

Ultimately, MIGAP will contribute to developing what Sinclair-Chapman (2015) called a “diversity infrastructure.” Along with APSA’s Diversity and Inclusion Programs, this project broadens APSA’s diversity infrastructure by developing a pilot campus-visitation program; fostering informal mentorship relationships; preparing students for summer research opportunities (e.g., the Summer Research Opportunity Programs, Leadership Alliance, and Institute for Recruitment of Teachers); helping them navigate graduate-school applications; and fostering their participation in the APSA Minority Fellowship Program and Ralph Bunche Summer Institute. Furthermore, we seek to improve retention and graduation rates by fostering collaborative relationships across institutions of higher education and by mobilizing support for students and faculty in MSIs. These relationships are key components of a strategy for diversifying political science (Beckwith 2015; Mealy 2015; Sinclair-Chapman 2015). Collectively, these coalitions will allow us to seize a particularly opportune moment for developing a holistic approach to diversifying political science. It comes at a time in which APSA status committees have sought to increase their collaborative work around pipeline, recruitment, and retention efforts (Mealy 2018).

Although recruitment and retention of Latinx students has proven to be challenging, we argue that this is far from being an intractable problem. Rather, we can leverage what we already know about supporting students and faculty from underrepresented groups to design and implement programming that enables their success. ■

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## CONFERCING IS NOT A LUXURY AND NEITHER IS THE SCHOLARLY LIFE OF OUR FUTURE COLLEAGUES

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As we learn to bear the intimacy of scrutiny and to flourish within it, as we learn to use the products of that scrutiny for power within our living, those fears which rule our lives and form our silences begin to lose their control over us...

The white fathers told us: I think, therefore I am. The Black mother within each of us—the poet—whispers in our dreams: I feel, therefore I can be free. Poetry coins the language to express and charter this revolutionary demand, the implementation of that freedom.

—Audre Lorde, *Poetry Is Not a Luxury* (1984, 36, 38)

This spotlight article uses Audre Lorde’s groundbreaking essay, *Poetry Is Not a Luxury* (1984), to consider a set of conditions not of my own making but that I survived. Therefore, the argument—funding first-generation, underrepresented minority, undocumented, refugee, Middle Eastern and/or Islamic, Native/ First Nations, and African/Black & African Diaspora/ Caribbean students to attend academic conferences as soon and as often as possible—is better described as a testimony—with a poem in the middle—and not as an endorsement of best practices. The genre of best practices suggests somehow a problem solved and not an ongoing, deeply violent dialectic of power. It is the latter with which I am concerned so I leave best practices to readers whose good faith compels them to stand outside of their own individual interests. Moreover, I am concerned with offering testimonial evidence and spurring a forthright conversation about ethical practices and principled necessities. As a testimony that insists on refusing silencing, it is worth exploring this set of conditions of ongoing, deeply violent dialectics of power. These particular groups of students are being enthusiastically recruited to campuses that are not willing to commit to their success in higher education. Departments must prioritize the funding of these particular groups of students with recruitment that supports them and their faculty mentors attending regional and national conferences each year during their graduate training. Period.

This article analyzes the types of commitments that faculty must make to guarantee that there are wraparound supports for these particular groups of students to flourish and to name the dialectic of power and violence that constitutes how research is conducted and how knowledge is produced in our discipline. Not all faculty are willing to commit to this type of anticapitalist politics of economic redistribution; however, those faculty who know that hiring and wage discrimination contributes to destabilizing forms of social inequality that constitute economic violence and cross-generational genocide may recognize these acts as important to endorse and address. As LGBTQ+, transgender, gender non-binary, first-generation and underrepresented minority,

undocumented, refugee, Middle Eastern and/or Islamic, Native/First Nations, and African/Black & African Diaspora/Caribbean students of and scholars in the political science discipline, our stories matter. The following testimonial describes the conditions when I arrived at my R1 political science graduate program after completing an Ivy League undergraduate degree, as well as what my mentors had to do for me to flourish. These conditions remain unchanged nationwide.

I know that my own students are flourishing when they can attend conferences as well as when they can articulate how this violent institutionalized dialectic of power has operated historically and continues to operate in higher education in our field.

### Conditions on The Ground Now

As a tenure-track and now-tenured professor with a doctorate in political science, I have purchased students' plane tickets, provided childcare, and fed and housed them at conferences. I have organized shared-housing arrangements to support students during critical periods of transition. I have secured mini-grants, typically from \$1,500 to \$3,000, to pay students as research assistants with the explicit goal of funding their attendance at conferences. I have taught extra courses to pay for hotel rooms, rollout beds, couches, and floor spaces so that students could attend conferences. I also have had to teach students how to be advocates for themselves and how to apply for funding from the Diverse Educational Community and Doctoral Experience (DECADE) program, graduate division; student government; professional associations and conference conveners; and offices of undergraduate and graduate research.

I fund my graduate students in these ways because my peer mentors and my mentors met me at the Greyhound bus in Santa Barbara, California, as an admitted graduate student; introduced me to their kindest and most supportive colleagues; and paid for meals and hotel stays. My mentors gifted me with paid research projects and my first job-interview suits, literally outfitting me to conduct research and present at scholarly conferences on two continents. Through these acts of sharing and welcoming me into intellectual life, I have become an interdisciplinary feminist political scientist working across multiple countries on the African Continent and in the African Diaspora.

Normative political theorist and feminist philosopher Audre Lorde described "poetry" as the form of theory building that "coins the language to express and charter this revolutionary demand, the implementation of that freedom." For Lorde, the type of freedom that I experience now and that was imagined for me by my mentors in the past required superior research training as well as a superior ethical environment that prioritized economic justice and redistribution. Lorde's ideas about writing insisted that poetry—that oft-demeaned form of creative expression—be understood as the most critical vector for "dreaming," "demanding," and creating "power within our living."

Those mentors and the scholars, librarians, women's center founders and staffers, advocates, and activists who are part of their intellectual community intentionally subverted what Jeanne Scheper (2017, 33) called the "redlining of education" and the "mortgaging of minds." These acts of sharing expressed to me their belief in my promise—but not my promise as an

exceptional "Magical Negro" or "Token." Rather, these acts of sharing by my mentors and their community demonstrated to me their belief in my promise as indicative of the promise of all of us—left behind, left out, not cited, and recruited with the expectation of failure. My mentors' sharing served as a relentless reminder that my *life* as an intellectual, as a writer, as a reader, and as a thinker was precious to them and to their survival.

Attending conferences are critical experiences that enable students to see themselves in the world of higher education and to begin to meet people who will be their peers in the field. At conferences, students make friends, build an associational life, and learn how to read informal spaces as learning spaces.<sup>1</sup> Learning to navigate the professional world of higher education requires enormous amounts of practice. It also requires students to figure out which people will accompany them as they learn how to discern the hidden curriculum of interpersonal interactions and formal requirements. For four centuries, the doyens of enlightenment have used their velvet-upholstered perches in research universities to legitimize the violence of enslavement, colonialism, imperialism, and heteropatriarchy. Whether these perches were literally built by enslaved persons or viewed as the necessary product of enslaved persons' actual flesh, we are still on the journey from what Lorde called the "intimacy of scrutiny"...[for]...control over us" to wherever we have arrived at in this present era of higher education.<sup>2</sup>

### *Poetry Is Still Not A Luxury—Sharing Is A Form of Anticapitalist Rebellion, A Poem*

*Long before many of the University of California campuses acknowledged that food scarcity was such an urgent problem for students that they had to concede to the well-organized student demand to build food pantries.*

*Long before these same campuses acknowledged that having one or two campus social workers could not fix the structural barriers to accessing public assistance that students faced,*

*Students denied public assistance for housing and food*

*Long before the university moved.....*

*Students and their advocates have had to do everything and anything to transform their admission to undergraduate programs into long term and decisive skills transfer that would enable them to enter the labor market and compete for the highest paying, most well-regarded, and most secure jobs in higher education.*

*Long before we even had the vocabulary to describe categories of students as "first generation" the intergenerational economic violence that had stalked*

*My family*

*Planted in me*

*The necessity for taking my education and the education of my peers seriously and trusting that financial resources would have to emerge from elsewhere.*

*That elsewhere is the sharing arrangements that have been the backbone of every single opportunity I have had in higher education and that I have modeled as an ethics of care and an ethics of material survival for my own students.*

By Tiffany Willoughby-Herard (2019)

### Changing the Conditions—Poetic Demands

I was already post-tenure when I wrote a grant titled, “Evicting Our Best: The Political Work of Doing Political Science as a Scholar of Color at UC Irvine,” which enabled me to secure modest funding from my campus diversity office to pay for eight underrepresented students to attend their first national academic conference: the National Conference of Black Political Scientists. For the first time, I was able to bring students to a conference without them going into debt and without maxing out my credit cards.

Where are those students now—just three years later? One defended a dissertation on March 8, 2019; another graduated from George Washington University’s graduate program spring 2019; another graduated from Rutgers University’s graduate program; another graduated from Claremont Seminary of Theology’s doctoral program; one is in the first year of a multi-year Fulbright Fellowship in Latin America; another is in the first year of a tenure-track job; several are working at high-paying jobs in higher education at Research One universities and applying to graduate school; others are doing archival research and working on first dissertation chapters. Representing diversity in age, race, country of origin, religion, and sexual orientation and gender identity, these students read one another’s papers and Power Points, provided key pointers for presentation style, and provided childcare during absences from home—for each other.

Reflecting on the practices associated with helping my students see how deserving they are to attend graduate school is tempered by reflection on many of our colleagues nationally who use their classrooms to discourage first-generation and underrepresented minority students from going forward. My understanding is tempered by my white colleagues, who diminish my leadership in this area with pretend care and concern about how I “have nothing to contribute” while they are busy trying to position themselves as modern-day Friends of the Negro and Friends of the Native. I am convinced that graduate education is the single-most important factor in enabling our future colleagues to see their worth, their value, and their own capacity for working with others to contribute in deeply meaningful ways to society and the world. The neoliberalization of higher education has yielded an impoverished undergraduate experience, where at large historically white R1 institutions far too often students graduate having had only a few transformative classroom experiences in which their lives as thinkers, researchers, and writers were affirmed, challenged, upended, or remapped.

I was told recently by the director of diversity at my campus to “be more playful.” I heard it as a codeword for being more strategic and for shifting from leading from behind to leading in front. I am still deciding what I think about that advice. However, in the meantime, I will keep encouraging my future colleagues to take themselves seriously as thinkers and creating opportunities for them to do that. I will continue to

warn them about people who want to help them for the wrong reasons and to teach them how to check me when I forget to accompany them. To the extent that I can clear space for them to access all of the languages and genres and research methodologies available to them—and those yet unthought—to “charter th[eir own] revolutionary demand[s],” I will continue my work of writing poetry and testifying. I am part of an insurgent political movement in higher education. I am here to testify, to write, and to return what has been stolen from generations yet to come. ■

### NOTES

1. Jessica Millward, University of California, Irvine–Morgan State University, (Black) Digital Humanities Pathways Program, Grant Application, March 15, 2019.
2. See Wilder’s (2014) exhaustive study of the role of enslaved persons in the colonies in the Americas; Mabokela and Magubane’s (2004) anthology, which pivots around Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902) and Lord Alfred Milner’s (1854–1925) statements about universities being the institutional renderings of African flesh boiled—both metaphorically and literally; Robinson’s (2007) reflections on the Smithsonian Institution; and the body of civil-rights law regarding the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (Wilder 1990). All seem to indicate the ways in which higher education has and continues to serve a mediating institutional function for raw biopolitical, libidinal, and material violence.

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### JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY: CHALLENGING MINDS AND CULTIVATING THE POLITICAL SCIENCE PIPELINE

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Numerous studies have shown that the lack of racial diversity within academic spaces impacts the sense of belonging and inclusion by members who are racial minorities. This glaring fact impacts not only how undergraduate students calculate their ability to obtain a doctoral degree in political science but also their perceptions of the feasibility of a future career as a political science professor. Our experiences at Jackson State University (JSU) highlight a model that presents a stark difference to the traditional trajectory. The political science department at JSU provided us with the privilege to engage with many political science faculty members of color who served