



**WOMEN
OF COLOR
IN THE
ACADEMY**

Return to Love

Honoring the Legacy of bell hooks

Friday, April 29, 2022 | 9:00 am - 5:00 pm Eastern Time

**Hosted By
Northeastern University**

welcome

Dear Colleagues,

“The academy is not paradise...” This statement by bell hooks always felt peculiar. Does anyone ever enter the academy in search of paradise? Especially as women of color in the academy, we are all too aware that the institutions we work in can be the exact opposite of paradise. This past year some of those challenges were emblemized by high-profile controversies such as the tenure denial of Nikole Hannah-Jones by UNC Chapel Hill. As Hannah-Jones noted in a public statement, “It is not my job to heal the University of North Carolina.” Indeed, many of us are often called upon to heal the colleges and universities for which we work. An expectation to experience paradise is not generally what people in higher education search for.

And yet, time and time again we have managed to create, curate, and cultivate our own forms of paradise, in community, in the classroom, and in coalitions. Women of Color in the Academy (WOCIA) represents one such paradise where women can come together to learn, share, think, grow, network, and strategize. How might we, in the legacy of hooks, attempt to create more opportunities for paradise within the academy?

With this year’s theme, “Return to Love: Honoring the Legacy of bell hooks,” we hope both to create the kind of paradise that hooks herself imagined, and to consider how to extend the legacy of her far-reaching impacts within the academy. A prolific writer, engaged teacher, and bold feminist thinker, bell hooks addressed a wide range of topics in her scholarship, teaching, and social action. hooks’ insistence on claiming her positionality within the academy is critically insightful and helpful for us to hold onto as women of color in the academy.

Recalling her legacy, Black feminist scholar Noliwe Rooks writes, “Because of bell hooks, we know we can bring our whole selves to our work. We can trust and believe in our intellect. We can be complicated in our humanity. We can be gentle with our critiques. We can be fierce in our protection. We can keep talking to, and talking with, and talking back, until the last breath.” In the bell hooks spirit of “bringing our whole selves to our work,” this year’s WOCIA theme is intended to highlight a topic that hooks held dear as well as to reflect on what her legacy means to all women of color in the academy regardless of school, location, discipline, language, class, race, or ethnicity. “Return to Love” far more than just romantic love—the call to love as hooks saw it is about self-love, love of sisterhood, love of others, love of teaching, love as an ethic, and much more.

If the tenor of the United States has shown us anything in the past few years, it is that we could all use more love. Love of self, love of others, love for our neighbors, our students, and colleagues. We invite you to enjoy today’s program which celebrates hooks’ dialectic of love, and in so doing, we hope that you experience a kind of paradise.

Sincerely,

Régine Jean-Charles and Toyoko Orimoto
Women of Color in the Academy, Conference Co-Chairs

*We dedicate the 2022 Women of Color in the Academy conference to bell hooks**

(September 25, 1952 – December 15, 2021).



Raised in segregated Kentucky, bell hooks was the daughter of a janitor and a maid. An avid reader, with poets Gwendolyn Brooks and Elizabeth Barrett Browning among her favorites, hooks was motivated to seek higher education and explore the realm of learning, which she would later describe as “the practice of freedom” and “a place where paradise can be created.”

She earned a B.A. from Stanford University, an M.A. from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and a Ph.D. from the University of California – Santa Cruz in English literature. As a faculty member, she taught at multiple colleges and visited universities across the country. Some universities where she lectured include the University of Southern California, University of California – Santa Cruz, San Francisco State University, Yale, Oberlin College, and the City College of New York. Ultimately, she returned to Kentucky in 2004 to become a Distinguished Professor in Residence at Berea College.

A prolific writer, hooks authored over 40 books, including five children’s illustration books and numerous poems about race and feminism. She pioneered the concept of intersectionality in feminism. Her work has had a profound impact on the teaching of feminism in the academy, showing that the goal of gender equity cannot be achieved without fully and honestly addressing race and sexuality. Her 1981 book, *Ain’t I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, has become a staple on college syllabi. She was a thought leader, a brilliant scholar, and an academic who used her pen to challenge society to be our better selves. A recurring theme in her work is the beauty of women of color and the value of our voices. Today we honor the memory of a sister whose ideas live on with us.

**We use lowercase letters to respect her own usage.*

Connect



Interactive Conference Program

See the Women of Color in the Academy Conference's Interactive Program to connect with a full list of resources and opportunities. woc.northeastern.edu/interactive-conference-program



Book Display

Browse books written by conference speakers, organizers, and attendees. View titles by bell hooks. woc.northeastern.edu/books



Slack Channels

#2022-ConferenceChat — Share videos, memes, and thoughts.
#connect — Provide social media handles, emails, etc.
#resources — Broadcast opportunities in New England and beyond.
Join the ongoing conversation with other women of color. Exchange ideas with conference attendees. bit.ly/SlackWOCIA



LinkedIn

Follow Women of Color in the Academy on LinkedIn for event updates and more. linkedin.com/groups/12649011



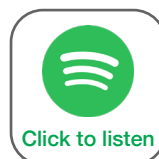
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Twitter

Follow Women of Color in the Academy [@WoCiA_NEU](https://twitter.com/WoCiA_NEU) to share your tweets with other conference attendees use #WOCInAcademy. twitter.com/WoCiA_NEU



Spotify Playlist

Listen to music performed by women of color throughout the conference! Playlist: [6th Annual Women of Color in the Academy Conference \(4/29/22\)](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3McLpg3) or visit spoti.fi/3McLpg3.

Schedule

All times are in Eastern Time

- 9:00 am | OPENING CEREMONY**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND INVOCATION
Mary Jo Ondrechen

OPENING REMARKS
Régine Jean-Charles

WELCOME
David Madigan
Michelle Wu
- 9:30 am | PLENARY SESSION I**

Introduction | Régine Jean-Charles
Keynote Address | Aisha Francis-Samuels
- 10:30 am | BREAK**
- 10:40 am | BREAKOUT SESSION I**

 - **Asian American and Pacific Islander Women: Leading Through Love and Contradiction** | Catherine Wong
 - **Communion: Using Psychology to Build Connection** | Christine J. Ko
 - **How Do You Want to Arrive? Creating Restorative Experiences by Expressing Love Through Research** | Serena J. Cardoso and Myisha R. Rodrigues
 - **From Margin to Center: Peer Mentorship** | Kenya Nyota Lee
 - **What's Love Got to Do with It? Engaged Pedagogy** | Ieshia Karasik
- 11:40 am | BREAK**
- 11:45 pm | BREAKOUT SESSION I DISCUSSION**
- 12:10 pm | BREAK**

- 12:15 pm | PLENARY SESSION II**
Moderator | Carmen Sceppa
Deans Panel | Wendi Williams, Amy Zeng, and Jean Zu
- 1:20 pm | CAREGIVING BREAK**
- 1:50 pm | BREAKOUT SESSION II**

 - **Finding Joy in the Journey** | Janelle Clarke-Holley
 - **On Remaining Whole** | Nicole M. Overstreet
 - **Self-Love is the Best Love: Ourselves First, the Academy Second** | Nicole A. Telfer, Rahmatu Kassimu, and Charity S. Watkins
 - **Sistering—the VERB: A Revolutionary Return to Love** | Lei Douglas and Ashley Odilia Armand
 - **Talking Back: Storytelling and Reflection** | Nidhi Lal
- 2:50 pm | BREAK**
- 2:55 pm | BREAKOUT SESSION II DISCUSSION**
- 3:20 pm | BREAK**
- 3:25 pm | PLENARY SESSION III**
Introduction
Corliss Thompson
Keynote Address
Leigh Patel
- 4:30 pm | CLOSING REMARKS, REFLECTIONS, AND GRATITUDE**
Toyoko Orimoto

“ *We cannot know love if we remain unable to surrender our attachment to power, if any feeling of vulnerability strikes terror in our hearts. Lovelessness torments.* ”

bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*

Breakout Session I

10:40 am - 11:40 am

Asian American and Pacific Islander Women: Leading Through Love and Contradiction | Catherine Wong

As Asian American and Pacific Islander women, how do we name this moment, where do we fit in the scholar activism discourse, and what should be our interventions within the academy? This interactive workshop will address how we create sensemaking from the contradictions of being invisible and hypervisible, of being silenced and outspoken, of following family scripts and career aspirations, and of doing intersectional scholarship and activism. Interrogating how we "...collude with the existing system in small ways every day, even those among us who see ourselves as anti-racist radicals" (hooks, 2003, p. 35) allows cross-racial solidarity to be fully reimaged.

Contextualize the rise in #AntiAsianHate. Create strategies to pivot to intersectional activism. Cultivate cross-racial solidarity, increased belonging, and collective action toward healing.

Communion: Using Psychology to Build Connection | Christine J. Ko

From academia to family life, at all socioeconomic levels, the implicit bias that women and men face continues to be different. Four concepts from psychology – metacognition (thinking about how you think and perceive), the Dunning-Kruger effect (the concept of being unskilled and unaware), a growth mindset (having a learner's perspective), and deliberate practice (setting measurable goals) – set the stage for increased self-awareness. Such introspection builds connection with self that can then spill over to others and your community.

Increase awareness of concepts in cognitive psychology that can help build stronger connections with self, others, and community.

How Do You Want to Arrive? Creating Restorative Experiences by Expressing Love Through Research | Serena Cardoso and Myisha R. Rodrigues

In this workshop, Serena Cardoso and Myisha R. Rodrigues share their approaches to research and practice through exploring and amplifying client and participant narratives, engaging critical praxis by calling out the impact of white supremacy culture on Black bodies, and leveraging healing-centered practice. This workshop honors bell hooks by actualizing love through engaging authentic ways of being and artistic pathways toward ceding power and creating restorative experiences. It also engages participants in their own brief exploration of embodied, indigenous practice and healing.

Gain ideas for creating safe spaces that enable authentic self-expression. Explore strategies to embrace one's whole self as practitioner, leader, and scholar. Learn and observe expressions of love embodied through research and practice.

From Margin to Center: Peer Mentorship | Kenya Nyota Lee

bell hooks reminds us that for women who are marginalized, their "survival depends on continued exercise of whatever personal powers they possess" (2015). Evolving from this mantra, workshop chair, Kenya Nyota Lee, researched the efficacy of a peer mentorship community for women of color in higher education administration. Her study offered women an opportunity to "bond with other women on the basis of shared strengths and resources" (hooks, 2015). The goal of this engaging workshop is to share the structure and conduct of the peer mentorship community and reflect on this opportunity to learn with and from other women leaders.

Explore how personal power, strengths, and resources, when shared in a space of sisterhood and solidarity, empower one's professional success and enable them to overcome the challenges faced by women of color.

What's Love Got to Do with It? Engaged Pedagogy | Ileshia Karasik

How do you connect with students in a classroom when many are fatigued, disinterested, or not equipped to handle the rigor? You can do so by creating a pedagogy of *love* in your class. As educators, we want to ensure a safe, welcoming space for everyone while offering a rigorous education that allows students to become better scholars. We will explore our bias and the Zone of Proximal Development and build a framework to teach with *love* as a *verb* strengthening our pedagogy.

Learn to connect with students in a classroom when many are fatigued and disinterested. Through rigorous education, tempered with love, inspire students to achieve academic success.

Breakout Session II

1:50 pm - 2:50 pm

Finding Joy in the Journey | Janelle Clarke-Holley

This experience is designed to empower individuals to embrace the joy in their journey. When we know how to engage in self-love it allows us to model to others how to love us. During the session, we capture common barriers that have impacted our journey and influenced the lens through which we view ourselves. Participants will be empowered to identify how to leverage their mindset to intentionally celebrate their authentic selves. By the conclusion of this interactive session, individuals will have reflected on their success journey and begun to envision how to magnify their brilliance. Join us in the journey!

Identify and learn how to overcome barriers and embrace one's excellence through the development of a personal success journey map.

On Remaining Whole | Nicole M. Overstreet

In reflection on the Women of Color in the Academy theme "bringing our whole selves to work" inspired by bell hooks, this workshop is a contemplation on remaining whole. There is a long history of how women of color have navigated the academy and its feverish desire to consume (the material and the immaterial) until there is nothing left. At the heart of much of our work is an ethic rooted in justice. However, when an entity has made it clear that this ethic is only desirable in service to the institution, how do we understand our strategies in remaining whole? This workshop offers an opportunity to discuss what it means to bring our whole selves to work while simultaneously remaining whole.

Gain perspective on what it means to bring the whole self to work, while retaining one's individualism and remaining whole.

Self-love is the Best Love: Ourselves First, the Academy Second | Nicole A. Telfer, Rahmatu Kassimu, and Charity Watkins

Women of color (WOC) in the academy make up less than 20 percent of full-time female faculty members (Curtis-Boles et al., 2015), and face the double-jeopardy of gender and racist discrimination experiences. Despite these significant social harms, WOC are still expected to work quickly and effectively at the expense of their physical and emotional well-being. In this workshop, we will provide tips, exercises, and routines that WOC graduate students and faculty can practice, as described in our upcoming memoir, "Our Doctoral Journey: A Collection of Black Women's Experiences." These strategies include rest, self-care routines, support systems, and documentation/journaling.

Learn how to build an intentional system of support and self-care. Discover the importance of documentation, acknowledge the power of rest, and identify ways in which they can return to themselves, wholly and unapologetically.

Sistering-The VERB: A Revolution- ary Return to Love | Ashley Odilia Armand and Lei Douglas

Through the interweaving of Black feminist frameworks centering Black sisterhood, sistering, and familial community creation, we aim to elucidate the complexities of Black women's experiences at higher education institutions and the consequential need for more intentional, structured communal settings for sistering and convening. Championing prose, poetry, illustrative texts, and art, this session will lead attendees into understanding sistering as a necessary form of intimacy and a "return to love." This return will be highlighted through bell hooks and her dynamic perceptions of love, the seven types of love derived from Greek philosophy, global perspectives of "love," and how that shapes the need for

a landscape that cultivates sistering in higher education. This session will utilize reflective exercises, group discussions, and calls to action.

Explore the notion of a "sister" to define authentic sistering for Black women in higher education. Examine Black feminist theory as preservation of sistering to liberate. Provide sistering as a tool, a methodology, a set of ritualistic practices, a shared spirituality, and a refuge.

Talking Back: Storytelling and Reflection | Nidhi Lal

As humans, we relate to stories more than facts or numbers. Using stories, we can strive to achieve narrative competence and absorb stories to understand human expression. With narration, attendees will achieve a greater understanding of human expression. This workshop emphasizes the importance of reflection in obtaining and evolving perspectives. The format includes (1) Read a narrative, (2) Listen to a narrative, (3) Reflect upon personal experiences, (4) Write a narrative using a prompt, and (5) Pair and share, and reflect upon lessons learned. Stories of our past experiences will allow us to look toward the future with greater confidence and empathy.

Gain an increased understanding of the use of stories as teaching tools. Reflect upon the narrative form as a means of human expression that creates confidence and empathy.

Conference Hosts & Honorable Guests



Régine Jean-Charles

Conference Co-Chair | Director of Africana Studies, Dean's Professor of Culture and Social Justice, and Professor of Africana Studies and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Northeastern University



David Madigan

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Northeastern University



Toyoko Orimoto

Conference Co-Chair | Associate Professor of Physics, College of Science, Northeastern University



Mary Jo Ondrechen

Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, College of Science, Northeastern University



Corliss Thompson

Associate Teaching Professor, College of Professional Studies, Northeastern University



Michelle Wu

Mayor of Boston



“ *The practice of love begins with acceptance—the recognition that wherever we are is the appropriate place to practice, that the present moment is the appropriate time.* ”

bell hooks, *Toward a Worldwide Culture of Love*

“ *As long as women are using class or race power to dominate other women, feminist sisterhood cannot be fully realized.* ”

bell hooks, *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*

Keynote Speakers



Aisha Francis-Samuels

President and CEO, Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology



Dr. Aisha Francis-Samuels became the first female President in the more than 100-year history of Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology (BFIT) in July 2021. Previously the college's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Francis-Samuels oversees the day-to-day operations of the college and plays a critical role in advancing its mission.

Dr. Francis-Samuels is an award-winning nonprofit leader and educator with broad experience in strategic planning, philanthropy, board relations, marketing, and communications. She believes in the ability of effective organizations and well-supported individuals to transform underserved communities for the better, which is her life's work. She enjoys serving as a strategist and implementing dynamic new programs at best-in-class organizations that improve access to and equity of educational and economic opportunities.



Leigh Patel

Professor, University of Pittsburgh



Dr. Leigh Patel is a writer, educator, and cultural worker. Her work is based in the knowledge that as long as oppression has existed so have freedom struggles. She is a community-based researcher as well as an eldercare provider. She is an elected member of the National Academy of Education. Prior to being employed as a professor, she was a middle school language arts teacher, a journalist, and a state-level policymaker. Dr. Patel is also a proud national board member of Education for Liberation, a nonprofit that focuses on supporting low-income people, particularly youth of color, to understand and challenge the injustices their communities face.

Her latest book, *There is No Study Without Struggle: Confronting Settler Colonialism in Higher Education*, from Beacon Press connects the distinct yet deeply connected forms of oppression, while also shedding light on the crucial nature of political education for social transformation. Her walk-on song is "Can I Kick It" by A Tribe Called Quest.

Deans' Panel



Carmen Sceppa

**Panel Moderator | Dean,
Bouvé College of Health
Sciences and Professor,
Northeastern University**



Dr. Carmen Sceppa is Dean of Bouvé College of Health Sciences and Professor at Northeastern University. As a physician and scientist, Dr. Sceppa's work advances and prolongs health for all. Her program of research is based on developing and testing lifestyle interventions to promote healthy aging and quality of life among underserved, vulnerable, and elderly populations with a specific focus on Latinx and African American populations. Dr. Sceppa received her medical degree from Francisco Marroquín University in Guatemala, where she was born and raised. She received her Ph.D. in Nutrition from The Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts.



Wendi Williams

**Dean, School of Education,
Mills College**



Dr. Wendi Williams' work centers on the development, implementation, and evaluation of school and community-based health and educational interventions that promote health and well-being among youth, their families, and the educational and mental health practitioners who work with them. Through her scholarship and research activity, she has articulated an intersectional approach to psycho-social spiritual intervention for middle school girls. The foundations of this work have extended to reflective intervention to facilitate leadership development among diverse women and Black/African women, specifically. Forthcoming work includes her book, *Black women at work: On recovery and refusal* out Fall 2022.



Amy Z. Zeng

**Dean and Professor, Sawyer
Business School, Suffolk University**



Dr. Amy Zeng became the sixth Dean, as well as the first female Dean, of the Sawyer Business School at Suffolk University in August 2020. An accomplished educator and leader in experiential and project-based learning and a recognized scholar in the field of supply chain management, Dr. Zeng brings to the School a passion for experience-based learning, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and global engagement. Prior to her current position, Dr. Zeng was the Dean of the Barney School of Business at the University of Hartford in Connecticut. Prior to that, she spent 19 years at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, where she held numerous faculty and administrative positions.



Jean Zu

**Dean, Schaefer School
of Engineering and Science,
Stevens Institute of Technology**

Dr. Jean Zu has served as Dean of the School of Engineering and Science at Stevens Institute of Technology since May 2017. Dr. Zu's research focuses on mechanical vibrations and energy harvesting. She has successfully collaborated with many different companies on research projects with a focus on automotive applications. She has published 340 papers including 180 journal papers and has supervised over 60 graduate students including 36 doctoral students. She served as the President of Engineering Institute of Canada (EIC) in 2012-2014. In 2019, she was chosen as Notable Women in Technology by Crain's New York Business. Dr. Zu obtained her Ph.D. from the University of Manitoba.

Breakout Session Leaders



Ashley Odilia Armand

Assistant Director at Center for Intercultural Engagement, Northeastern University



Serena J. Cardoso

Postdoctoral Fellow, Adjunct Instructor, Clinical Supervisor, and Psychotherapist, Brandeis University and Regis College



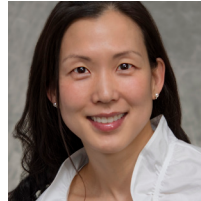
Rahmatu Kassimu

Public Health Consultant, Academic Writing Coach, and Educator, Dallas Independent School District



Janelle Clarke-Holley

Chief Executive Officer, JCHolley LLC



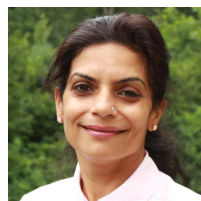
Christine J. Ko

Professor of Dermatology and Pathology, and Associate Director of Dermatopathology, Yale University



Lei Douglas

Area Coordinator for Residence Life, Northeastern University



Nidhi Lal

Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Family Medicine, Boston University School of Medicine



Ileshia Karasik

Assistant Cooperative Education Faculty, Finance & Accounting, D'Amore-McKim School of Business



Kenya Nyota Lee

Higher Education Professional, Career Strategist, and Doctoral Student, Northeastern University, and Chief of Staff, Baruch College



Nicole M. Overstreet

Associate Professor, Clark University



Breakout Session Leaders continued...



Myisha R. Rodrigues

Director of Organizational Improvement, Lesley University, and CEO and Founder, Third Veil Consulting, LLC



Charity S. Watkins

Assistant Professor of Social Work, North Carolina Central University



Nicole A. Telfer

Teaching Fellow and Ph.D. Candidate, University of Maryland, Baltimore County



Catherine Wong

Executive Director and Founder, Catherine Wong Consults: Education, Training & Research



“ Only love can heal the wounds of the past. However, the intensity of our woundedness often leads to a closing of the heart, making it impossible for us to give or receive the love that is given to us. ”

bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*

Acknowledgments

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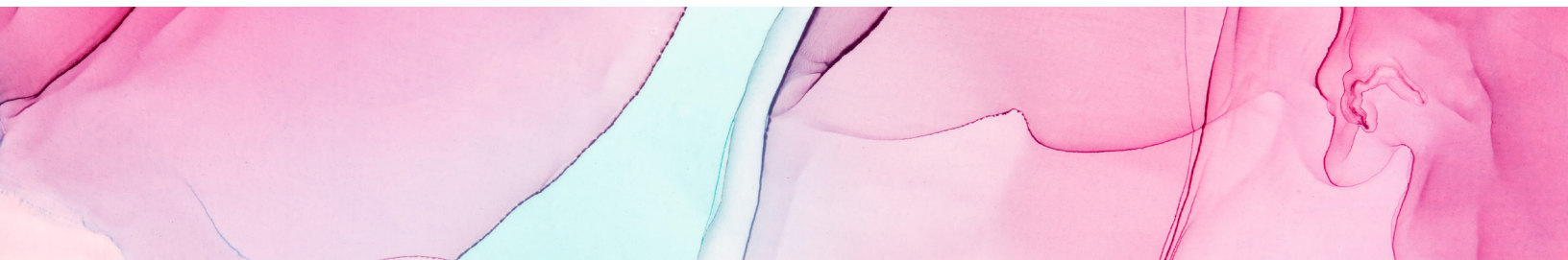
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Woo Song, Associate Professor of Education

“*Love is a combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect and trust.*”

bell hooks, *Communion: The Female Search for Love*

Thank You

Thank you to the Boston-wide Women of Color Advisory Committee for all of their meaningful contributions to the WOCIA events and initiatives. They specifically help in planning year-round initiatives which include an annual conference, quarterly soirees/gatherings, and exploration of an online space to connect WOC faculty. The Committee is composed of faculty and staff from a variety of universities in the greater Boston area. Thank you for everything you do!

We would also like to thank the Conference Planning Committee, including the founders, chairs, and members who bring their creative energy and ideas together to create an experience that is unique from previous years. The three sub-committees continuously create new ways to connect and improve; for example, for the first time this year, the speakers and sessions sub-committee coordinated a call for breakout session proposals. We very much appreciate your contributions!

And a special thanks to the ADVANCE Office of Faculty Development at Northeastern University for providing continual administrative support and infrastructure for Women of Color in the Academy initiatives.

Specifically, we would like to acknowledge Erinn Taylor de Barroso, Sam Stokoe, Dekel Luban, Michael Pettinato, and Ignacio Arruza for all of their hard work relating to the WOCIA initiatives.

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D'Amore McKim School of Business
Khoury College of Computer Sciences
School of Law

“ *Healing occurs through testimony, through gathering together everything available to you and reconciling.* ”

bell hooks, *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery*