

welcome

As we come together for our seventh annual conference and celebration, it is important to reflect on where we have been, where we are, and where we are going. The last year has seen an intensification of political attacks on the humanity of people of color, women, and the LGBTQ and trans communities. At the same time that our histories are—quite literally—being erased from history curricula, our positions in the academy are becoming more precarious as colleges and universities come to rely heavily on contingent faculty to fulfill institutional visions that increasingly adhere to neoliberal logics.

There has never been a more critical time for us to engage in the work of building and sustaining communities dedicated not just to surviving in times of precarity, but to reviving the spirit of togetherness that empowers us to thrive in such an environment. Women of Color in the Academy (WOCIA) represents valuable opportunities to share our knowledge and network. But it is more than that. It also creates a space for us to build and strengthen the relationships that have enabled us to resist the systems that present challenges in both our professional and personal lives.

This year's conference theme, "Community as Rebellion: Thriving in the Academy," is an especially timely one. It reflects the challenges we face as women of color whose work involves the production of knowledge in spaces that were not created for us, as well as the ways in which we have historically met these challenges with the strength and fortitude that comes from thinking and acting as a collective. That is the aim of the conference—to continue this tradition of supporting each other in this time of heightened precarity. As Lorgia García Peña, our keynote speaker, so eloquently writes, the importance of coming together as women of color is to open up "a space from which another way of imagining the academy and the university is possible," and to create a community that "[contradicts] the violence so many of us experience in our institutions."

This sense of community, and the rebellious spirit it reinvigorates, is an expansive one. As García Peña also acknowledges, our success results from the hard work and fellowship of a broader community of women—our ancestors, families, friends, those with whom we have come into contact, and those whom we have never met. It is important to keep this work going, to take up her call to "share our work, provide feedback and support each other, and most importantly, build a network and a community where we feel it is safe to rebel."

It is in this spirit that we welcome you to this year's conference!

Sincerely,

Patricia & Nicole

Patricia Davis and Nicole N. Aljoe
Women of Color in the Academy, Conference Co-Chairs

We dedicate the 2023 Women of Color in the Academy Conference to all women of color in the academy who have contributed novel and non-traditional expertise, theories, and findings to our knowledge base.

While these achievements are not always recognized with tenure and promotion, they are vital to our quest to build an inclusive, honest, and excellent academy. We see you. We honor your work and your dedication to excellence in cultivating knowledge.

We embrace you and sincerely hope that, one day, you will be embraced by the

entire academy as integral to its mission of excellence. You are the members of our community who inspire us most.

It is because of you that we reaffirm our own commitment to outstanding scholarship and assert that we will continue to embrace community and harness its collective power to fuel us.



Photo is from the last in person conference held in 2019.