

The Book of

Hope



**WOMEN
OF COLOR
IN THE
ACADEMY**

This professional development workbook is designed to affirm confidence in our readiness to begin, continue, and complete the work that calls us to a purposeful life.

Our conference theme of “Hope As Practice: A Decade of Empowerment, Creativity, and Connection” tells a story of honing knowledge about how others before us navigated difficult terrain. We are reminded to trust in an ancient genius to map, mark, and maneuver well on twisting and imprecise paths. Our people’s voices declare, Press On. For those we mentor and who look to us to light the trail, we continue. As we journey, we show compassion to ourselves and to others for the suffering and uncertainty endured and respect that clarity, peace, and joy are our legacy as well.

As you engage with this workbook, find inspiration in your dreams and ideas and be reminded that you are worthy, your work is vital, your voice is powerful, and your presence is divine.

EXERCISE 1

Hope as Practice: From Intention to Action

Hope, when practiced intentionally, becomes a powerful tool for transformation. This exercise helps us shift from hope as a passive wish to hope as an active, daily practice.

Part 1: Mapping Your Hope

What does hope look like in your daily academic life? Identify 3 concrete practices that sustain your sense of hope (e.g., mentoring students, collaborative research, community engagement).

Part 2: Hope Interrupted

Reflect on moments when your hope has been tested or diminished. What systemic barriers, personal setbacks, or institutional challenges have made hope feel difficult to sustain?

Part 3: Renewing Hope Through Action

Choose one area where you want to cultivate more hope. What is one actionable step you can take in the next 30 days to practice hope in this area? How will you measure or recognize this practice?

EXERCISE 2

A Decade of Empowerment: Honoring Our Journey

As WOCIA celebrates 10 years, we pause to reflect on how far we've come—individually and collectively—while charting our course forward.

Part 1: Personal Milestones (2016-2026)

Reflect on your own journey over the past decade. List 3-5 significant milestones in your academic career, personal growth, or community engagement. How have you grown in unexpected ways?

Part 2: Collective Wins

Consider the broader landscape of women of color in academia over the past 10 years. What victories—small or large—have you witnessed or been part of? What progress gives you hope?

Part 3: The Next Decade

Envision yourself 10 years from now (2036). What legacy do you want to have built? What does empowerment look like for the next generation of women of color scholars? Write a brief letter to your future self outlining your hopes and commitments.

EXERCISE 3

Creative Acts of Resistance and Joy

Creativity is not a luxury—it is a survival tool and a form of resistance. This exercise invites you to reclaim creativity as central to your scholarly identity and well-being.

Part 1: Creativity Audit

When was the last time you engaged in creative work purely for joy? List forms of creativity that bring you life (writing, art, music, teaching innovations, community organizing, etc.).

Part 2: Barriers to Creativity

What prevents you from prioritizing creativity? Consider institutional demands, productivity culture, impostor syndrome, or lack of resources. How has the academy's narrow definition of "scholarly work" limited your creative expression?

Part 3: Reclaiming Creative Space

Design one creative practice you will commit to this year. This could be: starting a creative writing group, integrating arts-based methods into your research, developing an innovative course, or carving out weekly time for creative projects. What support or resources would help you sustain this practice?

EXERCISE 4

Networks of Hope: Building Sustained Connection

Connection sustains us. This exercise expands on “Enlarging Our Alliances” from our 2025 “Book of Resilience” Professional Development booklet, with a specific focus on networks that nurture hope and mutual support.

Part 1: Your Circle of Hope

Identify 3-5 people who actively help you sustain hope in your work. What makes these relationships generative? How do you reciprocate that support?

Part 2: Gaps and Possibilities

Where do you need more connection? Consider: cross-institutional collaborations, intergenerational mentoring, interdisciplinary partnerships, or connections with scholars doing similar justice-oriented work. What types of relationships would strengthen your sense of hope and possibility?

Part 3: Creating Connection

Choose one specific action to deepen or create a new connection: schedule a virtual coffee chat with someone whose work inspires you, propose a collaborative project, join or start a writing accountability group, or reach out to someone you’ve lost touch with. What simple gesture of connection can you commit to this month?

NOTES



We are grateful to Noor Ali, Associate Teaching Professor, Graduate School of Education, College of Professional Studies, Northeastern University, for conceptualizing and creating this professional development workbook in collaboration with the ADVANCE Office of Faculty Development at Northeastern University and Beverly Yeager, Founder and Creative Director of The Design Wonder Studio. We are grateful for the words and ideas within, a testament to the enduring power of hope as practice and a reminder that your work is vital, your voice is powerful, and your presence is divine.



“

*All that you touch, You
Change. All that you Change,
Changes you. The only lasting
truth Is Change.*

Octavia E. Butler, Parable of the Sower, 1993

”