

Candidate's Statement

The following is based, with permission, on the original balanced-binned-case candidate statement for promotion to full by Dr. Jennifer Thorington Springer (2020; full original dossier [here](#)). It has been edited (by Rachel Applegate, reviewed by Dr. Thorington Springer) to reflect a balanced-Integrative DEI presentation. This primarily involves [rearranging material](#) and [adding local impact](#).

I seek promotion to Professor on an Integrative DEI case. My scholarly and university work concentrates on minoritized and underserved communities (particularly the African Diaspora). My DEI work is best understood as focused on two broad themes: (1) understanding and exploring the lived experiences of minoritized and underserved communities, both in literature as well as of students at IUPUI; and (2) advocating for, mentoring and supporting faculty and students of underrepresented groups at IUPUI.

My philosophy of diversity, equity, and inclusion is based on feminist, postcolonial, and cultural exploration of how women struggle for citizenship and humanity within the African diaspora. These women offer new perspectives on how people create radical identities and counter-cultures to resist oppression. This perspective informs all of my work throughout my research, teaching, and service. I have taken these perspectives and used them to inform and energize my campus work that supports the success of marginalized populations at IUPUI. I have significant scholarly products including most recently lead editor and creator of the volume, essays [Unraveling Gender, Race, and Diaspora](#), an article on “Fractured Diasporas,” and “Constructing Radical Subjectivities” (described below). In my role as Associate Dean for Student Services, and in work with xxxxx I have used these insights to advance the success of... My leadership is recognized In these ways I meet the criteria for promotion to full.

Below, I organize the case for promotion around the two themes, showing interrelated research, teaching, and service.

Theme One: *Understanding and exploring the lived experiences of minoritized and underserved communities, both in literature as well as of students taking classes at IUPUI*

My scholarly articles and edited collections in rank have **illuminated the lived experiences of minoritized and underserved communities**. Through the examination of representations of primarily women and other minoritized subjects in literature, film, and popular culture, my scholarship has offered new perspectives on ways in which those who exist on the fringes of the margins, often deemed social deviants, create radical identities and counter-subcultures as they resist oppression; I embrace the radical politics that evolve from the conscious acts of resistance performed by those marginalized and discuss the coping mechanisms used to not only survive systematic forms of oppression but also thrive by refusing to accept the status of victim.

With Professor Obioma Nnaemeka (Chancellor's Professor of French, IUPUI), I co-edited the collection of essays [Unraveling Gender, Race, and Diaspora](#), published by Africa World Press (2016)—first author for the introduction, editing throughout, and a contributed chapter, “[Making Life on Foreign Soil: Paule Marshall's Immigrant Women](#).” Building on my earlier scholarship devoted to Caribbean women's development of “rebel consciousness,” this chapter examines the migratory experiences of women in the Caribbean diaspora and their negotiation of hybrid identities due to displacement from exile, voluntary or otherwise. Reviewers have commended the volume for offering a global representation of the cross-cultural experiences of diasporic subjects and for incorporating the voices of academics, public intellectuals, and grassroots activists.

The movement and displacement of diasporic blacks and what happens when they meet has also been a focus in my scholarship on migratory acts. Drawing on race theory as well as literary and cultural studies, “[Fractured Diaspora: Mending The Strained Relationships Between African Caribbeans and African Americans](#),” published in *Wadagei: A Journal of the Caribbean and Its Diaspora* (2010), explores

relationships between African Americans and African Caribbeans in the U.S.. Expanding on the work of Cultural theorists Paul Gilroy and Stuart Hall, “Fractured Diaspora” fills a scholarly gap in understanding these relationships.

My most recent publications and works in progress shift to “radical female subjectivities.” For example, my article “[Constructing Radical Female Subjectivities: Survival Pimping In Austin Clarke’s *The Polished Hoe*](#)” (2015), published in the distinguished women’s studies journal *Frontiers*, examines how black women evolve from the basic stereotype of sexual deviance to a more nuanced self – what bell hooks calls a radical black female subjectivity – as they navigate the terrains of sex work and survival pimping. I continue to explore radical female subjectivities in additional projects. My article “[Crime, Punishment, and Retribution: The Politics of Sisterhood Interrupted in Marie Elena John’s *Unburnable*](#)” examines woman on woman violence, addressing how and why women abuse the power that mentoring and motherhood afford by inadvertently passing on the trauma they once experienced to their daughters. This essay has been peer reviewed and accepted for inclusion in the edited volume *Gendered Violence and Human Rights in Literature and Film: Perspectives From the African Diaspora*, edited by Obioma Nnaemeka and Naomi Nkealah, under contract at Routledge.

My second co-edited volume, [Rethinking Gender, Culture and Health in Africa and the African Diaspora](#), under contract with Goldline and Jacobs Press, adopts an interdisciplinary approach to study the political, economic, and social forces that influence women’s lives and health on the African continent and in the diaspora. I have co-authored with Krim Lacey, [Acculturation and Social Context on Severe Partner Abuse: The Experiences of U.S. Caribbean Black Women](#). Drawing on recent data from the National Survey of American Life Re-Interview, this chapter demonstrates the impact of assimilation, given that highly acculturated women are more likely to experience severe intimate partner violence.

Scholarship in progress includes works on Caribbean citizenship and black masculinity (conference presentation completed, manuscript in progress), and gender and sexuality in Carnival. The later builds on my expertise with “mas,” a type of performative action within Carnival that exemplifies class and gender politics.

My scholarly reputation and leadership in the field is reflected in invitations to review *Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal*, *Twentieth-Century Literature*, *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, and *the Multicultural Perspectives Journal*. I have recently been appointed as the Associate Editor of the new [Journal of African Gender Studies](#) (JAGS), for which we are currently reviewing essays for our first edition. Additional contributions include serving on the Planning Committee for the annual Caribbean Studies Association Conference which is one of the largest interdisciplinary conferences in the field and being voted a Humanities Councilor for the Council of Undergraduate Research (CUR), a longstanding institution that supports high quality student-faculty research and scholarship. As a CUR Councilor, I have already been instrumental in the work being done on inclusivity as a member of the Diversity Taskforce.

This research program directly informs my teaching. In my scholarship of teaching, curriculum development, classroom instruction, mentoring, and administrative work, I have prioritized student success, experiential learning, [equity-mindedness](#), and closing educational gaps in achievement by minoritized and underserved student populations.

I have published three journal articles that emphasize multicultural, inclusive pedagogies with a focus on aiding students to recognize their unconscious biases and preconceived ideas of the “other.” A component of this work is to challenge intersecting structural systems of oppression and the inherent privilege it breeds for people who can own “majority group” status. Of particular note, my article “[What’s Post-Racial Discourse Got to Do With It? Obama and Implications for Multiculturalism in College Classrooms](#),” (2014) published in the *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, examines

how conversations about a post-racial nation shape student perceptions and directly affect the instruction of professors like myself, who are invested in a multicultural and inclusive pedagogy. Rather than accepting the problematic position that Barack Obama's presidency is one that erases race/racism, I propose an exploration of President Obama's identity and politics as encouraging fluidity and cultural plurality. I show that race remains a viable political reality and plays a significant role in multicultural discourse on our campuses.

In keeping with my interest in minoritized and underserved communities, I have created several courses that explore diverse cultural representations in literature and film with attention to inclusivity across race, gender, class, and sexual identities. These courses close curriculum gaps, advancing department and campus missions where underrepresented students are more likely to remain engaged if course topics, themes, and texts reflect their lived experiences and identities. Courses I have developed include ENG-L406: Caribbean Women Writers, ENG-L689: Anglophone Caribbean Writers—Locating Culture and Identity, I300: Transnational Identities in the African Diaspora, and ENG-L245: Introduction to Caribbean Literature and Culture. For L245, I co-created a [study abroad experience](#) which will take place in spring 2020. Students will complete the first part of the course at IUPUI before going to Barbados for two-weeks. While in Barbados, students will be immersed in local culture to gain a better understanding of the literature, film, and nonfiction covered in the course.

At the state and local levels, I have served organizations with whom my research and teaching interests align: community and civic engagement are school and campus priorities. My commitment to women's studies led to my serving in the Girls' Gift Program, designed for professional women to mentor girls interested in developing their own businesses. I served this program as a founding board member, vice president, and a mentor/workshop facilitator. This program has received national attention and won local awards. I am a member of the West Indian Association of Indiana (WIAI), where I have served as a mentor to young people interested in pursuing college degrees and have reviewed scholarship applications awarded by the WIAI. I was also a founding board member of Summit Performance, an organization fostering opportunities for women playwrights and actors in the community to showcase their talent. Plays put on by this organization must be written by a female playwright, tell women's stories, explore social issues relevant to women's experiences, feature substantive roles for women, call for a cast made up of an 'equal to or greater than' ratio of female to male roles.

These publications, works in progress, and my seven international conference presentations in rank have been supported by eight competitive grants, including a New Frontiers, further evidence of the reach of my scholarship on women in the African diaspora and the regard in which it is held.

Taken together, my articles and edited volumes take an intersectional and interdisciplinary approach to the study of minoritized women and others who exist on the margins, who create radical identities and subcultures to resist oppression, whose lives span the Caribbean, the African continent and beyond.

Theme Two: *Advocating for, mentoring and supporting faculty and students of underrepresented groups at IUPUI*

My scholarship on multicultural teaching has evolved to include questions of equity and access in **engaged, experiential learning opportunities for students**, and in particular students at IUPUI, specifically focusing on High Impact Practices (HIPs), which have been recognized on college campuses as effective strategies for promoting student learning and success, and in particular for students from underrepresented groups who often do not thrive in lecture-focused classrooms. Because of my leadership as the program chair of the HIPs track at the national IUPUI Assessment Institute, I was invited to write a book chapter on the trends and future of these practices. I am the first author of “[Becoming More HIP: Assessment Trends In High Impact Learning Practices and Student Success](#),” forthcoming in *Trends in Assessment: Ideas, Opportunities, and Issues for Higher Education*. This chapter analyzes systemic and accurate ways of tracking participation of both students and faculty; the fidelity and quality of HIPs; as well as access and equity to improve student learning.

As founding director of the RISE [Research, International, Service, and Experiential Learning] Program—I have promoted diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom. I am most proud of having led the creation and implementation of our [IUPUI High Impact Practices Taxonomies](#). Through my advocacy these taxonomies have gained national recognition [cite downloads]. I am the first author of the article “Enhancing the Quality of High Impact Practices Through Taxonomies,” published in *Assessment Update Progress, Trends, and Practices in Higher Education*. Two major national reports have also been published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and American Council on Education ACE) <https://www.aacu.org/campus-model/high-impact-taxonomies-designing-faculty-development-tools-iupui> and <https://www.acenet.edu/news-room/Pages/Impactful-Practices.aspx>. I have also been consulted by administrators from college campuses interested in creating their own taxonomies and RISE- like programs at Virginia Commonwealth University, Rochester Institute of Technology. Other schools currently using our taxonomies include Duquesne University and the University of Nevada, Reno.

In my role as the founding Director of RISE (<https://rise.iupui.edu/>), I increased IUPUI’s national reputation as a leader among institutions where HIPs are considered integral to student success and made valuable contributions to projects that support experiential learning on campus and beyond. With support from the board, I created RISE Day which afforded faculty, students, and community partners an opportunity to show case the work that was being done collaboratively. RISE Day offered professional development opportunities for faculty interested in creating experiential learning opportunities, and students benefited from workshops to help them communicate the skills gained through engaged learning.

During this work, I identified gaps in diversity issues in campus programs for engaged learning. My project for the competitive Diversity Abroad’s Global Institute for Inclusive Leadership, “Diversifying HIPs at IUPUI” led to a collaboration with the Division of Undergraduate Education and Academic Affairs Office on a project funded by a [Welcoming Campus Initiative Grant](#) of \$25,000 (with a \$25,000 match) which also fueled the impetus for creating equity and access across HIPs for minoritized and underrepresented students who stand to benefit the most from participating in HIPs but the least likely to participate.

I have published three articles (first author on all) out of my work on HIP: “[Assessing High Impact Practices: Quality, Diversity, and Inclusive Excellence](#),” and “[High Impact Practices: The Call for a Commitment to Quality Educational Experiences and Inclusive Excellence](#),” identify the work being done nationally by various universities, including IUPUI, on HIPs—the current and future trends as well as existing gaps and how we might bridge these. The third article, “[Enhancing the Quality of High Impact Practices through Taxonomies](#)” is forthcoming in *Assessment Update: Progress Trends and Practices in Higher Education*. It highlights the design, development and implementation of our IUPUI taxonomies in service learning, themed learning communities, and internships. In addition, during the development of

IUPUI's Experiential and [Applied Learning Record](#) (known in the profession as the "Record," funded competitively by the Lumina Foundation) I ensured that diversity became a formal category.

Connecting the classroom with future work is a priority for all students, but even more so those from underrepresented groups. I oversaw the creation of the School of Liberal Art's Career Communities project designed to aid with recruiting and retaining students. This program allows us to engage students in thinking about their career paths from their first year of study, with opportunities to network with alumni, secure internships, and engage more deeply with faculty about professional opportunities in the discipline. The impact of this project on student success is in alignment with the AAC&U's reports of using "high touch" opportunities to help students "connect degree program pathways with students' own goals, lives, and emerging interests." Supported by a grant, I also initiated the Liberal Arts Boutiques Informational Sessions, designed to create a greater sense of belonging for our majors, transfer students, and pre-majors.

My **mentorship of students** has occurred in and out of the classroom. In rank, I have directed five independent studies and five master's theses, and co-chaired a dissertation committee for a student from another IUPUI school based on her topic in my area of expertise. I have mentored several students in the Diversity Enrichment Achievement Program (DEAP) and Norman Brown Diversity Leadership programs, both housed in the Multicultural Center with the goal to recruit and retain students of color, a campus priority. I have also worked closely with students who identify as LGBTQ+ and sought me out for additional mentorship after taking my classes. These efforts have led to my guiding of social justice projects such as The Tunnel of Oppression-<https://diversity.iupui.edu/offices/mc/socialjustice/tunnel.html> and facilitating sessions on creating a sense of belonging for under-resourced students. Twenty of my graduate and undergraduate students [in the last ? years] have received awards and/or presented at local, regional, and international conferences based on work that I have helped to oversee. Two of my graduate students submitted manuscripts for journal publication, and one, Mercedez Thompson, had an article accepted in an edited volume. I have also created opportunities for three of my graduate students to shadow me as well as allowed them to teach lessons in some of my undergraduate courses. After these sessions, I have in depth conversations with each student to discuss pedagogy. I have also provided extensive mentorship and research guidance to students enrolled in the Olaniyan Scholars Program, which supports undergraduate research in the humanities and social sciences through the interdisciplinary lens of Africana Studies.

In addition, I have **mentored faculty** by creating professional development opportunities that focus on diversity. My work on diversity and inclusion in my department and school led to an invitation to be a member of the Multicultural Community of Practice (MTCoP). I served as chair and became a founding member of the Multicultural Pedagogy Research Group (MPReG). In this role, I led efforts in designing and securing two new Chancellor's awards to recognize the work of our colleagues who engage in multicultural teaching and diversity work. I've presented on diversity and curriculum in various departments on campus, been a featured speaker at the E.C. Moore Symposium, and co-led a workshop at Ball State University's Diversity Research Symposium. While chair of MPReG, I designed a faculty survey to gain a better understanding of whether or how our faculty were engaging multicultural teaching and learning methods. Over 450 faculty members participated. From the data collected, I co-authored "[Multicultural Teaching: Barriers and Recommendations](#)," published in the *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*. This essay revealed that faculty members perceived several barriers to multicultural teaching, including student resistance, language barriers, lack of teaching resources, and time constraints. Faculty identified various institutional barriers that could be addressed to facilitate multicultural teaching at institutions of higher education. I was also second author on another essay, "[Faculty Perceptions of Multicultural Teaching in a Large Urban University](#)," published in the *Journal of Scholarship, Teaching and Learning*, which delved further into the methods being used by faculty at IUPUI to implement inclusive learning opportunities.

For faculty of color across disciplines, I led a mentorship program to help increase their research and publishing productivity. Dr. Sherree Wilson and I launched the Faculty Writing Success Program (FWSP) to support women and faculty of color as they work towards promotion and tenure. FWSP was formed in response to the challenge by Dr. Kerry Ann Rockquemore, Director of the National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development (NCFDD), in her presentation “Solo Success: How to Move From Surviving to Thriving in Academia When You Are the Only _____ In Your Department.” The Associate Dean of Faculties awarded funding for a one-year pilot to gauge the suitability of the NCFDD program for implementation at IUPUI. Thirteen participants signed up, of which twelve remained active. Based on the early results of the program, as well as the positive participant feedback, we got the Vice Chancellor for Research to provide additional funding for the FWSP participants to support their research goals as they continued in the program. The impact of this project lies in participants’ reports of higher success rates of publishing and securing external grants. The successful pilot program resulted in the Office for Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) funding an institutional membership with NCFDD for all IUPUI faculty and graduate students to enhance chances of securing promotion and tenure. We presented our findings at the 2013 Keeping our Faculty of Color VI Symposium. These efforts support the retention of faculty of color and women, a campus initiative, while also increasing opportunities to support their research projects.

As Associate Chair of Faculty in the Department of English, I created and implemented faculty professional development programming for my colleagues and provided guidance regarding our promotion and tenure process. I mentored junior faculty and lecturers regarding the tenure and promotion process and aided with the preparation of dossiers. Due to my extended service on the grant review committees of the university-wide New Frontiers Research Grant and the IUPUI Arts and Humanities Institute, I have been instrumental in encouraging junior colleagues to apply for research and teaching grants and assisting them with applications. I created workshops for lecturers interested in applying for promotion to senior lecturer and saw them through the promotion process. I also led the charge of completing the department’s most recent self-study and authored the response to the final review.

The impact of my work has been recognized at the campus level by three Trustees’ Teaching Awards, the Joseph T. Taylor Excellence in Diversity Award (as both an individual and group award recipient), and the Outstanding Student Motivator/Mentor award.

Summary

I have fulfilled all of the responsibilities of my tenure track position, while carrying out my role as Associate Dean for Student Affairs. For teaching, I have taught seven different courses in rank (four designed by me). I have had six peer evaluations of teaching, and use that information as well as anonymous mid-term surveys, end of course evaluations, and data on DFW and subsequent-course success, to continually refine my own teaching. I have an ongoing productive research stream on black and African Diaspora cultural studies. I participate in numerous school, campus, university, disciplinary bodies.

My diversity work forms a center to my self as academic, which flows over in distinctive, impactful, and high-quality ways. My scholarly work contributes to deep understanding of racial, cultural, and gender norms and struggles. My work with IUPUI’s high impact practices, including leadership of the Research, Internationalization, Service, and Experiential (RISE) learning initiative, has improved student engagement and learning outcomes. I have led structural changes such as the creation of a diversity committee within the School of Liberal Arts, and inclusion of diversity in the Record. My mentoring of students and faculty has led to success for minoritized members of the IUPUI community. This work has made a difference for individuals and also provided disseminated models on a national level, as reflected in conference presentations, journal articles, and downloads.

My research informs and motivates my teaching, my teaching is inspired by my scholarship and service ventures, and my service emanates from my teaching and research activities. I am an innovative leader in

some initiatives, and an essential contributor to others, all the while advancing diversity and inclusion. The cumulative effect of this work constitutes excellence, recognized on campus and off. I intend to continue to develop impactful programs for faculty and students and to press my scholarship's analysis of gender, race, and sexuality for greater understanding of minoritized populations.

[chair's assessment of dissemination outlets should emphasize that the selected journals are completely appropriate for the topics covered—they are narrow and innovative, intentionally, contributing to new venues for scholarship, which also means they will not have the citation numbers that traditional outlets have.]