Voice, Visibility and Power: Contextualizing the Undergraduate Black Women Experience at a Predominately White Institution

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Abstract— This exploratory, phenomenological study is centered on the lived experiences of Black undergraduate women enrolled at a predominately White institution (PWI). This study sought to highlight intersectionality as a key role in one's understanding of their identity in these spaces. The findings of this study suggest three key roles in these experiences; the need to uplift the race, interactions with other Black women, and the importance of a physical space on campus. Implications for administration, faculty and researchers are discussed.

Keywords: Black women, predominately White institution, intersectionality

INTRODUCTION

Data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) indicate that Black women earned 66% of associate degrees and 64% of bachelor's degrees during the 2013-14 academic year, outperforming other ethnic and gender groups (NCES, 2014). While this data suggests Black women are performing well academically, there is an undeniable relationship between race and gender as marginalized identities that lead to the lack of voice, visibility and power for Black women. Due to this, Black women experience college in marginalizing and oppressive ways that are different from their peers who do not share the same intersecting identities. From this, we know that Black women do not experience higher education in equitable ways and the intersections of race and gender and race create a unique set of experiences for Black women in different academic and social spaces. However, the stories of Black women in these spaces are rarely placed in academia.

The purpose of this exploratory, phenomenological study is to examine the lived experiences and intersecting identities of undergraduate African American women at a large, predominantly White institution (PWI). Drawing on intersectionality as a framework, the following research questions guide this study: (a) What is it like to be a Black woman at a PWI? and (b) In what ways does their multiple intersecting identities (e.g., race, gender, etc.) impact their academic and social experiences?

The goal of this research is to contextualize the marginalized experiences of African American women in predominately White social and academic spaces.

Review of Literature

To conduct this study, it is necessary to review of literature in the following two areas: (a) what we know about Black women's experiences getting into institutions of higher learning and (b) research on the experiences of undergraduate Black women in higher education.

Black Women's Journey to Higher Education

From the very founding of higher education, Black women have been excluded from achieving a higher education. Colleges and universities, originally created and designed for White males, were the earliest signs of Black women being excluded by their race. This trend was most evident when Harvard University was founded in 1636. During its founding, Harvard only allowed White males to enroll, which consequently set the tone for institutions of higher education to only support White populations of students and to discriminate against other populations solely on the color of their skin (Jones, 2006). And while women's liberation movements helped broaden access for women in higher education, this primarily included White women, excluding Black women. This provides yet another example of how Black women were excluded, but due to gender and race.

In an attempt to grant all social students' equal access to education, the Land Grant Act of 1862 created "separate but equal" Black colleges throughout the Southern states (Cross, 1991). There were an estimated 200 schools to serve Black students existed in the early 1880's but remained an attempt to keep higher education in the South segregated (Evans 2002; Porter 2013). Further, critical pieces of legislation such as *Brown vs. Board of Education* provided more opportunities for Black students to become enrolled at PWI's (Fleming, 1984). Consequently, the experiences for Black students relied on predominately White instructors who were often unable to understand or identify the needs of Black students in those spaces. Therefore, the experiences of Black undergraduate students at predominately White institutions remained marginalized at the expense of the institution.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century White women founded schools to train Black girls to become refined ladies to uplift their race. Because White women felt it was their duty to focus on the moral and educational development of Black women, early education for them sparked institutions known as "grooming schools" that would ironically develop some of the greatest Black women scholars in the world (Zamani, 2003). Moreover, because White women saw Black women as uplifters of their race, more attention was given to their development in that area. Both Blacks and Whites believed "… that black women bore the weight of the entire race. If they failed, a whole people failed" (Brazell, 1992). As a consequence, White missionaries oversaw every aspect of Black women's curriculum, dress, conduct and social interactions. Consequently, the Black woman's experience in higher education in its earliest stages faced limitations in roles and occupations. As a result, Black women's first earliest encounters in academia demonstrated a burden to uplift the Black race only be performing domestic duties and limited occupations to better themselves in fields they chose.

Experiences of Undergraduate Black Women

The marginalized and intersectional experiences of Black women at PWI's highlight the need to define and describe the specific needs of those students while enrolled. While research on this topic is relatively new, scholars have advanced research in two areas: (a) how Black women make meaning of their multiple layers of identity and (b) lack of visibility for Black women in these PWI spaces. Due to this study being relatively new, not much is articulated in academia to support these marginalized and oppressive experiences. However, scholars such as Christa J. Porter, Rachelle Winkle-wager, Constance M. Carroll and others have advanced scholarship in this area.

For instance, Carter, Pearson and Shavlik (1998) note that "historically black women have been one of the most isolated, underused and consequently demoralized segments of the academic community" (p. 98) demonstrating the lack of visibility for Black women in higher education. Unlike their White peers, Black women experience oppression at the intersection of their race and gender, which shapes their ideas, views, beliefs and life decisions.

In addition to facing invisibility, as stated by Carroll (1982), "the Black woman in higher education faces greater risks and problems now than in the past" because she is in a place previously occupied by the dominant group, and the numbers are growing on college campuses—she is becoming more "visible (Howard 2015)." As a consequence, the increase in diversity does not match the increase in policies and spaces of affirmation for Black women once they become more visible in these spaces. While this study tells readers that Black women are gaining more visibility, it also offers ways that faculty, staff and local cultural centers can play a critical role in assisting Black women during this process of self-exploration.

Similarly, bell hooks explores how Black women remain on the fringes of conversations surrounding Black people and women affirming recent studies on the marginalization of Black women in White spaces. hooks states, "No other group in America has had their identity socialized out of existence as have Black women. We are rarely recognized as a group separate and distinct from Black men, or a present part of the larger group 'women' in this culture…When Black people are talked about the focus tends to be on Black men; and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on White women (hooks, 1981)." Affirming this marginalization, Banks (2009) states "The way Black undergraduate women wear evidence of their membership in these socially constructed spaces, in connection with society's understanding of these spaces, is a root of the oppression Black women face and work to overcome." This diversity of experiences mimics a huge contributing factor to the lack of understanding of Black women's unique lived experiences in predominately White spaces.

Moreover, studies on Black women in higher education demonstrate how to how Black women in college conceptualize and make meaning of their identities Porter (2015). Porter's study suggests several factors such as personal foundations, precollegiate socializations, collegiate socialization, interactions with others, articulation of identity, influence of media and influence of role modeling according to data have a significant impact on how Black enrolled at a PWI develop and describe their identity as black women. Additionally, Porter points to PWI's as environments that foster opportunity for growth for African American women. She also emphasizes the need for spaces of affirmation, dialogue and connection for African American women in these spaces as an essential tool for educational and social success.

Additionally, Winkle-Wagner (2009) explores the narratives of 30 Black undergraduate women who make meaning of their identities through interactions with themselves, society and other people. These narratives focused on the struggle to define and maintain their intersectional identities in predominately White spaces. The shared feelings of isolation, culture shock and process of negotiating when interacting in different environments. Other important themes include being "too White" or "too Black" as well as being the only one of an intersectional identity within the academic space.

The unique experiences for Black women on predominately White campuses also rely heavily on fears overpowering their assertive sense of self when making meaning of their multiple layers of identity. Scholars such as Fleming explore how Black women experience being called upon to answer questions in academic spaces in which their identity as Black creates a tokenized piece of their existence (1984). Too often, Fleming describes, Black women are called to be the spokesperson for any Black social issues being presented in the space.

Conceptual Framework: Intersectionality

In the 1980's, the study of how different power structures interacted in the lives of Black women was coined "intersectionality" by Kimberlè Crenshaw. While Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality, the underlying concepts shaping this framework are not new. In fact, Patricia Hill Collins was one of the early examples that attempted to contextualize the overlapping identities Black women endure and their oppressive experiences due to their identities. In her book, "*Black Feminist Thought,*" the core tenants she introduced overlaps with what is now known as "intersectionality." Patricia Hill Collins argues four ideas that anchor Black women's' oppression; the legacy of struggle, interdependence of experience and consciousness, quest for self-definition, and the interdependence of thought and action (Jones & Wijeysinghe, 2011). Collin's view emphasizes the connection between how one thinks and what one does by privileging the self-defined standpoint of Black women. Additionally, Collins argues that Black women occupy unique standpoints on their own oppression composed of two components:

1. Black women's economic and political status provides them with a distinctive set of experiences that cultivate a different reality that is not experienced by other gender and racial groups in the same way.
2. These experiences create a unique Black feminist stream of thought concerning that reality which is not identical for all Black women (Collins, 1990).

Centered on both the lived experiences and academic work of Black women, intersectionality, in the scope of this research, assists in framing the interconnectedness of social categories such as gender, race and class as they overlap and create a unique set of barriers that generate discrimination and oppression (Crenshaw, 1991). The state of oppression, meaning systematically unjust conditions forced by one group onto another, constitutes a discussion on the role of its interaction with the Black woman identity.

Intersectionality is introduced as a theoretical framework that aims to provide a voice to social groups who occupy multiple layers of identity. In this research, intersectionality gives voices to the experiences of Black students in places where their voices were silenced. Moreover, intersectionality provides a more holistic view of identity especially in spaces of higher education. Winkle-Wager (2009) highlights, "scholarship often separates race and gender in ways that demonstrate privileged structures in society. Race studies may implicitly exclude racial minority women and studies of gender are framed as an issue of White women (2009). As mentioned earlier, Black undergraduate women embody multiple intersecting layers of identity and the intersection of these identities are framed by historical, social and political contexts that will be highlighted in the lived experiences through this research study.

Methodology

Design

This study was grounded in the exploratory transcendental tradition of phenomenology. A transcendental phenomenological approach attempts to understand lived human experience and consciousness when the preconceived ideas of a phenomena are actively removed. Scholars have identified the importance of phenomenology in higher education context (Heindel, 2014; Schuemann, 2014) and how it plays a role in how students understand and make meaning of their lived experiences. The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences and intersecting identities of undergraduate Black women at a large, predominantly White institution (PWI). Drawing on intersectionality as a framework, the research questions aim to identify factors that influence how Black women identify and make meaning of their intersectional identities in these spaces.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected using individual semi-structured interviews in attempt to get participants to speak openly about their lived experiences going through this phenomenon. For participants, the criteria were the following: a) over the age of 18 b) currently enrolled at the Pennsylvania State University c) identify as woman and identify as Black. Due to this study being a preliminary study, one interview was conducted with each woman. In order to offer privacy and security for students who were not on campus during the time of the interview, interviews were conducted online using an audio media service. Participants and the research team were expected to find a secluded room with closeable doors to participate in the interview on their end via Zoom. The same expectation for the primary researcher was to find a secluded location to conduct the interview via Zoom. Interviews were up to 60 minutes in length. Some of the interview questions were the following: What does it mean to be a Black woman in college? Is there a physical space for you on campus; if so, how do you negotiate those spaces?; and How supported do you feel as a Black woman on campus?

Following the semi-structured interviews, phenomenology requires interviews to be transcribed. After interviews are transcribed, key themes need to be organized and coded to better define the phenomenon to share with others. The primary researcher for this study transcribed the interviews and found key three themes relating to the research question.

Research Site

The Pennsylvania State University-University Park campus is the research site for this study. According to Penn State's Fact Book, as of Fall 2017 there are 1,948 Black students enrolled at University Park out of the 46,610 students enrolled. As a consequence, Black students make up only 4.2 percent of student enrollment. From 2013 to 2016 the percentages of Black students were the following: 4.1, 3.8, 3.9 and 3.9 respectfully. While this data suggests that over the last year, more Black students enrolled at Penn State's University Park campus than previous years beginning in 2014, the enrollment of Black students has been under 4.2 percent in its history.

Moreover, data from the Fact Book suggests Black students graduate at smaller rates than other racial and ethnic groups besides Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students. The four-year graduation rate for Black students as of the 2012 cohort is 48.3 percent. For five-year graduation rates, the percentage of Black students who graduated from University Park in the 2011 cohort was 63.4 percent and the six-year graduation rates for the 2010 cohort was 70.2 percent.

The Fact Book does not separate women from men in each racial and ethnicity group.

Participants

Participants were undergraduate Black women currently enrolled at the Pennsylvania State University. In order to find participants, unorganized social media platforms were used to recruit those fitting the criteria of the study. These participants were located in a GroupMe filled with over 300 Black women currently enrolled in the institution in efforts to locate those who were able to better articulate their lived experiences once being introduced to other likeminded women. This unorganized group was formed by students in the fall of 2017 in efforts to create a space for Black women to know programs and events that were made for them by their peers. The rationale for including this criterion was to locate those who were better able to articulate their lived experiences during this phenomenon and who were actively experiencing the phenomenon.

Three participants were identified. The women ranged in ages from 19-21, from second year of enrollment to the third, and majors varied from STEM to the humanities. Only one of the participants was first generation, but all three came from urban inner cities across the United States. To keep their identities protected, pseudonyms were used. Below is a brief demographic of the participants:

Name	UG Institution	Major	First Generation
Ashley	Penn State	Sociology and African American Studies	Yes
Tia	Penn State	Psychology	No
Mariah	Penn State	Biology	No

Data analysis

Data was analyzed after interviews were thoroughly transcribed. Each transcribed interview was documented on three different word documents. The primary researcher began looking at all aspects of the experiences described by the participants. The primary researcher then began identifying commonalities and organizing key themes using coding methods. After commonalities were identified, a new document with key quotes under each theme was created.

Epochè

My own experience with this phenomenon lies in the intersections of my identity generating both positive and negative experiences in predominately White spaces. I have always been hyper vigilant in my identity as a Black woman. Whether it was in high school where I wore the faces of eight Black women wrongfully murdered at the hands of police on my graduation cap or at the beginning of my college career where I forcefully inserted my narrative into curriculum that erased my identity, I have always known who I was. Moreover, most of my learning took place on an individual level. I would buy books, utilize Google and other forms of media to gain more insight on why my identity was so crucial. The more I understood, the more I needed people to understand how fearless, beautiful and resilient my women were. As a consequence, when I arrived at Penn State I sought Black women who served as mentors and Black women who served as sisters. I joined organizations that catered to Black women and worked my way up to lead it in the direction I felt the campus needed. I also joined programs and other organizations that clearly erased my narrative, but I made it imperative to share my identity in any space it could fit.

However, my narrative was not always met with gratitude. I was often called "aggressive" by my White professors who scorned me for questioning their sexism, racism or blatant attempts to ignore the role of Black women outside of Black history month. There have been times where I have been frustrated and felt alone in this journey, but I would not break. There have been times where men would talk over me in meetings and women would talk about me behind my back. However, having mentors and supportive friends who could share my burden and bare my narration of the emotional labor saved my entire college experience. I knew that my intersections of race and gender would always push me away from being just "Black"

because that meant masculinity to most and being a "woman" where that meant White women only. Moreover, I am still finding ways to improve the climate for Black women on campus and making sure our voices are heard clearly and loudly in all spaces we occupy.

Findings

Three key themes were identified: need to uplift the race, interactions with other Black women and the importance of physical space to determining how Black women experience higher education. Moreover, while their experiences differed, these themes echoed throughout each participants stories of their experiences at Penn State. The questions aimed to directly address their interactional identities of being Black and a woman. As a consequence, all of the participants were able to articulate how being in a predominately White space affirmed or denounced their own understanding of being a Black woman. These experiences were faced individually by internalizing certain familial structures and other forms of methods to mold identity. All participants were aware of their phenomenon as Black women in White spaces and allowed themselves to open fully with their views on other Black women, the campus as a support system and other common themes.

Three Themes

The three participants shared three common themes that helped them articulate their identities in predominately White social and academic spaces. Their individual narratives painted persistence in the struggle to articulate identity as well as factors that affirm or challenge what they believed they knew about themselves. By providing a safe space, as done in this study, the participants began articulating their experiences in ways that was not otherwise granted to them. In this space, women expressed their gratitude for other women, the burden they feel as Black women and the blurry line between physical and emotional spaces on campus available to them.

Burden to Uplift the Race

"I've been blessed with the opportunity to go to college and I think that for Black women, especially in the United States, I think it's just an obligation to your community, an obligation to young Black girls who are looking up at you and seeing what you're doing."

The participants articulated the importance of attending a college or university as Black women, however, what was interesting to note was their ability to explain this importance in terms of uplifting the Black community without even knowing it. The general interpretation of attending college was the following: necessary for young Black girls and Black people in general, college is not often experienced by Black women and a hyper vigilant understanding that being Black and a woman in this space creates a unique burden to succeed. Furthermore, Ashley, a junior and first-generation student, stated "I've been blessed with the opportunity to go to college and I think that for Black women, especially in the United States, I think it's [going to college] just an obligation to your community, an obligation to young Black girls who are looking up at you and seeing what you're doing." This narrative illustrates the pressure for Black women to succeed in spaces of higher learning as they are socialized into thinking it is solely their responsibility to uplift and lead the race.

Moreover, this same narrative echoed in the other two participants. Mariah, a senior, explained, "Being a Black woman in college means that I have the opportunity to not only better myself for myself but as well as benefit the whole black community. I feel like as Black women, we have a lot of pressure upon us to succeed and to well." This urgency to excel and prove that limits can be surpassed seems a role Black woman were assigned in terms of their success. However, while the women identified each time that attending college benefited them, it was warranted to introduce whole communities such as the Black community that they needed to uphold.

This burden persisted in academic spaces as well. As Ashley notes, "I definitely feel tokenized in my, I won't even say not only my sociology classes, because a lot of times especially at Penn State, some of the [African American] classes are used as general education courses um and so you have a lot of White students in these classes and it ends up being two or three Black students and you may very well be the only Black girl in there and you're inherently tokenized and then you also have to watch our tone because you may get deemed as this angry or aggressive or too assertive or bossy." Often times in academic spaces these Black women felt that they carried the burden of the entire race in their classes. Whether they were the "only" Black individual or woman in the class, each participant echoed the pressure of getting things right in fear of disappointing the entire community within their classes.

The women articulated their feelings of carrying the burden to uplift the race without directly stating this narrative. This points to a socialization of Black women when articulating their identities. Whether through familial structures or media/literature, this role has been instilled in these women while they are experiencing their academic spaces.

Interactions with Other Black women

"I'm able to relate to people or talking about things that stress me out that I feel like is overwhelming for just me."

Each participant passionately explained how their interactions with other Black women were useful to their success at Penn State. The women echoed how having other Black women in a predominately White space provided them with outlets of people who truly understood their daily struggles and triumphs. Even if their relationships with Black women in their home cities were typically negative, it was something about Penn State's space that made them yearn for those relationships more than they would have if placed in other environments. Moreover, while all three Black women spoke highly of their experiences at Penn State with Black women, they also touched on how speaking to other Black women helped them form and articulate their identities. For example, Ashley, a junior, states, "For undergraduate women, I definitely have found, as soon as I came to Penn State, so many other Black women who were older than me to just talk to them about their experience and how they were able to navigate Penn State and I think I've grown so much from Ashley 2.0 to Ashley 3,000 sometimes because I just been able to just find mentorship." This dependency on other Black women to help hold them accountable as well as share their emotional labor echoed in those who felt like their college experience so far was successful.

On the other hand, for both Tia and Mariah who grew up in urban city areas, their expectations of interactions with Black women on campus were negative. Though this did not play a role in their actual experience, it was their expectation walking into college. They experienced negative relationships with Black women at home and expected that to carry into their college experience. However, both were shocked when they could proudly say their relationships with Black women on campus were positive for the most part and how beneficial it was having someone to relate to in different spaces.

For the participants who sought mentorship from not only undergraduate Black women but Black women who were faculty and staff, their experience with articulating their identity was greater. For example, Ashley who sought mentorship from Black women who were faculty and staff often discussed relating to the faculty who experienced the same emotional labor within their profession. By being able to relate to faculty on their experiences as an undergraduate student, Ashley was feed more information on how to truly engage in spaces that were not designed for her but still belonged to her.

On the other hand, this clashed with the experiences of the other two participants who did not seek mentorship from Black women who are faculty and staff. Tia states, "As far as mentorship, I personally am not close with any teachers or any faculty, especially African American. I don't know if it's because I just transferred last year or I just don't know anybody really." However, no attempts to meet with Black women who are faculty and staff or seek mentorship was mentioned by either participant.

The Importance of Physical Space

"I find that spaces like that happen but they're not made to the point where you can say this is permanent and this will be here for years and for decades for all black women whenever they come to Penn State, whenever they come to an undergraduate institution it becomes a two year thing and then people lose the momentum and then it usually loses funding—it just becomes a second thought."

All participants expressed their involvement in student organizations dedicated to the advancement of Black women, but when asked about a physical space, they could not provide a solid example. One of the participants stated, "Organizations just meeting up and just being able to have these organizations is the space. Physical space I'm not really sure if we have a physical space." Another echoed with, "Not a permanent space for Black women. Not a space where they can safely come and engage and talk and learn and understand because I think that it's hard to bring people from such different backgrounds and with people coming from different learning points and different parts in their journey. So, when they come together it's a lot of clashing and that spaces like that can't even happen because we're focused on something else or stuck on a smaller part of the bigger picture. And then I think that it's just not permanent."

Underneath their frustration lie a real missing space they felt did not do them enough justice on campus. While they could clearly articulate organizations that assisted in creating a temporary space, they could not find a space that currently existed that did enough to support them holistically.

This yearning for a change in the temporary status of support for Black women echoed in all three participants. Their genuine appreciation for the little times they experienced those spaces were evident, but a sense of disappointment overwhelmed their security with feeling there was a unique space granted for them consistently.

Discussion

This study identified three key themes in understanding how Black undergraduate women experience college. Porter's 2014 study suggest several factors such as personal foundations, precollegiate socializations, collegiate socialization, interactions with others, articulation of identity, influence of media and influence of role modeling according to data have a significant impact on how Black enrolled at a PWI develop and describe their identity as Black women. This research reaffirms interactions with Black women being essential to the college experiences of Black women. The participants expressed enthusiasm for building relationships with undergraduate Black women in these White spaces and saw it as essential for their development. They defined for themselves what kind of women they were seeking relationships with and in what spaces do they typically meet.

Moreover, Winkle-Wagner's 2009 study is reaffirmed in this research through the commonalities of isolation in both social and academic spaces. Although only one participant felt completely tokenized in some spaces on campus, all three echoed the importance of knowing their identities as Black women on campus. Contradicting some of their positive experiences, all participants knew and recognized that this institution was not designed to enroll students like themselves which creates a new set of barriers leading to isolation on campus. Moreover, this research extends how other factors in each participant changed the way they experienced isolation. For the one participant who was heavily involved in Black student organizations and African American studies as her major, her contextualization of her tokenized experience was from a completely different level of identity development. Similar to scholars such as Fleming explore how Black women experience being called upon to answer questions in academic spaces in which their identity as Black creates a tokenized piece of their existence (1984). This study reaffirmed this notion presented by Fleming through one participant.

The importance of intersectionality as a lens to guide this research is critical in making strides towards understanding Black women's identity holistically. This study reaffirmed the notion that Black women are left out of spaces that are deemed "Black" when referring to only Black men and "women" when referring to only White women. All the participants did not separate their identities but instead streamed them together in efforts to self-define and recognize themselves in White spaces. The environmental factors that a predominately White institution create experiences of oppression when met with a multitude of intersectional identities.

Implications

Although the number of participants for this study was significantly small, the women who participated were able to clearly articulate their experiences in predominately White social and academic spaces. This data serves as an attempt to expand the literature on Black women's contextualized experiences in these spaces and to highlight what communities who wish to engage with this population of students need to know to holistically support them. This study formed three experiences with articulating intersectional identities.

Implications of this study begins with better constructing research on how Black women contextualize their own experiences. Due to one of the key themes being "burden to uplift the race," it can be noted that these participants have outside influences that help them articulate their perceptions of their identity. Not only does more research needs to be published to truly highlight the experiences of Black women in college, but literature addressing Black women articulating their identity in White academic spaces is crucial. In these pieces of literature, women need to be able to become fully supported in media in their roles as students receiving an education not women who bear the burden of receiving an education for the entire Black community.

Secondly, I encourage the Pennsylvania State University to increase enrollment of Black undergraduate women. Highlighted in this study is the importance of interactions with other Black women in predominately White spaces. The participants all self-identified this interaction as their key to success in this type of college environment. If Penn State increases its enrollment of Black women, these critical relationships will be sustained for years to come for those who seek them. Additionally, with an increase of enrollment in undergraduate Black women, an increase in Black women who serve as faculty and staff should soon follow. With more Black women visible on campus, those who seek mentorship and friendship with Black women will be holistically supported and can pinpoint the school's real strides towards inclusion.

Lastly, the physical spaces that currently exists on Penn State's campus have been identified as insufficient by these participants. While all of the women agreed that organizational programming provides a temporary comfort on campus, there are no physical spaces that provide the protection they need as both Black and women. If spaces on campus that already exists aim to provide safe spaces for Black women revisit things such as programming and the climate of their space to ensure they are serving who is intended in these spaces. Additionally, making sure the input of Black women on the condition of the space is valued. Seeking surveys from students on how well the space is useful in supporting Black women is key.

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