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As equity issues permeate higher education and continue to have an adverse effect on diversity and representation in the professoriate, *The Equity Myth* is a timely reminder that there is much work to be done. This book seeks to address the idea that universities and post-secondary institutions are enlightened spaces for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Challenging this presumption, this book discusses equity through the experiences of racialized and Indigenous faculty members at many of the major universities across Canada. This work calls for action, for to deny racism in higher-education institutions is to uphold inequitable practices.

Although the university as a whole is its locus of study, this book has implications for racism, equity, and representation within academic libraries in particular. The authors evaluate issues such as equity, representation, policy, and administration through the lens of critical race theory, Whiteness studies and Indigenous studies. Through their research, the authors use lived experiences to illustrate how racialized and Indigenous faculty members are represented, perceived, and have struggled to be acknowledged for the excess labour and emotional labour that is required of them. Featuring quantitative data collected from post-secondary institutions in Canada and internationally, as well as qualitative data from Canadian faculty members, this title contributes evidence and experiences to the ongoing debate that equity is not being achieved within the academy. The authors, many of whom identify as people of colour, supply a wealth of experience in conducting research in higher-education settings. This book demonstrates that racialized and Indigenous faculty members are severely underrepresented in many departments and face systemic barriers compared to their colleagues. Unconscious bias, differences in expectations, and a pervasive culture of whiteness inhibit achieving true equity in academia.

While chapter 1 is an introduction to the methodological approaches and positionality of the authors, chapters 2 through 4 describe the current landscape of equity and representation in higher education. Chapter 2 seeks to compare the number and the departmental distribution of racialized and Indigenous faculty
between schools in the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom and pair this with qualitative data gathered from faculty in Canada for further context. Racialized and Indigenous faculty members are found to be underrepresented in all of the countries studied, and, within those groups, women were less represented than men. Chapter 3 discusses disparities in employment income and representation, finding that, as a whole, not only are visible-minority faculty underrepresented, but they also earn lower wages than white faculty members. Chapter 4 investigates racialized and Indigenous experiences in productivity and the perception of merit through publications, Tri-Agency grants, and tenure. While racialized and Indigenous faculty members are found to be highly productive, “more racialized faculty perceive that tenure and promotion are based on ‘soft’ metrics such as personality and collegiality rather than ‘hard’ metrics like publication or winning grants” (81). This is due to the need for diverse faculty members to demonstrate that they belong in their departments and institutions. Although there is not a significant difference in the rate of racialized and Indigenous faculty achieving tenure compared to their colleagues, it takes longer, and there are more significant impediments. Taken together, these chapters paint a stark picture of the state of equity in Canadian universities. Despite many of the represented universities having equity policies and even equity and diversity offices, racialized and Indigenous faculty are still underrepresented, paid less, and less secure in achieving appointments such as tenure.

Chapters 5 through 7 focus on the lived experiences of racialized and Indigenous faculty members through qualitative analysis. Chapter 5 outlines the shifting changes in hiring practices, including the development of equity and diversity hiring statements and their decline as a result of neoliberalism’s influence on higher education. Developed in the 1980s and 90s, these policies intended to bring racialized and Indigenous faculty members to institutions of higher learning, though, with time, they proved to be hollow gestures that have changed to favour statements about excellence, leaving diverse candidates to prove that their work has value to the academy. Chapter 6 details the everyday struggles of diverse faculty members to address the pervasive culture of whiteness in their departments. Here, respondents speak to the experiences of tokenism, loneliness, and the intrinsic eurocentrism of canonical texts. Racialized and Indigenous faculty are forced to take on more labour than their colleagues, by having to prove the intellectual rigour and quality of their academic work. A provided example was the burden to prove the impact of publications and the quality of journals to tenure review boards unfamiliar with their field. Beyond that, racialized and Indigenous academics often take on more mentorship labour than their white colleagues, as racialized and Indigenous students will gravitate towards them, often the only racialized or Indigenous faculty member, in search of support. Chapter 7 describes the disproportionate expectations of racialized and Indigenous faculty to assist in performing diversity work on behalf
of their departments and institutions. Although hiring practices claim objectivity, which itself is linked to strongly held notions that academia is a place of progress, excellence is often used as a barrier to entry for diverse candidates. The definition of excellence varies contextually but often privileges credentials from elite institutions and publications in English-language journals. However, as one contributor notes, “On the other hand, once hired, there is no recognition of the different, unique, or additional expertise or scholarship that racialized faculty members bring to the institution as informed by their valuable racialized and community experiences” (161). These chapters reveal that participating faculty members must operate within an environment of enhanced expectation and tokenism that is often invisible to their white colleagues.

Chapters 8 and 9 describe common vehicles to address equity, such as equity and diversity offices. Chapter 8 delves into the development of these offices, spurred by legislation such as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 as well as the pressure that universities felt from feminist activists to address sex-based discrimination. The chapter goes on to describe the evolution of these offices from primarily handling harassment to addressing equity for the entire institution. Building on the previous chapter, chapter 9 describes the ways in which these offices are set up to create an impression that institutions are addressing equity issues rather than genuinely effecting change. Chapters 10 and 11 give concrete examples of how these discussed equity issues perpetuate within a particular discipline and the role that unconscious bias plays in academic environments. Chapter 10 seeks to locate what another contributor calls “disciplinary silences” (239) within political science, serving as an example for this process in other social sciences. Specifically, she focuses on the perceived lack of interest in the research on issues affecting race, Indigeneity, and gender. Chapter 11 addresses the implicit biases constructed into the processes of training, teaching, and hiring within higher education. From the prioritizing of Western epistemology in the canonical texts taught throughout the academy to the decisions affecting leadership appointments, this chapter highlights 12 areas where subtle biases significantly affect equity within academia. Finally, chapter 12 summarizes the key findings of the book, which are outlined above.

For academic librarians, this book is a valuable resource for understanding issues in diversity and equity in higher education. Problems of diversity and equity are not limited to teaching faculty but are pervasive in the overall representation within academic units, including academic libraries. As the student population becomes increasingly diverse, it becomes necessary to understand why diverse faculty have remained underrepresented. Although this book focuses on the experiences of teaching and departmental faculty, there are also parallels that should be drawn.
between the barriers to diversity and equity faced by racialized and Indigenous colleagues within academic libraries. It is vital that academic librarians, as researchers and information professionals, are aware of the issues presented by this book so that our work can contribute towards diversifying voices within the academy.

This book represents the first of its kind in thoroughly relaying the experiences of racialized and Indigenous faculty and the corresponding quantitative data on hiring and promotion in Canada. For academic librarians, this is an important resource to understand the fundamental challenges that racialized and Indigenous faculty face and offers an analysis of the development and ineffective practices of the offices meant to address them. As Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo, Director of Indigenous Initiatives at the University of Toronto, reminds us, “It’s not just about the hiring of an Indigenous person, it’s how will they be incorporated and supported, and the sustainability [of their job] . . . . The goal isn’t to fill those 40 roles and be done, the goal is to make a community here” (quoted in Boutsalis). For universities to increase diversity, they must develop a culture that is sustainable and deserving of racialized and Indigenous academics.

References