Hi, Trinity. I enjoyed reading the literature review and here are some comments I have for the final revisions to this part of the proposal. Some of these are tiny and some of them we’ll probably want to talk about at our next meeting.

[Pardon if there are typos—I did this with voice-to-text on my phone 😬].

On page 7 in the last paragraph before Intersectionality you need to indent that paragraph. When you talk about it is also possible that faculty face unique challenges you say “due to their positioning” I think you should explain what you mean by that. Also in the next sentence when you say “the two groups” I would say instead “faculty and students” may have differing interests.

On page 12 at the end of the section on intersectionality you say “there is a need for more quantitative analysis of women of color… that employs intersectionality as a theoretical framework” – you should explain what this means to you in terms of your dissertation. Are you using it as a theoretical or a conceptual framework that underscores the importance of looking at gender and race as intercepting axes of privilege or disadvantage among the university faculty? Every time you highlight “women of color” in the text are you implicitly employing an intersectional theoretical framework?

You should repeat this clarification of what it means to use intersectionality in your dissertation at the top of page 22 when you are finishing the first paragraph titled Contributions and Research Questions, and/or at the part where you claim that quantitative analysis would provide additional support for the trends observed in existing qualitative studies. (BTW, I’m not totally sure what “provide support for trends” means). I believe that paragraph needs to be indented.

Further you might want to split that paragraph into two pieces. One option would be to split it into one on interest convergence and intersectionality and a separate paragraph on looking at the political and economic context. Another option is to have one on interest convergence and the other is on intersectionality.

One last minor change to that paragraph is to use a different word than “robust.”

Now let's go back to the section titled Contextual Factors Affecting Faculty Diversity. That section opens a little abruptly and I think you should start it by reminding the reader that one of the critiques of CRT is that it can be seen as saying that racial inequality is pervasive and constant as opposed to contextual and varying. Then say that this dissertation draws from existing scholarship that has demonstrated how higher education funding and staffing varies considerably across states in the US and is associated with the state political context. Specifically you will assess weather contextual factors like state partisan control, higher education funding, and the timing of the COVID pandemic uniquely impacted the diversity of university faculty.

Toward the bottom of that paragraph you should capitalize “republican.”

For the second paragraph replace “Numerous states in recent years” with “As of November 2024, twelve states have passed anti DEI legislation and many more have proposed such legislation”.

In the paragraph right after [Insert Figure 1 here] I would tweak the phrase “pervasiveness of its opposition to diversity and inclusion.” I would delete “the pervasiveness of.” And at the bottom of that paragraph I think you need to cite a report to back up the claim that many state universities have done all those things as a result of the bills.

The next paragraph begins a little abruptly. Maybe you should say that one of the contributions of your dissertation will be to examine how state partisan control influences racial and gender diversity in academia. Then you need to explain why the studies you cite are not already answering the question that you are posing. I'm looking at Hicklin, Ortega, Taylor, etc and one question I had about those studies was whether they are analyses of states or analyses of universities. If they are analyses of states then obviously they haven't done what you are going to do in your dissertation. If any of these used IPEDS data then you'll need to clarify how your study goes beyond theirs.

At the end of the paragraph on political factors you explain that one way Republican state dominance can affect higher ed diversity is through higher ed funding. This viewing of funding as the mechanism that partly explains the state partisan control effect (and/or pandemic effect) is an important point that needs a little more time. It may also benefit from a conceptual diagram that you could add to this part of the literature review. I'm also not totally convinced of the argument that diversifying the faculty takes more generous state appropriations. That may be established in this literature, but currently the literature review doesn't explain that and presents it as a given. I would elaborate on that.

In the next paragraph on page 20 you say the pandemic stalled efforts to diversify university faculty and you cite Flaherty. Is that the reporter's summary of what happened in higher education or was it an empirical study that looked at number of job ads and changes in the gender and racial composition of faculty? I had the same question about the claim at the end of the paragraph that using tenure clock extensions reduces the likelihood of getting tenure. Is that statement an observation of the various authors of that paper or was it a conclusion based on a study of data on faculty going up for tenure?

Turning to the first full paragraph on page 22 midway through the paragraph I would delete “in addition to race and gender, however” And then I would elaborate on what you mean by “considering contextual factors.” This is where a conceptual diagram would be helpful because it would show the shock of the pandemic and state partisan control having direct effects on diversity plus indirect effects through state appropriations. The “direct effects” might be due to women & minority faculty extra duties and anti-DEI legislation, respectively. That's more explicit than just saying you'll consider contextual factors.

One meta question for you to think about is whether your dissertation is looking at the factors that influence faculty diversity or are you looking at factors that have shaped the trend in faculty diversity? Is it about diversity or about changes in faculty diversity?

At the top of page 23 I would say this dissertation will apply concepts of interest convergence & intersectionality to examine changes in faculty diversity over time using IPEDS data from 2015 to the most current data available. Earlier I suggested you clarify what you mean by applying intersectionality in this dissertation. You need to do the same thing with interest convergence. How does your dissertation “apply” interest convergence? That is not yet spelled out in the current document.

I want you to revise the four research questions to where they tell more of a story. Right now they seem too general and generic. The first question may not be a question but is just the empirical setup of your dissertation: you're looking at the changing composition of university faculty in this time period. One reason I'm not crazy about it being a research question is because you say you expect to see diversity increase in that time. And the only justification is because that's what you'd expect if you extrapolated Kim et al's findings. That doesn't seem super interesting to me, so I think you can just treat it as the nature of the empirical evidence you're looking at. Maybe the question is “to what extent have past trends toward greater faculty diversity continued in this fraught time period that features the pandemic and a notable increase in the politicization of higher education?”

Research questions 2-4 are more interesting and compelling. The question of whether the pandemic halted the progress towards greater faculty diversity is a great question. I also like the third question stated as how much does state political partisanship affect the racial and gender diversity of university faculty? I think you should remove the phrase quote “within this timeframe” from the second and third research questions. And the fourth research question then can be stated more in terms of a mediated association type question. You can ask whether differences in state appropriations associated with the pandemic and with state partisan control constrained gender and racial diversity of university faculty.

Editing the research questions to tell more of the story would be a better description of the mechanisms going on as compared to the sentence about “each factor creating a less than hospitable environment for women and racial minorities to navigate...” (in my opinion).

Here are edits for the bibliography. The Anon entry probably needs to be fixed. Several entries have start pages but not in pages and I'll let you look through those. You probably need more complete entries for the two Florida laws or statutes. The O'Connor reference and the Taylor et al reference I need more information so does Solorzano and I don't know what the journal PM&R is (Zhang reference) and is there really a journal named *Metropolitan Universities*? That's just some minor things to clean up in the bib as you move forward.

Congrats on getting it so far along! Onward to the Data, Methods, and Prelim Findings!