

Report of the Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity, and Equity (SCFDDE)

General Committee Charge

The Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity, and Equity (i) identifies and promotes best practices for faculty development, mentoring, and work environment to facilitate faculty success at all career levels; (ii) evaluates and advocates processes for faculty recruitment, promotion, and retention that promote diversity, equity, and work/life balance for the faculty; (iii) monitors the status of faculty development, mentoring, diversity, and equity; and (iv) issues periodic reports on the activities and findings of the committee that make recommendations for implementation.

2021-2022 Specific Charges for the SCFDDE:

1. Address systemic racism and other forms of inequity by assessing and evaluating ways to change University structures, practices, and biases at the University, school, departmental, and individual levels. Examples include eligibility for leadership roles, differential standards for faculty evaluation based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information, department-level voting privileges, biases implicit in quantitative methods for evaluating faculty, evaluation of effectiveness of campus mental health and wellness programs.
2. Investigate (a) the distribution of associated faculty and academic support staff by race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information and (b) the extent to which schools and departments provide clear career paths for faculty in all tracks.
3. Investigate the extent to which potential faculty leaders are identified and trained within departments and schools and, if appropriate, recommend ways to improve the processes of identification, training, and support.
4. Continue to review school-level Diversity Action Plan and identify “best practices” to improve each school’s plan and the University’s plan as embodied in its Inclusion Report.

Report on Charges

1. *Address systemic racism and other forms of inequity by assessing and evaluating ways to change University structures, practices, and biases at the University, school, departmental, and individual levels. Examples include eligibility for leadership roles, differential standards for faculty evaluation based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information, department-level voting privileges, biases implicit in quantitative methods for evaluating faculty, evaluation of effectiveness of campus mental health and wellness programs.*

In light of widely publicized comments made by a Penn faculty member that are diametrically opposed to the goal of addressing systemic racism and other forms of inequity—and, in fact, further entrench these inequities—we focused a great deal of our conversation related to this charge on the role of faculty governance in balancing academic freedom and tenure protection with the goals of developing an inclusive community where all are welcomed and can thrive. Dr. Anita Allen provided a legal framework for us to consider related to this topic and we also consulted with General Counsel as part of our deliberations. Areas of concern that we identified were the ways that existing procedures are designed primarily to protect faculty members charged with misconduct with little regard for the need for transparency especially regarding faculty, staff and students who may have been impacted by their misbehaviors.

We also focused on the tenure and promotion process and the ways that systemic inequities that may be built into this process need to be addressed. In addition to concerns about possible systemic inequities in the tenure and promotion process itself were concerns about the demographics of those who may be counseled out before going up for tenure. This is an area that SCFDDE would like to continue to pursue in the future with data that can inform recommendations for how to minimize inequities in the system.

In a meeting with Dr. Dani Bassett, co-chair of the LGBTQ+ Faculty Working Group, several areas of systemic bias against LGBTQ+ faculty were brought to our attention. For one, we have nonbinary faculty who are forced to misgender themselves by having to identify male or female for official recording purposes. Secondly, LGBTQ+ faculty are much more likely to grow their families through the foster care system, but they are not provided with the same parental and teaching leave as faculty who grow their families via birth or adoption. Thirdly, many transgender and nonbinary faculty continue to work and teach in buildings that do not offer all-gender bathrooms.

Recommendations:

1. The Faculty Senate should create an Ad Hoc Committee that closely examines the current University- and school-level procedures related to balancing academic freedom and tenure protections with the need for faculty sanctions (including possible tenure removal) for faculty misbehaviors with a particular focus on bringing more transparency to this process and considering the needs of those who have been victimized by these misbehaviors.
 2. The University should provide SCFDDE with systematic anonymized, aggregated data on tenure and promotion approvals and denials alongside the length of time that faculty have been at the associate professor level and also demographics of faculty who leave the University before going up for tenure or promotion to associate.
 3. The University should investigate ways of challenging federal reporting requirements that do not accurately reflect the gender diversity of our faculty. In the meantime, the University should also pilot new, more inclusive ways of collecting gender data that conform with the existing federal requirements. One possibility that some of our peer institutions have already adopted is to allow all faculty to self-identify their gender and then randomly assign those who identify as nonbinary into male or female for federal reporting purposes.
 4. The Faculty Senate should consult with Human Resources to review the current policies related to parental and teaching leave for faculty who choose to grow their families via foster care with the goal of revising the Faculty Handbook as appropriate to address faculty need.
 5. The University should adopt a campus-wide goal of ensuring that there is at least one multi-stall all-gender bathroom in every building and work with facilities to identify the current state of meeting this goal as well as to develop a plan for making this goal a reality.
2. *Investigate (a) the distribution of associated faculty and academic support staff by race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information and (b) the extent to which schools and departments provide clear career paths for faculty in all tracks.*

One area that SCFDDE is particularly interested in exploring is how the diversity of associated faculty and academic support staff compare to standing faculty. We received data from the Provost’s office related to the distribution of associated faculty and academic support staff, but the data as currently presented makes it difficult to identify any possible inequities that may need to be addressed. One area of concern that emerged from our preliminary review of these data are that the University currently doesn’t collect information related to national origin for these positions.

As part of our discussion, we realized that professional pathways vary across schools. For example, at PSOM, somebody can begin as an instructor for up to 3 years before moving into a Penn faculty position. In contrast, other schools have lecturer positions that can only be renewed for up to 3 years with no possibility of changing to another track making it difficult to attract diverse applicant pools. In addition, at PSOM, where there is no lecturer position, those on the clinical staff track (Penn Medicine Clinician) can be promoted from clinical assistant professor to clinical associate professor. In contrast, at other schools there are other positions such as senior lecturers that can be renewed, but do not offer the possibility of promotion or professional growth. We wonder how this lack of ability for professional growth may also impact the diversity of the applicant pool.

Recommendations

1. The University should create a user-friendly way of tracking demographic data for associated faculty and academic support staff at the University and school level as well as departmental level at large schools. This should include national origin information. This should also include the ability to make University, school and departmental comparisons between standing faculty and associated faculty and academic support staff.
2. The Faculty Senate should review the associated faculty and academic support staff options available in the Faculty Handbook with an eye toward making the positions appealing enough to attract a diverse applicant pool and considering the possibility of promotion and professional growth for each of the different positions.

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3. Investigate the extent to which potential faculty leaders are identified and trained within departments and schools and, if appropriate, recommend ways to improve the processes of identification, training, and support.

The expectations of service of recently promoted standing faculty of color increases compared to those of recently promoted standing faculty white faculty across schools. At the same time, many mid-career faculty of color leave the University to accept leadership positions at other universities. This suggests that they may be burdened with service but not offered leadership positions at the University indicating the need to take a serious look at the diversity of department, school and University leadership as well as inequities in service by faculty demographics, tracks and ranks.

Recommendations

1. SCFDDE should seek data that can help determine trends in gender, race and ethnicity in division, department chair, deanship leadership at the University over the past five years.
2. SCFDDE should seek data to better understand how each promotion and tenure committee considers service in its promotion guidelines and deliberations and whether there are any ways to prevent overburdening particular faculty groups with service (e.g. women, URMs, junior faculty).
3. SCFDDE should invite deans of faculty development (or their designee) to speak about programs they have developed to advance faculty of color to leadership roles, and from those discussions, compile a list of learnings and programs that could be replicated across the schools for the University community.
4. Continue to review school-level Diversity Action Plans and identify "best practices" to improve each school's plan and the University's plan as embodied in its Inclusion Report.

We continued last year's conversation about Diversity Action Plans. The plans vary greatly across schools, with no consistency even on who is included with some only including standing faculty and some including all full-time faculty. The structure and content of the plans also vary, making it difficult to do cross-comparisons across schools to determine best practices and areas in need of improvement. We identified the lack of clear guidelines from the University as to the purpose and goals of these plans as a primary challenge in them serving the goal of increasing diversity at schools and the University.

Recommendations

The University should develop guidelines for schools to consult while updating their Diversity Action Plans. We recommend that these guidelines specify that the plans should apply to all full-time faculty and provide guidance on the types of goals that should be developed, the types of resources dedicated to meeting these goals and procedures for how to assess the success of meeting them.

SCFDDE Membership 2021-2022

Hydar Ali, Dental Medicine
Antonella Cianferoni, PSOM/Pediatrics
Nelson Flores, GSE, *Chair*
Carmen Guerra, PSOM/Medicine
Junhyong Kim, SAS/Biology
Meghan Lane-Fall, PSOM/Anesthesiology & Critical Care
Ken Lum, Weitzman Design

Ex officio:

William Braham, Weitzman Design, Faculty Senate Chair
Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Annenberg, Faculty Senate Past Chair
Sherrill Adams, Dental Medicine, PASEF non-voting member