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Seattle University ADVANCE: Institutional Diversity Requires Recognizing and Rewarding Faculty Hidden Work

Sarah Trainer, Jodi O'Brien, and Jean Jacoby

Seattle University (SU) is a comprehensive, liberal arts university, founded in the Jesuit tradition of education of the whole person and social justice leadership. SU is characteristic of many institutions of higher education in categorizing faculty work and careers into three “buckets”: scholarship, teaching, and service. Historically, despite it being integral to the functioning of the university, work in the “service” bucket has been systemically undervalued and poorly assessed. This “hidden work,” which encompasses many aspects of teaching, is disproportionately done by women and faculty of color.

Many institutions of higher education currently face intense pressure to diversify their faculty populations. A diverse faculty will enable institutions to excel in the face of current challenges ranging from diversifying student populations, shrinking budgets, a worldwide pandemic, and a persistent need to articulate the relevance of the academy to the general public.¹ Many institutions of higher education are not, however, tackling diversity from a perspective of structural and cultural transformation. Faculty may be diverse in their scholarship, pedagogy, or identities but current practices require them to organize their careers around traditional evaluation and reward systems that disavow this diversity. The result is not good for anyone: many faculty report that they feel they must be “triathletes,”² excelling in teaching, scholarship, and service at all times. The results are also inequitable: women faculty and faculty of color report heavier institutional asks around under-valued teaching and service work.³

¹ McCoy, Henrika. 12 June 2020. “The Life of a Black Academic: Tired and Terrorized.” *Inside Higher Ed*. Wingfield, Adia Harvey. 1 July 2020. “We Built a Diverse Academic Department in 5 Years. Here’s How.” *Harvard Business Review*.

² Flaherty, Colleen. 26 January 2018. “Less is More.” *Inside Higher Ed*.

³ Bird, Sharon, Jacquelyn S. Litt, Yong Wang. 2004. “Creative Status of Women Reports: Institutional Housekeeping as ‘Women’s work’” *NWSA Journal* 16(1): 194-206. Britton, Dana and Laura Logan. 2008. Gendered Organizations: Progress and Prospects. *Sociological Compass* 2: 107-121. Daut, Marlene L. 28 July 2019. “Becoming Full Professor While Black.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Flaherty, Colleen. 12 April 2017. “Relying on Women, Not Rewarding Them.” *Inside Higher Ed*. Guarino, Cassandra M. and Victor M. Borden. 2017. Faculty Service Loads and Gender: Are Women Taking Care of the Academic Family? *Research in Higher Education* 58(6): 672-694. Gutierrez y Muhs, Yolanda Flores, Carmen G. Gonzalez, and Angela P. Harris. 2012. *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. University of Utah Press. Louis, Dave A., and Sydney Freeman Jr. 2018. “Mentoring and the Passion for Propagation: Narratives of Two Black Male Faculty Members Who Emerged From Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership.” *Journal of African American Males in Education* 9(1): 19-39. McCoy, Henrika. 12 June 2020. “The Life of a Black Academic: Tired and Terrorized.” *Inside Higher Ed*. Misra, Joya, Jennifer Hickes Lundquist, Elissa Holmes, and Stephanie Agiomavritis. 2011. The Ivory Ceiling of Service Work. AAUP: American Association of University Professors - Reports and Publications, January- February 2011. O'Meara, KerryAnn, Alexandra Kuveava, and Gudrun Nyunt. 2017. Constrained Choices: A View of Campus Service from Annual Faculty Reports. *The Journal of Higher Education*. Published online 27 January 2017. Stewart, Abigail J. and Virginia Valian. 2018. *An Inclusive Academy: Achieving Diversity and Excellence*. MIT Press. O'Meara, KerryAnn.

In 2016, Seattle University received a National Science Foundation ADVANCE-IT grant. The goal of SU ADVANCE is structural and cultural transformation that aligns faculty expectations and promotion standards with our educational mission. Our research indicates that many faculty choose to work at SU precisely because of its articulated mission of academic excellence and its emphasis on public and community engagement and the education of the whole person. At the same time, faculty consistently expressed concerns about the ways in which mission-aligned work is counted (or not), as well as the ways in which dedication to the institution is used but not rewarded. Work/life balance tensions have further heightened with the “collapse of the professional into the personal” (quoting a faculty), as a result of the new demands created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addressing this misalignment, SU ADVANCE is focused on two intertwined streams of cultural transformation: the revision of the university guidelines for promotion to full professor and the creation of systemic mentoring and faculty development opportunities. Our draft of the proposed revised guidelines for promotion to full professor rests on broadening definitions of faculty activities, to make the guidelines inclusive of diverse types of faculty work, recognizing faculty contributions as integrated and holistic. Concurrently, our work focuses on providing training for administrators in mentoring faculty and for faculty in integrating their professional contributions around work they find meaningful. In the words of one Seattle University administrator, this is simply a “better use of human resources.” It is also part of building a more truly inclusive institution.

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