



TENURE AND PROMOTION FOR FACULTY OF COLOR

Executive Summary

Recruitment, promotion, tenure, and retention of **faculty of color** is a longstanding problem within academia in the United States. According to 2020 U.S. Census data, the U.S. population has become increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. Data indicate that more than 40% of the U.S. population now consists of people of color. However, as of fall 2021, only 24.6% of tenure-track faculty across faculty ranks consisted of self-identified faculty of color, the bulk of whom are assistant professors. Two significant challenges in diversifying the professoriate by race and ethnicity are: (1) the small numbers of people of color entering faculty positions despite measurable growth in people of color completing doctoral degrees over time (Griffin, 2020; Liu et al., 2019), and (2) the decision by many people of color to leave academia at different points in their careers (Doležal, 2022; Zambrana, 2018).

The American Psychological Association (APA) and Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology (COGDOP) recognizes that an academic workforce that represents demographic changes within the student population and the larger U.S. society as essential to a vital and accurate psychological science that is relevant in the 21st century. In 2021, the Board of Scientific Affairs of the APA authorized a Task Force to examine promotion, tenure, and retention of faculty of color in psychology. APA, in collaboration with the Council of Graduate Departments in Psychology (COGDOP), solicited nominations for members of the Task Force. Appointed members began meeting in October 2021.

The Task Force was charged with focusing on systemic barriers and inequities that affect the evaluation of psychological scientists of color under review for promotion and tenure decisions. To that end, it identified three primary goals:

1. Describe the problem of tenure, promotion, and retention for psychological scientists who are faculty of color.
2. Describe the challenges and barriers that lead to unsuccessful tenure decisions.
3. Provide concrete guidance and strategies to chairs of psychology departments, psychology department faculty members, and external reviewers who will review faculty candidates for promotion and tenure in psychology departments in the U.S.

The Task Force also set a fourth aspirational goal to provide concrete guidance and strategies to chief academic officers and college administrators interested in implementing systemic changes to academic policies affecting the tenure and promotion of faculty of color.

A comprehensive review of the literature revealed five major themes apparent in the lives of faculty of color in higher education that negatively impact advancement to associate professor and to full professor.

I. THE CULTURE OF ACADEMIA IS EXTREMELY CHALLENGING FOR FACULTY OF COLOR

A large, substantial literature paints a sobering portrait of the daily experiences of faculty of color. Challenges include social and cultural isolation as the only or one of a few faculty members of color in a given departmental unit, overt racial discrimination by students and colleagues in classrooms and faculty meetings, and exposure to racially insensitive and ill-informed comments about people of color more generally. These racially stressful and traumatic experiences persist throughout one's professional career. They sap one's capacity to execute the intellectually intense work involved in academic pursuits. They undermine a faculty member's physical and mental health. As faculty advance to the higher ranks of the professoriate, the numbers decrease, exacerbating the social isolation

already present. Pursuit of tenure is an uncertain and often anxious time for faculty of all backgrounds; this is compounded by the profound social isolation, hostility, and indignities that accompany being faculty of color.

II. THE MISMATCH OF ACADEMIC CULTURE AND THE CULTURAL VALUES OF FACULTY OF COLOR

Academic culture emphasizes individual accomplishment, even when collaborative research and/or significant time investments are necessary to lay the foundation for research studies that can produce accurate, ethical research on certain study populations. Psychological scientists of color are often motivated to conduct research addressing one or minoritized populations and to answer questions that can enhance the lives of those communities. These areas of inquiry represent newer areas of psychological science. Foundational questions are still being answered, along with the development of new measurement tools and theories that account for these life experiences. Such research is quite time-intensive and requires time to bear fruit. These realities can place faculty of color at odds with the time constraints presented by probationary period and the expectation for completed conventional scholarly products at annual reviews. They also contribute to greater levels of alienation in the workplace and lower levels of professional satisfaction among faculty of color.

III. VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE SERVICE AND LABOR FOR FACULTY OF COLOR

Faculty of color are often the only ones from their racial and/or ethnic background in their department or program. Oftentimes, faculty of color value activities that foster a more inclusive campus and departmental climate. These small numbers of faculty of color combined with institutional mandates for diversity in the delivery of campus service and other forms of labor (i.e., mentoring, teaching course topics involving diversity, equity, and inclusion [DEI]) result in a high burden on faculty of color across ranks. The need for culturally meaningful, professional mentoring and instruction toward students of color and junior colleagues by faculty of color far exceeds faculty of color's capacity. Additionally, the reliance on such a small pool to fulfill the numerous important DEI mandates means that faculty of color must fill high numbers of requests for their time. Some faculty may not feel qualified to perform in DEI roles as well. The hierarchical nature of academic departments and power dynamics between administrators and junior faculty can create political pressure to say yes to such requests or

assignments due to: (1) a desire to be a team player or a good departmental citizen, and/or (2) a fear of retribution at the time of the candidate's tenure review for not performing in these expected roles. Furthermore, the experience of saying no in the presence of such substantial diversity needs can be extremely stressful for faculty of color who hold deep personal commitments to the principles of DEI. Lastly, colleges and universities do not consistently value this labor in terms of professional recognition, assess it comprehensively, or weigh it properly in merit review and compensation. These dynamics contribute to alienation and burnout among faculty of color.

IV. EXPERIENCES OF FACULTY OF COLOR WITH MENTORING AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Faculty of color experience significant difficulty securing consistent, effective mentoring at each stage of career development. The act of mentoring faculty is frequently perceived as a form of service and consequently, it does not receive the significant recognition it truly deserves as a critical imperative. Mentoring relationships can be the source of racial discrimination and microaggressions. Mentoring is often disconnected from the lived experiences of faculty of color, and thus can have limited relevance to their mentoring needs. Even in the presence of formal faculty development programming, mentoring for faculty of color is often nonexistent, vague, and/or inaccurate. Recognition and compensation for effective mentoring and faculty development is essential to the successful retention of faculty of color. They also build a sense of investment of faculty of color in the department and the institution. Effective mentoring ensures that investments in hiring and recruitment are maintained.

V. THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOLARLY ENGAGEMENT BEYOND THE ACADEMY FOR FACULTY OF COLOR

A major motivation for pursuit of a faculty career among faculty of color is a desire to engage in professional activities, whether through research, teaching, or service, that have a positive impact on the communities from which they come. Faculty of color seek out psychology departments that explicitly value contributions derived from community engagement, recognizing the time investments needed to conduct such research; that explicitly value the technical skills and personal investments involved in teaching courses addressing DEI topics; and that explicitly value campus and community service that enhances campus

climate and well-being of communities.

CONCLUSIONS

- The aim of the report was to shed light on systemic barriers and inequities that affect the evaluation of psychological scientists of color under review for promotion and tenure in psychological science, as well as provide recommendations for best practices in the promotion and tenure decision process when reviewing faculty of color.
- Faculty of color have more responsibilities outside of their day-to-day professorial duties that cause increased psychological and emotional burden compared to White colleagues.
- There is a great need for a wider array of metrics when it comes to evaluating faculty for tenure and/or promotion, specifically for faculty of color, and additional labor should be acknowledged formally.
- Policy changes are needed at the department and institution level to make promotion and tenure processes more equitable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The systemic barriers to the promotion and tenure of faculty of color are well-documented in the literature. Lacking, however, are well supported (evidence-based) actions to address these barriers. Our review clearly highlights that there is a need for empirical investigations and longitudinal studies to better understand and identify the most effective approaches to eliminating these barriers. With this limitation in mind, below the committee offers some initial first steps that may address the concerns raised in this report.

MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FACULTY OF COLOR

1. Create professional development resources for faculty of color: Provide opportunities for intraracial/intra-cultural networking and mentoring, increase support from leadership during the tenure process, and evaluate and modify practices that involve the inequitable distribution of visible and invisible responsibilities placed upon faculty of color who represent intersectional backgrounds.
2. Provide faculty of color with effective, engaged mentoring from the time of hire through promotion, tenure,

and advancement across all domains important to the institution (research, teaching, service), as well as the unwritten rules that drive campus culture, expectations, and perceived success.

3. Implement policies to ensure that effective departmental mentorship of faculty is properly structured, recognized, and compensated in the merit review process as an essential component of a well-functioning department.
4. Provide mentorship programs in the institution to ensure that mentor training (a) is culturally responsive, (b) promotes the professional growth of mentors, and (c) meets the needs and goals of the mentee.
5. Provide training for faculty mentors that embraces cross-disciplinary perspectives to enhance their skills supporting faculty and providing useful guidance to faculty mentees.
6. Provide faculty mentees with opportunities to evaluate the mentoring relationship and have an active role in deciding who mentors them.
7. Establish accountability checks to ensure mentorship is being delivered regularly and effectively.
8. Create campus-based faculty development programs aimed at cultivating faculty of color for leadership and administrative positions on campus. Provide monetary support for faculty to participate in academic leadership programs to position them to be competitive for administrative leadership positions on campus.

BIAS IN ANNUAL EVALUATIONS/EVALUATION METRICS

1. Review current promotion and tenure processes to evaluate the presence of implicit biases. For example, removing or modifying components of the evaluation process that are known to be subject to significant implicit biases (e.g., collegiality).
2. Share the criteria for promotion and tenure in writing with all faculty upon hiring that outline the next stage for professional advancement. Associate professors should receive a written copy of the criteria at the beginning of their employment. Make the criteria available electronically for all faculty to consult periodically as they advance.
3. Provide training for faculty voting within the department. Ensure that candidates understand the ways in

which the criteria for promotion and tenure map onto the institutional and departmental mission and the breadth of ways the criteria translate into outstanding professional accomplishment.

4. Standardize tenure processes and make promotion and tenure policies transparent. Create a checklist for promotion and tenure that highlights how the promotion and tenure committee, department/division, dean, and university committees make decisions and recommendations and include clear policies that outlines what happens at each level of decision making and what occurs if there are disagreements between these different units.
5. Use explicit rather than implicit criteria and eliminate criteria such as collegiality that are subjective.
6. Train faculty and higher administration who are performing reviews to reduce bias in review decisions (i.e., address implicit bias through training, which we recognize is important, but appreciate not sufficient in addressing all issues of bias).
7. Include DEI criteria in promotion and tenure processes. For example, tenure documents might include: (a) publications on the topic; (b) service activities that support and promote DEI; (c) examples of how DEI is incorporated in teaching and research; and (d) examples of mentorship of scholars from diverse backgrounds.
8. Embrace allyship. Institutions should provide training for all faculty to enhance the DEI skill sets needed for faculty service and cross-cultural mentoring. All faculty with institutional privilege should also engage in advocacy and demand more equitable practices.
9. Provide guidance to promotion and tenure committees regarding strategies for properly contextualizing the scholarly and professional activities of all faculty candidates. Critically evaluate how promotion and tenure committees are structured. For example, if faculty of color historically do not win elections, seek a different way of populating committees (for example, nominations, including self-nominations, that are then chosen by Department Chairs).

ELIMINATING INVISIBLE LABOR, VALUING VISIBLE SERVICE AND LABOR

1. Provide education to department colleagues and academic administrators about the prevalence and

scope of invisible labor expectations, demands, and toll (professional, emotional, financial, and relational) that faculty of color experience at all ranks.

2. Formally recognize, value, and make visible nontraditional forms of labor routinely expected of and performed by faculty of color in annual merit evaluations and promotion and tenure.
3. Provide mentoring, coaching, and support for faculty of color in negotiating service assignments and appropriate compensation for service performed to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

FOSTERING SUCCESS IN RESEARCH, PUBLICATIONS, AND FUNDING

1. Include tenure expectations in research to align with opportunity and need. For example, not requiring external funding for research when these additional resources are not needed to accomplish research activities and recognizing that a researcher may publish in a niche area that has high impact for the specialty, even if not published in a high impact journal.
2. Include metrics beyond traditional metrics such as citation counts, h-index, etc. to evaluate impact. For example, provide opportunities for promotion and tenure candidates to discuss how their work is addressing issues in society or the field which may be more informative than a traditional metric. As another example, reward faculty who may be engaged in efforts to change public policy and meaningfully impact society. Changing policy could have a significant impact in society but those efforts would not be necessarily captured by a traditional metric.
3. Align faculty and tenure expectations with institutional values (e.g., while the university values interdisciplinary scholarship, promotion requires demonstrating research independence).
4. While identifying external reviewers from aspirational or peer institutions is a laudable goal, the first priority should be securing letters from external reviewers who have the needed teaching, service, and/or scientific expertise to fairly evaluate the candidate even if that may lead to seeking external evaluations from institutions other than those that are aspirational or peer.
5. Ensure external review letter writers are clear on the values and goals of the institution and that their letters reflect that emphasis.

6. External letter writers should contextualize productivity and quality within opportunity. Institutions are encouraged to provide external letter writers with a standard set of metrics that will guide their evaluation and reflect the experience of faculty of color. This list may include, for example, attention to invisible labor (e.g., building and maintaining community relationships, dissemination to nonacademic audiences). While these criteria may not be included in traditional academic evaluation criteria, these activities serve the public good, a goal which is important to public colleges and universities. Moreover, engagement in invisible labor likely is an important context that reviewers should be mindful of when evaluating other areas of productivity.
7. Create a university-wide committee that collates emerging, innovative, or interdisciplinary scholarship to ensure that evaluation metrics reflect contemporary forms of academic scholarship.
8. Provide unit-level support on the evaluation and merit of nontraditional research to assist units in value-based decisions of what “counts” towards research and increase their effectiveness in mentoring early career faculty.
9. External and internal evaluators should use structured free recall for evaluation of candidates. Strengths and weaknesses of the candidate should be described using behavior specific examples (instead of feelings), consistent with the evaluation criteria determined for promotion and tenure.

FOSTERING SUCCESS IN MENTORING AND TEACHING

1. Include antibias language in the instructions for student evaluations.
2. Contextualize student evaluation ratings based on the gender and racial/ethnic composition of the students in the course.
3. Supplement student evaluations with peer observations, and evaluation from external letter writers (e.g., faculty going up for promotion and tenure can record sample classes which are sent to external reviewers for evaluation). To reduce potential bias that may also occur in peer observations and evaluations, include a clear rubric that guides reviewers and eliminates review criteria that are primarily subjective.

4. Add specificity to the areas that students assess and make these areas more concrete. In turn, eliminate student evaluations of the instructor and of the course overall as these are subject to rater bias.
5. Report student evaluations as the distribution of scores along with number of responders and response rate.

VALUING SCHOLARSHIP ENGAGEMENT CONTRIBUTING TO THE PUBLIC GOOD

1. Expand the definition of scholarly excellence to include contributions to the public good. Ensure that the institution’s mission with respect to community engagement and service to the public good are reflected in the departmental criteria for promotion and tenure.
2. Value the distribution of peer-reviewed study findings to nonacademic audiences through social media; face-to-face meetings; podcasts; op-ed pieces in print media; and other delivery channels in the review, promotion, and tenure process. This public-facing dissemination strengthens ties with the community, promotes research partnerships, and brings recognition to the institution. This type of dissemination can also facilitate and accelerate the implementation of research-based practices and interventions within the community and its institutions (e.g., schools, community organizations, criminal justice systems).
3. Value equally publications cowritten with community partners and published, in peer-reviewed journals including papers where community partners are senior/lead authors.
4. Count presentations to public audiences including schools, policy makers, and the community at large as scholarly products in annual merit reviews and in promotion and tenure reviews.

RETENTION AND ATTRITION OF FACULTY OF COLOR

1. Set promotion and tenure expectations and processes that are realistic, visible, and transparent.
2. Highlight responsiveness to racial microaggressions, implicit bias, and overtly discriminatory behaviors in policies and procedures.
3. Identify and address undermining or disparaging behaviors by colleagues that are not relevant to scholarship, teaching, and service.

4. Evaluate individual productivity and trajectory not compared to other candidates.
5. Recognize and support faculty efforts and scholarship (e.g., internal grant opportunities and awards).
6. Ensure faculty of color are aware of the unwritten rules, practices, and customs relevant to promotion and tenure in departments, colleges, and universities.
7. Diversify search committees to enhance the recruitment experience for candidates while being mindful that this may add additional burdens for faculty of color, particularly if the faculty of color is one of few at the institution, who could serve in this role. If the latter is the case, consider including in searches faculty of color from outside the institution on the committee.
8. Organize recruitment visits to include communicating culture/community to candidates to enhance the candidate's sense of belonging.
9. Provide candidates with opportunities to meet with faculty in other departments and identify affinity groups to meet with, during recruitment visits. Affinity groups that are administratively supported by the institution would reduce the burden of affinity groups to find ways to manage and be sustained. Providing candidates with opportunities to identify faculty in other departments with whom they would like to meet during the recruitment visit is an important approach to include when planning recruitment visits.
10. Seek cluster and target hiring to enhance shared interest and sense of community when clusters are hired. Importantly, when planning cluster hires, ensure that clusters reflect faculty of color at all levels of the professoriate level (assistant, associate, full).
11. Plan for successful onboarding and mentoring (e.g., mentors helping candidates create networks and providing opportunities to learn the cultural milieu).
12. Offset service stress to protect faculty from being overburdened with committee or service obligations that compromise their scholarship. Setting limitations, equally distributing service responsibilities across faculty, or increasing value of service in promotion and tenure.
13. Establish ways to document service so that it is easily and meaningfully included in the promotion and tenure process.
14. Create proactive policies and procedures to assess the conditions that lead to attrition and retention challenges for faculty of color in the department.
15. Articulate the value/contribution of one's expertise in offer letters and/or annual faculty reviews. Chairs should state how one's hire and expertise bring value to the unit and aligns with departmental/institutional mission.
16. Explicitly state viable opportunities for growth in annual reviews.
17. Develop recommendations that address factors that impact recruitment and retention including epistemic exclusion, tokenism, and discrimination.
18. Ensure that as disciplinary values change, policies and practices change in parallel.
19. Consider providing an opportunity for all faculty and staff of color to voice their perception of DEI on campus. In turn, discuss the results of this type of data collection and how the institution will address the challenges identified. Include demographic questions that will allow interpretation of results to identify whether and how the perception of faculty of color differ from their colleagues. Importantly, if there is a minimal number of faculty of color, then anonymity should be considered.
20. Create recognition and awards for the work of faculty that enhances DEI on campus and off campus in order to highlight the difficult and often unrecognized work being done by faculty and staff across higher education. If a financial component is included for other awards on campus, be sure to equate DEI awards to others on campus.

For suggestions on how to implement the recommendations above, consult the Suggested Blueprint for Academic Administrators.

For a copy of the full report, see <https://www.apa.org/pubs/reports/inequities-academic-tenure-promotion.pdf>.

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