

# Identify and Respond to Bias in Tenure Decisions

Overcoming Structural Barriers to BIPOC Faculty Retention



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# Meet the Research Team



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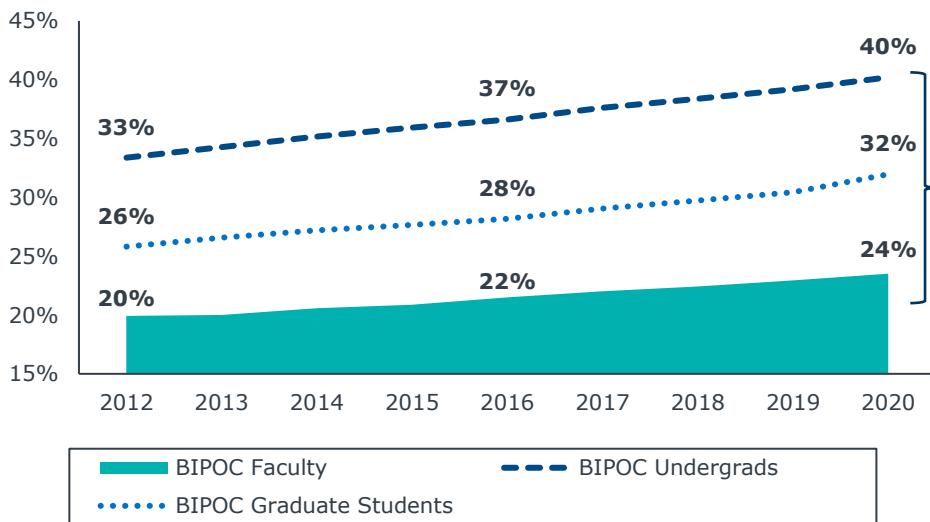
- 1 BIPOC Faculty Retention: Urgency Drivers
- 2 Simulation Activity: The Tenure Committee
- 3 Group Reflection

# Still a Long Way to Go on Faculty Diversity

## A Wide Gap Remains Between Faculty and Student Demographics

### Share of BIPOC<sup>1</sup> Students and Full-Time Faculty at US 4-Year Universities, Fall 2012-Fall 2020

n = 2,045 institutions



1) Faculty and students who self-identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or two or more races.



# Investing in Inclusive Hiring is Just Step One

Plans for Retention and Career Advancement are Also Critical

“

**It makes little sense to recruit diverse faculty of color if they leave after only a few years (or even months).** As a person of color, and having served in the faculty ranks, it is my experience that faculty of color often leave predominantly white institutions due to a lack of support and engagement with the institution. That can take many forms, including **undesirable course assignments, a devaluing of their scholarship, poor support and collaboration on research efforts, and microaggressions in the work environment.**”

*Perry Greene  
Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Adelphi University*

# BIPOC Faculty Retention and Belongingness Still a Challenge

+3-5%

Greater likelihood that Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty feel **dissatisfied or very dissatisfied** with fit in their department (vs. white faculty)

65%

BIPOC faculty at the University of Michigan considered leaving the institution

70%

Of BIPOC faculty at one university system considered leaving the system altogether in the past year

Source: Kiernan Mathews et al, ["When Perceptions of Diversity Don't Match Progress,"](#) Harvard Graduate School of Education; ["BIPOC Faculty Retention at University of Michigan Interviews with Michigan Faculty,"](#) August 2021; EAB interviews and analysis.

# 3 Factors in Employee Retention

## *What Cross-Industry Research Tells Us*



Engagement is 2x higher if employees **know what is expected of them**



70% of variation in employee engagement is due to **management**



**Burnt out** employees are 2.6x more likely to job hunt





# BIPOC Faculty Playing by Different Rules

## BIPOC Faculty Face Higher Expectations, Lower Rewards than White Peers

“

**“Sometimes the rules change for people of color or African Americans** who are on a tenure track. Sometimes they’re a bit stricter when African Americans are doing their research, and it’s always scrutinized harder.”

W. Franklin Evans, President  
*West Liberty University*

”

### Same Work, Different Rewards



Nonwhite biologists and physicists **earn lower salaries** than white peers



Black researchers are only **55% as likely to receive NIH grants** as white peers

~70%

of BIPOC faculty report feeling a need to work harder than their colleagues to be seen as legitimate scholars, vs. less than half of white professors





# Management Shapes Culture

## BIPOC Faculty Unsure Senior Colleagues are Ready for Meaningful Change

### You Know What They Say About Culture and Strategy...

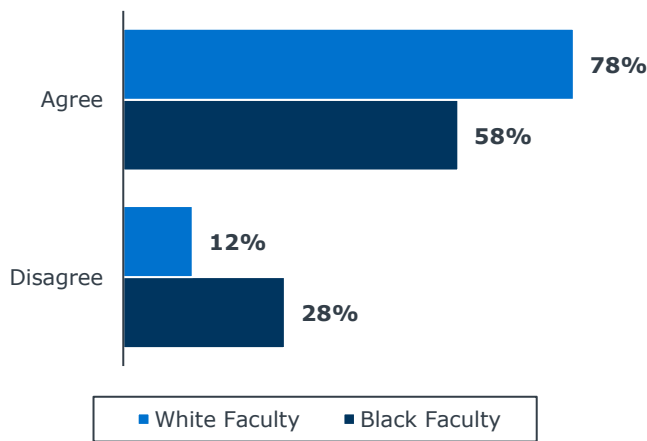
"The hard part is not acknowledging that the tenure and promotion system is limiting, but to put **people in positions of decision-making** (your deans, your faculty chairs, your mentors, your colleagues that actually validate your work, the publications that you submit to) - **those are the parts of the system that you have to change** before you can really bring value to the transformation of the tenure and promotion process."

Aswad Allen, Ph.D  
Chief Diversity Officer  
California State University—San Marcos



### White Faculty Likely Unaware of Their 'Unknown Unknowns'

Share of faculty who agree that *"on the whole, my department colleagues are committed to supporting and promoting diversity and inclusion in the department."* (COACHE)





# The Burnout Generation Comes to Higher Ed

## Overworked BIPOC Faculty Forced to Make Impossible Choices

### BIPOC Faculty Spend More Time than White Faculty On...



**Institutional DEIJ work** such as K12 school outreach and faculty recruitment<sup>1</sup>



Serving as a liaison to internal and external **committees and boards**<sup>2</sup>



**Mentoring**, coaching, and counseling BIPOC students and faculty<sup>3</sup>

”

### A Painful Choice Between Mission and Well-being

“Short of institutional change, the burden of supporting students of color often falls to faculty of color. This is in addition to disproportionate requests to serve on committees related to diversity. For my own professional and personal well-being, I have begun saying no to new service requests more and more. If I give any more of my time away (from research, teaching, or my personal life), **I risk having the institution fail both the student and me.**”

*Eric Grollman  
Former Associate Professor,  
University of Richmond*

- 1) Study of 469 biology faculty: Jimenez, M.F., Laverty, T.M., Bombaci, S.P. *et al.* “[Underrepresented faculty play a disproportionate role in advancing diversity and inclusion](#)”. *Nat Ecol Evol*, Vol.3, 2019.
  - 2) Study of 139 faculty at Arizona public universities: Luke J. Wood, “[Faculty of Color and White Faculty: An Analysis of Service in Colleges of Education in the Arizona Public University System](#),” *Journal of the Professors*, Vol. 8, Issue 1, Spring 2016.
  - 3) Summary of multiple studies: KerryAnn O’Meara *et al.*, “[Equity-Minded Faculty Workloads: What We Can And Should Do Now](#)”, *ACE*, 2021.
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Source: Eric Anthony Grollman, “[Invisible Labor: Exploitation of Scholars Of Color In Academia](#)”, *EGrollman*, 2015; EAB interview and analysis

# What Faculty Evaluation Gets Wrong



## Three Ways Promotion and Tenure Dampens BIPOC Faculty Morale

Impacts on Faculty



1



### Unclear Requirements

"I don't know what's expected of me. My department doesn't post its guidelines anywhere. Maybe a peer could help, but **when I see my white colleagues bonding over golf, I don't know how I can break into the clique.**"



2



### Narrow Definitions of Success

"The work I do is transformative for the institution. **I mentor students on the verge of dropping out. I help design the policies that will shape our hiring strategy.** It doesn't matter if I don't publish in an 'A' journal."



3



### Misaligned with Institutional Goals

"My department tracks all these different impact metrics for dossiers, but **it all feels meaningless.** Is this work really building to something or is it just busy work?"

# Patterns of Thinking Are Part of Human Nature...

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...But Can Lead to Flawed Logic or Pose Barriers to Deeper Consideration



## ► Cognitive Bias:

*A systematic inclination towards thought patterns that deviate from formal logic but help our brains process and interpret information. **Cognitive bias is different from prejudice.***



### Rooted in Human Nature

*Adapted to the Challenges of Our Ancestors*

- Cooperating in small tribes
- Hunting and foraging
- Avoiding danger



### Not Always Negative

*Cognitive Biases Remain Useful in Many Situations*

- Rapidly evaluating complex situations
- Inferring similarities in different environments
- Conserving mental capacity



### Widely Studied

*Disciplines Influenced by Cognitive Bias Research*

- Neuroscience
- Sociology
- History
- Business
- Linguistics



# Accessible Virtual Simulation Training

## How Georgia Tech's Simulated Tenure Case Teaches Committees About Bias



### A Quick and Easy Way to Apply DEIJ Concepts in a Simulated Setting



Simulated cases capture **different sources of bias** in promotion and tenure: teaching evaluations, invisible work, inter-disciplinary research, etc.



Interactive activity lets participants **practice recognizing and reacting to bias** in the moment



Average time to complete each simulated case is **20 minutes**

# Connecting Training to Trusted Information Sources

## Simulation Transcript Embeds Peer-Reviewed Research and Institutional Policy

"Let's start with scholarship. All his current grants are interdisciplinary."

*Perceptions of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary work vary. The GATech faculty handbook (3.3.7) indicates creative work must be appropriated to the individual discipline.*

### External Resources Cited in Training Transcript

**Faculty handbook policy** on how to evaluate creative work in tenure files

"My main concern about the grants is that he's spending most of the time in chemistry."

"[Candidate] hasn't a clue about our primary thrusts in materials. He's riding the coattails of chemistry with interdisciplinary NSF funding, which isn't hard to get, and he isn't project director on any grants on the c.v."

*Merton outlines "the Matthew effect," whereby the accrual of greater recognition to scientific contributions goes to those with already considerable reputations.*

**Peer-reviewed article** on biased decisions in research grant funding

"Don't discount big grants because they are interdisciplinary. He's published in highly respected journals..."

*The PTAC report (I.9) considers issues related to criteria in scholarship, including clarity, familiarity with publication venues, judgment across disciplines, uniformity and consistency of standards.*

**Internal committee findings** on how to communicate expectations about publication venues and multidisciplinary work



# Practice Makes Perfect



## Positive Results of Adopting Georgia Tech's ADEPT Training at Montana State:



**Longer Time Reviewing  
Each Dossier**



**More Supportive  
Committee Atmosphere**



**Less Diversity Fatigue**

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Committee members reported spending a significantly longer time reviewing each dossier compared to those in non-training conditions.”

“

Committee members who received the bias-literacy training reported a significantly more supportive committee atmosphere.”

“

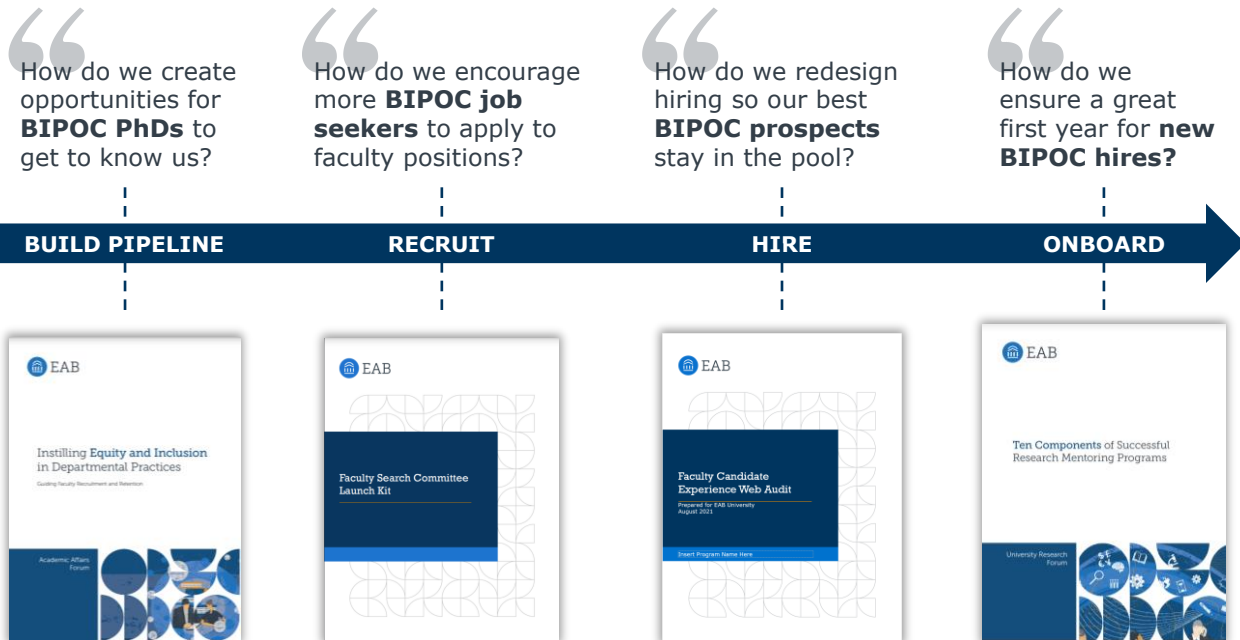
Committee members in training condition were also inclined to report less diversity fatigue, suggesting that the training did not invoke reactance.”



# EAB Supports Your Hiring Efforts

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## Resources to Increase BIPOC Faculty and Grow Pipeline of Future Scholars



Source: EAB, [Instilling Equity and Inclusion in Departmental Practices](#); [13 tools to elevate diversity in the faculty hiring process](#); [Candidate Experience Web Audit for Colleges and Universities](#); [10 Components of Successful Research Mentoring Programs](#).

# Discussion Questions



1. What kinds of biases, obvious or subtle, might have impacted James's tenure decision? How have you seen these biases play out at your institution?
2. What could Harry, James's chair, have done to help him better prepare his case for tenure, if anything?
3. How could Channelwood University create more clarity in its promotion and tenure guidelines? If you were on a committee to redesign these guidelines, what suggestions might you make?
4. What will you do next at your institution to help recognize and account for these biases?



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