Confronting the Embedded Nature of Whiteness: Reflections on a Multi-Campus Project to Diversify the Professoriate

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This paper examines the persistence of whiteness in DEI initiatives. Through case studies at three universities, the authors consider the challenges and successes of resisting the embedded nature of whiteness. They argue that equity within faculty reward systems is only possible by decentering white voices, recognizing BIPOC faculty expertise, and resisting tokenization. A shift in thinking that moves away from an instrumental value of BIPOC faculty—their labor is valuable insofar as they provide "diversity" for the institution and contribute to student success—and towards recognition of the inherent value of their research and leadership is crucial to more fully realizing equity.

Keywords: community engagement, diversity, service learning, faculty evaluation

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, the Massachusetts State College Association's (MSCA) collective bargaining process yielded new contractual language that validated community-engaged work in criteria for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. While the older contract had largely been silent on the role of community-engagement, the new language promised to recognize the work, notably as a form of scholarship. Importantly, the language itself was not sufficient to appropriately value this work as both candidates for personnel action and evaluators did not know how to use the language effectively or frame scholarly outputs—beyond the more "traditional" peer-reviewed journal articles or monographs, such as white papers, data sets, and reports—as forms of scholarship. Also occurring at this time were conversations regarding the prevalence of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) faculty undertaking this kind of work and the lack of support in the tenure and promotion process for BIPOC faculty. In response to these problems, the authors saw an opportunity to develop a three-campus initiative to operationalize the contract language and attract and retain a diverse professoriate by adopting more inclusive faculty support systems for community-engaged scholarship. However, this work unintentionally revealed how persistent the centering of whiteness can be in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work undertaken at predominantly white institutions (PWIs).

The initial concept for "Diversifying the Faculty: Pathways Towards Equity" was developed by three white women (also co-authors of this article) who aimed to operationalize the contract language, create resource material, and host workshops for community-engaged faculty and the peers, chairs, and administrators who evaluate their work. They believed that the project would support a diverse range of early career researchers, recognizing that many who undertake community-engaged research are BIPOC faculty, and provide students with engaging learning experiences and success in their college careers. When the project received a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education's Higher Education Innovation Fund, they recruited a larger team to undertake the work, which grew to include BIPOC faculty (Roopika Risam at Salem State University; Christina Santana, Tanya Mears, and Meghna Dilip at Worcester State University; and DeMisty Bellinger-Delfeld, Wafa Unus, and Asher Jackson at Fitchburg State University).

At Salem State University, Risam joined the team as the lone BIPOC faculty member with some trepidation. She wondered why, in fact, an initiative focused on "diversifying the professoriate" had been designed entirely by white colleagues, apparently without recognizing that BIPOC faculty have crucial insight to offer on the development of the program. Moreover, Risam was concerned that it was positioned as a diversity initiative to secure grant funding, rather than being fundamentally designed as one. It wasn't until a retreat with the cross-campus team, several months later, that she realized that her BIPOC colleagues on the other campuses shared her concerns that the framing of the initiative failed to center the voices of BIPOC faculty in discussions about the changes needed to evaluation practices at their universities. These discussions subsequently became the catalyst for imagining new ways of collaborating.

At Worcester State University, Santana joined two other BIPOC women faculty members who looked past a list of shared concerns in order to support key components of the grant. Specifically, Santana was interested in ensuring that community-engaged scholars like herself would feel empowered; Mears saw a way to make her extensive on-campus support of BIPOC students matter; and Dilip, like the rest of the team, was sensitive to the need to attract and retain a diverse professoriate. They were able to bond over

their discomfort and suspicions, especially the suggestion that targeting community engagement (something only one of the three participants was involved in) was an effective means of retaining them or recruiting other BIPOC faculty. This left two faculty feeling that they *should* be doing community-engaged work. Santana, the third faculty participant, mostly felt essentialized and typified by the project, a feeling BIPOC faculty participants from other campus teams also articulated at the retreat. There, the WSU team also began to realize that their white project manager was contributing to an enduring confusion. In fact, they decided that he, at best, did not have a clear understanding of the project. This realization opened their eyes to the truth that community-engagement professionals can struggle to implement diversity initiatives.

At Fitchburg State, there were initial concerns over the selection of the team. At first, the selected faculty team members were not entirely clear why they were invited to represent Fitchburg State. The team met to discuss what was being asked of them as BIPOC faculty. Concerns over tokenism and added invisible labor abounded, as they sometimes do when diversity work is introduced. In fact, during Fitchburg State's work on the grant, the team explored invisible labor often expected and foisted on BIPOC faculty and, ironically, discovered that they were undertaking nearly-invisible labor while working on the grant. This, in itself, was the start of an important conversation that continued throughout the grant work and that became central to the documentation produced by the Fitchburg State team.

Initially, there also seemed to be a cloudy connection between community-engaged scholarship and BIPOC faculty members. The Fitchburg State team made it clear that they needed greater clarification on this connection through a substantial literature review and discussion with the grant leaders about the positioning of BIPOC faculty in the grant work, to ensure that the equity and inclusion aspect of the grant work was a central focus, and not an ancillary component to ensure the grant's success. Again, the need for such assurance and clarification provided an opening for another important conversation and it became another important theme in Fitchburg State's work.

Based on our experiences, this paper examines the persistence of whiteness in campus and cross-campus DEI initiatives. Through case studies of our three MSCA universities (Salem State University, Worcester State University, and Fitchburg State University), we consider the challenges and successes of resisting the embedded nature of whiteness that we continually encountered. We argue that achieving equity within faculty reward systems is only possible by decentering white voices, recognizing the expertise of BIPOC faculty, and resisting tokenization in DEI work. A shift in thinking that moves away from an instrumental value of BIPOC faculty—that their labor is only valuable insofar as they provide "diversity" for the institution and contribute to student success—and towards recognition of the inherent value of their research and leadership is crucial to more fully realizing equity at our universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To better understand the larger context in which this initiative took place, this section reviews the literature on the challenges BIPOC faculty members face in PWIs, the embedded whiteness that exists within community-engaged work, the need to address cultural changes to retain historically underrepresented faculty when developing strategies to diversify the professoriate, and the issues surrounding community-engagement evaluation in the tenure and promotion process.

While there is a current movement across PWIs to address the historical oppression and marginalization of BIPOC faculty, staff, and students through DEI initiatives, these initiatives are not always successful due to the overwhelming number of challenges that BIPOC faculty face. An example of this is that PWI campus climates are often hostile and alienating (Fuentes et al., 2018), which results from a "lack of belonging, discrimination, social exclusion, and tokenism" for minoritized faculty (Settles et al., 2021, p. 1). BIPOC faculty are routinely challenged in the classroom, particularly when addressing race and ethnicity with students (Harlow, 2003; Turner et al., 2008; Pittman, 2010; Sue et al., 2011). They also receive disproportionately lower student evaluation ratings than white faculty (Aruguete et al., 2017; Chávez & Mitchell, 2020; Kreitzer & Sweet-Cushman, 2021), and occupy a disproportionate representation of contingent faculty positions (Navarro, 2017). In broader institutional contexts, minoritized faculty assume the burden of race-related service obligations, while they face significant challenges in the tenure and

promotion process (Guillaume & Apodaca, 2020; Settles et al., 2020), which we will discuss further later in this section.

Studies have shown that while not all minoritized faculty undertake community-engaged work—which encompasses community-engaged teaching, scholarship, and service–community-engaged work—is disproportionately undertaken by minoritized faculty members (O'Meara, 2011, 2012, 2018), a population that has been undertaking this work since they were first allowed into universities (González & Padilla, 2008; Gordon da Cruz, 2017; Risam, 2018a). This type of work "encompasses modes of knowledge production that many BIPOC faculty embrace as a means of maintaining commitments to leveraging their scholarship in partnership with their communities and engaging students in that work (Alston & Cantor, 2014)" (Eatman et al., 2017, p. 363). However, critical examination of community-engaged work by BIPOC scholars has argued for more equitable community engagement practices that emphasize a focus on power redistribution (Mitchell, 2008), move away from the embedded nature of whiteness (Mitchell et al., 2012), and support the importance of decolonizing community-engaged work (Yep & Mitchell, 2017). The field of community engagement is also moving through a transformative period in which scholars undertaking this work are explicitly challenging the primary presumptions behind traditional forms of scholarship: the researcher as expert and problem-solver based on an extractive approach to community knowledge and expertise, rather than a collaborator. Larger global conversations are also focusing on the need to move away from historically oppressive models of community engagement, like service learning, towards more equity-based frameworks, like critically engaged civic learning (Vincent et al., 2021).

Strategies for diversifying the professoriate that neglect the kind of scholarship that newer, more diverse faculty seek to pursue—like community-engaged scholarship—often fail to address the cultural changes necessary to retain historically underrepresented faculty. This is in addition to what Risam (2018b) describes as the double bind of BIPOC faculty, who are subject to cultural taxation (Padilla, 1994; Joseph & Hirschfield, 2011) and are "obligated to perform emotional, relational, representational, and educational labor for the institution, despite the fact that it is not personally rewarded" (Risam, 2018b, n.p.). Community-engaged work, then, becomes part of what Risam (2022) describes as a triple bind for BIPOC faculty who also pursue forms of research and teaching that are poorly understood in faculty reward structures. In light of the fact that community-engaged work has proven challenging for hiring, tenure, and promotion committees to recognize and evaluate as scholarship, this gap in faculty reward structures further exacerbates racist inequities within the professoriate (Niks, 2006; Changfoot et al., 2020). Consequently, minoritized faculty are less likely to pursue academic careers or to remain in faculty positions where community-engaged work is not valued and rewarded (Saltmarsh & Hartley, 2016). This, in turn, has significant impact on recruitment and retention of BIPOC faculty, whose work deserves support in and of itself, and to their contributions, which help our universities become student-ready (ready for the students we actually have, rather than the white, middle-class, traditional-age students some faculty and administrators imagine we should have) and better positioned to offer the high-impact educational experience of community-engaged teaching and research to minoritized students.

The methodologies of community-engaged work, in particular, have troubling effects on BIPOC faculty in tenure and promotion processes. Specifically, community-engaged scholarship requires ensuring that a project is itself designed in collaboration with community partners and not overdetermined by the university, holding space for all stakeholders' voices throughout the collaborative research process (Vincent et al., 2021) and recognizing that the outputs of community-engaged scholarship may necessarily look different from the more "traditional" forms of dissemination for scholarship, such as journal articles or monographs (Sturm et al., 2011). Studies have shown that tenure and promotion evaluation processes typically view community-engaged work by "either (1) reward[ing] community engagement as service (counting little in promotion and tenure) or (2) do not specifically reward community engagement as either teaching, research and creative activity, or service" (Sturm et al., 2011, p. 10-11), and in turn they create disincentives for faculty to undertake community-engaged work (Saltmarsh et al., 2009; Ellison & Eatman, 2008). While the contract language change via the MSCA on our campuses attempted to address this concern, there were still other problems, including faculty and administrators holding a narrow view of

what constitutes “scholarship” and evaluators being unsure of how to assess scholarly outputs that do not conform to preconceived and traditional expectations (Eatman et al., 2017).

BACKGROUND: THE MASSACHUSETTS EQUITY AND ENGAGEMENT CONSORTIUM

Across the three campuses, nine faculty members and three administrative leaders collaborated directly throughout the duration of the grant, with the project director and the administrative leaders for each institution meeting regularly throughout the grant period. Each campus team met to advance their own institutional level work and the entire Equity and Engagement Consortium met in person and virtually throughout the duration of the grant.

The consortium campuses that were selected to participate in this grant are three of nine state university campuses that make up a portion of the Massachusetts Public Higher Education system. Worcester State is a mid-sized university centrally located in Massachusetts and is a recipient of the Carnegie Elective Classification in Community Engagement. Salem State is a mid-sized university located in the North Shore area, has the most diverse student population of the nine state universities, and is also a recipient of the Carnegie Elective Classification in Community Engagement. Fitchburg State is a smaller-sized university centrally located in Northern Massachusetts and has recently established the Fitchburg State Center for Faculty Equity & Inclusion, which resulted as an outgrowth of this grant.

In the discussion below, we trace the events that led to the initial formulation of the project and the ways in which it changed dramatically once it began. It started in 2012, when the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE) adopted “Preparing Citizens” as one of its six strategic goals for Massachusetts public higher education. This was followed by the 2014 state policy for public colleges and universities, which named civic learning as an "expected outcome" for all undergraduate students (Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, 2015, p. 4).

With the 2015 launch of the Center for Civic Engagement at Salem State University, its leadership decided to intentionally align its inaugural work with the new MA Policy on Civic Learning. This effort, bolstered by small grants, was designed to strategically engage faculty in discussions related to the Civic Learning Policy and strive to build a civic-minded campus. In 2016, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, Salem State convened a statewide “Pathways to Civic Learning” conference to discuss pedagogies and institutional structures most likely to increase the civic learning and engagement of college students, including underrepresented students across academic disciplines and the student experience. The program featured a keynote address by John Saltmarsh, a civic engagement scholar and UMass Boston professor, entitled “Next Generation Engagement: The Rise of Publicly Engaged Scholars and What it Means for Higher Education”. Saltmarsh argued, based on his research and the research of others, that tenure and promotion evaluation policies have privileged traditional methods of inquiry in the creation of disciplinary knowledge. Faculty work that supports civic learning, on the other hand, engages faculty, students, and communities in reciprocal and collaborative problem-solving that challenges traditional concepts of expertise and authorship and is often interdisciplinary in nature. The presentation and the discussion that followed mobilized a group of faculty at Massachusetts state universities to lobby their administrative and union leaders, through collective bargaining, to support the work of civically-engaged faculty via overt language change in the faculty contract relating to the criteria for tenure and promotion.

As a result of their efforts, the Massachusetts State College Association (MSCA) and the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE) ratified language in 2018 that identified community-engaged research and teaching as elements to be evaluated alongside traditional faculty work. Specifically, the criteria for tenure and promotion now recognize community engagement in all three domains of faculty work: “community-engaged teaching methods,” “scholarship that includes community-engaged approaches and methods of dissemination,” and “public service, [and] community engaged service” (Massachusetts State College Association, 2017).

This sector-wide language was a first-in-the-nation achievement. However, many administrators and faculty on the campuses were either unfamiliar with the changes or unaware of what high-quality

community-engaged work could entail, so there was a need to advance the campuses' awareness and support of these changes. At Salem State, the need to develop a common understanding of community-engaged teaching and scholarship and develop corresponding professional development inspired two community-engaged faculty and one community-engaged professional, all white women, to seek out grant opportunities. At that time there was an RFP for a Massachusetts Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) grant that had "Transforming Student Success and Empowering Classroom and Campus Leadership" as a priority category and noted that diversifying the professoriate would meet that priority. Also required by the funders was the specification that the grants collaborate across other public institutions of higher education. Several decisions were made to frame the grant and meet the deadline, which included centering faculty support through student success and asserting that enhanced professional development of the new contract language would attract a more diverse professoriate. Fitchburg State University and Worcester State University joined to form the Equity and Engagement Consortium (EEC) and a plan was made for three-person faculty campus teams, each having a person with civic engagement involvement, diversity and inclusion knowledge, and union experience. The HEIF grant would provide the funding needed to bring campus stakeholders together to discuss what community-engaged work looks like across the disciplines, to create recruitment and marketing materials that attract a diverse professoriate, and to develop professional development that would help retain them.

At the onset of the grant period, core working groups on each consortium campus engaged in group study of best practices for successful implementation of institutional tenure and promotion practices that reward community-engaged approaches and methods and that align institutional inclusion and equity goals with community-engagement goals. Also, during this time, each campus met with their Leadership Cabinet to inform campus leaders of project objectives and proposed initiatives. Each campus hosted a campus kick-off forum for faculty and staff to share the goals of the initiative and to invite broad participation in conversations about how campus practices and messaging can be more inclusive of BIPOC faculty and other underrepresented identities. The intent was to build commitment for change, not just within academic affairs but across campus units.

At Salem State's fall 2019 convenings instead of the excitement and buy-in that was expected, some discord ensued over the idea that the grant was essentializing BIPOC faculty to justify getting the grant and achieve student success. From having three white women plan and write a grant that claimed to benefit BIPOC faculty to launching it with little consultation with BIPOC faculty, the process and method was flawed and stalled the work. Worcester State and Fitchburg State EEC partners were also struggling to articulate the purpose of the work and the individual roles and responsibilities of campus team members. EEC faculty team members expressed concern that the project was too focused on how supporting community-engaged work can support BIPOC faculty, rather than how to intrinsically support and value the work of BIPOC faculty.

In the spring 2020 semester, before the pandemic closed university campuses, the consortium held a two-day retreat that provided an opportunity for the campus faculty teams to build relationships with one another. These relationships between the faculty members along with the established consistent meeting/working schedule for the leadership team enabled the multi-campus collaboration to continue with many subsequent successes despite COVID disruptions. The retreat facilitator recommended meeting with faculty independently from the (white) campus leaders to learn about their aspirations in preparation for the retreat. This planning meeting led to a needed change in the retreat agenda to explicitly, and before anything else, address issues of equity and the experiences of BIPOC faculty on our campuses. Through formative assessment, we learned that the grant work itself was not addressing equity as much or as directly as engagement—and that the faculty involved wanted this to be corrected. Shifts were made to center equity and the experiences of BIPOC faculty, and ensure that the project focused on BIPOC faculty as intrinsically valuable rather than instrumentally useful for the benefit of students or the institution. These adjustments ultimately helped move us closer to achieving our initially intended goals and develop an ongoing EEC (now the New England Equity and Engagement Consortium) that continues to prioritize equity and BIPOC faculty.

REFLECTIVE CASE STUDIES: WORCESTER, SALEM, FITCHBURG

This study uses a reflective case study approach (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009) to discuss the implementation of the Equity and Engagement Consortium across the three Massachusetts state university campuses. A case study approach was chosen because it "is sensitive to the context in which information is gathered" (Radley & Chamberlain, 2012, p. 393) while conveying an understanding of complex phenomena in their "real-life context" (Yin, 2009). The three case studies discussed below examine the shared themes, obstacles, and successes that occurred at Worcester State, Salem State, and Fitchburg State.

Worcester State University (WSU)

When the grant project was introduced on our campus, our team, composed of a white, male team leader and three female BIPOC faculty assembled somewhat haphazardly. As faculty members, we had deep concerns about the implications of the grant, which both essentialized us and called for our participation to grant legitimacy. Worse, a couple of us had reason to distrust our team leader given an unfortunate reputation among faculty for issues including taking undue credit for past faculty efforts. Still, we signed on to do what we could to ensure that the grant goals were upheld and future faculty would benefit from greater support to pursue nontraditional work in academe.

What we encountered was a series of persistent obstacles brought on by the fact that our team skipped the first step outlined in the grant, which asked that we engage in group study of best practices for successful implementation of institutional tenure and promotion (T&P) practices that reward community-engaged approaches and methods and that align institutional inclusion and equity goals with community-engagement goals. Instead, we trusted our project manager, who convinced us to sign on to the project by offering to take the lead in planning and framing events, meaning that our responsibilities were reduced to weighing in via email and attending events. In hindsight, we realized that our project manager had fundamentally misunderstood the grant goals and had displayed a pattern of paternalism that showed up in his references to us as his "girls" and in his desire to protect us from what he saw as unfair or expanding demands from the project director (who was supporting the same events at all three campuses). Arguments transpired, resulting in the team leader's initial decision to restrict the team's communication with the project director, before stepping back from the project in the final months, leaving two of the faculty members to assume leadership.

When the project began, we diligently moved through the first few scheduled events and discussions with campus leaders and faculty members, though not without friction. For example, our kick-off event featured a prominent scholar with extensive experience in the field of community-engaged academic work, diversity, and promotion and tenure but, as it turned out, had been invited to speak at length not about this grant-relevant experience but about an honors living-learning program. Then, at our meeting with the WSU leadership, our team leader pressed those in attendance for funds to be devoted to the purchase of a van that might transport students to sites in the community—a pet project that had little relevance to the grant. In another early faculty forum, our team leader arranged for two white faculty to present on their "service-learning" projects, which featured uncritical and traditional "services" provided by white students to those in "underserved" communities. This was a watershed moment for the faculty team as we were forced to confront and move through our discomfort and confusion after a group of mostly white colleagues reached out to us following the event to communicate sincere concern. They saw whiteness centered where they had expected a distinct diversity initiative.

A meeting with representatives from Human Resources (HR), Marketing, and the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, Affirmative Action, and Equal Opportunity was our most productive and affirming forum of the HEIF grant project. The team was able to discuss branding and messaging, weighing in on four documents: our official prospectus (given to new faculty hires), our job advertisement in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and our description of WSU on LinkedIn. We felt that we were able to provide discrete language and suggestions to better reflect the values and priorities of current faculty in the service of recruiting diverse, engaged, and forward-looking faculty in the near future due to this collaborative effort.

It was at the grant retreat, almost halfway through the project, that we as faculty started to feel more empowered, due in large part to concrete contributions in our HR, Marketing, and DEI meeting combined with our increased communication as a team. We were helped by the space of the retreat to focus our efforts and, importantly, move beyond our team leader's vision. We set out to determine the best time to intervene in faculty members' thinking and planning regarding tenure and promotion. We decided to draft a document that could be distributed during spring personnel luncheons, which are hosted annually by campus deans, the union president, and the provost to review the requirements for tenure and promotion and answer questions. In essence, the team saw this as a prime opportunity to provide an additional voice as meeting attendees were already primed to think about "what counts" and how evidence should best be selected and arranged for review. This intervening document had two goals:

1. Communicate the change in contract language and offer definitions for relevant terms.
2. Contextualize the change within a recruitment and retention, diversity, equity and inclusion framework. Here especially, the team wanted to articulate a sobering reality: if an evaluator at any of the seven levels of the tenure & promotion process is not familiar with the techniques or methods of community-engaged scholarship (CES), this may have a disproportionate impact on BIPOC faculty—a reflection of institutional and structural racism.

The document drafted and vetted by deans was days away from being distributed at the spring 2020 faculty luncheons, but COVID stalled our plans, and a union vetting meeting was postponed and has not been rescheduled.

The pandemic notwithstanding, we were led by our team leader to understand that our grant-related work at WSU had been completed after our document had reached its final state. We found out months later that the other campus teams were working through the summer to design a final event and spend their remaining funds. Two faculty members (Santana and Mears) worked through difficult emotions and decided to see the project through on our own. Given our experiences, we were inspired by what we recognized as a lack of focused conversation among and on behalf of those who would be most served by the change in the contract language: BIPOC faculty. We decided to use the remaining funds to bring BIPOC faculty and those currently serving on tenure and promotions (T&P) committees into conversation with the goal of building community to ultimately work together to identify next steps.

We designed a cross-campus workshop specifically for ALANA/BIPOC faculty and current T&P committee members, titled "Recruiting and Retaining Community-Engaged ALANA/BIPOC Faculty: A Cross-Campus Conversation on Examples, Goals, and Tenure & Promotion." The event offered three discrete presentations, four breakout discussions, drew a total of 22 participants from both Worcester State and Fitchburg State Universities, and lasted two hours. The speakers presented on a series of topics and represented three institutional affiliations to signal both the breadth of this work and the range of impact. As a result of the workshop, participants articulated the following takeaways:

1. Faculty involved in community-engaged scholarship must ensure that their work is understood – lest they incur bias from traditionally minded-colleagues.
2. Specific groups must receive additional training – that is Peer Evaluation Committees within departments, chairs, and T&P committee members.
3. Conversations must continue around the value and necessity of nontraditional work in academe.
4. Allies must take seats on T&P committees.

Salem State University (SSU)

At Salem State University, working on this project was, in a larger sense, a process of confronting and coming to terms with the relationship between DEI and community-engaged work in our campus' cultural context. From the outset of our work, the SSU team struggled with the racialized power dynamics of our work. On our team, two white women faculty had been part of the design of the project along with a white woman administrator. While BIPOC faculty and the Office of Inclusive Excellence had been consulted while the project was being designed, none were invited to be faculty leads on the project until after it was funded by a grant. What seemed clear to Risam, the BIPOC faculty member who joined the team, was that

the grant proposal, which was claiming to be "diversifying the professoriate" seemed to pay lip service to diversity in service of the larger goal of operationalizing changes in contract language. Such changes would no doubt support BIPOC faculty and Risam did not doubt the team members' commitment to the crucial work of improving faculty diversity. Yet, when Risam voiced this concern, the team largely agreed that in order to get grant funding for projects, it's normal to frame it in ways that meet a call for proposals. While this is true, Risam found the fact that it was done without centering BIPOC faculty especially troubling.

After presenting information about the grant at a university leadership cabinet meeting, attended by all administrators, department chairs, and program coordinators, our team discovered that Risam's concerns were shared more broadly by our BIPOC faculty. After the leadership cabinet meeting in October, we received feedback from some campus leaders that our proposed work was potentially opportunistic at best and exploitative at worst. We originally planned to gather BIPOC faculty on campus to inform the development of resource materials and to learn how community-engaged work looks and feels across these individuals' disciplines, specifically from their perspective. Due to the feedback we received from the leadership cabinet meeting, we canceled this activity and began to center the importance of DEI in our approach and all future activities in support of this grant.

This was an important moment in raising our awareness of how the grant work was being received in light of the lack of authentic partnership from the very onset of the project, especially in the writing of the grant proposal. Had this project been conceived in and for BIPOC faculty it would very likely have taken a different path that more explicitly and intentionally addressed the challenges that community-engaged BIPOC faculty face in the pursuit of tenure and promotion. The three white proposal writers of this grant instead crafted a proposal that drew only a weak link to DEI issues in the service of securing a grant that had a constrained timeline. The group invited Risam specifically because of her excellent work in community engagement and academic research focused on DEI in higher education; however, this outreach should have happened at the start of the collaboration.

A large takeaway from this initiative for the white team members of this group is that it is one thing to know how to be a strong DEI ally, but it is quite another thing to enact those values. Best practices in community engagement advocate for sustainability and authentic relationships, yet we did not enact those practices in this project. When confronted with tight deadlines and narrowed foci of grant calls, we initially failed to live the values we espouse, in turn reinforcing the ideas this grant sought to change. We realize that it is not enough to seek feedback or recruit colleagues into such a project in the moment, rather it takes months and years to cultivate and build strong relationships that allow for organic DEI collaborations. Unfortunately, due to a number of reasons, including hiring and retention issues, there is a dearth of BIPOC faculty in leadership positions at Salem State, which undermines the important work we say we are committed to, but do not in fact commit to.

Like the other campuses, the arrival of COVID disrupted many intended activities and plans we had created to bring stakeholders into the fold and to update campus recruitment materials. As such, these activities did not occur, but we were able to reignite our efforts to hold faculty and evaluator workshops over summer and fall 2020, with the focus on BIPOC faculty that had initially been underdeveloped in the project design. The Community-Engaged Faculty Workshop was a two-hour virtual workshop. Due to an overwhelming interest of faculty wanting to participate, we held three sessions over two weeks for 20 faculty either on the tenure track or being considered for promotion in the academic year 2020-21. This workshop relied on the companion workbook created for *The Craft of Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning* (Welch & Plaxton-Moore, 2019). Activities faculty engaged with focused on faculty values, self-advocacy, faculty identity, and linking faculty narratives with evidence and documentation. In preparation for this workshop materials were created to help BIPOC faculty engage in self-advocacy during the tenure and promotion process and for allies who might be serving in a leadership capacity to better advocate for the community-engaged scholarship of BIPOC faculty.

The self-advocacy handout encouraged BIPOC faculty to familiarize themselves with the MSCA Collective Bargaining Agreement language and to connect with other faculty undertaking community-engaged work to better learn how to navigate the difference between formal written tenure and promotion policies and procedures and the unwritten informal practices that may more accurately reflect the culture

and norms of the university. This hand-out also advised BIPOC faculty to seek out colleagues who can help them understand the institutional culture as it relates to community-engaged activities, from teaching to scholarship to service, and to develop an elevator pitch to articulate why community-engaged scholarship is the preferred method for their research and how their community-engaged research is academically rigorous and publicly disseminated. Lastly, this handout encouraged BIPOC faculty to create a plan to document their community-engaged work and the impact of their research as it correlates with the language for community-engaged work in the MSCA Collective Bargaining Agreement.

For allies, the advocacy handout focused on the creation of consistent and intentional actions of advocacy that can help academic institutions chip away at a culture that lacks equity and maintains policies that marginalize communities. It encouraged advocates to make themselves aware of the origins of community-engaged research, to advocate for the creation of intentional communities — both formal and informal — within the department and in the broader campus community around community-engaged work, and to address the needs of BIPOC faculty to ensure true equity, which requires sustained long-term changes in various university structures, policies, and procedures.

In fall 2020, we were also able to hold a one-hour virtual workshop for the evaluators of faculty (department chairs and deans) that worked with over 40 evaluators. This workshop provided an explanation and status of grant-funded work and an overview of the updated MSCA contract language to set the context for the workshop. Evaluators were provided an explanation of community-engaged scholarship and examples of what community-engaged scholarship could look like across disciplines. Participants were then broken out into groups to collectively evaluate a sample community-engaged narrative looking for how it aligns with the MSCA contract language previously discussed.

Fitchburg State University (FSU)

Central to Fitchburg State's work was the acknowledgement that while policy changes and programming may offer a new pathway to change, people rarely change direction unless there is a more substantial culture shift. Institutional racism within higher education is a reality. Existing literature supports issues of tokenism, unequal and invisible labor of minority faculty members, marginalization of BIPOC faculty, code-changing, and systemic barriers for the hiring and promotion of BIPOC faculty and other minoritized faculty members. Fitchburg State's investigation supported the contention that while policies may change to accommodate progress in these areas, institutional culture can, and often does, disrupt any significant change. The Fitchburg State team addressed a key idea — that those who advocate and work toward equity and inclusion should consider that their role is not to help historically marginalized faculty members fit within the institution; it is to help change the institution's underlying issues responsible for their marginalization.

At the mid-winter retreat, the Fitchburg State team focused on the multiple challenges that community-engaged BIPOC faculty at our institution face during promotion and tenure. That led us to two activities through the remainder of the grant period: creation of a promotion and tenure guide for these faculty ("Equity and Inclusion for the Community-Engaged Scholar") which could be shared with faculty across the system of Massachusetts state universities and beyond, and the creation of a proposal for a Center for Faculty Equity and Inclusion.

The guide is designed to speak to two groups of people: minority faculty and peer advocates. It specifically addresses minority faculty who conduct community-engaged scholarship, but its information is relevant for all minority faculty. It also addresses peer advocates interested in understanding the challenges faced by minority faculty and committed to addressing systemic issues within higher education that adversely impact the tenure and promotion of underrepresented faculty and librarians.

The guide (which runs to 42 pages) consists of four parts. **Part I** presents guidance for self-advocacy. It provides BIPOC faculty and other minoritized faculty members with advice on establishing a sense of community on PWI campuses and recognizing moments when their "otherness" results in disproportionate workload or expectations that do not align with their expertise or role in the institution.

Part II speaks specifically to BIPOC faculty and other minoritized faculty members who conduct community-engaged research. Because minority faculty members often conduct community-engaged

scholarship, this document offers guidance on articulating the legitimacy and impact of this less recognized method of scholarship.

Part III addresses peer advocacy. A central theme of the guide is that inclusion, equity, and institutional racism within higher education is not the sole responsibility of the minority population on any given campus. It is the responsibility of all, and those coming from places of privilege can play a significant role in reshaping institutional culture to expose and address inequity. This portion of the guide gives advocates essential advice on how to avoid reshaping minority faculty to fit the system and instead work to reshape the system to include minority faculty.

Part IV is an exemplar of a proposal for a Center for Faculty Equity and Inclusion. This section's primary purpose is to provide interested parties with a starting point for how they may want to propose a center if their institution does not yet have one.

While the guide was a significant product of the work completed by the FSU team, the realities of current events reestablished the urgency for larger-scale change. A proposal for our Center for Faculty Equity and Inclusion, while a necessary product, needed to be put into motion with greater immediacy. As the nation grappled with the swift and devastating impacts of COVID-19, universities were witness to the undeniable inequities that plague higher education. The plight of the underprivileged student became even more apparent as faculty and administration struggled to ensure that students with limited resources were able to continue their education. Faculty themselves struggled with realities of inequity in their own lives as well. Larger issues of systemic inequality rose to the surface following greater attention to police brutality. The Black Lives Matter movement galvanized conversations of racial inequity. The campus community sought to hold itself accountable for its limited efforts to explicitly address these issues in the past. It demonstrated an intentional and admirable beginning to an overdue and much needed exposure of inequities at the university.

Informed by existing literature, survey data collected from faculty at Fitchburg State, and exploratory conversations with BIPOC faculty and community-engaged scholars, we proposed the creation of a Center for Faculty Equity and Inclusion to ensure the prioritization of faculty inclusion as a mechanism to explicitly address institutional racism within higher education. The Center would ideally work with the Crocker Center for Civic Engagement at Fitchburg State to ensure that community-engaged research, which has its origins in the addressing of systemic inequity and is often conducted by BIPOC faculty, is understood and supported through the tenure and promotion process. The proposal for this Center is intended to lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive and self-sustaining model.

The Center will help Fitchburg State University meet the needs of BIPOC faculty and other minoritized faculty members. It will recognize the vulnerabilities of these faculty members and the institutional and cultural barriers that disallow them from contributing to the campus community in a meaningful way. It will also support quality research on equity and inclusiveness, thus providing the university with a unique knowledge-base on one of the most significant conversations today. The Center will also provide a space for BIPOC faculty and other minoritized faculty members to engage in generative conversations on the implications of cultural and institutional norms that create barriers to their sense of community or their scholarship. These organic conversations are often the starting point for problem-solving measures.

The motivation for this Center not being based on the "unique perspective" of BIPOC faculty is noteworthy: BIPOC faculty members have "critical knowledge," not simply "diverse perspectives." If diversity is truly being valued, faculty should be seen as people who embody essential information, not individuals who think differently. The Center will ensure that the scholarship of BIPOC faculty and other minoritized faculty members is visible.

The Fitchburg State team also explored mentorship as a foundational method to ensure personalized support of BIPOC faculty. When solutions are offered through mentorship, that mentorship is often not tailored to the unique needs of minoritized faculty members. BIPOC faculty and other minoritized faculty do not need to be mentored in a way that idealizes the status quo. If those in higher education are to honestly address the issues of systemic racism within higher education, they must be willing to admit the problematic nature of the status quo as one that continues the marginalization of minority faculty members.

The success of the institution depends on its ability to address contemporary issues that impact its student body and produce knowledge that assists in solving global problems. Documents, guides, workshops, seminars, and friendly chats are not going to solve systemic racism within higher education. Action might. Sincere, dedicated, and consistent work against inevitable institutional barriers may. Firm financial investment in the prioritization of the problem and the support of the work will.

The team at Fitchburg State is aware that the reality of this vision is unlikely to see the light of day. Other financial obligations may take priority. Student success may be framed as disconnected from this issue and take precedence, despite constant reference to "diverse faculty" as good for student retention. Shared spaces will be offered instead of a dedicated space due to limited room on campus, despite literal calls for making room for BIPOC faculty and minoritized faculty members at the institution. Financial resources may be denied due to unforeseeable events such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This is ironic because, COVID-19 became a catalyst for conversations of systemic racism within dominant institutions and disproportionately impacted the communities that universities often vow to better serve.

Regardless, the team at Fitchburg State has pushed—and pushes—forward in pursuit of establishing a space for BIPOC faculty and community-engaged scholarship. Some progress has been made. During the annual January 2021 in-service, the proposal was presented to interested faculty and staff. The presentation was well-received and members of the Fitchburg State community were and are interested in supporting such a center on our campus. The proposal was also shared with the Grant Center in hopes of finding funding to establish and sustain the center. The full proposal was given to members of a working group, convened by a member of the academic staff and a faculty member of the Fitchburg State team. The working group is still working towards an operating center.

CONCLUSION

On the final day of the funding period (September 21, 2020), we held a virtual symposium entitled *Advancing Equity Through Publicly Engaged Scholarship: Transforming Faculty Reward Policies and Practices*. Co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education and Campus Compact of Southern New England and drawing over 300 registrants, the symposium featured a keynote presentation by KerryAnn O'Meara and presentations by project team members on their work. A significant accomplishment of this grant is that it provided the opportunity for BIPOC faculty to bring their own expertise to bear on research in the field of community engagement and challenge the field itself to be more inclusive and recognize and honor the diverse (and often not acknowledged) origins of community engagement work in ethnic, Indigenous, and women's studies. A number of the BIPOC faculty team members served in leadership roles in the planning of the symposium and/or presented on panels during the symposium. This involvement alone has brought much-needed new voices into the field of the scholarship of community engagement.

With the symposium marking the end of the grant project, the EEC was at an important juncture: do we write our final report and end our EEC at the point when our team dynamics were starting to function in a healthier and more equitable way, or do we apply for a subsequent grant and use our learnings to more deeply link racial equity and community-engaged academic work? Faculty now comprising the EEC (from the three universities that did the previous project, plus the University of Massachusetts–Amherst) valued the momentum we had achieved and decided to continue our work together, focusing on de-centering whiteness and undoing racism. We decided to pivot our attention to faculty development for anti-racist community-engaged programming, pedagogies, and practices that would build on the cultural wealth of minoritized students. In December 2020, we applied for a second HEIF grant, which was subsequently funded in March 2021.

In planning for this grant, we restructured the leadership, centering BIPOC faculty in leadership roles with white people playing supportive roles. The white team members practiced checking themselves and their place in the work and acknowledged the critical inquiry imperative to DEI work. The content of this grant also required us to co-create with our BIPOC students and community partners, holding focus groups to make sure their voices were centered in the work. As a result, the expanded EEC created "Anti-Racist

Community-Engaged Pedagogy", held five professional development institutes based on those principles that engaged nearly 60 faculty, and closed with a September 2021 day-long virtual Symposium on Anti-Racist Community-Engaged Learning that was attended by 574 people from across the nation.

At this writing, the second grant has ended, with presentations about the work scheduled in various national forums. The EEC will continue to meet and move the work of anti-racist community-engaged learning forward, but it will be done through institutional funds, on individual campuses, with collaborative, collegial support. The EEC, and our functioning as a team, grew from a well-intentioned group of white leaders, with incomplete knowledge and a singly focused goal to operationalize contract language, to a strong and healthy team led by BIPOC faculty who have shown how to advocate and lead for change both on campus and in the community.

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