

Provost Faculty Promotion Dialogue | March 14, 2022

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Overview & Top Lines

72 participants from 13 colleges/schools and 1 division



AGNR	7
ARHU	9
BMGT	1
BSOS	9
CMNS	8
EDUC	4
ENGR	6
GRAD	-
INST	2
JOUR	-
LIBR	4
MAPP	2
PLCY	2
SPHL	8
UGST	1
Other	9

Faculty Type



Extension Agent	2
Librarian	4
PTK	22
TTK	31
Other	13

Obstacles to address



- DEI as a domain is going to be harder to incorporate than other factors being discussed in this series (collaboration, quality, impact, etc.) because it is enforced by the hierarchy of gender and race that DEI efforts essentially seek to disrupt.

"More than the other factors, this goes to the heart of the 'hierarchy protecting the hierarchy.'"

- Measurement and activities need to be based on values. Until it is clear the institution values DEI in a deeper way, it will go uncounted/unmeasured. There is a need for obvious support from the top, as well as specific guidance on what is measurable and how to measure it.

"Needs to be authentic at the core; cannot be a 'checking the box' activity."

- We need to address the impact of incorporating DEI requirements into promotion decisions that are already in process (many plans of organization do not include DEI as one of the criteria).

- It is hard to distinguish between an actual commitment to DEI work and doing something to check a box.

"What is generative and what is transactional? The moment value is assigned to DEI work, it becomes transactional."

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Indicators of success



The major themes that emerged from the discussion about possible indicators of success were:

- Active involvement in DEI-related initiatives or activities
- Inclusive teaching
- Collaborations or partnerships that focus on DEI principles

A number of people noted the importance of relying on narrative as a means of expressing and understanding what faculty have done related to DEI across some broad categories. This will allow for differences in goals and measures across contexts and disciplines and address the challenge of quantifying some of these measures.

Themes



What makes it difficult to evaluate DEI?

Consider your own research, teaching, and service as well as the work of your field/discipline. What do you see as obstacles that need to be removed or addressed to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into the evaluation and promotion process?

A. Require DEI in evaluation and require DEI statement of all faculty

- Faculty should be required to articulate their work and the impact of DEI; right now, it is an option. It should be required regardless of the funding source and what they are asking for.
- DEI statements need more weight and need to be required. The statement can give a practical measurement of impact or success.
- DEI should be part of our culture and ought to be part of the department level requirements for TTK and PTK promotion process. This means a fundamental change in the deliberation process in APT meetings; citations should show the impact factors of the DEI efforts the person has done.

B. How DEI is defined will be key

- It is difficult to evaluate what you have not defined; this is an issue that needs to be addressed in disciplines, in professional fields, and across higher education.
- Saying what DEI is generally might be possible, but to get specific enough that it is measurable with outcomes will be hard.

“DEI is hard to define—what is a DEI initiative? Is it part of teaching and service categories, as opposed to a topic of research?”

- DEI evaluation applies in different ways depending on the context and discipline. It might include collaboration, scholarship with wide variance, or data collection.

“It would take a broad tent to accommodate everyone.”

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Themes



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C. How will DEI efforts be measured and evaluated?

- The approaches will vary from program to program.

“How can I know if I am reaching the intended audience and having a DEI impact?”

“What is the rubric and what if DEI isn’t part of my training or background?”

- The Faculty Success system has a place to enter DEI information (maybe DEI statement?), making this easier to make concrete and transparent.

“As I prepared for my annual review, I appreciated that you could include things that were DEI related in the ‘faculty success’ section.”

- Judging and measuring impact requires time, energy, and monetary investment to do the necessary qualitative and quantitative study, and units may not have the capacity.
- If scholarly work is closely tied to/based in DEI exploration, this work is looked at critically. If the work is not tied to the DEI domain, it is not considered at all.
- There should be a holistic way of looking at this. We can look at this intellectually, and by measuring how faculty are perceived by colleagues/peers and students.

“There is another piece about self-awareness and how we embody DEI ourselves.”

Themes



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D. Training for competence and enhancing tolerance for difficult conversations will be essential

- If DEI is part of evaluation criteria, faculty need to be given mentoring, training, etc., to increase their capability and confidence.
- We will have to really invest in training before we start evaluating people in DEI.

“TLTC has a 6-week program, all faculty should be required to attend something like that, and not a 45-minute presentation.”

“We are encouraged to bring DEI into teaching, but people may not have the skills to do it.”

- There is awkwardness with this topic across the country, and a need to focus on the silence and awkwardness to push through it.

“We need to increase comfort talking about DEI issues so we can unpack these things in order to be able to address what’s happening in the curriculum.”

“We haven’t developed the voice we need to respond to the pushback to these issues in the ‘room where it’s happening’ and decisions are being made.”

Themes



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E. Need more diversity in students and faculty

- We need a more diverse community—faculty and staff—in which to operate, regardless of DEI efforts towards evaluation and promotion.

“Addressing DEI in the classroom doesn’t matter if the composition of students in the classroom doesn’t change to be more reflective of the community.”

- We need to increase faculty awareness of diversity so that tenure decisions are not sidetracked by cultural misunderstanding. For example, the way someone writes their personal statement may be in more of a story-telling fashion vs. a White European style of writing and presentation. Also, the writing style may be different for people who do not speak English as their first language; sometimes their promotion package is not given the same respect.

“I have been horrified by how tenure decisions have been sidetracked with cultural misunderstanding.”

- Those faculty of color who do significant mentoring because they are the few faces of representation for students are providing “hidden labor” that can penalize their own future. They could become overwhelmed, resulting in other tasks suffering.

“Up until now, many assignments for DEI efforts or initiatives have gone to minorities, people of color, etc., because they are the ones interested and impacted the most. How do we make it okay for them to say ‘no’ to those requests since they do take time?”

Themes



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F. When DEI doesn't "fit" with the work

- Expect pushback from those comfortable with current methods of evaluation. They may pay lip service, but it will not be held up at different levels of review.

"It's like saying 'we value teaching,' while in reality research is valued more."

- In the sciences, there are people who express the opinion that there is a tradeoff between DEI and rigor/excellence. There is a sentiment that putting emphasis on DEI will water down other criteria.
- Sometimes there is not room or resources for DEI authorship and work in certain research agendas and disciplines.
- Due to the way outcomes are defined in externally-funded grants and research, there are constraints in explicitly expanding scope to include other outcomes, such as DEI.

"Much of my work is with NIH. Even if we change our metrics, we need outside funders to also change their metrics to do this work."

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Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Themes



Identifying measures of success

How will we know whether to give someone a high rating in the area of diversity, equity, and inclusion? What would they be doing or accomplishing if their work demonstrated excellence in DEI?

Data collected via online brainstorm tool, Ideaboardz

A. Active involvement in DEI-related initiatives or activities

25 unique comments, 30 additional upvotes

- This theme had the most comments and upvotes. Most suggestions grouped into one of four sub-topics:
 - Effort towards diversifying the student body/staff/faculty (7 comments) – focused on the extent to which faculty are involved in recruitment efforts, as well as how diverse their own group(s) of students/postdocs are.
 - Work to change policies so they are more inclusive and equitable (4 comments) – highlighted work that faculty do to ensure DEI principles are reflected in policies (e.g., hiring and retention policies, inclusive practices).
 - Contributions to official DEI initiatives (4 comments) – suggested measuring involvement in established committees and/or initiatives focused on DEI in some way. One comment noted the importance of counting varying types of contributions and service (beyond just committee participation).
 - Updating courses and/or creating new courses to promote DEI (3 comments) – related to the courses faculty have updated or designed to be more inclusive of DEI principles and concepts.

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B. Inclusive teaching

14 unique comments, 23 additional upvotes

- Inclusive teaching was the second largest category of comments and focused on the degree to which various aspects of a faculty member's teaching and course design created an inclusive learning environment. Many of the comments grouped into one of two sub-topics:
 - Syllabus demonstrates DEI has been considered (4 comments) – spoke to the design of courses and the extent to which inclusion has been considered (e.g., DEI values included in syllabus, accommodations for students with disabilities, diverse collection of authors in reading list).
 - Student feedback (4 comments) – pointed to student feedback as a means of assessing the degree of inclusivity of a faculty member's teaching.

C. Collaborations or partnerships that focus on DEI principles

9 unique comments, 7 additional upvotes

- This theme highlighted the importance of tracking any DEI-focused partnerships and collaborations faculty have undertaken. Two sub-topics emerged, each of which focused on a different type of collaboration:
 - Community-based projects or service activities (6 comments) – related to DEI-related work faculty do in the community with community partners.
 - Research/work collaborations focused on DEI (2 comments) – related to DEI-related collaborative research faculty do in partnership with other faculty.

Themes



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D. Use narrative explanations to show evidence of DEI work in different categories

8 unique comments, 19 additional upvotes

- This theme focused on the importance of narrative as a means of understanding what a faculty member has done related to DEI. Several people alluded to the idea that DEI goals and measures may vary depending on context and discipline and suggested very broad categories (e.g., research, teaching, service, building knowledge, external stakeholders); faculty could write about what they've done related to DEI in each applicable category.

E. Impact

8 unique comments, 6 additional upvotes

- This group of comments centered on the need to measure the impact of any DEI-related work a faculty member has done. Some suggested outcomes to measure included student success, learning outcomes, and community impact.

F. Establishing and accomplishing DEI specific goals

6 unique comments, 13 additional upvotes

- This set of comments highlighted the importance of establishing specific DEI goals and measuring the degree to which those goals are achieved.

G. DEI-related professional development

6 unique comments, 11 additional upvotes

- This theme suggested tracking the DEI-related continuing education and professional development opportunities of which faculty have taken advantage, and the growth they have experienced as a result.

Themes



Identifying measures of success

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H. Diversity of research partners and people mentored

6 unique comments, 6 additional upvotes

- This group of comments centered on evaluating the composition of groups of people with whom a faculty member partners, and the pool of students and junior faculty a faculty member actively mentors (i.e., is a faculty member partnering and mentoring only people who are like them or are they reaching out to people from a variety of backgrounds?).

I. Evaluations

6 unique comments, 6 additional upvotes

- These comments focused on evaluation as a primary measure. Some suggested methods included comprehensive program evaluations, surveying the particular group or population involved in work with a faculty member, 360 evaluations, and feedback from students and/or other faculty members.

J. Research/scholarship that focuses on DEI principles

4 unique comments, 2 additional upvotes

- This small group of comments pointed to faculty research and publications. Two small sub-topics emerged:
 - Citing diverse authors (2 comments) – focused on the extent to which faculty members cited research from a diverse array of other researchers.
 - Research demonstrates some aspect of DEI (2 comments) – focused on the extent to which a faculty member's research focuses on elements of DEI in some way.

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K. Need more funding and recognition for DEI-focused work

3 unique comments, 5 additional upvotes

- This group of comments expressed a sentiment that more funding for and recognition of DEI-related research and work is needed if we want to make DEI more of a priority for faculty.

Notes

- There were 7 additional comments that did not fit into any of the listed themes.
- Several groups discussed the need for more explicit definitions or shared understandings about the focus and measures.
 - *“Not everyone is equally well informed about DEI. It is important that we are understanding and using the same terminology.”*
 - *“Measuring DEI creates anxiety for people who don’t know how to do it. We’re asking people to try something new and be measured on it for promotion.”*
- There was a great deal of discussion across groups about how difficult it is to demonstrate impact with DEI-related work. A few main points surfaced several times:
 - As with some of the topics of previous sessions, DEI can be context and discipline specific.
 - People noted the challenge in drilling down to specific enough definitions without oversimplifying complex concepts and intuitive practices, and without creating *“performative checklists.”*
 - DEI work is often collaborative in nature, and, as one participant put it, *“it is a challenge to come up with an individual measure for a collaborative process.”*
 - Some acknowledged that not everyone values DEI or sees the need for this work, and that there is *“silent pushback”* from some corners that needs to be addressed.

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Themes from Chat

In a few words, share your reaction to the comments you just heard from the Provost.

Many participants expressed appreciation for the focus on DEI in the strategic plan and the University's recognition that "it is essential to incorporate DEI into the APT policy."

There were several comments highlighting the connection between diversity, equity, and inclusion and broader goals:

- *"DEI considerations is a way to strengthen and deepen our commitment to excellence."*
- *"DEI is linked to our public service in support of democracy and the U.S. Constitution."*
- *"Recognizing and rewarding the contributions of our faculty, staff, and students to DEI will help to further our ability to make a strong impact in the community beyond UMD."*
- *"Rewarding work that is not simply about diversity in research, but that ADVANCES diversity on campus seems exactly the right way forward!"*



Themes from Chat

What is something that caught your attention today?

Several participants expressed the need for DEI efforts to surpass a simply transactional approach:

- *“How do we make this a meaningful cultural shift with opportunities for continued development rather than a compliance checklist?”*
- *“We need to think of DEI as transformative tools, not simply an end goal in itself. We also need to talk about DEI and social justice together.”*
- *“We need to be careful how we start measuring, lest we do more harm than good.”*

There were a few comments about training and support:

- *“We need practice in responding to blowback ...”*
- *“Extensive training of all constituents would be needed to really incorporate the value of DEI into the culture and promotion processes.”*

Finally, one participant’s comment resonated with others:

- *“The fact that it is SO HARD to say anything truly meaningful should not be confused with the even more important fact that - measured or not - this dimension of scholarship is vital to our future. As a university and as a planet. There is no Plan B.”*