

**Retention of Faculty of Color**  
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The faculty at academic institutions do not represent the racial and ethnic demographic shifts observed across the national population (Whittaker et al., 2015). Universities across the country continue to show an underrepresentation of ethnic/racial minorities and women across disciplines (Moreno et al., 2006). This disparity has been attributed to the inability of institutions to address changing points of access as well as the lack of recognition that promoting diversity drives the primary mission of a university (Whittaker et al., 2014). Attempts to address underrepresentation are often transient and/or inconsistent. Recruiting practices are an important first step to developing a critical mass of faculty. Still, upon arriving on campus, faculty of color are often socialized to assimilate to the academic environment rather than the campus recognizing and accommodating to the experiences of those traditionally underrepresented in academia (Whittaker et al., 2015). As such, limited attention is provided for promoting retention and advancement.

According to Marquette University's (MU) Office of Institutional Research and Analysis (OIRA), in 2018 faculty who identify as Hispanic/Latinx, African American/Black, Asian/Asian American, or American Indian/Alaska Native constituted 18% (80 out of 455) of the Regular Faculty. A closer inspection reveals that Hispanic/Latinx tenure-track faculty included 16 individuals, 11 of which are situated in the College of Arts and Sciences, and 23 identified as African American/Black. The faculty trends since 2008 show a steady decline of Hispanic/Latinx faculty, with a slight increase in the past year, while African American/Black faculty have remained relatively stable. In a recent report by OIRA (May, 2019), the attrition rate, or percentage of faculty who left MU while on tenure track, was 31% across all faculty who were hired between 2003-2010. Although it is important to note the low headcount or sample size, in that same time the attrition rates for Hispanic/Latinx and African American/Black faculty were 60% and 45%, respectively.

As such, vital to the changing demographics in higher education is paying close attention to the factors that contribute to attrition and implementing mechanisms that facilitate retention. The lack of retention and advancement of underrepresented faculty results in faculty who do not represent the broader population and a lack of senior role models or mentors (Whittaker et al., 2014). Often cited as reasons for faculty of color departure are feelings of isolation, marginalization, and/or invisibility (Stanley, 2006). That is, an unwelcoming environment or not feeling like one belongs to the campus culture can function as barriers to faculty retention. Culture has been described as "the sea we swim in – so pervasive, so all-consuming, that we fail to notice its existence until we step out of it. It matters more than we think" (Hrabowski, 2019). Cultural transformation and sustained work are required to mitigate the problem, which will require long-term, strategic initiatives and commitment of resources. (Whittaker et al., 2015). Further, deans and department chairs function as major impact points when it comes to promoting diversity and inclusion practices (Whittaker et al., 2015).

In summary, retaining faculty of color can be facilitated by addressing a culture of belonging and resource allocation. That is, a strong sense of belonging and connectedness allows for consistent retention of faculty, in general, but individuals of color specifically. Programs that facilitate integration and belonging have been effectively implemented in addressing undergraduate student success (Maton & Hrabowski, 2004; Museus et al. 2017).

**Elements to a Culture of Belonging**

In describing environments that facilitate student success, Museus and colleagues (2017) indicate that critical to a culturally engaging campus environment is *cultural relevance* and *cultural responsiveness*. Cultural relevance refers to environments that represent the cultures and identities of the individuals within that space. Cultural responsiveness involves the ability of campus environments to effectively respond to the needs of its culturally-diverse members. These broader systemic factors are then thought to contribute to the individual's sense of belonging, academic dispositions, and performance. Adapting this framework to

address faculty retention, it seems important for departments to ascertain the level of cultural relevance and cultural responsiveness within their respective units.

**Cultural relevance.** Cultural relevance can be thought of as a foundational level or the first critical step to a culturally engaging environment. The University of Miami (<https://culture.miami.edu/>) participated in a cultural transformation initiative in which they engaged in campus conversations regarding 1) shared values (What is our shared common purpose?), 2) leadership expectations (What expectations do we have of leadership?) and 3) service standards (How do we treat each other?). Within each domain, individuals and departments answered three main questions: What does it mean to us? How are we doing? What can we do better? The Appendix shows an example worksheet with MU's guiding values. Department members can be asked to answer these questions individually and then to discuss as a broader group.

This exercise can be broad and assist departments in operationalizing how MU's guiding values translate to their work or it can be more precise by examining a specific topic or value, such as Diversity and Inclusion for example. Through this process, a shared understanding emerges regarding a department's common purpose and expectations. Including as many individuals as possible in the process is important as it gives a sense of ownership and it affirms that individual identities are represented in the resulting product. Ideally, the result of these conversations and/or exercise is to have a cohesive statement linking the department's shared values with their mission and that of the university. Indicators of success can include faculty sense of belonging, reporting feeling valued and supported, and improved department communication.

**Cultural responsiveness.** As a second, and important, level towards developing a culture of belonging includes a department's and university's ability to provide resources that address the needs experienced by faculty of color. Best practices guidelines for faculty retention have made three important suggestions including 1) monitoring school/department health, 2) establishing supportive climate, and 3) supporting professional development.<sup>1</sup> For instance, continuously monitoring the health of the department can be accomplished via *biannual State of the Department* assessments/surveys, faculty satisfaction surveys, and exit interviews. These regular assessments can provide information regarding faculty workload and overburden of faculty of color so that department chairs can make accommodations as necessary. Indicators of success can include balanced faculty workload, faculty reporting feeling valued and supported, and fewer faculty "exits".

Establishing a supportive climate can be addressed, in part, through mentoring programs and supportive networks have been important initiatives toward faculty retention. Underrepresented tenure-track faculty receive significantly fewer mentoring interactions across a semester when compared to non-underrepresented faculty (Hyers et al., 2012). Specifically, over the course of a semester, non-underrepresented faculty received 13 additional mentoring experiences with high-status tenured colleagues. These interactions were thought to include content central to their impending tenure outcome. Ideally, mentorship programs for newer faculty should include both peer support and tenured mentors. Indicators of success can include the number and quality of mentoring relationships available within a given time period.

Further, it is important to provide resources and training for faculty to become allies or "cultural ambassadors". Often, well-meaning majority faculty do not have a good understanding of the issues and problems experienced by underrepresented faculty, which interferes with their ability to adequately mentor. Other times, majority faculty are aware of the barriers but do not have the skill set to intervene or facilitate success. Establishing "cultural ambassador" training program at a department and/or university level would allow faculty to be better able to identify obstacles to success and confident in their capacity to implement the appropriate resource to match the need.

Finally, professional development opportunities for underrepresented faculty are important to facilitate advancement into senior leadership roles. Nationally, programs like the Faculty Success Program,

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<sup>1</sup> From "Guide to Best Practices in Faculty Retention", Columbia University, November 2018

through the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, provide online training designed to facilitate research productivity and work-life balance. At MU, the Faculty Exploring Leadership Opportunities (FELOS) focuses on expanding leadership strategies and philosophies via regular face-to-face workshops, leadership coaching, and mentorship. Beyond formal programs, departments can facilitate faculty professional development in a variety of ways including opportunities for “shadowing” leaders or assigning mid-career and early-career faculty time-limited departmental projects. In this way, faculty can gain leadership experiences that involve managing a group of colleagues, developing project goals and timelines, and working to achieve measurable outcomes.

**Appendix**

**Shared Values**

What do they mean for us (individually or in our unit)?

MU Guiding Value	What does it mean for us?
Development of students	
Academic excellence	
Change and improve ourselves, community, and world	
Nurture inclusive, diverse community	
Servant leadership	
Create plans for greater good	
Additional:	
Additional:	

### Shared Values

How are we doing?

On a 1-10 scale, with 10 being the highest, rank how your unit is performing on the following values and behaviors.

MU Guiding Value	How are we doing?
Development of students	
Academic excellence	
Change and improve ourselves, community, and world	
Nurture inclusive, diverse community	
Servant leadership	
Create plans for greater good	
Additional (if needed):	
Additional (if needed):	
TOTAL	

**Shared Values**  
What can we do better?

MU Guiding Value	What can we do better?
Development of students	
Academic excellence	
Change and improve ourselves, community, and world	
Nurture inclusive, diverse community	
Servant leadership	
Create plans for greater good	
Additional:	
Additional:	

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