



Promoting Equity in the Faculty Promotion and Tenure Process Executive Summary

Woodruff Leadership Academy

Team: The Promoters

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Executive Summary

Introduction

Emory University and Emory Healthcare have received national recognition in many areas including endowments, best hospitals, magnet designations; and is home to top medical, nursing, and public health schools. Both organizations value and emphasize being the best, we will present another area in which Emory can take the lead. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) has been a major focus for the institution over the last few years. Our group identified equity in promotion as an area where Emory may have opportunities for improvement and to lead. This report will address the current state of promotion within the Woodruff Health Sciences Center (WHSC) and will include recommendations to advance and promote equity in the process in manners that enrich faculty excellence. The current faculty promotion and tenure (P&T) criteria across schools within the WHSC results in unintended but measurable barriers to equity.

Statement of Purpose

We have the opportunity to foster faculty excellence, satisfaction, and retention by promoting equity in the promotion and tenure process to drive Emory to a higher level of eminence.

Approach

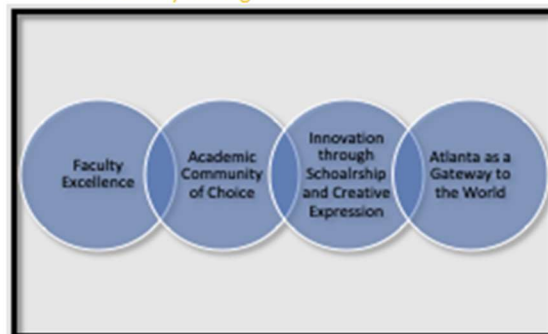
1. Obtain and report the demographics of faculty promotions from the 3 schools in WHSC from 2004 – present
2. Compare faculty promotion data from WHSC to other institutions and national benchmarks
3. Survey current WHSC faculty regarding perceptions of the current promotions process
4. Interview key stakeholders in each school in WHSC as well as at the university level regarding equity and the promotion process
5. Review existing literature demonstrating how equity in promotion drives outcomes
6. Identify areas of current strengths as well as opportunities for improvement resulting in final recommendations

Importance

Emory University recognizes that diversity, equity, and inclusion are fundamental to the values that contribute to educational excellence, an environment where people sense appreciation and connections to others, and fairness in advancement and opportunities that are available to faculty, student, and staff. While diversity is often thought of as racial and ethnic differences, it extends beyond race and understood to encompass age, gender, disability, national origin, health status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic standing, immigration status, family background, neurodiversity, intersectional identities, and broad representations of human existence (Emory institutional Statement on Diversity). The university's vision is centered on being internationally recognized as an inquiry-driven, ethically engaged, and diverse community, whose members embrace respect and employ creativity, critique, and collaboration in providing courageous leadership for positive transformation in the world through teaching, research, scholarship, health care, and social action. OneEmory: Engaged for Impact reflects the vision for Emory to be recognized as a leading research university that fosters excellence and attracts world class talent to innovate today and prepare leaders for the future (Emory.edu).

In advancing goals that lead to a bold future, Emory's strategic framework four pillars highlight the strength of Emory as an international research university. These pillars build on the talent of faculty, students, and staff and ensure that Emory will deliver on its commitment to contribute to society and the common good.

One Emory Strategic Framework Four Pillars



As a leading university, the WHSC, including the School of Medicine (SoM), Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing (NHWSN), and Rollins School of Public Health (RSPH), carries forth the essential work of the OneEmory's priorities in attracting world-class faculty scholars. To achieve faculty excellence, it is important to build a diverse faculty and create an environment that highly regards fairness, respect, equity, and inclusive excellence. According to the recent Institutional DEI Strategic Planning Communities: Report to the President, our institutional data demonstrates we have not met this objective consistently. The faculty does not represent the rich diversity of our global community, our surrounding region, or Atlanta. These findings threaten diversity goals that respond to national calls for a diversified healthcare workforce. Data also demonstrates that inclusion must be a sustained area of focus, as does clarity of career pathing for faculty members. To fulfil Emory's mission and vision, there were several recommendations made inclusive of a commitment to: *Increase transparency about tenure and promotion processes and standards to eliminate hidden rules or concealed knowledge that can negatively impact career progression of any faculty member, including BIPOC (Black, indigenous and people of color), first-generation, and other underrepresented or marginalized groups.*

Analysis of Current State and Comparison to Other Institutions and Benchmarks

Data were obtained from Emory University's Office of Institutional Research and Decision Support within the Provost's Office. These data track full time faculty across SoM, NHWSN, and RSPH from 2004 to 2021. Counts of faculty and time in rank for each year are listed along with gender and race/ethnicity information. Of note, counts <5 within any category are redacted to protect faculty privacy. There was limited available data for RSPH, so subsequent analysis focused primarily on the SoM and NHWSN.

Among the SoM data, analysis of the gender and race/ethnicity composition was focused on 2004 (earliest available data), 2017 (when SoM promotion and tenure (P&T) guidelines were substantially revised), and 2021 (most recent data). Within the clinical, research, and teaching tracks looking at gender, there was clear growth in proportion of women in the faculty from 2004 to 2021, including growth in the highest ranks of Associate Professor and Professor. Overall tenure track faculty numbers have decreased over time, however the proportion of women in tenure track positions increased. Comparing data from 2021 to 2021 AAMC benchmarks for faculty gender composition, Emory is outperforming benchmarks at Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and particularly at the Professor rank.

Within the clinical, research, and tenure tracks looking at race/ethnicity, there was only slight increase in proportion of historically underrepresented groups (HUGs) in the faculty from 2004 to 2021, though growth was seen in the rank of Professor. The proportion of HUGs in tenure track positions has not increased over time. Comparing data from 2021 to 2021 AAMC benchmarks for faculty race/ethnicity composition, Emory is underperforming benchmarks in the proportion of HUGs at nearly every rank.

Separate available data for NHWSN for racial/ethnic composition from 2010 through 2022 demonstrate significant increases in both Asian and HUGs over time. Current percentage of HUGs at NHWSN is 32%, compared with a benchmark of 16% from the AACN. With men as an underrepresented minority in nursing schools, the current percentage of men at the NHWSN at 11%, also outperforms the AACN benchmark of 7.4%. NHWSN is outpacing HUG representation at Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor rank compared to AACN averages. However, when the Asian faculty data are removed, other diverse faculty are underrepresented at Professor rank. The data from the RSPH was heavily redacted, limiting comparison, though available data on racial composition place RSPH in between the SOM and NHWSN in terms of percentage of HUGs.

To assess efforts at promoting equity within the promotion process at the level of individual other institutions, a survey was sent to fifteen academic institutions seeking data on gender and race/ethnicity composition of individual schools, and questions related to processes surrounding ensuring equity in promotion. The response rate for this survey was low, the resultant content was limited, and there was sensitivity expressed to this topic from some of the respondents who chose not to return data.



Quantitative Methods and Results: WHSC Faculty Survey

In January of 2022, the institutional DEI strategic planning communities report to the president was released from the office of the Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion/Chief Diversity Officer, Dr. Carol Henderson. In this report, pillar one is faculty excellence, specifically “fostering a culture of eminence that attracts and inspires scholars of the highest order.” Institutional recommendations to promote faculty excellence include references to hiring, supporting, and promoting a diverse faculty and diverse works. Specifically, the university commits to “hire, retain, support, and promote an increasingly diverse faculty and works to increase the number of faculty members from HUGs and other marginalized groups and increase transparency about tenure and promotion processes and standards to eliminate hidden rules or concealed knowledge that can negatively impact career progression of any faculty member.” The faculty subcommittee community report references the underrepresentation in ascending into more senior / leadership positions and tenured positions for HUGs. The report noted that the SoM—the largest academic unit in terms of faculty members—is below the university mean with less than 4% tenured faculty from HUGs.

Acknowledging this report, our team’s aim was to understand specifically the WHSC faculty’s knowledge and satisfaction with the current P&T system as well as their opinion about the equity of the current promotion guidelines and process. A 19-question survey was sent to the WHSC all faculty listserv in March of 2022 which included 3079 total faculty, 2,685 from the SoM, 201 from the NHWSN, and 193 from the RSPH. Respondents were asked to provide basic demographic data about age, gender identity, academic rank, race/ethnicity, tenure status, and primary school within WHSC. 9 questions about the faculty’s opinions of the P&T process and equity of the process were included. Faculty were asked to comment on strengths of the current system as well as opportunities for improvement and perceived barriers.

493 responses were logged, 15% of those surveyed. While response rates for all 3 schools were similar, most responses were from SoM due to the larger number of SoM faculty. 40% of respondents were assistant professors, 30% were either associate or full professors. 83% were non-tenured and 58% were women. Of respondents, racial / ethnic breakdown included 15% Asian, 9% Black, 5% Hispanic, 59% White, and 10% preferred not to answer or selected other.

Across all faculty the satisfaction with the P&T guidelines and confidence in the equity of the process was uniformly low. Specifically, 75% of all faculty rated their satisfaction with the current P&T guidelines as not at all/slightly/somewhat satisfied. Only 19% were confident that the current P&T criteria are inclusive of diverse types of faculty achievements and contributions. The majority, or 61%, did not feel supported in the process of being promoted. Only 21% were confident that the current guidelines and process within their school is equitable for all faculty.

In subgroup analysis, the younger faculty, early career faculty (assistant professor rank), non-white faculty and women had statistically significant lower satisfaction and confidence ratings of the P&T process and perceived equity in the process and equity in acknowledging diverse types of faculty contributions. The same groups also reported feeling less supported in the promotion process. The NHWSN faculty had particularly low confidence that the current promotion and tenure criteria being inclusive of diverse types of faculty achievements, with 100% rating their confidence in this area as not at all/slightly/somewhat.

Qualitative Methods and Results: WHSC Faculty Survey

About 1000 narrative comments were received in response to questions regarding the strengths of the current P&T system, the greatest opportunity for improvement, the perceived barriers to improvements and any other comments. Responses were varied and at times quite detailed and spirited. Qualitative analysis from narrative responses showed top strengths of the current system according to the WHSC faculty included clarity of current criteria, varying pathways / tracks for promotion, currently available resources and programs for navigating the process, and uncoupling of tenure from promotion. Greatest opportunities for improvement include the need for recognition for more diverse kinds of work/ contributions in promotion criteria, need for more transparency, need for more consistency of standards across tracks / departments and schools and need for more mentorship, including in general, across schools/disciplines, and more mentors from varying genders and from HUGs. The main perceived barriers were institutional inertia, lack of transparency, and focus on traditional metrics (research and scholarship) which does not recognize diverse spectrum of



contributions and varying pressures on faculty (heavy clinical load, heavy teaching/mentoring load, unique stresses for women or primary caregivers for families).

Qualitative Methods and Results: Key Stakeholder Interviews

Key stakeholders in the promotions process across the WHSC and the university were interviewed including Dr. Kristy Martyn (Associate Dean for Education at the NHWSN), Dr. Kathy Griendling (Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development from the SoM), Dr. Carmen Marsit (Associate Dean for Research at the RSPH), and Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion/Chief Diversity Officer for Emory University, Dr. Carol Henderson. Stakeholders were asked about their perceptions of the strengths and opportunities for improvement in the current P&T system and asked to share practices that have been implemented which have increased equity in the promotion process. They were also queried about perceived barriers to change as well as past initiatives that were tried but not implemented. Portions of stakeholder interviews will be shared in the final presentation.

Call to Action

Both the quantitative and the qualitative data from our faculty survey suggest there is ample room for improvement in our P&T processes. Emory University and Emory Healthcare comprise an increasingly diverse workforce that serves a diverse student body and a diverse patient population. The potential to lift our current status to a preeminent one among academic medical centers is locked up in the individual and group potential of our faculty and staff and can only be unleashed by creating an inclusive academic community where fairness, value and recognition through the P&T process are integral part of our institutional culture and practices. Emerging data from the corporate world suggest that active promotion of diversity and inclusion in the recognition and value system of organizations significantly improve productivity. For example, it has been demonstrated that if just 10% more of the workforce in any organization feel the culture and the process (including the promotion system) in that organization is fair to all and inclusive, work attendance is raised by almost one day per year per employee. One can only imagine the seismic impact such a boost would have on the WHSC workforce productive of the over 30,000 employees including the 3,500 full-time faculty. There are data from the corporate world to also suggest that when the workforce thinks their organization is highly committed to, and supportive of diversity, *and* they feel highly included, then they are 80% more likely to agree that they work in a high performing organization – in other words morale is uplifted by almost a doubling factor. These corporate world data together with what we have heard from our faculty strongly suggest that the investing in diversity and inclusion particularly in the value and recognition processes can significantly impact the bottom line (productivity and morale).

Overall, our data indicate that Emory has made significant progress in the last several years in promoting equity in our faculty appointments and P&T process across the health sciences and is comparable to other AAMC institutions regarding those benchmarks. However, there is ample opportunity for improvement. Disparities persist among our WHSC faculty of different genders and ethnicities regarding rank and time-in-rank. In addition, our surveys indicated that HUGs and women feel less supported during the promotions and tenure process. Faculty desire recognition for more diverse kinds of work / contributions in the promotion criteria and more transparency about the current status of promotions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on our analysis of current state and comparison to other institutions and benchmarks and the results of our mixed methods analysis, we recommend:

1. Emory become one of the few universities to embrace transparency by making all faculty demographic, appointment, and time in rank data (anonymous and redacted) in all departments of all three schools in the WHSC publicly available online.
2. The creation of an interactive online CV benchmarking system (e.g., a dashboard coupled to EmoryFirst) to enable all parties to objectively track the progress of individual faculty during the promotions process and to all comparison of data across departments and schools.



3. The establishment of an Emory-wide task force engaging a diverse cohort of faculty to identify barriers to promotions and the mechanisms for negative perceptions. This task force should include faculty from HUGs and gender minorities for perspective regarding systemic race and gender-related barriers. Faculty with varying roles and responsibilities also need to be included to gain perspective on changes needed to recognize a wider range of faculty contributions and work.
4. Increase diversity of P&T, FCAP, and promotions-related committee members and promotions process mentors including based on faculty demographics and types of work.
5. Increase collaboration across departments and schools in WHSC and across the university to share the best practices for the P&T process, promote transparency, and optimize consistent standards.

Conclusions

Emory has made progress in improving equity in faculty P&T process in recent years. However, ample opportunities exist to further improve this process to achieve the university goal to hire, retain, support, and promote an increasingly diverse faculty and works and to increase the number of faculty members from HUGs, gender minorities, and other marginalized groups. By embracing data-driven transparency and establishing equity-minded and standardized processes, Emory can achieve national eminence among institutions of higher education in promoting equity in faculty promotions.

