

**Harpur College
Binghamton University**

**Report of the Harpur Faculty Committee for
Diversity and Inclusion**

2014-2015

For Florence Margai (1962-2015)

As an Associate Dean of Harpur College, Florence was there when the Dean gave this committee its charge. Sadly, she is not here to receive the final product, having suddenly passed away in the interim. May this report on diversity and inclusion, ideals she did so much to advance in multiple roles during some two decades in the college and university, serve as a modest memorial to her life and labor.

Executive Summary

“Diversity is the mix. Inclusion is making the mix work.”

--Andrés T. Tapia¹

Dean Anne McCall convened the Harpur College Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Committee in Fall 2014 and charged it with a “basic fact-finding mission” of figuring out “what is working and what is not” with regard to issues of diversity and inclusion. The dean urged the committee to “put aside any biases that there is a problem,” and to focus on talking to faculty members in Harpur about their experiences. The committee spoke at length with 110 individuals, nearly one-third of the Harpur faculty. In addition, the committee gathered data through the Dean’s Office and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

The committee

Problem	Recommendations to the Dean
Women and faculty of color resign at disproportionately high rates	*Conduct exit interviews to find out why *Pursue recommendations below
Several racial and ethnic groups are underrepresented	*Develop Harpur Postdoctoral Fellow program designed to attract and groom individuals from underrepresented groups who enhance diversity goals *Require departments to submit plans for achieving greater diversity and fostering inclusion *Create a standing Harpur Diversity and Inclusion Committee
Inadequate parental leave policy	*Create a “Harpur minimum” parental leave policy *Work with president and provost to push this with SUNY
Employment and visas for partners of faculty members	*Institute a partner accommodation policy *Task an office on campus with assisting non-academic partners with visas and employment
Childcare needs	*Prioritize family-friendly work scheduling *Expand Campus Pre-school
Salary inequities	*Monitor salary data and adjust salaries for equity purposes *Instruct chairs to alert dean to salary inequities
Unclear tenure and promotion standards	*Require departments to commit to their standards in writing *Meet with tenure-track faculty (as a group) annually to discuss procedures and concerns
Female faculty stuck at associate rank	*Create mentoring program for female associate professors *Sponsor workshops on pathways to full professorship *Develop a mid-career leave program
Lack of diversity among Chancellor’s Award recipients and Distinguished Professors Lack of transparency and shared governance in departments	*Expand the nomination process beyond the departments *Exercise necessary oversight in trouble 0.2

Executive Summary

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
 2. Harpur Faculty
 3. Parental Leave
 4. Family Accommodation
 5. Salary
 6. Tenure and Promotion
 7. Department Climate
 8. Grievance Procedure
 9. Faculty Governance
 10. Transdisciplinary Areas of Excellence
- Conclusion
Acknowledgments
- Appendices

1. Introduction

As the premier public, we must, above all, be accountable to our students, taxpayers and communities that look to us for education, innovation and inspiration. We will be a place where discovery and creativity are supported and encouraged, shaping the world in profound and tangible ways. We will be diverse, inclusive and global, drawing on the broadest range of perspectives, experiences, talents and aspirations.

--Harvey Stenger, introduction to Road Map²

Minimizing the value of diversity in the academic enterprise invites grave danger: it allows us to erect a monolithic conception of competence that stifles the creative development of the discipline.

-- Phoebe A. Hadden, "Academic Freedom and Governance: A Call for Increased Dialogue and Diversity"³

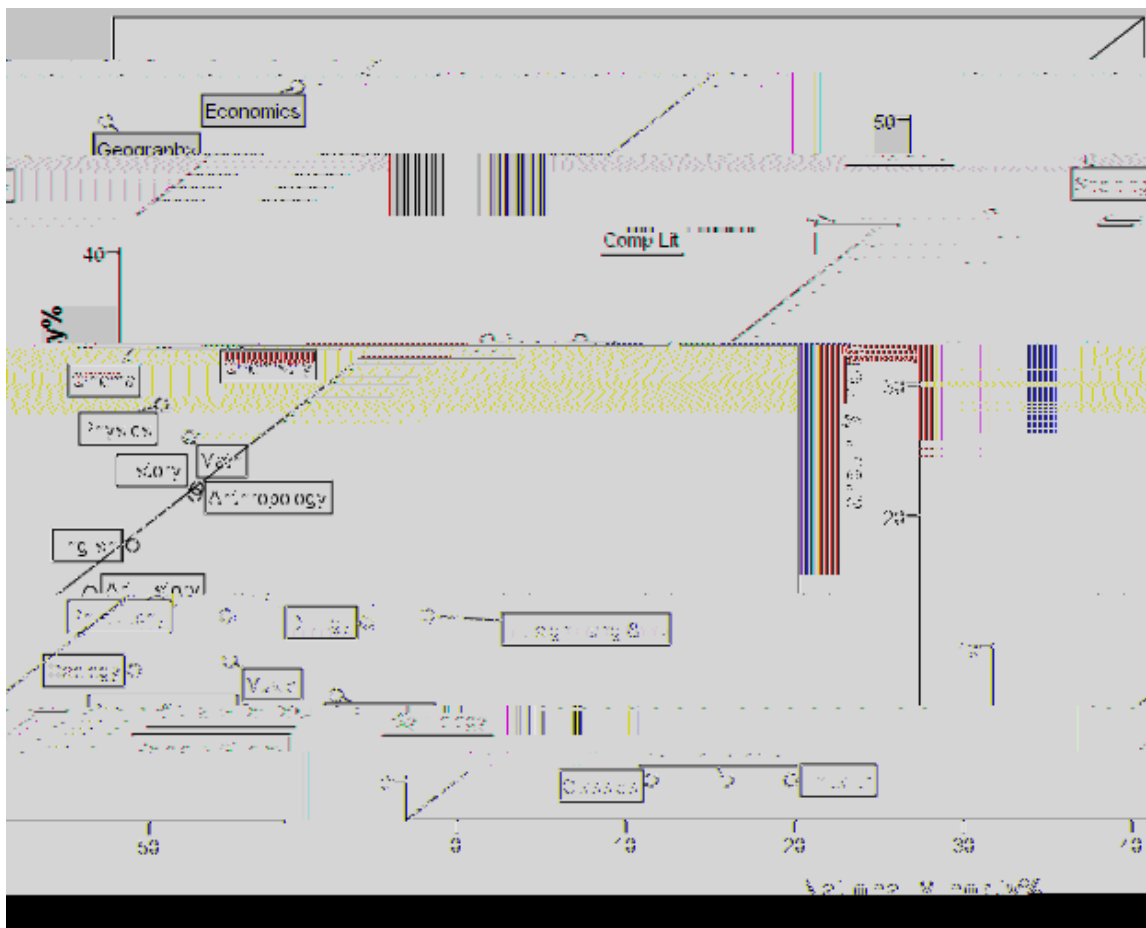
In the summer of 2014 Dean Anne McCall initiated discussions about forming an ad-hoc committee on diversity and inclusion in Harpur College. In addition to her personal commitment to the issue, Dean McCall was undoubtedly mindful of the Road Map process, which identifies diversity and inclusion as core values of Binghamton University. Accordingly, the Dean formed the Harpur College Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Committee at the beginning of Fall 2014. On September 17, 2014 Dean McCall delivered her charge to the committee. Ours, she said, would be an "evidence committee," a "basic fact-finding" body charged with examining "the state of things" in the college," our "first purpose" being to ascertain "what is going on." The committee was mandated to identify both areas of strength and weakness, the better to determine "what we can do" to advance diversity and inclusion in the college. It should, Dean McCall advised, should focus exclusively on the tenure-line (tenured and tenure-track) faculty and concentrate on three categories: ethnicity, gender and race.

The dean placed her office at the disposal of the committee in gathering all necessary facts and figures. Dean McCall al

Distribution of Faculty by Race/Ethnicity

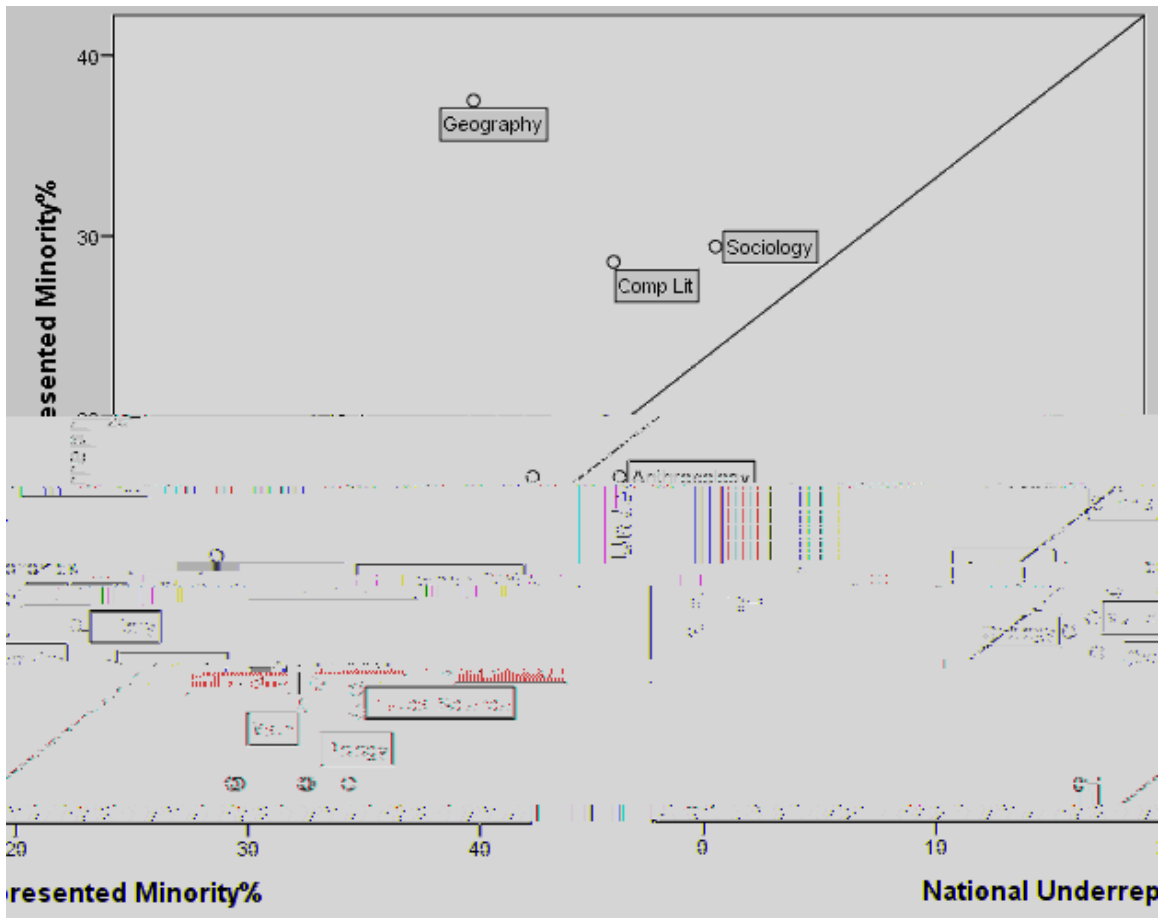
	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Blk Male ⁴	8	2.2	2.2
Blk Female ⁵	9	2.5	4.7
Asian Male ⁶	35	9.6	14.2
Asian Female	14	3.8	18.1

Percentage Comparisons by Field of Harpur Faculty Members and 2012 PhDs Granted Minority Group Classifications



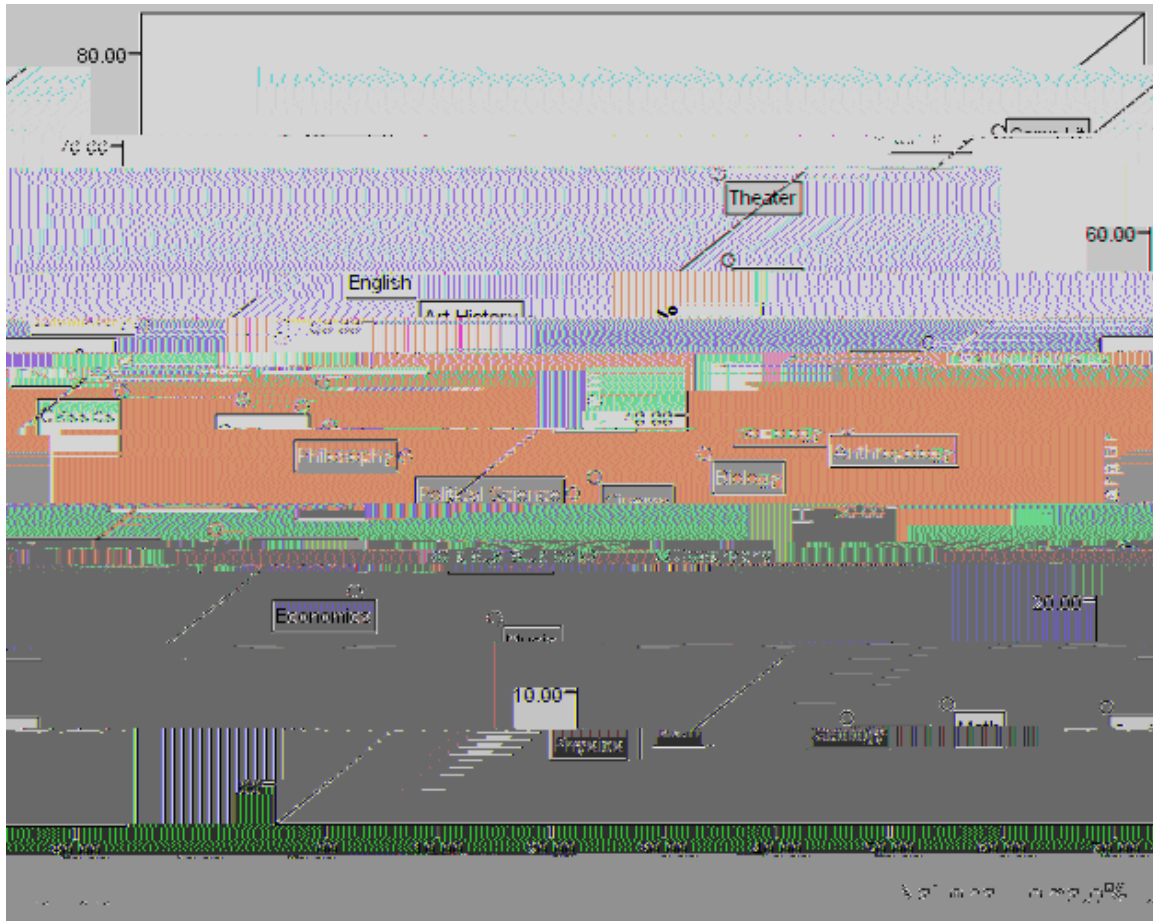
*Minority group categories include Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and mixed origin (i.e., including one or more of the four).

**Percentage Comparisons by Field of Harpur Faculty Members and 2012 PhDs
Granted
Underrepresented Minority Group Classifications***



*Underrepresented group categories include Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and mixed origin (i.e., including one or more of the three).

Percentage Comparisons by Field of Harpur Female Faculty Members and 2012 PhDs Granted



of members of presently underrepresented groups—run up against the following problem: the lack of diversity in Harpur reflects a lack of diversity in academia more generally, including a lack of diversity in new PhDs, and thus a lack of diversity in applicant pools. This problem was noted by many interlocutors. Some of these interlocutors used this fact as an explanation – or justification – for why their departments have not hired more members of underrepresented groups, try as they might. We do not agree that the lack of diversity in academia justifies not hiring more members of underrepresented groups; rather, it indicates that the effort to make Harpur College more diverse and inclusive must

Furthermore, graduate students need funding. In this connection the systematic defunding of the Clark Fellowship, which supports financially needy graduate students (many of them students of color) in Harpur and other schools in the university, must be reversed. Achieving greater faculty diversity and inclusion also requires active networking at conferences by professors. Departments also need to maintain updated lists of publications, websites, and professional and disciplinary groups focused on women and minorities.

Recommendations

Medical Leave Act (FMLA).¹⁰ Female faculty members objected to characterizing pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care as disability or “incapacitation.”

Several young female colleagues talked about their desire to start families but their simultaneous hesitance given that they could not obtain “clear information” about what accommodations might be available. There has been great variety in response to requests for parental accommodations. Only a couple of faculty members with whom we spoke explicitly rejected the principle of paid parental leave on the grounds that it would discriminate against those without children.

Maternal v. Parental Leave

Some disagreement emerged regarding whether the university should adopt a gender-specific maternity policy or a gender-neutral parental leave policy. Several female colleagues expressed reservations about paternity leave. They worried that it would give “further advantage to men in the field, since the family responsibilities still would most likely fall more heavily upon women.” A male faculty member with young children volunteered that he would not have interrupted his academic work to take a paid paternity leave, even if one had been offered. Concerns about the possibility that male faculty members would use parental leaves for unintended purposes led several faculty members, including at least one male, to recommend a paid maternity leave for women only. Others disagreed and demanded, in the name of nondiscriminatory inclusiveness, “a gender-neutral parental (not maternal) leave policy.” Most interlocutors agreed that, at a bare minimum, Harpur should institute a maternity leave policy to protect female junior faculty.

Current Realities: Binghamton University, UUP, the State, and Obstacles to a Maternity/Parental Leave Policy

Binghamton University’s Human Resources office maintains a webpage entitled, “Leaves for Childcare, Birth & Adoption.”¹¹ The site urges faculty members who become pregnant, or plan an adoption, to notify their department chairs and the office of Human Resources as soon as possible, “so that planning can begin.” It then announces: “As a public agency (State University of New York), Binghamton University *does not* provide a paid maternity leave, such as that provided by some private employers” (emphasis in the original). This language implies a statewide prohibition on paid maternity leaves; some deans definitely seem to assume they are prohibited from providing such leaves.

The FMLA requires that employees who have been employed for at least 12 months at a business or institution with at least 50 employees be allowed up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for family and medical reasons. Binghamton University’s Human Resources website on “Leaves for Childcare, Birth & Adoption” can be found here: <http://www.binghamton.edu/human-resources/leaves/leaves-childcare-faculty.html>.

<http://www.binghamton.edu/human-resources/leaves/leaves-childcare-faculty.html>

However, our research has established that no state law specifically prevents a “public agency,” such as Binghamton University, from providing paid maternity leave.¹²

The issue of maternity or parental leave for faculty and staff at SUNY schools seems to turn on the question of responsibility. Should such leaves be determined through employment contract? Or should they be mandated by state law? Or should they be benefits – like research leaves and other course releases – that are negotiated with the dean? Binghamton University’s Director of Human Resources, Joe Schultz, insists that parental leave benefits are “terms and conditions of employment that are bargained between UUP [United University Professions] and the state in contract negotiations at the state level.” The office of New York State Senator Tom Libous, who represents the greater Binghamton area, seems to agree. The senator’s research specialist, Valerie Datta, assured this committee that the senator has been “very supportive of seeing the Senate and State agencies adopt paid maternal/paternal leave.” But, Datta added, in the absence of state legislation, it is assumed that this issue is to be governed by contract. Therefore, she explained, because the senator is “respectful of the roles that UUP...and others play in representing the State workforce...I doubt he’d want to weigh in on the details of any contract negotiations.”¹³

While our state senator’s office and HR director maintain that a labor contract can only be negotiated between UUP and the state – meaning the governor’s Office of Employee Relations – ~~UUP representatives report that the State refuses to discuss the issue of paid maternity or parental leave at all.~~ Even so, UUP has prioritized and pushed the issue for at least a decade. During this time, it has obtained only very minor concessions. These include:

--faculty may use up to 30 sick days to care for family members who are seriously ill

--faculty may use up to 15 sick days when adopting or fostering a child

--faculty may stop the tenure clock for the arrival of a new child¹⁴

In the absence of clear policy, UUP has assembled a “Family Leave/Work-Life Services Guide” (<http://uupinfo.org/reports/reportpdf/FLWLSguide102113med.pdf>). This resource acknowledges that SUNY family leave options are a “patchwork system,” one

that relies on “accrued sick time” and unpaid leave under the FMLA but could also use murkier “options to change work schedules.... at the discretion of the president.” These options could include “flexible scheduling and modified duties or alternative assignments.” The first two options – using accrued sick time and modified work schedules – are impractical for most faculty members in need of maternity leave: such individuals are among the lowest paid tenure-line faculty and have little if any accumulated sick leave.

Peer Institutions and the Private Sector

This committee was dismayed to discover how far Binghamton University lags behind many peer institutions and also the private sector in terms of paid maternity leave. To be sure, a number of peer institutions treat pregnancy and childbirth like Binghamton does – as matters of disability to be covered by earned “sick leave” or unpaid FMLA leave. (Examples include Clemson University, the College of William and Mary, and George Mason University.) Some public universities offer more generous provisions. For instance, the University of Virginia allows pregnant faculty members to take 3 weeks at full pay or 6 weeks at half pay, while Penn State offers a semester without teaching responsibilities. The University of California system offers 6 weeks of paid maternity leave plus other benefits, including a creative and flexible Active-Service-Modified Duties (ASMD) program for longer maternity leave and also parental leaves.¹⁵ The City University of New York (CUNY) system grants 8 weeks of paid parental leave, which it won in its 2007-2010 contract negotiations. The University of Alabama grants 8 weeks of paid leave with a paid semester-long release from teaching duties that may include some service expectations after the 8 weeks of initial leave is completed. Our (less than exhaustive) research among public universities revealed the University of North Carolina to have the most generous policy – a full semester of paid leave. But even this is stingy, when compared to some major U.S. corporations. The Bank of America and Price Waterhouse both offer 12-14 weeks of paid parental leave. H322.56 c STm /TiT Q q 0.2 (S) -0. STm /

paid maternity leave. As President Barak Obama explained in a recent memorandum, “the United States lags behind almost every other country in ensuring some form of paid parental leave to its Federal workforce; we are the only developed country in the world without it.”¹⁷ In this same document, Obama announced his intention to align “the Federal Government with the parental leave policies of leading private sector companies and other industrialized countries.” To that end, he proposed to grant federal employees 6-12 weeks of paid parental leave for the arrival of a child. This new policy would still not meet international standards. In 2000, the United Nations International Labor Organization revised its 1952 Maternity Protection Convention to establish a minimum maternity leave of 14 weeks paid. Most nations in the world legislate a policy of paid leave that is at least that generous.¹⁸

Recommendations

The committee recommends the creation of a clear, “progressive,” “codified,” and “uniform” maternity/parental leave policy that treats accommodations for childbirth, childbearing, and infant care as a right rather than a favor. Such a policy would resolve the most urgent problems identified by our interlocutors, while also providing Harpur College with a powerful tool to recruit and retain female faculty, in particular. Female faculty are most likely to need a maternity leave when they are untenured, so providing

pay for any part of the FMLA leave.” For faculty members who have not accrued

“the number-one reason women refused an outside offer was because their academic partners were not offered appropriate employment.”²¹

These findings are consistent with our conversations. Several women with whom we spoke agreed that partner hires affect female academics differently than males. One person suggested that “successful academic women are usually married to men in their field,” since “most men in other professions would not tolerate the commitment required to succeed in academia.” Consequently, “the burden of needing a partner accommodation more commonly” is borne by women. Another interlocutor asserted that her chair has shown “open hostility” to the idea of partner accommodation, and that “this hurts women more than men.” This faculty member has had particularly distressing experiences. Having a commuting spouse creates numerous logistical and relationship problems, but it also imposes limits on her teaching schedule and the time she can devote

For at least 12 years —and sometimes much longer—childcare remains an important concern for faculty members who are parents, especially mothers. Many researchers

In terms of salary, the gender gap is wider than the race/ethnicity gap. Among assistant professors, Asians and Native Americans are paid more than white males: roughly \$74,000 for the former and \$73,000 for the latter. On average, white female assistant professors earn less, around \$70,000, while

Mean Faculty Salaries by Rank & Gender

Rank	Female	Mean Salary	N
-------------	---------------	--------------------	----------

correlate to gender, race, and ethnicity. Seen in this light, the “massive inequity” in salary about which one faculty member spoke is by no means a figment of her imagination. Another member of the faculty, this one a chair, was also “very upset” about salary compression in his/her department. The problem, this interlocutor continued, became more acute the longer one remains at the university and, in the case of the department in question, disproportionately affects faculty of color.

As previously noted, it is only at the associate professor level that women have attained some kind of pay equity with men in Harpur

departments stand out for the number of such individuals. Those departments are headed by Biology, followed by Art History, Chemistry, Music and Philosophy. In various other departments, we identified individual cases of especially low salaries. Across the board, there was some correlation with gender, race and ethnicity.

Recommendations

Salary differentials, which in many cases disproportionately and negatively affect women and faculty of color, are an important matter of diversity and inclusion. The committee recommends that the dean encourage chairs to bring to her attention salary disparity issues within their departments.

Mentoring

Many of those with whom we spoke, women in particular, mentioned the importance of mentors. A new faculty member offered that she would like to see a more effective system of mentoring in the college. Full professors agreed, suggesting that better mentoring would help to retain women and faculty of color, especially in fields where they are underrepresented.

Mentoring across Harpur seems to be quite inconsistent. Some departments take mentoring seriously, while others are more cavalier about it. For example, one junior faculty member reported asking her chair for a mentor

pointed out that the Drescher excludes individuals who

tenure and promotion are not so easily found. Evidently, not all departments have committed standards to writing, although it is the committee's understanding that the Dean's Office has advised departments to do just that. Anecdotes shared with this

Junior faculty members who hold joint appointments find the tenure process especially bewildering. One such individual was advised to invest her energies in her berth department, but became very concerned when – very late in the process – she discovered online that the other department would also participate in her tenure review. Consultations with the chair of the berth department calmed her but did not resolve all of her questions. Another faculty member said a colleague with a joint appointment had been denied tenure for failing to produce a book, even though a book was not required in one of the appointing departments. This matter also has diversity and inclusion implications: faculty of color are more likely to have joint appointments than their white colleagues.

Other issues related to tenure and promotion center on language, race, and gender. One interlocutor pointed out that faculty members whose first language is not English are often considered “deficient teachers” solely on the basis of their non-American accents, putting them at a disadvantage in the tenure and promotion process. Another colleague observed that female faculty members are more often assigned to service tasks related to undergraduate (as opposed to graduate) students; as a result, women are “seen as more teaching oriented than research oriented.” This, too, is a disadvantage in tenure and promotion. In addition, several senior female faculty members have noticed that junior women sometimes have difficulty meeting research expectations for tenure “because they are left with the primary care of children.” (This issue is discussed further below and above, in sections 3 and 4, respectively on Parental Leave and Family Accommodation.)

Promotion to Full Professor

Promotion to full professor is less fraught than tenure and promotion to associate professor, mainly because it is not tied to a “clock” and failure to attain it does not result in termination. Still, many associate professors assure us that the process of promotion to full remains mysterious and, to many, inaccessible. Like tenure, promotion beyond the associate level has important implications for diversity and inclusion. The percentage of faculty who attained the rank of full professor by 2014 varies by race and ethnicity. As the table below indicates, with the exception of the two Native American faculty members – both of whom are full professors – African Americans have been promoted to full professor at the highest rate – 36%. White faculty members have been promoted at a rate of 29%, with Hispanic faculty close behind at 26%, and Asian faculty further behind at 21%. None of the 4 tenure-line faculty members who identified as multiracial attained the rank of full professor as of 2014. The reasons for these varying rates of promotion are unclear.

Race/Ethnicity	Total Full Professors	Total Tenure-Line Faculty	Percentage
Asian	10	46	22%
Black/African American			

become public personalities simply because of the ways in which their identities coincide with their scholarship. The expectations and resulting service largely go unrecognized and unremunerated. "At the same time," our interlocutor concluded, "as embodiments and representations of what they teach," women faculty of color who specialize in the experiences of people of color often "face scales of hostility in the college environment and in the departments."

Performing comparatively greater service seems to be an obvious hindrance to the scholarly progress of female associate professors. But there are other possible reasons for the underrepresentation of women among the rank of full professors, as this committee discovered. For one, several female associate professors said they had not requested to be considered for promotion partly because no one had encouraged them to do so. An extraordinarily accomplished female full professor told us that she did not go up for promotion "on time," but waited a full five years until a senior male colleague advised her to apply. A long-time female associate professor said that several people had asked her if she planned to apply for promotion, "but no one has invited me to do so." Another

changes can help to create a more level playing field for women. These should include: “paid family leave for both mothers and fathers, especially for childbirth, a flexible workplace, a flexible career track, a re-entry policy, pay equity reviews, child care assistance, dual career assistance.”³²

Promotion to Distinguished Professor and Chancellor’s Awards

Nominations by colleagues and chairs begin the process that leads to promotion to

Recommendations

The committee recommends that Harpur College develop a plan to ensure that mentoring programs are available to junior faculty. While allowing that it is worthy of consideration, the committee takes no position on the question of whether mentors should come from inside or outside the mentee's home department. Regardless, the mentor should be a tenured member of the faculty and should be selected in

In too many cases, however, we heard stories about departments with climates that fall

Troubled Departments

The worst problems seem to be confined to a few especially troubled departments. The single most problematic of these departments seems to be in a parlous state. From this particular unit came multiple, consistent, and credible reports of yelling, screaming, finger wagging, threatening gestures, and intimidating body language in department meetings and in more informal settings. “It’s really bad – I’ve seen horrible stuff,” confided one faculty in this department, where those engaged in the bad behavior are largely white men while the objects of their wrath are mainly people of color. Questioning such behavior can invite retaliation: charges of (reverse) racism and anti-male bias have been leveled against people of color and women who publicly object to harassment and bullying. In some cases, chairs abdicate leadership by refusing to intervene; in others, chairs enable and even participate in the bad behavior.

Special Predicament of Women and People of Color

Some women and people of color have responded to an unhealthy department climate by “checking out.” That is to say, they fulfill their teaching obligations and engage with their students, but otherwise distance themselves from departmental affairs as much as possible. They skip routine department meetings, attending only when some weighty matter is on the agenda. Others who feel under siege continue to attend department meetings and events out of a sense of commitment and a desire to protect more vulnerable colleagues. Feeling silenced and disempowered, many individuals are more often seen than heard. Junior faculty, with more to lose than their tenured colleagues, are more likely to fall into this category. One result is underutilized, or unused, talent that could otherwise enrich the department and, by extension, the college and the university as a whole. Another is demoralized and disenchanted faculty members who experience decreased productivity, lower job satisfaction, and declining emotional health. Some look for jobs elsewhere.

In the end, though, women and people of color feel much more over-utilized than underutilized. Much of this overwork takes the form of service responsibilities, including

Similarly, women and people of color are less likely to be assigned to teach graduate seminars. Some male faculty members are said to view this gender-segregated division of academic labor as part of the natural order of things: women, with their “maternal nature,” are better suited to mentoring undergraduates. Accordingly, there were reports of male faculty guiding students in need of special nurturing to their female colleagues. Some faculty members report that undergraduate mentoring in their departments has become feminized, treated as women’s work and therefore undervalued. Undergraduates, male and female, are not slow to grasp the message: they are generally more demanding of female faculty. This phenomenon has racial as well as gender dimensions. Male faculty of color report similar experiences of overwork and under appreciation.

often at will. Chairs also influence recruitment by appointing search committees. Moreover, through example, leadership and, when needed, reproof, chairs can powerfully impact the department climate.

Recommendations

A good department climate is one of the great intangibles of the academy. It is surely an indispensable factor in the quest for greater diversity and inclusion. Mostly, a healthy department climate has to emerge from within, honed by a combination of collegiality, civility and leadership. In the latter connection – departmental leadership – the dean has an opportunity to help shape department climate. While affirming the principle of departmental autonomy and shared governance, the committee recommends that the dean should not, as a matter of course, approve pro forma the nominees for chairs presented by departments. In some instances, inquiry and scrutiny may be warranted, especially in the case of troubled departments. Departments with eligible women and people of color but no track record of having women and people of color as chairs should also be a cause for

As already noted, the Road Map envisions Binghamton becoming the premier public university of this century. The premier public university must not just recruit but also nurture and retain a faculty that is diverse with regard to race, ethnicity and gender. Because female faculty and faculty of color are especially vulnerable to discrimination, exclusion, and bullying – intended and unintended – effective clear, safe, and calibrated grievance procedures are crucial to attracting and retaining them.

In our conversations, a significant number of faculty members – mostly women and people of color and concentrated in a few departments – shared experiences of discrimination, threats, bullying, incivility, harassment, and public shaming. Others reported observing such behaviors. The violators ranged from department officers, including chairs, to other colleagues and even students. Many of those with complaints raised questions and concerns about Harpur grievance procedures. They were uncertain about where to file complaints or how the process would work. Our conversations indicate that few faculty members are quick to file a grievance; most registered complaints only after the harassment had become intolerable; the most common victims of discrimination have been people of color and women; none were eager to bring formal complaints. Some faculty reported incidents to the Office of the Ombudsman; others contacted the Affirmative Action Office or its successor, the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Sometimes reports were made simultaneously to the Office of the Dean. For the most part, these reports failed to produce satisfactory or long-term results.

University Office of the Ombudsman

The University Office of the Ombudsman is described on the BU website as “a safe place to voice your concerns, evaluate your situation, organize your thoughts and identify your options.” The Ombudsman offers advice, a sounding board and, presumably, information about how to access more formal avenues for filing a grievance. The Ombudsman can also serve as a mediator when all parties agree to attend a mediation session. However, the Ombudsman cannot require a faculty member to participate. Also, the Ombudsman operates under a veil of confidentiality. Consequently, we do not know what sorts of issues find their way to the Ombudsman. Nor do we know whether grievances brought to the Ombudsman indicate that some problems are concentrated in particular areas of the college, though our conversations indicate that is the case.

Faculty members who consulted the Ombudsman generally felt good about the experience, but did not find that it resolved their grievances. One female interlocutor, a senior member of the faculty, remembered that when a male colleague circulated an accusatory and untruthful email about her within the department, she took it to the Ombudsman but found the office “pretty ineffective.” She concluded that the university and college grievance processes “lack teeth.” Another faculty member who had consulted the Ombudsman appreciated the support she received as well as the wise counsel. Yet when her male accuser (in another reported case of slander that was circulated by email within and beyond the department) refused to discuss the issue, the Ombudsman had no more assistance to offer. Of course, both of these faculty members

had the option of formally filing grievances after their disappointing experiences with the Ombudsman. Their failure to do so is indicative of the reluctance of many faculty to formalize grievances, even when they have been the subjects of public defamation. On the whole, faculty seem to prefer talking through their concerns and grievances in a collegial manner and resolving them informally. Those with grievances usually have no interest in making a bad situation worse, knowing that they must continue to work with their tormentors, who are generally in the same department.

Other faculty members are cynical about the grievance process. This seemed to be the view of one interlocutor who told of “outrageous,” “vulgar,” and “sexist” comments made to and about her and a female secretary by a male colleague. She took no action. In part, she was unsure if the offending comments rose to the level of actionable sexual harassment. But she also declined to pursue the matter because she did not believe that doing so “would do any good.”

Universally, faculty members were confused about where to take grievances. One
b

The Chief Diversity Officer indicated that she aims to use her new office to improve upon the reactive, compliance-driven model of the Affirmative Action Office—a model that discouraged and deterred many faculty members from filing grievances. Instead, she informed the committee, the ODEI will be more proactive. To that end, she is spearheading a number of initiatives to encourage respect for diversity and support for inclusion. One of these will be improving the “onboarding process” for new faculty to ensure that individuals are properly welcomed and that they are connected with “affinity groups,” mentored effectively, given clear information about resources and expectations, and equipped with a retention plan designed to enhance success. All of these proposed plans woul

The Faculty Senate is mostly invisible for many faculty members.
-- Harpur Faculty Conversation with a Diversity & Inclusion Committee Member, Fall
2014

The modern university is founded on the principle of shared governance. Largely, this means shared governance between the administration and the faculty. The other major stakeholders, students and staff, who make up the majority of the university, generally have little formal say in its governance, student governments and staff unions notwithstanding. Shared governance usually begins in the individual departments and other instructional units and finds its highest collective expression in the faculty senate.

that the FSEC does indeed have an outward appearance of being club-like, obfuscating and exclusive, if not exclusionary.

Professor Sinclair also acknowledged that the senate itself has become a largely ineffective, rubberstamp chamber that typically approves, without questions or even dissent, decisions made in advance and presented for ratification by the FSEC. He doubted that some senators even read the resolutions they approved. Many do not bother to attend, as evidenced by the empty seats with nameplates at meetings of the Faculty Senate.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee is another story. Membership on the FSEC is very demanding on one's time and offers little in the way of professional reward, Sinclair

The FSEC has earned its reputation as an unaccountable and self-perpetuating body because of the way its members are nominated and elected. The faculty by-laws stipulate that:

The annual election for the members of the Executive Committee shall be in March.

i. Nominations for election shall be by petition within each of the constituencies defined above.

- a. Each constituency shall nominate candidates from the constituency to a number at least twice as many as the constituency's membership on the Executive Committee. Nominating petitions must be signed by a minimum of 5 constituents.
- b. Should the number of candidates nominated by any constituency be insufficient, the Executive Committee shall nominate from among the entire constituency additional candidates in order to reach the minimum required number.

In practice, due to the lack of interest and willingness to serve, candidates are rarely nominated by constituents. The FSEC often struggles to find candidates willing to run, and it is not uncommon to hold elections with a single candidate for a position, as opposed to two, as stipulated by the by-laws. This practice creates an image and reality of a self-perpetuating, self-appointed body. We should point out that despite overlap from year to year in the composition of the FSEC, there is turn-around, as members may not serve more than two consecutive two-year terms.

The other source of confusion when it comes to distinguishing the FSEC from the Faculty Senate is the fact that the FSEC is not elected by the senate. Instead, FSEC members become, ipso facto, Senate members without ever having been elected. One result is that the FSEC sets its own agenda, as opposed to following the directives of the Faculty Senate, and the senate becomes a rubberstamp of resolutions presented by the FSEC.

Professor Sinclair promised to explore the possibility of changing the independence of the FSEC from the Faculty Senate. Under the envisioned new system, the Faculty Senate would elect the members of, and set the agenda for, the FSEC. This change would require amending the faculty by-laws.

Although Professor Sinclair did not mention it in his January 6 email, the previous day's discussion also included the possibility of forming a diversity committee of the Faculty Senate. The chief purpose of this proposed committee would be to ensure that all of the senate's other committees, including the all-important FSEC, are diverse and inclusive.

The FSEC has begun discussions to change practices for the upcoming election, and is considering a proposal for changes in the by-laws. But reforming the faculty by-laws is only the first step. The senate should be remade into a relevant chamber with active and questioning members rather than passive and deferential ones, as traditionally has been the case. This would require that the FSEC educate the faculty about faculty governance. It would also require that faculty members be willing to serve and be active in faculty governance. But the above will not happen if service is not properly recognized and

rewarded in personnel decisions. The proposed changes would do much to temper caustic comments about a permanent government, whenever the Faculty Senate, and especially the FSEC, comes up in faculty conversations.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that the Faculty Senate elect the members of, and set the agenda for the FSEC, a change that would require amending the faculty by-laws. It also urges the Faculty Senate to create a diversity committee tasked with assuring diversity on all other Faculty Senate committees (including the FSEC).

10. Transdisciplinary Areas of Excellence (TAE)

We should hire faculty in groups or ‘clusters’ that include individuals drawn from multiple disciplines. This approach will promote the kind of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration necessary to tackle complex problems and enhance Binghamton’s strength and reputation as a research university.

-- Road Map³⁸

Interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary cluster hiring has become de rigueur in the American academy. Many institutions of higher learning, especially public universities, have in recent years been hiring in ways that transcend the disciplines that have served as the main loci for the production, organization and dissemination of knowledge since the rise of the modern university. The point of cluster hiring is to build on existing areas of strength with the goal of achieving distinction or excellence in specific fields of study that cut across the life and natural sciences, the social sciences, the humanities, and the arts, of which the disciplines are sub-units. The clustering hiring program at Binghamton is called the Transdisciplinary Areas of Excellence (TAE). The TAE in turn is an important component of President Harvey Stenger’s Road Map Process.

Faculty Views on the TAE

The TAE drew mixed reviews from the faculty members who spoke with this committee. Many of our interlocutors appreciated that the TAE program has helped them move outside the cloister of their individual departments and engage with colleagues across the college and the university more generally. Interest in transdisciplinarity was especially strong among women, faculty of color, junior faculty, and those with stories of harassment and bullying. These individuals yearned for alternate, and safer, spaces

³⁸ <http://www.binghamton.edu/president/road-map/pdfs/binghamton-road-map.pdf>

outside their departments, intellectually as well as personally. Many of them hailed the TAE as potentially offering just what they had longed for: an entree to interdepartmental interlocution and transdisciplinary collaboration. One faculty reported that membership on one of the TAE committees had resulted in her developing “a greater sense of community within the university.” Another was thankful to the TAE for enabling junior faculty “to interact outside of the department.” Someone in a troubled department welcomed the prospect of a TAE hire, including TAE representatives from other departments on the hiring committee, which could have a salutary effect on the berth department. One new faculty member recently hired through the TAE process reported, unsurprisingly, that he valued interdisciplinary work but also that he found the members of the search committee “very congenial” and the overall recruitment process “extremely positive.”

Not all of those with whom the committee spoke, however, gave the TAE a positive

foremost among them people of color with research and teaching interests in nonwestern

Acknowledgments

Members of the Harpur Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Committee would like to thank Dean Anne McCall for convening this committee and also for offering such generous support for its work. We also thank associate dean Anna Addonizio and pre-law adviser Nolana Quince (also a committee member) for tracking down obscure data and delivering it in a legible form and timely way. Thank you also to Jennifer Nolan, assistant to the dean, for preparing our e-mail invitations to Harpur faculty and handling reimbursements. We also thank individuals we consulted for their expertise on particular issues of concern to the committee; these include Jamie Dangler, Valerie Datta, Heather DeHaan, Fran Goldman, Valerie Hampton, Joe Schultz, Thomas Sinclair. Finally, we thank all of the many faculty members—including volunteers and recruits—who took time out of their busy schedules to meet with us; thank you for trusting us with your stories. We hope you see your experiences and concerns reflected in this report.

Appendix 1

In addition to a random sample drawn from a list of 365 faculty members supplied by the Harpur Dean's Office, we selected the names of 24 people, separated into two lists of 12. One list included women and underrepresented minority faculty members; the other included 12 white male faculty members. Each of the nine committee members was asked to have a conversation with 8 people from the women and minority list and 4 white males, with two provisos. (1) No committee member would request a conversation with someone from her or his own department. (2) To preserve the random selection feature, our requests for interviews would proceed in sequence from the top of the list (meaning, e.g., no committee member would request an interview with the ninth through twelfth person on the list of women and underrepresented faculty members unless one or more names among the first eight on the list had declined our request). When a declination came back, we were each instructed to preserve the sequence on each list--e.g. one declination from a woman or underrepresented minority meant making a request to the ninth name on the list; two declinations meant making

Appendix 2

Distribution of Faculty by Gender

	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
--	--------	---------	-----------------------

Appendix 3

Distribution of Faculty by Rank

	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Asst	106	29.0	29.0
Assoc	119	32.6	61.6
Prof	107	29.3	91.0

Appendix 4

Distribution of Faculty by Rank & Race/Ethnicity

Rank	Race/Ethnicity	Number	