

**Developing a Race and Equity Agenda
for the UWT Campus and Community**

DIVERSITY FELLOWS STATEMENT

to UWT Faculty Assembly

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Executive Summary

People of color employed by the University of Washington Tacoma face (1) barriers well-documented in higher education literature and in reports previously convened by the University of Washington; (2) the passive aggressiveness of local culture in UWT and in the Pacific Northwest; (3) seemingly permanent inertia manifested by colleagues and leadership who ignore thoughtful research reports (like this one) of campus diversity issues and/or who take little action to address their personal and professional concerns; and (4) a context of faculty and university policies that do not fundamentally address the causes, nor practice of, racial exclusion and oppression.

This report clarifies this larger racialized context, and in regard to faculty-related diversity and equity issues at the University of Washington Tacoma, the Diversity Fellows offer three recommendations to guide further implementation:

1. Continual, ongoing, critical analyses of policies and procedures-in-practice related to faculty diversity;
2. Implementation of best practices that reflect these analyses, with specific regard to hiring, promotion, tenure, mentoring, service, and curricular decisions; and
3. Concrete accountability measures that address the many circumstances where faculty and administrator practice might conflict with the intent of these policies.

Based upon research conducted on the experiences of faculty of color, as well as convened reports at UW Seattle and UW Tacoma, we offer the following implementation actions:

1. Align our mission of “Urban Serving” with the current Strategic Planning Process and develop a consensus of “Urban Serving” that reflects the University of Washington’s Race and Equity Initiative.
 - a. Integrate race and local communities into the definition.
 - b. Integrate service with communities of color into the definition and into the merit review process.
 - c. Integrate the urban serving mission throughout campus, including in hiring and retention reviews, student admissions criteria, curriculum, and new program proposals.
 - d. Launch a race and community accountability panel to the Chancellor.
2. Launch a UWT University Level Diversity Committee that reports directly to the Chancellor.
 - a. Conduct an annual equity audit that includes the experiences of community, students, faculty, and staff of color.
 - b. Assess the instruction of DIV courses and review DIV course proposals.
 - c. Assess faculty recruitment efforts.
 - d. Formally assess diversity-related merit review processes.
 - e. Provide a forum for raising incidents emanating from individual, institutional, and structural racism.
3. Expand faculty retention efforts, with a particular focus on recognizing and mitigating the many micro-aggressions faculty of color face.

- a. Provide support for faculty who engage in work related to access and success for traditionally underrepresented students (and communities).
- b. Institute a faculty diversity orientation (UWT and/or UW-wide).

Report

At a time when UW Tacoma is working hard to increase the student retention rate, we see an even more urgent need to retain engaging, diverse faculty and hire faculty who are open to cultivating cultural humility and who are well prepared in and wish to practice culturally relevant and responsive approaches. The need to recruit and retain diverse faculty is central to the UW system-wide commitment to equity and diversity. The integration of efforts to recruit and retain diverse faculty are also essential to both foster and model how to create an inclusive, welcoming learning environment for the UWT community.

We believe that the UWT Faculty Handbook, in alignment with the UW faculty code, encompasses the spirit of the University of Washington's commitment to diversity (please see the charge letter in the Appendix). The commitment to diversity has been systematically elevated by a recognition of the role of addressing race and equity through President Ana Mari Cauce's Race and Equity Initiative and the Resolution of faculty support for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion released by the Executive Council of UWT Faculty Assembly. It is important to note that such equity-driven statements are the result of continued faculty and student efforts to improve the faculty experience by valuing a diversity of racial and ethnic identities, academic approaches, and professional activities. Relatedly, in our estimation, the UWT Handbook does not have obvious nor intentional negative impacts on faculty of color. Indeed, the popular discussion about UWT is focused on celebration of our vast diversity, both regionally and within the UW system. For example, a recent article in the *Business Examiner* (October 2015) celebrates UWT as being particularly committed to diversity:

"In addition to having diversity, UWT is also committed to diversity. This is made apparent by the existence of the Office for Equity and Diversity, the Diversity Task Force and the Diversity Resource Center, as well as events such as the MLK Day Unity Breakfast and the annual Diversity Summit."

Despite our public commitment to "diversity" and "inclusivity," such statements and policies fail to recognize and address the hostile racial climate that is consistently described through numerous UW reports and clarified extensively through higher education research. Ignoring these experiences by not addressing racial inequities or oppression by merely touting a commitment to "diversity" and "inclusivity" only contributes to this hostile climate. These conversations not only silence those who experience racial oppression at all levels (individual, institutional, and system-wide), but also compromises the larger on-campus (cross-country) struggles for increased faculty representation of the very students on which UWT prides itself, and further mutes the concerns of uneven implementation of the policies designed to address racial inequalities.

What we find is that, historically, altering and refining policy language simply does not address the underlying campus (and societal) racism that shapes the experience of people of color (and social justice-oriented) faculty members. Deeper, this refining does not

acknowledge the personal and structural barriers caused by individual and institutional practices within the university, the department or program, and within each respective discipline. Even the most well-intended policies that originally aimed to address inequities can and have been read and implemented in such a way that maintains institutional and/or structural inequalities. Much of this is because policies, procedures and practices (1) are focused on individual intent; (2) are framed in broad “diversity” and/or “inclusivity” language as lip service; and/or (3) reflect systemic oppression. As such, they do not address larger structural barriers related to racism (and sexism), and, if policies/procedures to address racism are in place, they are not systematically or evenly implemented.

We argue that without a greater acknowledgement and intentional focus on addressing racism (such as micro-aggressions, institutional barriers, and regional cultural contexts that reflect systemic racism) that negatively impacts faculty of color, policy and procedural change will be ineffectual. Indeed, we suggest that the many already-identified barriers to recruiting and retaining faculty of color are often ignored while policies and practices that may have been intended to support all faculty are strategically and/or unevenly followed through and applied, particularly with regards to underrepresented groups. Despite UW Tacoma’s commitment to diversity and inclusion, because of the pervasive nature of racism and a pervasive insistence that our commitment to diversity and inclusion, in and of itself, is addresses racism, merely changing policies is, at best, insufficient to address the larger context of racism within higher education. At worst, it supports racism and racial oppression.

Based upon this context, we offer three guiding recommendations:

1. Continual, ongoing, critical analyses of policies and procedures-in-practice related to faculty diversity; and
2. Implementation of best practices that reflect these analyses, with specific regard to hiring, promotion, tenure, mentoring, service, and curricular decisions; and
3. Concrete accountability measures that address the many circumstances where faculty and administrator practice might conflict with the intent of these policies.

Context of Faculty of Color

Despite committed efforts and resources, the percent of tenured underrepresented faculty of color (American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black, Latino, Asian, and Pacific Islander) at the UW has remained stagnant at approximately 10% for the past decade. In 2011, out of the total of 1,970 tenure and tenure-track faculty at the UW, 79% were white, 2.6% Black, 4% Latina/o, 12% Asian/Pacific Islander, and .5% Native Americans/Alaskan Natives.¹ In 2014, UWT tenure/tenure-track faculty reflect similar patterns: while 16% of faculty are Asian, only a statistically insignificant number identify as Pacific Islander, just 1% are Native American (reflective of two 2014 hires), 7.9% are Hispanic/Latino, and 4% are Black.² Interestingly, and contrary to national trends, the lecturer pool at UWT is actually less racially diverse than tenure and tenure track faculty (85% of

¹ From Graduate School Diversity Report 2013 Update (Aisenberg, 2013).

² From UW Affirmative Action Office, 2015.

lecturers are White³). The situation of underrepresented faculty stands in stark contrast to the diversity of the both the UWT student population and the population of the surrounding communities. This disparity limits the recruitment and retention of diverse students and also hampers UWT's community engagement efforts.

With an increasing emphasis on global education at UW, a global vision of diversity should be in place as non-white international faculty face different forms of racism (from white and non-white North American peers). While the campus becomes increasingly global, little space for formal discussion about balancing local and global diversities exists, furthering the burden on the few isolated international faculty of color.

Faculty Underrepresentation and Continued Racial Barriers

A commitment to Race and Equity must include a commitment to developing a respect and understanding of cultural differences and learning about and understanding the differential impacts of oppression. Since this commitment is not systematically integrated into UWT's curriculum, faculty assessment, or in student support efforts, efforts to increase diversity and inclusivity ring hollow (at best) and maintain or exacerbate racial oppression.

The one-hour mandatory training offered by Academic Affairs for faculty hiring committees is necessary but insufficient to address the deep, racialized assumptions that are built into academic fields and related assessments of academic merit. A contributing factor to recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty of color is that while increasing efforts are being implemented to ensure faculty searches all adhere to diversity practices, these practices are being implemented by a faculty who have not interrogated the systemic racism that pervades the assessment of candidates and who are not well-versed in the actual barriers to serving as a faculty member of color at a predominantly white university.

A commitment to "inclusivity" and "diversity" without a genuine commitment to equity and combatting oppression empowers those already in power. For example, when searches have contained language that - by virtue of the research interests listed - would have opened up the pool to more diverse faculty, faculty members have "flagged" such language as inappropriate in that it allegedly limits the academic freedom of the faculty conducting the searches to find what are framed as "appropriate" faculty members. In other words, academic freedom often contains racialized ideas of research/teaching projects and interests, and the lack of acknowledging such racialized assumptions creates additional barriers to recruiting and retaining underrepresented faculty. Similarly some insensitive review criteria could undermine faculty diversity efforts⁴. In another case, while research repeatedly finds that faculty of color tend to be rated lower than their

³ Many lecturers began as non-competitive hires recruited through local networks, which (underrepresented) scholars of diversity typically have difficulty accessing. An increasing reliance on the lecturers for teaching at the UWT campus could suggest that the overall faculty workforce will be less diversified in the future.

⁴ For example, "Teacher Evaluations Could Be Hurting Faculty Diversity at Universities" (Pratt, C., *The New York Times*, December 16, 2015).

white peers in student evaluations due to racism, a same benchmark is used to assess the teaching effectiveness of all faculty.

A UW Graduate School report shows that faculty research and scholarship pertaining to race and diversity is generally less valued and often limited to the pursuits of faculty of color. This is reflected in the annual review discussions, and, as stated above, this sentiment has greatly affected even the searches that attempt to identify diversity needs at the onset. It is clear from both UW reports and higher education research that race and gender are not necessarily seen as significant issues, much less specialized areas of study. In fact, they are deemed the opposite: as something anyone can research and teach by virtue of living in our societies, reinforced by the well-intended implementation of Diversity-identified courses that may be taught by faculty with little to no academic experience in diversity. This is in addition to the reality that faculty are being tasked with evaluating diversity-related indicators without having expertise (or even familiarity) with such. These factors contribute to a limited and often superficial dialogue regarding race and diversity that devalues race scholarship.⁵

Decades of research documents the long-term negativity underrepresented faculty face in predominantly white universities. The social and professional isolation faced by underrepresented faculty of color (or social justice oriented faculty), from being the only person of color in a program, department, or meeting, to serving as a mentor to many of the social justice oriented students creates a tangible personal and professional set of barriers. The unrecognized overburdens of being a racially isolated faculty member lead to decreased retention and increased burnout. The impact of desegregating an academic program places an unfair, unacknowledged, and yet demanding burden upon underrepresented faculty (and race scholars). The barriers associated with such unacknowledged desegregation efforts are well-documented by what the higher education field refers to as micro-aggressions and the cumulative impact of racial battle fatigue. One particular edited text (Racial Battle Fatigue in Higher Education: Exposing the Myth of Post-Racial America) provides dozens of narratives of faculty of color and the personal and professional struggles of navigating everyday micro-aggressions and the structural barriers to serving either as race-scholars or being positioned as such, regardless of professional expertise. These impacts are replicated at the UWT campus and across the UW system.

Overall, it remains both challenging and burdensome for underrepresented faculty of color to continually advocate for equity from within academic programs and across the campus when their voices and efforts, whether solicited (and requested) by upper level administration or initiated by themselves, often go unnoticed. At times, UW faculty of color present personal and professional concerns with little action taken⁶. The same frustration is shared by some UWT faculty of color who find thoughtful research reports of campus diversity issues (like this one) ignored almost immediately after being released. The seemingly permanent inertia manifested by colleagues and leadership

⁵ From UW *Graduate School Diversity Report 2013 Update* (Aisenberg, G., 2013).

⁶ From *Graduate School Diversity Report 2013 Update* (Aisenberg, 2013)

weakens morale and contributes to a sense of invisibility and alienation of underrepresented faculty of color. In some cases, this type of invisibility has led to the departure of faculty of color.

Recommendations

Based upon research conducted on the experiences of faculty of color, as well as convened reports at UW and UWT, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Align our mission of “Urban Serving” with the current Strategic Planning Process and develop a consensus of “Urban Serving” that reflects the University of Washington’s Race and Equity Initiative.

UWT publically defines itself as an “urban serving” University, however the understanding of what it means to be “Urban Serving” varies widely across campus. The Strategic Planning process that is currently underway at UWT should provide the campus with a common definition and understanding of what Urban Serving means at UWT. It is essential that this definition and vision reflects and is responsive to local and regional historically underrepresented and currently underserved communities. This common understanding should inform the strategic plan of all units and programs at UWT, and be integrated into the assessment and evaluation processes for all programs and employees. This definition of “urban serving” should be written into the UWT Handbook, so that every Strategic Planning process at the university and department levels in the future will be able to turn to it for as a reference.

This definition must accommodate the following:

- a. ***Integrate race and local communities into the definition.*** The definition of Urban Serving should explicitly address the relationship between the University and local communities of color. This definition should also position UWT faculty and staff as intentionally reflective of and responsive to local and regional historically underrepresented and currently underserved communities. Because this is so integral to defining the university, the definition - and interpretation of such - should be based upon collaboration with (1) community-based leaders who engage with historically underrepresented and currently underserved communities; (2) student leaders; (3) faculty who have a strong, respectful relationship with the community and students of color; and (4) faculty whose research reflects and/or greatly impacts communities of color.
- b. ***Integrate service with communities of color into the definition and into the merit review process.*** The definition of Urban Serving should explicitly address the relationship between faculty service and local communities of color. Faculty service with local communities of color should be rewarded in merit review process.
 - i. ***Clearly frame urban serving efforts within the faculty code, school, and program guidelines: faculty involvement with local communities of color as part of scholarly work.*** Urban serving efforts should be considered a component of scholarly work, even if the service does not result in an immediate scholarly publication.

- ii. ***Conduct research workshops or peer working groups to help interested faculty convert community work into published research.*** The Office of Research should support and sponsor community-based, participatory research initiatives that align and extend UWT's urban serving mission. Attendance and/or organizing these workshops should be reflected in merit review processes.
 - iii. ***Clearly frame urban serving efforts within the faculty code, school, and program guidelines in relation to teaching expectations.*** Faculty should be expected to, and supported in, integrating urban serving into course design, course outcomes, and teaching approaches.
 - iv. ***Clearly frame role of Deans and Directors in evaluating urban serving criteria to limit perceptions of bias inherent within a leadership infrastructure that does not represent the diversity of UWT's local community.*** While we recognize the existence of hierarchical performance reviews, it is important to clarify that many faculty and administrative leaders are not well-versed in the scholarship of diversity, racial oppression, and equity. Thus, we advocate for increased reliance upon peer reviews from established UWT diversity scholars.
- c. ***Integrate the urban serving mission throughout campus, including in hiring and retention reviews, student admissions criteria, curriculum, and new program proposals.*** Urban serving should be tangibly visible throughout all aspects of the university, including research, teaching, and service for faculty, but also in relation to staff roles and responsibilities, and expectations for students.
 - d. ***Launch a race and community accountability panel to the Chancellor.*** This panel should include local and regional urban serving experts, as well as community leaders, faculty, students, and community partners.

2. Launch a permanent UWT University Level Diversity Committee that reports directly to the Chancellor.

This Committee needs a clear and coherent charge and must be staffed by faculty who have established, recognized expertise in equity and diversity to establish ongoing faculty-led diversity accountability measures. The committee will also include UWT staff and administrators with similar demonstrated expertise. While we want to have more people involved as the advocates for diversity on the UWT campus, we need to see the expertise in diversity work developed through a rigorous process of research, engagement, and reflections. Faculty without deep knowledge of, and experience working with, multiple urban communities undermines and negates the diversity work at UWT. Service on the Diversity Committee should receive 1 full course release per year of service.

- a. ***Conduct an annual equity audit that includes the experiences of community, students, faculty, and staff of color.*** UW has convened several retention studies over the past decade, as well as isolated reports

on the experience of faculty and staff of color. UWT should lead by example through conducting annual assessments of institutional climate with a specific focus on race. This annual audit includes a diversity in staffing report, student climate survey, and provides statistical updates on the diversity of UWT's students and staff. Based on the annual audit, all campus leaders should undergo a two-year review regarding campus racial climate.

- b. ***Assess the instruction of DIV courses and review DIV course proposals.*** The University of Washington adopted a diversity course requirement for all undergraduates last year. This requirement includes three credits of coursework that focus on the sociocultural, political and economic diversity of human experience at local, regional or global scales. As has been the practice of universities since its existence, courses should be proposed and taught by experts in that area of scholarship. Thus, these courses must be proposed and taught by faculty who are diversity scholars, as evidenced by their research, service, teaching, and/or professional background. Processes for determining such must be delineated and should be within the purview of the Diversity Committee, particularly the faculty members on the committee as curricular decisions fall under the purview of the faculty⁷.
- c. ***Assess faculty recruitment efforts.*** Faculty search plans should be reviewed by the Diversity Committee to ensure language that reflects the urban serving mission of UWT. Guiding question for the review could be: "How will this hire help address the urban serving mission while also increasing access and retention of students of color?" Diversity Committee review ensures recruitment efforts and related candidate rubrics adequately include urban serving mission and recognize diversity of candidates as strengths.
- d. ***Formally assess diversity-related merit review processes.*** This committee formally assesses merit review processes in relation to diversity-related scholarship, teaching, and service. It also provides suggestions for faculty peer reviews, including letters of support.
- e. ***Provide a forum for raising incidents emanating from individual, institutional, and structural racism.*** Currently, faculty, staff, and students who raise issues and experiences of individual, institutional, and structural racism may face immediate retribution (from peer colleagues and leadership). These microaggressions add to a context of fear and professional risk. Therefore, this committee provides a forum for airing such grievances as a way to mitigate the institutional reaction to those who identify racial exclusion, and further empowers the faculty to raise

⁷ As stated in the legislation, "The requirement is meant to help the student develop an understanding of the complexities of living in increasingly diverse and interconnected societies." (UW Office of Minority Affairs & Diversity). Currently, at UWT, faculty propose "DIV" courses, which are officially designated by the Academic Policy and Curriculum Committee of the UWT Faculty Assembly.

institutional solutions directly to the Chancellor. This process also formally collects data and reports on such incidents.

3. *Expand faculty retention efforts, with a particular focus on recognizing and mitigating the many micro-aggressions faculty of color face.*

Many faculty, including recent hires, experience microaggressions as part of the daily reality of being faculty on a predominantly white campus. Yet there are no current forms of support for navigating within a racialized context, even though additional work continues to be expected of faculty of color, most often without recognition.

- a. ***Provide support for faculty who engage in work related to access and success for traditionally underrepresented students (and communities).*** This can include financial incentives, but also should be reflected in merit reviews.
 - i. Consider additional service pay for faculty of color whose very presence serves to racially desegregate committees and academic programs.
 - ii. Recognize faculty of color have more work to do and carry a larger burden with regards to students of color. This should be reflected in guidelines for tenure and promotion and in merit letters, and best practice should, for example, recognize documented research that clarifies that faculty of color typically receive lower teaching evaluations from white students, while having to mentor larger numbers of students of color.
- b. ***Institute a faculty diversity orientation (UWT and/or UW-wide).*** The orientation activities could include providing workshops on topics such as surviving UWT as a faculty member of color and building ongoing regional support networks linking first year faculty with UWB and UWS faculty of color.

Suggested Timeline for Implementation

1. Release the report to UWT faculty: Winter 2016
2. Call a meeting with the Chancellor: Spring 2016
3. Form a UWT Diversity Committee and by-laws: Autumn 2016
4. Develop an implementation plan: Winter 2017

Appendix

Charge Letter from 2014-2015 Faculty Assembly Chair:

Nov. 25, 2014

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This campus fellows group will research and make recommendations to Executive Council (EC) on the improving the ways diversity and equity are incorporated into the work of the faculty.

As a member of this campus fellows group, you will research and report on ways faculty-related structures, policies, procedures and practices can address and improve UWT's core campus value of diversity and equity within an urban-serving university context. You will review Faculty Assembly and EC structure, policy, and procedures, as well as other practices, policies, and procedures subject to or that impact areas of faculty oversight, such as hiring and promotion and tenure. At the end of the year, you will make recommendations to improve the ways we incorporate diversity and equity into our professional campus work. Your work should be informed by, but not duplicate the work of the UWT Diversity Task Force.

The fellows will meet during the 2014-15 academic year and prepare a report for the Executive Council of the Faculty Assembly by the end of June 2015 that includes:

1. a review of structures, policies, practices, and procedures under faculty purview, including Faculty Assembly, EC and other faculty-related professional work including hiring and promotion and tenure using the lens of diversity and equity.
2. a suggested action plan with strategic goals and recommendations to improve how diversity and equity are incorporated into Faculty Assembly, EC, and other faculty-related professional work structures, policies, practices, and procedures including hiring and promotion and tenure.
3. an actionable timeline for implementing the improvements.
4. a set of accountability measures for assessing progress toward achieving the goals and recommendations.