

**University of Memphis Faculty Senate  
Anti-Racism Committee Report  
November 16, 2020**

**Committee Members:**

- Jill Dapremont (Chair), Professor, Loewenberg College of Nursing),
- Gloria Carr (Ombudsperson, Associate Professor, Loewenberg College of Nursing),
- Harvey Felder (Professor, Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music),
- Ladrica Menson-Furr (Associate Professor, Education, Director of African and African American Studies),
- Stephanie Huette Assistant Professor, [Department of Psychology (Cognitive)],
- Gretchen Peterson (Professor and Chair, Sociology),
- Nirmalee Ivy Raddatz (Assistant Professor, School of Accountancy)

**Faculty Senate Charge to Anti-Racism Committee**

In July 2020, acting on behalf of the Faculty Senate (FS) during the summer recess, the FS Executive Committee (EC) formed and charged the FS Anti-Racism Committee to

*Explore issues of systemic racism affecting faculty members. Develop recommendations for anti-racism actions to present to the administration for institutional changes.*

**Background**

The racial unrest across the United States in the summer 2020 called for an end to systemic racism and racial injustices. Responding to multiple calls for the U of M Faculty Senate to issue a position on this issue, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee issued a statement that the U of M Marketing and Communication released to the University community on July 8, 2020.

*The University of Memphis Faculty Senate supports the University working towards racial justice keeping with our vision to prepare students for success in diverse and inclusive environments along with our core values: accountability, collaboration, diversity and inclusion, innovation, service and student success. The Faculty Senate is committed to addressing systemic and institutionalized racism and implicit bias towards African Americans and people of color.*

*The nation has witnessed tremendous systemic racism and police brutality towards African Americans and people of color leading to a climate of incredible distress for many Americans, specifically African Americans and people of color.*

*As University of Memphis President M. David Rudd stated, “We have an identified set of core values that embrace fairness, equity and justice, and we are committed to living those on a daily basis, particularly when they are most needed.”*

*The Faculty Senate stands in solidarity with African Americans and people of color who are faculty, staff and students speaking up to eliminate systemic racism, police brutality and racial injustices. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee has begun the process of seeking diverse, interested faculty members across the University to serve on a Special Committee on Anti-Racism with a charge to explore issues of systemic racism affecting faculty members and to develop recommendations to the administration for institutional changes.*

*University of Memphis Faculty Senate Executive Committee*

When the FS Executive Committee established this ad hoc committee, Dr. Jill Dapremont was asked to chair the committee. University of Memphis Marketing and Communication sent an invitation for all interested faculty to serve on the committee. Faculty from various academic units responded to that request and agreed to serve on the ad hoc committee. At the August 25, 2020 Faculty Senate meeting, the Ad hoc committee on Anti- Racism was ratified. Since this diverse committee was formed, much discussion has occurred at the Anti-Racism regular meetings around the issues of systemic and institutionalized racism and implicit bias towards African Americans and people of color.

On June 11, 2020, President Rudd announced to the campus community a reform and change initiative designed to target the *Eradication of Systemic Racism and Promotion of Social Justice within the University and larger community*. Several members from the Faculty Senate Anti-Racism committee have join workgroups to further contribute to this work.

The Anti-Racism Committee has met five time during the Fall 2020 Semester. Assignments have been given to members to support the recommendations that are being presented in this document.

## **Recommendations/Action to Achieve Equity**

### **Diversity of U of M Academic Units**

Feedback from colleges/departments have indicated that some academic units at the University of Memphis are not as diverse as they could be. As displayed in Table 1, the racial distribution of University of Memphis faculty reflects the diversity of the US population with the notable exception of Asians who are over-represented on the faculty. However, the racial inequity of African American faculty is clearly demonstrated in the distribution of tenure by race. Additionally, Table 1 indicates, 44% of University of Memphis faculty are tenured which arguably may be considered too low for a University seeking Carnegie R1 research ranking.

Notably, tenure is fairly equally distributed among all racial groups **except for African American faculty**. While the absolute percentage of African American faculty at the University of Memphis falls only slightly below the US population, they are not achieving tenure at the same rate as do their colleagues of other races.

Secondly, while for all other races, tenured faculty outnumber non-tenure track faculty of that race, the reverse is true for African American faculty. As Table 1 indicates, African American(s) are one and half times more likely to be in non-tenured than tenured positions than are faculty of other races.

**Table 1.**

*Tenure Status by Race University of Memphis, Fall 2020*

Race	Faculty <sup>1</sup> /US Population <sup>2</sup>	Non-Tenure Track	Percent Non-Tenure Track	Tenure Track	Tenured	Total	Percent Tenured by Race
White	69%/ 76.3%	249	36%	114	319	684	47%
Asian	14%/5.9%	35	26%	39	60	134	45%
Black	11%/13.4%	<b>53</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>31%</b>
Hispanic	4%/18.5%	11	26%	10	21	42	50%
Multi-Race	1.5%/2.8%	6	43%	2	6	14	42%
Other	*	6		4		10	*
Total	*	360		190	440	992	44%

**Source:** <sup>1</sup> University of Memphis Power BI Office of Institutional Campus Reports. Retrieved from <https://app.powerbi.com/groups/me/reports/02a7c446-5afb-4081-b579-d6e82120ee1b/ReportSection87cdf3ac7a214fbf94ab>

<sup>2</sup>US Census Bureau Quick Facts 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>.

To address the concern for equity and the belief among all persons that they are treated equitably, we have crafted recommendations and included specific action steps to achieve these recommendations.

### **Committee Recommendations for Faculty, Staff, Administration, and Governing Bodies**

#### **Recommendation 1: To institutionalize racial diversity among faculty.**

##### **Action Steps**

- 1.1 All search committees reflect the diversity of the university/US population.
- 1.2 Applicant pools should be approved by U of M Human Resources for diversity. Should the pool not be sufficiently diverse, i.e., missing candidate who present as African Americans or a Person of Color, documentation of the efforts made to recruit African Americans and people of color needs to be presented to HR before candidates are notified and the search continues.

- 1.3 Follow AAUP policy *Affirmative-Action Plans: Recommended Procedures for Increasing the Number of Minority Persons and Women on College and University Faculty* <https://www.aaup.org/report/affirmative-action-plans-recommended-procedures-increasing-number-minority-persons-and-women>
- 1.4 For academic units that do not reflect the diversity of the US population, an explanation is provided to the Provost Office about why African Americans or people of color are typically underrepresented in this discipline. Additionally, in the report, the committee will have highlighted where exceptions to the underrepresentation trend were noted at other institutions. The committee documents the successful strategies and approaches used by other institutions to address the discrepancies.
- 1.5 All departments, colleges or schools in the University engaged in hiring faculty shall create a strategic plan for faculty diversity that delineates concrete approaches to promote hiring and retaining diverse faculty. The plan shall address the steps to be taken to recruit a diverse pool of faculty, to create a welcoming environment for faculty of diverse backgrounds, and to support diverse faculty through the tenure and promotion process.

**Recommendation 2: Support the successful achievement of tenure among all faculty, specifically African American and People of Color.**

**Action Steps**

1. Make explicit to *all* \*faculty tenure track applicants in the interview process that:
  - 2.1.1. They should follow the tenure and promotion guidelines for their unit. All units must alert new faculty to these guidelines within the first month of starting a tenure-track position)
  - 2.1.2 Outside employment that is unrelated to a *faculty member's research* as well as additional or overload teaching assignments *may* seriously impede and jeopardize successful progress toward achieving tenure. The intention of this action step is not to prevent faculty from making these choices. Rather, this is to provide information so that faculty are making more informed choices having considered the potential unintended consequences of using their valuable thinking time with other activities.
  - 2.1.3 The *minimal* expectation of all academic units is evidenced by the scholarly productivity from all tenure track faculty by the 3<sup>rd</sup> year mid-tenure review. Published papers, art/music presentations, and discipline specifically defined "scholarly productivity" done at the University of Memphis should now be a part of the faculty member's Curriculum Vitae.
  - 2.1.4 When a tenure application is submitted, the scholarly component of the candidate tenure dossier will be sent to *four* or more outside reviewers in their scholarly area who are tenured associate professors at highly ranked universities for their recommendation about the tenure of this candidate.

- 2.2 Assign all tenure-track faculty a mentor, who must be tenured, and is specifically charged with guiding that new faculty member toward tenure and promotion.
- 2.3 Ensure parity across service loads for all junior faculty including recognition of informal student mentoring (meeting with and encouraging students in their pursuits outside of a formally designated role as advisor).
  - 2.3.1 Faculty who are African American and people of color are often sought by students who are African American or People of Color for informal mentoring and support that **could** differ in amount\*\* from their other junior colleagues (Dapremont, 2011). *When* this occurs, it should be recognized in meaningful ways in their service loads.
- 2.4 All academic units should provide to their tenure track faculty a list of professional journals which represent the rigor and accepted standards of the discipline. It should be made clear that publication in these sources is regarded as appropriate and worthy of a tenure track individual. It also should be expressed by all academic units that, while not impossible, it is highly unlikely that publishing in non-indexed open-source journals will be career or tenure enhancing. Additionally, academic units should provide a list of professional organization memberships and professional conference attendance (as an attendee and a presenter) that will be viewed favorably during tenure deliberation.
- 2.5 Reduce the teaching loads of all tenure track faculty until tenure is achieved. Tenure track faculty assignments must remain consistent while seeking tenure. Except in extreme, unavoidable circumstances, teaching assignments should remain the same for faculty on a tenure track until tenure is achieved. ALL changes in teaching assignments for tenure track faculty should be explained in writing/semester to the Provost Office.
- 2.6 Tenure track faculty should not be assigned to teach during the summer, intersessions, or course overloads.

*\*Note: Although this document addresses the disparity experienced by African American faculty, this action step would be important for all faculty.*

*Arguably, as the most under-represented group in some departments, African American faculty will be most positively impacted.*

*\*\*Note: Aside from the usual faculty-student mentoring activities, when a marginalized person (gender, race, religious belief) seeks assistance from someone a student believes will understand, it is most often because a student has either experienced or witnessed discrimination and/or implicit bias in a hurtful, limiting way. Support requires debriefing (hearing all the emotional response, walking the student back through the context, what happened, what was said/done) and then formulating, with the student, positive ways to see the experience, move beyond it, and ways to respond. When the student needs to respond, this requires formulating with the student a way the student can be heard and not harmed and then practicing it out with the student. Every one of these encounters also requires time for the faculty member to personally re-center and refocus.*

**Recommendation 3: Address salary compression/inversion because of its adverse impact on all faculty and especially faculty who are African American and people of color.****Action Steps**

- 3.1 Strategize ways to ensure that salary compression/inversion is not always the first casualty of every university financial crisis and budget shortfall.

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**Committee Recommendations for Student Success**

The Committee commends the University for its efforts to support the success of underrepresented students at the University of Memphis. Since an overarching goal of all university general education curricula is to educate people to be good citizens and contributing members of society, the University of Memphis has a 6- semester unit requirement in American History.

**Recommendation 4: Increase the general knowledge of students about African American and people of color in the US.****Action Steps**

- 4.1 Academic advisors should remind students of the general education choices in the 6-unit American History requirement that can include courses about minority persons. Examples of such courses include:

- HIST 3881 African American History
- HIST 4851 History of Women in America
- SOCI 3422 Racial and Ethnic Minorities: Comparative study of racial and ethnic minorities in United States

- 4.2 Additional courses focused on African Americans and people of color should be added to these choices offered to students in the general education curriculum.