

**NC STATE**

# **Black Faculty Retention and Success Task Force**

Final Report  
Spring 2023

## **Introduction**

The underrepresentation of Black faculty in American higher education has been a persistent problem for several decades. Despite some efforts to improve diversity and inclusion, the number of Black faculty members remains significantly low. This paper focuses on the issues affecting the retention of Black faculty in American higher education and the best practices utilized to retain faculty in higher education.

Retaining Black faculty members in academia is critical to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. Black faculty members bring unique perspectives and experiences to the classroom, contribute to research that addresses issues affecting communities of color, and serve as role models and mentors for Black students (Gasman & Tudico, 2014; Jackson & Napier, 2016). However, retaining Black faculty members in academia remains challenging due to various factors, including institutional racism, lack of support, and insufficient mentoring opportunities (Harper, 2018).

Research indicates that Black faculty members are more likely than their white counterparts to experience workplace discrimination, isolation, and bias in the workplace (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2015). These experiences can contribute to lower job satisfaction and a decreased sense of belonging on campus, leading to higher turnover rates (Burrell, 2016; Jackson & Napier, 2016). Furthermore, Black faculty members may face unique challenges when balancing their professional responsibilities with personal commitments and experiences, such as caregiving or navigating racism and discrimination outside of work (Gasman & Tudico, 2014; Winkle-Wagner, 2019).

Institutions must proactively promote diversity, equity, and inclusion to address the challenges of retaining Black faculty in academia. This includes creating a supportive and inclusive environment for Black faculty members, providing mentorship and professional development opportunities, and offering fair and equitable compensation and benefits (Harper, 2018). Institutions must also address systemic issues of racism and bias that may contribute to the retention challenges facing Black faculty members.

## Literature Review

Research has identified several factors contributing to Black faculty retention and success in higher education institutions. These factors include a lack of institutional support, racial microaggressions, and bias in hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions. Additionally, studies have shown that Black faculty members are more likely to experience burnout and are less satisfied with their work environment than their white counterparts. It is, therefore, essential to identify and understand these challenges to develop strategies to support Black faculty members in higher education institutions.

### Culture

Institutional and departmental culture can significantly shape faculty members' experiences in higher education, particularly regarding their sense of belonging within their respective academic communities (Kelly et al., 2017; Grandison et al., 2022). Unfortunately, there are many ways in which these cultures can detract from a sense of belonging, creating obstacles that prevent faculty from feeling fully included and valued.

Institutional and departmental culture can be detrimental to a sense of belonging for faculty by perpetuating exclusionary norms and practices (Louis et al., 2016). For example, suppose a department consistently promotes a narrow definition of "quality" scholarship or research or prioritizes specific methodologies or perspectives over others. In that case, it can lead to faculty members who do not fit within these narrow parameters feeling undervalued or marginalized. Similarly, suppose an institution or department has a culture that places a premium on individual achievement and competition rather than collaboration and mutual support. In that case, this can create a sense of isolation and disconnection for faculty who feel they must constantly compete with their colleagues for recognition or resources (Kelly et al., 2017).

*"When I see an award for something to apply for, and I'll see "a letter from your department head" as one of the criteria and I will put it away, I don't even bother at that point – My new department head is even worse." - Current NC State Associate Professor*

Another way institutional and departmental culture can also detract from a sense of belonging for faculty is by perpetuating microaggressions and bias (Louis et al., 2016). Microaggressions are subtle forms of discrimination that are often unintentional but can significantly impact those who experience them. These can take many forms, from offhand comments reinforcing stereotypes to exclusion from critical decision-making processes. Over time, these microaggressions can erode a faculty member's sense of

belonging and make them feel like they are not entirely accepted or valued within their academic community.

Institutional and departmental culture can detract from a sense of belonging for faculty by failing to adequately address diversity, equity, and inclusion (Kelly et al., 2017). Suppose an institution or department does not prioritize these issues or fails to take concrete steps to address them. In that case, it can create a climate in which faculty from underrepresented groups feel excluded or marginalized (Gasman & Tudico, 2014). For example, suppose an institution does not have adequate policies and support systems in place to address issues of discrimination or harassment. This can make it difficult for faculty to feel safe and supported in their work (Gasman & Tudico, 2014).

*"Lots of favoritism at both the college and department level. Always the same cohort of people are getting selected to do things. I've not ever been asked to be on a college committee or to do anything at the college level, ever. For the past 6-7 years, the same would be true in my department. With the exception of another department in my college who use me for everything – search committees, dissertation committees." - Current NC State Associate Professor*

To address these challenges, institutions and departments need to take a proactive approach to create a culture of belonging for all faculty members. This might include initiatives to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, such as targeted hiring or professional development programs and efforts to foster a culture of collaboration and support rather than competition and individual achievement (Kelly et al., 2017). Institutions and departments might also consider implementing policies and programs that address microaggressions and bias, such as training programs or anonymous reporting systems. By taking these steps, institutions and departments can work to create a more inclusive and welcoming academic community where all faculty members feel valued, supported, and included.

### **Lack of Equity Between Professional-track and Tenure-track Faculty**

One of the most significant issues facing academia today is the need for more equity between professional-track and tenure-track faculty. While both types of faculty play essential roles in the academic community, there are significant differences in job security, compensation, and opportunities for advancement. This lack of equity can

significantly impact the experiences of professional-track faculty, and institutions need to take steps to address this issue (Louis et al., 2016).

One of the primary differences between professional-track and tenure-track faculty is the nature of their appointments. Tenure-track faculty are typically hired long-term, expecting to eventually be considered for tenure, which provides job security and academic freedom (Louis et al., 2016). On the other hand, professional-track faculty are typically hired on a term basis, with little job security beyond the duration of their contract. This can create significant stress and uncertainty for professional-track faculty, who may have a different level of job stability than their tenure-track counterparts (Louis et al., 2016).

Another critical difference between professional-track and tenure-track faculty is their compensation. Tenure-track faculty typically earn higher salaries than professional-track faculty, and they often receive additional benefits such as access to research funding, sabbaticals, and other forms of professional development. Professional-track faculty may need access to these resources, limiting their ability to advance their careers and achieve their professional goals.

In addition to these issues, there are significant differences in opportunities for advancement and recognition within the academic community. Tenure-track faculty are typically given priority when it comes to promotions, research opportunities, and other forms of recognition, which can make it difficult for professional-track faculty to advance their careers and achieve the same level of recognition and respect within the academic community.

To address these issues, institutions must proactively promote equity between professional-track and tenure-track faculty. This might include implementing policies that provide greater job security and benefits for professional-track faculty, such as multi-year contracts or access to professional development opportunities. Institutions might also consider implementing more equitable compensation policies, ensuring that professional-track faculty are paid fairly for their work and have access to the same resources as tenure-track faculty. Additionally, institutions can work to promote a culture of inclusion and recognition for all faculty members, regardless of their appointment type. This might include initiatives to celebrate the accomplishments of professional-track faculty, provide opportunities for professional development and networking, and ensure that all faculty members are included in critical decision-making processes.

By taking these steps, institutions can work to promote more significant equity and inclusion within the academic community, ensuring that all faculty members can achieve their professional goals and contribute fully to the success of their institutions.

### **Cluster Hires**

Cluster hiring is a strategic approach employed to address the underrepresentation of minority faculty in higher education. Cluster hiring is a process where institutions hire multiple faculty members in the same or related disciplines with a shared research interest or focus (Muñoz et al., 2017). The idea is that by hiring a cohort of diverse faculty members who share research interests, they can support each other and create a more inclusive environment. This type of hiring can also lead to increased research collaboration and productivity.

Research has shown that cluster hiring can effectively increase the number of minority faculty in higher education (Muñoz et al., 2017). Muñoz et al. (2017) found that cluster hiring effectively diversifies faculty in STEM fields. The study analyzed the impact of cluster hires on the representation of underrepresented minority faculty in STEM fields in 10 institutions. The results showed that institutions with cluster hiring had a higher percentage of underrepresented minority faculty than those without. This finding supports the idea that cluster hiring can be an effective strategy to increase the representation of minority faculty in higher education.

However, it is essential to note that cluster hiring is not a silver bullet solution. While it can be effective, institutions must achieve diversity goals. A study by Ginther and Kahn (2019) found that while cluster hiring increased the representation of underrepresented minority faculty in STEM fields, it did not close the gap between minority and non-minority faculty. This finding suggests that cluster hiring should be used with other strategies to increase diversity, such as improving the climate for underrepresented faculty and addressing systemic barriers to diversity in higher education.

### **Sense of Belonging**

The sense of belonging for Black faculty in academia is essential to their success, well-being, and retention in higher education institutions (Martinez et al., 2017). Black faculty often experience a lack of inclusion, isolation, and marginalization in predominantly white institutions (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2015), negatively impacting their job satisfaction, productivity, and professional growth. Thus, fostering a sense of belonging among Black faculty is crucial to their success and the institution's diversity and inclusivity goals.

*"My colleagues keep me here. We are so close, so supportive of each other. When one of us is down, we pick the person up. I feel so lucky to work with these people. We like each other's company."*

*- Current NC State Associate Professor*

Research has shown that a sense of belonging is a critical predictor of academic success and persistence for Black students. Similarly, a sense of belonging for Black faculty is associated with greater job satisfaction, motivation, and retention rates. A study by Hurtado et al. (2020) found that Black faculty with a stronger sense of belonging reported higher job satisfaction and engagement in diversity and inclusion activities. This finding highlights the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive environment for Black faculty to thrive and contribute to the institution's mission and goals.

*"While other colleges within NCSU allowed department heads to advocate for the retention of their faculty, my college required the Dean to handle all retention situations and failed to advocate with the Provost for my retention." - Former NC State Full Professor*

To foster a sense of belonging among Black faculty, institutions must address systemic barriers and biases contributing to their marginalization and exclusion (Martinez et al., 2017). This includes addressing issues of pay equity, mentoring, and promotion practices, as well as addressing microaggressions and discrimination in the workplace (Harris, 2023). Institutions can also support Black faculty by creating affinity groups, providing opportunities for professional development, and recognizing their contributions to the institution.

A sense of belonging for Black faculty is essential to their success and the institution's diversity and inclusivity goals. Creating a supportive and inclusive environment for Black faculty requires addressing systemic barriers and biases, providing opportunities for professional growth and recognition, and fostering a culture of inclusion and belonging. Ultimately, prioritizing the well-being and success of Black faculty benefits the institution and its diverse community of students and faculty.

## Representation of Black Faculty at NC State University

The lack of representation of Black faculty in academia is well-documented. According to a National Center for Education Statistics report in 2017, only 6% of full-time faculty at four-year institutions in the United States were Black (Espinosa et al., 2019). This is even though Black people comprise 13% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). This disparity has been a persistent issue for decades, and its impact is felt across higher education.

*"I kind of have a feeling that experiences of disrespect are at the center of feelings that a lot of Black faculty have and what causes them to leave. Being disrespected when you're Black is even harder to deal with...you try so hard to climb this mountain and you finally do, but you feel like I might as well have been a cashier for the level of respect I get, that cuts a little deeper as a Black faculty member, it's just so hard to take. - Current NC State Assistant Professor*

| Fiscal Year | HIRES                    |       |      | SEPARATIONS              |       |       |
|-------------|--------------------------|-------|------|--------------------------|-------|-------|
|             | African American / Black | Total | %    | African American / Black | Total | %     |
| 2018-19     | 4                        | 74    | 5.4% | 0                        | 45    | 0.0%  |
| 2019-20     | 3                        | 67    | 4.5% | 4                        | 72    | 5.6%  |
| 2020-21     | 4                        | 57    | 7.0% | 5                        | 63    | 7.9%  |
| 2021-22     | 4                        | 51    | 7.8% | 5                        | 84    | 6.0%  |
| 2022-23 YTD | 6                        | 75    | 8.0% | 9                        | 49    | 18.4% |

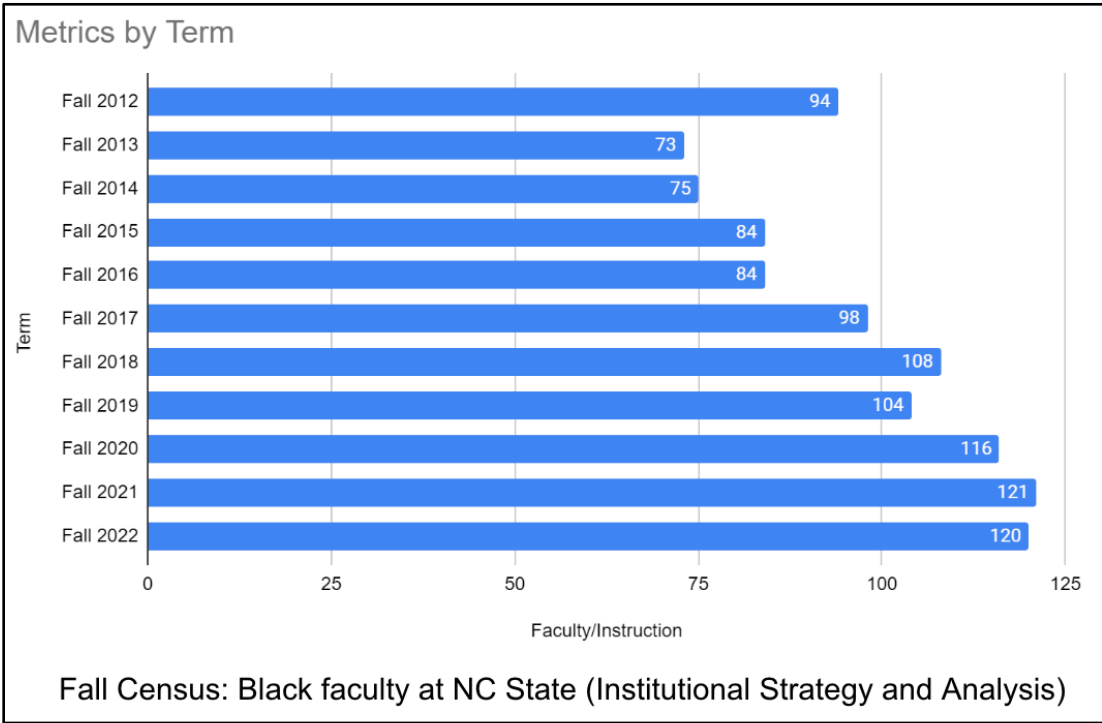
NC State Hires and Separations of Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty (Institutional Strategy and Analysis data)

The lack of representation of Black faculty has significant consequences for the academic community (Carter & Craig, 2022; Louis et al., 2016). For example, it can create a sense of isolation and disengagement for Black students who may not see themselves represented in the faculty (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Additionally, Black faculty members often bring unique perspectives and experiences to their research and teaching, enriching the academic community (Wilder, 2015; Carter & Craig, 2022; Louis et al., 2016). The underrepresentation of Black faculty also perpetuates the marginalization of Black voices and perspectives in academia, which can have broader social implications (Sue, 2013).



|                      | Fall | African American / Black | Total | NC State % | Peers % |
|----------------------|------|--------------------------|-------|------------|---------|
| <b>Faculty Count</b> | 2018 | 118                      | 2,748 | 4.29%      | 3.30%   |
|                      | 2019 | 119                      | 2,778 | 4.28%      | 3.60%   |
|                      | 2020 | 131                      | 2,849 | 4.60%      | 3.60%   |
|                      | 2021 | 139                      | 2,817 | 4.93%      |         |
|                      | 2022 | 132                      | 2,818 | 4.68%      |         |
| <b>Faculty Hires</b> | 2018 | 10                       | 129   | 7.75%      | 3.80%   |
|                      | 2019 | 4                        | 120   | 3.33%      | 3.10%   |
|                      | 2020 | 10                       | 84    | 11.90%     | 4.80%   |
|                      | 2021 | 8                        | 91    | 4.93%      |         |
|                      | 2022 | 7                        | 115   | 6.09%      |         |

\*IPEDS Instructional, Research and Public Service (IRP) includes field faculty and post-doc fellows, but not library faculty



Efforts to increase the representation of Black faculty in academia are ongoing. Some initiatives have focused on increasing the pipeline of Black scholars through targeted recruitment and retention efforts (Kayes, 2006; Tillman, 2001). Others have advocated for systemic changes to address institutional biases and promote diversity and inclusion (Milem et al., 2005; Louis et al., 2016). Ultimately, addressing the underrepresentation of Black faculty in academia will require a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including universities, professional associations, and funding agencies.

## Issues Affecting Retention of Black Faculty

Several issues affect the retention of Black faculty in American higher education institutions. These issues include:

- **Lack of Institutional Support:** Black faculty members often face a lack of institutional support, leading to isolation and exclusion. This lack of support can be in the form of limited access to resources, inadequate mentoring, and a lack of opportunities for professional development.

*"I want the task force to know I'm not a bitter person, but it baffles me how I end up disliked or treated by leadership, and I think it baffles those around me as well. I wish I understood why. It's important for the university to know there are costs to allowing that disrespect to happen, for example, I've changed my donations from my college to Park Scholars, and I have decided not to make a financial endowment into my home department, because I feel like doing that would be funding my own oppression." - Current NC State Assistant Professor*

- **Racial Microaggressions:** Black faculty members often experience racial microaggressions, which are subtle, unintentional acts of discrimination. These can include being mistaken for a staff member or student, being asked to represent the "Black perspective" on all issues related to diversity, or being excluded from social events or professional networks (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2015). Racialized microaggressions experienced by Black faculty in academia can manifest intentionally and unintentionally, reflecting systemic biases and ingrained prejudices (Grandison et al., 2022). Intentional microaggressions are deliberate acts that seek to demean, belittle, or marginalize individuals based on race. These can include overt racist comments, discriminatory actions, or exclusionary practices.

On the other hand, unintentional microaggressions are often subtle and unconscious, resulting from implicit biases ingrained within societal structures. These can manifest as seemingly harmless comments, dismissive behaviors, or assumptions based on stereotypes, which may inadvertently reinforce racial stereotypes or undermine the experiences and expertise of Black faculty (Louis et al., 2016). It is essential to recognize that both intentional and unintentional

microaggressions contribute to the challenges faced by Black faculty in academia, and addressing these issues requires proactive efforts to promote inclusion, educate about racial dynamics, and create a supportive environment for all faculty members.

*"This environment doesn't feel safe or trustworthy, and I don't think I can do that anymore. As much as I love my colleagues, I don't think I can do that – it's just not possible. I need to be treated with respect, not be yelled at at meetings, not be blatantly disrespected. I want to be invited into college or department-level opportunities." - Current NC State Assistant Professor*

- **Bias in Hiring, Promotion, and Tenure:** Black faculty members are often subjected to bias in hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions. This bias can take many forms, such as a lack of diversity on search committees, limited access to informal networks, or a focus on research productivity at the expense of teaching and service.

## Spring 2021 COACHE Survey - NC State

### URM Faculty Rated Measures Lower\* than White Faculty

| Leadership:<br>Institution-wide  | Departmental<br>Collegiality  | Departmental<br>Quality   | Personal and<br>Family Policies  |
|--|---|---|--|
| Priorities are acted on consistently<br><br>Visible leadership for support of diversity          | <i>(professional track only)</i><br>Clarity of departmental contract renewal process<br><br>Clarity of departmental contract renewal criteria | Intellectual vitality of tenured faculty<br><br>Scholarly productivity of NTT faculty | Housing benefits<br><br>Spousal/partner hiring program<br><br>Stop-the-clock policies (pre-tenured only) |
| and <span style="background-color: #d9ead3; padding: 5px 15px; font-weight: bold;">Salary</span> |   | <i>*higher by 5% or more on the response scale</i>                                    |  |

*"Black faculty in academia bear an invisible service load, shouldering the weight of representation, mentorship, and diversity work, all while pursuing their own research and teaching. Their contributions are invaluable and their resilience remarkable, as they navigate a system that often fails to recognize and alleviate the unique burdens they carry." - Former NC State Full Professor*

## **Best Practices for Retaining Black Faculty**

There are several best practices that American higher education institutions can utilize to improve the retention of Black faculty. Based on the literature, these best practices focus on addressing the underlying and overarching issues researchers have found to impact Black faculty retention in academia negatively (Grandison, 2022; Jones, 2015; Tillman, 2001).

### **Developing Inclusive Hiring Practices**

Institutions can develop inclusive hiring practices by actively recruiting diverse candidates, using diverse search committees, and ensuring job postings emphasize the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

### **Providing Institutional Support**

Institutions can support Black faculty members by offering mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and access to research funding and office space.

### **Addressing Microaggressions**

Institutions can address racial microaggressions by training faculty and staff on identifying and responding to microaggressions, creating safe spaces for Black faculty members to discuss their experiences, and establishing clear policies and procedures for reporting and addressing discrimination (Gasman & Tudico, 2014).

*"It still goes back to colleagues, that goes back to the very beginning of my time. My colleagues have been very encouraging, collaborating on projects, being appreciative if I find something that is a good match for them. At the end of the day, there's nothing much better than being a good colleague, being willing to read something before it's submitted and give honest feedback." -  
Former NC State Associate Professor.*

## **Promoting Equity in Hiring, Promotion, and Tenure**

Institutions can promote equity in hiring, promotion, and tenure by establishing clear evaluation criteria, ensuring diverse representation on promotion and tenure committees, and addressing bias in evaluation processes.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, retaining Black faculty in American higher education remains a significant challenge. The underrepresentation of Black faculty members can negatively affect both students and faculty. To address this issue, institutions must proactively improve diversity and inclusion, provide institutional support, address racial microaggressions, and promote equity in hiring, promotion, and tenure. Only by taking these steps can American higher education institutions create an environment supporting Black faculty members' success and retention.

Academic institutions are critical in retaining Black faculty and supporting their success. Recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by Black faculty members is essential for creating an inclusive and equitable environment that fosters their retention and advancement. By investing in developing inclusive policies, practices, and support systems, institutions can create a sense of belonging and provide opportunities for professional growth. Retaining Black faculty not only enriches the academic community with diverse perspectives, experiences, and knowledge but also enhances the learning environment for students by offering role models and mentors who reflect their identities. Academic institutions must prioritize Black faculty recruitment, retention, and success, as their presence and contributions are integral to creating a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable academic landscape.

By valuing and investing in the contributions and perspectives of Black faculty members, the university can create an inclusive and equitable environment that benefits the entire academic community. Retaining Black faculty enhances diversity, fosters a

sense of belonging, and provides valuable role models for students from diverse backgrounds. It also contributes to the richness of research, teaching, and scholarship by incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences. To ensure the success of Black faculty, NC State University must prioritize implementing supportive policies, mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and resources that address the unique challenges they may face. By doing so, the university demonstrates its commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion and positions itself as a leader in cultivating an academic community that values and supports the success of all its faculty members.

## **Black Faculty Retention and Success Task Force Charge and Membership**

In the fall of 2022, Provost Warick Arden charged the Black Faculty Retention and Success Task Force with examining the retention and success of Black faculty at NC State University. Specifically, this task force was to explore challenges associated with retaining Black faculty and to provide recommendations to address the understood challenges and opportunities.

The Black Faculty Retention and Success Task Force aims to address and mitigate the unique challenges Black faculty members face within our institution and create an inclusive and supportive environment that promotes their retention, professional development, and overall success. This task force is dedicated to fostering a campus culture that recognizes and values the contributions of Black faculty while actively working to dismantle systemic barriers that hinder their advancement and well-being.

While working to identify areas of positive impact for Black faculty at NC State, the task force has worked to acknowledge and understand the recommendations of three previously charged working groups (2011, 2013, 2018) and provide updated [recommendations](#) to advance this work.

|                             |  |   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Doneka Scott</b>         | <b>Vice Chancellor and Dean</b>                      | <b>Division of Academic and Student Affairs (DASA)</b>      |
| <b>Melvin (Jai) Jackson</b> | <b>Assistant Vice Provost</b>                        | <b>Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity (OIED)</b> |
| Carolyn Bird                | Professor  | CALS  |
| Deanna Dannels              | Dean   | CHASS   |
| Joy Gaston Gayles           | Professor  | CED   |
| Stephanie Helms Pickett     | Associate Vice Provost                               | OIED  |
| Tamah Morant                | Teaching Professor of Economics                      | PCOM  |
| Stacy Nelson                | Interim Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion   | CNR   |
| Juliana Nfah-Abbenyi        | Associate Dean of Diversity                          | CHASS   |
| Sheri Schwab                | Vice Provost for Institutional Equity and Diversity  | OIED  |
| Jamilla Simpson             | Assistant Dean for Inclusive Excellence              | COS   |
| Katharine Stewart           | Senior Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs | Provost's Office  |
| Kelly Wick                  | Chief of Staff, Office of the Provost                | Provost's Office  |

## **Research Objectives**

The primary objective of this study was to explore the retention and success of Black faculty in higher education institutions. Specifically, the study identified the challenges and factors contributing to Black faculty members' retention and success. Additionally, the study examined the effectiveness of existing strategies and programs designed to support Black faculty members at NC State. The findings of this study contribute to developing evidence-based strategies to support Black faculty members and promote their success in the academy and at NC State.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining a survey and one-on-one interviews, to investigate the factors influencing Black faculty retention at NC State University. The survey provides a broad understanding of the experiences and perceptions of current and former Black faculty members at NC State. At the same time, the interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of their individual experiences.

### **Survey Development**

A comprehensive survey was developed to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The survey was designed to gather information about various factors that may influence the retention of Black faculty, including but not limited to:

- A. Demographic information (e.g. gender, years of experience, faculty appointment)
- B. Perceptions of the campus climate and support systems
- C. Experiences with a sense of belonging initiatives at department and college levels
- D. Opportunities for professional development and career advancement
- E. Work-life balance
- F. Perceived barriers to retention and success
- G. Suggestions for improving retention and support

The survey utilized Likert scale ratings and open-ended questions to capture a range of perspectives and experiences.



## **Data Collection**

The survey was administered electronically using an online survey platform, Qualtrics. Invitations were distributed to potential participants via email, along with a detailed explanation of the study's purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

## **One-on-One Interviews**

Following the survey, participants were invited to one-on-one interviews to understand their experiences better. Participants were allowed to select an individual task force member based on comfort level to serve as the interviewer. Interviews were conducted by task force members, either in person or through video conferencing platforms. The semi-structured interviews allowed flexibility to explore participants' unique perspectives. Interview questions focused on individual experiences, challenges, and recommendations for improving faculty retention and success.

## **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data from the survey were analyzed using statistical software and descriptive statistics to summarize the demographic characteristics and survey responses. Qualitative data from open-ended survey questions and interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis, identifying common themes and patterns in participants' responses.

## **Participants**

The participants of this study will consist of current and former Black faculty members at NC State University. The inclusion criteria for participants will be individuals who have held a faculty position at NC State University and self-identify as Black or African American. Participants will be recruited through targeted email invitations and announcements posted on university platforms. Confidentiality and voluntary participation will be emphasized to encourage candid responses.

### **Inclusionary criteria:**

Participants must self-identify their race/ethnicity to participate in the research study.

| <b>Inclusionary Criteria:</b>  | <b>Example:</b>   |
|--|---|
| - Must identify as a Black or African American.                            | - Identifies as Afro-Caribbean  |
| - Must be formerly or actively employed as faculty at NC State University. | - Employed as an associate professor of engineering.<br>- Previously employed as a professional track faculty in Sociology at NC State. |
| <b>Exclusionary Criteria:</b>  | <b>Example:</b>   |
| - Identifies as any race/ethnicity other than Black/African American       | - Identified as a white male.   |
| - Is not actively or formerly employed as faculty at NC State University.  | - They are employed as faculty outside of NC State.   |

### **Limitations**

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The findings may be specific to the context of NC State and may not be generalizable to other institutions. Additionally, the study relied on self-report data, which may be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias.

### **Results**

The results section of this research study presents the findings obtained from an examination of the factors influencing the retention of Black faculty at NC State. Through a survey and one-on-one interviews with current and former Black faculty members, this study sought to uncover and understand the key themes that emerged regarding their experiences within the institution.

### **Population Sample**

The population included current and former Black faculty between 2018 - Present. These figures include 82 former Black faculty and 129 current Black faculty (211 total).

Of this population, 34 individuals completed the survey and were subsequently invited to participate in individual interviews with a task force member of their choosing. Eleven interviews were invited and three completed.

| <b>Instrument</b>     | <b>Population</b> | <b>Respondents</b> | <b>Percentage of Population</b> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Survey                | 211               | 34                 | 16%                             |
| Interview invitations | 34                | 3                  | 9%                              |

The following section presents an analysis of the collected data, focusing on the themes that emerged related to invisible labor, unsupportive institutional culture, lack of mentoring, lack of equity for faculty with non-tenure track appointments, compensation inequity, and unconscious bias. These themes provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by Black faculty members, shedding light on the systemic barriers that may hinder their retention and overall job satisfaction.

By exploring these themes, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. The findings offer a deeper understanding of the unique experiences of Black faculty members at NC State, allowing for targeted interventions and policy recommendations to improve their working conditions and enhance their opportunities for success and advancement within the institution.

### **Theme 1: Invisible Labor for Black Faculty**

One prominent theme from the data analysis is the presence of invisible labor for Black faculty members. Participants described engaging in additional service work, mentorship, and diversity-related initiatives that often went unrecognized and unrewarded. They reported feeling burdened by these responsibilities, which often consumed significant time and energy, impacting their ability to focus on their core teaching and research duties.

### **Theme 2: Unsupportive Institutional Culture for Black Faculty**

Participants consistently highlighted an unsupportive institutional culture that perpetuated a sense of marginalization and exclusion for Black faculty. They described instances of microaggressions, lack of respect, and limited opportunities for

meaningful engagement and involvement in decision-making processes. This culture created a hostile work environment that adversely affected their professional growth and job satisfaction.

### **Theme 3: Lack of Mentoring**

A recurring theme was the lack of formal and informal mentoring opportunities available to Black faculty members. Participants expressed a desire for guidance and support in navigating the academic landscape, building networks, and accessing resources. The absence of mentors contributed to feelings of isolation and hindered their professional development and advancement within the institution.

### **Theme 4: Lack of Equity for Faculty with Non-Tenure Track Appointments**

Another key theme that emerged was the lack of equity for Black faculty members holding non-tenure track appointments. Participants described experiencing differential treatment, limited access to professional growth opportunities, and a lack of job security compared to their tenure-track counterparts. These inequities created barriers to their career progression and contributed to feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction.

### **Theme 5: Compensation Inequity**

Participants highlighted compensation inequity as a significant concern. They reported disparities in salary and benefits compared to their peers, with Black faculty members often being underpaid for their qualifications and contributions. This disparity in compensation further exacerbated feelings of undervaluation and inequality within the institution.

### **Theme 6: Unconscious Bias**

Participants discussed the pervasive influence of unconscious bias within the institution. They described instances of biased evaluations, lack of recognition for their achievements, and disparities in opportunities for advancement. Unconscious bias negatively impacted their professional growth and perpetuated systemic inequities within the academic environment.

Overall, the results of this study shed light on several critical themes related to the experiences of Black faculty members at NC State. The findings highlight the need for institutional interventions to address the issues of invisible labor, unsupportive institutional culture, mentoring, equity for non-tenure track faculty, compensation inequity, and unconscious bias.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **I. Compensation equity:**

**Create a toolkit for department-level leadership that details the resources, tools, and opportunities to address compensation and resource equity (including retention funds, course release, research support, graduate student support, compression challenges, etc.). Complete a thorough faculty compensation analysis and equity study every three years. (NC State Strategic Plan (SP) Goal 4)**

Compensation equity is essential in retaining Black faculty in academia. Research has found that Black faculty members are often paid less than their white counterparts, even when controlling for factors such as years of experience and job duties (Holley & Thompson, 2019). This pay inequity can contribute to lower job satisfaction and a decreased sense of value and recognition in the workplace, which may lead to higher turnover rates.

Additionally, pay inequity may limit career advancement opportunities and exacerbate the representation gap among Black faculty in higher education (Carter & Craig, 2022). Institutions must prioritize compensation equity as a critical component of their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. This includes conducting regular audits of faculty salaries to identify and address pay inequities, ensuring transparency and fairness in salary negotiations and evaluations, and providing equal professional development and advancement (Carter & Craig, 2022). By prioritizing compensation equity, institutions can demonstrate their commitment to valuing and retaining Black faculty members and promoting a more diverse and inclusive academic community.

In conclusion, compensation equity is crucial in retaining Black faculty in academia. Pay inequity can contribute to lower job satisfaction, limit opportunities for career advancement, and ultimately lead to higher turnover rates. Institutions must prioritize compensation equity as a critical component of their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to ensure that Black faculty members feel valued and supported in the workplace.

**II. Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) standards:**

**In support of Goal Three of the NC State University Strategic Plan, colleges and departments should conduct 'regular' (four-year cycles) service audits of faculty. These service audits should include reviews by faculty and 'local' administrators and regularly occur for all faculty across entire departments. Department heads will conduct the service audits and will be made accountable to College deans for regular reporting. (SP Goal 3, 7)**

**III. Equity for Tenure-Track (TT)/Profession-Track (PT) faculty:**

**Develop an institutional structure that creates equitable outcomes and opportunities for professional track faculty in terms of their ability to assume leadership roles and appointments at varying levels within departments, colleges and university leadership.**

The overabundance of Black faculty service in mentoring, DEI service, and other forms of service in higher education is a concerning issue that highlights the lack of equity in the field. Black faculty members are often burdened with additional responsibilities beyond teaching and research, such as mentoring and supporting students of color, participating in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, and serving on committees dedicated to addressing social justice issues on campus. This overreliance on Black faculty for DEI work can contribute to burnout and hinder their professional growth and advancement opportunities (Trejo, 2020).

Research suggests that Black faculty members face unique academic challenges and barriers contributing to this overburdening. For example, they may experience isolation, tokenism, and microaggressions, negatively impacting their job satisfaction and sense of belonging on campus (Turner, 2019).

Furthermore, Black faculty members may not receive the same institutional support and resources as their white counterparts (DeCuir-Gunby & Gunby, 2015), which can impede their ability to conduct research, publish, and advance their careers (Trejo, 2020).

The overabundance of Black faculty service also has broader implications for higher education. By placing the burden of DEI work on Black faculty members, institutions may inadvertently reinforce the notion that these issues are solely the responsibility of people of color rather than a shared responsibility for all

academic community members (Turner, 2019). This reinforces structural inequalities and hinders progress toward a more equitable and inclusive academic environment.

In conclusion, the overabundance of Black faculty service in mentoring, DEI service, and other forms of service in higher education is a concerning issue that highlights the lack of equity in the field.

Black faculty members face unique challenges and barriers in academia, and relying on them for DEI work can contribute to burnout and hinder their professional growth and advancement opportunities. Institutions must recognize the importance of equity in higher education and work towards providing Black faculty members with the necessary resources and support to ensure their success and well-being on campus.

#### **IV. Sense of belonging:**

**Create and implement an institutionalized faculty affinity group program at the University level. This faculty affinity program will allow faculty members to develop impactful relationships and meaningful connections with faculty who may share similar interests, cultures, and affinities. (SP Goal 4)**

A sense of belonging is essential for retaining Black faculty in academia. Research has found that Black faculty members who feel a strong sense of belonging and connection to their institution are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, have higher levels of engagement, and experience less turnover (Huang et al., 2019). Conversely, Black faculty members who experience isolation, discrimination, or a lack of support in the workplace may be more likely to leave their institution (Warren & Frison, 2022). A sense of belonging is also essential for promoting academic success and career advancement. It fosters a supportive and inclusive environment that allows Black faculty members to thrive and reach their full potential (Harris, 2023).

Institutions can promote a sense of belonging among Black faculty members by creating an inclusive and supportive environment that values diversity and provides opportunities for engagement and connection. This includes providing mentorship and networking opportunities, recognizing and celebrating the contributions of Black faculty members, and addressing issues of racism and bias in the workplace (Warren & Frison, 2022). By prioritizing a sense of belonging for Black faculty members, institutions can create a more diverse and

inclusive academic community that fosters academic success, promotes career advancement, and ultimately leads to more excellent retention of Black faculty members.

A sense of belonging is critical for retaining Black faculty in academia. Institutions must prioritize creating an inclusive and supportive environment that values diversity and provides opportunities for engagement and connection (Harris, 2023). By doing so, institutions can promote academic success, career advancement, and greater retention of Black faculty members.

## **V. Continuous data-tracking:**

### **Black faculty time to progression (time in faculty designation)**

The collection and analysis of faculty rank progression are crucial in academic institutions for several reasons. First and foremost, it provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and success of the institution's faculty recruitment, retention, and promotion processes. By systematically tracking and evaluating the progression of faculty ranks, institutions can identify patterns, trends, and areas for improvement in their faculty development strategies. This information enables them to make data-driven decisions regarding faculty hiring, mentorship programs, professional development opportunities, and promotion criteria, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of education and research output. Moreover, analyzing faculty rank progression allows institutions to assess and address potential disparities or biases in advancing faculty members based on gender, race, or background. It helps promote transparency, fairness, and diversity in academia by identifying and rectifying inequities within the faculty ranks. Lastly, collecting and analyzing faculty rank progression is a valuable benchmarking tool, enabling institutions to compare their faculty progression rates with peer institutions and national standards. This allows for meaningful comparisons, sharing of best practices, and fostering healthy competition, ultimately leading to continuous improvement and excellence in the academic community. Collecting and analyzing faculty rank progression is essential for evidence-based decision-making, promoting equity and diversity, and ensuring academic institutions' long-term success and reputation.

## **VI. [Service audits](#)**

In higher education institutions, faculty members play a vital role in achieving the core mission of providing quality education and conducting research. While the



traditional evaluation systems primarily focus on teaching effectiveness and research productivity, there is a growing recognition that service to the institution and the broader community should also be assessed and recognized. Service audits, therefore, serve as a valuable tool to evaluate and acknowledge faculty members' contributions in terms of service.

Service audits significantly impact supporting equity for faculty in higher education. They help identify and address disparities in service obligations, promote a balanced workload, and recognize the value of service work. By incorporating the findings of service audits into decision-making processes, institutions can create a more equitable and inclusive environment that values the diverse contributions of faculty members, ultimately enhancing their professional growth and fostering a more equitable higher education landscape.

*"I'm being asked to be on lots of social committees, help with cleanup after events and stuff like that, instead of serving on search committees or community boards. The tenured faculty in my department would all agree. I think there is too much power given to department heads to assign work to faculty and that power gets misused." - Current NC State Assistant Professor*

## Previous Working Groups' Recommendations

| Year of Recommendation: | Recommendation:  | Implemented:  | Outcome:  | Notes:  |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| 2018                    | Restructure the nature of Opportunity Hires (2018)   | Currently underway by the "Target of Opportunity Hire" committee. | The current Opportunity Hires program is under re-evaluation by the Provost's office. That team is reviewing and considering most of the concerns noted here. | It needs more clarity about what is and is not an "opportunity hire." e.g., are spouses considered opportunity hires? Are opportunity hires focused explicitly on diversifying the faculty? Leadership must clarify. We need to be thoughtful about "gaming" the system because it may marginalize the folks hired under it (or make them feel marginalized by the program). Departmental faculty communicate to the folks hired under this program (mainly faculty of color) in demeaning ways that damage the faculty's sense of belonging and value. What mechanisms can the head, deans, and the provost implement to reward positive climates and hold folks accountable for marginalizing or discriminatory behavior? |
| 2018                    | Employee candidates should show a demonstrated commitment to diversity and equity in job applications (2018) | Implemented in individual departments, units, and academies       | Current UNC system policy has restricted the use of these practices in applications and interviews  | Current UNC system policy has restricted the use of these practices in applications and interviews. Guidance is being developed by UHR to be distributed to the colleges  |
| 2018                    | Mentoring, support, and Recognition for black faculty (2018)   | NCFDD membership has been established for ~5 years.               |   | The Faculty Senate has created a working group to examine how faculty service (mentoring, emotional labor, etc.) should be recognized in the SFR.   |

|      |   |   |  |  |
|------|---|---|--|--|
|      |   |   |  | <p>Increase funding/support for FSP program participation</p> <p>University-wide mentor matching software</p> <p>Mentor Leadership Academy (MLA) through College of Engineering (Assoc. Dean, Joel Ducoste)</p> <p>Creation of groups focused on faculty productivity and output with the unintended outcome of mentoring.</p> |
| 2018 | Senior-level administrators should receive more training on how to support and retain faculty of color (2018) | Efforts have focused on faculty leader training     |  | <p>Training has not explicitly focused on the retention and support of faculty of color. The Faculty LEAD program has integrated DEIB into the certificate course to assist faculty leaders with creating more inclusive academic environments.</p>  |
| 2018 | Create separate spaces to support black faculty that are distinct from spaces to support Black staff (2018)   | The creation of AAFSO (former glory).               |  | <p>The organization has not had the impact that it initially sought.</p> <p>Developing subgroups within AAFSO? What is the strategic connection with OIED?</p>   |
| 2013 | Gather and disseminate information (2013)   | Increased transparency from senior administration   |  | <p>Leadership searches for senior positions have increased transparency regarding candidate information, schedule, and processes.</p>  |
| 2013 | Develop a Comprehensive Plan to Increase Black Faculty (2013)   | Provost Opportunity Hires Program (early iteration) |  | <p>The program was recertified and supported in 2016 with expanded opportunities.</p>  |
| 2013 | Align Campus Resources to Increase Black Faculty  |   |  |  |

|      | Representation (2013)   |  |  |   |
|------|---|--|--|---|
| 2011 | Develop new approaches to increase the number of women and faculty of color in tenured, tenure track, and administrative positions (2011) |  |  | The integration of the target of opportunity hire programs                                  |
| 2011 | Establish "targets" (not quotas) for demographic diversity for each hiring unit that have more apparent rewards and consequences (2011)   |  |  | Comprehensive college annual review, while quotas aren't established, numbers were reviewed |
| 2011 | Identify and expand exemplar diversity programs (2011)  |  |  | Post-grant support of NC State programs like the Building Future Faculty program            |
| 2011 | Examine current policy and practices (2011)   |  |  | Consider need for bullying policy.  |

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## **Terms of reference:**

### **Service audit**

A faculty service audit systematically assesses faculty members' service activities and contributions within an academic institution. It involves evaluating the various service roles undertaken by faculty members, such as committee work, administrative responsibilities, professional outreach, and community engagement. The purpose of a faculty service audit is to measure and recognize the contributions made by faculty members beyond their teaching and research responsibilities, as service is an essential component of their academic role.

The institution reviews and assesses each member's service activities' quantity, quality, and impact during a faculty service audit. This can be done by collecting and analyzing documentation, such as committee reports, meeting minutes, community engagement records, and evidence of leadership roles in professional organizations. The audit may also involve soliciting feedback from colleagues, students, and external stakeholders to comprehensively understand the faculty member's service contributions.

The objectives of a faculty service audit include identifying and acknowledging faculty members' service achievements, assessing their level of engagement and effectiveness in service roles, and providing opportunities for professional development and recognition. It helps institutions ensure that faculty members are fulfilling their service obligations, and it can inform decisions related to promotion, tenure, and merit-based evaluations.

By conducting a faculty service audit, institutions can gain insights into the overall service culture, identify areas where additional support or resources may be needed, and encourage a more balanced distribution of service responsibilities among faculty members. It also provides a basis for promoting a service excellence culture and recognizing faculty members' significant contributions to the academic community and beyond.