



# ASPIRE

INSTITUTIONAL  
CHANGE INITIATIVE

## **LEVERAGING PROMISING PRACTICES**

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**Improving the  
Recruitment,  
Hiring, and  
Retention of  
Diverse &  
Inclusive  
Faculty**

## Executive Summary

Institutions looking to make headway into the persistent challenge of recruiting, hiring, and retaining a more diverse faculty are often looking for a playbook of best or promising practices to aid their efforts. While there are no one-size-fits-all solutions for the context-specific challenges facing universities, research on promising practices and the experiences of underrepresented group (URG) faculty provide indicators of the necessary elements of programs, practices, and interventions to increase the institutional and national diversity of faculty.

These recommendations for promising practice are grounded in the research literature and should help institutional leaders to structure their interventions to best tackle these challenges. These promising practices urge institutions to:

- **Foster relationships all along the faculty career pathways.**
- **Democratize knowledge about processes, standards, and norms.**
- **Rethink recruitment and hiring strategies.**
- **Address the conditions of faculty retention and success.**
- **Celebrate diversity regularly.**
- **Expand definitions of excellence for faculty accomplishments.**
- **Question the roots “objective” or “neutral” criteria internally and externally.**
- **Ensure values of diversity, equity, and inclusion are deeply embedded in decision-making.**



This report offers suggestions and guidance for institutions, including the importance of conducting a thorough self-assessment, the danger of reaching for promising practices before identifying the root problems, and a framework for developing a holistic, comprehensive and systemic approach to institutional change for inclusion that addresses the systemic, structural, values and cultural dimensions simultaneously.

## INTRODUCTION

A diverse faculty is poised to help public institutions meet their goals of better serving their communities, advancing innovation and discovery, contributing a variety of perspectives to the public discourse, and cultivating knowledge to support an educated global citizenry (National Academies, 2007). In addition, research suggests that students from underrepresented group (URG) backgrounds learn best from faculty who come from similar backgrounds (Palmer et al., 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2012; National Academies, 2016) or who have made deep and meaningful commitments to an inclusive education practice (Kuh, et al., 2011; Mayhew et al., 2016; Rodriguez et al., 2012). However, ongoing efforts to increase the diversity of faculty, particularly in STEM fields, have only realized incremental gains despite decades of funded activities to address this challenge.

One significant reason for this lack of progress has been piecemeal efforts both along the educational and training trajectories of faculty aspirants and a resistance to changing institutional environments and cultures in meaningful ways to enhance the recruitment, hiring, and retention of URG faculty (Bennett, et al., 2020). Creating environments and cultures that better support URG faculty requires implementing a broad program of policy innovations, shifts towards greater consistency and accountability in practice implementations, and a broadened and inclusive definition of faculty excellence that permeates all layers of an institution.

Despite growth in the research literature, the evidence base of promising practices to achieve these goals and improve faculty recruitment, hiring, and retention indicates very mixed results. When managing and catalyzing institutional change, institutional leaders often

jump from awareness of a problem to implementing promising practices without developing a thorough understanding of the underlying issues of their problems. This is a “change trap” that leads to the implementation of promising practices that do not actually address the institution’s real issues or cause the promising practice to be implemented incorrectly. These mis-implementations have largely resulted in the mixed evidence regarding these practices.

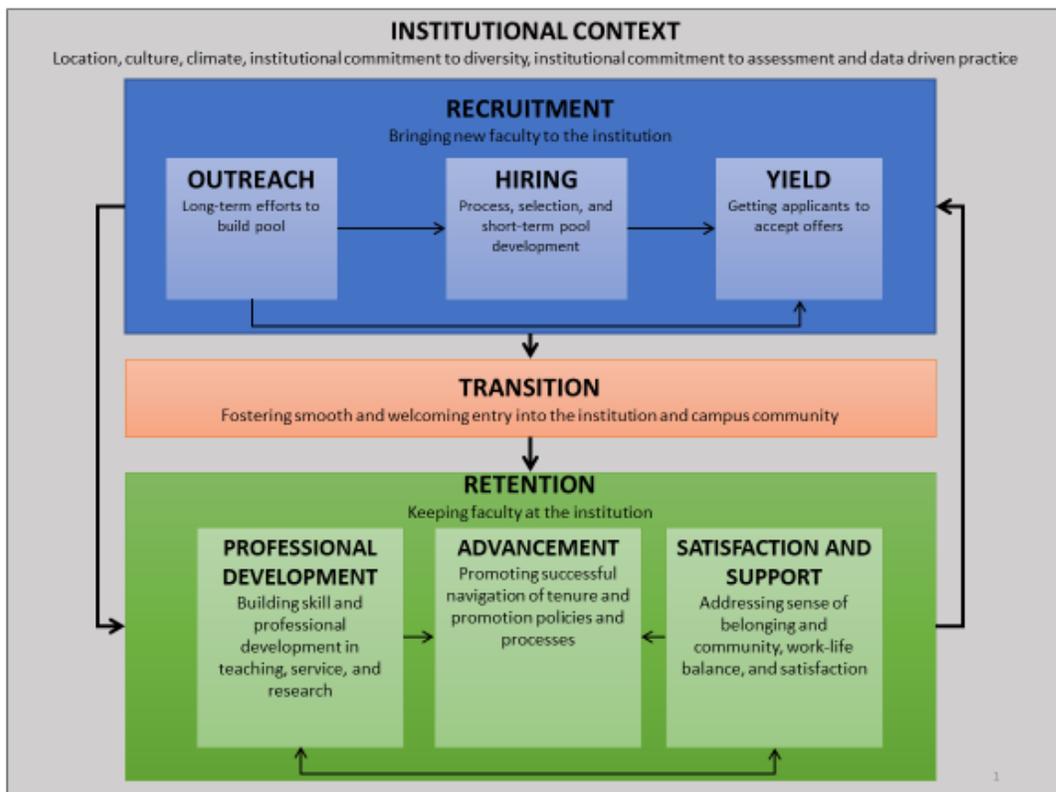
Simply put, each of these promising practices has both worked and not worked in various institutional contexts. Our experience is supported by Laursen and Austin (2014), who studied organizational change at 19 institutions that received NSF-funded ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grants. They found that there were no “best practices” that would work equally well across all campuses; rather, institutional leaders had to develop a deep understanding of the specific challenges their institution was facing in promoting faculty diversity and understand the context within which they wanted change to occur before deciding what combination of interventions and strategies would be most likely to promote faculty equity and diversity.

The persistent lack of faculty diversity and underrepresentation of women and men of color in the academy are rooted in exclusionary structures and practices embedded in recruitment and hiring, how work is assessed and allocated, how resources and support are distributed, and the extent to which faculty are welcomed into academic communities and included in departmental networks. It is important to highlight and acknowledge that in addition to addressing the pathways into and through the academy in comprehensive ways, the structure of the interventions must align with

the specific challenges on campus. It is essential that institutional leaders conduct thorough self-assessments to increase their understanding of the most pressing issues

they wish to address and to then craft holistic action plans with a suite of promising practices that attend to the multidimensional problems they face.

**Figure 1.**  
**Institutional Model for Increasing Faculty Diversity**



## A FRAMEWORK FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT: THE INSTITUTIONAL MODEL FOR INCREASING FACULTY DIVERSITY

The Institutional Model for Increasing Faculty Diversity (Figure 1) offers a complex, multidimensional framework that helps institutions organize and understand the factors and forces that impact their ability to recruit and retain a diverse faculty (Griffin, 2020).

The Model was developed as part of the APLU INCLUDES Project (NSF #1649214) and currently serves as the foundation for the NSF-

funded INCLUDES Alliance, [Aspire: The National Alliance for an Inclusive and Diverse STEM Faculty](#) (NSF #1834518, 1834522, 1834510, 1834513, 1834526, 1834521) [Institutional Change \(IChange\) Network](#).

The IChange Network is a community of transformation (Kezar & Gehrke, 2015) for institutions committed to a process of self-assessment, action planning, and

implementation around recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse and inclusive STEM faculty.

The Institutional Model for Increasing Faculty Diversity suggests that to increase faculty diversity in meaningful ways, campuses must implement comprehensive programs, policies, and strategies that address 4 core areas:

- institutional context, or the overarching commitment and investment the campus has made in promoting diversity and inclusion;
- faculty recruitment, or short- and long-term efforts to bring faculty from diverse backgrounds to campus; transition, or the process by which faculty are welcomed and incorporated into campus communities between their hiring and formal initiation of employment;
- retention, or efforts focused on promoting faculty success and satisfaction that keep them at the institution.

These dimensions do not work in isolation of each other. Rather, it is important to note and assess how increasing the critical mass of faculty from diverse backgrounds on campus through various recruitment strategies may create a critical mass and increase sense of belonging, which can have an impact on retention.

Comprehensive programs that promote successful transitions to the campus community and access to professional support and

development may make it easier to recruit potential new hires eager to enter environments offering these forms of support.



Rather than launching compartmentalized programs that exist in silos across the institution, we highly recommend collaborative efforts to not only understand the forces that impact faculty diversity, but also to develop interrelated interventions to attract and retain scholars from underrepresented backgrounds.

To learn more about our findings and recommendations from APLU INCLUDES and the NSF INCLUDES Aspire Alliance to increase the diversity of faculty at your institution, please check out the following:

### **Strengthening Pathways to Faculty Careers in STEM: Recommendations for Systemic Change to Support Underrepresented Groups**

- Documents learning from APLU INCLUDES about where the efforts to enhance pathways to the STEM professoriate are strong, and where further systemic efforts at change are needed.

### **Institutional Barriers, Strategies, and Benefits to Increasing the Representation of Women and Men of Color in the Professoriate**

- Offers a thorough review of the research literature informing the Institutional Model for Increasing Faculty Diversity and the promising practices cited here.

### **A Guidebook for a Campus Self-Assessment of Successes and Challenges in STEM Faculty Diversity and Inclusion**

- Provides more information on how the model can be used to complete an institutional self-assessment, including links to a self-assessment questionnaire and data template to kick-start institutional efforts at change.

### **Supporting Faculty During & After COVID-19: Don't let go of equity**

Shares cautions for institutional leaders as they implement policy adjustments in response to COVID-19, including the disparate impact of these adjustments on women and men of color faculty.

## **THE EVIDENCE FOR PROMISING PRACTICES**

The evidence-based strategies for increasing the diversity of the faculty vary in their foci, addressing challenges at all points in the Institutional Model for Increasing Faculty Diversity; some interventions even address multiple portions of the model simultaneously.

We have organized these promising practices according to the four frames for equitable organizations proposed by the Simmons University Center for Gender and Organization (CGO) (1998):

- 1) equipping the individual,
- 2) creating equal opportunities,
- 3) valuing difference, and
- 4) managing culture.

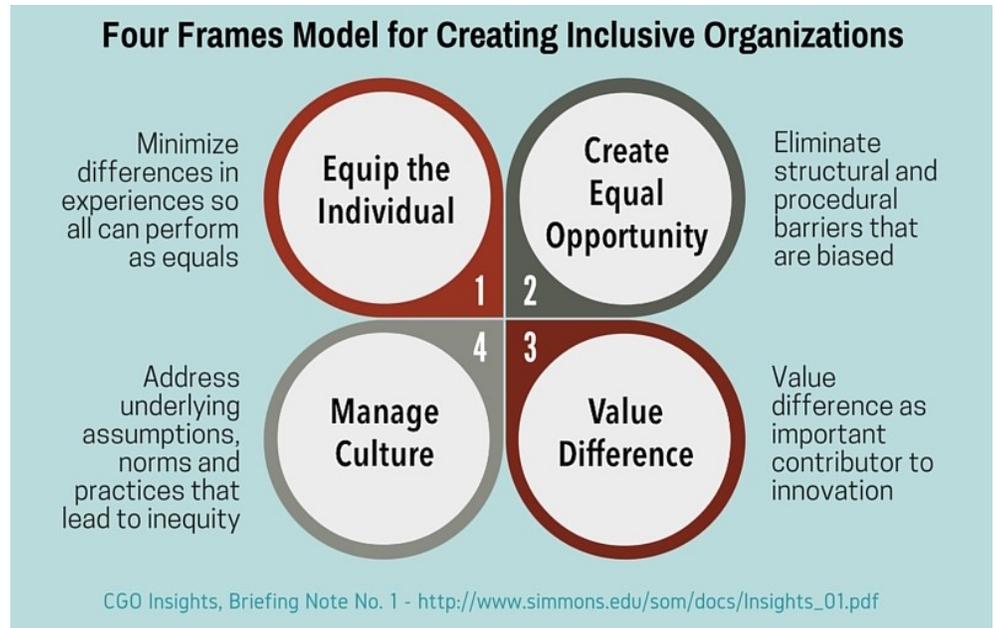
CGO suggests that true transformation for equity requires interventions among all four frames, addressing the systemic, structural, values and cultural dimensions simultaneously.

In addition to balancing strategies across the four frames and addressing the largest institutional challenges for a diverse faculty, we encourage institutional leaders and policymakers to diversify their strategies, developing institutional action plans that integrate policies and practices that reflect their unique challenges at the institutional, departmental, and individual levels.

Figure 2 was developed by [Women in Engineering ProActive Network](#)

([WEPAN](#)), an Aspire Alliance partner, to illustrate the four frames.

**Figure 2. WEPAN's Illustration of the Four Frames for Inclusive Organizations**



## Frame 1. Equipping the Individual

The first frame of the CGO model for equitable organizations focuses on providing individuals the skills, knowledge, and understanding they need to navigate the organization. We believe these efforts are actually addressing the persistent variation in and lack of access to mentoring, informal networks, and career development for both graduate students (e.g., Cianni & Romberger, 1995; Curtin, Malley, & Stewart, 2016; Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008; Patton, 2009) and faculty. These challenges, combined with the usual challenges for new or new-to-an-institution faculty, create particularly high barriers for URG faculty success. This wide-scale variation in support and access for URG graduate students and faculty requires

interventions that address those gaps by fostering relationships and democratizing individual access to knowledge about processes, standards, and norms.

### *Fostering Relationships*

Intervention strategies focused on fostering relationships help to mitigate the common exclusion that women and men of color experience from informal networks of scholars who serve as collaborators, mentors, advisors, and compatriots. These networks often facilitate consideration in recruitment, insight into the "hidden curriculum" of attaining tenure or full promotion, and access to funding or publication opportunities that are essential for professional success at many institutions.

Fostering relationships, especially with mentors and peers who share minoritized identities, is critical to faculty navigating and surviving environments that are often hostile and marked by racism and sexism (Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Turner et al., 1999).

## Building A Pool

Interventions focused on fostering relationships can begin before the active recruitment process to fill a faculty position even begins. Institutions wishing to move beyond the well-worn networks already in place may want to expand their potential pools of candidates by developing programs that cultivate relationships with graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty at other institutions. This can include developing a process for informal talks and visits before a position opens (Collins & Johnson, 1988), developing a lecture series to invite promising URG scholars (Gasman et al., 2011), or creating an institutionally funded post-doctoral program that provides an easier pathway into a faculty position for funded fellows (Knowles & Harleston, 1997; Tuitt et al., 2007). Another recommended, and potentially controversial, intervention is to establish a “grow your own” program to train doctoral students and postdoctoral trainees and subsequently hire them into faculty positions (Gasman et al., 2011; Lumpkin, 2007; Tuitt et al., 2007).

## On-Campus Interviews

Once the pool for a position has been developed, and candidates have advanced into the interview stage, interventions in this frame focus on how the on-campus interview process can be structured to be culturally responsive while simultaneously increasing the likelihood that a candidate accepts an offer. This includes giving URG candidates opportunities to connect

with other faculty and staff on campus who might share similar identities and experiences (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), to meet with students, especially activists, who might provide honest assessments of the campus culture and environment for URG community members (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017), and to provide connections to community leaders and people who may be relevant to their work and life beyond the institution to foster a sense of comfort and connection (Light, 1994).

## Mentoring

Perhaps no single intervention for URG faculty has been discussed and researched more than mentoring, and yet it remains a challenge for many institutions. Both formal and informal mentoring enhance community and a sense of support on campus, and facilitate the sharing of information about faculty life at a particular institution or department (e.g., Curtin et al., 2016; Dancy & Brown, 2011; Phillips, Dennison, & Davenport, 2016; Piercy et al., 2005; Thompson, 2008; Zambrana et al., 2015). Mentoring relationships established in the transition period prior to a new hire’s arrival on campus can provide women and men of color with opportunities to ask questions, get feedback on syllabi and manuscripts, and develop potential collaborations in the time before they arrive on campus (Phillips et al., 2016).

Institutionally sponsored mentoring that extends beyond the transition period is especially helpful to URG faculty when senior scholars invite them to collaborate on research, offer “hands on” (p. 59) feedback on their writing, and guide them in building the skills necessary to be a strong scholar (Zambrana et al., 2015). When mentors are trained and engage in culturally responsive practices, women and men of color faculty are more likely to feel affirmed and

supported, and to have a sense of community that mitigates the isolation of being “the only” or only one of a few (Phillips et al., 2016; Piercy et al., 2005; Stanley, 2006; Zambrana et al., 2015). Mentoring programs that convene groups of mentor-protege pairs or distribute mentoring activities across multiple individuals further address needs for community and connection (Piercy et al., 2005).



## Peer Networks

In addition to the success of mentoring programs, research suggests that peer networks can serve as communities of support that promote URG faculty’s persistence (Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005; Martinez et al., 2017; Piercy et al., 2005).

Successful peer networks build relationships, affirm faculty identities, create valuable space for building trust, and help maintain faculty members’ motivation (Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005; Fries-Britt & Snider, 2015; Garrison-Wade et al., 2012; Griffin, Pifer, et al., 2011; Jones & Osborne- Lampkin, 2013; Kelly & Winkle-Wagner, 2017; Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Patton & Catching, 2009). On-campus peer networks may also help faculty of color find support, community, and services in predominantly White neighborhoods off-campus (Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008).

Some of the most successful formal peer networks, including Sisters of the Academy and the National Center for Faculty Diversity and Development, provide an opportunity for emotional and relational support while also equipping faculty to articulate and plan research agendas, craft successful publications, share information about career enhancing opportunities, and collaborate with each other (Jones & Osborne-Lampkin, 2013). Informal networks can be facilitated through institutional sponsorship of affinity groups, colloquia, networking receptions, and other events.

## *Democratizing Knowledge about Processes, Standards, and Norms*

Equip the individual interventions focused on democratizing knowledge about processes, standards, and norms help to make explicit areas of information considered “common knowledge” that often are not formally included in graduate education, orientation sessions, or common campus processes. Overall, these activities focus on eliminating disparities in information availability, allowing URG faculty and their colleagues to establish common understanding of the institution’s policies, priorities, and processes.

## Negotiating Job Offers

Given the likely variation in mentoring and career support for URG graduate students and faculty, another area where campuses can provide potential faculty hires support is creating scaffolded offer negotiation processes, including negotiation templates and checklists of items that could be negotiated for or that candidates should anticipate discussing (Laursen & Austin, 2014). These interventions provide common and consistent insight to candidates about what they should or could be negotiating for, leading to more equitable start-

up packages, salaries, and resources, affecting faculty members' long-term success and likelihood of retention.

## Role Clarity

Institutions should establish formal mechanisms to provide faculty information about the requirements for success in the tenure and promotion process, including the distinctions between requirements in their respective departments, colleges, and at the university level (Eddy & Gaston-Gayles, 2008). Departments should provide faculty early exposure to how professional reviews work, timelines for completing the various components of the process, and benchmarks in scholarship, teaching and service that are indicators of good progress towards a successful promotion and tenure review (Laursen & Austin, 2014). Clarity in these expectations for both faculty candidates and reviewers leaves less room for biased interpretations of a candidate's achievements and can encourage more positive outcomes for women and men of color (Laursen & Austin, 2014; Settles et al., 2006).

## Professional Development Plans

Professional development is rarely addressed directly by institutional administrators; it is often expected that faculty will gain access to the support they need with little institutional or departmental support (Sorcinelli & Austin, 2016). URG faculty are not necessarily in need of more professional development than their majority peers, but the unique nexus of challenges they face in navigating the academy necessitate additional support and resources for accessing professional development opportunities. Equitably distributed and structured opportunities designed to help faculty

gain access to guidance and support in teaching, research, and service can promote faculty members' confidence in their skills and success (Laursen & Austin, 2014).

URG faculty need both supportive relationships and quality information to address the pervasive inequity they experience in demands on their time. Research suggests that women face more teaching demands (Bellas & Toutkoushian, 1999; Winslow, 2010), people of color are often asked and expected to have substantial commitments to service (Baez, 2000; Griffin et al., 2013b; Padilla, 1994; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996), and women of color report significant time and emotional energy investments in both



activities (Griffin et al., 2011; Turner, 2002b; Turner et al., 2011). Mentors, peer networks, role clarity and formal professional development training can help URG faculty navigate the tricky space of campus service work, allowing them to honor their personal commitments and investments (Baez, 2000; Griffin, 2013; Martinez et al., 2017; Reddick, 2011), manage the pressure to accept, and political implications

with denying, such requests, and negotiate the heightened volume of such requests (Winkler, 2000).

## **Frame 2. Creating Equal Opportunities**

The creating equal opportunities frame goes beyond addressing individual needs and supporting minoritized scholars. Rather, the focus in this frame is on removing structural barriers and challenges that perpetuate the disparities we observe in the academy. Scholars and institutional leaders have less often assessed whether and how institutional structures, policies, and practices exacerbate inequities and disadvantage individuals from marginalized groups.

It is critical to consider how institutions can increase diversity by removing barriers and instituting new programs and policies that ultimately will benefit all. Scholars have long recommended a shift in perspective from the individual to the institution, and are increasingly reporting on the efficacy of policies, programs, and initiatives that aim to promote equity by addressing inequitable structures.

### ***Rethinking Recruitment and Hiring Strategies***

There are several strategies that can be helpful as institutions seek to revise their recruitment strategies. First, it is important to acknowledge that recruitment is not a one-time event; institutions must address: outreach, or long term efforts to build a pool; hiring, the identification and selection of a candidate for a specific position; and yield, encouraging selected candidates to accept an offer (Griffin & Muñoz, 2015; Laursen & Austin, 2014). While women and men of color faculty play an

important role in advancing many of these strategies, institutional leaders need to be mindful of not placing further, unrewarded, service burdens on URG faculty (Griffin et al., 2013).

### **Ongoing Recruitment**

Institutions have found success with moving from short-term hiring strategies to longer-term, ongoing recruitment using centrally created materials to ensure that consistent messages are sent to potential candidates. Current faculty are expected to be deeply engaged in this work and encouraged to make connections with promising scholars from minoritized backgrounds at conferences and invited talks, regardless of whether or not there was an open position (Bilimora and Buch, 2010).

### **Diversity and Inclusion in the Job Description**

As departments and programs begin the hiring process, it has been highly recommended that they determine how their commitment to diversity and inclusion will be a part of the selection process (Laursen & Austin, 2014). Scholars have found that when search committees include a clear and explicit statement about the importance of diversity and its value to the institution (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) and identify a commitment to diversity in the job description (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010; Smith et al., 2004), it increases the number of applications from and likelihood of hiring women and men of color.

### **Selection and Training of Search Committees**

Scholars also suggest that search committees must be constructed and trained with intention to increase faculty diversity. Simply put: more

diverse search committees result in more diverse hires. For example, search committees that include women are more likely to have women as finalists, and ultimately hire women scholars (Glass & Minnotte, 2010). Women and men of color often bring unique perspectives to the search process, which can be beneficial when trying to break out of common paradigms of “merit” and reliance on traditional strategies and networks for recruitment and hiring (Smith, 2000).

Training is also critical. Faculty searches are highly subjective (Smith, 2000), leaving lots of room for stereotypes, adherence to traditional norms, and implicit bias to influence decision-making. While many committees may receive an affirmative action briefing, Turner (2002a) notes that committees must form and share a common understanding of how diversity and inclusion will be integrated into the hiring process.

Implicit bias trainings have received a great deal of attention, and have been applauded for their efficacy in helping individuals recognize their deeply held and often unconscious beliefs about the abilities and interests of women and men of color, and how these beliefs shape their decision-making (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010; Carnes et al., 2012; Girod et al., 2016; Kayes, 2006; Laursen & Austin, 2014).

Such trainings have translated to increases in the number of women in hiring pools, finalist lists, and hires (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010; Devine et al., 2017; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Similarly, science search committees trained on implicit bias were over six times more likely to make an offer to a woman candidate than those who did not (Smith, Handley, Zale, Rushing, & Potvin, 2015).

Search committees should also consider whether they are prepared to recognize multiple forms and indicators of talent in a diverse applicant pool. Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) recommended making the ability to engage with and promote diversity a formal criterion upon which to make decisions. They also recommended that search committees intentionally assess and ask candidates to articulate how they will actualize a commitment to diversity and inclusion in and outside of the classroom.

## Dual Career Support and Partner Hires

Compensation goes beyond salary and can include resources and support that help individuals make more successful transitions to the institution and faculty life (Tuitt et al., 2007). Supporting the professional needs of potential hires’ partners often has been recommended as a way to promote faculty recruitment, particularly for women (Sorcinelli, 2000; Stewart, Malley, & Herzog, 2016; Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, & Rice, 2000).

According to a study of almost 400 American Association of Colleges and Universities, approximately a quarter of institutions have dual-career hiring policies, but most of these policies were informal and not in writing (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2000). Active support from institutions for partner employment was found to enhance how seriously offers were taken by candidates (Smith, 2000), and were more likely to result in a hire (Wolf-Wendel et al., 2000).



## Addressing Faculty Retention and Success

While many institutions have focused on developing and integrating new recruitment policies and strategies, it is important to remember the important role that retention plays in cultivating a more diverse faculty body in STEM. Institutions must consider how they are evaluating the performance of their faculty, how they define and reward merit in that process, and the steps they are taking to ensure that departments, colleges, and the campus as a whole are supportive and inclusive environments.

## Reconsidering Tenure and Advancement Processes and Criteria

Much like hiring decisions, promotion and advancement decisions can be subjective; criteria are rarely specific and can be subject to interpretation. This subjectivity can result in a lack of clarity as well as an underappreciation of the talents and skills of women and men of color. These attributes are poorly measured by traditional metrics of productivity that may replicate bias (e.g., number of manuscripts published, h-index, mean teaching evaluation scores). Some institutions have found success in offering training for tenure and promotion

committee members and providing structured opportunities for mentoring and feedback to enhance the consistency of the information that candidates receive about the criteria for advancement (Laursen & Austin, 2014).

Institutions also must consider whether the requirements for advancement (promotion, tenure) are in alignment with institutional rhetoric about the importance of teaching and mentoring (O'Meara, 2010; Rice et al., 2000), and recognize the ways in which women and men of color make unique contributions to the academy. To reach this goal, some institutions have revised their promotion and tenure criteria, adopting broader definitions of scholarship inclusive of teaching and community engagement (O'Meara, 2010).

## Family-friendly Policies

Family-friendly policies like tenure clock extensions for individuals who need to take family leave, and other workload modifications that allow for better work-life integration can promote faculty satisfaction, increasing their likelihood of retention (Bilimoria et al., 2008). Grants and programs to support faculty during major life transitions, family leave, pregnant and nursing women, and child-care, coupled with broad communication about family-friendly policies and resources, can encourage the use of policies that support women and caregivers, increasing faculty diversity (Laursen & Austin, 2014).

## 3. Valuing Difference

The valuing difference frame focuses on promoting and championing the value of diversity broadly on campus, while identifying and celebrating the unique contributions URG faculty make to their communities. These efforts redefine or expand definitions of excellence to

include an understanding of and appreciation for diversity in thought, leadership styles, background, communication styles, and scholarship.

General programming operated by a diversity office including ally trainings, affinity group month celebrations, intergroup or community dialogue series, and speaker series, that help to promote and celebrate diversity across campus, can advance the value of diversity.

Potential candidates are attentive to the signals that they receive about the campus climate, observing the extent to which women and men of color are welcomed and included in their departmental and campus-wide communities, as well as whether diversity is treated as an institutional priority (Price et al., 2005; Tuitt et al., 2007). Efforts to embed valuing difference across campus may influence the experience of climate for URG faculty but are likely not enough to counteract a lack of structural support for their contributions.

When successful, valuing difference efforts will manifest in revised or expanded criteria for the review of candidates during faculty searches and promotion and tenure review. Truly valuing difference will require expanding beyond often narrow, yet neutral-appearing, definitions of merit, to meaningfully capture the contributions of candidates from various racial and ethnic minority, and other URG, backgrounds (Jackson, 2008).

This might include enacting a welcoming and inclusive application review and interview processes that frame diversity as a strength (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Smith, 2000). Some campuses, especially those that are barred from engaging in affirmative action policies, have found that expressing their value and interest in diversifying the curriculum has resulted in a more diverse faculty (Collins & Johnson, 1988). Another example might include bringing the requirements for advancement (promotion, tenure) into alignment with institutional rhetoric about the importance of teaching and mentoring (O'Meara, 2010; Rice et al., 2000), which URG

faculty perform at higher rates under higher levels of scrutiny and skepticism (Griffin et al., 2011; Stanley, 2006; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Winkler, 2000; Winslow, 2010).

Valuing difference can be an effective strategy to begin changing definitions of success and excellence on the campus. Such policy reforms also require wide-spread buy-in from faculty, given that the faculty ultimately implement policy locally and may continue to emphasize traditional definitions of excellence in their departments (CGO, 1998; O'Meara, 2010).

While an institutional norm of valuing diversity can reframe these evaluations to some extent, there is also a risk of reinforcing stereotypes of URG faculty. For significant change, deeper cultural interventions are also required (CGO, 1998).

**Figure 3. Core Values of Promising Practices in Each Frame**



## 4. Managing Culture

The final frame, re-visioning work culture, focuses on how various forms of identity-based marginalization (e.g. sexism, racism, ableism) are embedded in institutional values, systems, and structures. When operating within this frame, we assume that what is considered “normal practice” on our campuses either implicitly or explicitly recognizes or benefits individuals from privileged groups. For example, we would assume that while they appear “neutral” and objective, the expectations for tenure and promotion are written in a way that affirms the skills and contributions most easily made by White men (e.g. scholarly productivity, grant activity), and devalues meaningful labor that is either taken up by or shifted in inequitable ways to women and men of color (e.g. teaching and mentorship).



Once an institution is operating to address its culture, it may have to move beyond expanding the criteria for inclusive excellence to begin questioning long held assumptions about what excellence means and looks like, which contributions to the institution are most meaningful and valuable, and how we assess whether someone’s work is having an impact.

In many ways, cultural change is at the root of [Aspire's IChange Network](#). Ultimately, we are encouraging institutions to do the hard work of reconsidering their norms, values, and practices, questioning who they benefit and who they marginalize. Implementing new policies and programs is important, and at the same time, there must be a shift in how policies are perceived for them to have their desired impact. For example, while they may be available and informally supported, family-

friendly policies like leave for infant care and stop-the-tenure-clock procedures may go underutilized because women (and men) feel that taking advantage of them would hurt them professionally (Finkel et al., 1994; Gardner, 2012, 2013).

Normalizing and celebrating usage of these policies would represent a cultural change, shifting the ways faculty and administrators engage with and perceive the policies and the people who use them.

Finally, institutional leaders must also consider their role and responsibility in fostering a climate where all can feel included, respected, and valued. It is important to critically assess the culture and norms of science (e.g. competition, narrow definitions of intelligence and success, minimization of personal identities) and determine whether they align with the inclusive learning communities we aim to support.

Presidents and provosts, deans, and department chairs set the tone, offering a vision of what it means to be a part of an inclusive and supportive community and supporting campus units as they do this work.

There is no one way to engage in this kind of cultural change. For example, Laursen and Austin (2014) identified four strategies or models capturing how institutions aimed to address departmental climate issues. Two involve providing support directly to departments, allowing them to determine their own problems and potential solutions. The other two models relied on external intervention in the forms of training that would help leaders foster a more inclusive climate or the provision of resources to support climate and community building initiatives.

**While strategies vary, it is perhaps most important that leaders realize that departments and programs cannot make these changes on their own, and need leadership, support, encouragement, and guidance in the process.**

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