AUGUST 2024 | VOL. 2, NO. 8

SUPPORTING FACULTY

AN ACADEMIC LEADER PUBLICATION

LEADING FACULTY WITH PURPOSE AND VISION

LEGAL ISSUES

Lead Your Department to Safeguard Student Privacy

Eric Lyerly

University administrators and registrars often rely on deans and department chairs to promote departmental compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Likewise, such individuals are frequently the first people in the reporting chain when a student believes that a professor has violated their privacy rights. But without sufficient training, faculty leaders are not always certain when and how FERPA restrictions apply to their departments. In such instances, they may also lack the tools to respond to student reports of FERPA violations.

In this article, I will provide a brief explainer on FERPA, tailored to what faculty leaders need to know to prioritize student privacy and keep their departments compliant. I will also provide examples of how FERPA applies in different scenarios. These examples are taken from real cases from the Student Privacy Policy Office (SPPO), the federal agency responsible for investigating complaints of FERPA violations against postsecondary institutions.

> *Generally, faculty's disclosures of a student's grades, conduct, or other relevant information to another official in the institution will be protected by FERPA.*

An overview of FERPA

FERPA generally restricts colleges and universities from disclosing personally identifiable information (PII) in an eligible student's education record to a third party without consent.

An eligible student is a student who has reached 18 years of age or is attending a postsecondary institution at any age (34 C.F.R. §99.3). All college students have FERPA rights. PII is information that directly (name, address, identification number, etc.) or indirectly (gender, race, birthdate, etc.) identifies an individual student.

FERPA provides several exceptions to its general consent requirements, allowing faculty to make the following types of disclosures of a student's education record without consent:

- Disclosures to school officials
- Disclosures based on a school official's personal observations
- Disclosures other institutions where a student seeks to enroll
- Disclosures in connection with a health or safety emergency

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Supporting Faculty (ISSN 2993-1851) is published monthly by Magna Publications Inc., 2718 Dryden Drive, Madison, WI 53704
Phone 800-433-0499
Fax: 608-246-3597
Email: support@magnapubs.com
Website: www.magnapubs.com

One-year subscription: $149.

Expanding Leadership Roles for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty: What Institutional Leaders Should Consider

Laura E. Sponsler

Non-tenure-track faculty (NTTF) make up over 50 percent of the faculty in higher education ("Percentages of Full-Time Faculty," 2020). At associate's and baccalaureate-granting institutions, more than 70 percent of faculty are NTTF. There are many consequences of this composition, including effects on student learning, academic governance, and faculty health and well-being. One of the less discussed consequences of these changes is the pipeline for available faculty leaders. With faculty burnout (Pope-Ruark, 2022) and workload equity (O'Meara et al., 2021) dominating the narrative, tenured faculty cannot possibly fulfill all the formal and informal leadership roles needed in higher education today. Many NTTF have the same or similar education and training as tenure-track faculty and should not be excluded from leadership simply because of their line.

In response to the changing composition of the faculty, campuses have innovated including creating full-time, non-tenure-track faculty (FTNTTF) lines, inviting NTTF to participate in governance, and developing pathways for career advancement and faculty development. In 2021, my institution, the University of Denver (DU), was recognized as a Delphi Award Winner from the Pullias Center—in part for our work to institutionalize and create a culture of respect for NTTF.

The following suggestions stem from some of our work to support FTNTTF and reflections of my own leadership from the past three years serving as the resident scholar for teaching and professional faculty. This role was created within the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and is charged with leading efforts to support DU's FTNTFF. As an NTTF leader, here are four things I wish administrators would consider in regard to NTTF:

1. **Shared governance is contingent upon participation and representation; all faculty should be eligible to participate and lead.** First and foremost, NTTF should be engaged in faculty governance at their institutions. While participation in governance has improved over time, institutions should create ways to engage NTTF in governance and leadership with peers and colleagues through leadership on committees, formal leadership positions in faculty senate, or leadership opportunities with other governing bodies. NTTF should also be eligible to serve on and lead search and other curriculum-related committees due to their expertise in the classroom.

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2. **Many NTTF have leadership experiences outside academia to draw upon and should be considered for leadership positions in the academy.** Many NTTF come to the faculty with experiences outside higher education and possess transferable skills that our institutions could use if they included these NTTF and gave them opportunities to lead. At DU, I personally know former school leaders and superintendents, CDC experts, WHO leaders, international aid workers, think tank experts, government officials, nonprofit executives, industry experts, and high-ranking corporate leaders. (And these are just people I know—I'm sure there are many more examples on my campus and yours!) These experiences are enriching to the faculty and to our students and show applied leadership skills.
   NTTF with these leadership and administrative experiences bring rich and diverse experiences to bear in higher education. In my experience, many NTTF want to put their leadership skills and career aspirations to use as leaders in the faculty senate, committee chairs, department chairs, associate deans, and mentors. What is the pathway for career development and the faculty lifespan for all faculty? Institutional leaders should examine their policies and practices to create spaces and pathways for NTTF to be able to lead.

3. **NTTF often offer a different perspective and can diversify leadership teams.** Given the traditional hierarchy of the faculty in higher education, many NTTF feel like second-class citizens or separate from tenure-track and tenured faculty. With this outsider status, NTTF can offer a different perspective on issues facing faculty and students on campus . In some ways, NTTF can relate to and empathize with staff and the staff-faculty divide. In my experience, NTTF are attuned to equity issues and often see blind spots in institutional policies and practices that are exclusionary. On our campus, it is often NTFF who lead on equity issues related to workload, teaching, and compensation.
   Although tenured faculty sit at atop higher education's perceived hierarchy, not all NTTF desire tenure-track positions (although some certainly do, and this is not meant to downplay the lack of tenure-track lines and the declining number of full-time faculty members.) Rather, I have observed that many faculty members want the job security of tenure and its affordances but also like modeling different forms of engagement in teaching, research, and service. The priorities of NTTF can be diverse and can add to the richness of opinion.

4. **NTTF have expertise in the classroom and advising students and should be included in decision-making about curriculum and the student experience.** Many NTTF are primarily in teaching roles and teach multiple courses per term; many teach general education classes. In this way, NTTF may experience a closeness to and understanding of the student experience that can be useful to leaders considering general education reform or other curricular initiatives. Shouldn't it be those in the classroom and working most closely with our students who have a say in how the curriculum is structured and organized? NTTF can provide valuable leadership about the student experience and the curriculum and should be included in decision-making.

NTTF are an untapped and underused resource on our campuses. Institutional leaders should create policies, practices, and pathways for NTTF to participate in shared governance and serve as leaders at their institutions. There is a lot to gain from including this population, not least of all faculty with rich experiences and diverse perspectives who have connections with our students. Given the reality of the composition of the faculty, we cannot continue to systematically exclude over half the faculty from leadership in our institutions. As an NTTF member who studies NTTF, I hope you take these recommendations to your departments, schools, colleges, and institutions and consider how you can include this important and marginalized group of faculty in formal and informal leadership roles on your campuses.

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This article first appeared in *Academic Leader* on November 20, 2023.

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In these instances, a dean, department chair, or other faculty member will likely have the right to disclose a student's education records to third parties without consent.

Disclosures to school officials

FERPA permits faculty to disclose information from a student's education record, without consent, to a school official with a legitimate educational interest (34 C.F.R. §99.31).

The SPPO has interpreted "school official" broadly to include the following individuals:

- Professors
- Registrars
- Counselors
- Admissions officers
- Chancellors
- Board members
- Presidents
- Trustees
- Attorneys
- Employees of a K–12 school that is partnered with a college or university to train student-teachers
- Other college and university staff

A school official has a legitimate educational interest in a student record if the individual needs to review the record to fulfill their professional duties. Colleges and universities are generally responsible for determining who is a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest.

Generally, faculty's disclosures of a student's grades, conduct, or other relevant information to another official in the institution will be protected by FERPA. This includes disclosures from professors to faculty leaders and vice versa.

However, this analysis gets tricky when considering the lawfulness of disclosures to employees of outside institutions that are aligned with a college or university. In this case, it still goes back to whether the college or university has determined that the individual is a school official and who has a legitimate educational interest in a student's records.

Examples of how it applies:

- **A professor shares information from a student's education record with faculty of the university's satellite campus.** Employees of the satellite campus of the university are school officials of the main university. A professor can make disclosures of a student's protected information to such officials without the student's consent.
- **A professor in a university's college of education discloses a student's PII from an education record to a K–12 school district where she was a student teacher.** Here, the disclosure is permissible if the district official to whom the records are disclosed is a school official of the university. Colleges and universities frequently partner with primary and secondary schools to train student-teachers. This agreement necessitates the sharing of relevant education records with the K–12 schools. Therefore, relevant employees at a K–12 school can be school officials of the university.

Disclosures based on personal observations

This exception is especially important for faculty leaders. SPPO complaints involving faculty often implicate this exception. By understanding the exception, deans and department chairs can properly respond to a student's complaint that a professor or instructor violated their privacy rights.

Generally, information that faculty or other school officials obtain through personal observation or knowledge of a student—rather than from an education record—is not protected by FERPA (34 C.F.R. §99.31).

There is one caveat. A faculty member's personal observations or knowledge may become protected by FERPA if the individual uses the information to create an education record. Suppose a professor or instructor finds that a student plagiarized an assignment and

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takes disciplinary action on the basis of this knowledge. If the department (or institution) maintains a disciplinary record related to the academic misconduct, the professor's knowledge and observations of the student's plagiarism would be subject to FERPA.

Examples of how it applies:

- **A professor states to a graduate student that an undergraduate student threatened her.** FERPA does not restrict faculty from sharing with a third party their interpretation of a student's statement—as long as such knowledge comes from personal observations and not an education record.
- **A dean requires a student to apologize to classmates for violating the code of conduct without making the student admit to specific conduct.** This incident does not implicate FERPA, since the law applies only to disclosures of protected information from an education record—not information based on the student or dean's personal knowledge of the conduct code violations.
- **A professor tells other students that a certain student is performing poorly and questions whether the student will "make it."** Although unprofessional, this statement comes from the professor's personal observations about the student and does not disclose protected information from an education record.

Disclosures to officials of another postsecondary institution where a student seeks to enroll

FERPA permits a college or university to disclose a student's education records (without consent) to officials of another institution where the student is seeking to enroll (34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(2)). In this scenario, the institution must make a reasonable effort to notify the student of the disclosure. Students cannot prevent a past institution from transmitting the student's education records or communicating about the student to their new institution.

This exception frequently comes up for deans and department chairs, who are often asked to write letters of recommendation for students seeking to transfer to another institution or enroll in graduate programs.

An example of how it applies:

- **A professor sends a student's letter of recommendation (without consent) to another university where the student is seeking admission.** The professor's disclosure of the student's letter is permissible since it shares student information with the university where the student is seeking enroll. It does not require the student's prior written consent.

Disclosures pursuant to health and safety emergencies

Faculty may disclose PII from a student's education record—without consent—in connection with a health or safety emergency. In such cases, deans, department chairs, and other faculty may make disclosures to appropriate parties if the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals (34 C.F.R. § 99.31(a)(10)).

Appropriate parties include but are not limited to

- the parents of the student;
- medical personnel;
- law enforcement officials;
- public health officials; and
- other students and staff members (in certain cases).

Importantly, FERPA does not allow faculty or other school officials to perform a blanket release of a student's protected information. Rather, colleges and universities may disclose only the PII that is necessary to protect others' health or safety.

Examples of how it applies:

- **During the COVID-19 pandemic, a university instructor shared information regarding a student's COVID tests with other students and graduate assistants.** SPPO found that such a disclosure did not violate FERPA, since the pandemic created a health and safety emergency warranting the disclosure. It also found that institutions are permitted to determine that other students are "appropriate parties" in some situations.
- **A university disclosed PII from a student's education record to a professor after the student threatened the professor and her family.** Here, the university disclosed a student's disciplinary information to a professor whom the student had allegedly stalked and sexually harassed. The disclosure was permissible under FERPA to protect the health and safety of the professor.
- **Campus police post a picture of a student in a campus bulletin instructing individuals to contact the campus public safety office upon seeing the student.** This disclosure is permitted by FERPA if it is necessary to protect the health and safety of students and others.

The bottom line for safeguarding student privacy

The buck for FERPA compliance in academic departments stops with faculty leaders. Administrators expect deans and department chairs to promote an atmosphere of respect for student privacy rights. Additionally, students often turn to faculty leaders when they feel a professor has violated their FERPA rights.

By understanding FERPA, faculty leaders can help their departments safeguard student privacy rights. They can also better understand how to respond to student reports of FERPA violations, satisfying the institution's compliance responsibilities and potentially avoiding a cumbersome SPPO complaint and investigation.

Tackling the Teaching Statement: What Do Reviewers Want?

Amy B. Mulnix

We've all written them: the narratives or statements that frame our teaching for those reviewing our portfolios. Maybe the review is for a job; maybe it is for contract renewal, tenure, or promotion. But how many of us have had a clue about what this document is supposed to do? Provide an overview of our teaching philosophy? Highlight our use of active learning? Demonstrate our commitment to professional growth? Outline how we resolved an issue in our teaching? All the above? Like a student simply told to write an essay on a book they've studied, a person being reviewed is left to wonder what exactly they're supposed to do.

I've heard many reviewers, when questioned about the purpose of the narrative, defend leaving it vague, claiming that how the reviewee approaches the task is telling. Certainly, there is value in the individuality someone brings to a narrative (e.g., sense of humor, degree of formality, preference for paragraphs versus bullet points), but if transparency reduces systemic inequities for students, it is also critical for equitable faculty evaluation.

Let's take the contract renewal decision. Reviewers might be looking for evidence that someone is responsive to student concerns and able to problem solve when they encounter difficulties. The reviewee, however, choses to present a description of the courses they've taught and the chronological changes they've made to syllabi without explaining why those changes were made.

In this situation, does the reviewer have the evidence they need to make a judgment about the candidate's suitability? Yes, if the reviewee received explicit guidelines for what the narrative should accomplish and instead chose a different path. No, if the reviewee had only a vague description, such as in an outdated faculty handbook, to guide their choices of what to include. It isn't only novices who are vexed by the lack of transparency. I've also heard highly connected, mid-career faculty who've been turned down for a promotion say in response to feedback they received, "Well if I knew they were looking for *that*, I would have provided it."

What can a candidate do? Sure, they can ask questions and find colleagues to provide advice on the narrative. But when expectations aren't explicit, the quality of the narrative depends to a greater degree on factors such as previous familiarity with higher ed expectations, the extent of one's social network, or the willingness of a department chair or other senior colleague to make time to mentor the candidate. Lack of transparency is an equity issue, especially given that there is no agreement in higher education about what constitutes teaching effectiveness (Mastrokoukou et al., 2022).

Similar scenarios arise when job candidates aren't given clear instructions of what to include in their teaching statements. What a difference it would make to someone coming out of a graduate program or postdoc if, rather than being asked to craft a teaching statement, they were given a prompt to, for instance, reflect on their strengths and areas for growth or discuss a difficult teaching episode and what they would do differently. In these circumstances, the candidate has few options for getting clarification and the inequity can be amplified.

So, what is a possible solution for making the narrative more valuable and equitable as a piece of evidence for teaching effectiveness? My answer, you won't be surprised, is to make the expectations of the narrative clear to candidates—for example, in the case of a job application, by providing a specific prompt. Different institutions obviously have different contexts, missions, and definitions of teaching effectiveness and the goals of the narrative should be tailored to those. But my experience suggests that there are underlying criteria regardless of the local context; those doing reviews typically look for intellectual skills such as whether the candidate can analyze the feedback they receive, can problem solve, and are adaptive and flexible in their approaches to teaching. My experience also suggests that this is not the framework pre-tenure faculty have in mind when they begin writing their narrative.

In this case, even a few sentences describing the properties of a good narrative would prompt them in the right direction. For instance:

Candidate narratives necessarily differ across individuals, departments, level of experience, and areas of expertise and responsibility. All narratives should, however, demonstrate the ability to reflect on one's practice as a teacher, including analyzing evidence, solving problems, and adapting to diverse student needs as they relate to teaching and learning.

Even greater specificity could be provided by defining what is meant by analyzing, problem solving, and adapting. Below, I've unashamedly drawn phrases from AAC&U's VALUE rubrics, specifically those on critical thinking, problem solving, global learning, and inquiry

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and analysis, to make my own thinking transparent.

- **Analyze evidence.** Draw from the diverse pieces of available evidence (e.g., course evaluations, peer observations, senior exit interviews) to identify significant individual incidents as well as patterns that illustrate your teaching strengths and areas for growth. Provide sufficient context to present a coherent and comprehensive analysis or synthesis. As appropriate, identify alternative interpretations of the evidence and articulate why you settled on the one you did.
- **Solve problems.** Identify several difficulties in your teaching. Discuss why these are priorities for improvement for you and identify viable strategies for taking action. Articulate the potential benefits and drawbacks of the possible solutions and present a logical and consistent plan for addressing the issue. Indicate how you could obtain feedback along the way and adapt your plan as necessary.
- **Adapt teaching strategies to a diverse student population**. Discuss the complex ways in which the students you work with are diverse. Evaluate and apply diverse cultural perspectives. Discuss the strategies you use or are developing to support the learning and success of all your students. Identify examples when the diversity in your classroom changed your own perspectives on and assumptions about teaching and learning.

So, how do we make teaching narratives less vexing and more equitable? If you are a reviewer (e.g., committee member, dean, provost or department chair), you can argue for making instructions to candidates clearer given your context, mission, and expectations.

If you are the person being reviewed, what options do you have? Here are my suggestions.

- Read all formal documents about the narrative carefully. Ask questions when you are not clear.
- Attend all information sessions in which the evaluation process for your cohort is presented and discussed. Ask questions.
- Ask trusted senior colleagues for advice not only about what to include but also about the intellectual skills you should highlight in the narrative.
- Ask those who've recently been reviewed to share copies of their narratives.

Lastly, approach writing your teaching narrative not only as a necessary task but as an opportunity for significant reflection. That reflection should include analysis of the feedback you've received, consideration of multiple possible approaches to the difficulties that have emerged, and exploration of how your teaching can be adapted to match the diverse strengths and needs of your students. Not only will such reflection help you develop the skills that will enhance and enrich your teaching skill, but it will likely also rekindle your enthusiasm for the work you do on a daily basis.

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This article first appeared in *The Teaching Professor* on October 24, 2022.

Five Ways Administrators Can Show Faculty Support

Mary C. Clement

In the summer of 2017 while I was teaching a graduate education course in China, in oppressive heat, my administrator provided cool water and fresh fruit—a small token that made a big impression on me. Having worked 42 years in educational institutions, I have witnessed what true administrative support feels like and how it can be honed to improve the work of instructors and used to retain them. Support begins with the very first encounter between the candidate and the administrator. Relationship building, communication, and guidance are integral to supporting all faculty. When administrators know their faculty members' work and acknowledge that work, the faculty feel ongoing support.

1. Positive hiring

The hiring process sets the tone for the employee's relationship with administration. New hires wish to be recruited and wooed. Having struggled to earn advanced degrees, they seek positions where they will be appreciated from the beginning of their careers. Positive interviews and offers made without lengthy delays aid the hiring process. Retention of strong employees begins with their hiring experience. Truthful advertisements that include specifics about the job are important to share in an interview. The first step in building a trusting relationship with the new hire is to ensure the job turns out exactly as expected, with no negative surprises for the faculty member.

2. Ongoing induction

Hiring takes time and money, so it only makes sense to invest in the induction of new hires. Mentoring of new instructors offers an excellent way to reduce the stress and challenges of the new job. Mentors should be experienced faculty who have had some training in how to mentor and who choose to mentor at a point in their careers when they have the time to do so. Administrators can develop and facilitate the mentor selection, guidelines, and program implementation. They can serve as informal mentors as needed, but a new employee may not want to share openly with their evaluator.

Faculty members feel supported when they hear consistent information, not one story from the department chair and another from the dean.

Having all new hires get together for lunches and discussion groups provides them with a cohort of colleagues. Again, it is the administration that establishes such groups with an identified leader—perhaps a veteran professor ready to "give back" by sharing with beginners. If the institution offers workshops for new faculty, encourage all new hires to attend.

3. Clear communication

Clear, accurate information is a key to supporting faculty members and is the cornerstone of the trusting relationship that defines support. For most in higher education, central issues of communication include how to earn promotion and tenure and how to be reemployed annually. Yes, one's salary and benefits have to be made clear.

Faculty members feel supported when they hear consistent information, not one story from the department chair and another from the dean. It is better to say, "I don't know, but I will find out," than to make a quick answer that is unsubstantiated. Personally, I'm skeptical of new announcements or initiatives until they actually happen, due to being told so many false claims in the past. Faculty who feel unsupported because of weak communication may simply choose to not follow directives.

4. Knowledge and acknowledgement of the faculty members' work

Administrators need to know what the faculty members do and the scope of their ongoing research agendas. With regard to teaching, administrators should observe classes, even if institutional guidelines don't require them to do so. How can an administrator write a valid letter for tenure without ever seeing the faculty member teach?

Some professors are much better suited to certain committee assignments than others. Knowledge of the person's background and experience will help the administrator make the match of professor to service and committee work.

While administrators are inundated with reading material, they need to make time to read the publications of their faculty members. They need not read books in their entirety, but they should read specific articles so that they can assist in venue recommendations for future

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publications. I vividly remember when the college president saw me at a social event and made a point to comment on a recent publication of mine. It was a "wow" moment for me. This president had asked faculty to send him copies of published articles when he first arrived on campus, stating, "It's a good way for me to become acquainted with your work." That is support!

Acknowledging faculty success is sometimes best done in private and other times well received in public. To decide which is best, get to know the faculty member and build a positive, trusting, professional relationship built. We all like some genuine praise and recognition.

5. Use of faculty members' strengths

There is always a massive amount of work to be done in any college department. Administrators may feel that they have to go it alone and do everything by themselves. Yet faculty members want to have a voice in decisions and work. An administrator who considers shared governance and invitational leadership should find that faculty members will contribute when supported and invited to the work. It is not a surprise to know that faculty members talk in the hallways about how they could have done something better than the administrator if they had just had a chance to contribute. Finding a way to listen to faculty input and make the best use of it can be another way to help faculty feel supported.

How can administrators best use the faculty members' experience and expertise? Listening and learning from faculty is important—yet time consuming and also very frustrating. If both administrators and faculty can strive to see the other's point of view and to learn what the big-picture issues are for the other side, that can be helpful.

A final note on utilizing faculty strengths is to not overlook the quiet professor. Being quiet can be a strong attribute. Quiet people are often deep thinkers. Don't expect quick answers in a meeting to necessarily be the best solutions. There is a saying that a good engineer thinks of ways to solve a problem before others even see it. That may be true of quiet people. Do not underutilize them or their ideas.

Genuine support

While providing coffee and bagels to faculty can look like a nice gesture, it won't make up for a genuine lack of administrative support, and faculty can feel the difference. Is support warm and fuzzy? Maybe, but not necessarily, as a difficult heart-to-heart conversation can be a way to demonstrate support.

Faculty who feel supported may work harder and share their positive attitude with others. Just as tree climbers go out on only those branches that support their weight, so too will faculty members take leaps in their work only when they feel safe to do so. Sometimes cool water, fruit, coffee, and bagels do add to the equation.

I have written this short piece from the faculty member's viewpoint, but I do recognize that faculty need to bridge the gap and support their administrators' work as well. The same strategies apply to support administration—communication, knowledge and acknowledgement of work, relationship building, and trust.

This article first appeared in *Academic Leader* on March 1, 2021.

Promoting Faculty Development on a Tight Budget

Jodie N. Mader

In a dream world, every academic institution would be populated with a teaching and learning center coupled with a faculty enrichment meeting room. In fact, faculty would continually hone their skills as researchers and teachers in an engaged center on campus. Sounds great, right?

For large institutions, probably. But for small to medium-sized colleges and universities, such as Thomas More University, where I work, probably not. At most of these latter institutions these centers do not exist. In fact, it may be a while before faculty development at these schools has an actual physical location, if it ever does. Yet many institutions offer workshops on faculty development throughout the academic year. It has been proven that intentioned faculty development practices on campus improve student learning and the professor's general development (Condon et al, 2016). It is essential for faculty to continually sharpen their experience and pedagogy to keep up with the needs of modern students. But the reality for most institutions is that while practices must take place on campus to provide continuing education for faculty, the space can vary and not include a permanent imprint on campus. The actual creation of a room or center (or both) requires money, time, and a massive investment by administration. This pedagogical investment is usually never addressed, and if is, it is way down a budget line of future expenses. Does your university have buy-in? Do the faculty have buy-in with or without physical space? Would interest in professional development increase if they had a physical location to collaborate and innovate? Most faculty and staff, I presume, would say yes, of course!

It is an issue of not only physical space but also human power. Who runs these sessions? Faculty or staff? Moreover, how are they paid? Is it with a stipend or course reassignment or release? At many institutions, faculty are the key facilitators of these areas and often do not work in it full-time. In fact, many faculty developers do these positions while teaching a 4/4 load or receiving a small stipend or course reassignment (e.g., a 3/4 load). Thus, faculty developers can only commit so much time to creating meaningful workshops because of their teaching loads. This situation can diminish the quality of continuing education (Gillespie, 2002).

As Lenin posited in one of his most famous works, "What is to be done?" What does one do in the face of limitations on physical space? How can a faculty developer produce meaningful, quality workshops while possibly teaching a full load of courses? How can one promote a culture of lifelong learning among their peers given the situation and lack of physical space?

Have faith, as there are many ways to approach this dilemma. Indeed, there are ways to engage faculty on a shoestring budget. These approaches will involve low costs and, in turn, hopefully, foment growing involvement among invested parties, such as the administration. The bottom line is this: work with what you have. Below are a few options for fostering faculty improvement on your campus.

Convene faculty outside the classroom

The first goal should be to bring faculty together outside the classroom, and a common way to do so together is with food and drink. Try out a lunch period and complement it with coffee—or perhaps create a brown bag talk. This year I am piloting a brown bag "lite" session, which is a 30-minute session between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. It takes place one Friday per month and is scheduled in advance. I advertise the events in a few ways. I create 8-by-10-inch posters and place them on walls where faculty congregate. I also design smaller handouts to put in employee mailboxes. I create miniature, almost bookmark-sized handouts that fit nicely into mailboxes to remind faculty of the upcoming event. I also do an email blast and promote on our Facebook page. While this takes some time, a student worker is great to help in this area. The activity coincides with "Foodie Fridays," when faculty and staff voluntarily bring treats to share. This approach covers several elements in faculty development: making use of our often unused faculty and staff lounge, having people share their food dishes, and bringing faculty together to chat about something pedagogical. I chose a duration of 30 minutes for its length and the time of the day because it coincides with the lunch hour. This period enables faculty to eat while they mingle over academic topics with their colleagues. Out of 85 faculty, I average 10–15 per event.

Promote a longer faculty development session

A second option is the promotion of a longer faculty development session, one on a Monday or Wednesday in the afternoon. (As I have found that longer Friday sessions are generally not well at-

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tended, I instead focus on days when faculty tend to be on campus longer.) This session might be a book club or a forum in which new faculty can share their research. Again, bring some snacks, or if possible, get permission to share wine. Great discussions take place over food and drink. These sessions can grow into faculty writing groups and faculty learning communities. As with the brown bag lite workshops, I organize one assembly per month and include the participation of faculty who received faculty development funds the previous year. After contacting those recipients, I open a call for presentations to all faculty who may want to contribute to a workshop.

Put faculty development online

A third option is online education. While the two options above are preferable as they promote social interaction, faculty are busy, and sometimes development has to be asynchronous. One possibility is to create a faculty development course and post all handouts and PowerPoints that were used in any workshop. In that course create a chat forum where faculty can converse with one another about a topic presented. Alternatively, allow faculty to write teaching blogs that could be added to the course for their colleagues to peruse. Most universities have a learning management system; take advantage of it. It is free and can be used to help promote learning through other means. It helps faculty who may miss a workshop. I use our Canvas page. I created a Faculty Development Resource folder where all faculty can access any handouts, PowerPoints, or other material they may have missed.

The options above require some effort but little to no campus financial resources. Food and drink can come on the goodwill of faculty and staff willing to donate. Their participation in this regard is desired but not necessary. The hope, however, is that starting to promote faculty development on campus will create buy-in, and most faculty will want to participate in a variety of ways. Similarly, you can promote these events electronically via email or a Facebook page or Twitter account created explicitly for faculty development. Also, Canva.com features an easy way to create paper promotional materials.

In the end, do not lose hope. Strive to hone and grow faculty development on campus with the resources you have. Budgets can shrink, but a desire to innovate and grow will never die.

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This article first appeared in *Academic Leader* on January 6, 2020.

How Institutions Can Move Toward Equity by Addressing Whiteness

Vasti Torres

In a recent *Academic Leader* article, Jordan Harper described an approach for campus leaders to locate whiteness in higher education. In this piece, I provide practical examples of how these issues manifest in academic affairs and what senior administrators can do in their daily work to address whiteness. I will focus on practices that go unexamined and can play a role in preserving inequities. At the outset, it is important for me to acknowledge that I see decolonization—the act of unsettling oppressive structures and power centered on whiteness—as intricately intertwined with institutional practices that must be recognized in order to move away from cultural norms based on whiteness. As I focus on practices, I will use both whiteness and decolonization to describe what needs to change at our institutions to create a more equitable environment where all can thrive.

It is important to note that this is a challenging time for campus leaders engaged in combatting whiteness. Institutions are being besieged by anti–diversity and equity initiatives from some elected state leaders (e.g., Florida, Georgia, Iowa), including bans on critical race theory. Yet, the work academic administrators do to understand how whiteness permeates the institution remains critical to help all students succeed and to create an inclusive environment for faculty and staff.

Whether we acknowledge it or not, institutional actors expend much energy on preserving the status quo. Sometimes this is called "tradition"; other times, it is about a small group maintaining power. In either case, those who dissent can be marginalized. This is the dynamic that Harper describes as complicity "employing a conscious ignorance" that reaffirms rather than challenges the status quo that inhibits creative thinking and change. It is important to acknowledge that campus stakeholders are often deeply connected to traditions, making it difficult to challenge and change this organizational dynamic. This connection ensures that whiteness sits at the center of daily functioning of most campuses. To challenge campus traditions, we need to understand how they shape campus cultures. To change traditions is to change the culture of the campus and expand who belongs.

As most leaders in academia can relate to this, changing the culture of any institution is difficult. Yet leaders must be prepared to engage with anxiety and resistance when initiating change. The hesitancy to avoid conflict within academic administrators is what sustains the whiteness-oriented status quo. To understand this from a different perspective, this is the frustration most non-white, untenured, and marginalized people feel every day as they interact with our institutions. Having to confront microaggressions on a daily basis is exhausting. Therefore, to retain faculty from non-white and marginalized groups, institutional actors must also experience the daily work bringing about a less whiteness-oriented culture requires.

Efforts to make campus culture more inclusive can be found at every college and university. These efforts, however, tend to be carried out through small initiatives and seldom influence the whole campus. If institutional leaders truly seek to address whiteness on their campus, then interrogating campus-wide culture is required. As Kezar (2019) explains, it "is not enough to alter historically embedded patterns that seep into policies, facilities, resource allocations, and daily decision-making. What the research points to is the need for culture change" (pg. 2). The idea of interrogating campus culture to encourage change that decolonizes whiteness would require interrogation of the following:

- Why do we maintain traditions? Do they serve all individuals in the same manner?
- How can we encourage dissent and hear what is intended?
- How can we reconsider the hierarchies inherent in bureaucracies and systems of faculty rank? Does an academic rank really give someone power?
- Do our admissions standards privilege certain types of students? Do institutional aspirations reinforce whiteness or promote equity?
- Does whiteness or a status quo perspective center efforts to attract and onboard new administrators?

Asking these questions is the starting point for engaging in authentic change toward decolonization. The types of discussions that they elicit can be difficult but promote awareness about how to make an institution more equitable and welcoming for all. Each question points to practices that center whiteness and maintain the status quo. By asking these questions, administrators set the tone for deep change.

Some readers may object to upending some traditions that may be desired. I

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agree—but these tend to be the minority of traditions. A recent *Inside Higher Ed* article (Alonso, 2022) highlighted a seemingly desirable but inequitable tradition: requiring students to wear branded regalia. This type of decision making could be seen as what Harper named the "white gaze" of leadership by creating the standard of how institution can change. When renting academic regalia can cost between $100 and $1,000, what kinds of actions are institutions taking to assure equitable access for low-income and first-generation students? This need has prompted institutions to create regalia closets for students who cannot afford to rent or buy graduation caps and gowns. When an institution decides to brand itself with certain regalia, how does it consider the increased cost to students? Instead, the assumption is that all students can afford this cost or worse, they can take out more loans to pay for this cost.

Another example of centering whiteness is when academic leaders treat tenure as meaning there is no way to address behavior. During a mandatory hiring workshop focused on diversifying the applicant pool, the facilitator stated that it was important to expand the ideas around which graduate programs are acceptable for hiring faculty. Without missing a beat, the faculty member sitting next to me leaned over and said, "We know that only graduates of three institutions are successful in our department." It was clear that this training was not going to change this committee member's—perhaps their entire academic department's—values or ideas about excluding some applicants. In these situations, the typical response from an academic administrator to such elitism is to provide rationale for why this cannot be challenged. Academic administrators tend to react with thoughts like, *We can't control a tenured faculty member!* or, *This faculty member is a national figure in the field; there is not much that we can do.* The real issue is that academic administrators are not willing to have the difficult conversation needed to address behavior that can support equity changes. Being a tenured professor does not mean the person can do anything they want. Administrators use "tenure" as an excuse for not addressing behaviors. The "do nothing and see what happens" approach to administration embeds whiteness and sets up an expectation that nothing will change. While we are forced to address illegal behavior, why do we allow inconsiderate and strong-arming behavior to become the norm? Moving our institutions toward decentering whiteness is not easy, but a necessary part of what must happen to create an equitable environment for all. Remember that silence is complicity.

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This article first appeared in *Academic Leader* on March 6, 2023.

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