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**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

**FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**EQUITY REPORTS**

**Natural Sciences**

**Humanities**

**Social Sciences**

**OCTOBER 2018**

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## **Executive Summary**

### **An Equity Study of the Tenure-Line Faculty in Arts and Sciences at Columbia University**

Academia is a vital global forum for the pursuit of knowledge and education through thoughtful research and reflection. To effectively serve this role, academia must reflect the population it serves, foster diversity of thought and backgrounds, and treat its members equitably.

Research and experience indicate that diversity is essential to excellence, and that diverse groups make better decisions and come to more robust conclusions. It is essential therefore for academia to foster and encourage diversity to stay relevant and at the leading edge of new ideas and knowledge, and to be attractive to all students.

In the fall of 2016, the Policy and Planning Committee (PPC) of the Arts and Sciences faculty at Columbia University, prompted by the relatively slow pace of improvement in the diversity of the faculty and persistent questions about the equitable treatment of faculty across groups, undertook an equity study of the tenure-line faculty within the three divisions of Arts and Sciences. The goal was to determine whether underrepresented faculty, women, and minorities (URM) are being treated equally on a number of dimensions, such as salary, workload, and leadership, as well as whether the climate they experience is the same as their colleagues and conducive to their success.

Under the umbrella of the PPC, three divisional subcommittees were formed to study faculty experience, as well as distribution of resources and workload within natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities departments. Online surveys, in-person interviews, and collection of data at the department and university level informed the committees, with IRB approval and training for committee members. The findings suggest that while most faculty are happy with their careers at Columbia, and there is parity in many areas, there are some concerning disparities between women and URM faculty when compared to their white male colleagues, particularly around climate, workload, and resources. These are outlined below, along with the associated recommendations, and are provided in detail in each of the divisional reports.

We do not think that the issues identified are unique to Columbia, but we do believe Columbia can become a leader in addressing equity issues, building on existing leadership through substantial financial commitments to diversity. The degree to which PPC and its subcommittees have been given access to sensitive data is in itself a model of the transparency we hope to promote, and forms the basis of these

recommendations. This work would not have been possible without the full support and cooperation of Arts and Sciences leadership. We are indebted to Executive Vice President (EVP) and Dean of the Faculty David Madigan for his leadership in providing exceptional access to needed data as well as substantial support for data collection and analysis. We are grateful that the faculty and administration have embraced these findings and that some of the recommendations below are already underway. Continued resources and attention will be required.

## Findings and Recommendations

### 1 Leadership

All the subcommittees noted the lack of diversity in senior leadership within the Arts and Sciences chain of command, and in particular the lack of women in senior positions. While it varied by division, overall women were also underrepresented as department chairs relative to their representation on the tenured faculty. This was not the case for URM faculty, except at the higher levels of administration.

It was emphasized that equity and diversity issues need to become embedded and interwoven within the existing governance structure of Arts and Sciences and the Arts and Sciences EVP's Office.

Concern was expressed in the surveys and by some interviewees about a lack of transparency, unwritten rules, and a perception of cronyism and favoritism around how decisions are made. Within the surveys, these concerns seemed to be disproportionately experienced by women faculty.

#### *Recommendations:*

- Diversify Arts and Sciences leadership.
- Establish a standing committee, accountable to the EVP and with a relationship to PPC, to guide and monitor the specific implementation of recommendations.
- Increase transparency and rule-based decision making.
- Enforce and strengthen existing rules on professional conduct, including harassment, discrimination, bullying, and retaliation.

## 2 Faculty diversity

A 2014 pipeline report noted that diversity is still quite poor for many Arts and Sciences departments, most of which have particularly small numbers of URM faculty for most departments. The current system of target of opportunity diversity hires being substitutional after three years rather than incremental (allowing department growth) is perceived to be having a discouraging effect on the potential of that program. However, it was also noted that hiring faculty that contribute to diversity has to become part of the mainstream hiring system, and not be seen as something departments do only for target of opportunity hires. Additionally, the report indicated that some departments may need to address climate issues before they are successful in recruitment and retention of faculty who contribute to diversity.

The social sciences subcommittee found concerning indications that URM faculty may be less successful in obtaining tenure within that division, but the numbers were very small, and so this merits further investigation.

### *Recommendations:*

- Provide incentives for departments to improve diversity, particularly at the tenure level, such as growth of faculty.
- Ensure that department climates are conducive to the success of all faculty.
- Study and address possible barriers to tenure for URM faculty.

## 3 Education on Climate, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity

There were considerable differences in the experiences of women versus men, particularly at the department level. In surveys, women described department climate as far less supportive and inclusive than men did, and reported having experienced or witnessed discrimination far more often. In interviews, many women spoke of the “old boys club” environment, inappropriate comments made by their male colleagues, and other unprofessional behavior.

It is crucial to raise awareness, particularly among chairs, of the climate issues that prevail in some departments and to provide training on how to improve them. It is equally important to provide all faculty with the tools and skills needed to support a diverse environment and contribute to a positive department climate. It was recognized that in-person training is likely to be most effective, as well as

training that engages and empowers faculty to be part of the solution to issues within their own departments.

*Recommendations:*

- Require appropriate training for all leadership positions, including department chairs, search committee chairs, and department administrators (DAAFs or equivalent).
- Provide in-person training, with a focus on bystander training, on a voluntary basis.
- Ensure all new employees receive CIDE training and are aware of university policies.
- Empower faculty with training on how to handle difficult situations in which they feel they are targets.

#### **4 Policy, Process, and Transparency**

Many of the concerns that arose appeared to be a result of unclear policies and decision-making processes. For instance, identified inequities in the distribution of named chairs may result from a lack of transparency and process in how those decisions are made. Inequities in distribution of workload and leadership positions within a department were identified with women disproportionately serving in low-power, time-consuming roles, such as director of undergraduate studies (DUS), while men were disproportionately serving as department chairs. Many were unclear on how these decisions are made, as well as distribution of department/center/institute resources and lacked access to department or center/institute by-laws.

*Recommendations:*

- Ensure all departments, centers, and institutes have updated by-laws accessible online, and that department and Arts and Sciences policies are clearly communicated to all faculty and department administrators.
- Develop and review by-laws with clear guidelines for officer selection, such as chair or director, and how teaching and administrative service are distributed among faculty.
- Establish and enforce conflict of interest policies for distribution of resources and hiring.
- Evaluate policies for the distribution and appointment of named chairs.

## 5 Salary

Analysis of normalized anonymized salary data revealed some possible salary inequities, particularly within mid-career cohorts in the natural sciences and social sciences. The subcommittees realized that it is important that salary equity is considered in terms of peers at similar career stages rather than department average. However, the committee did not consider differences in productivity or other criteria that might contribute to salary differences. Considerable concern was expressed that Columbia has too strong an emphasis on outside offers to adjust salaries and other resources. The outside offer culture was considered by many interviewees to be counterproductive and destructive to morale. In the natural sciences, data suggested that while women and men were equally likely to obtain outside offers, women were twice as likely to accept them and leave. This is consistent with survey results that showed women were more likely to consider leaving to allow more time for research and find a more supportive environment, whereas men were more likely to consider leaving to increase their salary.

### *Recommendations:*

- Correct any obvious salary inequities immediately.
- Create an avenue for merit- and equity-based raises without outside offers.
- Consider how service and advising are incorporated into annual salary raises.
- Have departments clearly communicate the criteria for annual raises.
- Establish a thorough and regular review of salary equity.
- Develop a long-term strategic plan to address salary compression.

## 6 Harassment, Discrimination, and Bullying

The online surveys documented concerning findings around discrimination and harassment, and interviews revealed many instances of bullying and other unprofessional behavior particularly within the department setting. Women were much more likely to experience these types of behavior though some men did, as well. The majority of women reported experiencing at least one instance of discrimination by their colleagues at Columbia, and almost one-third reported experiencing at least one instance of harassment by their colleagues across Arts and Sciences, with the numbers highest in the natural sciences. However, we should note that we do not know how respondents interpreted the term “harassment” (though a link to university policies was provided) and we do not know how long ago these incidents took place. Nevertheless, it is clear that

women are, on average, having to contend with additional obstacles in their professional environments compared to their male colleagues.

It is also apparent that there is considerable concern and a lack of faith in the current reporting options, and fear of retaliation was expressed. Within the PPC there was broad support for the development of some sort of system that would allow complaints to be time-stamped but not filed until the complainant was ready (e.g., they got tenure), and a system that collated complaints against individuals to allow some protection for complainants through safety in numbers. However, due process must of course always be followed, and this was always emphasized throughout the discussions.

*Recommendations:*

- Clearly define what constitutes harassment, discrimination, and bullying.
- Adopt a policy defining harassment, discrimination, and bullying as professional/research/scientific misconduct within Columbia.
- Implement an information escrow system to preserve and collate reports of misconduct.
- Work with the relevant offices to encourage review and reform of the existing reporting system to establish trust and confidence in the process.

## **7 Workload**

Significant differences were identified in workload around committee work in particular. Women and URM faculty participated in slightly more committee service at the department level, but almost twice as much at the university level. It was noted that at the university level this was likely due to a laudable desire to have diverse committees, but care must be taken not to overburden these faculty, ensuring that their efforts are focused on the committees that shape the future of the university. The additional department-level burden for women and URM faculty in departments where they are underrepresented was also noted in terms of “invisible labor,” such as the informal advising of students, where they are seen as role models.

*Recommendations:*

- Establish equity in assigning teaching and service, including as directors of undergraduate or graduate studies; avoid assignment of DUS/DGS to untenured faculty where possible.

- Establish a system to reward service and recognize invisible labor, including formal and informal advising of students and low-level administrative tasks.

## 8. Work/Life

Parenting and caregiving responsibilities were reported as an issue of particular concern by humanities faculty, as detailed in the Humanities Equity Committee (HEC) report. While faculty in other divisions reported concerns about schooling and childcare, there were not significant differences in the concerns reported between male and female faculty. The PPC has formed a subcommittee to study childcare and schooling issues across Arts and Sciences.

### *Recommendations:*

- Clarify policies regarding teaching relief for birth mothers in the semester they are due.
- Provide more substantial needs-based resources for early childcare or family care.
- Provide transparency on admissions to The School at Columbia and consider how to distribute that subsidy more broadly and evenly.
- Consider developing an on-site daycare.

## 9 Continued Vigilance

It was evident that the work conducted here is just the start of what needs to be sustained effort to study and address the issues identified. Much of the data collection could have been more efficient and robust if more systematic records had been kept.

### *Recommendations:*

- Continue and deepen analysis of the situation of URM faculty across divisions.
- Conduct regular climate, workload, and satisfaction surveys.
- Conduct regular salary equity studies.
- Maintain data collection and organization for regularized reporting on equity across issue areas.
- Replace annual faculty information form with an online system to generate department-level data on distribution of teaching, research, and service.
- Conduct faculty exit interviews.



## **Acknowledgements**

The work described here represents the efforts of many faculty and staff. The study was initiated within the PPC in response to the Columbia University Senate's Commission of the Status of Women 2014 Pipeline study. Professor Maya Tolstoy led the PPC's equity subcommittee that formed the divisional subcommittees, as well as leading the natural sciences subcommittee within that. Professors Ellie Hisama and Pablo Piccato led the humanities and social sciences subcommittees respectively. Dr. Rose Razaghian and her office under the direction of Executive Vice President David Madigan led the study of university-level data and framing these data within the context of the study goals. The three divisional subcommittees, listed in the individual reports, consisted of 26 faculty across departments in Arts and Sciences, and contributed enormous amounts of time, thought, and effort into the collection of department data, discussion and evaluation of all the data collected, and input for the development of recommendations described in this executive summary. The PPC, the Arts and Sciences Executive Committee, and divisional deans provided a governance overview and feedback on all documents, particularly the recommendations. These recommendations were based on input from all the divisional subcommittees, and a variety of internal and external experts and key personnel that PPC met with over the course of the 2017-18 academic year in response to the findings.

## PPC MEMBERSHIP, 2017/18

Maya Tolstoy, *Professor, Earth and Environmental Sciences, PPC Chair*

Maria Uriarte, *Professor, Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology, PPC Vice-Chair*

Richard Davis, *Professor, Department Chair, Statistics*

Mamadou Diouf, *Professor, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies*

Ellie Hisama, *Professor, Music (Fall 2017)*

Eleanor Johnson, *Associate Professor, English and Comparative Literature*

Brendan O’Flaherty, *Professor, Economics (Fall 2017)*

Pablo Piccato, *Professor, History (Spring 2018)*

Seth Schwartz, *Professor, Department Chair, History*

Gareth Williams, *Professor, Classics (Spring 2018)*

Andreas Wimmer, *Professor, Sociology*

## **EQUITY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS, 2016/17-2017/18**

### **Natural Sciences Equity Committee (NSEC)**

Maya Tolstoy, *Professor, Earth and Environmental Sciences, NSEC Chair, PPC Chair*  
Frederik Deneff, *Professor, Physics*  
Ellie Hisama, *Professor, Music, PPC*  
Laura Kaufman, *Professor, Chemistry*  
Darcy Kelley, *Professor, Biological Sciences*  
Janet Metcalfe, *Professor, Psychology*  
Pablo Piccato, *Professor, History, PPC*  
David Schiminovich, *Professor, Astronomy, PPC*  
Michael Thaddeus, *Professor, Mathematics*  
Maria Uriarte, *Professor, Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology, PPC Vice-Chair*  
Tian Zheng, *Professor, Statistics*  
Ex Officio: David Madigan, *EVP for Arts and Sciences, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences*  
Ex Officio: Rose Razaghian, *Associate VP, Planning, Analysis and Curricular Coordination*

### **Humanities Equity Committee (HEC)**

Ellie Hisama, *Professor, Music, HEC Chair, PPC*  
Stefan Andriopoulos, *Professor, Germanic Languages*  
Courtney Bender, *Professor, Religion*  
Jo Ann Cavallo, *Professor, Italian*  
Kellie Jones, *Associate Professor, Art History and Archaeology*  
Eleanor Johnson, *Associate Professor, English and Comparative Literature, PPC*  
Lydia Liu, *Professor, East Asian Languages and Cultures*  
Robert Gooding-Williams, *Professor, Philosophy*  
Patricia Grieve, *Professor, Latin American and Iberian Cultures*  
Emmanuelle Saada, *Professor, French and Romance Philology*  
Maya Tolstoy, *Professor, Earth and Environmental Sciences, PPC Chair*  
Maria Uriarte, *Professor, Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology, PPC Vice-Chair*  
Katharina Volk, *Professor, Classics*  
Jennifer Wenzel, *Associate Professor, English and Comparative Literature; Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies*  
Ex Officio: David Madigan, *EVP for Arts and Sciences, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences*  
Ex Officio: Rose Razaghian, *Associate VP, Planning, Analysis and Curricular Coordination*

### **Social Sciences Equity Committee (SSEC)**

Pablo Piccato, *Professor, History, SSEC Chair, PPC*  
Page Fortna, *Professor, Political Science*  
Rosalind Morris, *Professor, Anthropology*  
Stephanie Schmitt-Grohé, *Professor, Economics*  
Maya Tolstoy, *Professor, Earth and Environmental Sciences, PPC Chair*  
Maria Uriarte, *Professor, Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology, PPC Vice-Chair*  
Andreas Wimmer, *Professor, Sociology*  
Ex Officio: David Madigan, *EVP for Arts and Sciences, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences*  
Ex Officio: Rose Razaghian, *Associate VP, Planning, Analysis and Curricular Coordination*