



RANKIN CLIMATE

Impact of the Campus Climate on Faculty

The research literature supports that the campus climate influences the levels to which faculty members thrive, particularly faculty of color and other historically excluded community members.¹ It is well known that disciplines across higher education struggle to retain faculty of color². Substantive research has illuminated that the experiences of faculty of color may contribute to their leaving predominantly white institutions and sometimes the academy altogether.

A negative campus climate can manifest in:

- Lack of retention of Faculty of Color³
- Lack of retention of women in STEM fields
- Lack of a clear and fair promotion and tenure processes⁴

While the perception of a non-supportive environment can have negative effects on faculty members, faculty members who judge their campus climate more positively are more likely to feel personally supported and perceive their work unit as more supportive.⁵ Here you will find robust research that explains why climate assessments are an important opportunity to engage, learn and act to further enhance the community experience for faculty members.

Influence of Microaggressions

Research supports the relationships between workplace discrimination and negative job and career attitudes, and how workplace encounters with bias negatively influence health and well-being.⁶ Faculty of color often report experiencing a hostile climate in their departments, colleges, and institutions more broadly than White faculty. Other research demonstrates that

¹ Harper & Hurtado, 2009; Maramba. & Museus, 2011; Mayhew, M. J., Rockenbach, A. N., Bowman, N. A., Seifert, T. A., & Wolniak, G. C. 2016; Patton, 2011; Strayhorn, 2012; Buckley, J. B., & Park, J. J., 2019, Fernandez, F., Merson, D., Ro, H. K., & Rankin, S., 2019

² McGee, E.O. (2020). Interrogating structural racism in STEM higher education. *Educational Researcher*, 49(9):633-644. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20972718>

³ Blumenfeld et al. (2016); Gardner (2013); Garvey & Rankin (2016); Johnson et al. (2014); Kutscher & Tuckwiller (2019); Lawrence et al. (2014); Pascale (2018); Ruud et al. (2018); Strayhorn (2013); Walpole et al. (2014)

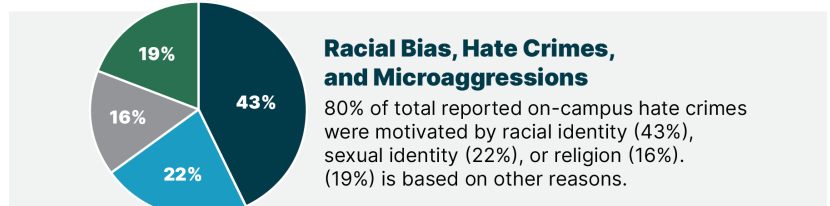
⁴ <https://rankin-consulting.com/literature>

⁵ Costello, 2012; Griffin, Pérez, Holmes, & Mayo, 2010; Kaminski, & Geisler, 2012; Vaccaro, A., 2012, Griffin, K. A., Pifer, M. J., Humphrey, J. R., & Hazelwood, A. M., 2011; Vaccaro, A., 2012

⁶ Young, K., Anderson, M., & Stewart, S. 2014; Costello, C. A., 2012; Garcia, G. A., 2016; Mayhew, M., Grunwald, H., & Dey, E.; 2006

faculty of color experience racially-charged climates and racism in their workplace.⁷ These environments can be described as “chilly” campus climates, social isolation, research censorship, ineffective mentoring, and high service expectations.”⁸

In addition, faculty of color frequently experience racial microaggressions and racial stereotyping within the academy.⁹ In one study, research found that women, Black, and Latino/a/e faculty members report discrimination in the workplace as a significant stressor.¹⁰ In fact, Black, Latino/a/e, and Asian faculty report higher levels of stress, discrimination, unpaid labor, and dissatisfaction with coworkers compared to White faculty.¹¹



Research also underscores the relationship between hostile workplace climates and subsequent productivity.¹² As an example, faculty who feel more supported and like their identities are respected are more likely to mentor students and participate in professional development activities.¹³

Impact on Retention

One of the biggest outcomes for an institution of a perceived negative campus climate is the struggle to retain faculty of color. The negative campus climate stems from several common themes: a lack of recognition, the hostile climate discussed above, a lack of network or community, and racialized tenure and promotion processes.

Faculty of color are often placed in a precarious position of hypervisibility/invisibility.¹⁴ These faculty report experiencing being hypervisible when it comes to diversity-related work, including being tokenized in marketing campaigns, on diversity committees, and/or when the university/college is trying to look diverse. Yet, these same faculty experience feeling invisible in

⁷ Alire 2001; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2018; Turner et al., 1999.

⁸ Johnson, J.M., Boss, G., Mwangi, C.G. (2018). Resisting, rejecting, and redefining normative pathways to the professoriate: Faculty of color in higher education. *The Urban Review*, 50, 630–647. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-018-0459-8>

⁹ Alexander & Hermann, 2016; Brown et al., 2016; Mutegi, 2013.

¹⁰ Stolzenberg, E. B., Eagan, M. K., Zimmerman, H. B., Berdan Lozano, J., Cesar-Davis, N. M., Aragon, M. C., & Rios-Aguilar, C. (2019). Undergraduate teaching faculty: The HERI faculty survey 2016–2017. Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.

¹¹ Vargas, E., Westmoreland, A. S., Robotham, K., & Lee, F. (2018). Counting heads vs making heads count: Impact of numeric diversity and diversity climate on psychological outcomes for faculty of color. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*.

¹² Bilmoria & Stewart (2009); Costello (2012); Dade et al. (2015); Eagan & Garvey (2015); García (2016); Hirshfield & Joseph (2012); Jones & Taylor (2012); Levin et al. (2015); Rankin et al. (2010); Silverschanz et al. (2008)

¹³ Stolzenberg, E. B., Eagan, M. K., Zimmerman, H. B., Berdan Lozano, J., Cesar-Davis, N. M., Aragon, M. C., & Rios-Aguilar, C. (2019). Undergraduate teaching faculty: The HERI faculty survey 2016–2017. Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA.

¹⁴ Settles, I.H., Buchanan, N.T., & Dotson, K. (2019). Scrutinized but not recognized: (In)visibility and hypervisibility experiences of faculty of color. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 113(2019), 62-74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.06.003>

core faculty work, and particularly in research. This dichotomy shows up when faculty of color are recognized for their “diversity,” but not recognized for their work in research and teaching.¹⁵

This invisibility also contributes to a lack of network or community for faculty members of color. The tokenizing faculty of color is exacerbated when there is a dearth of faculty of color. This dearth, as well as lacking a space or even the possibility to connect with other faculty of color, is often the reason cited for leaving their institutions.¹⁶

In addition, research has shown that faculty of color experience a disproportionate amount of stress and anxiety related to tenure and promotion processes at predominantly white institutions.¹⁷ Faculty of color also describe their tenure and promotion processes to be racialized, particularly related to myths of meritocracy and race evasiveness.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Alire, C. A. (2001). The new beginnings program. *Journal of Library Administration*, 33(1–2), 21–30. https://doi.org/10.1300/J111v33n01_03 and Montgomery, B.L., Dodson, J.E., & Johnson, S.M. (2014). Guiding the way: Mentoring graduate students and junior faculty for sustainable academic careers. *SAGE Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014558043>

¹⁷ Jayakumar, U. M., Howard, T. C., Allen, W. R., & Han, J. C. (2009). Racial privilege in the professoriate: An exploration of campus climate, retention, and satisfaction. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 80(5), 538–563. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2009.11779031> and Johnson, J.M., Boss, G., Mwangi, C.G. (2018). Resisting, rejecting, and redefining normative pathways to the professoriate: Faculty of color in higher education. *The Urban Review*, 50, 630–647. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-018-0459-8>

¹⁸ McGee, E.O. (2020). Interrogating structural racism in STEM higher education. *Educational Researcher*, 49(9):633-644. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20972718>