Equity-Minded Reform in Academic Reward Systems: Supporting Diverse Faculty and Diverse Forms of Scholarship

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From Indifference to Action

"Unchecked Discretion" ➡ Equity-Minded Reform (Bensimon)
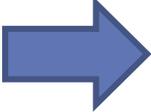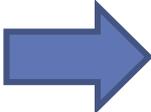
"Deliberate Indifference" ➡ Full Participation (Sturm)
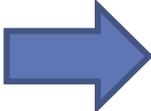
Bystanders ➡ Allies
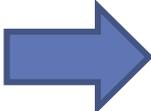
Costs for Change ➡ Costs for Not Changing

Making the Case for Action

- The Full Participation Argument

- The Fairness Argument

- The Recruitment Argument

- The Legal and Cost-Benefit Argument

- The Retention Argument

- The Equity-Minded Argument*

Equity-Minded Reform

Equity is an actionable concept, not just a theory and is the process involved in achieving equality (Bensimon, 2006; Nieto & Bode, 2009).

Equity minded reform:

- is aware of the socio-historical context of exclusionary practices in higher education
- takes ownership and responsibility for equity in process and outcomes

Assumptions to Challenge

- The Pathways of Excellent Work

- Trajectory/Time, Independence vs. Collaboration

- Peer Review: Who and why

- Excellence as Measured by a Few Narrow Indicators

- Elitism as a Strategy to Ensure Excellence

- P&T Process as Unbiased, Objective

An Equity-Minded Campus…

1. Broadens the Definition of Scholarship

2. Accepts and Assesses New Scholarly Products

3. Encourages Varied Metrics for Impact

4. Removes Noise & Adds Relevance to External Review

5. Owns Bias: (e.g. Teaching Evaluations)

6. Creates MOU/Mentoring Plans

7. Recognizes Pace and Trajectory will Vary

An Equity-Minded Campus…

8. Organizes Fair Workloads

9. Values Collaboration

10. Analyzes Pay Gaps & Creates Alternatives to Outside Offer-Only Raises

11. Resists Arguments for Cheap Labor: Replaces with Fair Stipends and Benefits for Postdocs & NTT faculty

12. Becomes Accountable for Outcomes: Displays Transparency & Accountability.

I. Broadens the Definition of Scholarship

- Scholarly activity is dynamic—increasingly interdisciplinary, engaged, digital, policy-related

- "Defining scholarship as the discovery, integration, engagement, and transmission/translation of knowledge" (University of Maryland)

- Quality of scholarship assessed through Peer Review, Impact, Significance

- Onus is on the candidate to demonstrate each of these three elements of their scholarship.

- Related changes are made to organization of CV, job descriptions

II. Accepts and assesses new scholarly products

- Add language that documentation will often include traditional means (citations, journal impact factors) but may also take other forms.

- Promotion and tenure guidelines should provide concrete examples of potential alternative products/evidence of scholarship.

- Newer forms of scholarship should be reviewed in the medium for which it was produced (e.g. in electronic form).

III. Encourages Varied Metrics for Impact

- Impact factor and citation counts flawed when used alone to assess impact of scholarship

- [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA), noted metrics such as the Journal Impact Factor (JIF) are used as quick and dirty assessments of academic performance and should not be.

- Allow alternative impact metrics for advancement relevant to the scholarly form & audiences the work targets

IV. Removes Noise & Adds Relevance to External Review

Remove "Noise" from the Review Process (O'Meara, 2014)

- Choice of external reviewers based on prestige of institution
- Recording Declines
- "Would this person be tenured at your institution"/ordering peers

Adds relevance to the review process

- Selects reviewers based on their expertise in the field
- Requires reviewers with expertise in newer scholarly forms
- If relevant, chooses reviewers who can evaluate alternative impacts

V. "Owns" Bias

- Explicit recognition that bias exists in promotion & tenure documents.

- Ensure faculty know about bias at all levels of packet review

- Explicit recognition that when a department chair or APT committee chair sees a pattern of bias or discrimination (such as in student evaluations) they comment on it; they affirm the institutional commitment to promoting inclusive excellence.

- Explicit charge to review committee—a process for what happens when racist, sexist considerations are brought into discussions.

VI. Creates MOU/Mentoring Plans

- At entry faculty sit down with department chairs and a mentoring team to outline a mentoring plan/MOU that explicitly notes the kinds of scholarship they will do (e.g. engaged, digital, interdisciplinary) and its writing venues and forms that might deviate from department norms.

- This document follows the candidate through each evaluation.

VII. Recognizes Pace & Trajectory will Vary

- Candidate dossiers will differ based on life circumstances.
- The issue is meeting standards for excellence, not how long it took candidates to get there.
- Time investment dependent metrics (#s of grants, publications, size of grants) disadvantage faculty with other constraints on their time

- APT committee members informed when a candidate takes advantage of programs and is reminded that these are university-supported policies
- Tenure delay is included in reference letter request

VIII. Organizes Fair Workloads

- Time is one of the most valuable resources faculty have to accomplish their goals, which is why course release is a common incentive for various faculty activities.

- Women faculty found in many studies to spend less time than men on research; women and URMs more time on campus service.

- Time spent on research predicts publication productivity.

- Time spent on campus service has been found to negatively impact women's time to advancement from associate to full professor.

- We need department and college level organizational practices that structure fairer workloads even as we make individuals more aware of the impact of unconscious bias on service requests.

IX. Values Collaboration

- Explicitly value collaboration in guidelines.

- Allow for authors to identify their contributions to co-authored, co-written grants and projects.

- Discussion in promotion and tenure guidelines about balance of independence vs. collaboration and value of collaboration.

- "Go beyond single-authored article or book as key indicator of quality and excellence (AERA, 2013)."

X. Addresses Pay Gaps & Creates Alternatives to Outside Offer Only Raises

- Wage gap between men and women is a persistent problem that can be remedied with salary adjustments.

- Outside offer-only policies make the wage gap worse, can decrease standing and recognition if women are less likely to pursue outside offers (O'Meara, 2014; O'Meara, Lounder & Campbell, 2014; O'Meara, Fink, White-Lewis, in press).

- Equity-minded campuses create alternative ways to provide raises based on assessment of productivity and local contributions.

XI. Resists Arguments for Cheap Labor

- Resist arguments to "race to the bottom" of stipends and benefits for NTT faculty and Postdocs to stay competitive with peer grants to NIH or NSF; to solve budget problems on the backs of those with the least negotiating power.

- Equity-minded campuses focus on ways to improve working conditions, salaries, benefits, and advancement opportunities for NTT faculty and postdocs; they include them in the discussions.

XII. Requires Accountability

An equity-minded institution tracks and is accountable for the outcomes of their reward system efforts. As such they:

- Collect data and share it widely (e.g. tenure decisions, promotion, outside offers by race, gender, NTT faculty, postdocs)

- Place language in their P&T documents that requires periodic examination of this data for equity concerns.

- Identifies a process for revisiting guidelines and addressing equity issues as they appear.

Conclusion

- Reward system practices play real roles in reproducing inequality; they constrain and enable agency.
- There is a cost to institutional "deliberate indifference."
- How much more data do we need?
- We need to act now.

Thank you

To find resources and papers mentioned here please see the resource page provided to participants at the presentation and:

O'Meara papers and UM ADVANCE:

- http://www.education.umd.edu/Acad[/index.cfm?URLID=komeara](/index.cfm?URLID=komeara)

- www.kerryannomeara.com

- www.advance.umd.edu