BEYOND THE KUMBAYA: A REFLECTIVE CASE STUDY OF ONE UNIVERSITY'S DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION JOURNEY

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ABSTRACT

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are laudable objectives, but how do we move beyond a proclamation of value to the gritty work of critique, openness, and action? One practice in institutional improvement is to focus on what can be counted, but cultural changes are more difficult to see. Finding ways to observe and measure what is inherently difficult to quantify includes quantitative, and qualitative data, proxies, and narratives. As beacons of social change, universities have historically been on the leading edge of ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion. In the paper, we use a reflective case study design to challenge myths that protect the status quo and describe data and proxies for baseline diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our case study focuses on how one university uses institutional research and introspection to craft policies and practices along its journey toward a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus climate.

In "An academic Gresham's Law," historian Henry Wechsler argues that as higher education institutions diversified, "the arrival of a new constituency on a college campus has rarely been an occasion for unmitigated joy," but instead a threat to institutional mission, vision, and cultural norms (1981, p. 567). Borrowing from the concept of Gresham's Law, newcomers will drive away traditional constituencies of students, faculty, and staff. However, as Wechsler explains, these "apocalyptic" fears typically were not realized, and he draws on four historical examples—the integration of poorer students into nineteenth-century New England colleges, of women in the Civil War postbellum era, of Jewish students in the early twentieth century, and Black students during the Civil Rights era. Instead, institutions made accommodations such that majority students were able to self-segregate. Thus, even as institutions diversified, they were hardly inclusive.

During the Civil Rights era, as a more diversified student body by race/ethnicity, sex/gender, and gender identity, socioeconomic status, religion, and sexuality entered the academy at critical mass levels, they began to agitate for change, individually and collectively, on campus in addition to changes in society writ large (Lipset, 1993). Present in these movements were songs of protest and unity, including Kumbaya. Emerging as a cultural artifact brought to the land which would become the United States by enslaved Africans, it is largely believed that

the song survived across the eras in the care of the Gullah-Geechee peoples of the South Carolinian and Georgian coasts, the earliest recording thereof found in 1927 (Winick, 2010). From the 1950s through the 1990s it was recorded by folk artists in the United States and around the world to inspire unity, as a ritual of reverence, and as an anthem of togetherness. Over time, the song garnered negative connotations. Politically, Kumbaya, meaning come by here—a plea for godly intervention and comfort, became a proxy for "weak consensus-seeking" resulting in unrealized policy goals (Winick, 2010, p. 3). Within the social sphere, it derived connotations of "touchy-feely," "wishy-washy," "nerdy," and/or "meek" (Winick, 2010, p. 3). In this vein, the term kumbaya has become a dismissive term of naiveté that glosses over substantive differences to achieve a superficial sense of togetherness.

As we, the authors, reflected upon a year in which we made significant strides in addressing structural inequalities as laid bare by the death of George Floyd and utilizing institutional data analyzed in pursuit of an NSF ADVANCE grant that was awarded in 2020, we were hesitant to use the term kumbaya to describe our case study given its unifying and divisive connotations. However, in March 2021, as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) affirming policies were under consideration by the Faculty Senate, some Senators invoked the dismissive use of the word kumbaya to deride the DEI proposals as "spiritual" or "feel good" with questionable efficacy (ECU Faculty Senate, 2021). Demonstrating the other interpretation of kumbaya, the one of unification and social change, the Faculty Senate ratified each of the measures including adding the cultivation of a welcoming and inclusive environment to the job duties of a unit administrator, a statement regarding the value of DEI on campus, faculty evaluation guidance including the fair evaluation of DEI work and an annual DEI professional development. The chide was

poignant, thus the title of this paper reminds us to move beyond the deprecatory kumbaya and to reclaim it as a term of fortitude. DEI work is not ephemeral, and those who do this work are neither weak nor meek. Given the tendency of academic Gresham's Law, the pursuit of diversity to the exclusion of equity or inclusion (Wechsler, 1981), promoting DEI comprehensively is necessarily hard, counter-cultural, and thereby revolutionary.

It is through this lens that we employ a reflective case study strategy to describe the experiences of introspection, activism, and interrogation around diversity, equity, and inclusion on one college campus in rural-serving Eastern North Carolina. Here our attention centers on DEI policy advances among faculty. We begin with a description of our institutional context which we follow with our description of making change at East Carolina University (ECU), including our reflections on continual improvement and larger implications for higher education practice.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

ECU was founded in 1907 as a teacher training school, expressly "for the purpose of giving to young white men and women such education and training as shall fit and qualify them to teach in the public schools of North Carolina" (NCGA, 1907, p. 1169, emphasis added). While this language forestalled desegregation efforts, in the wake of Brown v. Board of Education (1954), the state legislature removed this language in 1957 to the chagrin of the institution's Board of Trustees. Until this point, the institution resisted desegregation in athletics, music, and artistic performances as well as student enrollments, although Black laborers were hired by the campus since the 1920s. In 1962, ECU admitted its first full-time undergraduate student, Laurie Marie Leary-Elliot, who graduated with a B.S. in business administration in 1966. Julia Mae Fields was hired as ECU's first Black professor in 1971 (ECU News Services, 2021).

Contemporarily, ECU is a typical large 4-year, regional public university. It had a total enrollment in Fall 2020 of 28,798, 83 percent of whom were undergraduates. Its regional focus includes the largely rural population from the 44 counties of eastern North Carolina. Its student body includes students from 47 states, the District of Columbia, and 99 different countries. Racial and ethnic minorities, inclusive of federal racial/ethnic classifications but exclusive of Non-Resident Alien and Unknown statuses, made up 33% of the undergraduate student population and 26% of the graduate student population. ECU has 10 degree-granting colleges/schools/institutes and is classified as a primarily residential undergraduate campus with High Research Activity Doctoral University by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education and has a special classification for Community Engagement.

ECU is located in Greenville, NC, and it has approximately 7,000 employees, about 2,000 of whom are faculty members. In 2019, racial/ethnic minorities constituted 37% of North Carolina's population and 42% of the population in Eastern NC (United States Census Bureau, 2019). In the same year, only 21% of ECU faculty identified as racial/ethnic minorities. While Black/African American and Hispanic faculty combined comprised 10%

of the faculty, within the Eastern region, they comprised the majority of persons minoritized by race and/or ethnicity. See Table 1 for percentages by race/ethnicity categories. We elaborate further on classifications and challenges thereto in our discussion of establishing baseline data.

By gender, women comprise 51% of the faculty; 60% as non-tenure track instructional faculty, and 43% tenure track. We use the term gender here, rather than sex, as we believe that individuals respond to questions about sex or gender with their gender identities, even when the response choices consist of only male, female, and no response. But here again, classification schemas evade simplicity, and we engage in this warranted discussion below. Within the tenure track faculty, the female presentation declines as rank increases, 56% of assistant professors are women, 49% of associate professors are women, and 31% of full professors are women. As a collective, the proportion of racial/ethnic minorities within each gender is approximately the same.

Table 1: ECU Faculty & Students by Race/Ethnicity Compared to Percentages within North Carolina and Eastern North Carolina, 2020

	North Carolina	Eastern NC	Faculty	Students
Am. Indian/Al. Native	1%	3%	0%	1%
Asian	3%	1%	10%	3%
Black/Af. Am.	21%	27%	6%	17%
Hispanic	10%	9%	4%	7%
Nat. Hawaiian/OPI	0%	0%	0%	0%
Two+ Races	2%	2%	1%	4%
White	63%	58%	78%	69%

Note: Racial/ethnic minority categories used here are those used by the National Center for Education Statistics, i.e., Black/African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Two or more races. To be consistent with U.S. Population Estimates, ECU percentage calculations exclude Non-permanent residents and faculty/students with unknown race/ethnicity.

Culturally, North Carolina is indelibly shaped by populist ideals, contouring towards political and religious conservatism tempered by pro-business moderates. As described by Christensen (2010) in *The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics:*

> The state lit the cigars for corporate executives but was hostile to organized labor; it generously spent money on roads and universities but was stingy when it came to the   poor. State leaders sought a measure of fairness towards its black citizens, so long as it didn't threaten the system of segregation. ... The state's voters are willing to elect   liberals who they think will look after the average man—as long as he does not transgress southern, racial customs. (pp. vii-viii, x)

Thus, when Governor Terry Stanford began establishing a foundation for racial integration, he did so quietly, in contrast to Alabama's Governor George Wallace's schoolhouse door stance. It was a business decision. The reverence for southern customs and mores extends beyond race and ethnicity, to include traditional notions of "good" expressions of gender and sexuality.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the state made national headlines with its Public Facilities Privacy & Security Act of 2016, also known as HB2 or colloquially called the "Bathroom Bill" which established sex-segregated public bathrooms. More recently and closer to home, when the Trump/Pence 2020 reelection campaign hosted a rally in Greenville, on the campus of East Carolina University on July 17, 2019, rally attendees chanted "Send her back!" referencing U.S. citizen and House Representative, Ilhan Omar. The suggestion was that she be sent back to Somalia, due in part to her public positions in support of marginalized people. Two days after the rally, ECU's Interim Chancellor released a statement affirming the

university's commitment to the open exchange of ideas as well as the diversity and safety of the community. Many faculty, staff, and students, including the Faculty Senate, were dissatisfied with the Interim Chancellor's response with one professor writing an editorial lambasting him for not adequately preparing the ECU community for the trauma of the rally. The professor cited conversations with worried students whose families reportedly asked them about transferring schools due to safety concerns. Thus, it was expected that in 2020 efforts to make changes would be met with resistance.

As the culture wars continue with people in the United States more polarized than ever (Iyengar et al., 2019), colleges and universities, as microcosms of the larger society, are intellectual centers where ideas are exchanged (Menand, 2010) and where policies and practices can be forged to cultivate a more harmonious, welcoming, and inclusive society, a site where we can tinker towards kumbaya. As evident in the above discussion, establishing a baseline set of data from which progress can be measured is challenging. However, we press forward using the best data available.

MAKING CHANGE

In 2020, ECU applied for and received an NSF ADVANCE grant to implement internal support of structural changes that encourage DEI among faculty in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). This achievement is the culmination of the collective efforts of changing teams of mostly women, work forwarded in collaboration with the Faculty Senate in light of George Floyd's murder in that same year. The broader goal is that institutional cultural changes will not be siloed exclusively in STEM fields, but rather DEI will infiltrate the ECU way of thinking— it will be universal in our hiring, retention, evaluation, and promotion values and practices.

THE PROCESS

Because diversity work is ever evolving along multiple dimensions, it is not a goal with a measurable objective but rather an ongoing undertaking of improving campus climate. Equity, justice, inclusion, and belonging are factors that must be intentionally incorporated so that everyone feels part of the university community. Borrowing from continuous improvement processes as applied in higher education (Temponi, 2005), we assert that changing campus culture is an iterative process that starts with (1) dispelling myths around DEI work, (2) establishing baseline metrics and comparing them over time, (3) identifying shortcomings, (4) addressing them through policy and practice, and (5) reflection and adjustment (See Figure 1). The sections of this paper follow this process. The following section describes and dispels myths about DEI work.

Figure 1: Our Process
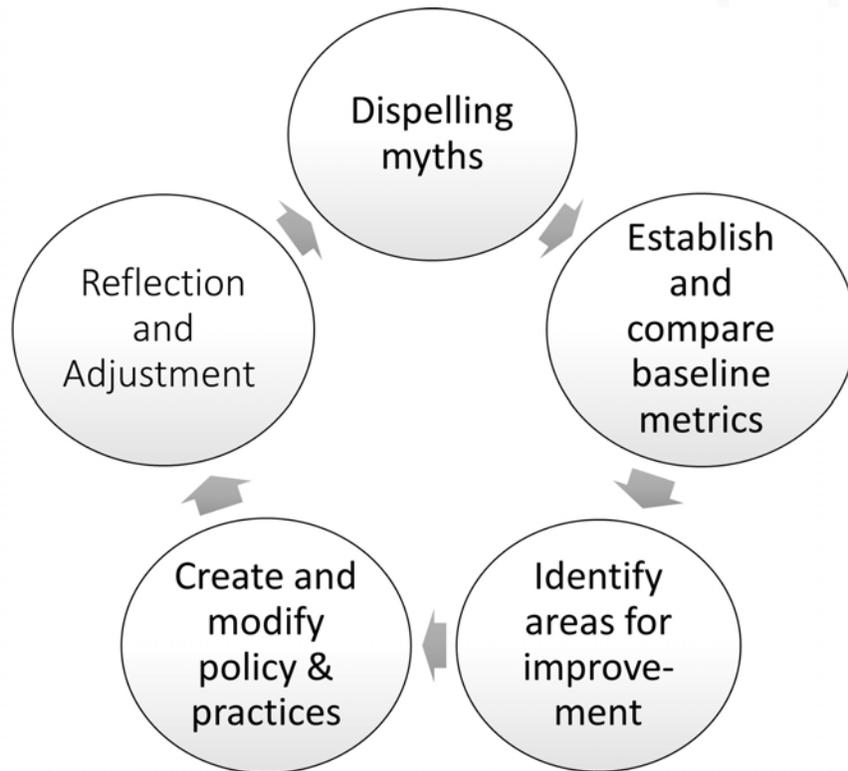
The next section of this paper describes how ECU has used quantitative and qualitative data to establish baselines and mark progress over time. These data indicate areas for improvement followed by actions taken at ECU. The paper concludes with a critique of the process thus far and goals for future work.

STEP 1: DISPELLING MYTHS

Kumbaya, the song that once galvanized social, political, and cultural movements in solidarity, has become shorthand for superficial consensus seeking that fails to accomplish crucial interrogation

(Winick, 2010). In much the same way, the revolutionary work diversity, equity, and inclusion movements on college campuses in the 1960s and 1970s have been subverted and reinterpreted as touchy-feely, kumbaya efforts. Rather than kumbaya representing strength and power in togetherness and harmony as it once did, its meaning has been appropriated in the political arena by people trying to disparage one another and dismiss critics as naive (NPR, 2012). Consistent with the dichotomous connotations of kumbaya, this section dispels dismissive myths around DEI work to realign our mental models around solidarity. Here, we describe five common myths or misperceptions about DEI, delineated based on our analysis of the literature and confirmed in our own experiences of meeting resistance while doing this work on campuses. Some of these misperceptions are unfortunate side-effects of misinformation. Others are calculated tools deployed to resist change and protect privilege. We discuss the socio-political dynamics of each, exploring how they create and exacerbate opposition to institutional cultural change. Table 2 summarizes the myths and their repercussions for DEI work on campuses.

Myth 1: DEI work is no longer necessary

Most university campuses are diverse places, so there is no need to continue this work: "mission accomplished."

Data on diversity at universities reveal that diversity has only slightly increased over time and that several racial and ethnic groups remain underrepresented, as does the proportion of women in many fields. Heilig et al. (2019), citing data from the National Center on Education Statistics, report that university faculty have become increasingly diverse by race/ethnicity over time, and the nonwhite faculty has increased by 50% over the past 20 years. However, the increase has not radically changed the face of the faculty. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)

faculty remain underrepresented on most campuses. A discussion of the use of this term in lieu of racial/ethnic minorities follows in the section on establishing baseline data.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics,

> Of all full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in fall 2018, approximately 40% were White males; 35% were White females; 7% were Asian/Pacific Islander males; 5% were Asian/Pacific Islander females; and 3% each were Black males, Black females, Hispanic males, and Hispanic females. Those who were American Indian/Alaska Native and those who were of two or more races each made up 1% or less of full-time faculty.

They note that percentages were based on full-time faculty whose race/ethnicity was known. Race/ethnicity data are not collected for nonresident aliens. Given that Black and indigenous people make up about 15% of the population in the United States, according to the Bureau of the Census, this means that they are underrepresented as faculty. When BIPOC faculty are hired, they are often not retained (Fries-Britt et al., 2011; Turner et al., 2008). Although the faculty has become more diversified by gender, women remain underrepresented in general, and are especially underrepresented in the STEM fields, with further underrepresentation among BIPOC women (Bruning et al., 2015; Myers et al., 2019). The need for DEI work is not an accomplished mission but rather it should be framed as an ongoing challenge, requiring commitments of time and resources to make and sustain progress.

Table 2: 5 Myths and Their Negative Impact on DEI Work on Campuses

Myth	Negative Impact	The Reality	A More Effective Approach
DEI work is no longer necessary because campuses are diverse places	Divestment from initiatives to recruit and retain minoritized faculty.	Most universities are still primarily staffed by members of dominant groups.	DEI work is an ongoing challenge, requiring commitments of time and resources to make and sustain progress in diversifying campuses.
DEI work is not everyone's responsibility	Trainings "preach to the choir" and put undo burden on marginalized people to educate dominant group members.	DEI is everyone's responsibility, particularly those with authority, power, and resources to make change.	We must charge all people in positions of authority to take responsibility for removing barriers and rectifying inequities in the workplace
DEI work is about compliance with state and federal policies	Superficial annual trainings substitute for reflexive institutional change.	State and federal policies are stop-gap provisions in case of violations. They do not substitute for reflexive self-study and collaborative institutional transformation.	Required trainings should be designed and implemented so as to create reflexive change over time.
DEI work exacerbates rather than heals rifts	People who identify problems with equity and inclusion are silenced and further marginalized.	Ignoring problems ensures that they continue. DEI work provides tools for effective conversations about problems.	Hard conversations should be facilitated and embraced as a necessary part of institutional transformation and DEI success.
DEI work leads to the hiring and promotion of less qualified faculty			
	Creates backlash against minoritized faculty and supports the continued focus on hiring and promotion of faculty in dominant groups.	Hiring pipelines are filled with highly qualified minoritized candidates.	Deficit-minded approaches should be rejected as racist/sexist and achievement-minded approaches should be embraced and implemented.

Myth 2: DEI work is not everyone's responsibility

Many people misperceive that DEI work is narrowly defined as either the responsibility of the campus diversity office, the marginalized communities, or the academic disciplines of social sciences and humanities. First, because most universities have created programs and special offices for DEI programming, professional development, data collection, and compliance, some people assume that these offices can independently and completely handle all DEI work on campus. These units do important work to make campuses welcoming and affirming places, but they are limited in their scope and impact. Often, professional development (PD) programs are attended by people already sensitized to DEI work. This type of selection bias means that the PD programming may not be reaching the target audiences (Anderson, 2019). These national trends are observable at ECU.

Second, members of dominant groups may assume that DEI work is only the purview of people who have had their voices or perspectives diminished, specifically women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ people. This misperception may be due to a misunderstanding of identity politics and concerns about cultural appropriation (Henning, 2013). By this, we mean that some people who occupy privileged positions in society recognize inequities and injustices, but they remain silent out of fear that speaking up might be (mis)read as speaking for or speaking over marginalized others. Thus, well-meaning potential allies might opt out of DEI work by being over-cautious about offending people who could benefit from advocacy. These people in privileged positions may not recognize that, due to their positionality, they possess resources, situational power, and the ability to make positive change, should they choose to advocate for people with less power and privilege (Crenshaw, 2017). We need to do a better job of training and providing skills

and resources to all people in all positions of authority and who have various access to financial, social, and political capital so that everyone knows the role they can and must play to interrupt and undo inequities in the workplace, as the Wharton School (2020) argue. DEI work is more likely to engender sustained transformational change when members of dominant groups are invested in and act in accordance with DEI goals. In his ethnographic research, Anderson (2019) shows how a university can be transformed when DEI work is part of the daily routine of workers in units across campus, not just in DEI offices. Rather than siloing DEI work in spaces with like-minded and similarly trained people—the "choir"—routinizing DEI work throughout campus, making it part of the mission of various campus entities, creating stakeholders beyond the choir. This model of broad participation in DEI work is the foundation for ECU's ADVANCE grant funding that taps advocates and allies from the dominant groups to lead and participate in the DEI transformation of our campus.

Third, some people assume that DEI work is not appropriate or possible in disciplines that do not study or teach diversity and by this logic, departments like physics, chemistry, and engineering would have no expectations about contributing to the DEI culture on campus. Since 2001, NSF has invested over $270 million in universities across the United States to support ADVANCE projects that engage campus-wide strategies to transform the culture from one of inequity and exclusion to one of diversity, equity, and inclusion in science, technology, engineering, and math disciplines. Research from scholars including Steele et al. (2005), Tennial et al. (2019), and Zhang et al. (2016) can guide academic programs that struggle to diversify for various structural reasons. Steps that administrators and faculty in those programs can take include updating the curriculum to include work by and about women and BIPOC; staffing

courses with women and BIPOC faculty, and/or bringing in experts in the field to guest lecture; varying assignments to account for different styles of learning and collaboration; using examples in class that acknowledge diverse lived experiences. In some fields, simply changing a pronoun in an example from "he" to "she" or "them," or changing a hypothetical name from "Tom" to "Jamal" can do a lot to decenter privilege and to help diverse students feel included in their fields of study (Goar et al., 2013). These are small, easy, and impactful ways that everyone can make a difference. Thus, the assumption that DEI work is not everyone's job is incorrect. DEI work is for and about everyone. Broader participation across the university and academic disciplines is necessary to transform university cultures so they are inclusive, equitable, and diverse.

Myth 3: DEI work is about compliance with state and federal policies

Title VII of the 1965 Civil Rights Act prohibits workplace discrimination based on race/national origin, and sex, among other protected classes. Similarly, Title VI provides protections for students in educational settings with Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 explicitly prohibiting sex discrimination, closing loopholes in practices such as differential financial aid packages, access to academic programming, and athletics based on sex (Chambers, 2016). Except where prohibited by state law, most state colleges and universities state that they are equal opportunity institutions that practice affirmative action. Towards these ends, federal and state agencies require DEI training to ensure compliance in hiring, student admissions, and sexual harassment law, among others.

Many people assume that ticking the box of annual mandatory workplace training on diversity and equity is sufficient to kickstart cultural changes on our campuses. However, daily practices and processes need reflection and revision. While some research has documented positive impacts of annual training in shifting attitudes (Kalinoski et al., 2013), one-and-done diversity training is ineffective at transforming an entire university in the long term (Kalev et al., 2006). Instead, models that provide comprehensive, high-quality initial training, supported by ongoing, iterative training doses over time are recommended (Corriveau, 2015; von Thiele Schwarz et al., 2016). Such recursive PD provides opportunities to check in with allies about challenges and successes (Tannen, 2007). Quality ongoing training can change practices and culture, such that members of workplace communities reflect and grapple with DEI challenges as they arise. DEI issues that are regularly discussed and resolved do not build up or divide, they are addressed rather than shelved. The repeated doses keep DEI ever-present so that it is a collective lived experience. The normalcy of conflict resolution and awareness gives voice to marginalized groups and makes challenges to the status quo less confrontational and more conversational. Effective, reflexive training that is grounded in institutional culture and based on data collected by and about that institution can improve "organizational socialization" (Griffin, 2020), both for new hires and for long-term faculty. Training can provide clarity on roles, responsibilities, and procedures, as well as help hold positional leaders accountable when policies are violated.

Myth 4: DEI work exacerbates rather than heals rifts

When the people who call out and problematize inequality are blamed and seen as the problem, rather than focusing on the issue, it can silence those who observe, experience, and report discriminatory practices and attitudes (Myers, 2005). This became evident in the language used around the Black Lives Matter movements in 2020. Media outlets signaled value judgments in their coverage and word choices labeling

activists as "violent protestors" or "peaceful demonstrators." The conversations shifted from the message to the method of expression. The focus on method over message is a recurrence of the rhetoric and media coverage around the Civil Rights moments in the mid-1960s which continue to impact receptiveness to calls for cultural change. For example, common portrayals of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X are of them as juxtaposed opposites. These depictions ignore the commonalities shared between these men, downplaying Martin's more radical ideas as well as Malcolm's ethic of care (Baldwin, 1986; Grimm, 2015; Kelly & Cook, 2005; Teixeira et al., 2015).

Highlighting the need for DEI does not create or exacerbate rifts, it does not cause injustice, it identifies where injustices exist. The work of DEI asks the people within the university to bear witness and act. Rather than denigrate those who see injustice, we should be grateful because the critique of the system identifies areas for improvement. This is how the interrogative process of academic writing works (Peterson, 2020). The invitation to be critiqued and challenged is how we expand knowledge and understanding. This response to challenges of the dominant paradigm (re)centers on the feelings of discomfort and anger experienced by members of dominant groups when structural inequalities are brought to their attention. In her book, White Fragility, Robin DiAngelo (2018) describes how to develop racial stamina and move beyond argumentation, silence, and withdrawal to gratefully inviting critique that sparks personal reflection and movement toward transformation.

DEI work redirects attention to the structures and pathways to dismantle entrenched systems of power and privilege so that society can be more just and equitable (Kendi, 2019). Diversity and equity work threaten the status quo precisely because of their effectiveness at changing culture, practices, and structure.

DEI work involves laying the ground rules necessary to have difficult conversations, build bridges across intellectual camps (Best, 2021), and transform institutions into equitable and inclusive places not only for the most marginalized but for all faculty.

Myth 5: DEI work leads to the hiring and promotion of less qualified faculty

Dating back decades, affirmative action policies incited claims that paying attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion when hiring leads to the recruitment and retention of unqualified employees. Numerous scholars have pointed out that this claim erroneously presumes that members of protected classes (people of color and women) are less qualified than the dominant group (White-Lewis, 2020; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Kang & Kaplan, 2019). However, scholars like these and other researchers have demonstrated repeatedly that claims of under-qualified hiring and advancement are not supported. This assumption fuels overt and subtle discriminatory practices.

In a not-so-subtle questioning of qualifications, in May 2021, the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees offered Nikole Hannah-Jones the Knight Chair in its Hussman School of Journalism and Media on a term contract rather than including tenure as was recommended by the faculty and provost. After public pushback, highlighting her qualifications as a Pulitzer Prize winner and MacArthur Fellowship recipient whose work spotlights civil rights and racial injustices, the Board ultimately offered her tenure in June (Jaschik, 2021; Stripling, 2021). Hannah-Jones declined UNC's offer, explaining, "At some point when you have proven yourself and fought your way into institutions that were not built for you, when you've proven you can compete and excel at the highest level, you have to decide that you are done forcing yourself in." This public case reminds faculty that the qualifications of marginalized faculty

are often questioned and discounted. We define marginalized and minoritized below. Varying standards undermine basic equity and inclusion as well as the ultimate success of these faculty members. Many faculty members in similar positions suffer in silence when dominant groups doing the discounting escape scrutiny and thus the consequences are borne by the minoritized faculty members. DEI values inclusive excellence, building rich, productive pipelines of diverse scholars and instructors (Doscher & Landorf, 2018; Posselt, 2014; Williams, 2007; Williams et al., 2005). This approach is self-fueling in many ways: when students see themselves represented in their faculty, they are more likely to enter that field themselves (Myers et al., 2019). Institutions should work to reject deficit-minded approaches as racist and sexist and, instead, embrace achievement-minded approaches when working to diversify faculty (Griffin, 2020).

Although these myths are persistent and pervasive; these assumptions that limit DEI work do not hold up under scrutiny. Research demonstrates repeatedly that these misperceptions are inaccurate. Why, then do they persist? Misperceptions are either entrenched in the protection of the status quo, dismissed as no longer relevant, or projections of the dominant groups recentering their discomfort by blaming problematizing people as overly sensitive. However, not collectively working toward diversity goals, equity in resource allocation, and inclusion in the institutional cultural climate has real-life consequences that are borne by the marginalized faculty members. Universities must move beyond dismissive kumbaya attitudes to the unifying, fortifying kumbaya dispositions of the 1960s that aggressively challenged social norms in the spirit of broad inclusion.

STEP 2: ESTABLISH BASELINE METRICS AND COMPARE OVER TIME

It is impossible to measure progress without a baseline. At ECU, we have worked collaboratively across the university leadership, institutional research, and the faculty to establish baselines, develop proxy metrics, and track progress over time. At ECU, we want a faculty workforce demographically reflective of the region and the students; a faculty that provides students with a rich set of learning opportunities and experiences, role modeling, mentorship, and sponsorship. Beyond the numbers, we want to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where faculty can cultivate their intellectual pursuits and share learned knowledge and creative activities with students. However, before we can get to this cultural aspiration, we must engage the structural diversity (Hurtado et al., 1998) and limitations thereof within our faculty ranks. This means being able to "count" the faculty to measure diversification progress (OED, 2021); however, counting by identity groups is not a straightforward process. Defining terms, reporting data and even the data collection process itself are all fraught.

In the introductory section of this paper, we described some baseline metrics on faculty diversity at ECU. Our metrics demonstrate that Black and Latinx faculty are underrepresented compared to student demographics and among our service area of eastern North Carolina. These seemingly straightforward counts are wrought with decisions and judgment. Often the term minority is used as shorthand for people in the United States whose race or ethnicity is less than 50%, a numerical minority. Furthermore, the term minority is also used to identify women, who are numerically in the majority but are included as minorities because they do not have access to the same power and

privilege as males or the dominant group. Thus, one can be in the numerical majority by race/ethnicity, sex/gender, or even sexuality within a given context and still because of power dynamics be rendered minoritized. Similarly, the term marginalization marks the distance from power, thereby rendering those on the margins as opposed to closer to power centers marginalized.

The term underrepresentation is strictly about numerical representation. It reflects the proportion of individuals from a given group as compared with a broader demographic: regional, state, national, or global. The National Science Foundation uses the term underrepresented minorities (URM) and has several programs focusing on underrepresented minorities which includes peoples of African, Latinx, and Indigenous heritages but typically excludes peoples of Asian heritages. We believe this practice should be interrogated as in many places (not our own) faculty of Asian heritages are not overrepresented (Chambers, 2020). Furthermore, many Asian faculty are subject to accent (among other forms of) discrimination (Li & Beckett, 2006). Moreover, the Asian pan-ethnic identity includes a diversity of peoples of different ethnic heritages who may be more different than alike. There are different opportunity sets by migration patterns and time in the U.S. The conception of URM reinforces model minority myths that leave people of Asian heritages open to discrimination and hate crimes (Atkin et al., 2018; Shih et al., 2019; Shams, 2020). The term we believe most appropriate when speaking collectively about faculty minoritized by race and ethnicity is Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). The term acknowledges that White is a color and the failure to recognize it as such furthers colorblind White dominance and dysconsciousness about race/ethnicity (Chambers, 2020). In short, we believe that White peoples should not be allowed through language to escape into a purportedly neutral

"racelessness." Being White and whiteness has meaning (Cabrera, 2018). BIPOC as we use it in this manuscript is inclusive of people of Black African heritages whether of more recent immigrant heritages from the African continent, Black peoples from the Caribbean, and other parts of the African diaspora. It includes people of the 774 recognized and unrecognized indigenous tribes residing in the land occupied by the United States. It also includes people of Asian and Latinx heritages. All of these terms are contested (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020).

In addition to the way we categorize and name people, the questions we ask as we collect data, the way we ask them, and the response options provided influence what is collected, counted and reported. Since its inception in 1790, the U.S. Bureau of the Census (n.d.) has collected race/ethnicity and sex/gender data on individuals within the United States. However, this process of classification is a continually evolving one. Reflecting the ways that race is a social and political construction (Feagin, 1991; Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Myers, 2005), the federal government has recategorized race/ethnicity numerous times as the positionality of different groups evolved. The changing categorization of African Americans over time is itself a powerful illustration of race relations in the United States (Brown, 2020; see infographic at Pratt et al., 2015). Major changes occurred between 1960 and 1970, with a marked increase in categories for ethnicity. In 2000, people could choose more than one category to represent their race and/or ethnicity and in 2010, the Census form asked two questions about race/ethnicity. In the first question, people are asked to choose an "ethnicity," with the options of Hispanic or Not Hispanic. The second question asks about "race" with instructions to choose as many as apply. A combined race and ethnicity question was under consideration for 2020, in which people would be offered all the race and Hispanic options in one place and could, additionally, be able to supply more detail about their

origin, tribe, or race (Krogstad & Cohn, 2014). However, this change did not take place and the race/ethnicity definitions in the 2020 census remained the same as in the 2010 census.

In our biological and sociological understandings, distinctions between sex and gender implicate meaningful identities beyond binary classifications of male and female, man and woman. Despite folk knowledge, neither sex (Davis, 2015; Fausto-Sterling, 2000) nor gender (Butler, 1999, 2004; Connell, 1987) are binary with only two categories; additionally, neither is a static biological fact. Instead, both sex and gender are socially constructed spectrums, with structural and interactional consequences for individuals based on their categorization (Risman, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 1987). To better reflect and capture people's lived reality, calls for changes to quantitative measures of gender, in particular, are ongoing. For example, Westbook and Saperstein (2015) not only critique the misuse of biological categories (male/female) to measure gender (man/woman), but they also point out that neither binary measure captures the spectrum of gender identities and performance prevalent in today's society. New research shows that more members of Gen Z, people born between 1997 and 2015, are rejecting the gender binary than previous generations, calling for more gender-inclusive language to reflect gender fluidity (Parker & Igielnik, 2020). Despite a myriad of problems with traditional measures of sex and gender, fixing these measurement problems is not easy. As Westbrook and Saperstein (2015) note, measurement is both an art and a science— both of which are affected by larger social and political contexts.

Debates on the inclusion of sexuality and gender identity classifications occur among professional researchers, in regulatory agencies, and at the federal level. At issue is the ability of individuals to be able to identify and be counted versus the unveiling of those with

minoritized statuses and potential subjugation to dominant parties who could do harm, well-meaning intentions notwithstanding. During the creation of the 2020 Census, this debate expanded to include sexuality indicators. For years, census questions regarding households reveal same-sex partnerships while not providing space for individual identification (Bitterman & Hess, 2021). Ultimately, proposals to include LGBTQ+ persons in the count failed for rationales both supportive and sinister (Velte, 2020).

Data collection is further complicated by a growing number of people choosing not to disclose personal data such as race/ethnicity for a variety of reasons (Rubin et al., 2018). Because demographic information is submitted voluntarily, it is therefore private and legally protected from unwanted discovery; there can be gaps in our knowledge based on that data. For example, in some years, data on faculty and staff at ECU have been collected less systematically than in other years and there were significant numbers of faculty for whom we did not have basic race/ethnicity or sex/gender data. Some of these data were filled in at the level of the University of North Carolina System Office for state and federal reporting purposes. For example, gender, as operationalized by binary biological sex, might be assigned based on a decision rule such as assigning male if the person's campus ID ended in an odd number and female if it ended in an even number. Obviously, this assignment produces inaccurate counts of male and female faculty. State and federal reporting allow for "unknown" race/ethnicity and when race/ethnicity data are not systematically collected, many unknowns can result. The variation in the number of unknowns over time calls into question the numbers within other race/ethnicity categories. At ECU, the percentage of faculty for whom race/ethnicity was unknown was 30%, 25%, and 18% in the years 2016, 2018, and 2020 respectively. How can accurate

baseline and trend data on race/ethnicity be assessed with this much variation in the unknown category?

Universities and state systems are, in many cases, constricted in the data they collect by federal reporting requirements which mandate which data elements and response options are to be reported to the Department of Education. Outside of race/ethnicity and gender operationalized as binary sex, few if any diversity metrics are part of the reporting requirements. As such additional demographic data typically is not regularly collected by higher education institutions. As mentioned previously, this places a binary restriction on response options related to gender/sex; federally mandated questions regarding race/ethnicity, although allowing for more response options than in decades past, are also limiting. To cite just one example, any faculty member who selects "Hispanic" in response to the question on ethnicity is subsequently reported as Hispanic without regard for those who might prefer to identify themselves as multiple races in addition to the Hispanic ethnicity. Faculty and staff within institutions can, and sometimes do, collect data on other metrics which are useful in assessing faculty diversity (e.g., religious preference, sexual orientation, dis/ability, and the like); however, this requires a great deal of organized effort from, and collaboration among, university employees. The "data people" on most campuses (that is, Offices of Institutional Research), often have their hands full meeting federal and state reporting mandates and, thus, may not be able to assist with the collection of additional DEI-related data.

Even when reporting locally, Institutional Research (IR) personnel are constrained by privacy rules and regulations. Especially in DEI work, some pieces of information are unknowable without violating individuals' rights to privacy. When there are small sample sizes of reported demographic

attributes, the identifiability of the group members keeps IR from providing those numbers; this, in turn, can undermine the tracking of underrepresented groups to determine if progress is being made in making the university a diverse and inclusive environment. For this reason, at ECU we have tried to find other quality indicators that inform a sense of our climate of inclusiveness and the equitability of resource distribution and workloads.

Since 2015, there has been an overt, concerted effort at ECU to establish baselines and monitor progress on difficult-to-measure indicators of equity and inclusion. Coordination between faculty and administration has yielded a series of surveys that individually provide specific insights and when taken together provide a narrative about the campus climate. We provide an overview of these data collection efforts in Table 3. Information regarding the number of faculty by rank and tenure statuses disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender is reported discretely (not intersectionally) to the Faculty Senate. This includes statistics on the diversity of the faculty and administration, and initiatives in place to enhance the hiring and promotion of women as well as racially and ethnically minoritized faculty. These data-informed conversations combined with the lived experiences of minoritized faculty, and the social climate of the region, state, and nation have prompted faculty engagement around the issues of DEI.

For example, the Black Faculty Organization (BFO) is an employee resource group whose membership bolsters each other through the challenges faced by many Black faculty such as their disproportionate service burdens (Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017) and racial battle fatigue (Hartlep & Ball, 2019). As employee resource groups (ERGs) are defined and voluntarily led by faculty with some support from the Office of Equity and Diversity, the onus is on the employees

to create and maintain resource groups as well as develop and promote supportive activities. Other faculty and staff groups such as the LGBTQ+ group provide valuable social networking experiences. To persist, ERGs need both interest and leadership which effectively adds to the service burden of minoritized faculty. Thus, these informal groups, like the Hispanic faculty group, can wither when the individual drivers of the group leave the university or are pulled away by other service responsibilities. There are other models of ERGs that serve the needs of the minoritized faculty and staff with institutional support and shared resources across groups for common activities (Lerma et al., 2020).

STEP 3: IDENTIFY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Creating a climate of equity and inclusion includes professional development training, ongoing reminders and nudges, continual introspection, and critique. What we see from faculty demographics described in the first section of this paper is that women and BIPOC faculty are underrepresented relative to the population at large. We can also see that their representation diminishes at higher faculty ranks, but the question of why is not addressed in these metrics. Perhaps, a climate of exclusion contributes to their lack of professional success. Much easier to grasp are institutional policies, procedures, and practices as well as administrative accountability for improvement. As such, we planned to devote time in the next step to analyze faculty recruitment and hiring, evaluation and advancement policies, procedures, and practices as well as inquired into opportunities to positively influence administrative engagement. Given other institutional stresses, the university was amenable to accountability "carrots" but not "sticks."

We also agreed that leadership must prioritize equitable access to resources and workload distributions. When attempting to measure equity, resource allocations and workload equivalences can serve as direct indicators of disparities as well as indirect evidence of climate concerns. The 2016 Faculty Salary and Equity study conducted at ECU by an outside consultant, with input from Faculty Senate representatives, found that while there were individual faculty members who were underpaid relative to their institutional peers, there were no systematic differences in faculty salaries by race/ethnicity or gender. Underpaid faculty were reported to their respective deans and the redress of the pay gaps was the colleges' responsibility. However, in an accompanying analysis of faculty work productivity, institutional research found that women faculty had 25% more service responsibilities than male faculty. Whether service load differentials here are voluntarily incurred is irrelevant as they point to broader workload disparity trends, and patterns of gender-based workload discrimination (O'Meara et al., 2018; O'Meara et al., 2021). Perhaps related to differences in workload distribution, ECU women's faculty produced 23% fewer peer-reviewed journal articles and received 26% fewer external grants. Thus, the lower research productivity of women in 2016 could be related to their higher service loads and/or their 29% lower start-up funding. These differences in start-up funding have since been addressed by associate deans of research and the Office of Research, Economic Development and Engagement.

We are making progress. In a 2021 examination of startup packages from 2015 to 2020 by the ECU ADVANCE Team (THRIVE), there were no differences in startup packages by gender. It is expected that the 2016 faculty salary and workload equity study for academic affairs will be replicated in the next couple of years.

Table 3: Select DEI Data Collection

| Year	2012 & 2015	2016	2017	2018 & 2020	2019	2016 & 2021
Survey Title	Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE)	Faculty Salary Study (Academic Affairs, Tenured and Tenure Track Faculty)	Qualitative Inquiry on the Perceptions of STEM Women Associate Professors	Faculty Engagement Survey	Faculty Survey of Attitudes and Experiences Relating to Race/Ethnicity, LGBT Status	Analysis of the Equity in Startup Packages by Gender
Survey Description	Job Satisfaction, Retention, and Exit Surveys administered by the Harvard Graduate School of Education	Secondary data analysis of faculty salaries and workload in academic affairs conducted by institutional research.	Phone Interviews conducted by the ECU ADVANCE Team	Survey conducted by Modern Think at the direction of the UNC System Office	Survey deployed by ECU ADVANCE Team regarding faculty experiences and perceptions of discrimination as well as institutional climate and resources.	Multiyear analyses of startup packages by gender conducted in 2016 and 2021 by the ECU ADVANCE Team
Key Findings	Women and racially/ethnically minoritized faculty expressed lower job satisfaction than White men	No systemic differences in salaries although some outliers. Men log more research and creative activities products than women. Women perform 25% more institutional service than men.	Women described barriers to advancement and shared stories of unfair treatment.	Lack of administrator accountability. Significant differences in campus experiences by race/ethnicity.	Respondents witnessing discrimination: 32% by sexuality, 28% by gender, & 39% by race/ethnicity. Respondents experiencing discrimination: 10% by sexuality, 13% by gender, and 15% by race/ ethnicity. Approximately one-third of respondents believed a minoritized sexuality (16%), gender (28%), or race/ethnicity (39%) could negatively influence being hired at ECU. Respondents indicated they did not believe that ECU has a welcoming and inclusive environment by minoritized sexuality (27%), gender (24%), or race (20%).	In year one, there was a significant difference in startup packages with men receiving more and larger awards than women. By 2021 there were no differences in startup packages by gender.

STEP 4: CREATE AND MODIFY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

We used data about our faculty diversity, our survey indicators about inclusion, workload, and start-up package inequities to help frame our NSF ADVANCE proposal. George Floyd died while we were awaiting funding notice and the Faculty Senate Officers were able to use the data collected and strategies delineated in the grant proposal to put forth a statement advocating for immediate change. The statement, entitled Faculty Officers Statement and Commitments in Response to Racism: A Call to Action, committed the Faculty Senate to the creation of a standing DEI committee as well as to increase the engagement of BIPOC faculty in the Senate and Senate committees more broadly. The Faculty Officers, including one member of the ADVANCE Team, also demanded the following of the university:

1. Increased investment in the recruitment and retention of minoritized faculty;

2. The hiring of a full-time associate director within our Office of Faculty Excellence devoted to DEI professional development in the contexts of teaching, research, interpersonal relations, and leadership;

3. The provision of resources to employee resource groups; and

4. The establishment of DEI goals for each unit and accountability measures for academic administrators in their pursuit of these goals.

The Officers formed an Exploratory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) which began and completed its work in the Fall of 2020. The committee was composed of faculty from all nine colleges, across faculty and administrative ranks. It also worked in partnership with the Office of Equity and Diversity, the Office for Faculty Excellence, and the Department of Intercultural Affairs within Student Affairs. The committee initially met to identify and define ECU's issues with equity and diversity that impact and are impacted by faculty. Based on these collective listening sessions, the committee was further broken down into four subcommittees tackling initiatives that were achievable, practical, and impactful. See Figure 2 for a digest of subcommittee designations and their work. Once an announcement of the ADVANCE grant was made, co-PIs on the grant were added to subcommittees of the D&I committee, enabling a smooth translation of the data work conducted in preparation for the grant, in addition to proposed changes to policy and practice. In addition to previously collected data, these subcommittees conducted independent research, gathered data, and studied models of policies and DEI approaches at other universities.

Figure 2: Organization and Actions of the Exploratory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion
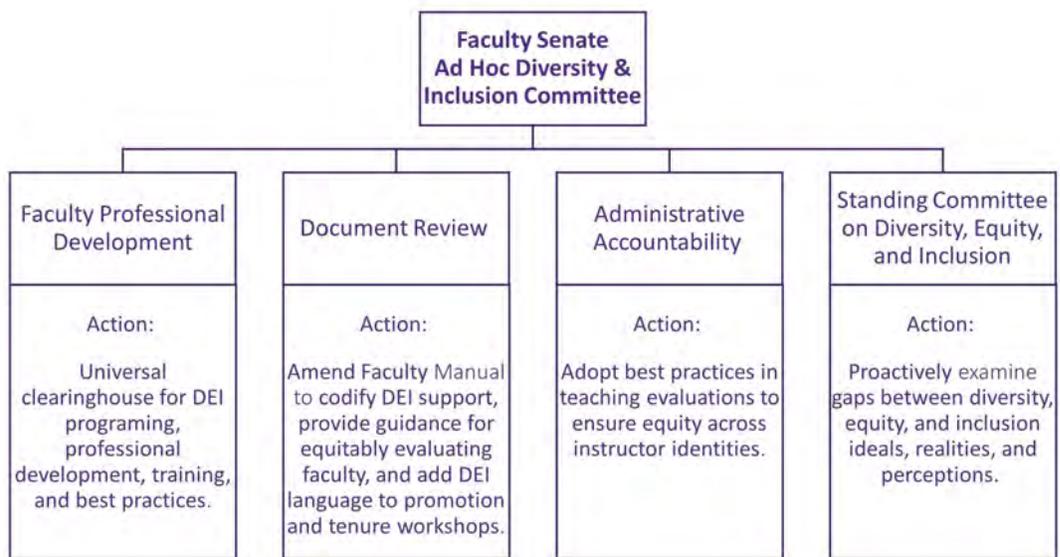
The initial work of the subcommittees was to discover and draw on resources, research, pedagogy, expertise, and programming already dedicated to and grounded in DEI work across the ECU campus. Each subcommittee is assigned a different area for a review of current policies, practices, and outcomes related to the university's DEI implementation efforts and climate assessments.

- The Faculty Professional Development Subcommittee provides a clearinghouse for programming and training that supports DEI work. By having a centralized, faculty-led group, DEI programs can reach a broad audience, can be enhanced with our discipline-based expertise, and are enriched with insights from faculty members' lived experiences. In addition, this committee can collect attendance counts and hours of professional development participation of faculty, staff, and administrators.

- The Document Review Subcommittee is examining the criteria that outline the scope and responsibilities of faculty members described in the Faculty Manual to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are included within this definitive text. In addition, this committee is reviewing the criteria and process for promotion and tenure to ensure that it is sufficiently flexible to reward faculty for broad contributions to teaching, research, and service while accommodating differences in workloads and experiences that systematically align with minoritized statuses.

- The Administrative Accountability Subcommittee examined the research on student evaluation of instruction and how biased assessments from dominant groups systematically underrate faculty from different racial and ethnic groups (Chávez & Mitchell, 2020). This committee is working with administrators who evaluate faculty to ensure that performance appraisals do not penalize faculty members for their identities. This committee also brings best practices in

faculty reviews to administrators to ensure they are current with DEI research around performance assessments.

- The Standing Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion within the Faculty Senate oversees the other three subcommittees and identifies ways for them to collaborate and work effectively within the institutional system. This committee assesses the quantitative and qualitative data on DEI, aligns areas for improvement with the activities of the other subcommittees, and provides annual critiques of the status of the campus climate with respect to DEI.

Proposals from the Document Review and Standing Committees were adopted by the Faculty Senate in March 2020. The initial introspection of the Faculty Senate Exploratory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion illuminated the vast wealth of expertise already existing at our institution, across departments and fields. Faculty and staff have demonstrated expertise in identifying gaps in our campus's DEI work and following their critique with useful and practical solutions.

By design, ECU's ADVANCE team, the THRIVE@ECU project, was knitted into the work of the Faculty Senate Exploratory Committee and as such was poised to continue the work after the committee was dissolved. This includes oversight of policy innovations, such as those that would change search committee composition and define administrator accountability metrics, as well as partnerships with our Office of Faculty Excellence and Office of Equity and Diversity to provide professional development and support for all faculty, while focusing on women in STEM.

The goals of THRIVE are to change culture by increasing the multicultural competencies of faculty and leaders through professional development, create support systems for minoritized faculty and implement structural change. The THRIVE@ECU team uses the metaphor of a tree to illustrate our goals, emphasizing connections through support, core support through policy and accountability, and outreach through professional development (see Figure 3).

To achieve goal one, we adapted Advocates and Allies (A&A), an intersectional approach to disrupting White male hegemony, by organizing White men faculty and administrators to become change agents. This year we hosted two A&A Allies trainings virtually, due to the coronavirus pandemic, and were able to attract the highest number of participants using the online format. In 2021-2022 we will host an Advocates workshop in person, the scheduling of which is still in progress. In the meantime, we have identified a colleague, a White man, to forward this project.

Figure 3: THRIVE Goals
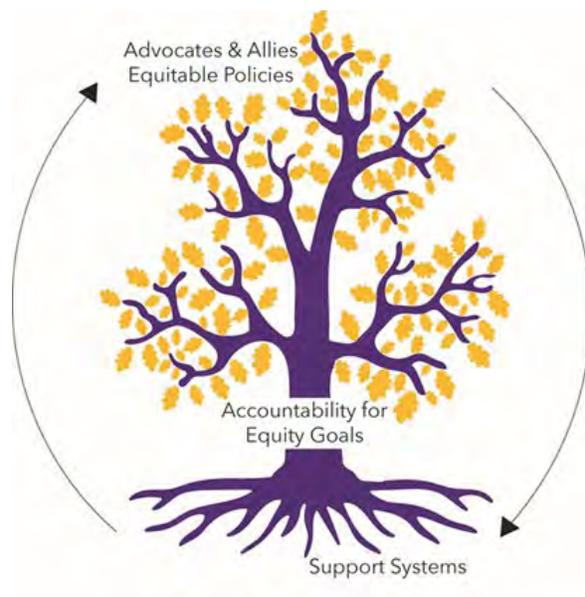
In addition to our A&A adaptation we:

1. Reviewed current search and personnel committee chair training for efficacy;
2. Held a leadership retreat for deans, directors, and department chairs featuring Menah Pratt Clark (Virginia Tech) whose

remarks focused on the integration of DEI into strategic planning;

3. Hosted a broader launch of THRIVE featuring Beth Mitchneck (University of Arizona) who provided a data-centered explanation of bias in the academy with strategies for addressing it; and,

4. Provided an outdoor public viewing of and panel discussion on Picture a Scientist, a documentary on sexism in academic environments.

To advance goal two we:

1. Hosted two community learning exchanges (Militello et al., 2014) focused on women and BIPOC in STEM, respectively;

2. Launched a professional chapter of oSTEM (Out in STEM) to build community among queer STEM faculty and staff as well as build awareness in the broader campus and Greenville community;

3. Provided funds for individual STEM women to attend research productivity and leadership professional development programs; and

4. Reached out to include underrepresented areas in STEM in our ongoing work.

We made significant progress on goal three policy developments and will continue with the creation of accountability practices and incentives for faculty, department chairs, and deans. To monitor our progress, ECU will collect data, surveys, and narratives that will be collated and reviewed both by internal and external reviewers. While the NSF ADVANCE initiatives specifically target DEI in STEM, systemic institutional climate changes will benefit all faculty.

STEP 5: REFLECT & ADJUST

A reflective case study is an approach to traditional case study methods wherein the researcher examines their present condition and past antecedents to understand a phenomenon within a case bounded by time and place (Hamilton & Corbett-Wittier, 2013; Tardi, 2019). The reflective case study approach accentuates researcher reflections as participant observers. As a racially, ethnically, and disciplinarily diverse team, the researchers participated in the advancement of inclusive excellence policies for faculty as faculty leaders, institutional researchers, equity officers, and scholarly practitioner-research advocates for institutional change; the reflective case study approach is an appropriate inquiry method (O'Reilly et al., 2017). In congruence with this method, we use thick description techniques to detail the phenomenon of bringing institutional data to bear on our DEI goals. We detail much of this above, including attention to institutional policy and practice, our reflections on what happened, how it happened, what we learned, and what we would do differently in pursuit of our goals. As such reflective case study design is as much a tool for the improvement of personal practice as well as a tool to be shared within a professional learning community. We provide evidence of our credibility and reliability through thick description and our audit trail. In addition, results were confirmed through triangulation with institutional documents, peer debriefing, and collaborative writing (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Drew et al., 2008; Yue, 2010).

Upon reflecting on this year of DEI work we acknowledge that we accomplished much in a short amount of time. We also know that we cannot rest on these achievements.

As was demonstrated through integration processes after the Civil Rights Era, policy changes do not readily translate to changes in culture. Therefore, ongoing vigilance is needed to ensure that changes on paper become changes in practice and that changes in practice become changes in habits of mind and ways of being.

While we encountered limited outright opposition, we did engender "friendly fire," ally on ally incursions often in the form of microaggressions (Sue, 2010). Through this we learned that it is important to practice mindfulness in how we engage others, to recognize our connections as players on "one team," and to quickly reconcile and extend grace generously. We also learned the importance of self-care and how engaging in a collective ethic around self-care can allow embattled team members to recuperate while others continue to move ahead.

In terms of things we would improve or do differently, our focus on addressing deans, directors, and department chairs while research-driven (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993), often was to the exclusion of other senior academic leaders. In the future, we endeavor to be more inclusive. In addition, while advancing policy proposals through Faculty Senate processes, we did not provide forums for Faculty Senators to provide feedback or voice concerns in advance of the March 2020 meeting. Given time constraints within the meeting, this left some Senators with the option to participate in the up or down votes without a fuller discussion of their concerns. While most measures passed with supermajorities, if some Senators feel railroaded in a particular action, there could be reactionary policy advocacy in the future. Overall, we found significant support for this DEI work across campus constituencies. This was amplified by the Chancellor's endorsement of our efforts with the Board of Trustees, the faculty, and his administration.

In this vein, a dedicated few were able to move a campus community toward conscientiously engaging in DEI reflection and dialogue: Are we a campus that values diversity, equity, and inclusion? How do we demonstrate that commitment?

CONCLUSIONS

For too long diversity, equity, and inclusion have been either ignored outright or fueled by empty rhetoric. The three prongs of D-E-I have been aggregated into a singular initiative assigned to an office or people with "diversity" titles. At ECU, diversity, equity, and inclusion have distinct meanings that collectively describe a campus climate that is ever evolving into a more welcoming space that listens to the voices of marginalized groups and transfers that knowledge into action. With the collaboration of the Office of Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the faculty and administration, ECU is having conversations around data, lived experiences, leadership, and inclusive governance.

This paper describes a reflective case study about ECU's experiences with (1) dispelling the myths around DEI work, (2) engaging in data-informed introspection, (3) identifying ways for improvement, (4) translating those observations into action, and then (5) reflecting and evaluating progress in an iterative evolution of improving the campus climate for all people. In this interrogative process, we have had to face some hard truths and accept criticisms as opportunities to do better. We do not identify with the dismissive fragility critique; we are well beyond kumbaya as a derogatory reference of naiveté that glosses over the difficult work to achieve superficial unity. Rather, our DEI work is developing a climate of listening to marginalized voices, re-thinking processes, and inviting critique.

In 2012, during a panel on ECU's history regarding racial integration, Justice Henry Frye, the first African American Chief Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, said:

Positive change does not come about by osmosis. Positive change comes about when somebody looks at a situation and says, "This needs to be changed. This needs to be better," and they set to work to make things better. (Copper, 2013, para. 9)

We have moved beyond the appropriated, dismissive interpretation of kumbaya and are reclaiming it as a rally of power and fortitude to persevere through the hard work of making DEI a way of life on our campus.

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