Walking the Talk: Toward a Values-Aligned Academy

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Abstract

Walking the Talk: Toward a Values-Aligned Academy is the culmination of 18 months of research interviews across the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA). Conducted by the HuMetricsHSS Initiative as an extension of their previous work on values-enacted scholarly practice, the interviews focused on current systems of evaluation within BTAA institutions, the potential problems and inequalities of those processes, the kinds of scholarly work that could be better recognized and rewarded, and the contexts and pressures evaluators are under, including, as the process progressed, the onset and ongoing conditions of COVID-19. The interviews focused primarily on the reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) process. Interviewees outlined a number of issues to be addressed, including toxicity in evaluation, scholars’ increased alienation from the work they are passionate about, and a high-level virtue-signaling of values by institutions without the infrastructure or resources to support the enactment of those values. Based on these conversations, this white paper offers a set of recommendations for making wide-scale change to address systematic injustice, erasure, and devaluation of academic labor in order to strengthen the positive public impact of scholarship.

Keywords
research evaluation, academe, metrics, humanities, values, public scholarship

Disciplines
Higher Education | Humane Education | Library and Information Science | Other Social and Behavioral Sciences | Scholarly Communication | Work, Economy and Organizations

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A HuMetricsHSS White Paper
The HuMetricsHSS Team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Walking the Talk: Toward a Values-Aligned Academy* is the culmination of 18 months of research interviews across the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA). Conducted by the HuMetricsHSS Initiative as an extension of their previous work on values-enacted scholarly practice, the interviews focused on current systems of evaluation within BTAA institutions, the potential problems and inequalities of those processes, the kinds of scholarly work that could be better recognized and rewarded, and the contexts and pressures evaluators are under, including, as the process progressed, the onset and ongoing conditions of COVID-19. The interviews focused primarily on the reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) process. Interviewees outlined a number of issues to be addressed, including toxicity in evaluation, scholars’ increased alienation from the work they are passionate about, and a high-level virtue-signaling of values by institutions without the infrastructure or resources to support the enactment of those values. Based on these conversations, this white paper offers a set of recommendations for making wide-scale change to address systematic injustice, erasure, and devaluation of academic labor in order to strengthen the positive public impact of scholarship.

Traditional processes of RPT do not support the values articulated in mission statements and hiring meetings. The research–teaching–service triangle is heavily imbalanced in favor of research — a certain number of publications in problematically determined “top” or “excellent”

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1 Beginning with this publication, we have opted for a collective authorship model. To identify all authors contributing under the collective model in each of our publications, our aim is to select a different way of listing co-authorship. In this case we have chosen ORCID IDs listed in ascending order: Nicky Agate [0000-0001-7624-3779], Christopher P. Long [0000-0001-9332-5689], Bonnie Russell [0000-0002-6374-6384], Rebecca Kennison [0000-0002-1491-9608], Penelope Weber [0000-0002-4542-8989], Simone Sacchi [0000-0002-6635-7659], Jason Rhody [0000-0002-7096-1881], Bonnie Thornton Dill [0000-0002-7450-2412].
journals or university presses is considered a “threshold” for advancing toward or attaining tenure or promotion to full professor, only after which is teaching considered. “Service,” often defined only as participation on ponderous university-level committees, might be taken into account, if necessary. Scholarship that produces objects other than articles and books, interdisciplinary scholarship that falls between disciplinary expectations, the creation of supportive learning environments, engagement with colleagues through peer review and collaboration, and the emotional and intellectual labor of mentorship are all either left out of evaluation processes entirely or considered “extra credit” work that might tip an otherwise “mediocre” number of publications over the line into tenure. This is more often than not the reality, despite the fact that many of these activities are the primary motivators for people to have become academics in the first place and the primary ways to make the academy a welcoming, safe, and equitable place for the next generation of students and researchers.

Attempts to bring the norms and habits of an institution into alignment with its stated values are often hollow and unsuccessful, as they are rarely backed with any kind of structural power or significant resources. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) offices and committees in particular are established as a gesture toward “diversity,” a value found in the mission statements of all fourteen BTAA institutions, but these offices can do little on their own to address genuine issues of equity and inclusion, not to mention anti-racism. Often they are given symbolic rather than actual power, with students, faculty, and staff relying on them on an informal basis to intervene in instances of racism, ableism, or homophobia, rather than their being included as a permanent fixture in systems of evaluation or given resources for trainings or other longer-term interventions aimed at changing entrenched behavior. Their power, such as it is, is palliative rather than preventative, and as such can only address atomized, not structural, bias.

The responsibility for making change in systems of RPT and evaluation more generally seems at once to belong to everyone and no one. Departments bow to disciplinary convention or the bylaws laid out by deans and provosts; deans and provosts swear that the departments themselves set the standards by which they are evaluated. A refusal of agency for fear of failure — and of consequences for the attempt (such as plummeting university rankings, loss of grant money, and so on) — results in a foundering machine aware of its defects but unwilling and unable to fix them, with the weight of these defects coming down hardest on the most vulnerable members of the academy.
The academy must recognize these multiple levels of agency for it to be able to transform itself into what it professes to be. While there are endless ways to potentially bring about this change, this paper identifies a number of **specific recommendations** for broadening the definition of scholarship and for reducing harm to BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and disabled faculty, students, and staff.

**Create a university-level committee to support the evaluation of emerging or underrecognized research approaches aligned with institutional values.** Community-engaged participatory research, public scholarship, and interdisciplinary approaches need to be recognized at the unit level not only as something that “counts” toward a threshold publication goal, but as valuable academic work regardless of the kinds of scholarly objects they produce.

**Rethink expectations for tenure by aligning achievements with opportunity.** During the COVID-19 pandemic, many departments and units have granted tenure-clock extensions and other modifications to tenure requirements. These changes have made it clear that change is possible and should open the door to other potential interventions regarding the time required for trust-building in communities, for the pedagogical work of making educational materials accessible, and for the adoption of proactive, preventative approaches to bias in RPT processes.

**Align clear expectations of faculty assignments (including job letters or hiring documents) with institutional values and with specific outcomes and indicators associated with the aspirations of the new member of the faculty.** Faculty are often hired on the strength of their interdisciplinary or community-engaged work, but then asked to alienate themselves from that work to be promoted. Promotion criteria should be drawn from the intersection of the institution’s values and what the scholar themself deems important in their work.

**Develop a rubric to inform annual review conversations between chairs and faculty members.** Annual review meetings are important mentoring opportunities and are necessary moments for the department chair to ensure that the faculty member is getting what they need from the department to progress along their desired path toward tenure or promotion.

**Reform the way external review letters are solicited, valued, and evaluated.** Readers rely on external letters for disciplinary expertise that they may not share. Making the expectations for external letter writers clear and basing those expectations on the values and goals of the
institution and the scholar themself allows a truer understanding of a scholar’s work and its potential contributions. Additionally, letters should be solicited from writers who are genuinely well-versed in someone’s work rather than solely from “peer” institutions.

**Participate in values-based workshops at the unit level.** Values-focused workshops can open a space for faculty and administrators to connect with one another around the core goals that shape a shared mission.

**Revise unit-level governing documents.** Governance documents at the unit level can and should serve as guides for the higher levels of the review process, rather than for policing the work of scholars within a department. Support for public scholarship, participatory community-engaged work, or interdisciplinary approaches can be made explicit in these documents.

**Shift the categories of the tenure and promotion process from the means to the ends toward which they are directed.** Research, teaching, and service are not meaningfully distinct categories of modern scholarly labor and should not be treated as such by systems of evaluation. Instead, evaluation should focus on the ends those means serve: sharing knowledge, expanding opportunity, and mentoring/stewardship.

**Collaborate with provosts to revise university-level statements on promotion and tenure.** The process by which promotion and tenure guidelines are set varies from university to university. However, campus-level expectations must work in tandem with the department-level governing documents mentioned earlier to realign institutional values with the practices and policies of tenure.

**Increase opportunities for disciplinary leaders to experience evaluation practices and procedures from a wider diversity of disciplines across the mission of the university.** Leadership training programs supported by college deans and managed through offices of associate provosts for faculty affairs would provide opportunities to explore and share disciplinary values and practices, with the goal of expanding perspectives on the assessment process.

**Break down silos both intra- and inter-institutionally.** Despite the myriad challenges and resistances to change outlined in this paper, there are many people engaged in addressing the
problems of the RPT system. Developing formal and informal lines of communication among individuals engaged in transformative work would allow greater leverage, understanding, and resource-sharing.

**Create better and more consistent ways to track what is now often invisible labor to ensure equity.** The work of addressing bias often falls on those most affected by it, and the labor required to prevent further trauma and bias goes unrecognized and unrewarded. Structures of evaluation need to recognize this as important work that enriches the institution and the academic community at large.

**Dedicate resources toward creating an inclusive, anti-racist campus climate.** To create a genuinely inclusive and anti-racist (not simply diverse) campus environment, institutions of higher education must come to terms with the racist and oppressive relationships their campuses have been built upon, as well as how those relationships still manifest in social, geographic, and systematic ways.

These recommendations are not intended to be exhaustive, nor will they address every issue raised by the interviewees consulted in our research nor felt by every member of the academy. They are, however, aimed at addressing the most exciting potential intervention points of the current moment, meant to take advantage of gaps highlighted by the crisis we are experiencing and to harness the hope, creative energy, and transformative power of faculty, administrators, and staff determined to create a better academic world.
INTRODUCTION

The Humane Metrics in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HuMetricsHSS) Initiative endeavors to facilitate the local creation of values-based frameworks that will enable scholars in the humanities and social sciences (HSS), academic units, and institutions to tell more textured and compelling stories about the impact of their research and pedagogy and the variety of ways they enrich public life. To advance the broad culture change that the HuMetricsHSS Initiative envisions requires strategic interventions at specific leverage points in the ecosystem of higher education.

We began five years ago by asking what on its surface seemed a simple question: What would it look like to start to measure what we value, rather than valuing only what we can readily measure? This led us to a series of subsequent questions: How does the academy, particularly within the context of the United States, currently measure scholarly work? Does this evaluation reflect the values of the institutions and individuals who work in the academy? What kinds of work and workers does the current system fail, and how do incentives, as they exist, drive some work and hinder others? How do individuals and institutions articulate their values, and how do those align — or not — with systems of assessment and evaluation? Much of that work has been described in our article “The Transformative Power of Values-Enacted Scholarship.”¹ This white paper, the culmination of a research project undertaken over the last 18 months, generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, serves to deepen understanding of the problem and articulate concrete steps that can be taken to align institutional and personal values with practices of scholarly evaluation by broadening our methods of review and assessment so they respect and recognize the full range of scholarship practiced, the wider network of contributors to academic scholarship, and the different forms that impact may take.

REASON FOR THE PROJECT

“What are the values? Most institutions don’t have any. We might have mission statements, but we don’t have values.”

“Our dollars dictate our values.”
As we outlined in our article for *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, current systems of evaluation in academia tend to rely on a set of proxy measures, often drawn from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and mapped poorly onto HSS disciplines, that fail to recognize and reward the many dependencies upon which a healthy scholarly ecosystem relies. These proxy measures privilege certain kinds of scholarship — and scholars — over others and reinforce historical biases and barriers for scholars of marginalized backgrounds and identities. There is a growing sense among scholars across all disciplines, but particularly those within HSS, that they are being evaluated on what can be easily measured rather than on a holistic and textured understanding of their work and the impact it has on communities within and outside of the academy. As we and others have shown — and as was evident throughout the 123 interviews conducted during this study — attempts to determine the quality of scholarship by measuring the quantity produced alienate scholars from the work they think truly matters. As one colleague we interviewed put it in a conversation about how personal and institutional values might be aligned:

“I've been discouraged from doing the kind of work that's really meaningful for me.”

“It's about epistemologies — and the politics of whose knowing matters.”

“The thought is: if you're generating grant money, then you're generating good outputs in the prestige economy.”

“The campus is saying, ‘We want to be open and equitable and inclusive,’ and ‘We want to be one of the top five international R1s,’ but also ‘We want to have an acceptance rate of 5%.' It's almost paradoxical.”

Our research suggests that evaluation policies and the cultural practices that surround them are not only misaligned with work scholars find personally meaningful, they are also out of joint with the very values many institutions of higher education identify as core to their mission.
mechanisms of evaluation capture a limited set of outputs when considered against the wide diversity of scholarly activities that enrich academic life. This narrow, highly quantified approach to evaluation fuels a toxic culture predicated on scarcity, competition, and alienation from personal and institutional values.

Our research is intended to identify the specific mechanisms within those systems of evaluation — especially within the relatively well-defined structures of reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) — that create the conditions of inequality and alienation within the academy, and to provide a set of recommendations for interventions that begin to address them. However capacious and aligned with values our practices of evaluation may become, we must remain attuned to the ways implicit and explicit bias shapes academic judgment. The danger is not simply that unexamined prejudices will inform our decisions, but also that a naïve understanding of objectivity will prevent us from recognizing the biases that condition all judgment. As Brittney Cooper puts it, “We can neither heal nor fix that which we will not confront” (84). Confronting inequity and alienation within the academy requires candor, courage, and a sophisticated understanding of the role bias plays in human judgment.

Our approach draws the rich history and resources of the HSS disciplines into a space that is too often overshadowed by perspectives adopted from the sciences. The rapid publication practices and more standardized forms of scholarly expression in the sciences have elevated publication rates and citations as the metrics that dominate in faculty evaluation. STEM disciplines often assert more fiscal and social power in academic settings than do the arts and HSS; as a result, STEM practices have been increasingly adopted as appropriate across all academic disciplines. Despite this dominance, when during our interviews, workshops, and events we have engaged our STEM colleagues in conversations about values-enacted approaches to scholarship and values-based forms of evaluation, they express a deep appreciation of and eagerness to join attempts to align values with practices. Our research suggests that there is a deep yearning across disciplines for practices of evaluation that at once empower scholars to align their values with their work and more effectively enable institutions to put their articulated mission into concrete practice.

To create genuine change in systems of evaluation, we recognize the need to identify intervention points at the individual, departmental, collegiate, and institutional levels. To that end, we conducted research that engaged individuals across a wide variety of institutional levels
at every university in the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) in the hopes of gaining a better understanding of the metrics currently gathered at those institutions, the contexts within which evaluation is undertaken, the kinds of bias (implicit and explicit) that are either built into institutional systems or perpetuated by decision-making bodies in those institutions, and the pressures that evaluators, faculty, staff, and librarians might be under to meet institutional expectations for RPT. We also explored with our interviewees what they believe is missing from those evaluation processes and spoke about the values that animate their own work.

THE CORE ISSUES

Despite institutional mission statements that promote inclusivity, the public good, diversity, transdisciplinary research, and student success, our interviews uncovered considerable consensus across staff and faculty roles at all levels that the traditional process of tenure and promotion does not support these articulated values.5 Furthermore, at a more personal level, current approaches to scholarly evaluation do not value the kind of meaningful (e.g., community-While most of our interviews focused on faculty evaluation for tenure and promotion, it is important to acknowledge that most faculty are no longer tenured, on the tenure track, or even fully employed. Three decades ago, 56.2% of faculty had tenure; that number is now 45.1%. In the 1970’s 80% of faculty were full time; that is true for under 55% of faculty today. As the American Association of University Professors warned in 2018, this trend has consequences:

Today, the tenure system has shrunk, and the majority of faculty members are contingent workers who work without the protections of tenure. While many students and parents may assume that the majority of faculty are tenured or tenure-track, our data demonstrate a truth long known to those inside higher education: students at US colleges and universities are more likely to be taught by non-tenure track faculty members working in full- or part-time contingent positions than by tenure-stream faculty. The casualization of faculty labor is reflected in the unbundling of the traditional faculty role.

engaged, cross-disciplinary, or openly available) work a diverse new generation of faculty have expressed a need and desire to do. For example, institutions may claim to value interdisciplinary scholarship, but often require interdisciplinary scholars to do extra work to legitimize their approach to different disciplines. Indeed, the disciplinary structure of most universities itself presents barriers to advancing inter- and transdisciplinary work. Institutions may espouse the merits of public scholarship, but relegate community engaged, participatory scholarship to the undervalued category of “service” rather than the more highly esteemed category of “research.” Institutions may advertise their communities as inclusive, even as minoritized faculty colleagues too often struggle to create space for the work they care most deeply about. We as members of a national academic community need interventions that align institutional and personal values with the vital work of advancing knowledge capable of creating a more just world in the wake of a pandemic and in the shadow of a rapidly deteriorating biosphere.

Our interviews suggest that the current systems of rewards and evaluation no longer serve the core values of higher education institutions or the faculty in the tenure system. What is more, the system itself exacerbates institutional inequities, allowing tenure-track faculty and administrators to devalue critical work done by colleagues outside the tenure system. While non-tenure-track faculty are not the focus of this paper, there is a distinct lack of meaningful professional development and career engagement for adjuncts and instructors, and many of the problems outlined here apply as well to non-tenure systems of promotion and reward.

“A lot of people are just stuck. They know there are flaws in the system but can’t let go of the fact that if they succeeded [within it], it must work.”

The values that institutions of higher education profess to care most deeply about — articulated through university mission statements, promotional materials, and talking points — are often not the values enacted in the policies and practices that shape academic life. This disparity has led to a growing sense of alienation among faculty who entered higher education with a deep commitment to certain core values, values that are themselves very often articulated in the founding documents of institutions of higher education. For example, a faculty member might be hired to do innovative transdisciplinary research, only to find themself constrained by highly policed disciplinary expectations as they move through the tenure process. Or they find themself
caught between an interdisciplinary program that values the work they do and a departmental tenure home that only “counts” a limited slice of their scholarly activity as “real research.” The very institution that sought them out because of the ways their scholarship challenged the status quo is now mobilized against them in order to preserve that very status quo.⁶

“Everyone knows these proxy measures don’t work, but nobody can change them.”

Whether it is because of willful ignorance about how tenure and promotion processes are determined, unacknowledged investment in the idea that merit equates to success in a hierarchical system, a feeling of being overcome by the enormity of a decades-long problem, or a trepidation to poke an already irascible bear, it seems that no one feels that they have sufficient agency, authority, or energy to change the system, although there is broad recognition that the system is broken. There is a tendency for administrative leaders at one level of the promotion and tenure process to point to leaders leveraging power at a different level of the hierarchy as the source of the resistance to change.

“Ultimately it’s up to the university level, the university committee.”

“The colleges set a lot of their own rules and processes.”

“The threshold is defined by the department.”

“The unit says it’s the discipline that drives the rules.”

Deans point to chairs, chairs to deans or to tenure-and-promotion committees, provosts say they rely on disciplinary expertise within units, junior faculty look to their senior colleagues, while senior faculty fall back on institutional norms or the expectations of the broader scholarly community.⁷ The result is that a broken system continues to operate while no one feels that they
are themselves the agents of the change our institutions of higher education so desperately need.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this methodology

The original draft of this white paper contained a more traditional methodology section, narrow in scope and limited to the work that had gone into the creation of the paper itself. However, in the process of internal reflection by the HuMetricsHSS team, we realized that a traditional methodology section failed to capture the rich texture of the range and depth of the labor that went into the creation of this report. This unrecognized labor ranged from the intellectual contributions of HuMetricsHSS colleagues who refined our theoretical framework over the past five years, to the participants in our workshops who contributed greatly to our thinking on values, to the practical and logistical contributions of colleagues on and beyond the team who scheduled interviews, reserved rooms, copyedited the text, and prepared the document for accessible publication on the web and in the PDF version. Our own commitment to valuing the process as much as the product and to recognizing the widest possible diversity of labor that makes scholarship possible led us to a series of self-reflective, candid, and sometimes difficult conversations, facilitated by Xhercis Méndez, that resulted in an agreement to write a different kind of methodology section, one that more effectively aligns with the values we have sought to embody in this project and that seeks to write each other into the text as a way to recognize the range of contributions and diversity of expertise that went into the creation of this white paper.

Preparing for the research

Over the course of 18 months (October 2019 – April 2021), with the generous support of the Mellon Foundation, we conducted interviews with 123 people across the BTAA. At each university we spoke with those who are daily involved in metrics, evaluation, and impact: deans and other administrators (e.g., faculty affairs, research administration, diversity and inclusion), faculty (particularly those who serve on relevant committees in the faculty senate), librarians, and research evaluation managers. We also reviewed institutional mission statements, statements of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and other “values-driven” documents already produced by these universities. Although our original intention was to visit each of the BTAA universities in person to conduct a full day of interviews, we were only able to visit three of the 14 universities before COVID-19 restrictions curtailed travel; the balance of the interviews were coordinated through Calendly, a software that facilitates online appointment scheduling, and conducted via Zoom.
The script we used (see Appendix A) remained unchanged whether we were meeting in person or on Zoom.

We began our process by seeking institutional review board (IRB) approval at Michigan State University for the research project, and we were provided with exempt status. The IRB work was led by Chris Long and Rebecca Kennison. Our process for ensuring informed consent is outlined in Appendix B. In addition to the process spelled out there, a draft of this white paper was shared with all participants and their feedback shaped the revision process we undertook before releasing the paper to the public.

The interview process

Upon receiving approval from the IRB to proceed with our study, we started by compiling lists of individuals in similar roles we wanted to interview at each institution. Although no two universities have exactly the same organizational structure, we targeted our invitations to deans of humanities and social sciences and their associate deans of research and faculty affairs; university library deans and their associate deans of research, as well as the impact librarian (if there was one); and appropriate administrators in the office of faculty affairs and the office of research, including whomever oversees the analytics platforms utilized by the institution to track faculty productivity and impact (see Appendix C for a list of those platforms). Administrators who are responsible for DEI efforts on campus were also included; sometimes these are members of a campus-wide office, sometimes a part of administration at the college level, and sometimes a single individual who advises the president directly. We also spoke with members of the faculty senate who served on various committees whose work focuses on related issues: tenure and promotion, faculty affairs, DEI, and so on.

In all we invited 445 people to speak with us and ended up interviewing 123 individuals in 71 separate sessions. Although we interviewed a minimum of two people at each institution, representation from each university varied widely. (See Appendix D for more about participants’ demographics.) To ensure we could have the frank conversations desired, we did not record the sessions but did take extensive notes. For consistency, all notes were taken by a single notetaker, Penelope Weber, who later tagged the interviews as described below. The interviews were moderated by Rebecca Kennison, who followed a written script and ensured all questions were answered (see Appendix A), but most conversations were free-flowing, with additional questions being posed by Deans Chris Long (Michigan State University) and Bonnie Thornton Dill (University of Maryland, College Park) as the interviews progressed. The questions sought to uncover what kinds of metrics each institution gathers on faculty research productivity and impact and how those metrics are used, especially within tenure and promotion processes. We inquired as to which metrics were felt to be most effective, especially in ensuring that the work
that the institution valued most was being properly recognized. We also asked our interviewees what they felt is missing in the current evaluation process and whether there was something they felt they would like to see better recognized or stories that they felt they were currently unable to tell that they would like to be able to tell. The first three questions — the role(s) played by the interviewees, metrics gathered by the institution on faculty productivity and impact, and blue-sky thinking about what evaluation might look like to address the issues raised throughout the conversation — were consistently addressed in all the interviews. If time permitted and the interviewee had (unprompted) mentioned values in their comments, we asked a final question about a value or values that guided the interviewees’ own work or that they saw reflected across their unit or institution.

Data analysis and the writing process

The notes that arose from these interviews were tagged by Penelope Weber using MAXQDA2020. Based on the content of the interviews, she created a coding structure. The general codes included “metrics systems,” “university operations,” “values,” “what’s missing or should be rewarded,” “barriers to change,” and “alternative metrics already in use,” with smaller subsets along the lines of “invisible labor,” “external letters,” “zero-sum thinking,” and “mentorship.” These codes served as organizational tools across the 14 BTAA institutions, assisting the co-authors of this paper in the writing process. A similar methodology and the same software were used by Rebecca Kennison in evaluating the institutional “values statement” documents; for an aggregated list of those values, see Appendix E.

Both preceding and running concurrently with the interview process, the HuMetricsHSS team led a series of workshops that provided key intellectual framing and gathered significant feedback, some of which helped generate the research plan for this white paper and others of which took place concurrently with the research interviews and likewise helped to inform our work. All the workshops provided insight into specific challenges faced by staff and faculty that helped generate recommendations that are reflected throughout this white paper. Most of these workshops were led by Nicky Agate, Chris Long, Jason Rhody, and Penelope Weber. We wish to thank all of the workshop attendees for their participation, which contributed substantially to our thinking. Similarly, the team has had ongoing conversations with those at similar and synergetic initiatives, such as the Curtin Open Knowledge Initiative (COKI), DORA, Imagining America, the INORMS Research Evaluation Group, Invest in Open Infrastructure, the Next Generation Library Publishing Values and Principles Framework, the Open Knowledge Coalition, the Open Syllabus Project, OPERAS, Publishing and the Publicly Engaged Humanities, and the ScholCommLab; Nicky Agate has taken the lead in representing the HuMetricsHSS team in many of these conversations, connecting the work of the HuMetricsHSS project with other aligned initiatives in ways that generated both vital partnerships and insights reflected throughout this report.
The initial draft of the white paper, including the first articulation of the challenges and recommendations, was undertaken by Penelope Weber, Rebecca Kennison, Chris Long, and Bonnie Thornton Dill. The HumetricsHSS team worked collectively on the research design and everyone on the team contributed to the writing, refining, and editing of the final version of the paper. A literature review, conducted primarily by Rebecca Kennison, confirmed the major themes we heard in our interviews and helped to further inform our understanding of the issues. The data visualizations included in the appendices were created by Bonnie Russell and reviewed by Simone Sacchi.

As a final step in the process, we invited every interviewee to review a draft copy of the white paper and to respond with suggestions and observations. Eight provided feedback. As might be expected, given the range of views we heard in our interviews, not every interviewee agreed with our description of the challenges nor with all our recommendations and conclusions. We have tried as best we could to address all comments we received. We are grateful to everyone who provided feedback and who gave generously their time to be interviewed for this project.

Once the feedback from the interviewers was incorporated, Bonnie Russell designed and built the web-based and PDF versions, and we worked as a team to ensure all outputs met accessibility standards.

**CHALLENGES**

“How do we turn this barnacled ship?”

**CHALLENGE: Not everyone wants change.**

“We’re so invested in [this system] that you can’t even speak about changing it.”

“By recommending something new, the logic is you’re rejecting something old. People treat it as a zero-sum game.”
Although academics are perceived by many as being progressive(s) in their outlook and philosophy, the academy itself is often stifled by its history. Traditional outputs are prized and prioritized even while a facility with new but unrewarded modes of inquiry is increasingly required of new faculty members. Change is slow. And incentives for change are few. 

One of the marks of the neoliberal university that prizes competition has been a growing obsession with rankings of all kinds. Despite calls for caution, universities, colleges, and even departments are all continually ranked. Fear of “slipping” in those rankings really matters — and not just to administrators. Many within the academy have also internalized the value of being highly ranked, not least because with prestige comes very tangible material reward; for example, to be tenured or promoted, the scholar in question must be validated as one of the top scholars in their field, the expression of which takes the form of letters written most often by peers at universities of equal or higher rank and of citations by other scholars whose work appears in a “top” journal or university press–published monograph. This unrelenting focus on the “prestige economy” and unabashed pride in being, if not a “top university,” at least one with such an aspiration shapes the process, policies, and practices at every level of the university — whether for better or (often) for worse.

“Even though everyone says rankings don’t matter, when you’re ranked high you’re happier than when you’re not.”

And as we heard in our interviews, for some faculty — perhaps for many — this status quo works just fine, particularly within the tenure-track system. As in the guild system, the route for advancement from novice (graduate student) to apprentice (assistant professor) and journeyman (associate professor), and finally to master (full professor) is well demarcated, even if it is not always well documented. There is often a reluctance to change, if not an outright fear of doing so, especially when it comes to evaluating new, engaged, or digital work. In particular, there is a strong desire to keep in place traditional formats (e.g., the monograph) and traditional policies and practices (e.g., research being valued more than teaching and teaching being valued more than service). Even those who understand the importance of rewarding activities and outputs that might fall outside the traditional criteria for promotion find themselves resistant to shifting reward mechanisms that are often considered to have worked well, even if imperfectly. Daniela Garofalo is not alone when she notes in her article “Tenure by the Book” that “important work”
such as “digital projects, community engagement, or research whose purpose is primarily focused on administering an academic program” is not being rewarded in the same way as a monograph, but she still worries: “[H]ave we thought carefully enough about the problems that might arise from waking this sleeping giant [of changing tenure criteria so they reward such work]?" 17 This attitude is passed from generation to generation.18 As one of our interviewees observed,

“The native culture does not encourage young people to shake the tree. They see their best way forward is to reinforce the status quo rather than to try and change it.”

Even so, time and again we heard in our interviews how three major areas of academic work were undervalued and unevenly supported: digital projects, community engagement, and interdisciplinary scholarship. While highly valued by scholars and administrators alike (see Appendix E), none of these are (yet) recognized and rewarded, at least in the humanities and humanistic social sciences, in the same way as the traditional single-authored article or monograph. Collective and collaborative work often requires an increased commitment of time and effort, and although it advances the publicly engaged research that institutions say they hope to support, doing such work poses considerable challenges, not the least of which are the limited publishing venues available for interdisciplinary research,19 the common practice of receiving only partial credit for any multi-authored publication,20 and the fact that a focus on the end product (the website or the funded grant or the published article, for example) often obfuscates the immense amount of scholarly labor that went into its production (such as the creation and distribution of datasets, the building of trusting relationships with collaborators and community partners and the public, and the development of truly accessible resources that engage a wide diversity of scholars).21 Furthermore, such work is considered more like icing on the cake than the cake itself. As one of our interviewees stressed,

“It [all] comes back to the threshold of research productivity [as determined by traditional outputs]. If they’re barely above the threshold or at the threshold, then all of this wonderful work would put them over the edge, but if they haven’t passed the threshold, it’s not going to count [at all].”
CHALLENGE: Everyone espouses support for diversity, equity, and inclusion, but putting those values into practice cannot be done without reckoning with the history of public universities such as those that compose the BTAA.

“If you’re serious about diversifying, you have to do something, and if you’re not willing to do something you’re not serious about it.”

Though referenced in the mission and value statements of every BTAA university we reviewed (see Appendix E), the terms “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” have different meanings, representations, resources, and expectations not only across different campuses but among the vast array of units that make up any single university. In some documents, the goals associated with the DEI mission are specific and clear, such as “increase the number of faculty of color and the number of women faculty by X” or “recruit a student body that looks more like the residents of the state in which the institution resides.” In others the goals are vague and diffuse and people are left wondering if this term — which was originally invoked to ensure that campuses became a home for people whose lived experiences differed from that of the overwhelmingly white, middle-class majority that historically dominated most of these institutions — refers to diverse identities, diverse ideas, or non-descript differences within the population.22

“Being frank, this [DEI officer] position was created with no job description. Here, you’re appointed! Solve everything: faculty, students, curriculum.”

Most campuses have a DEI office with responsibilities that range from student advocacy to faculty and administrative bias training. Though deeply invested in producing equitable and inclusive outcomes for minoritized groups and individuals on campus, the leaders with whom we spoke experience considerable frustration in their efforts to accomplish a set of goals that they
believe will make the institution a more welcoming and inclusive place for minorities. Some of that frustration derives from the tenuous structural location that many of these offices occupy.23 DEI officers are placed in the role of experts and advocates, but are often structurally disconnected from the processes central to running the institution: DEI officers and their offices generally do not participate in the process of approving curriculum revisions and changes; they often have no role in the recruitment, hiring, retention, or advancement of faculty.24 At best, these offices act as a kind of institutional conscience — encouraging, informing, and advocating for more inclusive practices, but with little leverage to implement or enforce changes that are needed. In this role of mentor and counselor on the one hand and advocate on the other, DEI officers are often put in the position of being the most informed yet lacking power to effect direct change, including in tenure review cases. As one person we interviewed put it:

“Sometimes I'm the person who even negotiates with the associate provost, because there are things shared with me that may not be shared with [them], so I end up advocating for a second review. Depending on the relationship I have with a dean, I can [perhaps] pick up the phone.”

The power that does reside in these offices is power to influence through expertise, through their association and support from the president (which is not always a given), through resource distribution (if available), and through access to and dissemination of information. Except in matters related to Title IX compliance, DEI offices generally lack authority to implement, sanction, or reward actions that promote campus diversity. Because decisions regarding faculty hiring and retention are decentralized and rest in academic units, university-level DEI offices have the challenge of working with a wide range of structures, values, histories, and cultures within the university to help bring about change.25 There is a recognizable trend of hiring unit-level DEI officers who are capable of intervening in unit-level hiring and evaluation processes. While this can offer university-level DEI officers structural support for institutional transformation, these unit-level DEI officers are often overwhelmed by requests for support without the requisite resources to provide it. Further, they can become the single point of engagement and responsibility for issues connected to DEI, thus displacing the responsibility each member of the academic community has to proactively create a culture of belonging that is inclusive and equitable.26
Thus, while the general acknowledgement of DEI is important, many of the steps that need to be taken to have a meaningful impact in these areas are lacking. Much of the DEI work done on campus falls to BIPOC, queer, and disabled faculty, many of whom have themselves experienced harm throughout their educational experience and continue to experience microaggressions and other forms of discrimination that their white, cis, able-bodied colleagues do not understand and both unknowingly and knowingly repeat. For example, insufficient attention is paid, even now, to the daily challenges our disabled colleagues face. As one colleague we interviewed put it:

“The pandemic has been really good for me because I don’t have to interact with anyone who hurts me. I’m happier, I’ve been more productive, because I don’t have to deal with the everyday microaggressions and bullshit that I’d deal with on a daily basis going to the office. I know a lot of people have been struggling, but for me it’s been great. I would love to continue working from home so I don’t have to see any of them.”

True progress in our professed commitment to DEI work requires uncovering, discussing, and addressing these harms and identifying specific interventions that can redress them.

Furthermore, the notions of excellence and elitism that pervade the culture of higher education perpetuate inequality. These are most apparent in the hierarchical ways we construct knowing and knowledge production and in our processes of assessment that measure productivity and impact, all of which reinforce systemic inequities. Finally, we must acknowledge our history. As Brendan Cantwell pointed out in a recent essay, “Higher education’s racist history is embedded in the norms and processes that anchor the institution. History is not just in the past; it’s living today.” In Toxic Ivory Towers, Ruth Enid Zambrana makes a similar point, noting that the narratives of her informants illustrate how “institutional structures are deeply embedded in the reproduction of exclusion and racism while simultaneously claiming the diversity discourse as a language of power to maintain the status quo” (211). Meaningful interventions will need to respond to the ways entrenched structural and historical challenges resist the change we so urgently need.
CHALLENGE: Institutional inertia and abdicated agency for change are more common than not.

“People don’t think they have the power to do anything.”

Most universities in the BTAA are “proudly decentralized,” which gives academic units a high degree of autonomy while making it difficult to establish university-wide consensus that would lead to substantive, structural change. While decentralization opens the opportunity for experimentation that can lead to genuine transformation, too often one layer of the hierarchical structure defers authority or shifts responsibility for change to another decision-making level within the institution. So, for example, a department chair might point to the dean or the provost as the reason why a certain expectation or regressive policy is in place, or a faculty committee might point to the chair or to the expectations of the discipline as expressed by their scholarly society as sources of resistance to change. Generally, we found in our interviews that academic leaders at the decanal and provostial levels defer to the disciplinary expertise of the faculty to articulate the processes, practices, and norms associated with the evaluation of scholarship, recognizing that large research universities need to evaluate the quality of work across a wide range of disciplines — from the fine and performing arts, to the bench and social sciences, to the humanities and professions. While this disciplinary diversity infuses the system with a wide array of ways of evaluating and recognizing scholarship, rather than being a source of innovation and change, these different approaches are siloed. Thus, the novel practices of evaluation they may open remain largely isolated from one another.

In addition, administrative leadership turnover can mean dramatic shifts in priorities and focus that make structural change to the RPT process difficult.\textsuperscript{35} For faculty whose career advancement depends on a clear understanding of how they will be evaluated, such changes in administrative leadership reinforce the importance of long-term stability within the tenure and promotion process. The average tenure of a dean is often only three to five years,\textsuperscript{36} while the traditional tenure process routinely takes six years, so it is not uncommon for faculty to experience two or three different administrative leadership changes during their pre-tenure probationary period. There is little incentive for administrative leaders or pre-tenure faculty to advocate for substantive changes to the promotion-and-tenure process given the time horizon
such changes would require. Developing long-term, strategic interventions in the tenure and promotion process under these circumstances is very difficult as administrative leaders have little incentive to make meaningful change while pre-tenure faculty yearn for clear expectations and stability.\textsuperscript{37}

**CHALLENGE: The prestige economy seems an intractable force.**

The prestige economy relies on rankings, metrics, and practices that punish those institutions who might move first to change the manner in which scholarship is evaluated and rewarded. Organizations like the Association of American Universities have historically relied on traditional indicators of quality that fail to capture the wide breadth of transdisciplinary and participatory research and creative activity. Competitive relationships between research-intensive (R1) institutions convert the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge — which is not a rivalrous good because one’s use or access to it does not use up or diminish it for another — into a zero-sum endeavor that pits institutions against one another in a competitive effort to procure advantage within the prestige economy.

Within such a competitive environment, institutions are punished for attempts to shift away from the logic that drives the prestige economy and toward approaches that facilitate collaboration, coordination, and cooperation or that introduce new ways of knowing shaped by public engagement that fall outside traditional mechanisms of academic measurement.\textsuperscript{38}

Those institutions that have long benefitted from the prestige economy have little reason to change it, while those for which it has been detrimental too often lack the traction to make meaningful change or risk relinquishing access to resources required for their survival.

And yet, some indicators of the prestige economy are beginning to crumble. Conditions resulting from COVID-19 led many universities to move toward test-optional admissions, an action that begins to erode their ability to cite SAT and ACT scores as measures of the competitive excellence of their students.\textsuperscript{39} COVID-19 is also bringing other factors into consideration as students make college decisions.\textsuperscript{40} And many universities are reconsidering tenure and promotion timelines and other productivity measures.\textsuperscript{41} These shifts are a long way from creating an avalanche of changes, but they might be building blocks for the future.
CHALLENGE: Regressive mentoring and the “received” hierarchy of scholarly activities are entrenched.

Although faculty are held annually accountable for their productivity, not all “products” are considered equal. As we argue elsewhere, disproportionately rewarding certain forms of academic labor (such as publications) and discouraging other forms of necessary scholarly labor (such as reviewing) creates an unsustainable imbalance in overall scholarly production (reflected most clearly in the challenges faced by editors in obtaining suitable and thoughtful reviewers). But the problem runs deeper than that. Even when institutions have made substantive changes to their evaluation processes in response to the articulated values of the faculty and the mission of the university, junior scholars continue to report that they receive conflicting advice from their senior colleagues. Pre-tenure faculty regularly are advised to put off meaningful research until after they receive tenure, because doing work that pushes the boundaries of existing expectations is too risky. As one person we interviewed put it, the advice often sounds like this:

“It’s difficult and maybe not a good idea to gamble too much when they’re coming up for tenure. It’s your entire future you’re gambling with. Tenure’s value, of course, is that once you’ve got it, it’s hard to fire you. Once you’re up there, you can gamble.”

Under the guise of “protecting” the time and “supporting” the effort of their junior colleagues, senior scholars in fact reinforce and police traditional practices of scholarship that too often pull junior colleagues away from the work that is most meaningful to them. “Service” (which is where community-engaged scholarship, for example, often falls) is widely seen as a category of scholarship from which junior scholars must be protected if they are going to be able to submit a dossier that demonstrates research productivity and teaching success. Indeed, the clear value-hierarchy operating in the RPT processes we reviewed across the BTAA sets the category of “research” above all other scholarly activities, with some lip-service given to teaching, while the catch-all category of “service” is always put off, deprecated, and diminished.

If there is a three-legged stool for the tenure and promotion process, the legs are not equal in length or strength. Research, as understood and measured in narrow ways, is the most important of the legs, while teaching is an uneven second, and service a very weak third. This makes for a very unbalanced and precarious stool indeed!
The rhetoric of “protecting” junior faculty from service and teaching responsibility serves to police and regulate a regressive tenure and promotion process that undermines the very mission of the university to advance knowledge, serve the public good, and transform lives.

**CHALLENGE:** The COVID-19 pandemic has had — and will continue to have — an enormous impact.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to a boil many of the inequities that have simmered below the surface for so long, disproportionately affecting women and faculty of color, the latter of which are more likely to come from communities with higher rates of infection or have family and friends who are part of those communities. Last year a number of universities encouraged faculty to submit a “COVID Impact Statement” along with their research narratives as part of their annual review, a seemingly generous acknowledgement that many faculty have been struggling during this time. A number of scholars, however, have reported declining to provide such statements out of concern for how these statements will be viewed by their administrators and their colleagues. In addition, junior faculty in particular fear that if they were to request an extension of their tenure clock, a provision that has been automatically granted in many institutions, they may be held up to even more scrutiny because they had an “extra year.” As UCLA’s Center for the Study of Women notes, in professionally acknowledging personal circumstances, a faculty member must “rely on the good will of their department chairs and deans, in a way that leaves individual faculty members and instructors vulnerable to implicit bias, including sexism, racism, ableism and class-based prejudice.”

The studies that looked at faculty productivity over the first year of the pandemic underline the reality that even if no one acknowledges an impact by COVID on their academic life, those who have suffered the most in terms of research productivity are (unsurprisingly) women, who have traditionally been the primary juggler of work and family. But while the challenges of childcare have been foremost in the discussions of COVID’s impact on faculty and staff, we know there have been other struggles that have gone mostly unacknowledged, including for those who may be experiencing what has come to be known as “long COVID,” which worryingly has been
shown to affect cognitive functions.\textsuperscript{53} A recent study shows that 36\% of people who have been infected by the virus still experience symptoms many months later, whether or not they were originally asymptomatic or vaccinated.\textsuperscript{54} With the onset of the much more infectious Omicron variant, which has proven capable of causing breakthrough infections among those fully vaccinated and even boosted, the possibility of many faculty, staff, and students developing long COVID remains very real. Although the United States Department of Health and Human Services has determined that long COVID can be considered a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act,\textsuperscript{55} as employees in the academy who were disabled before the pandemic can attest, colleges and universities are usually very poor at acknowledging disability, much less providing accommodations for those who need them.\textsuperscript{56} Should they experience long-term effects from COVID, full-time tenure-track and tenured faculty have some protection against financial hardship through health insurance and sick-leave benefits and the flexibility of a 9-month contract; contingent faculty do not. While students with long COVID must be given accommodations and universities are working hard to provide them,\textsuperscript{57} faculty and staff are less likely to have that same experience. Indeed, the generosity of the early pandemic now seems at an end,\textsuperscript{58} even though COVID continues to infect and thus affect individuals and their communities at the same rate as a year ago.

**CHALLENGE:** “Between the idea and the real falls the shadow” (as T. S. Eliot would say).

While the actual processes for promotion and tenure being followed may have been long established and may be well understood and documented,\textsuperscript{59} implementation of guidelines and bylaws are often open to interpretation and subjectively applied.\textsuperscript{60} At some institutions this lack of clarity may be intentional, as noted by one interviewee:

“A wise [institution] lifer pointed out to me that the key thing is that [the institution] doesn’t follow its written policies and won’t write down the policies it actually follows.”

Terms like “quality,” “collegiality,” and “professionalism” are often weaponized and can be especially targeted toward BIPOC and disabled faculty members. Many times the idea of “fit”/“collegiality” within an existing culture can be used to bar faculty from well-deserved promotion.\textsuperscript{61} There can be pressure from more senior faculty to keep those whose research may contradict or question another’s from promotion by questioning the quality or even the
legitimacy of that person’s work.62 As the AAUP report On Collegiality as a Criterion for Faculty Evaluation notes, “Historically, ‘collegiality’ has not infrequently been associated with ensuring homogeneity and hence with practices that exclude persons on the basis of their difference from a perceived norm.”63 Community-engaged work that is seen to be too “activist” can be in this category. As Corey Miles wryly observes, “Universities embrace activist rhetoric, but not activists.”64 The cautionary tale of Garrett Felber, an assistant professor of history at the University of Mississippi known for pushing boundaries in his work who was terminated for not being “sufficiently” communicative with his chair, bears this out: “In this context,” notes Miles, “the tenure track conveys to junior scholars that career security is earned only through a set of narrow values and beliefs.”

While there are opportunities for risk-taking on every rung of the career ladder, many universities look to “protect” junior faculty and to be clear (and often restrictive) about what they need to do to achieve tenure. Many disciplines in the humanities and social sciences still rely on the monograph as the standard or require a certain number of articles to be published in so-called “high-impact” journals. For some digital humanities scholars, this is a major barrier.65 One of our interviewees, who had been hired specifically to do digital humanities work, related a story in which they asked their dean explicitly about the “traditional” work it seemed they were also expected to do:

“I asked, ‘Do I need to do both?’ [The answer was] Yes. ‘You have to do digital stuff because that’s why you were hired, and you also have to meet the traditional thresholds.’ So we did.”

They did get tenure, but the cost of doing so still brought tears to their eyes.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Meaningful change in higher education requires intentional efforts to align scholarly practices with deeply held personal and institutional values. Many of the challenges we have identified are ultimately rooted in a misalignment between the workings of the system and the values the system professes to advance and support. Recognizing that this values misalignment is at the root of the sense of alienation that prevails across higher education opens the possibility of strategic interventions at every level of the system, from the very personal to the most entrenched structures of institutions. However daunting this may at first appear, the truth is that change can begin to take root and grow in even the smallest of personal interactions as individuals clarify for themselves — and with their colleagues — the values that make their work meaningful and the practices that make their values real in the world. An intentional commitment to enact values in every academic encounter, in the policies we adopt, and in the modes of evaluation we embrace, will, over time, begin to shift the culture of higher education. Even small intentional changes in the manner in which we interact will have substantive structural impact.

Although one of the challenges we have identified is an adherence to the status quo and a reluctance to change, the upside of having established and fairly well-understood mechanisms and governance structures in place for RPT is that it affords us with an opportunity to leverage those very processes and structures to enact the change we wish to see. Since traditional approaches to RPT are so well defined, we are able to identify specific strategies of intervention that can be accomplished without a complete overhaul of the system.

Each stage of the RPT process provides inflection points for change. Much of the formal documentation produced by departments, colleges, and offices of faculty affairs strives to provide a shared understanding among all the stakeholders of process, criteria, and required metrics. There is value in clarity of the process, and we heard in our interviews a strong desire for even more transparency. Clear hiring letters, memoranda of understanding, and tenure criteria that spell out innovative work expectations, for example, are key to ensuring such work is recognized and valued from the beginning of the faculty member’s employment at a given institution and provides a frame of reference for the faculty member, departmental colleagues and chairs, and deans.
Faculty of all appointment types (including contingent faculty and professors of practice and instruction) and all members of the staff are important change agents, but they must be given more power and opportunities to enact transformation within their departments and schools through inclusive practices of shared governance. Here, too, advocacy for shared governance must be put into intentional action through the practices and policies that shape institutional habits. Articulated institutional values are too often misaligned with the practices of evaluation that shape faculty research and teaching and with the wider policies that shape academic life. The following recommendations are designed to reform mechanisms of research and teaching evaluation to realign values with practices.

RECOMMENDATION: Create a university-level committee to support the evaluation of emerging or underrecognized research approaches aligned with institutional values.

One emphasis in many of our interviews was the importance of public scholarship at all levels of the university, whether we were talking with librarians, contingent faculty, tenure-track and tenured faculty of all ranks, chairs, deans, or other administrators — with the caveat that the concept itself was very difficult to define, much less to measure. What is acknowledged is that while universities value community-engaged, participatory research, public scholarship, and interdisciplinary approaches, these efforts are often not supported at the unit level. Community-engaged work of necessity crosses all three areas of research, teaching, and service in ways that are not discrete, complicating the narrative faculty need to tell about their work. In particular, research is defined too narrowly, as only that which results in a citable publication of some kind — and efforts looking to change such definition are scattershot, rather than unified or overarching. (See Appendix F for an example from Michigan State University of a different approach in thinking about how better to describe the work being done by faculty and staff.)

Although community-engaged, participatory research is increasingly a mission priority of universities, evaluation structures either fail altogether to recognize the various forms of labor that make such work successful or require scholars to expend time and effort educating their colleagues and advocating for acknowledgement. While traditional modes of research and outreach to communities about the work that may have been done at university are unidirectional, community engagement and team projects are multidirectional. Participatory research and community-engaged scholarship require establishing trusting relationships with
partners, deepening connections with communities, and identifying shared goals, all of which take time that our current systems of evaluation and their often rigid timelines are largely unable to accommodate or reward. Such trust-building and collective work must be welcomed and rewarded from the beginning of a faculty member’s career and must be accounted for in tenure clocks. As we heard in our interviews, often tenure-track faculty either postpone the work they really want to do (often expressed as “when I get tenure, I’ll then do X”) or double their workload by doing traditional work they know will be rewarded while also doing the community-engaged or digital work that they really prize.

Similar to community-engaged work is interdisciplinary or collaborative scholarship, which also is reportedly highly prized by universities (see Appendix E) but that in practice needs to be rewarded differently than it is. Work that bridges more than one discipline requires extra effort on the part of the scholar(s) doing this work, whether that is in developing the expertise needed to be fluent in another discipline or in finding appropriate publication venues for the work produced or in making that work legible to the departmental colleagues who are responsible for determining raises and promotions. Very often interdisciplinary work is also collaborative work, but even when that collaboration is with others within a single discipline, this work is often disincentivized, if not outright discouraged. For most HSS disciplines, single-authored work is more highly prized than collective authorship. Many departments count a co-authored publication as only a partial publication, requiring those who work collaboratively to publish many times more often than the scholar who works alone. Collaborative work is often much more challenging, requiring constant negotiations among collaborators who must rely on each other to get the work done. As with community-engaged work, collaborative projects often require trust-building, and such work, while enriched by collective activity, often takes longer. Rarely is any of this extra effort acknowledged in the recognition and reward process.

To address all of these concerns, we recommend the creation at each institution of a university-level committee designed to support the evaluation of emerging or underrecognized research approaches that are in alignment with the values the university holds. In our analysis of BTAA values compiled from vision and mission statements across the alliance, community engagement, interdisciplinary approaches, and collaborative partnerships are all highly prized. (See Appendix E for a list of these values.) These activities should also therefore be properly recognized and rewarded. A committee charged specifically with evaluating such work will ensure that it is taken seriously. The University of Minnesota’s Review Committee on
Community-Engaged Scholarship is an example of the type of committee we have in mind. That committee limits its review of dossiers to those community-engaged scholars who are approaching tenure or promotion. Our recommendation is to expand this concept to include all faculty who are engaged in community-engaged, interdisciplinary, or collaborative work — as well as those who work in emerging fields of study — at any stage in their career.

In a similar effort, Public Philosophy Network has created a mentoring panel to advise faculty in crafting their portfolios in ways that make publicly engaged work recognizable in the RPT process and an External Review Panel of qualified reviewers of public scholarship for interested departments and universities. We encourage other academic societies whose work focuses on community-engaged, interdisciplinary, or collaborative scholarship to develop such mentoring and external review panels.

**RECOMMENDATION: Rethink expectations for tenure by aligning achievements with opportunity.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has required many universities to adjust expectations for tenure by more intentionally aligning the achievements they expect with the opportunity current conditions afford their faculty to accomplish. As mentioned above, many universities have responded to the undeniable burdens brought on by the pandemic by, among other interventions, inviting faculty to provide COVID Impact Statements, granting automatic extensions to the tenure clock, and elevating the value of teaching as many faculty focused on pivoting in-person teaching to online. Though born of crisis, these interventions demonstrate how creative, flexible, and adaptive the tenure process in higher education can be. Drawing on this experience, we recommend a broader rethinking of expectations for tenure that intentionally and explicitly align achievements with opportunity.

To attain more equitable institutional practices, campuses should ensure that RPT guidelines take into account not only the effects of the pandemic on faculty and staff in the long as well as short term, but also the opportunities each scholar has to thrive in pursuing values-aligned work. Aligning achievement with opportunity requires at least a threefold strategy.

First, it is important to find ways to recognize and reward values-aligned work that has traditionally been undervalued in RPT processes. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has
introduced qualitative and narrative ways for universities to highlight and recognize the important pedagogical development work that went into moving courses online. These strategies need to be sustained and expanded to include mentoring activities, publicly engaged work, contributions to DEI efforts, and other activities aligned with the articulated mission of the university.

A second strategy in aligning achievement with opportunity is to proactively redress bias at all levels of the RPT process. Campuses should institute programs for leaders to receive unconscious bias training directed particularly at providing support for BIPOC, LGBTQ+, disabled, and women faculty in mentoring, supervising, and leadership development. Establishment of a BTAA database of training and sample materials (e.g., external letters, letters of recommendation, offer letters) could be a useful resource, building on work already being done by ADVANCE at the University of Michigan, at Columbia, at Berkeley, and in Georgia Tech’s online training modules. Evaluators must better recognize and give credit for the full range of work that faculty who are minorities do to support students, colleagues, and themselves in managing incidents that range from microaggressions to blatant racism and ableism. Credit for time spent with students and colleagues providing guidance and counsel and acknowledged mental health days are just two examples of the kinds of strategies that institutions need to put in place.

Third, universities need to expand opportunities for meaningful achievement. Recognizing that publicly engaged research, for example, requires time to develop, campuses could adopt systems not dissimilar to that accorded to STEM faculty as they spin up their labs and establish their teams before they are asked to demonstrate tangible outputs. These practices can be adopted for and adapted to those scholars who are engaged in publicly engaged, transdisciplinary, or other values-aligned work. Relatedly, universities can create post-doctoral programs that explicitly transition to tenure-track positions based on certain specified and agreed-upon goals and indicators, as, for example, the College of Social Sciences at Michigan State University has done with their Dean’s Research Associate (Postdoc) Program. Indeed, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many universities found ways to extend the tenure clock for faculty caregivers. Similarly, certain forms of scholarship require more time to develop, and it is important to recognize the connection between time and intentional practice.
RECOMMENDATION: Align clear expectations of faculty assignments with institutional values and with specific outcomes and indicators associated with the aspirations of the new member of the faculty.

At some institutions, the job offer letter serves as a roadmap to tenure and promotion; at others, there are written statements of expectations for faculty assignments. Crafted in dialogue with the candidate, the chair, and the dean, offer letters or statements of expectation that outline the milestone accomplishments and personalized indicators of success that will lead to reappointment and tenure provide both flexibility and clarity. These written documents can become the basis for annual review letters that refine and adjust goals and expectations as faculty research and teaching progress and develop, goals and expectations that in turn should be visited regularly during in-person conversations with the department chair or head. For this recommendation to be successful, mutually agreed-upon written expectations of faculty assignments aligned with institutional values need to be the touchstone to which administrators and faculty return at least annually to ensure that faculty activities align with articulated institutional expectations.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop a rubric and facilitate training to inform annual review conversations between chairs and faculty members.

Annual review conversations can be important moments of mentoring. They can provide chairs with valuable information about how the goals and aspirations of a faculty member are developing over the course of the RPT process. These conversations also afford faculty members with opportunities to tell a textured story about their work. Using a rubric to shape these conversations in ways that support an expanded understanding of scholarship and creative activity offer opportunities both to recognize and document these new and emerging modes of scholarship. For an example, see the Faculty Annual Review Form in Appendix G.

Additionally, there must be recourse for faculty members who are dehumanized and discriminated against by their chairs or other mentors. Chairs must be held accountable on issues of accessibility and accommodation for disabled faculty members and must undergo...
training on unconscious bias around issues of race, gender, and sexuality before taking the position as chair. Regular training for chairs and other administrators on how to provide formative feedback within the context of regular annual reviews for a wide diversity of faculty members is a critical aspect of a holistic strategy to ensure the annual review process creates a culture in which each member of the faculty is supported and empowered to do work aligned with personal and institutional values.

**RECOMMENDATION: Reform the way external review letters are solicited, valued, and evaluated.**

So much of the promotion and tenure process depends on the quality of the external letters that are solicited, received, and reviewed. Again and again in our interviews, the importance of this form of peer review was emphasized as critical to the tenure and promotion process. It is crucial, then, that the letters that solicit external reviews be explicit about emphasizing the importance of scholarly activity that aligns with institutional values. Requests for reviewers to comment on and speak to specific modes of less-traditional scholarship — digital scholarship or public scholarship, for example — or to specific kinds of scholarly production, such as films, exhibitions, or curated online content, expand the range of scholarship that might find supportive voices in external review letters. Reviewers, however, need to be explicitly asked to provide feedback about what may appear to be non-traditional modes of scholarship. Intentional strategies must be adopted by chairs and deans who solicit external letters to ensure that external reviews support an expanded understanding of scholarship that aligns with the values of their institutions and faculty. Such strategies should also take into account who might be best positioned to provide such letters. For community-engaged scholarship, for example, community leaders might be solicited for their feedback; for inter-institutional collaborative work, fellow collaborators at other universities might be asked to contribute a letter attesting to the collaboration.

Training is also required to ensure that review committees provide a holistic and unbiased review of the external letters. Too often review committees read too much into the reputational values of the institution whose letterhead is on the letter rather than on the content of the review. A balanced reading of these letters ensures that a broad understanding of scholarly activity and production is affirmed and supported in the review process.
RECOMMENDATION: Participate in values-based workshops at the unit level.

Workshops that afford the faculty opportunities to reflect upon their own personal values and to identify the values that they share with their colleagues position units to articulate strategic goals and to revise governing documents that advance and support the values they have identified. Values-focused workshops can open a space for faculty and administrators to connect with one another around the core goals that shape a shared mission. Facilitated conversations in such spaces can animate transformative change rooted in intentional alignment of values with unit-level policies and practices.

RECOMMENDATION: Revise unit-level governing documents.

Disciplines are policed at the department level. Unit governing documents shape the sort of scholarship that will be pursued and produced. Revising unit-level governing documents to explicitly support emerging and innovative modes of scholarship will then provide faculty within the tenure system with textual support to advance work about which they care most deeply. Explicitly affirming public scholarship, participatory community-engaged work, or interdisciplinary approaches in unit governing documents provides faculty with the institutional support they need to pursue vibrant and dynamic new forms of research and creative activity.

Institutions should establish a regular process of reviewing unit- and campus-level promotion and tenure documents to ensure that they align with institutional priorities and with campus and unit mission and values. For example, if the land-grant mission or community engagement are key aspects of the institutional mission, then promotion and tenure criteria should speak directly to the kind of community-engaged work that counts and how that work is rewarded. Or if innovation or leading-edge approaches to the field is a value, criteria should speak to how work that utilizes innovative or new approaches could be fairly assessed, not dismissed simply because it does not fit traditional modes of production. In addition, if such innovation is valued, promotion and tenure documents should explicitly articulate how faculty are encouraged to take risks and learn from failure. Qualitative and narrative aspects of the dossier can be leveraged to give an account of these risks and learnings, but they need to be explicitly encouraged in official documentation of the process.
RECOMMENDATION: Shift the categories of the tenure and promotion process to the high-impact achievements of sharing knowledge, expanding opportunity, and mentoring/stewardship while moving away from the siloed categories of teaching, research, and service.

Following the Charting Pathways of Intellectual Leadership framework developed in the College of Arts and Letters at Michigan State University (see Appendix F), the shift from traditional, siloed categories toward higher order achievements opens the possibility of recognizing, rewarding, and encouraging a broader range of scholarly activities while simultaneously supporting those faculty pursuing traditional modes of scholarly production. By focusing on how they shared knowledge in a given year, scholars are able to draw on activities from across the traditional categories of the RPT process; knowledge can be shared through teaching activities, by publishing, or in service to the profession. Similarly, faculty can expand opportunities for students and colleagues through their teaching, their research, or their service. Finally, by emphasizing the importance of mentoring and stewardship, this framework values and supports what too often is the invisible intellectual and emotional work of supporting students and colleagues or of contributing to the institutional resources that make scholarly life possible.

RECOMMENDATION: Collaborate with deans and provosts to revise university-level statements on promotion and tenure.

Our conversations with provosts, associate provosts, and deans suggest an openness to recognizing a wide diversity of modes of scholarship and a commitment to putting the values of the university into practice through the university RPT process. Some universities distribute a letter from the provost annually to college deans and department chairs that set the parameters for a successful RPT review process; at other universities, there are standing campus-level guidelines. These documents afford us with a critical opportunity to explicitly align the core values of the university with the practices and policies that shape academic life. In particular, it is important for these documents to encourage innovation, risk-taking, and publicly engaged community-oriented scholarship. In addition, it is critical that these statements and guidelines require documented contributions to DEI as part of the promotion and tenure process. An
example can be found in Michigan State University's current Statement on Faculty Promotion and Tenure (Appendix H).

RECOMMENDATION: Increase opportunities for disciplinary leaders (chairs, directors, senior faculty) to share, learn about, discuss, and exchange evaluation practices and procedures from a wider diversity of disciplines across the mission of the university.

Institutions would enhance their ability to enact a common mission, overcome silos, and create a generally more supportive climate for faculty growth and development if leadership from many different disciplines and parts of the university — especially the arts and sciences core — had enhanced opportunities to explore and share disciplinary values and practices, with the goal of expanding perspectives on the assessment process. Leadership training programs supported by college deans and managed through offices of the associate provost for faculty affairs provide possible mechanisms for implementing such dialogues and discussions. The audience for these workshops would be new and continuing unit heads and members of unit RPT committees. Former members of university-wide tenure and promotion committees who have directly experienced the variety of metrics, values, and tools that are used in assessing a wide range of scholarly practices and approaches could serve as facilitators.

RECOMMENDATION: Break down silos both intra- and inter-institutionally.

A common theme we heard throughout our interviews was how decentralized each university is. While this decentralization can be a strength, in very practical ways it also results in silos across the institution. What we heard in our interviews is that many faculty, administrators, librarians, and staff feel they are going it alone in trying to change the institution, but the reality is quite different. Both within institutions and across several (if not all) the BTAA universities, we heard recurring themes that indicate that these individuals are not at all alone in their endeavors. They simply do not know who their allies are. We recommend developing both formal and informal lines of open communication between and among deans’ offices, offices of faculty affairs,
libraries, and those engaged in DEI work, focused on shared values and shared mission(s) and
on building alliances across universities among and between these groups.

Happily, our current round of funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provides for the
establishment of working groups to facilitate such conversations. These working groups will
tackle several pressing issues raised during our interviews, including the challenges of
community-engaged work by tenure-track and contingent faculty, social injustices and systemic
racism (including addressing head-on the problematic history of land-grant universities),
enacting values-based governing documents at the departmental and college level, adopting an
approach that looks at impact beyond mere numbers (what is often called “responsible
metrics”), and enhancing a shared academy-owned infrastructure that allows for more nuanced
stories to be told in evaluating faculty productivity and impact. The activities of these working
groups will include (1) a virtual discussion for a every other month; (2) an asynchronous online
forum where any member can review the notes of any group's discussion and provide feedback
and comments, the asynchronous nature of which will allow members to participate on a
schedule and in a manner that works for them while ensuring contribution from the largest
number of voices; (3) various position papers on the topics discussed during the fora; (4) a final
convocation that will bring together the members of the working groups to draft
recommendations for the BTAA to adopt alliance-wide (with an eye to what others outside the
alliance also might do); and (5) a database of supporting materials for use both within and
outside the BTAA. Members of the working groups will also be encouraged to meet regularly on
their own campuses with other members of the working groups and with additional stakeholders
to speak with one another about approaches they might take collectively on their local campus
to influence decision-makers at all levels of the university; reporting back on these
conversations will be a regular part of the bimonthly discussion fora.

While we are hopeful these working groups will help facilitate intra- and interinstitutional
conversations, there is a huge role also to be played by scholarly and learned societies, as well
as by consortia of various kinds, who are well positioned to provide fora for conversations,
establish standards, recommend good and best practices, and provide guidance to their
members. We are encouraged in particular that the American Council of Learned Societies,
through their *Intention Foundry*, has taken an active role in advancing and coordinating this very
important work.
RECOMMENDATION: Create better and more consistent ways to track what is now often invisible labor to ensure equity.

The limitations of our current tools for evaluating important aspects of academic, scholarly, and professorial work renders many important and rewarding activities unseen. Nowhere is this more profound, problematic, and threatening to the goals of inclusivity, diversity, and equity than the invisible labor associated with supporting minorities, whether that is BIPOC faculty and staff in predominantly white institutions, women in predominantly male fields, and disabled and LGBTQ+ faculty and staff across the institution. In fact, as institutions, we often do not invest in the human infrastructure needed to build diverse and welcoming communities, to help our staff and faculty understand the manner in which unconscious bias and microaggressions are manifested in classrooms and in personal interactions, or to acknowledge the emotional work required to navigate an institution in which many are grossly underrepresented and that often does not in any meaningful way acknowledge the systemic barriers to success these employees face. As a result, the work of healing, guidance, support, reassurance, and persistence for these populations falls overwhelmingly upon BIPOC and other minority faculty and staff, who are themselves often in dire need of the support they are providing others. This work is invisible and uncompensated; it is time consuming and emotionally draining; it impacts scholarship and productivity.72

RECOMMENDATION: Dedicate resources toward creating an inclusive, anti-racist campus climate.

“There’s a strong correlation between the strength of the university as a STEM leader and its utter ignorance of the Indigenous possibilities in that place.”
“In the middle of campus there's a little patch of cornfield — the original first experimental agricultural station, a shrine to science. [Just] try to close that patch, that bastion of research, by calling attention to how it’s stolen. [But] corn gets you to the heart of Indigenous epistemologies, not only knowledge but relation: corn is older kin, not something to be experimented on.”

“Diversity” and “equity” are both terms highlighted repeatedly in most university mission and values statements (see Appendix E), but many institutions are slow to recognize — let alone address — their own history of inequality and racial injustice. To create a genuinely inclusive and anti-racist (not simply diverse) campus environment, institutions of higher education must come to terms with the racist and oppressive relationships their campuses have been built upon — physically as well as historically. This means, among other things, unearthing and telling the full history of the campus: beginning with how the land was acquired and from whom; through the role of enslaved people and the institution of slavery and indentured and oppressed labor in its construction and establishment; up to its current policies and patterns of inclusion/exclusion of various groups of people in the student body, in the residence halls, on the staff and faculty, and, yes, even in the publication and citation practices that are at the heart of a current evaluation system that privileges some individuals and voices over others.

Steps toward creating an inclusive, anti-racist campus include making the position of chief diversity officer a vice-presidential-level appointment — with resources, authority, personnel, and a campus-wide network. As discussed earlier, many diversity offices are created with little-to-no job description and very little institutional power. Ensuring DEI practices are prioritized and executed throughout the university requires high-level institutional buy-in and support. All levels of leadership should be held accountable for developing and achieving anti-racism and equity goals; identifying, recording, and studying inclusivity accomplishments; and working with diversity office staff to build interdepartmental and intercollegiate efforts.

These trainings and accountability strategies should also serve as a part of an overall effort to prepare department chairs for the responsibilities of their position. Department chairs are
instrumental in creating a supportive, equitable climate in their department and in making sure the institution is serving the scholars under their care, not only the other way around.76

CONCLUSION

In her book Posthuman Knowledge, Rosi Braidotti argues that we ought to approach our shared state of very real exhaustion affirmatively. “Let me dare to suggest,” she writes, “that there is a creative potential here, which means that exhaustion is not a pathological state that needs to be cured, as an actual disorder, but a threshold of transformation of forces, that is to say a virtual state of creative becoming” (17).77 The exhaustion we feel in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reckoning with long legacies of racism and exclusionary practices indicate that we have entered a space of transformative change. The emergence of the Delta and Omicron variants of the virus and the impact of long COVID78 among students, staff, and faculty suggest that we remain in the middle or even in early stages of this disruptive period of change.

In the interviews we held over the past 18 months, we experienced the stress, strain, and anxiety of the liminal space we currently inhabit. We heard the exhaustion, the frustration, the exasperation, and the alienation. But we also heard the hope, the creativity, the deep and enduring love of learning, and the abiding commitment to creating a more just and equitable ecosystem of scholarly engagement. Higher education stands at a crossroads. The policies and practices that shape scholarly life are not aligned with the core values for which higher education institutions profess to stand or with the personal values many in higher education hope to enact through their work. The alienation, frustration, exasperation, and exhaustion our colleagues voiced throughout the interviews may have been amplified by the pandemic and the reckoning with racism, but they can ultimately be traced to the misalignment between the values we profess to hold and the practices that shape contemporary academic life. Without direct action to redress this misalignment, we will remain unable to tap into the hope, creativity, and joy that are the catalysts of genuine transformation. Through our conversations we identified opportunities for intervention in quotidian interactions, small policy changes, slight shifts of emphasis, and innovative structural adjustments. We learned that substantive institutional transformation is, in fact, possible — and that each of us involved in the higher education endeavor, however exhausted we may feel, can be an agent of the change we envision if we remain committed to putting our values into intentional practice in every encounter we have, in every decision we make, in every policy we create, and in every practice we undertake.
There is enormous creative potential for transformative change in higher education in the recommendations we have outlined here. Many, as you will note, do not require tectonic shifts in institutional structures but rather adjustments in how we put the values we say we care most deeply about into concrete action in the habits, practices, and policies that shape the way scholarship is pursued. Each intervention moves us closer to living up to the values so many of us sought to embody in our decision to dedicate our lives to higher education; together, over time, the changes we suggest will have a broader transformative effect. Only when higher education lives up to the values for which it has long advocated will the university be in a position to address the grand challenges of our time with new creative energy, integrity, and grace.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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It is also worth noting that prior to the curtailing of travel that was imposed because of COVID-19, the members of the research team had requested help from the library at each institution to coordinate our research trip planning, asking for their partnership in organizing conversations across their campuses. They all generously agreed to coordinate our interview schedule, sometimes acting as well as the host for the day, and we are most grateful to them for all their help — especially Birdie Beckwith, Melanie Carroll, and Cynthia Vitale. We wish we had had the opportunity to partner with more libraries than we did.

We are particularly grateful for the coordination and unflappable flexibility of Deans Long and Thornton Dill’s assistants, Deanna Thomas and Chant’e Ingram, who overcame the many often complex scheduling challenges along the way. We’d also like to thank Mike Thicke, who helped with some technical issues in the production of the electronic versions of the white paper, and Kelly Sattler, who assisted with Manifold setup.

The PDF version of this white paper is presented in Atkinson Hyperlegible font. The font is provided for free from the Braille Institute and improves readability by increasing character recognition, clearly differentiating between commonly misinterpreted letters and numbers.
ENDNOTES

We have also provided a list of all the references cited in this white paper, with links to the full text.


2 We are of course not the only ones or even the first to have made these important points. For a sampling of the discussion and longstanding concerns about HSS work when it is evaluated using criteria developed for STEM, see:


Humanities: A Comparison of Web of Science Coverage for Five European Countries.” *PLOS ONE* 16(4): e0249879.


3 For an indication of the sorts of values institutions indicate as important to them, see *Appendix E*.


5 As Rebecca Givan (2020) observes, the shift of many universities to so-called responsibility-centered management (RCM) budgets only exacerbates the situation, as “even deans and program chairs with the most high-minded values are forced to choose between wretched options. The values baked into the [RCM] system all but require increased use of precarious,
contingent faculty members; when an adjunct professor teaches a large, popular class, the program has a little more breathing room to fund faculty research or admit one more doctoral student.” Instead, she argues, “We need an approach to administration that first embraces the highest mission of the university, and then determines financial priorities based on the fulfillment of that mission…. Will [university leaders] move forward with integrity and moral courage, aspiring to the best of higher education?”


Of particular concern among those of us looking to make substantive and transformative change in the academy should be addressing the additional challenges found in an increasingly contingent academy. Contingent faculty, for example, are often not included in departmental or university governance, and the precarity of their employment means they often do not feel empowered to challenge or change the system.

For data on the trend toward adjunctification, see:

For examples of the myriad issues this trend toward adjunctification raises, see:


Flaherty, Colleen. 2016. “More Faculty Diversity, Not on Tenure Track.” Inside Higher Ed (blog), 22 August.


Sylvia Hurtado and Jessica Sharkness capture the problem succinctly: “To gain the freedom to innovate, we must get tenure; yet to get tenure, we must be conformists” (37).


See also:


In Gérard Roland’s (2004) analysis, institutions can either change slowly and continuously (what he calls "slow-moving") or rapidly and irregularly ("fast-moving"). (For Roland, “institutions” are defined as "any form of constraint that human beings devise to shape human interaction," rather than how we use the term in this white paper, to mean colleges and universities.) "What is often called 'culture,' including values, beliefs, and social norms," Roland notes, "can be classified as a slow-moving institution. The evolution of culture is closely related to the evolution of technology and scientific knowledge, which obviously plays an important role in understanding growth. Like culture, technology evolves slowly and continuously, although the pace may vary" (119). Colleges and universities likewise evolve slowly.


Perhaps unsurprisingly among a professoriate that has been socioeconomically, educationally, and demographically homogeneous and self-perpetuating for centuries, not everyone feels that the current system is broken or in need of change. Robert M. Diamond noted in his 2005 essay “Scholarship Reconsidered: Barriers to Change” that “many faculty members in key leadership roles … [are] reluctant to change reward structures or definitions of scholarly work that [have] worked so well for them” (57), and that sentiment has not — for some, anyway — shifted much over time. Job satisfaction surveys, while rarely uniformly rosy, often note that many faculty
experience their profession as welcoming and their careers as satisfying. Several of our interviewees likewise expressed admiration for a system in which they have thrived and admitted their desire to maintain the status quo. One observed:

“Tradition is what holds the entire educational enterprise together.”


On the demographics of the academic enterprise, see:


**On academic job satisfaction, see:**


Belmonte (2020), ibid.


Most of our interviewees, however, expressed **concerns about the status quo**. Their critiques — of a system that seems above all to value elitism, prestige, gatekeeping, and traditional modes of scholarly communication that favor certain scholars over others — are strongly reflected as well in the literature:


Lancaster, Alex. 2016. “Given Frustrations with Academic Structures, How Can We Build a More Human-Centered Open Science?” Impact of Social Sciences (blog), 26 July.


For more on competition as a hallmark of neoliberalism, particularly within higher education, and the systemic concerns that raises, see:


Donoghue (2018), ibid.


11 As Cameron Neylon, Friso Selten, and Paul Groth argue, “While the underlying intent of the rankings is to measure similar things, they do not, and what they do measure is very unclear. If they measure anything at all, it appears to be visibility and prestige, something that feeds on itself, and would be predicted to lead to fixation at the top of the rankings. In fact it is worse than that. By giving these rankings importance and meaning, we concentrate our attention merely on doing well at them. The statistical analysis suggests that they are biased, unstable and unreliable, precisely to those institutions that most rely on them to provide an ‘objective’ view of their performance.”


12 The (often) unquestioned importance of rankings can be seen in this job ad posted on 28 October 2021 for a “University Ranking Strategist,” whose “primary purpose” is to “[provide] leadership, expertise and support to university-wide activities aimed at improving the university’s reputation, profile, and performance across several domestic and international university rankings. [The position] plays an essential role in yielding noticeable improvements in the university’s recognition for excellence, as measured in academic rankings within disciplines and the university, as well as in strengthening the university’s position in relevant international rankings. It is instrumental for building campus-wide awareness, engagement, and culture of rankings.”

See:


Shore and Wright (2020), ibid.


13 For studies of the widespread adoption by faculty of rankings and ratings, see:


Hammarfelt and de Rijcke (2015), ibid.


Blackmore (2015), ibid.


Kandiko Howson (2018), ibid.


Ndofirepi (2017), ibid.


As KerryAnn O’Meara (2011) points out, “Many scholars have explored the experiences of tenure track faculty as they are socialized into the traditions and norms of their disciplines and fields, departments, colleges and universities, and academic profession more broadly” (179), with most of those studies concluding that women and faculty of color are considerably less satisfied with their institution’s tenure and promotion process than are white men. But, she cautions, “many studies need to be repeated controlling for variables of institutional type, career stage, discipline, and other key intervening variables,” pointing to a study by Cathy Trower and Jared Bleak (2004), for example, that found that “when career stage and institutional type were controlled, fewer differences emerged in the experiences of white faculty and faculty of color” (180).


See also:
Bentley et al. (2012), ibid.
Jackson et al. (2017), ibid.
O'Meara (2006), ibid.


17 It is perhaps notable within this context that in our conversations, very few of our interviewees — even among librarians — mentioned the decades-long crisis in monograph purchasing that has resulted in fewer presses producing fewer books, thereby increasing the competition among scholars who often depend heavily on this format to achieve tenure or be promoted. That tenure criteria have over time become more demanding, often requiring more than one monograph to achieve tenure, has only exacerbated this problem.

For more on the “monograph crisis,” including its latest open-access iterations, see:


Fyfe et al. (2017), ibid.

Ganz, Scott. “On Inequality and Academic Publishing (and How Google Scholar Is Like the SAT).” OrgTheory (blog), 22 July.


65


Gannon et al. (2018), ibid.


O’Meara (2011), ibid.


Véliz and Gardner (2019), ibid.


Prorating co-authored publications is a long-standing but highly contested practice — accused by some of inspiring gaming the system through false authorship claims, by others of creating inequities among team members by crediting all contributors equally even if all contributions were not equivalent in terms of time and effort, and by still others of disincentivizing collaboration by encouraging limited or even single authorship. A related concern about co-authored works is authorship order, which is perceived to favor the first author — and may actually do so, in both symbolic and real terms — regardless of the method used to decide that order.

See:


Fox and Faver (1984), ibid.


O’Meara, KerryAnn. 2010. “Rewarding Multiple Forms of Scholarship: Promotion and Tenure.” In *Handbook of Engaged Scholarship: Contemporary Landscapes, Future Directions —


Seltzer (2018), ibid.


22 Diversity consultant Carmen Morris cautions, “We are all equal, in the sense that we are human beings, but we are not all the same, having different needs and particular concerns relative to the diversity and inclusion plan.... Don’t make the mistake of lumping as many aspects of diversity and inclusion as possible into your diversity and inclusion agenda in a haphazard way. Make sure that you focus on aspects, individually as well as holistically, so that intersectionality is fully covered. Remember, this goes far beyond ticking boxes and quick fixes.”


23 In Jeffrey L. Wilson’s 2013 study looking at seven chief diversity officers (CDOs) and their impact on campus climate, he observed, “The CDOs at the institutions differed in how they ascended to that role, their titles, who they reported to, and areas of responsibilities. Some cited near perfect harmony among members of the campus community around diversity issues, while
others had met with challenges” (433). Our interviews confirmed that where CDOs are concerned, not much seems to have changed in the past decade.


See:


As Sara Ahmed has argued, “When things become institutional, they recede. To institutionalize x is for x to become routine or ordinary such that x becomes part of the background for those who are part of an institution” (21).


See also:


Durodoye et al. (2019), ibid.


Griffin (2019), ibid.


Riffing on the term “cultural taxation” originally coined by Amado M. Padilla (1994), Derrick E. White (2021) has referred to the activities undertaken by minoritized faculty to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion as a “service tax,” because the time spent mentoring students and colleagues, serving on diversity committees, recruiting minority colleagues, planning and leading workshops, and participating in local communities is time not being spent on the activities — particularly research and publishing — that are rewarded in RPT evaluation.


See:


See, for example:


Arnold, Noelle Witherspoon. 2014. “Psychological Heuristics: Mental/Emotional Designs of Racial Battle Fatigue and the Tenure/Promotion Terrain for Faculty of Color.” In *Racial Battle...*


Holmes (2013), ibid.


Maranto and Griffin (2010), ibid.


Robinson (2014), ibid.


Settles et al. (2022), ibid.


Zimmerman et al. (2016), ibid.


Burke (2021), ibid.


Kattari (2020), ibid.


Price, Margaret, Mark S. Salzer, Amber O'Shea, Stephanie L. Kerschbaum. 2017. “Disclosure of Mental Disability by College and University Faculty: The Negotiation of Accommodations, Supports, and Barriers.” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37(2): Article 5487.


Erica Pinto's short film, “*Structural Discrimination: The Unequal Opportunity Race*,” created for the African American Policy Forum, dramatically makes this point.

Unlike elitism, which by its very nature is exclusionary and therefore at its heart inequitable, “excellence” is sometimes cast as entirely compatible with equity, as it is in the Association of American Colleges and Universities' framework for DEI, *Making Excellence Inclusive: A Framework for Embedding Diversity and Inclusion into Colleges and Universities’ Academic Excellence Mission*. Abigail J. Stewart and Virginia Valian (2018) make a similar argument that the two concepts go hand in hand. There are many scholars, however, who find “excellence” to be as problematic as “elitism” — and for much the same reason.

Stewart and Valian (2018), ibid.

See:


Blackmore (2015), ibid.


Clauset et al. (2015), ibid.


Cruickshank (2016), ibid.


DeTurk and Briscoe (2019), ibid.

Fitzpatrick (2019), ibid.

Herlihy-Mera (2015), ibid.


Hitchcock (2018), ibid.

Jenkins (2013), ibid.


Littler (2013), ibid.
Neylon (2020), ibid.
Platzer and Allison (2018), ibid.


32 See, for example:


Baker (2018), ibid.


Clauset et al. (2015), ibid.


Ganz (2017), ibid.
Hamraie (2016), ibid.
Hitchcock (2018), ibid.
Jacobs and Winslow (2004), ibid.
Jenkins (2013), ibid.
Kawa et al., (2018), ibid.
Last (2018), ibid.
Lee et al. (2021), ibid.
Morley and Aynsley (2007), ibid.
Mott, Carrie, Daniel Cockayne. 2017. “Citation Matters: Mobilizing the Politics of Citation Toward a Practice of ‘Conscientious Engagement.’” *Gender, Place and Culture* 24(7): 954–973.
Ndofirepi (2017), ibid.
O’Rand (1989), ibid.


University Wankings (2021), ibid.

van den Brink and Benschop (2011), ibid.

Wellmon and Piper (2017), ibid.

West et al. (2013), ibid.


Winslow (2010), ibid.


See also:
Ahmed (2012), ibid.


Fenelon (2003), ibid.


Frederick and Wolff-Eisenberg (2021), ibid.


Gusa (2011), ibid.
Hall (2018), ibid.
Harper (2012), ibid.
Holmes (2013), ibid.
Jayakumar et al. (2009), ibid.


See (2016), ibid.


See also:


Almeida (2014), ibid.

Arnold (2014), ibid.

Edwards and Ross (2018), ibid.


Harley (2018), ibid.

Harper (2012), ibid.


Oswal (2015), ibid.

Pittman (2012), ibid.

Riley-Reid (2017), ibid.

Robinson (2014), ibid.


Settles et al. (2018), ibid.

Shavers et al. (2014), ibid.


Stanley (2006), ibid.
Stevenson (2012), ibid.
Titchkosky (2008), ibid.

Wingfield and Skeete (2016), ibid.
Zambrana et al. (2016), ibid.

Among the challenges faced by administrators, particularly at the decanal level, that drives such rapid turnover is a general distrust by faculty of administrators. Ejner J. Jensen (2006) makes this wry observation: “Ambition and leadership skills, key values in other areas of our society, are suspect qualities in academe. Thus, by virtue of their appointment different from the colleagues with whom only a while ago they shared office space, students, and commitment to a discipline, administrators are widely regarded as having abandoned the intellectual enterprise they are supposed to conduct.... The desire to run an enterprise, to exert leadership, to make decisions that can reshape a life or redirect an organization is shut off, frustrated, and in its stead one finds only the familiar round” (486, 488).

Joan V. Gallos (2002) has termed this dilemma the “dean’s squeeze”: “Squeezed from above and below as well as from inside and outside the university, deans are caught in the jaws of conflicting cultures, pressures, and priorities. Constrained by traditions and tensions inherent in the role, they are increasingly accountable for outcomes over which they have little influence and less control.... Deans are, in essence, classic middle managers: They have enormous responsibilities, little positional power, insufficient resources, and limited authority. They navigate daily the circular rhythms of life in the organizational middle — pleasing up to secure the resources needed to please those below who do the work that leads to unit success. The realities of a dean's life, as I know them, lie in stark contrast to the common perceptions of those who see power, grandeur, and glory — and to the naive images of the job often held by those who aspire to the position” (174).

See also:


Although much of the focus in the literature is on the traits of a successful dean, the greatest single predictor of longevity in a dean’s tenure is not personality or training, but institutional fit—a match between worldview and university context.

See:


37 Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that it is departmental leadership, more so 
than decanal or provostial leadership, that faculty look to for guidance. As Janet Lawrence, 
Sergio Celis, and Molly Ott report from their study on whether pre-tenure faculty believe they 
will be treated fairly throughout the tenure process, “Equitable treatment of junior faculty at the 
department level and effectiveness of feedback have the strongest relationships with beliefs 
about the equity of tenure decision-making” (155).

Lawrence et al. (2014), ibid.
See also:
August and Waltman (2004), ibid.
Campbell, Corbin M., KerryAnn O’Meara. 2014. “Faculty Agency: Departmental Contexts 

Drange, Susan, Kristen Barnes. 2019. Improving Department Climate: Tools and 
Resources for Departments and Department Chairs. New York: Columbia University Faculty of 
Arts and Sciences.


Analysis of Disputes over Faculty Promotion and Tenure.” Research in Higher Education 43(5): 
503–529.

Kruse, Sharon D. 2020. “Department Chair Leadership: Exploring the Role’s Demands 
and Tensions.” Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 4 September.

Lisnic, Rodica, Anna Zajicek, Shauna Morimoto. 2018. “Gender and Race Differences in 
Faculty Assessment of Tenure Clarity: The Influence of Departmental Relationships and 

Maranto and Griffin (2019), ibid.


Skachkova (2007), ibid.

Tierney and Bensimon (1996), ibid.


Zimmerman et al. (2016), ibid.

Nevertheless, there are many scholars fighting against this entrenched thinking.

See, for example:


Braunstein (2017), ibid.


Eble et al. (2019), ibid.
Ellison and Eatman (2008), ibid.
Fitzpatrick (2019), ibid.
Harley et al. (2010), ibid.

Kandiko Howson (2018), ibid.
Kehm (2013), ibid.
Klein and Falk-Krzesinski (2017), ibid.


Orange (2015), ibid.


Such factors include the financial impact of the pandemic on families, the perceived value of online vs. in-person instruction, the location or prestige of the college or university, and a desire for the “college experience,” study-abroad opportunities, and in-person sports activities.

See:


Ideas to rectify the problem of finding qualified reviewers often center on tangible rewards, such as credit mechanisms or financial payments offered by the publisher, rather than on shifting the current evaluation system, as we suggest here. David Crotty (2016) takes umbrage at the idea of peer reviewers being rewarded in some way: “Many activities of a researcher are done as a service to one’s community, not out of an expectation that they will lead to financial reward or career advancement. Do we really need to turn philanthropic volunteerism into a carefully tracked and rated competitive exercise?” Most reviewers, however, prefer our approach — although we hope it is needless to say that we ourselves are not in favor of adding yet another metric per se. A survey conducted in July 2015 by the publisher John Wiley & Sons found that “Reviewers strongly believe that reviewing is inadequately acknowledged at present and should carry more weight in their institutions’ evaluation process,” with respondents saying that “Reviewing should be acknowledged as a measurable research output” and arguing that “I would spend more time reviewing if it was recognised as a measurable research activity” (Warne, 47).


Warne (2016), ibid.

See also:

Cochran, Angela. 2016. “Is More Recognition the Key to Peer Review Success?” The Scholarly Kitchen (blog), 19 September.

Crotty, David. 2015. “The Problem(s) with Credit for Peer Review.” The Scholarly Kitchen (blog), 17 June.
Decades ago Ernest L. Boyer (1990) urged a now-famous rethinking of faculty reward, arguing:

> It seems clear that while research is crucial, we need a renewed commitment to service, too. Thus, the most important obligation now confronting the nation’s colleges and universities is to break out of the tired old teaching versus research debate and define, in more creative ways, what it means to be a scholar. It’s time to recognize the full range of faculty talent and the great diversity of functions higher education must perform. For American higher education to remain vital we urgently need a more creative view of the work of the professoriate. In response to this challenge, we propose in this report four general views of scholarship: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Let’s agree that the 1990s will be the decade of undergraduate education. But let’s also candidly acknowledge that the degree to which this push for better education is achieved will be determined, in large measure, by the way scholarship is defined and, ultimately, rewarded. (xii–xiii)

While this broader concept of scholarship was much discussed at the time and the piece has (ironically, given its stance against lionization) become canonical in the literature, the more traditional view of scholarship — as research that results in specific outputs — remains entrenched.

Boyer (1990), ibid.
See also:
Alperin et al. (2021), ibid.
Cronin and La Barre (2004), ibid.
Lewis (2004), ibid.
Lisnic et al. (2018), ibid.
Schimanski and Alperin (2018), ibid.
Seltzer (2018), ibid.
Tierney and Bensimon (1996), ibid.
Trower (2009), ibid.
Véliz and Gardner (2019), ibid.
45 For arguments in favor of rethinking "service" as scholarship, see:
   Alperin et al. (2019), ibid.
   Community (blog), 16 October.
   Calhoun (2003), ibid.
   Meyers, Christopher. 2014. “Public Philosophy and Tenure/Promotion: Rethinking
   O’Meara, KerryAnn. 2002. “Uncovering the Values in Faculty Evaluation of Service as
   O’Meara, KerryAnn. 2005. “Encouraging Multiple Forms of Scholarship in Faculty Reward
   Park (1996), ibid.
   Saltmarsh et al. (2009), ibid.

46 Highlighting many of these inequities are the data and storytelling at the heart of COVID
   Black, led by Kim Gallon, “an organization that recognizes the power of health data and
   information combined with critical and justice-oriented theoretical frameworks ... to tell
   empowering stories about Black life that address racial health disparities.”

   See also:
   D’Ignazio, Catherine, Lauren F. Klein. 2020b. “Seven Intersectional Feminist Principles

47 For studies of how these stresses have particularly impacted scholars of color, see:
   Levine, Felice, Na’ilah Suad Nasir, Cecilia Rios-Aguilar, Ryan Gildersleeve, Katherine
   Rosich, Megan Bang, Nathan Bell, Matthew Holsapple. 2021. Voices from the Field: The Impact
   Staniscuaski, Fernanda, Livia Kmetzsch, Rossana C. Soletti, Fernanda Reichert, Eugenia
   Zandonà, Zelia M. C. Ludwig, Eliade F. Lima, Adriana Neumann, Ida V. D. Schwartz, Pamela B.
   Mello-Carpes, Alessandra S. K. Tamajusuku, Fernanda P. Werneck, Felipe K. Ricachenevsky,
   Camila Infanger, Adriana Seixas, Charley C. Staats, Leticia de Oliveira. 2021. “Gender, Race and

Tugend (2020), ibid.

48 That tenure clock extensions have only seemed “family friendly” has long been acknowledged, well before the pandemic. As with many aspects of academe, the pandemic made the problem only more obvious. Jessica Malisch et al. (2020) list a number of reasons why a tenure clock extension is “not a panacea to accommodate faculty experiencing challenges and delays in the research domain” (15380) — not least because of an extension’s effect on long-term earning potential. They instead argue for “strategies to promote equity [that] extend to ... any academic affected by COVID-19” (15380).


In an excellent Twitter thread, Ainsley Lambert-Swain underlines this point: “Universities choosing to offer an irrevocable delay for promotion & tenure to junior TT faculty in light of COVID is not supportive. Support would look like: a course release(s), more research funds, a jr sabbatical, a RA, a TA, and/or adjustments to tenure requirements. But these forms of support cost money, while optional delays to P&T potentially saves money. This is an important consideration for universities, given that higher ed budgets have taken a hit as a result of the pandemic. One of the things I keep thinking about is how gender, family, and work expectations will collide to shape who takes these delays and how this will shape gender inequity in pay and career advancement in the longterm in higher ed.”

Lambert-Swain, Ainsley [@_SocSpecialist_]. 2022. *Universities choosing to offer an irrevocable delay for promotion & tenure to junior TT faculty in light of COVID is* [Tweet]. Twitter, 19 January.

See:


See also:


Carrigan (2020), ibid.
Feldman and Jafar (2021), ibid.
Levine et al. (2021), ibid.
Oleschuk (2020), ibid.
Staniscuaski et al. (2021), ibid.
Tugend (2020), ibid.

51 The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explains the condition this way: “Although most people with COVID-19 get better within weeks of illness, some people experience post-COVID conditions. Post-COVID conditions are a wide range of new, returning, or ongoing health problems people can experience four or more weeks after first being infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. Even people who did not have COVID-19 symptoms in the days or weeks after...
they were infected can have post-COVID conditions. These conditions can present as different types and combinations of health problems for different lengths of time. These post-COVID conditions may also be known as long COVID, long-haul COVID, post-acute COVID-19, long-term effects of COVID, or chronic COVID.”

More information about post-COVID conditions can be found on the CDC website.

See also:


See also:


See, for example:
Burke (2021), ibid.
Grigely (2017), ibid.
Titchkosky (2008), ibid.


At the start of the pandemic, as national- and state-imposed lockdowns were becoming the norm and colleges and universities followed suit, there was much discussion of safety and care for the campus community. In March 2020 the American Federation of Teachers and the American Association of University Professors issued a joint statement of principles addressing the needs of students, staff, and faculty of whatever status and urging, among other guidelines, that “Every employee should be held harmless economically and professionally” and “all staff members should be provided the authority to telework” throughout the course of the pandemic, noting in particular that “Decisions to continue teaching a course online after the COVID-19 crisis has abated should follow the principles laid out in AAUP’s *Statement on Online and Distance Education*, which requires consultation with appropriate faculty decision-making bodies.”


In the “Afterword” to their collected volume *Ableism in Academia: Theorising Experiences of Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses in Higher Education*, also written in March
2020 as COVID lockdowns had just begun, Jennifer Leigh and Nicole Brown (2020) (ibid.) optimistically hope:

Physical presence may no longer be seen as a requirement for teaching, learning, research and the dissemination of research. The barriers around lack of accessibility that those with chronic illness, disability and neurodiversity have encountered may be tumbling down. Inability to attend physically may no longer be seen as a barrier to promotion and progression. Institutions are rolling out technology and guidance to ease access, and it is hard to see that these will be taken away once we have ridden out this current crisis. (237)

Commenting as well on the sudden and complete shift to online instruction in March 2020, when “it is as if we have awoken in a parallel universe to find, like magic, we can all successfully telecommute for work and studies,” Mia Ocean observes:

This says something about who we value. We could not grant accommodations for individuals with dis/abilities, but we can complete an overhaul of the system for people without dis/abilities. While flexible attendance and telework are convenient examples given our current circumstances, my argument is not limited to them. My goal is to shift our view of reasonable accommodations processes in our own institutions — which can ironically be rather unreasonable. Additionally, I want to draw attention to the arbitrary nature with which we make decisions that disproportionately impact the dis/ability community, keep individuals with dis/abilities from fully participating in the workplace and higher education, and reproduce historical inequities. (1546)


As we now know from the vantage point of 18 months later, much of the academy — at least in the United States — has returned to “business as usual,” even with the spread of the much more virulent Delta variant; it has been a rare case for faculty and staff to have been consulted in any meaningful way.

See, for example:


Michigan State University's current Appointment, Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion Recommendations can be found as Appendix H.

See also:


Jackson et al. (2017), ibid.


Tierney and Bensimon (1996), ibid.


Several studies have shown that although most pre-tenure faculty believe they are clear as to their departmental criteria for tenure, their perceptions of the fairness of the process can differ widely owing to what Patricia Matthew (2016b, xv) calls the “unwritten codes” of tenure. Underrepresented minority women in particular are more likely to report inconsistent and even contradictory messaging about expectations, ineffective or nonexistent mentoring within their department, strained relationships with peers, and a lack of regard for their work, any or all of which may negatively affect the outcome of their tenure case. These do not seem to be simply perceptions. Women of color — particularly Black and Indigenous women — are in reality the least likely of all demographic groups to achieve tenure. Even when they do achieve tenure, women of color are also least likely to be promoted to the rank of full professor.


See:

Ambrose et al. (2005), ibid.
Damasco and Hodges (2012), ibid.
Diggs et al. (2009), ibid.
Griffin et al. (2011), ibid.
Jayakumar et al. (2009), ibid.
Lawrence et al. (2014), ibid.
Lisnic et al. (2018), ibid.
Ponjuan et al. (2011), ibid.
Roos and Gatta (2009), ibid.
Stanley (2006), ibid.
Thomas and Hollenshead (2001), ibid.
Trower (2009), ibid.
Turner et al. (2008), ibid.
As Diane Dawson and colleagues (2022) point out, "While collegiality plays a role in the morale and effectiveness of academic departments, it is amorphic and difficult to assess, and could be misused to stifle dissent or enforce homogeneity" (1). Nevertheless, they note, "collegiality likely plays an important role in RPT processes, whether it is explicitly acknowledged in policies and guidelines or not" (1), and, following Agate et al. (2020; ibid.), argue, in light of this trend, that "While none of the institutions that defined or assessed collegiality used a value-centric approach, there is ample opportunity for them to do so, especially as momentum continues to build towards research assessment reform" (16).


See:
Ambrose et al. (2005), ibid.
Bruce (2011), ibid.
Campbell and O’Meara (2014), ibid.
Frazier (2011), ibid.
Morley (2003), ibid.
Stanley (2006), ibid.
Trower (2009), ibid.

62 See, for example:

Baffoe (2014), ibid.


Delgado Bernal and Villalpando (2002), ibid.
Ede and Lunsford (2001), ibid.
Gonzales and LaPointe Terosky (2016), ibid.

Hurtado and Sharkness (2008), ibid.
Jackson et al. (2017), ibid.
Jenkins (2013), ibid.
Morales et al. (2021), ibid.
O’Meara et al. (2018), ibid.

Richardson (2018), ibid.
Ruiz (2014), ibid.


See also:

De La Torre (2018), ibid.
Gillberg (2020), ibid.

Kumbier and Starkey (2016), ibid.


Saltmarsh et al. (2009), ibid.

Seifer et al. (2012), ibid.


Zambrana et al. (2015), ibid.

65 Not much seems to have changed since Joseph Raben made this observation in the inaugural issue of *Digital Humanities Quarterly* in 2007:

The time it will take for the academic establishment to recognize the value of online publication is a function of its willingness to accept the replacement of a system that has seemed to operate relatively well until now. Books and print articles have been the stairs leading to the tenure, promotion, higher salaries and reduced teaching loads that are the system’s rewards for scholarly industry. When deans and even chairs are incapable of evaluating the content of such publications, they have been able to rely on the number of a candidate's publications, their substance, the prestige of their publishers and (to a limited extent in the humanities) the number of times they are cited elsewhere. With understandable ergophobia, these administrators do not eagerly anticipate learning a new system without these comforting means of measuring accomplishment.


See also:


Seltzer (2018), ibid.

66 Public scholarship” is an umbrella term that covers two distinct but complementary aspects. Community-engaged work is scholarship that — as the name implies — is embedded within a community. Collaborators are members of that community. And while many of the goals and priorities of the community will be shared, most or even all of the non-academic community members may not be particularly interested in producing the traditional outputs that will get their academic colleagues rewarded. (For case studies highlighting this aspect of public scholarship in the humanities, see the 2021 working paper *Public Humanities and Publication* by Kath Burton, Catherine Cocks, Darcy Cullen, Daniel Fisher, Barry M Goldenberg, Janneken Smucker, Friederike Sundaram, Dave Tell, Anne Valks, and Rebecca Wingo.)
The second aspect of public scholarship is that of communicating scholarship to the public, e.g., such as the role public intellectuals play. While most higher education institutions value this work — especially those working in public affairs offices — such efforts are not recognized and rewarded in the same way as traditional outputs, but rather most often fall into the category of “service,” the least prestigious and least well recognized of the three activities faculty regularly track and report, thereby reducing any incentive to spend the considerable time and effort required to communicate scholarship in public fora.

One notable attempt at bringing these two aspects of public scholarship together is the Public Philosophy Journal.

For more on the challenges and opportunities of public scholarship, see:
Alperin et al. (2019), ibid.
Arbuckle (2019), ibid.
Benneworth et al. (2018a), ibid.
Bloomgarden (2008), ibid.
Callard et al. (2015), ibid.
Ćulum (2014), ibid.
Eatman et al. (2018), ibid.
Ellison and Eatman (2008), ibid.

Harley et al. (2010), ibid.

Hoffman (2021), ibid.

Kirschenbaum (2012), ibid.

Kruss et al. (2016), ibid.


O’Meara et al. (2011), ibid.

Orange (2015), ibid.

Renwick et al. (2020), ibid.

Saltmarsh et al. (2009), ibid.


Tremblay (2017), ibid.

Watermeyer (2015), ibid.


Woolcott et al. (2020), ibid.


On concerns about rigid timelines and pressures to produce “on the clock” that may not be conducive to thoughtful — much less engaged — scholarship, see:


Mountz et al. (2015), ibid.


Read and Bradley (2018), ibid.


68 For more on the importance of mentoring, no matter what the career stage, see:


Riley-Reid (2017), ibid.


Stanley (2006), ibid.
Sugimoto (2014), ibid.
Thomas and Hollenshead (2001), ibid.
Tierney and Bensimon (1996), ibid.
Tillman (2001), ibid.


Zambrana et al. (2015), ibid.

70 One idea floated by several of our interviewees was the establishment of intra- and inter-institutional collaborations focused on shared infrastructure (e.g., open source solutions with support for those who do not have the resources, such as that offered by Humanities Commons and the publishing platform Manifold), standardized metadata (including the integration of ORCID across systems), and interoperability of platforms (including commercial ones), particularly those used across campus to track faculty productivity.

71 One example is the American Philosophical Association’s Good Practices Guide, written by Peter Railton, Mi-Kyoung Lee, Diane Michelfelder, Robin Zheng, which is “intended to serve as a set of recommendations to help philosophers create and maintain an academic community based on mutual respect, fairness, inclusivity, and a commitment to scholarship and learning.”

72 This point has been made from a number of different angles throughout this white paper. For more through this particular lens — that of academic care-giving and the emotional labor it requires — see:

Ahn et al. (2021), ibid.


Conesa (2018), ibid.
Docka-Filipek and Stone (2021), ibid.


Guarino and Borden (2017), ibid.
Harley (2018), ibid.


Miller et al. (2018), ibid.


Wingfield and Skeete (2016), ibid.

For more on the history of land-grant universities as a direct result of colonization, see:


Patel (2015), ibid.

Rodriguez (2012), ibid.


For more on decolonizing the academy and creating an anti-racist campus, see:


Andrews (2018), ibid.


Baffoe (2014), ibid.


Brook et al. (2015), ibid.

Bunda et al. (2011), ibid.

Burden-Stelly (2018), ibid.


Curley and Smith (2020), ibid.

Dei (2000), ibid.

de Leeuw et al. (2013), ibid.

Dennis (2018), ibid.


Gordon (2014), ibid.

Grande (2018), ibid.


Hall (2018), ibid.


Hathcock (2016), ibid.


Holmes (2013), ibid.


Jones and Jenkins (2008), ibid.


Minthorn and Nelson (2019), ibid.
Mott and Cockayne (2017), ibid.
Muñoz (2009), ibid.
Neylon (2020), ibid.
Niemann (2012), ibid.
Nishida (2015), ibid.


Richardson (2018), ibid.


Rouhi (2017), ibid.


Stein (2018), ibid.

Stockdill and Danico (eds.) (2012), ibid.

Sultana (2018), ibid.


Todd (2016), ibid.

Tuck (2018), ibid.


Uperesa (2016), ibid.


We are of course not alone in making this recommendation. As Edward T. Parker III (2020) argues, “The CDO must be in the C-suite. The chief diversity officer ought to sit at the president’s table. While CDOs who are organizationally positioned under the provost or chief academic officer are common, the CDO must have access to the president.” Thankfully, many of them already do. According to a 2019 survey by Russell Reynolds Associates, nearly 80% of the 60 CDOs in their sample reported to either the president (70%) or chancellor (10%); 15% reported to the provost. This is a considerable improvement over the sample of 94 CDOs surveyed in 2011 by the search firm WittKieffer, in which only 36% reported to the president (Leske and Tomlin, 2011), a number not much changed in their 2017 survey of 81 CDOs, in which the percentage of those reporting to the president, chancellor, or CEO had only risen to 40%. Admittedly all three surveys are fairly small samples and may not be reflective of the larger higher education landscape.

As Margaret-Mary Sulentic Dowell observes, “When senior campus leaders have robust understandings of the depth and breadth of diversity in all its dimensions, its centrality to the mission of public higher education becomes crystal clear. When this happens, the entire campus infrastructure shifts so that the positional authority and resource allocation necessary to realize equity and live diversity can be established. Leadership surfaces as central to the struggle for equity, and essential for the cause of equity” (209).


See:
Stanley et al. (2019), ibid.

Among the many fine resources developed to address campus climate issues is “Improving Department Climate: Tools and Resources for Departments and Department Chairs,” created by Susan Drange and Kristen Barnes for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Columbia University. See:
Williams and Williams (2006), ibid.


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APPENDIX A: Research Interview Script

The HuMetricsHSS Initiative endeavors to create and support a values-based framework that will enable scholars in the humanities and social sciences (HSS) to tell more textured and compelling stories about the impact of their research and the variety of ways it enriches public life. To advance the broad culture change that the HuMetricsHSS initiative envisions requires strategic focus on specific leverage points in the ecosystem of higher education. This second phase of funding includes strategic engagement in the form of targeted interviews with tenure system faculty, administrators, research impact librarians, and research evaluation managers in the Big 10 Academic Alliance (BTAA).

What we hope to understand through our conversation in the next hour is to understand the role you and your office/committee play in research and scholarly evaluation at the university and to better understand the challenges to and opportunities for rewarding what is most valued. Please be assured that confidentiality will be strictly maintained. We will not be recording this session, merely taking notes. Any summarized reports will present comments primarily in aggregate form; when comments are attributed, all identifying information will be removed (gender, rank, subfield, etc.). If there is anything at all that you would not feel comfortable being shared even in the aggregate, please let us know and we will mark the notes accordingly.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Please tell us a little bit about your office/committee and the role you (each) play within that group.
2. What kinds of metrics does your institution gather on faculty research productivity and impact? How are those metrics used, especially within tenure and promotion processes? Which of these do you feel are most effective, especially in ensuring that work you wish to recognize is being properly recognized?
3. What do you feel is missing in the current evaluation process? Is there something you feel you would like to see better recognized? What stories are you currently unable to tell that you would like to tell?
4. Please tell us about a value or values that guide your own work or that you see reflected across the work you see or in your division or the institution as a whole.
APPENDIX B: Research Participant Information and Consent Form

**Study Title:** HuMetricsHSS – Humane Metrics for the Humanities and Social Sciences  
**Researcher and Title:** Christopher P. Long  
**Department and Institution:** Dean’s Office, College of Arts & Letters  
**Contact Information:** cplong@msu.edu  
**Sponsor:** The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

You are being asked to participate in a research study.

**WHAT YOU WILL BE ASKED TO DO**

As participants in a HuMetricsHSS workshop or interview, you will be asked to reflect upon the values that inform your research and pedagogy and the processes by which academic work is evaluated and rewarded at your institution and across higher education. The workshops require active engagement with participants and the interviews require candid responses to questions related to research evaluation processes.

**YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW**

You have the right to say no to participate in the research. You can stop at any time after it has already started. There will be no consequences if you stop and you will not be criticized. You are free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the researcher (name and complete contact information: mailing address, e-mail address, phone number).

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University’s Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb[at]msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.
DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT

For the workshops and interviews, the following informed consent procedure is planned: The potential participants will be informed via email invitation about the topics to be discussed, the risks and benefits of participation, the manner and form in which data will be collected, how confidentiality will be maintained, and who else will participate in the focus group. They can thus make an informed decision about their participation. Their attendance at the focus group sessions will indicate their consent. Ahead of publishing the final findings, a draft will be circulated among the participants for review.

The procedure for informed consent will not require the explicit signing of a consent form, but will ensure that consent is implied by their participation in the workshops and interviews.
APPENDIX C: Faculty Reporting Systems

**Illinois:** Academic Analytics and Digital Measures

**Indiana:** Academic Analytics (opt-in)

**Iowa:** Digital Measures [Activity Insight]

**Maryland:** Digital Measures [Activity Insight]

**Michigan:** Interfolio + some homegrown systems

**Michigan State:** Academic Analytics (used to use Digital Measures [Activity Insight])

**Minnesota:** Digital Measures [branded as Works] [Libraries run Pure]

**Nebraska:** Digital Measures [Activity Insight], Academic Analytics, SciVal (Elsevier), Pure (Elsevier) [various colleges use various ones]

**Northwestern:** Interfolio (used to be Word docs) + Pure (Elsevier) [branded as Northwestern Scholars]

**Ohio State:** Symplectic Elements (called Vita) + homegrown system (many just use Word templates) + Academic Analytics

**Penn State:** Pure (Elsevier) + Digital Measures [Activity Insight]

**Purdue:** Academic Analytics + spreadsheets (used in College of Liberal Arts, but not university wide)

**Rutgers:** Sakai [famously resisted Academic Analytics]

**Wisconsin:** Academic Analytics (opt-in)
APPENDIX D: Interview Demographics

Affiliation by Field

Figure 1: Interviewee Affiliation by Field
Academic fields from self-reported data from the 123 interviewees.
Figure 2: Interviewee Disciplinary Affiliation
Disciplines aggregated from self-reported data from the 123 interviewees.
Figure 3: Interviewees by Discipline

Discipline information from self-reported data from the 123 interviewees.
Figure 4: Interviewees by Rank

No rank/unknown largely made up by librarians and administrators.
Interviewees by Role

Figure 5: Interviewees by Role
Roles self-reported by the interviewees.
Figure 6: Interviewees by University

Breakdown of university affiliation for the 123 interviewees.
APPENDIX E: Big Ten Academic Alliance Values

As part of our research, we examined vision and mission statements, strategic plans, and other materials produced by the BTAA universities that state the values each of them hold. Each document was tagged with corresponding values and then analyzed, with more weight given to the frequency of the term as it appeared across the corpus. Find the full list of 108 values in our interactive visualization.

Top 20 BTAA Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Illinois</th>
<th>Indiana</th>
<th>Iowa</th>
<th>Maryland</th>
<th>Michigan</th>
<th>Michigan State</th>
<th>Minnesota</th>
<th>Nebraska</th>
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Figure 7: Top 20 BTAA Values

The top 20 BTAA values are listed in weighted order by the number of references to the value in university materials.
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Documents Used in This Study

Illinois:
About the University of Illinois
Guiding Values of the University of Illinois System
Strategic Plan 2018-2023

Indiana:
About Indiana University
Mission and Strategic Planning

Iowa:
Operations Manual
Strategic Plan 2016-2021
UI Academic Mission

Maryland:
Mission and Vision (summary)
Mission and Vision (full version)
Statement on University Values
APPENDIX F: Charting Pathways of Intellectual Leadership

The Charting Pathways of Intellectual Leadership initiative offers a values-enacted framework that can drive institutional transformation. Where the current reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) model focuses on means — research, teaching, and service — the Pathways framework emphasizes the ends toward which scholarship is directed: sharing knowledge, expanding opportunity, and engaging in mentorship and stewardship. This subtle shift from means to ends restores the focus of the RPT process on meaningful outcomes.

![Diagram: Values, Activities, & Outcomes of Intellectual Leadership]

Figure 8: Values, Activities, and Outcomes of Intellectual Leadership

In dialogue with chairs, faculty are invited to identify horizon goals, milestones, and stepping stones along their pathway to intellectual leadership. Those goals become the markers of academic success; progress along their pathway becomes also progress toward tenure and promotion. With this model, faculty will no longer have to put the work that is most valuable to the university and most meaningful to them off until they receive tenure.
The semi-transparent circles in the diagram are the ends toward which we work: they are the primary narrative drivers in those career stories we mentioned already: sharing knowledge, expanding opportunity, and mentorship and stewardship. These are the things that “count” when we add up the accomplishments of a career. If a faculty member does them well, they will be recognized as an intellectual leader. Notice that this does not limit or establish a hierarchy for how such leadership manifests: leadership shows itself across our mission areas of research and scholarship, teaching and learning, outreach and engagement, service and stewardship. Indeed, the higher standard of academic quality we hope to cultivate involves an integrated combination of them all.

For more information about this approach, see:

APPENDIX G: Faculty Annual Review Forms

The faculty annual review forms appearing here in Appendix G have been developed by faculty and administrators in the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Culture (WRAC) in the College of Arts and Letters at Michigan State University.

The annual review process involves a peer-review committee of faculty members from the department who use these forms as they evaluate faculty activities over the course of a given year. These forms are submitted to the department chair and they inform decisions regarding general salary increases, annual review feedback, and mentoring conversations.

The first form is for tenure system (TS) faculty. It provides an example of how the Charting Pathways of Intellectual Leadership framework (see Appendix F) can be applied in an annual review context. The rubric here also includes language about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on faculty activities.

The second form is for non-tenure system (NT) faculty and academic specialists (AS), whose work focuses largely on teaching. All teaching activities of faculty in the non-tenure system at Michigan State University are governed by the Union of Nontenure Track Faculty (UNTF-AFT Local 1855/AFL-CIO). The dean’s office in the College of Arts and Letters at Michigan State University is working with non-tenure and academic specialist faculty to adopt the Charting Pathways of Intellectual Leadership framework to their specific appointment types.

These forms were developed through a collaboration of Sonja Fritzsche, Associate Dean of Academic Personnel and Administration in the College of Arts and Letters; Jacqueline Rhodes, at the time Professor and Department Chair in the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures and now Joan Negley Kelleher Centennial Professor of Rhetoric and Composition at the University of Texas – Austin; and Ben Lauren, Associate Professor, Director of Graduate Programs and Associate Chair in Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures at Michigan State University.
Faculty Annual Review Form – TS Faculty

Annual review and/or merit pay review committee members: Please complete a form for each faculty member under review. The committee chair will collect the forms to prepare a committee report for the chair that provides brief narrative commentary regarding each faculty member for the chair’s use in writing annual review letters.

Faculty member under review:    Review Year:

Contract percentages (or percentages negotiated research/creative activity/teaching service for the reporting year):

Sharing Knowledge

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<th>Level Three</th>
<th>Level Four</th>
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<tr>
<td>A faculty member must <strong>meet</strong> responsibilities to Department courses and students and show evidence of professional development.</td>
<td>A faculty member must have <strong>meritorious</strong> accomplishments in research and creative activity, instruction, and service within the academic and broader community.</td>
<td>A faculty member must demonstrate <strong>distinguished</strong> accomplishments in research and creative activity, instruction, and service within the academic and broader community.</td>
<td>A faculty member must demonstrate <strong>exceptionally high</strong> accomplishments in research and creative activity, instruction, and service within the academic and broader community.</td>
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Summarize Strengths, Weaknesses, Achievements, and Recommendations

As you summarize in this section, explain how the faculty member engaged the following considerations in regard to research activity.

How did the faculty member share knowledge?

How did the faculty member share knowledge through teaching?
How did the faculty member share knowledge through service/outreach?

Review committees must take the impact of the global pandemic into account in accordance with the Provost's memos on COVID impact statements and evaluation. The impact of COVID may have reduced the workload in the area of research in favor of greater activity and accomplishments in teaching or service. Reviewers need to accommodate for this change in workload and not review it adversely, but rather evaluate the review materials according to the work accomplished rather than the work not accomplished.

Mentoring/Stewardship

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<td><strong>distinguished</strong> accomplishments in</td>
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Summarize Strengths, Weaknesses, Achievements, and Recommendations

As you summarize in this section, explain how the faculty member engaged the following considerations.

How did they expand opportunities for others? In what ways did they engage in mentorship and stewardship?

Review committees must take the impact of the global pandemic into account in accordance with the Provost's memos on COVID impact statements and evaluation. The impact of COVID may have greatly increased the workload and accomplishment in the area of teaching and service. Reviewers need to accommodate for this change in workload and not review it adversely, but rather evaluate the review materials according to the work accomplished rather than the work not accomplished.
WRAC Faculty Annual Review Form – NT/AS Faculty

Annual review and/or merit pay review committee members: Please complete a form for each faculty member under review. The committee chair will collect the forms to prepare a committee report for the chair that provides brief narrative commentary regarding each faculty member for the chair’s use in writing annual review letters.

Faculty member under review: Review Year:

Contract percentages (or percentages negotiated research/creative activity/teaching service for the reporting year):

Teaching

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<td>A faculty member must <strong>meet</strong> responsibilities.</td>
<td>A faculty member must have <strong>meritorious</strong> accomplishments.</td>
<td>A faculty member must demonstrate <strong>distinguished</strong> accomplishments.</td>
<td>A faculty member must demonstrate <strong>exceptionally high</strong> accomplishments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summarize Strengths, Weaknesses, Achievements, and Recommendations

As you summarize in this section, also explain how the faculty member engaged the following considerations.

How did the faculty member share knowledge? How did they expand opportunities for others? In what ways did they engage in mentorship and stewardship?
Service/Outreach

<table>
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Summarize Strengths, Weaknesses, Achievements, and Recommendations

As you summarize in this section, also explain how the faculty member engaged the following considerations. How did the faculty member share knowledge? How did they expand opportunities for others? In what ways did they engage in mentorship and stewardship?
APPENDIX H: Appointment, Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion Recommendations

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

The Office of the Provost sends this policy bi-annually to deans, directors, and chairpersons to assist them in reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions. During its annual review, the University Committee on Faculty Affairs and the University Committee on Faculty Tenure can suggest changes.

View a PDF of the Spring 2021 Memorandum from Provost Woodruff.

The Nature of Faculty

MSU tenure-system faculty create, invent, produce, discover, express, and reveal elements about ourselves, our world, and our place in that world. Their work may examine the minutia of a bacterial cell or the complex significance of an artistic performance. The nature of this work allows us to understand, contextualize, and improve the human condition or may be abstracted from utility and exist solely as revealed knowledge. In the end, the diverse products of their work may be lauded by many or known by only a few, appreciated for their audacity or cited for their wisdom, and appear in books or papers, exhibitions, or productions.

MSU non-tenure-system faculty teach, advise, advance, and work on independent research, scholarship, and pedagogy that provide new insights that are conveyed in myriad ways. Our librarians, health professionals, academic specialists, and academic faculty in the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams contribute in specialized ways to scholarly life and contribute to the intellectual fabric of our community of scholarship.

While there is formalized nomenclature associated with academic tracks and the nature of work, at their core, MSU faculty are catalysts of human striving in pursuit of new knowledge and enduring truths, teaching and enabling learning for a new generation of students, and linking real world praxis to our cycle of understanding. Faculty are valued for their work and themselves. Faculty are the cornerstone of a great university.
Philosophy of Tenure

The conceit of the tenure system is that those who are able to create, fashion, and share new knowledge are also those who have earned special freedoms. Indeed, tenure is a concept that places academics in a unique class, allowing scholars the freedom to explore and express themselves and their work in ways that could be antithetical to present knowledge. This premise has an important corollary: those who are best at producing new work are also best able to teach what is known and to use their expertise to enable learning at foundational depth and on the leading edge of emerging knowledge. Research universities can only be called great when their creative and learning environments are in full resonance and each is valued as a fundamental aspect of what enables tenure. Knowing and learning are the outputs of those who earn this special status within the system.

MSU tenure-system faculty are also called to the higher purpose of a land-grant institution in which the service, outreach, or engagement component is weighted in equal measure to the pursuit and teaching of knowledge. Our land-grant mission is the leavening that allows MSU to continually rise, and with it the State of Michigan and our national and global partners and stakeholders.

Thus, the MSU philosophy on tenure is a frame for our aspirations to achieve the highest standards of research and teaching, and of service and outreach. This philosophy guides the evolution of our tenure and promotion systems across all units of the University over time. The value proposition of these systems is that they support all who strive to achieve the highest standards so that society will learn and become better as a result.

Tenure, and the associated promotion processes for all faculty, represent systems determined by the people who have created them. They have established academic “winners” measured, somewhat ironically, against the metrics of those who have gone before. This irony plays out further in that the cultural antagonist to a great institution is homophily. To resist this homophily, systems must be developed that enable scholarship and teaching to be viewed through the widest possible lens by the widest group of narrators. When tenure and promotion systems become regressive, scholarship is reduced to attributes of existing knowledge legitimized by those who have long held privilege. They then fail to imagine new possibilities in whose interest these systems were formulated (at best) and exclude new entrants into the systems who are most different from those for whom the systems were originally created (at worst). The
intention of this memo is to invite the units responsible for tenure and promotion recommendations in the University community to engage in a new kind of thinking that establishes and values a new level of creation, invention, production, discovery, expression, and revelation about ourselves, our world, and our place in that world.

Our philosophy of tenure and shared values for the promotion of faculty requires regular evaluation of standards for transitions and retention as well as indicators for assessment at all parts of the pathway. In its purest form, tenure represents one milestone along a trajectory of academic achievement, not a destination. Inasmuch as accomplishments that advance the effectiveness, climate, and culture of the unit, college, university, and discipline are attributes for a positive outcome, significant or repeated behaviors that are inconsistent with these values are reasons for institutional interdiction at any point in the lifetime of a tenure-system/tenured faculty. Tenure can never be used as a shield to hide or permit behaviors unbecoming the title faculty. Moreover, the environment in which tenure is earned is therefore tested as part of the system as well. Thus, the standards we set for earning tenure are a reflection of the University writ large, a measure of the accomplishments of a person, and a measure of the success of all the tenured or promoted faculty as stewards of this process.

Additionally, our tenure structure holds levels of accountability or duties. The first duty is of the Institution to establish clear values upon which policy rests. If we are what we value, we must be able to measure that value and use those values in our decisions. Thus, the aspirations of each decision should rest on all the bedrocks of our purpose — research, teaching, service, outreach, and engagement. The second duty for all members of the MSU community engaged in the recruitment and development of faculty is to review all of the documents associated with tenure and promotion. Members of the college leadership are called upon to engage in meaningful guidance and to establish a posture that is expectant of success, even when the new scholarship emerges at angles orthogonal to work that may have gone before. The test of any department lies in the success of its recruitment, tenure, and promotion process, not in the exclusionary practices of winnowing academics. The final duty rests with the individual to shape and nurture the next generation of knowledge. This is a high bar — work, ideas, and products are concretized in papers, books, performance, or sculpture, but also ephemeral in the development of another scholar in the profession. The core of tenure is earned by the individual; the process is enabled by the College; and the Institution, writ large, bestows the final outcome.
There are additional duties of the individual to the institution that are associated with this process and they include a fidelity to the highest standards of faculty behavior, the enablement of a culture and climate that is respectful of all individuals and takes personal responsibility for behavior and the associated climate that is created. Behaviors unbecoming a member of the faculty erode confidence in the individual. Thus, it is our duty as a member of the MSU faculty to be accountable for our actions, to hear critique, to be self-reflective, and to come to the aid of those who are subject to the negative impacts that result from behaviors unbecoming. The consequence of inaction is born out in structural corrosion and results in a climate where the best work, best teaching, and best selves cannot be accomplished or realized. Thus, at each point of possible interdiction, we must work to enable individuals who believe in personal standards and accountability to the profession, to the Institution, and to those within their unit. These duties are tested daily, and failure may be self-evident and correctable, or may need to be corrected by outside entities. Behaviors that erode an individual, corrode a culture, and etch themselves onto the Institution will eventually destroy the academy. Faculty members of MSU have a particular duty to hold themselves accountable. Institutional leaders have the duty to enumerate and hold the faculty accountable. These duties are within the purview of the reviews that occur in the context of appointment, annual reviews, reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

Indeed, the statement on Academic Freedom and Responsibility within the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Policy in the Faculty Handbook emphasizes that academic freedom and responsibility are intertwined: “Michigan State University endorses academic freedom and responsibility as essential to attainment of the University's goal of the unfettered search for knowledge and its free exposition. Academic freedom and responsibility are fundamental characteristics of the University environment and are always closely interwoven and at times indistinguishable.”

What follows is a framework that is sent annually to all tenure-system faculty, deans, school directors, and department chairpersons to assist them in creating the environment for success in which reappointment, promotion, and tenure work is done and decisions are made. Because recommendations for reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) are among the most important decisions made by great universities, clarity and transparency are essential components of an effective process. The published policies, procedures, and criteria for reappointment, promotion, and tenure provide further guidance.
Just as this memorandum is shared annually to communicate University-level expectations and procedures, each college will review the University statement and ensure alignment of their systems to enable a positive outcome. This policy is provided to the University Committee on Faculty Tenure, who suggest changes that ensure a shared view of this value proposition.

Guiding Policies

Section 1: University-Level Standards

Reappointment to a Second Probationary Appointment — Each reappointment recommendation should be based on clear evidence that a record is being established of progress toward becoming an expert of national and/or international stature, a solid teacher, and a contributing member of the unit, college, University, and/or discipline.

Reappointment with Award of Tenure — Each tenure recommendation should be based on a clear record of sustained, outstanding achievements in scholarship, teaching, and service across the mission, consistent with performance levels expected at peer universities. The record should provide a basis in actual performance for predicting capacity to become an expert of national and/or international stature and long-term, high-quality professional achievement and University service.

For the faculty member appointed initially as associate professor on a probationary basis in the tenure system who has established such a record, the tenure recommendation is effective upon reappointment after one probationary appointment period.

Extensions to the Tenure Clock — Some candidates for reappointment, promotion, and tenure will have received an extension of the tenure clock by virtue of University policy. Under these circumstances, the criteria for reappointment, promotion, and tenure are the same as is true for the faculty member who has not received a tenure clock extension.

Promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor with the Award of Tenure — A recommendation for promotion from assistant professor to associate professor includes the award of tenure, and should be based on several years of sustained, outstanding achievements in scholarship, teaching, and service across the mission, consistent with performance levels expected for promotion to associate professor at
peer universities. A reasonably long period in rank before promotion is usually necessary to provide a basis in actual performance for predicting capacity to become an expert of national and/or international stature and long-term, high-quality professional achievement and University service.

Promotion to Professor — Inasmuch as the University invests in an individual at the time of tenure, the measure of promotion to “full” is the investment the individual has made in the University. As such, a recommendation for promotion from associate professor to professor in the tenure system should be based on several years of sustained, outstanding achievements in scholarship and education across the mission, consistent with performance levels expected at peer universities. Moreover, it is an expectation that individuals should provide leadership within the department, mentorship to junior faculty and graduate students, teaching of undergraduates, service on committees, and contribute to a flourishing intellectual life for those in the broader discipline, unit, college, and Institution. A reasonably long period in rank before promotion is usually necessary to provide a basis in actual performance to permit endorsement of the individual as an expert of national and international stature and to predict continuous, long-term, high-quality professional achievement and University service. As a tenured faculty member, a professor must not only demonstrate disciplinary excellence, but also demonstrate commitment and effectiveness in larger institutional missions such as improving culture, inclusiveness, and equity both in the academy but also more broadly in society. Innovation brought to teaching and interdisciplinary team building that enables broader groups of people from the widest possible disciplinary or college perspective are also part of a move from individual work to being a university professor. Such a responsibility is even greater for those who earn promotion to full professor.

The Reflective Essay: Each candidate for reappointment, tenure, and/or promotion must include a maximum five-page reflective essay about accomplishments over the reporting period as a part of the dossier. This essay should highlight how accomplishments in research/creative activities, teaching, and service are significant and impactful and have contributed to the mission of Michigan State University. The Reflective Essay should not be a narrative of the individual's CV, but rather provide information on how previous and current accomplishments represent excellence.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts Related to Research/Scholarship/Creative/Performative Activities, Teaching Outreach, and Service: Because DEI are core values of Michigan State University, candidates should detail their
DEI efforts, providing evidence of their activities and accomplishments in the context of research/creative activities, teaching, service, outreach, and engagement. Faculty should include evidence of their activities and accomplishments in DEI, as appropriate, when detailing information on relevant research/creative activities, teaching, and service in appropriate sections of their dossier. Faculty should describe how these efforts are interwoven and enhance all other areas of faculty accomplishment. Whenever applicable, faculty commitment to learning and engaging in DEI efforts will be recognized and considered in RPT. Certainly, scholars across campus engage in a myriad of research and teaching efforts, not all of which can incorporate DEI activities. Significant involvement in DEI efforts can be viewed as a metric for advancement.

Core Values Related to Conduct: Accomplishments that advance the effectiveness, climate, and culture of the unit, college, and University, consistent with University core values, must be considered in these decisions, as must significant or repeated behaviors that are inconsistent with these values.

Section 2: The Focus of the Office of the Provost’s Review

The Office of the Provost review of each recommendation concentrates primarily on the evidence of the individual’s effectiveness in the performance of academic duties. Within this context, faculty must demonstrate substantive and sustainable achievement in research, teaching, and service, and the infusion of their scholarship into outreach and engagement efforts, where applicable. Assessment of faculty performance should recognize the importance of both research and teaching and learning, and their extension beyond the borders of the campus as part of the outreach dimension. Assessment should take into account the quality of outcomes as well as their quantity; it should also acknowledge the creativity of faculty effort and its impact on students, on others the University serves, and on the field(s) in which the faculty member works. It is expected that multiple methods for assessing performance be used in assessing research, teaching, and service. For example, the sole use of student evaluations of teaching is inappropriate as a means for assessing teaching effectiveness. Among other concerns, research has demonstrated bias in student evaluations of teaching relative to underrepresented minorities and women.

In many cases, faculty demonstrate excellence through individual scholarly activities. Collaborative scholarly efforts, cross-disciplinary activities, and the integration of scholarship into the creation, application, and dissemination of knowledge are also
recognized as relevant dimensions of faculty performance. Excellence in service at the unit, college, University, disciplinary, and/or societal level is also expected of faculty. In addition to the traditional markers of service (e.g., committee work, professional association efforts), activities that advance core values like diversity, equity, and inclusion for faculty, students, and staff must be recognized in assessing faculty performance.

Consistent with Michigan State University’s core values, the University is committed to excellence and equity in every facet of its academic mission. As such, all faculty are strongly encouraged to play a proactive role in learning about, contributing to, and supporting MSU’s institutional goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Contributions to DEI will be acknowledged, evaluated, and recognized in the reappointment, promotion, and tenure process, as well as in annual reviews of faculty accomplishments. The University acknowledges that contributions to DEI have largely comprised “invisible work” that often disproportionately falls on women and underrepresented groups, and recommits itself to recognizing and rewarding these efforts. DEI efforts can be accomplished through research, teaching, and service, with expected impact on the department, program, discipline, or institution. For example, candidates might: propel a research agenda that incorporates equity and inclusion issues, or diversity in their object of study; establish/support the creation of initiatives around DEI; foster inclusive learning environments both in the classroom and research groups that ensure that students are provided with equitable opportunities for success; participate in mentorship programs for minoritized students; create new DEI curricula programming; or work with diverse groups/organizations on and off campus.

Finally, as enunciated above, the University expects of faculty a fidelity to the highest standards of behavior, the enablement of a culture and climate that is respectful of all individuals, and personal responsibility for behavior and the associated unit and University climate that is created. Consistent with this philosophy, the Provost may use information regarding behavioral matters that are otherwise maintained in confidence in rendering final determinations.

Section 3: Expectations of Department Chairpersons, School Directors, and Deans[5]

The first responsibility for chairpersons or school directors is to ensure the development of a set of fair standards and evaluative criteria for use in making RPT recommendations. These standards must take into consideration peer evaluations that
have established a fair set of questions regarding contributions to the field, contributions to the values of the Institution, and other supporting information. As a general rule, in making assessments, no single indicator should be used as the sole measure of excellence and/or scholarly productivity; rather, the goal should be that multiple elements should be used in assessing excellence for each area of a faculty member’s assignment.

Unit administrators are responsible as individuals for the recommendations made to the dean. Deans independently review each recommendation for reappointment, promotion, and tenure, and in each case will focus primarily on how effectively the individual performs academic duties. They support or reject the recommendations of chairperson/directors and college review committees and independently make a recommendation to the Provost, taking into account unit, college, and University criteria. Bearing in mind the University's continuing objective of an excellent, diverse faculty, the unit and college must ensure well-grounded, well-justified recommendations of reappointment, tenure, or promotion.

Section 4: Expectations of Unit and College Review Committees

Each department and school is required to establish procedures so that its faculty can provide advice to the chairperson/school director regarding recommendations for reappointment, promotion, and tenure. Similarly, each college is required to have a college review committee, consistent with the policy “College-Level Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Committees.” Members of review committees are expected to make recommendations to the chairperson, director, or dean that are based upon full and frank discussions about candidates that are confidential, respectful, and evidence-based. All share the responsibility of building a unit characterized by inclusive excellence.

Because tenure is in the University, not the college or department/school, there should be some minimal level of uniformity in how college committees function. Thus, in addition to the dossier (Form D, CV, reflective essay) for each candidate, each case should include:

- Unit reappointment, tenure, and promotion bylaws and policies
- Information concerning the expectations for the faculty member, e.g., appointment letter for reappointment cases, annual review letters since last RPT action, dean’s
developmental letter at time of reappointment, letter explaining why a promotion case was previously denied

- Written reports from all unit peer review committees that include the votes to support the recommendation
- External review letters
- Unit-level RPT votes
- Abstentions in all votes should be restricted to conflicts of interest.
- All college committees are required to have each member vote on RPT actions and report the college vote to the Office of the Provost.

Section 5: The Process and Timeline

Unit peer-review committees make recommendations to the chairperson or school director. Chairpersons and directors then make unit-level recommendations which are reviewed by the college peer review committee, which makes a recommendation to the dean. Deans make the college recommendation to the Provost by February 28 each year. Because tenure at Michigan State University is in the University and not in the department, school, or college, every action prior to the Provost’s review is a recommendation. Only the faculty member can stop a reappointment, tenure, or promotion case from moving forward to the next higher level of review. A negative recommendation by the chairperson, director, or dean does not eliminate the review at the Provost level. Recommendations are to be based on explicit unit and college criteria and quality evaluations that are consistent with unit, college, and University policies and goals.

The Office of the Provost reviews occur each year during March and April. Faculty are to be notified of the recommendations from their chairperson/director and dean when those recommendations are forwarded to the next level for review. Faculty will normally be notified of the final recommendation for reappointment, promotion, and tenure actions during May. Official notice of final decisions will normally be sent to faculty members in June, after the President has approved promotion actions and the Board of Trustees has approved tenure actions at its June meeting. Reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions become effective on July 1 of each year.

See Faculty Guide for Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Review: https://hr.msu.edu/ua/promotion/faculty-academic-staff/guide.html.

Service includes accomplishments that advance the effective functioning, climate, and culture of the unit, college, and University, consistent with MSU core values. It also includes service to the profession, or in support of outreach and engagement in the greater Lansing community, across the state of Michigan, nationally, or internationally. The definition of “service,” similar to research and scholarship, varies by faculty member, but can be intellectually described and reviewed by members of the academic community.

While collaborative scholarly efforts are recognized and encouraged where appropriate, reappointment, tenure, and promotion decisions are individual to the faculty member. Evidence of the faculty member’s individual contribution to collaborative efforts is critical in making these decisions.

For those colleges which are not organized into departments and schools, the dean, as unit administrator, holds the responsibilities that are required of chairpersons and school directors in other colleges.

Further information about tenure committees can be found in the faculty handbook.