

Transforming Tenure and Promotion: A Grassroots Initiative

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“A tenure denial is made to seem as if it is the sole responsibility of the person denied tenure, but it is also evidence of a department’s and institution’s collective failure to adequately mentor, integrate, and help their junior colleagues navigate the hidden rules, culture, and politics of their specific institution” (Park, 2020, p. 280).

Faculty from communities facing historical and ongoing intersecting systems of expropriation, exploitation, and exclusion (including BIPOC, women, LGBTQ+, nonbinary, working class, people with disabilities, immigrant/refugee populations, and especially those at the intersections of these identities) experience enormous challenges at every point of the educational system. If historically excluded people make it to a tenure track position, they have already successfully negotiated the educational pipeline from K-12 through the demands of a PhD, and the hiring biases in tenure track lines, only to face tenure and promotion processes that are vague, based on a faulty premise of meritocracy, individual values, color-blindness; and full of implicit bias and unwritten assumptions (Matthew, 2016; Galarza, 2019; Zambrana, 2018; Freeman, 2018) or even “a hazing process” (See, 2016, p. 155). The outcome is that faculty from historically excluded groups are more likely to leave institutions without tenure and if they get tenure, are less likely to be promoted to full professor (Durodoye et al., 2020; Stewart & Valian, 2022; Guillaume, 2022).

This article focuses on the initial steps of one college at San Francisco State University to shift the culture of tenure and promotion processes. In regard to language, we choose in this article to use the global term “faculty from historically excluded communities” but recognize that there are unique stereotypes and issues associated with various identifications or intersecting identities. A Black gay man faces some different microaggressions than an Asian American

woman or a non-binary person with disabilities, but the structural oppression built into higher education treats all who do not fit the White middle class male model on which the system was based, in similar ways (Clay, 2015; Griffin, 2016). Much of the research we cite was on specific subgroups with one or more marginalized identities, and this is necessary and important work, but beyond the scope of this paper to address. We recognize that the effects of structural oppression are not merely additive, but intersectional and multiplicative (e.g. Guan et al., 2021; Harpur et al., 2023; Tefera et al., 2018) and can result in “battle fatigue” (Arnold et al., 2016; González, 2020; Robinson, 2022; Fujiwara, 2020) based on racism, classism, sexism, gender normativity, heterosexism, and other factors that contribute to inequity.

We focus on over-arching themes in tenure and promotion that affect nearly all faculty from historically excluded communities. We begin with a brief introduction on research about the challenges faced in the tenure and promotion process, then describe the development of a set of dialogical questions to guide revisions for tenure and promotion criteria departments and programs as well as the grassroots approach we undertook to ensure various stakeholders in the College of Health and Social Sciences, at San Francisco State University, could engage with the social justice principles of the document and eventually take part re-envisioning the tenure and promotion process and criteria for all departments/schools in our college.

Research on Tenure and Promotion for Historically Excluded Populations

“In contrast to the myth, when it comes to inclusiveness, universities may be the last bastion of elitism and sanctioned racism in the United States” (Niemann et al., 2020, p. 3).

On the surface, tenure and promotion seems straightforward, as in the edict “publish or perish.” At research intensive universities where the greatest emphasis is on scholarship, this is still true, but at every institution faculty are evaluated on at least three aspects of their

performance: scholarship, teaching, and service; and these are often treated as separate (but rarely equal) components. Metrics and numeric assessments have been developed to make the process appear to be objective and data-driven, but written tenure and promotion guidelines are full of unwritten assumptions (Matthew, 2016), including perceptions about “fit” in the department, cultural differences that affect interpersonal communication and relationships, tensions between value systems (individualism and its emphasis on meritocracy, individual effort, and competition versus collectivism: see Brunila, 2016, for examples), implicit bias in tenure and promotion committees, perceptions about the quality of scholarship related to use of the mainstream disciplinary theories and methods versus innovative cutting edge interdisciplinary work (Fillingim et al., 2023), campus climate issues (Garrison-Wade et al., 2012), negative perceptions about “diversity or affirmative action hires” and issues of cultural taxation (Reddick et al., 2021).

The unspoken rules and infrastructure of the university still promote straight, White, male privilege and values; that has been obscured by vague language about rigor, academic freedom, meritocracy, excellence, diversity, inclusion, and being a team player (Zambrana, 2018). There is still a prevalent myth that diversity is at odds with excellence or high standards (Gibau et al., 2022). Tenure and promotion guidelines may not allow for self-determination of faculty (Guillaume & Kalkbrenner, 2019; Kelly & Winkle-Wagner, 2017), to have agency over one’s own scholarly trajectory as in how to balance one’s scholarship, teaching, and service activities—even what to study and how. Additionally, the imprecise guidelines for tenure and promotion often overlook the racialized and gendered expectations, labor and time that women, LGBTQI+ and nonbinary faculty of color take on that are not present in dated metrics for teaching, research, and service.

Campus climate affects all faculty from historically excluded groups, creating the paradox of visibility, that is, of being hyper-visible as the only or one of a few members of a group represented on faculty; while at the same time being rendered invisible and silent by larger forces that result in microaggressions and obstacles to success at every level, such as lack of recognition, pressures to conform in order to “fit,” mispronunciations of names, being described as angry, exotic, sassy, inappropriate, too loud, and other stereotypes (Beagan et al., 2021; Berhe et al., 2021; Edwards et al., 2022; Gibson, 2019; Monforti & Michaelson, 2020; Pitcher, 2017), or “forced to hide in plain sight” (Mobley et al., 2020, p. 606). Individual faculty members’ abilities to be “fair,” a value that most favor, are negatively impacted by a wide variety of invisible psychological factors from schemas, stereotype threat, implicit biases, and cognitive distortions (Stewart & Valian, 2022).

For women and women of color faculty, being able to speak up for one’s self is a challenge; as Edwards et al. (2022) noted, “it is important to speak individually . . . but to do so is to enter a game that is still set against us” (p. 2) and “when I do speak up for myself, I am told to ‘take things in the spirit it was intended’ by white male colleagues” (p. 11). Thus, faculty from historically excluded communities may remain silent for many reasons: to avoid being seen as a trouble-maker; to avoid colluding in a policy or practice they disagree with, but choose not to engage in the battle; to avoid potential retaliation; from self-doubts and imposter syndrome (Edwards 2019); because microaggressions are sometimes subtle and hard to explain; and many more. Being silenced is a form of invisibility. Gibson (2019) outlined some of the challenges in speaking up in academe:

You are overreacting. That’s not how I meant it. Why are you so sensitive? Can’t you just ignore it? No one here is a bad person. Let’s make sure we remain

collegial. I don't even see your race. . . . We are all good people. . . . We should be civil. (p. 216)

Campus climate is related to class differences as well, and often gets couched in terms of “professionalism,” which hides middle class assumptions for one’s appearance and behaviors and effectively says to many faculty, “Don’t bring your lived experience to work” (Davies & Neustifter, 2021). After years of being rendered invisible and isolated, though, when it comes to tenure reviews, “[a]ll of a sudden they put you under this microscope” (Zambrana, 2018, p. 148).

Campus climate also includes the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities of a campus. Many have noted that the current emphasis in many universities on DEI may work against real progress by obscuring structural oppression (Rodríguez, 2020; Zambrana, 2018; Castañeda et al., 2020). García Peña (2022) writes:

[t]he project of ‘diversity and inclusion’ that many of us are forced to represent does not lead to freedom or justice . . . rather . . . it yields a language of comfort that allows white supremacy to name us in the very process of creating our exclusion. (p. 29)

In other words, “diversity efforts may exacerbate rather than ameliorate inequality” (Arnold et al., 2016, p. 891). The system also upholds sexism, gender binaries, and heterosexism in addition to White privilege. Bourabain (2021) called current DEI initiatives in the academy a “smokescreen of equality” (p. 255), masking the ways the system continues to exclude “interlopers” (Montegary, 2023). When tenure committees have not been trained in implicit bias, the letters they write for colleagues from historically excluded communities may reflect their own biases and lack of knowledge (A4BL Anti-racist Tenure Letter Working Group, 2022). Implicit bias can manifest as beliefs that faculty from historically excluded communities are

incompetent in their main fields of study, or not giving them the benefit of the doubt when manuscripts or grants are rejected, minimizing or erasing one's accomplishments as "non-impactful" activities, and/or acting surprised when one is successful (Zambrana, 2018).

These are factors that cut across all three areas of tenure and promotion evaluation. We will address the three areas separately below, although recognizing that they overlap to a great degree, especially for faculty from historically excluded communities. For example, teaching and service can represent significant intellectual and creative contributions (King, 2022), and one form of service translates research for use by people in practice. There is a growing literature on each of these areas, so for the sake of brevity, we offer only a few representative citations for each issue.

Scholarship

"The oppression we study in society is the oppression we experience in academia"

(Valverde & Dariotis, 2020, p. 45).

Knowledge production is a central component of faculty work, and it is often the area most scrutinized by tenure and promotion processes. A study of over 900 faculty from research intensive universities showed that White male faculty had the most publications, the highest h-indexes, and got tenure earlier than women or faculty of color (White et al., 2020). Academic-specific microaggressions that faculty from historically excluded communities experience are comments like, "[t]hat kind of research will never get funded. . . . might not want to look too social/racial justice oriented . . . don't be too out" (Galarza, 2019, p. 165). Faculty from historically excluded communities face several challenges related to scholarship, including:

1. **Lack of mentoring.** Mentoring in scholarship has many benefits, such as being provided advice about funding sources, strategies to enhance publication, professional networks

and connections, calls for manuscripts, general support, and often, research collaborations. Faculty from historically excluded communities are more likely to report difficulty finding a mentor and having negative experiences with mentors (Davis et al., 2020). Inniss (2020) reported “one person’s nurturing mentor is another person’s spirit murderer” (p. 24).

2. **Resources.** Faculty from historically excluded communities may be concentrated at non-research intensive universities where there are fewer internal grant programs, less research start-up monies, and less research infrastructure for grant-writing and administration, no funds for publication fees, less travel money, etc. White men are the most likely to receive grant funding (Stewart & Valian, 2022). Many universities operate on reimbursement systems for research and travel. That is, faculty members must pay these costs out of their own pockets and wait weeks or months for reimbursement. Many faculty do not have the financial resources to support this practice, thus are disadvantaged in their scholarship.
3. **Content/research agenda.** Of course, some faculty from historically excluded communities conduct research on discipline-specific topics with no social justice focus, but many chose a research career to work for the better of their own communities. This is sometimes dismissed with the derogatory term “me-search” and considered biased, political, too personal, too practical, and/or atheoretical (Edwards et al., 2022; Harris, 2020; Thomas, 2019; Reyes, 2022; Veldhuis, 2022). Grace Park (2020) was told by her tenure committee “[w]e are scholars not activists” (p. 284). In reality, community-based research is time-consuming, exhausting, and rigorous work, more likely to have real-life applications and lead to social change. Women and faculty of color reported higher rates

of having their research devalued, and this was associated with lower job satisfaction and higher intent to leave than for White men (Settles et al., 2022).

4. **Methods.** Again the issue of rigor is often raised for research that does not use the supposedly more objective methods of quantitative science. Numbers-driven work has a place in the academy, but is not as useful for answering questions about structural oppression, lived experience, and complex social phenomenon. When tenure decisions are weighted toward data-based articles and sophisticated statistical formulas, important studies about things like lived experience can be dismissed.
5. **Potential publication biases.** Many faculty from historically excluded communities engage in cutting edge interdisciplinary methods that may not fit as well in the mainstream journals of one's discipline; thus are relegated to specialty journals that might not be familiar to members of tenure and promotion committees and/or not considered "top-tier" (Guillaume et al., 2020; Veldhuis, 2022). Editors of mainstream disciplinary journals may have an unconscious "quota system" in mind and be more likely to desk reject articles outside of mainstream content and methods (Eliason, 2023). Harris and Nicolazzo (2020) noted "[t]he reality remains that our borderlands scholarship [based on Gloria Anzaldua's work] is assessed, peer-reviewed by, and published within an academy that is steeped in systems that construct and maintain binary, monolithic, and inflexible ideologies" (p. 238) and "[w]hile we as trans people were working to author our own lives, society was working to write over our lives" (p. 239).
6. **Authorship issues.** When criteria are based on individual effort alone, tenure guidelines may favor single or first authorship, or even result in formulas of calculating article contribution as a percentage, such as counting a second author on a two-author paper as

half an article. These systems deny the possibility that a research collaboration might involve all authors having an equal contribution to the innovative intellectual work of development of research questions, design of studies, analysis and interpretation of findings; but unequal distribution in the less intellectually important aspects of article-writing logistics. Moreover, consider that probationary faculty may come from communities where Western logics of proprietorship are incompatible with “commons” such as land and knowledge, and/or where bringing attention to one’s self for potential gain contradicts notions of modesty and communal obligation. As such, efforts to quantify the contribution of each collaborator, translate said contribution into a given convention for author-order, and/or ascribe a certain percentage of credit for a co-written publication in a tenure file can be foreign, risk exacerbating inequalities amongst collaborators, implicitly discourage collaboration, and create unnecessary work to make our labor legible. Indeed, deciding author-order produced an issue for us as we recognized and worked to go beyond the proprietary logics and potentially inequitable implications of author-order. The insights shared here emerged only through dialogue with one another, and, thus, we hold that every person contributed equally (despite author-order).

7. **Citation practices** favor the authors in mainstream journals of a discipline, thus ignoring the contributions of faculty from historically excluded groups (Fillingam et al., 2023). Reviewers of manuscripts look for these mainstream citations and may reject articles that don’t contain them.

Teaching Effectiveness

“When we actually try to teach what we were ostensibly hired to teach, we are met with roadblocks, outrage, and outright attacks at every turn” (Nam, 2020, p. 172).

“The most marginalized teach about diversity” (Ahluwalia et al., 2019, p. 187)

Teaching is often the most direct way that faculty can contribute to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts of universities, through role-modeling as well as content and pedagogy; but it is not often seen as such by tenure and promotion processes (Jennings, 2010; Orlov & Allen, 2014; Francisco-Menchavez et al., 2023). Course load issues are central, with faculty from historically excluded groups often having higher workloads overall (particularly when the combination of teaching and service are examined). There are several ways that faculty from historically excluded communities are disadvantaged by current ways of evaluating teaching.

- Student bias in evaluation. There is a considerable literature showing that students’ explicit and implicit biases show up in evaluations of faculty from historically excluded communities, often reflecting negative stereotypes based on race, gender, sexuality, and more (Clay 2015; Boring, 2017; Heffernan, 2022).
- Faculty from historically excluded communities are often tapped to teach the most difficult classes; that is, those that focus on issues for minoritized populations and social justice. While seeking to also embody the tenets of social justice pedagogy in the classroom while teaching about social justice, they face greater student resistances, external challenges (political attention on critical race theory and historically accurate pedagogies, for example), and need greater emotional and psychological resources in the classroom to negotiate this difficult terrain. Teaching that employs a critical lens and is grounded in social justice can be emotionally exhausting and is rarely extrinsically

rewarded (Veri et al., 2022). The faculty from historically excluded communities is often charged with teaching the most difficult content to meet accreditation standards, letting other faculty off the hook from learning about oppression and incorporating this critical information into their own classes. The burden of representation and DEI in pedagogy is put entirely on the already marginalized faculty member (Ahluwalia et al., 2019).

- Greater scrutiny of class materials and teaching style. Cultural differences in communication and the role of the teacher (authoritarian versus egalitarian, for example) may mean that tenure and promotion committees are more critical of assigned readings, class topics, grading practices, and other aspects of teaching.
- Student advising: Faculty from historically excluded communities are often inundated by students seeking advising and mentoring, as they are visible role-models for students. Nam (2020) suggested that some faculty take on heavier advising loads and more challenging teaching because “[w]e as women of color and queer people of color faculty do this not because ‘We’ve been there,’ but because ‘*We’re still here,*’ subject to the very same kinds of exploitation and oppression that our students face” (p. 173).

Service Work

“Women are expected to, and will, labor for love” (Stewart & Valian, 2022, p. 96)

Academic institutions cannot operate without the service of faculty members in the running of an academic endeavor; from curriculum committees, admissions work, planning graduations and student forums, fund-raising, policy-making, student advising, overseeing student organizations, mentoring of students and probationary faculty, and many more. Service is the area with one of the most glaring disparities: women, especially women of color, do far more of the type of service that is considered “non-promotable tasks” (Babcock et al., 2022;

Zambrana, 2018). Black women are so burdened by service activities that they were dubbed “the maids of academe” (Harley, 2008, p. 20).

Many authors have written about the cultural taxation of faculty from historically excluded communities; the extra burden put on faculty for their perceived expertise in representing their home communities, such as being asked to be the token representative for one’s community on multiple committees and task forces; be the face of diversity on university PR materials; deliver guest lectures; advise student groups; write the diversity sections of accreditation or departmental review documents; and other forms of “hidden service” that are not typically included in one’s curriculum vitae (Domingo et al., 2022). Such inequitable distribution of service with diminished value not only impedes career advancement, but is also exacerbated by the lack of clarity and consistency by which service is evaluated in the RTP process. Some issues related to service include:

- Devaluation of internal service work, “housekeeping” tasks that are done predominantly by women, as opposed to elected positions at higher levels (Edwards et al., 2022).
- Perceptions about local community involvement as one’s hobby (personal) rather than legitimate service, or perceiving community work as activism. For example, Messinger (2011) found that LGBT faculty who engaged in advocacy work experienced more discrimination and microaggressions than LGBT faculty not perceived as activists.
- Difficulty of faculty from historically excluded communities in saying “no” to service and risk being perceived as “not a team player” or shirking their duties. Requests for service often come from those in power over tenure decisions.
- Siloed service: DEI work or other work on behalf of students and communities that are historically excluded are devalued. This type of DEI work, while sometimes rewarding,

can also take away time from one's own scholarship. For instance, consider the following reflection: "[w]e lost time for our research in trying to put right a system we did not create that has never benefitted us" (Edwards et al., 2022, p. 10).

The Working Circle for Tenure and Promotion Justice at SFSU

The College of Health and Social Sciences at San Francisco State University, under the then leadership of Dean Alvin Alvarez, launched the RACE initiative in response to the murder of George Floyd, beginning with a series of town hall meetings and racial healing circles to give voice to the grief and frustration felt by many faculty. The mission statement for the initiative states:

The CHSS Reflections and Actions to Create Equity (RACE) Initiative is a college-wide and permanent commitment to dismantling racism systemically in the college and to advancing and embedding racial justice in its teaching, research and service as well as its policies, procedures, and operations. Given the dual challenges of dismantling institutional racism and reimagining a racially just institution, the RACE Initiative is dedicated to a long-term process of institutional transformation and collective struggle towards actualizing our ideals and aspirations.

Dean Alvarez convened a working circle to address social justice in the tenure and promotion process. The charge to the committee was to provide context and guidance helpful to departments/programs as they revise their tenure and promotion documents and procedures, with an eye toward racial justice, and in agreement that all faculty have intersecting and complicated identities that cross race/ethnicity, national origins, linguistic, immigrant or refugee status,

gender, sexuality, class, ability levels, and many more. A respondent in Zambrana's study (2018) noted:

[t]here are subtle ways and I think you never know what it is people are discriminating on. Is it because you're a woman? Is it because you're an out gay woman? Is it because you're a Chicana that doesn't talk academically theoretical lingo?. (p. 94-95)

Thus, our focus is broad and addresses the ways that systematic oppression affects faculty with diverse and intersecting identities and communities.

AAUP's recent survey of DEI practices in tenure (Edelman, 2022) showed that 22% of institutions included DEI criteria in tenure reviews, 39% had examined tenure standards for implicit bias, and 39% had provided implicit bias training to tenure committees. Of institutions that address DEI in tenure reviews, a few have considered using DEI activities as a "fourth bucket" whereas others attempt to integrate them or even require them as part of a typical tenure review (e.g., Gibau et al., 2022, describes a system for rewarding "champion level" work on DEI but allows individual schools and departments to use existing criteria without consideration of DEI).

Oregon State University (OSU) took a broader view and added this statement to the tenure guidelines in 2015 (<https://facultyaffairs.oregonstate.edu/faculty-handbook/promotion-and-tenure-guidelines>). For example, the OSU faculty handbook on promotion and tenure states:

Oregon State University is committed to maintaining and enhancing its collaborative and inclusive community that strives for equity and equal opportunity. All faculty members are responsible for helping to ensure that these goals are achieved. Stipulated contributions to equity, inclusion, and diversity

should be clearly identified in the position description so that they can be evaluated in promotion and tenure decisions. Such contributions can be part of teaching, advising, research, extension, and/or service. They can be, but do not have to be, part of scholarly work. Outputs and impacts of these faculty members' efforts to promote equity, inclusion, and diversity should be included in promotion and tenure dossiers.

We opted for an incremental process that might lead to actual systems change rather than tackling institutional policies. We began with a statement of general principles (authored by working circle member Cesar Rodriguez), an approach compatible with Fillingim, Reyes, and Ricks-Ahidiana's (2023) call for introducing a new set of values to the tenure process (they call for care, humility, and dignity). The general principles also recognize the need for self-determination (Guillaume & Kalkbrenner, 2019; Rodriguez, 2011). The rest of the document focuses on sets of guiding questions for departments to grapple with as they revise their tenure and promotion documents and processes. Below, we note the grassroots approach in creating robust discussion towards faculty buy-in rather than top-down administrative initiatives, in hopes that investing in faculty dialogue would likely to transform the system from the bottom up.

In the spring of 2022, working circle members, Drs. Sherria Taylor, David Rebanal, Cesar Rodriguez, Sheldon Gen, Valerie Francisco-Menchavez, and Mickey Eliason convened bimonthly meetings to center our experiences, explicitly drawing out our intersectional identities and how those informed how we navigated through our lives in academia. With the objective of centering the experiences of historically marginalized faculty to reimagine the metrics of tenure and promotion, our meetings invited each of us to be vulnerable and honest. The discussions evoked frank and painful experiences, and also creative and sustaining strategies for surviving

the tenure-track process. The transcripts for our meetings were collated and summed up by working circle member Mickey Eliason, who brought the first draft together. Each member then read and reviewed a draft that was sent to the Dean's office. In her first semester in an inaugural administrative position in the college, Valerie Francisco-Menchavez, Assistant Dean of Restorative and Transformative Racial Justice, brought the working draft to a first reading at Chair's Council and gathered broader faculty input through an online survey, attendance of department meetings, faculty caucuses, one-on-one meetings, and recruitment of faculty facilitators across the 12 departments in the college. The grassroots logic was to introduce and engage discussion with college leaders with the acknowledgement that it was tenure-track and tenured faculty who would need to have major stakes in the principles of the RTP and Social Justice guidelines as they would be taking part in their own departmental discussions and revisions. From top-down to bottom-up, the intentional spaces organized to discuss the policy created a robust dialogue across the college. Francisco-Menchavez then organized the feedback and revised the document for a final reading and vote for adoption of the working draft to college policy. The full document can be accessed at <https://chss.sfsu.edu/retention-tenure-and-promotion-rtp-and-social-justice-5-15-23>.

Prelude: People in the Academy from Communities Facing Historical and On-going Intersecting Systems of Expropriation, Exploitation, and Exclusion

To be truly inclusive and supportive of all faculty, staff, and students at a university requires attention to the recognition of obligations and opportunities that arise from membership in historically excluded communities. This recognition has implications for self-definition and for positive outcomes for individual faculty members and the communities they belong to, live in, work with, and serve. We believe that a department or college that acknowledges the impact

of these obligations and opportunities will better serve all of its communities, not just those from historically excluded groups.

Recognition of Obligations

- Most immediately, this requires a recognition of the multiple **obligations** we face as people from and with commitments to rectifying historical exclusion.
- We are *not* **decontextualized workers** without obligations to undertake reproductive labor to support our communities, our loved ones, and our selves. Nor are we without obligations to communities facing historical exclusion.
- We are **people living at unique intersections** of cis-heteropatriarchy, racialism, ableism, and capitalism and other forms of oppression, with intimate proximity to communities making life with dignity possible despite the negations of these co-constituting systems of inequitable social ordering.
- We live in bodies that exist across a range of **abilities**, and we may be living with both visible and invisible disabilities.
- We are **relations** who do not abnegate the reproductive labor necessary to support our communities, loved ones, and, of course, ourselves onto others: we undertake that labor.
- We are **community members** who cannot ignore projects of collective protagonism (“self-determination”); we join our communities in struggles that go against and beyond systems of oppression.
- We are **teacher-learners** who belong to similar, if not the same, communities that the people we work with in the classroom belong to; and subsequently, invest into our mutual co-development.

- We are **agents** whose practices unsettle historical and on-going processes of exclusion which generate risks—including fatal threats to our very lives.

All of these obligations are, at best, unseen and, at worst, discredited or discouraged.

They, nonetheless, create unique demands on our time and abilities—that is, they create forms of what is now called **cultural taxation**.

Recognition of Opportunities

We must also recognize the **opportunities** created by these obligations to deploy our trainings (both formal and unofficial) and abilities to support the struggles of communities we belong to. We often already deploy our capacities to meet these obligations in ways that exceed the narrow spectrum of traditional academic labor within the categories of “research,” “teaching,” and “service”—a spectrum informed by the logics of oppression. These opportunities include:

Accompaniment

Most immediately, a recognition of opportunities to **accompany**, or walk with, communities we are embedded within—in ways that exceed what is currently defined as service or scholarship. Knowledge is generated through struggle, and those at the front lines of struggle generate erudite and relevant knowledge. Opportunities to accompany communities in struggle deepen the **relevance** and **erudition** of our work as educators and writers, insofar as we learn with and are **grounded** in communities protagonizing to address contemporary, local, material, and relevant challenges.

Knowledge work

These obligations create opportunities to co-generate and share erudite interventions in collaboration with intellectuals and communities (inside and beyond the academy). Moreover,

these also create opportunities to craft interventions that (1) are shared through a **multitude of modalities** (beyond narrow confines of a peer-reviewed publication obscured by paywalls and arcane language); (2) are more readily **accessible** and **useful** to multiple communities.

Teaching

These obligations and their concomitant opportunities to accompany communities of struggle can deepen the relevance of what we can share with people we work with in the classroom—from skills and insights to concepts—if only because we are grounded in communities and issues they are connected to themselves. Such a potential educational experience deepens students' ability to be of service—either as engaged community members and/or working professionals—to address critical social issues. This requires **experimentation** to find ways to exchange with the people we work with in the classroom, as we work to provide a relevant training and meaningful experience—all of which exceeds what a problematic, Likert-scale student evaluation otherwise registers.

Self-Definition

Such recognitions require the opportunity for tenure-track faculty to engage in **self-definition** to narrate our obligations, terrains, trainings, and the subsequent interventions we craft.

Terrain

We may identify a terrain in a traditional academic sense: to survey academic literature, note gaps therein, and develop a strategy to intervene. However, self-definition permits a probationary coworker to **narrate the unique demands** given our obligations to certain communities in a historically and geographically specific terrain, then narrate how these obligations and opportunities inform *how* we accompany communities, *how* we exchange in the

classroom, and *how* we craft interventions. Thus, we can narrate why we chose to labor in ways that go beyond traditional academic modalities.

Training

The opportunity to self-narrate also entails self-defining the formal, disciplinary training we pursued in traditional academies; from bodies of literature, theoretical traditions, methods of inquiry, onto disciplinary specific modes of writing. As members of historically excluded communities, we've often been trained in "**alternative academies**"—those clandestine spaces where subjugated knowledges are generated, and where unofficial, unrecognized if not delegitimized, ways of knowing and being are shared. In the mid- to late 20th century, people of color, queer, disabled, working poor, and gender-based communities of struggle partially disrupted the traditional academy (and its reproduction of capitalism, racialism, ableism, and cis-heteropatriarchy), creating an opportunity for us to articulate our hitherto subjugated ways of knowing and being through the academy. Thus, self-definition allows us to deploy these alternative, subaltern ways of knowing and being, and/or our formal trainings, in the service of struggle during our capacity as knowledge workers in the disrupted academy.

Interventions

Traditional academia entails faculty members using their training in specific methodologies to craft interventions to shape a given terrain. Certainly, we may choose to invest our labor into crafting a traditional, peer-reviewed text, to teach in traditional methods, and pursue traditional modes of service. Through self-definition, we can also narrate why our obligations, terrains, and formal and otherwise unrecognized trainings **inform how we craft unique interventions** to serve specific communities, in ways that exceed traditionally recognized academic modalities.

Expected Outcomes of Recognition

Labor justice

Such recognitions and self-definition can constitute a form of **labor justice**. No longer presumed to be decontextualized knowledge workers, we can avoid the exacerbated demands to fulfill two seemingly disparate sets of demands: obligations to our communities, and a narrow set of requirements in the traditional categories of research, teaching, and service. Instead, coworkers from and with commitments to historically excluded communities can deploy their training and labor to realize their obligations, potentials, and interventions in the service of communities we're obliged to, and have that labor recognized within an expanded spectrum of rewarded academic labor (a spectrum that exceeds the current register of traditionally defined academic labor).

Diversifying the professoriate

Furthermore, in recognizing a broader multitude of ways we work and create, we deepen the opportunity for our co-workers, particularly lecturer faculty, to be considered for tenure-track hires, and as viable candidates able to achieve tenure and promotion. This, in turn, can help **diversify our professoriate** to better reflect the diversity of the people we work with in the classroom, all while deepening their educational experience by incorporating some of our best educators with the deepest practical experience and local networks.

Trickle-Up Social Justice

We invite those who read this document to recognize social justice not as a zero-sum game. Instead, social justice proposals are opportunities to improve our entire lot as faculty. Consider the sage and practical insights shared by activists in the trans community—that of **trickle-up social justice**. This general practice centers the grievances, analyses, and, most

importantly, proposals of those most negatively impacted by intersecting systems of cis-heteropatriarchy, racialism, ableism, and capitalism. As such, in expanding the spectrum of recognized academic labor to include the erudite and rigorous interventions crafted by probationary faculty from working-class communities of color, the proposals shared in this project can expand the spectrum for all faculty, creating new and creative opportunities for them to invest their labor and have their interventions recognized as legitimate outcomes. This parallels the promises of universal design. The principle of trickle-up social justice invites us to consider how tenure and promotion might be further reimagined and improved when interrogated from the vantage point of other co-workers, including lecturer faculty, faculty that are impacted by the criminal justice and immigration enforcement systems, queer and/or trans faculty, etc.

Tapping Unforeseen Creative Potential

Finally, by recognizing our obligations, our informal trainings, and the opportunities created thereby, all while expanding the register of recognized traditional labor, this unleashes potential for **unforeseen creative innovations** potentially generated by faculty in our college, campus, and beyond. This can facilitate new collaborations with intellectuals inside and outside of the academy, encourage new methodologies of analysis, new modalities of creating and sharing interventions, and reward creative and effective pedagogy, all while deepening our ties and relevance to related communities.

Questions to Guide Tenure and Promotion Revision

General Considerations for Departments as a Whole to Discuss

These guiding questions offer departments discussion prompts as they revise their tenure and promotion documents. The process intends to include and contextualize sociopolitical,

economic, and historic contexts to assist the academic department think through equity that may go beyond tenure criteria.

- What are the expectations for the department and tenure/promotion Chair or Committee in the process?
- What structural barriers in the university tenure/promotion system has your department identified that affect success for your candidates?
- What added value do faculty from historically excluded communities bring to the department?
- How can departmental tenure/promotion documents acknowledge the cultural taxation on faculty who belong to historically excluded backgrounds?
- Is there recognition of issues of labor justice in assignments of workload?
- What do the tenure/promotion documents say about values of the department?
- Does the tenure/promotion process consider the whole person, or fragment that person into only the three areas?
- Is the tenure/promotion process conceptualized as a developmental process?
- Are departmental policies and procedures, including tenure/promotion, transparent?
- Are departmental committees charged with supporting promising lecturer faculty to prepare them for tenure track positions?
- How are tenure/promotion and other departmental processes aligned with notions of equity and inclusion?
- How are faculty trained to be effective tenure/promotion Chairs and committee members?

Questions to Guide Revision of Teaching Effectiveness Criteria

- How are course load assignments addressed in tenure/promotion criteria?
- How do tenure/promotion criteria address the potential biases in student evaluations of teaching?
- How do tenure/promotion processes address the scheduling of and format of peer observations of teaching?
- Are social justice teaching methods valued and noted in tenure/promotion criteria?
- Is there recognition of the equitable distribution or workload of “difficult” classes in the department?
- Are tenure/promotion reports focused on strengths rather than deficit, and formative and developmental in the early years?
- What and how many types of data do departments use to attest to the efficacy of a faculty member’s teaching?
- Are advising and mentoring, two very different activities, lumped together in tenure/promotion criteria?

Questions to Guide Revision of Professional Achievement and Growth Criteria

- How is scholarship defined and measured in the departmental tenure/promotion expectations?
- Is there a compelling reason to specify a number of scholarly outputs?
- Is there a rationale for a formula or process calling for weighting of co-authored works? That is, is collaborative work valued or considered less than individual work?
- How are factors like “rigor,” “impact,” or “significance” of scholarly work defined and measured?

- Do textbooks and monographs count the same as peer-reviewed journal articles or books in university presses?
- When are external reviewers an advantage to faculty candidates?
- When does so-called “grey literature” count as scholarship?
- What is the value of translational work?
- How is the inclusion of students in research publications and presentations weighted or valued?
- How is collaboration in research and scholarship discussed, supported, and valued?
- Is it feasible to give some credit for work not yet published or funded?
- How about curation work?
- How are equity issues with requirements for conference presentations addressed?

Questions to Guide Revisions of Service Criteria

- Can faculty members truly decline certain service activities without penalty?
- How are the expectations of service articulated, and how are the commitments of faculty accepted and incorporated into faculty’s workload and trajectory?
- Do tenure/promotion criteria recognize the often invisible service activities of many faculty?
- Is there recognition of the added labor and cost involved in campus and professional organizations where the faculty member is expected to represent historically excluded communities on top of other duties?
- What about peer review activities?
- Where in the dossier can faculty explain the interconnections of their service, scholarship, and teaching?

Conclusions and Next Steps

The project of revising RTP criteria and creating spaces for dialogue among faculty and across departments is ongoing. Currently, under the leadership of Dean Andreana Clay and Assistant Dean Francisco-Menchavez, the College of Health and Social Sciences at SF State is reworking a tenure and promotion guidebook to provide guidance to (1) departments to engage these questions during revision of departmental criteria for tenure and promotion; (2) candidates navigating the review, tenure and promotion applications; (3) chairs and members of tenure and promotion committees to recognize the white supremacy culture and values that litter the tenure and promotion process. This guidebook is a direct outcome of the grassroots approach we took when we pursued making the aforementioned guiding questions as a part of college policy. Instead of a handbook that puts the onus only on candidates (as it existed prior this process), faculty in our college insisted that change needed to include departments, RTP chairs and committee members who had power to inform and shift the conceptual and pragmatic terms of RTP in our college. Workshops for faculty at all ranks to discuss and actualize the tenets of the policy are continuing. For faculty in CHSS, having this document as part of our college's discourse has been helpful in incorporating invisible labor in teaching, research, and service in tenure and promotion narratives. As we usher in the first round of RTP protocol revision wherein departments can consider these guidelines, we are looking forward to difficult yet generative discussions reflecting on our college's practices around tenure and promotion. Although the above guidelines for RTP criteria have been adopted to college policy, we understand that seeding these principles is a protracted process towards change. Therefore, we offer these questions and our process as one way of addressing two strategies—a grassroots and college-level approach—to transform tenure and promotion processes.

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