

Faculty Educational Requirement for Racial Justice and Equitable Futures

Summary of the WG-F [Final Report](#) to the Faculty Senate (4/5/2021)

Cornell's radically equitable founding vision and [core values](#) guide this recommendation to the Senate. The faculty is committed to the principles of academic freedom and free speech articulated in the [University Statement](#) and have a responsibility to extend the rights it protects to all members of the community. Doing this effectively requires faculty to understand that structural racism, colonialism, and injustice, and their current manifestations have a historical and relational basis, even as it requires that faculty learn to communicate effectively across the differences that they will encounter as they go about their daily work. Ensuring an equitable climate on campus is an essential responsibility and this proposal suggests a framework to support faculty engagement with diverse colleagues, students, members of the staff, and with the broader community.

By "faculty" we mean all members of the University and RTE faculties. Job descriptions vary across these populations, but dedication to an antiracist, just, and equitable campus is important to all. Versions of the faculty education piece also apply to post-docs, research assistants, teaching assistants, and others whose actions have a direct bearing on the campus climate for learning. The faculty educational requirement parallels the [student educational requirement](#), and the six-course training [program](#) required by the Office of Human Resources for all staff. This proposal describes a framework for content production, delivery, and accountability.

We recommend that the faculty educational requirement be built on models of impactful content designed and delivered by Cornell's Office of Faculty Diversity and Development ([OFDD](#)) located in the Office of the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs ([VPAA](#)). The OFDD already has an excellent record of offering a variety of [workshops](#) to departments frequently collaborating with the [Intergroup Dialog Project](#) (IDP), the Graduate School's [Office of Inclusion and Student Engagement](#), and the [Center for Teaching Innovation \(CTI\)](#). Two salient examples of workshops that use video modules (produced with Cornell Interactive Theater Ensemble, [CITE](#)) followed by facilitated discussion groups are "It Depends on the Lens" that addresses bias in faculty recruiting, and "Hang in There and Be Tough" which addresses race/gender issues in the classroom. We recommend additional support for the OFDD so that they can create (and regularly update) a library of readily available instruction modules on topics that relate to various faculty roles (mentor, advisor, instructor, supervisor, colleague, director, etc.) as they may occur across a multiplicity of venues (classroom, laboratory, office, department meeting, residence hall, etc.). Departments/faculty should cycle through workshops over time sequencing the topics in a way that addresses their most pressing needs and in a manner that respects faculty time and commitments. We recommend that the OFDD track faculty participation and provide regular reports to departments with the expectation that individual participation over the course of a semester be in the vicinity of two hours.

A number of additional steps need to be taken to ensure participation and accountability. First, we recommend that the current requirement for a DEI statement from all applicants to faculty positions be extended and a DEI statement be part of the dossier in all renewal and promotions cases. The Senate's [AFPSF](#) committee has examined this idea in the context of [tenure promotions](#). Second, based on the example of many individual departments and the College of Engineering, a DEI-related question be added to course evaluations across the campus. While bias towards women and BIPOC faculty should be taken into account, this will provide many opportunities for improvement. Finally, annual reports by chairs to the Dean should document faculty participation in OFDD programs, summarize course evaluations and outline departmental climate issues. These annual DEI snapshots must become part of the periodic program review undertaken by the [FCPR](#) and VPAA.

In conclusion, we emphasize that this education requirement does not impinge in any way on what faculty choose to teach, write, or research. It is focused instead on workplace support and education so we will be better able to safeguard the entire community's rights to free expression and academic freedom in a community of learning.