



CREATING  
CONNECTIONS  
CONSORTIUM

# CREATING CONNECTIONS CONSORTIUM

Summary Report  
2013-2023

CREATING CONNECTIONS TO TRANSFORM HIGHER EDUCATION  
FUNDED BY THE MELLON FOUNDATION

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

As originally stated, the mission of the Creating Connections Consortium (C3) was to “advance innovation and transformation in higher education—to enable students and faculty, whatever their identities, backgrounds, or institutionalized positions to access, thrive, realize their capabilities, engage meaningfully in institutional life, and contribute to the flourishing of others.” This mission emerged directly from Susan P. Sturm’s definition of full participation, which refers to the ability of all people, regardless of identity or background, to achieve their full potential in higher education as contributing stakeholders. Specifically, C3 worked to intervene in the professional development, mentorship, and capacity building of underrepresented undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs in support of faculty and curricular diversity at liberal arts colleges (LACs).

C3 as a consortium took form when administrators from three LACs (Connecticut College, Middlebury College, and Williams College) partnered with committed collaborators at two research universities (University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University) to disrupt a negatively reinforcing cycle of LACs failing to recruit and retain faculty members from underrepresented groups. These initial five partner schools eventually became eight with the addition of Bates College (2015), the University of Chicago (2016), and the University of Michigan (2016).

### Methods

C3 began in 2013 with four programs to support students, MFAs, and PhDs along the academic pathway: Undergraduate Fellows, C3-Liberal Arts Diversity Officer (C3-LADO) Visits, Postdoctoral Fellows, and the Summit. In 2017, three new programs were launched and the Postdoctoral Fellows program was discontinued. The new programs were Pathways to Academia: Visits and Experiences (PAVE), New Scholar Series, and Faculty Funding. The PAVE visits were intended to complement the C3-LADO Visits, and the New Scholar Series and Faculty Funding programs were designed to introduce departments and programs to innovative junior scholars of color who they might then hire as tenure-track faculty with initial funding from C3. Whereas the original programs defined “underrepresented” more broadly, the New Scholar Series and Faculty Funding programs only funded participants from racialized communities, meaning that White women who historically benefit the most from affirmative action initiatives were not eligible.

### Findings and Recommendations

With support from the Mellon Foundation, C3 created opportunities for thousands of stakeholders and instituted models for undergraduate and graduate student professional development as well as faculty recruitment. With a focus on students and postdoctoral fellows from underrepresented groups, C3 developed a pathway approach to faculty diversity that relied on cross-institutional and multi-generational collaboration. These collaborative communities of practice were nimble and responsive to the changing needs of undergraduate students and recent

MFAs and PhDs through mentoring, capacity building, and professional development that inspired another Foundation-funded initiative, the Associated Colleges of the Midwest.

It is notable that all C3 LACs employ a greater percentage of faculty of color now than they did in 2013. There was a “cumulative and multifaceted impact” on faculty hiring, one program administrator remarked, of which C3 was a part, but not the only factor. The success of C3’s approach is also reflected in the placement of 83 percent of C3 postdocs into tenure-track positions, a placement rate that we celebrate even though C3 cannot take full responsibility for their successful employment. Partner LACs have also hired 43 tenure-track faculty from the partner research universities over the last decade, irrespective of race or ethnicity. At the time of writing this report, three former postdocs are tenured, and two undergraduate research fellows hold tenure-track positions. Another five undergraduate research fellows have received PhDs, and 22 are currently pursuing PhDs. Of the 47 graduate students who presented at New Scholar Series symposia, 34 have graduated, and 17 of these graduates have tenure-track or tenured positions at higher education institutions (HEIs). Finally—with the support of C3—LADO institutions hired 27 faculty with Faculty Funding, and as of this writing, these faculty remain at their institutions.

C3 revealed the challenge of attempting transformational change at institutional scale when authority is decentralized and accountability is lacking. In a faculty governance structure that (as of yet) permits minimal intervention from institutional administrators, it was a challenge to ensure equity in the candidate search process. For this reason, multiple participants suggest that institutions and initiatives that are interested in diversifying their professoriate prioritize structural change. Recent scholarship from education scholars suggests that various strategies together could advance racial equity in faculty hiring—from including equity advocates in search committees to requiring experiential learning opportunities for committee members to implementing holistic review as part of the search. Other scholars recommend updating faculty hiring policies to include equity checkpoints or introducing financial incentives to ensure equity in the search. A multipronged approach is best, as the results of these strategies will vary, depending on the institution or the unit running the search. At the same time, the end goal of this work is not simply to increase the representation of faculty of color or ensure equity in the faculty search process. These steps are just part of a much bigger culture change and the full participation of all members of our HEI communities.

## **Conclusion**

This ten-year initiative has changed lives and supported the advancement of underrepresented scholars and their families, and has uncovered key structural issues that must be remedied if we are to ensure full participation of all institutional constituents. In other words, the work continues; and if we see all our work together in support of full participation as part of a larger effort, then it is impossible to despair. It is our hope that you use this report—and the lessons we learned through C3—to further the objective of full participation at your own HEIs, a goal that has the potential to ensure educational access and social mobility for all stakeholders.

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*Dedicated to Michael E. Reed and Jeffrey W. Cason*

## Introduction

Affirmative action has been under attack since the 1970s. While effective at boosting the admission of students of color to selective higher education institutions (HEIs), race-conscious admissions have been challenged for ostensibly being unfair to White applicants—a view that ignores the persistent impact of racial and ethnic discrimination on applicants of color and presumes that the admission process is otherwise meritocratic. This summer, the conservative-dominated Supreme Court is expected to rule against affirmative action, forcing HEIs to employ other strategies to assess students' diverse backgrounds and experiences. In California and Michigan—two of the nine states where race-conscious admissions are even now outlawed—the enrollment of Black undergraduates, for example, declined precipitously when the law changed.<sup>1</sup> HEIs (and the attorneys who represent them) have for decades been incubating and building alternative admissions policies, aware that the affirmative action model is under legal threat *and* insufficient at achieving racial equity.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Shirley M. Collado, president and chief executive officer of College Track and president emerita of Ithaca College, noted that she and other co-founders of the Creating Connections Consortium (C3) were acutely aware of the challenges around prioritizing support to students from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups and were “hypervigilant” about defining “underrepresented” broadly—to include students of color but not exclusively.<sup>3</sup> In its work with existing (already admitted) undergraduate and graduate students, C3 emphasized “full participation,” instituting programming to support a pathway approach to hiring faculty from underrepresented groups, including faculty of color, at partner liberal arts colleges.

As originally stated, C3’s mission was to “advance innovation and transformation in higher education—to enable students and faculty, whatever their identities, backgrounds, or institutionalized positions to access, thrive, realize their capabilities, engage meaningfully in institutional life, and contribute to the flourishing of others.” This mission emerged directly from Susan P. Sturm’s

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<sup>1</sup> At the same time, employers have been prohibited from considering race or ethnicity when hiring a job candidate since 1964. Erin Doherty, “Colleges brace for the end of affirmative action,” *Axios*, February 24, 2023, <https://www.axios.com/2023/02/24/affirmative-action-sctus-college-diversity>; Civil Rights Act of 1964; 7/2/1964; Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, 1789-2011; General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the 1996 article by Susan P. Sturm and Lani Guinier, “The Future of Affirmative Action: Reclaiming the Innovative Deal,” *California Law Review* 84 (1996): 953-1036. See also Susan P. Sturm, “Reframing Affirmative Action: From Diversity to Mobility and Full Participation,” *The University of Chicago Law Review Online*, October 30, 2020, <https://lawreviewblog.uchicago.edu/author/susan-p-sturm/>.

<sup>3</sup> The initial 2012 proposal emphasized support for underrepresented graduate students and recent graduates. It defined “underrepresented” as those who are either historically underrepresented (such as African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, or other Pacific Islanders), are first-generation college students, or have followed nontraditional pathways to college due to exceptional talent and motivation in the face of adversity, such as societal, economic, or academic disadvantages. However, when we inaugurated the New Scholar Series and Faculty Funding programs in 2018, we emphasized that participants in these two programs specifically should be people of color, in recognition that White women have historically benefited most from affirmative action programming.

definition of full participation, which refers to the ability of all people, regardless of identity or background, to achieve their full potential in higher education as contributing stakeholders.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, C3 worked to intervene in the professional development, mentorship, and capacity building of underrepresented undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs in support of faculty and curricular diversity at liberal arts colleges.

From 2013 to 2023, C3 supported the professional development of nearly 2,600 participants from 70 HEIs. Of the 103 undergraduate fellows who have graduated, seven have received PhDs, 14 have received either a JD or masters degree, and 22 are current PhD students. At the time of this report, C3 postdoctoral fellows have obtained tenure-track positions at an astonishing rate of 83 percent (24 of 29), and half are currently at liberal arts colleges (LACs).<sup>5</sup> Notably, all C3 LACs now employ a greater percentage of racialized faculty members. Of course, we cannot say for certain that this progress inevitably emerged from C3 programming. At the same time, these same institutions hired a total of 43 tenure-track faculty (of all races and ethnicities) from the R1 partner schools. These outcomes were achieved in collaboration and through partnerships that prioritized cross-institutional decision making. As Dr. Collado stated, “Partnerships are really what propelled the beginning of C3; the vision has always been collaborative.”

This report is based on nine, semi-structured interviews with administrators, including some co-founders, who later had the opportunity to review, modify, or correct their statements. The interview participants had the option to remain anonymous. Also included is feedback from a group of C3-affiliated staff and administrators to whom I presented the early findings that form the basis of this report. The goal of this report is to provide a history of this grant-funded initiative, elaborate on its successes and challenges, and present strategies for building on our work.

### **C3 Origin**

With funding from the Mellon Foundation (Foundation), C3 began in 2013 as the result of an alliance of administrators across five HEIs. Previously, three co-founders of the Liberal Arts Diversity Officers (LADO) consortium had met to commiserate over their shared struggles to diversify the professoriate at their respective colleges: Connecticut College, Middlebury College, and Williams College. These administrators were in leadership positions with influence over faculty hiring and worked closely with a chief academic officer. An interview participant later recounted that the co-founders were concerned that dissertation committees were dissuading junior scholars from taking positions at liberal arts colleges out of the assumption that these institutions did not encourage or support rigorous scholarship. At the same time, the administrators hoped to engage LAC departments and programs and have faculty equally invested in their vision of full participation.

C3 as a consortium began to take form when these LAC administrators partnered with committed collaborators at two research universities (University of California, Berkeley and Columbia University). The university administrators were already dedicated to recruiting and supporting the professional development of underrepresented graduate students. In the case of UC Berkeley, one

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<sup>4</sup> Susan Sturm et al., “Full Participation: Building the Architecture for Diversity and Community Engagement in Higher Education,” *Imagining America* 17 (September 2011): 1-22.

<sup>5</sup> Each of the C3 LAC partner schools hired one of their postdocs and Middlebury College hired two.

administrator had existing ties with LADO and had invited faculty members to campus to connect their students with faculty life at LACs. At the Columbia Law School, the Center for Institutional and Social Change was (and is) led by an expert on workplace equity in higher education, and the Center had demonstrated expertise in strategic planning, research design, and systems assessment that it would mobilize to support C3.<sup>6</sup> These initial five partner schools eventually became eight with the addition of Bates College (2015), the University of Chicago (2016), and the University of Michigan (2016).

## **Initial Goals**

As reflected in the 2014 grant report, organizers initially identified three goals for achieving the goal of full participation: Pathway, Capacity, and Hardwiring.

1. Through the *Pathway* model, we sought to enable diverse groups of students and faculty to enter, thrive, and succeed in higher education. Our focus was on individuals as they moved through the pathway from undergraduate to graduate studies to postdoctoral and academic employment.

One administrator recalled how essential it was to intervene at key points along the academic pathway and not restrict our focus to just academic hiring committees, for example. Dr. Collado remembered initially asking, “What if we thought way bigger than our places [colleges] and started thinking about the solution, about the whole pathway... providing these connecting points, [since] very few research universities were even advising their graduate students of color around all of these things?” Another interview participant concurred and added that educating underrepresented graduate students about faculty life and expectations at LACs was an important step to recruiting them. This West Coast respondent stated, “The issue was that our students knew about the R1 schools (e.g., Stanford, Harvard, the UC system); but they knew very little about liberal arts colleges, because that tradition is not as strong in California as it is in the Northeast and the Midwest. And consequently, [graduate students] would benefit from new opportunities if they understood more about what a faculty position in a liberal arts college looks like.”

Initially illustrated by Manuel Poitras, then the C3 Research and Program Associate, the Pathway model 1.0 (Figure 1) cultivated a coherent and structured approach to diversifying the professoriate and achieving full participation. Through the biannual Summit and three programs that allocated funding, training, and other support to undergraduates, graduate students, and recent MFAs and PhDs, the approach envisioned a process that would guide students to become LAC faculty. With the elimination of the Postdoctoral Fellows program and the addition of three new programs (Pathways to Academia: Visits and Experiences (PAVE), New Scholar Series, Faculty Funding), C3 added a

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<sup>6</sup> The first grant proposal identified the initial members of the Executive Committee, as well as their *then-titles* and the HEIs they were associated with at the time. They were Carlos Alonso, Ph.D. (Irving and Jean Stone Dean of Arts & Humanities, Columbia University), Roger Brooks, Ph.D. (Dean of the Faculty, Connecticut College), Anthony Cascardi, Ph.D. (Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and Vice President for Graduate Education, UC Berkeley), Shirley M. Collado, Ph.D. (Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of the College, Middlebury College), Michael Reed, M.A. (Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity, Williams College), and Susan P. Sturm, J.D. (George M. Jaffin Professor of Law and Social Responsibility and Director of the Center for Institutional and Social Change, Columbia University). Josephine Moreno, Ph.D. (Graduate Diversity Director, Arts & Humanities, UC Berkeley) was also instrumental in co-founding the initiative.



professional development opportunity for graduate students and provided two funding opportunities for LACs to showcase and hire junior faculty of color. The Pathway model 2.0 is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 1: Pathway Model 1.0

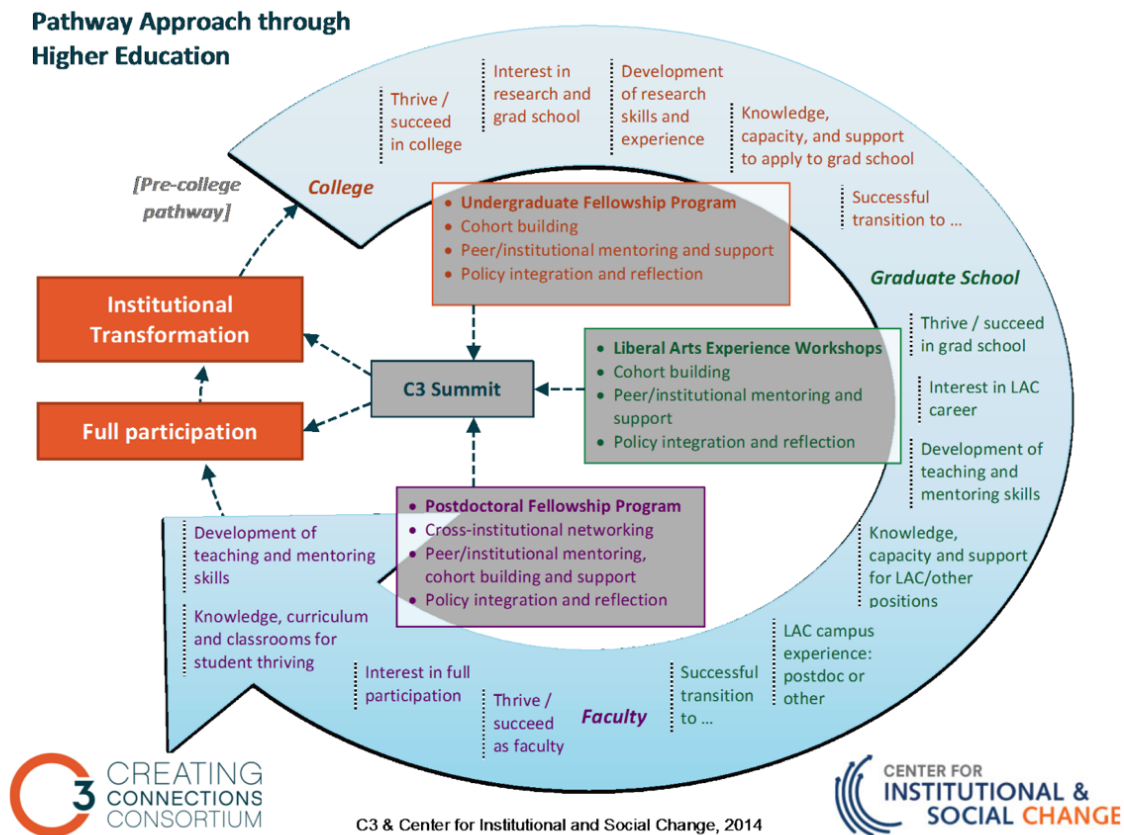
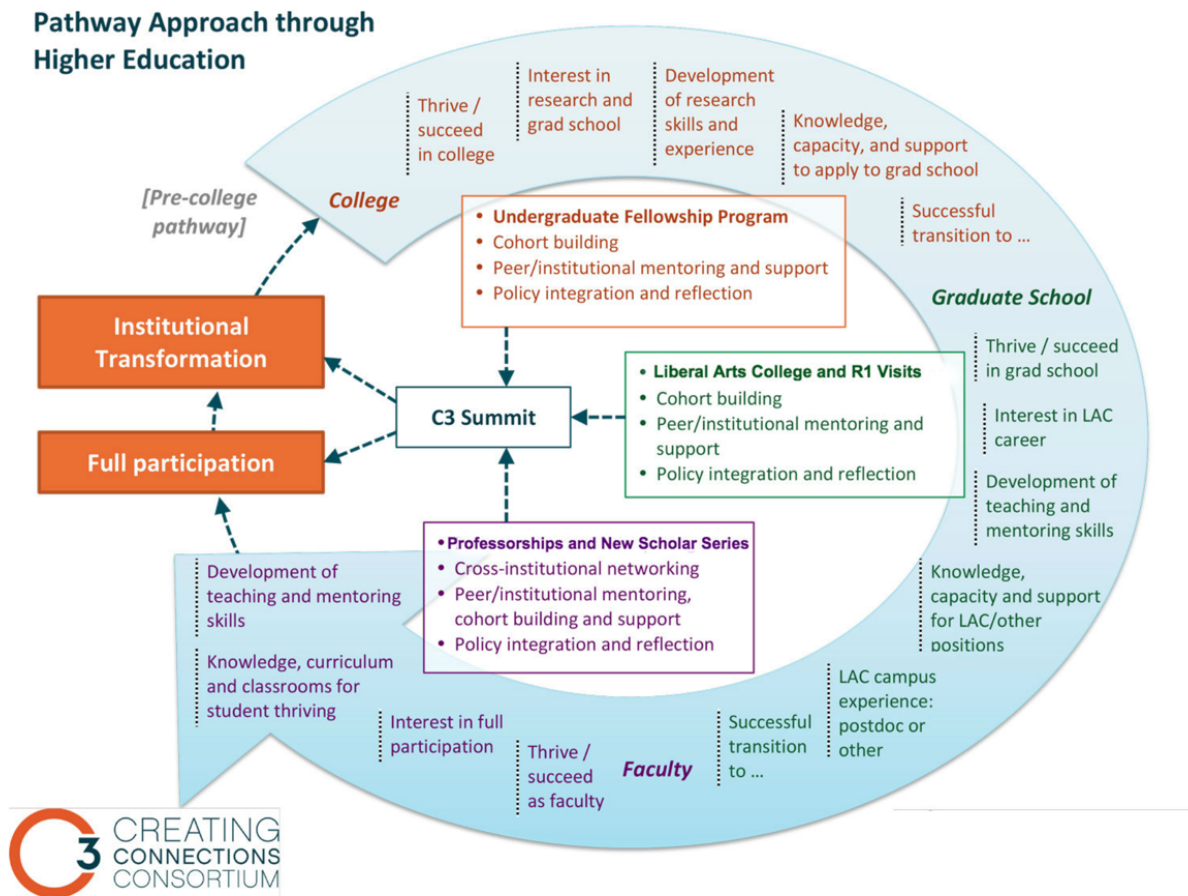




Figure 2: Pathway Model 2.0



- Our second goal was to build and enhance constituents' *Capacity* for full participation in academic pathways. By focusing on relations that structure the pathway and build capacity, we erected scaffolding beyond individual action in support of movement through the pathway.

Support for this pipeline of underrepresented scholars included building mentoring relationships and networks across both research institutions and LACs. One interview participant said that an initial approach was to cultivate collaborative relationships across the LADO institutions to together create a pipeline of graduate students who would eventually become tenure-track faculty. Dr. Collado articulated how connecting with UC Berkeley (and Dr. Josephine Moreno) was the key moment when C3 became possible: "We essentially found a partner who was actually trying to address the same issue for her graduate students [around] placement. And we thought, 'You know what, this could be really exciting for graduate students of color.' But we must get in front of them." In other words, it was not enough to wait until PhD or MFA students were at the hiring stage. Administrators had to be prepared to support these junior scholars throughout graduate school and ready departments for them in advance.

3. For the third goal, we prioritized *Hardwiring* change to make it sustainable over time and transportable to other settings. This entailed emphasizing policies and cultures that (ideally) solidified C3's innovations and integrated them into the HEIs and environment along the pathway.

From the beginning, C3's co-founders recognized that hardwiring change meant more than creating temporary positions (e.g., lectureships, postdoctoral fellowships) for underrepresented scholars. Unsurprisingly, instituting policies and cultures that would persist beyond C3 (and support the continued hiring of faculty from underrepresented groups) proved to be the most difficult goal to achieve. Dr. Collado expressed, "The biggest issue was absolutely having a line baked into a school that would allow these talented graduate students to become more than just visiting faculty or fellows... And the home departments that would host these faculty also needed to be really serious about being a destination for more faculty of color." More specifically, Collado said, administrators hoped to "open the window to cluster hiring and targeted opportunity hiring and a real commitment of how to match talent. [We wanted] departments to understand the value of what it meant to really start with this vision. And that by doing it, they weren't dumbing down the professoriate or being forced to compromise their governance structures." To date, however, cluster hiring and targeted opportunity hiring for underrepresented faculty have not been integrated into policies at C3 partner schools.

### **Mellon Foundation Investment in C3**

One interview participant stated that the Mellon Foundation was interested in funding C3 for three primary reasons. One, the Foundation was excited about how C3 proposed to hire postdoctoral fellows and transition them into tenure-track faculty members. They had hoped that C3 would create a model that HEIs beyond the consortium could use to hire underrepresented, tenure-track faculty. By having LACs collaborate with research universities, C3 was employing "the postdoc as a way of accelerating the diversification of the professoriate by basically using a lot of carrots." Two, by "using a lot of carrots to strengthen the ties between two sectors of higher education with compatible needs and goals," the Foundation saw potential in C3's cross-institutional collaboration—both across C3 partner institutions and across the dozens of LACs in the LADO consortium. The proposed collaboration aligned with existing Foundation efforts to answer the question, "How do you create synergies across the higher education sector?" Collado added that some of the schools in these consortiums were not the "usual suspects" funded by the Foundation and so "people and organizations that weren't always working together ended up being in the same room" and collaborating for change. People working together to answer this question across the C3 and LADO institutions suggested that sustainability might be possible. Third, the Foundation was excited by C3's commitment to supporting networking across constituents and HEIs. C3 programming saw undergraduates socialized by graduate students who were themselves advised by LAC faculty. An interview participant added, "The original emphasis on undergraduate and postdoc cohorts also suggested that progress could be made by professional development within and across the two communities."

### **Programs**

C3 began in 2013 with four programs to support students, MFAs, and PhDs along the academic pathway: Undergraduate Fellows, C3-LADO Visits, Postdoctoral Fellows, and the Summit. In 2017, with renewed funding from the Foundation, we added three new programs and discontinued the Postdoctoral Fellows program. The added programs were PAVE, New Scholar Series, and Faculty

Funding. The PAVE Visits were intended as a complement to the C3-LADO Visits, and the New Scholar Series and Faculty Funding programs were an attempt to introduce departments and programs to innovative junior scholars of color who they might then hire as tenure-track faculty with funding from C3. Whereas the original programs defined “underrepresented” more broadly, the New Scholar Series and Faculty Funding programs only funded participants from racialized communities, meaning that White women who historically benefit the most from affirmative action initiatives were not eligible.<sup>7</sup> All these programs are described below.

### *Undergraduate Fellows*

Beginning in Summer 2013, this program afforded underrepresented rising juniors or seniors from LADO schools who majored in the humanities and humanistic social sciences with the opportunity to participate in an eight- to nine-week intensive research program at one of the partner universities. These summer programs were already in place on the campuses, and C3 provided the funding for 10 cohorts of undergraduates following a competitive application and review process. By providing an intensive and immersive research experience in a graduate school environment, the fellowship program sought to inspire C3 undergraduate fellows to apply to graduate school and equip them to succeed once they got there. Fellows were matched with graduate student or faculty mentors, and they then supported their mentor’s research project or developed a research project of their own. The fellows also participated in workshops that provided guidance on preparing for the GRE, writing a personal statement, selecting a graduate school and program, and handling challenges in higher education. A total of 103 students from 18 LADO schools (including the C3 partner LACs) participated in the Undergraduate Fellows Program.

- **Challenges:** While each of the C3 research institutions committed to admitting a specific number of LADO students to their summer undergraduate fellowship programs—a number that varied over time—most were unable to consistently follow through on this commitment. With the exception of Columbia, the administrators who served on the Executive Committee were far removed from the selection process and unable to ensure that a specific number of LADO students were admitted to their programs each summer.

### *C3-LADO Visits*

The visits to our partner universities, jointly organized by LADO and C3, connected graduate students with various faculty opportunities at LACs. Dr. Josephine Moreno and LADO developed and inaugurated these events, and we at C3 were grateful to partner with LADO for nine years. The two-day visits, organized by a campus partner, focused on providing graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds with information about academic and social life, as well as about available positions at LACs; one-on-one meetings with LADO representatives to discuss feedback on job application materials; and networking opportunities with LADO representatives who are faculty members and/or academic administrators. C3-LADO visits also attempted to engage the university

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<sup>7</sup> Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, “Framing Affirmative Action,” *Michigan Law Review First Impressions* 105 (2007): 123-133, <http://www.michiganlawreview.org/assets/fi/105/crenshaw.pdf>.

faculty in conversations regarding the value of a liberal arts career pathway for their students. A total of 858 graduate students, MFAs, and PhDs participated in these 24 visits, as did 126 LAC faculty.<sup>8</sup>

- **Challenges:** Graduate students and postdocs most attended these C3-LADO visits when there still existed the opportunity to apply for the Postdoctoral Fellowships program, which only saw them competing against applicants from four institutions and not applicants worldwide. Attendance at these visits declined after we eliminated the Postdoc program. However, an added benefit was that the students and postdocs who attended these visits moving forward were the types of constituents C3 most wanted to support, namely students and postdocs from underrepresented groups—an observation articulated by Dr. Alberto Ledesma, Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Division of Arts & Humanities at UC Berkeley.

### Postdoctoral Fellows

Between 2014 and 2018, C3 postdoctoral fellowships provided graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds with opportunities to transition successfully into tenure-track faculty positions at LACs. The goal was for C3 fellows to gain first-hand knowledge about research and teaching at liberal arts colleges, cultivate new networks of support, and experience life on small campuses in both suburban and rural settings. The 29 postdoctoral fellows from the four partner universities also enriched their host departments and HEIs by contributing to diversifying curricula and improved student success, amongst other benefits.<sup>9</sup> All four C3 LACs hired a C3 postdoc, and Middlebury hired two. Interestingly, all five postdocs hired by the partner schools graduated from UC Berkeley. As of the writing of this report, an additional six former postdocs are employed at LACs (Amherst College, Hamilton College, Skidmore College, and St. Lawrence University). C3 concluded this program at the request of the Mellon Foundation, which expressed that funding would only be renewed if C3 offered alternative programming that supported the hiring of underrepresented scholars into tenure-track positions, not terminal postdocs.

- **Challenges:** Unfortunately, the postdocs hired by the C3 LACs did not inevitably stay at these institutions. At this time, Bates, Middlebury, and Williams have each lost a postdoc-turned-faculty member to other institutions—two to LACs and one to a research institution. Many other postdocs wished to be hired into tenure-track positions at their host institutions but did not receive sufficient support from their academic units. In the “Challenges” section, I discuss more about the obstacles posed by faculty search committees to the hiring of C3 postdocs.

### Summit

The Summit (a biannual conference) convened undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty members, diversity officers, deans, presidents, and other members of the community to focus—for one weekend—on our shared mission and goals. The Summit also catalyzed energy to move forward with C3’s transformative ambitions by creating an opportunity for strategic thinking and capacity building across HEIs and generations. More than 1,100 people participated in six Summits hosted by the four partner LACs.

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<sup>8</sup> In conjunction with these visits, LADO also developed and distributed a job list for faculty positions available at the partner LACs.

<sup>9</sup> Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner, Juan Carlos González, and J. Luke Wood, “Faculty of Color in Academe: What 20 Years of Literature Tells Us,” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 1, no. 3 (2008): 139.

- **Challenges:** The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated that we transition the last two Summits from in-person to virtual. And like many event organizers, we struggled to create similarly beneficial conditions for community building in the virtual space. While attendees still spoke highly of the event and its contribution to their professional development, they were not able to easily build relationships with other participants—unless they were panelists on the same panel.

Table 1: C3 Summit Data

Year	Host	Theme	Keynote Speakers	Attendance
2022	Middlebury College (virtual)	“Uncovering the ‘Hidden Curriculum’ of Academia”	n/a	250
2021	Williams College (virtual)	“Pandemics: Race, Healing, and Transformation in Higher Education”	Davarian Baldwin; L. Song Richardson	240
2018	Middlebury College	“Reimagining the Academy: Constructing Inclusive and Participatory Communities in Challenging Times”	Eve Ewing; Chastity Lord	215
2017	Williams College	“Transformative Power of Race in the Academy: Measuring Change, Charting Futures”	Adrienne Davis; Eric A. Hurley; Shelva Paulse Hurley	211
2015	Bates College	“Practicing Communities: The Transformative Power of Race in the Academy”	Evelynn Hammonds; David Kyuman Kim	267
2014	Connecticut College	“Launching Transformation”	Freeman A. Hrabowski III; Tracey Hucks; Juana María Rodríguez	177

#### *Pathways to Academia: Visits and Experiences*

Beginning in 2018, the PAVE program served as a complement to the C3-LADO visits by LADO faculty. During these visits, graduate students or postdoctoral fellows from each of the four partner universities visited one of the partner LAC campuses for a two-day event. We had two primary goals with these visits: 1) provide the visiting graduate students and postdoctoral fellows with information about social, intellectual, and professional life at LACs and help establish personal contacts between the visitors and LAC faculty, and 2) inspire undergraduates to apply for C3 summer fellowships and to consider graduate school. All the visitors were from backgrounds underrepresented in higher education. These eight visits welcomed 49 graduate students and recent graduates as well as 55 undergraduates.

- **Challenges:** These visits were hugely beneficial for the participants, particularly the PhD students and recent PhDs. However, they required a large amount of work by staff and administrators at both graduate and undergraduate institutions, particularly the LAC organizers. For the labor required, the number of students served was small.



### New Scholar Series

The New Scholars Series was a complement to the Faculty Funding program and a mechanism to introduce graduate students from racially and ethnically underrepresented groups to liberal arts colleges and to facilitate the hiring of these candidates at LADO schools. This program provided funding—for short-term campus visits—to departments and programs at LADO institutions that welcomed innovative curricular perspectives from underrepresented MFA and PhD candidates or recent graduates. Priority was given to those departments or programs who anticipated making tenure-track hires. Originating from 36 graduate institutions (in the US, Italy, and Nigeria), 47 participants presented their research at 10 of these symposia between 2019 and 2022.

- **Challenges:** To our disappointment, only four LADO institutions (six academic units) solicited funding for these events, beyond the funding already allocated to the C3 LACs. Lewis & Clark College, in fact, received funds for three of the six New Scholar Series events held by non-partner schools. We attribute these low applicant numbers to the amount of labor required to organize these visits, which units were disinclined to assume. We also see as an explanation the difficulty that LADO administrators had in convincing their HEIs' faculty (including chairs) of the New Scholar Series' value.

### Faculty Funding

Inaugurated in 2019 as an alternative to the Postdoctoral Fellows Program, the Faculty Funding program supported the hiring of faculty members from groups racially and ethnically underrepresented in higher education and who offered curricular and scholarship foci that broadened institutional norms. If, through a national search or a New Scholar Series, departments or programs at LADO institutions identified candidates from underrepresented groups whom they wanted to hire, they could apply for funding to support the first two years of a tenure track position plus start-up funds for research and travel. Funding was extended to HEIs that sought new perspectives on their curricular offerings and pedagogy and that saw value in engaging PhD (or MFA) candidates in this pursuit. Preference was given to new hires in departments or programs that had previously held a New Scholar Series. C3 funded 27 faculty from 24 graduate institutions. Beyond the four C3 LACs, 12 LACs in the LADO consortium received funding for Faculty Fellows.

- **Challenges:** A disappointing outcome of this program was that we awarded *no* funds to hire candidates who first presented their research at the HEI's New Scholar Series. In other words, all Faculty Funding supported the hiring of faculty via national searches.

### Successes

As mentioned above, all C3 LACs now employ a greater percentage of racialized faculty members than a decade prior. The partner LACs have also hired 43 tenure-track faculty from the partner research universities over the last decade, irrespective of race or ethnicity. An astounding 83 percent of C3 postdocs were hired into tenure-track positions, a placement rate that we celebrate even though C3 cannot take full responsibility for their successful employment. At the time of writing this report, three former postdocs are tenured (at Amherst College, St. Lawrence University, and University of Washington-Bothell), and two undergraduate research fellows from the 2013 and 2015 cohorts have tenure-track positions (at Duke University and Harvard Divinity School). Another five undergraduate research fellows have received PhDs, and 22 are currently pursuing PhDs (six of whom attend or attended the same graduate institution where they were Undergraduate Fellows). Fourteen others have

received either a JD or Masters. Of the 47 graduate students who presented at New Scholar Series symposia, 34 have graduated, and 17 of these graduates have tenure-track or tenured positions at HEIs, including Middlebury. Finally—with the support of C3—LADO institutions hired 27 faculty with Faculty Funding, beginning in 2019. All these faculty remain at these institutions.

C3's successes can be described more broadly in the following six categories:

1. *Awareness and pathway support:* Along the academic pathway, we intervened to provide information and developmental opportunities for research, careers in higher education, and careers at LACs—all with the goal of advancing full participation for nearly 2,600 constituents from 70 HEIs. Dr. Alberto Ledesma recognized, “A lot of underrepresented students who haven’t demystified the current hidden curriculum, reflect this imbalance [as they navigate academia]. Even though they produce impressive CVs, there’s still this palimpsest of insecurity.... And a lot of the graduate students who took the most advantage of C3 were graduate students who, I think, were negotiating impostor syndrome.”<sup>10</sup> C3 programming considered the interpersonal, institutional, and structural inequalities they had experienced that denied them access to the hidden curriculum and that provoked feelings of inadequacy.
2. *Multi-Generational Conversations and Networking:* We built professional bonds of collaboration across generations of faculty and students—and across traditional institutional boundaries. In nearly all programming, C3 cultivated multigenerational networks, from undergraduates at LACs to administrators and senior faculty across HEIs. Dr. Collado highlighted the significance of “C3 deliberately including undergraduates and faculty members, and department chairs and deans” and added, “I just think we shouldn’t forget about the role that these faculty members play in the lives of our own students because it’s so important, and I think C3 did that really well.” She said that likewise, for administrators co-creating C3 at the consortial level, “C3 opened up a very concrete path for people to have these conversations that people weren’t usually having... [because] we were really naming some of the things that are very hard for faculty of color.... So that’s an element of the dynamic of the ripple effect of C3 that really goes far beyond how many of these fellows were placed.”
3. *Mentoring:* From undergraduates to recent MFAs and PhDs, we helped institutional and campus leaders and visionaries of full participation develop nurturing relationships to foster capacity for change in individuals and cohorts. We also modeled, supported, and provided information at critical junctures to students and recent graduates from underrepresented groups. Of the C3-LADO visits to research universities, an interview participant commented, “The kind of feedback that we got from students was that it was the most mentoring and the most meaningful mentoring that they’d ever received since beginning graduate school. The students

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<sup>10</sup> Coined by Philip Jackson in 1968, the “hidden curriculum” is defined by education scholar Rachel Gable as “the set of tacit rules in a formal educational context that insiders consider to be natural and universal. Those with prior knowledge of those tacit rules are prepared to succeed because they have learned the rules before, and those with no or little prior knowledge don’t even realize when they are breaking the rules let alone how to use these rules to their advantage.” Interviewed by Scott Jaschik, “The Hidden Curriculum,” *Inside Higher Ed*, January 19, 2021, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2021/01/19/author-discusses-her-new-book-first-generation-students-harvard-and-georgetown>.



were very clear about this—that mentoring from faculty in their graduate programs had not been on par with their needs.” At the C3-LADO visits alone, nearly 860 graduate students, MFAs, and PhDs participated in 24 visits, alongside 126 LAC faculty.

4. *Capacity building and professional development:* C3 encouraged skills development and knowledge of best practices in support of full participation and the strategic capacity of young scholars from underrepresented groups and of leaders in institutional change. One university administrator expressed, “I certainly know a lot more about liberal arts college environments than I did before joining C3.... And so, by being more educated myself about liberal arts colleges, what they do, what they stand for, how they evolved—even over the past few decades—I'm able to share that with my students, to open that up as a possibility for them, but also for our faculty.”
5. *Leadership and institutional collaboration:* We linked dozens of leaders at institutions where programs had overlapping goals and stakeholders. We also created cross-institutional communities of practice and worked to integrate innovative best practices in institutional routines and practices. Keeping the number of partner HEIs relatively small (n=8), commented Dr. Alberto Ledesma, allowed executive leadership to be nimble and responsive to the needs of constituents and the Foundation. They added, “I think what made it work was that we all knew each other and worked with each other, as a community. The meetings that we had, where we got to know each other and develop policies organically, was a feature of the program.” Another interview participant observed that by bringing together senior leadership across LACs and research universities, “We were harnessing the power of the collective.... And I think there was good reason to think that it was a path to long term change. We were also adding complexity [by working across institutions]. It was exponentially more complex.” Shirley Collado also emphasized the value of White accomplices: “I do think it's really important to acknowledge that there were White allies.... It was a really important moment because we were all talking about race, and we were all really activating something that had not happened before.”<sup>11</sup>
6. *Impact on other higher education initiatives:* Based on C3’s initial reports, the Mellon Foundation was incentivized to fund (\$8M) another collaborative alliance in support of academic pipeline development for underrepresented faculty at LACs between the Associated Colleges of the Midwest and the Big Ten Academic Alliance. Like C3, this partnership relied on collaboration across research universities and liberal arts colleges in support of tenure-track faculty hires in the humanities, humanistic social sciences, and arts. C3 programming seems to have also inspired subsequent programming, such as the Big Ten Academic Alliance Graduate Student Panels and Faculty Fellows Emerging Scholars Seminars.

## Challenges

It is notable that over the 10-year duration of C3, all C3 LACs employ a greater percentage of faculty of color now than they did in 2013. As one interview participant said, the goal of the consortium was

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<sup>11</sup> See also Marybeth Gasman, Jessica Kim, and Thai-Huy Nguyen, “Effectively Recruiting Faculty of Color at Highly Selective Institutions: A School of Education Case Study,” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 4, no. 4 (2011): 220.

“about incremental gains, building familiarity and awareness, and letting the quality of the candidates speak for themselves.” We see how this approach found success even beyond C3’s programming. There was a “cumulative and multifaceted impact” on faculty hiring, one respondent remarked, of which C3 was a part, but not the only factor. The success of this method is also reflected in the placement of 83 percent of C3 postdocs into tenure-track positions. However, it is impossible to determine if these gains would have also occurred in the absence of C3 programming. Administrators also expressed frustration that the work of C3 has not resulted in improved systems to ensure racial equity in faculty hiring.<sup>12</sup> One respondent stated, “We have to admit the students in order to ensure the pipeline.... The liberal arts colleges are at the end of the pipeline, but they have to be receptive to what’s happening beforehand. And consequently, how are we bringing along the pipeline?” C3’s founders knew that faculty autonomy over the search process would be a hurdle to equity in faculty searches. But as the interview participant commented, “If we had headed into the work with a direct challenge to faculty governance around hiring, I’m not sure the project would have ever gotten off the ground.” We now know that it is essential to account for the faculty governance structure and to create mechanisms that hold search committees accountable for the people they hire.<sup>13</sup> We see how the pathway model that we implemented was ultimately frustrated at its end by obstacles at our own HEIs. For example, attempts to *directly* hire postdocs into tenure-track positions weren’t successful (i.e., nearly every unit preferred to hire from a national search rather than to hire the in-situ postdoc). We see it as a lesson that our and other HEIs can learn from and build on in our community efforts for more equity in the hiring process.

Barriers to equity are not just structural, and attitudinal obstacles erected by incumbent faculty also limit inclusiveness; but research has shown that targeting individual bias alone does not ameliorate racial inequity in the hiring process.<sup>14</sup> As Susan Sturm writes,

A crucial step in this work is the move to *institutions* as the focus of analysis and interventions (as compared to the more conventional emphasis on individuals, groups, or policy). Interventions aimed at institutional practice have traction to improve the conditions shaping individuals’ experiences and to connect local experimentation to national networks.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Racial equity in faculty hiring refers to a system where racially diverse knowledge and experiences are equally embedded in policies, processes, and where there is a cultural fabric of hiring routines that enable evaluations of racially minoritized scholars to be free from discrimination and bias.” Román Liera and Theresa E. Hernandez, “Color Evasive Racism in the Final Stage of Faculty Searches: Examining Search Committee Hiring Practices that Jeopardize Racial Equity Policy,” *The Review of Higher Education* 45, no. 2 (Winter 2021): 182.

<sup>13</sup> As described by Leticia Villarreal Sosa et al., “Faculty governance has been a part of the history of most institutions, giving faculty a significant role in academic and personnel decisions, and can take many forms ranging from faculty senates to committees and task forces.” “Decolonizing Faculty Governance at Hispanic Serving Institutions,” *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* (2022): 2.

<sup>14</sup> For example, Liera and Hernandez have found that “as long as policy commitments, practices, and outcomes remain decoupled, steps toward equity in one element of the hiring process will be used to legitimize disparities in the others; and racial inequity will persist” (203). See also Julie Posselt, et al., “Evaluation and Decision Making in Higher Education: Toward Equitable Repertoires of Faculty Practice,” in *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research* (Volume 35), edited by Laura W. Perna (Springer Nature, 2020), 6.

<sup>15</sup> Susan Sturm, “The Architecture of Inclusion: Advancing Workplace Equity in Higher Education,” *Harvard Journal of Law & Gender* 29, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 249. Italics added for emphasis.

In other words, structural interventions have broader reach and can also effect changes in attitudes at the individual level. But to exclusively focus on attitudinal bias has no guarantee of success and leaves in place existing institutional barriers. For example, scholarship strongly suggests that anti-bias training for search committee members does not inevitably result in a more inclusive search.<sup>16</sup> To achieve full participation, not just increased representation, Sturm asserts that we must identify and eliminate institutional hurdles that indiscriminately impede the participation of marginalized individuals.<sup>17</sup> An interview participant agreed and added, “I think finding a way to work more closely in changing the organizational culture, the institutional culture, is probably where more capital and human resources need to be invested.”

At HEIs across the country, the number of faculty of color has not kept pace with the number of students of color at our institutions.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, decades-long efforts by colleges and universities to diversify the professoriate have met with limited success.<sup>19</sup> Most interview participants specifically noted that faculty governance—specifically administrators’ (near) inability to hold search committees accountable for running equitable searches—was a hurdle to the diversification of the faculty at LACs. While overt racism can exist on search committees, the hiring of underrepresented candidates is also hampered by some well-intentioned faculty who practice abstract liberalism—committing to the ideals of equity while concurrently opposing changes to existing practices.<sup>20</sup> Of course, the obstacles encountered by C3 and other similar programs is not a signal to eliminate faculty governance in favor of corporate governance, for example. In this section, I will explore feedback from my respondents, incorporate a review of recent literature on diversity and equity faculty hiring and the faculty governance structure, and finally propose alternatives to the current status quo. It is our hope that by being upfront about our challenges and proposing alternative practices informed by recent research that other HEIs and programs can build on our foundational work.

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<sup>16</sup> Liera and Hernandez, 205; Peter S. Cahn et al., “Disrupting Bias Without Trainings: The Effect of Equity Advocates on Faculty Search Committees,” *Innovative Higher Education* 47 (2022): 253-272; Patrick S. Forscher et al., “A Meta-Analysis of Procedures to Change Implicit Measures,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 117, no. 3 (September 2019): 522-559; Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev, “Why Doesn’t Diversity Training Work? The Challenge for Industry and Academia,” *Anthropology Now* 10, no. 2 (2018): 48-55.

<sup>17</sup> Sturm, “Architecture of Inclusion,” 250.

<sup>18</sup> Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo, “‘We Are All for Diversity, but...’ How Faculty Hiring Committees Reproduce Whiteness and Practical Suggestions for How They Can Change,” *Harvard Educational Review* 87, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 558.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> See for example: Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Tyrone A. Forman argue that racism (not just bias) still very much exists and is based in “color-blind” ideology, “‘I am not a racist but...’: Mapping White College Students’ Racial Ideology in the USA,” *Discourse & Society* 11, no. 1 (2000), 50-85; Román Liera, “Moving Beyond a Culture of Niceness in Faculty Hiring to Advance Racial Equity,” *American Educational Research Journal* 57, no. 5 (2020): 1958; Liera and Hernandez, 195.

Table 2: The Race/Ethnicity of US Undergraduates and Full-time Faculty in Fall 2020

Race/Ethnicity	Undergraduates <sup>21</sup>	Full-time Faculty <sup>22</sup>
White	52%	74%
Hispanic/Latino	19%	6%
Black/African American	13%	7%
Asian/Asian American, Pacific Islander	7%	12%
Multiracial	4%	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	Less than 1%	Less than 1%

As illustrated in Table 2, the number of undergraduates of color exceeds the number of faculty of color on US college and university campuses. In fall 2020, 74 percent of full-time US faculty were White. Asian American and Pacific Islanders accounted for an additional 12 percent, and Black faculty comprised 7 percent of full-time faculty. Hispanic and Latino professors made up 6 percent of the total, while American Indians, Alaska Natives, and people of two or more races all accounted for 1 percent or less of full-time faculty. When compared with the race and ethnicity of US undergraduates, full-time faculty were 22 percent Whiter. We know that the recruitment of students of color and other underrepresented students is the result of significant labor by admissions professionals who have employed strategies such as holistic review to support the pipeline development of scholars of color.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, many institutions are adopting mandatory training and oversight of faculty hiring committees.

There is still debate about whether the low percentage of faculty of color is due to a (supposed) paucity of recent MFAs or PhDs of color; but over the past decades, scholars of education have shown that there are more than enough racialized candidates to hire into faculty positions.<sup>24</sup> For instance, in their 2012 analysis of racialized faculty at California community colleges, Kendra Jeffcoat and William E. Piland stress, “The canards that qualified faculty of color are not available, that these potential faculty lack experience, are not interested in teaching in a community college—especially one whose staff is predominantly White, and can’t even be located if they are interested and qualified are not valid now, if they ever were.”<sup>25</sup> Much of this progress is thanks to the dedicated work of the admissions professionals, who have recruited promising graduate students and supported their professional development throughout graduate school. Through a pathway model, C3 also cultivated the

<sup>21</sup> Melanie Hanson, “College Enrollment & Student Demographic Statistics,” *Education Data Initiative*, July 26, 2022, <https://educationdata.org/college-enrollment-statistics>.

<sup>22</sup> These totals do not include international faculty. “Race/ethnicity of College Faculty,” National Center for Education Statistics, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61>.

<sup>23</sup> As described below, one definition of holistic review, as articulated by the American Association of Medical Colleges, is: “mission-aligned admissions and selection processes that take into consideration applicants’ experiences, attributes, and academic metrics as well as the value an applicant would contribute to learning, practice, and teaching.” “Holistic Review,” *American Association of Medical Colleges*, <https://www.aamc.org/services/member-capacity-building/holistic-review>.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Luke J. Lara, “Faculty of Color Unmask Color-Blind Ideology in the Community College Faculty Search Process,” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 43, no. 10-11 (2019): 704; Daryl G. Smith et al., “Interrupting the Unusual: Successful Strategies for Hiring Diverse Faculty,” *Journal of Higher Education* 75 (2004): 135.

<sup>25</sup> Kendra Jeffcoat and William E. Piland, “Anatomy of a Community College Faculty Diversity Program,” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 36, no. 6 (2012): 408.

development of underrepresented students, MFAs, and PhDs to prepare them for faculty positions. However, hiring committees must see as valuable this pipeline of junior scholars and be prepared to offer them tenure-track positions. Dr. Collado lamented, “Even with money, even with the [Mellon] Foundation, even with the talent sitting right in front of us, we still make excuses with our governance structures and our resources to not do right by people of color in the academy.” Faculty need to be stubborn and genuinely committed to disrupting this status quo, stated another interview participant. They must take a stand and assert, “No, this is not good enough. We need to do better. Because there are talented men and women out there of color who we’re not hiring.” As described below, HEI administrators must also create the conditions to hold departments and programs accountable for conducting equitable searches.

Equitable faculty searches should result in the hiring of more faculty of color who are committed to equity and justice, which benefits our institutions and these scholars’ own disciplinary fields. An increase in the number of faculty from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds results in an improved sense of belonging for students of color and even leads to higher graduation rates for these same students.<sup>26</sup> Research also demonstrates that interactions between diverse faculty and White students results in “deeper cross-cultural and critical-thinking skills and greater levels of empathy” amongst the students.<sup>27</sup> Of course, the impact of racially minoritized faculty extends to other constituents, as they bring diverse perspectives and experiences that enrich the campus climate and curricula.<sup>28</sup> So too does the research these scholars conduct and publish encourage progress in society at large. In other words, the success of our institutions, students (all of them), and society is contingent on recruiting and hiring faculty of color who value full participation for all.

The systemic barriers present in the faculty hiring process are not new. Nearly two decades ago, Sturm wrote, “Universities’ decentralized administrative structure complicates efforts to achieve institutional mindfulness. Power is highly distributed in academia, and change is often difficult to achieve.”<sup>29</sup> Researchers have also recognized that faculty search committees perpetuate bias and expressed concern about lack of representation in faculty governance.<sup>30</sup> Marybeth Gasman provocatively lamented, “The reason we don’t have more faculty of color among college faculty is that we don’t want them.”<sup>31</sup> Current research argues that faculty “hiring committees protect rather than unsettle Whiteness,” and those who use “colorblind” discourse do so to the benefit of White values and

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<sup>26</sup> Rebecca Horecky Stout, et al., *The Relationship Between Faculty Diversity and Graduation Rates in Higher Education*, *Intercultural Education* 29, no. 1 (March 2018): 1-19.

<sup>27</sup> “Faculty Diversity Plays a Central Role in College Completion,” *The Education Trust*, December 1, 2022, <https://edtrust.org/press-release/faculty-diversity-plays-a-central-role-in-college-completion/>. Full report is available at Jinann Bitar, Gabriel Montague, and Lauren Ilano, *Faculty Diversity and Student Success Go Hand in Hand, So Why are University Faculties So White?* (New York: The Education Trust, 2022), [https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Faculty\\_Diversity\\_Report\\_FINAL-3.pdf](https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Faculty_Diversity_Report_FINAL-3.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Turner, González, and Wood, 139.

<sup>29</sup> Sturm, “Architecture of Inclusion,” 258.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Damani K. White-Lewis, “The Facade of Fit in Faculty Search Processes,” *The Journal of Higher Education* (2020): 1-25; Liera and Hernandez, 181-209; Villarreal Sosa et al., 1-17.

<sup>31</sup> Marybeth Gasman, “The Five Things No One Will Tell You About Why Colleges Don’t Hire More Faculty of Color,” *The Hechinger Report*, September 20, 2016, <https://hechingerreport.org/five-things-no-one-will-tell-colleges-dont-hire-faculty-color/>



norms.<sup>32</sup> With few exceptions, the primary steps of the faculty hiring process are the same across HEIs.<sup>33</sup> At universities and colleges across disciplines in the United States and Canada, faculty hiring and tenure and promotion are overseen by autonomous departments and programs. This decentralized hiring process means that there is typically little oversight for how the units run the search or who they choose to hire.<sup>34</sup> In recognition of how inequality is perpetuated in faculty searches, many institutions have instituted implicit bias training for some of the committee members; but there is no evidence that these trainings sufficiently transform the hiring process.<sup>35</sup> Even faculty with the goal of challenging the dominant ideology and advocating for candidates of color struggle to disrupt the status quo while concurrently honoring the non-discrimination mandate from the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) that race not be considered, which justifies a color-evasive ideology.<sup>36</sup> The result of autonomous units conducting decentralized searches without accountability (and with the EEOC mandate) is that HEIs continue to predominantly hire White candidates whose training and expertise mirror those on the hiring committee.

Even when committee members are not aware of the harm they are doing, they risk reproducing Whiteness—whether through the job ad, the composition of the committee, or the questions asked of candidates. Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo outline numerous discursive actions that hamper the hiring of faculty of color: 1) subjective scrutiny of candidate CVs, 2) discourse of “fit,” 3) the notion of a “token” committee member of color, 4) diversity-related questions as additive to the interview, and 5) normalization of candidate ignorance on race and gender.<sup>37</sup> Damani K. White-Lewis also finds that racially marginalized job applicants are disadvantaged by faculty who disguise idiosyncratic preferences as evaluations of organizational fit.<sup>38</sup> Without exploring how “campus culture is disproportionately shaped over time by the racial majority,” faculty can inadvertently maintain these White cultural ideologies.<sup>39</sup> Román Liera and Theresa Hernandez show that by ignoring race entirely—or practicing color-evasiveness—committee members “reproduce racial power dynamics,” even in the case of an institution that modified both practices and policies “to increase racial diversity

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<sup>32</sup> Sensoy and DiAngelo, 558; Liera, 1954-1994.

<sup>33</sup> When these units receive permission to make a new hire (whether a new line or in response to a departure or retirement), they write a job ad, vet applications, conduct first-round interviews (often virtually or over the phone), and conclude by inviting finalists to campus for a final days-long interview. George Tomlinson and Sydney Freeman, Jr., “Who Really Selected You? Insights into Faculty Selection Processes in Top-Ranked Higher Education Graduate Programmes,” *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 42, no. 6 (2018): 856.

<sup>34</sup> The offices of Equal Opportunity (EO) and Human Resources (HR) do not have much authority over the dynamics of search committees. Leah Hakkola and Sarah J.V. Dyer, “Role Conflict: How Search Committee Chairs Negotiate Faculty Status, Diversity, and Equity in Faculty Searches,” *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 15, no. 5 (2022): 583; Villarreal Sosa et al., 1-17.

<sup>35</sup> Liera and Hernandez, 205; Forscher et al., 522–559; Dobbin and Kalev, 48–55.

<sup>36</sup> Higher education researchers are increasingly using “color-evasive” instead of “color-blind” to highlight how ignoring race is an active, rather than a passive, process. Subini Ancy Annamma, “Conceptualizing Color-evasiveness: Using Dis/ability Critical Race Theory to Expand a Color-blind Racial Ideology in Education and Society,” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 20, no. 2 (2017): 147-162; Lara, 709.

<sup>37</sup> Sensoy and DiAngelo, 559.

<sup>38</sup> White-Lewis, 1-25.

<sup>39</sup> Liera, 1957.

in their application pools, finalist lists, and hiring outcomes.”<sup>40</sup> Some of this (albeit unintentional) damage, can be mitigated by experiential learning or inquiry-based intervention (not passive training) for search committee members, an approach I explore in the subsequent section.

Search committees also sometimes prioritize individual or unit priorities over those of the institution, even actively blocking institutional goals. One interview participant stated, “The autonomy of the department is, in many ways, the starkest example of the way in which faculty continue to see themselves as individual contractors, not in any way as citizens of the institution.” Another administrator agreed and added that faculty searches can become very personal. They expressed, “Senior faculty have incredible power, and they are so personally invested—sometimes in the best ways, but other times in detrimental ways. In other words, they are committed to the notion that the person who replaces them must replace them in kind.” The interview participant reflected that, often, the outgoing (soon-to-be-retired and typically White) faculty member sits in on the faculty search for the person to replace them, and they can be adamant that the new hire replicates their area of expertise exactly (known as homophily).<sup>41</sup> The problem with this expectation is that it encourages faculty to undervalue other areas (cloning bias) and prevents the committee from considering new and innovative approaches or even the evolving needs of the unit itself. Cloning bias can also partially explain why faculty members hire people who look like them or from backgrounds like theirs.<sup>42</sup>

Many faculty are advocates of social justice and support institution-wide efforts to diversify the professoriate; but in practice, their commitment does not align with action. They operate in a framework of abstract liberalism, to use a term coined by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, and have “purported caring about fairness but [have] devalued the knowledge and experience of racially minoritized faculty finalists.”<sup>43</sup> This type of faculty member is described by Annette Henry as “academic colleagues whom I find ‘affable’ and ‘intelligent’ people and who espouse ideals of social justice [but] seem to have little—if any—consciousness of the ways in which their attitudes and behaviours are interpreted as racist by their non-White colleagues nor how the system of white supremacy performs its work.”<sup>44</sup> These are the types of committee members who (often subconsciously) valorize “White racialized values, norms, and traditions.”<sup>45</sup> One respondent expressed annoyance when explaining how some professors hindered the hiring of a C3 postdoc of color. They said, “There was so much investment poured into this program [C3] to facilitate this kind of thing. And at the very last moment, when we’re just shy of the finish line, we’ve got faculty—who themselves are insisting that they are all in favor of this outcome—putting up roadblocks. It was genuinely so disillusioning. Because, at that moment, all I could feel was the hypocrisy of these people.” At the same time, this administrator recognized that progress has indeed been made over the past 10 years because “no one is debating whether the

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<sup>40</sup> Liera and Hernandez, 183.

<sup>41</sup> For more information on homophily, see Julie R. Posselt, *Inside Graduate Admissions: Merit, Diversity, and Faculty Gatekeeping* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

<sup>42</sup> For more information on cloning bias, see JoAnn Moody, *Rising Above Cognitive Errors: Improving Searches, Evaluations, and Decision-making* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015).

<sup>43</sup> Liera and Hernandez, 195.

<sup>44</sup> Annette Henry, “‘We Especially Welcome Applications from Members of Visible Minority Groups’: Reflections on Race, Gender, and Life at Three Universities,” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 18, no. 5 (2015): 589-610.

<sup>45</sup> Liera, 1954.



department should be more diverse.... [Sometimes] people's words don't match up with their behaviors. But the tenor has shifted” from previous conversations. What this interview participant describes is an interesting situation in which faculty now appear willing to *discuss* diversifying the professoriate but unwilling to implement measures that would make it happen.

Of course, there are faculty members who are deeply committed to equity in the hiring process and likewise express dismay that senior faculty, in particular, have the authority to stymie the hiring of candidates from underrepresented groups. Search committee chairs are instrumental to carrying out an equitable search.<sup>46</sup> Most, but not all, committee chairs are senior (tenured) faculty. Scholars have found that even when junior faculty chair search committees, they may not have the positional power required to push back against the opinions or rules of tenured faculty gatekeepers.<sup>47</sup> As Leah Hakkola and Sarah J.V. Dyer write, “[T]he normalized faculty hierarchy dominated behavior and decision-making during the search process, regardless of the alleged function of the search chair.”<sup>48</sup> In fact, “when senior faculty believe their discretion and autonomy of hiring their preferred finalist is being challenged,” contend Liera and Hernandez, “our findings demonstrate that they undermine hiring practices and criteria intended to center the research, teaching, and service experience of racially minoritized faculty.”<sup>49</sup> One administrator with whom I spoke also recognized the limitations of a hiring approach predicated on faculty hierarchy. They lamented, “The people who are the most senior, in terms of length of service, are the ones making the decisions about who to hire, the hires who will shape the next 30 years of the curriculum.” They added that this is a “reminder of how archaic the governance models and the procedures around faculty hiring are. They're all predicated on the assumption that the existing specialty expertise and the existing system that produced the faculty we have is the same system that we want to produce the faculty of the future.” Given the current homogeneity of senior faculty (the majority of whom are White men), it is unsurprising that the percentage of faculty of color remains smaller than the percentage of students of color.

The university and college leaders who are committed to hiring more faculty from underrepresented groups expressed that they have worked hard to mobilize the limited authority they have. One interview participant expressed frustration that proactive and interventionist approaches by HEI administrators are so easily hampered by faculty authority over hiring. Even Deans of the Faculty and Provosts—who have more authority than most administrators—risk alienating senior faculty and creating a hostile work environment for new hires if they wield their limited power. The same informant recalled a time when a senior administrator shut down a faculty search after the hiring committee declined to hire a candidate of color, even after ranking that candidate first in documents previously sent to the Dean of the Faculty. The interview participant celebrated this (rare) show of

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<sup>46</sup> Zachary A. Smith, “The Best Search Committees,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 31, 2016, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-best-searchcommittees/>.

<sup>47</sup> Sonya A. Grier and Sonja Martin Poole, “Reproducing Inequity: The Role of Race in the Business School Faculty Search,” *Journal of Marketing Management* 36, no. 13-14 (2020): 1190–1222; William G. Tierney and William A. Rhoads, *Faculty Socialization as Cultural Process: A Mirror of Institutional Commitment*, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, no. 93-6 (Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development, 1994), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED368322.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> Hakkola and Dyer, 589.

<sup>49</sup> Liera and Hernandez, 204.

force. But the outcome still did not result in an offer to the candidate of color. At another institution, a senior administrator wielded their authority to intervene more directly in a faculty search that concluded with the hire of a candidate of color who was then a postdoctoral fellow in the unit. Despite the stellar student evaluations and research performance of the then-postdoc, the unit had been insistent on running a national search, which would have been a potential roadblock to the institution's commitment to hiring the postdoc. While the unit *did* ultimately hire the postdoc into a tenure track position, the administrator later worried that their intervention would provoke discrimination against the new hire as retribution for the administrator's involvement. Their fear was not unfounded, as there is a "perception in the academy that diversity does not equate to excellence."<sup>50</sup> The subsequent section outlines additional strategies for administration to intervene in this near autonomy of faculty hiring committees to devise a racially equitable search.

One interview participant directly stated that if colleges and universities want to be competitive for research dollars, they must commit to culture change. In other words, HEIs that do not commit to new organizational approaches to change institutional structure and culture will likely not receive grant funding. Despite millions of dollars invested in elite LACs over several decades, some interview participants revealed that foundations are also frustrated at the limited progress. The same respondent lamented that foundations that have long been committed to funding higher education diversity efforts are now experiencing "diversity fatigue" because, "as all the recent research suggests, faculty diversity is nowhere near a reflection of how the undergraduate population has been demographically transformed in the last 25 years." They added that while money is certainly key to advancing diversity initiatives, it alone cannot correct the "culture problem." Autonomous faculty search committees have stymied efforts at change; and numerous foundations are understandably frustrated and asking, in the words of Dr. Collado, "Why is it that we give you all this money? And you just keep producing the same results?" Thus, the repercussions for not effecting structural change are multifaceted, resulting in a less equitable campus climate as well as less grant funding for the institution.

Of course, the barriers to the professoriate for underrepresented faculty are not just at the hiring stage; for this reason, the recruitment of candidates of color must happen concurrently with institutional transformation and with the broader goal of full participation. While this report does not explore retention, we know this and other best practices are essential to institutional efforts to promote the belonging of students and faculty alike. "The project of achieving inclusive institutions," writes Sturm, "is not only about eliminating discrimination or even increasing the representation of previously excluded groups. It is about creating the conditions enabling people of all races and genders to realize their capabilities as they understand them."<sup>51</sup> Speaking about the climate of the department, Dr. Collado observed, "If you're lucky enough to actually be deemed hire-able, or wanted by the department, once you're in—even if your work is stellar—you also face an environment where there's no natural mentoring. There's not a natural expectation that all faculty in that department should be socialized and supported," that they're in a place "where people want them to stay and thrive." Indeed, thriving at an institution, stated a respondent, is about "valuing your own contributions and having the institution value you... and get you into a tenure track position." When underrepresented faculty are

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<sup>50</sup> Bridget Turner Kelly, Joy Gaston Gayles, and Cobretti D. Williams, "Recruitment Without Retention: A Critical Case of Black Faculty Unrest," *The Journal of Negro Education* 86, no. 3 (2017): 307.

<sup>51</sup> Sturm, "Architecture of Inclusion," 250.

not mentored or valued, they seek positions elsewhere.<sup>52</sup> For this reason, writes Susan Sturm, “Institutional transformation is necessary to correct structural bias in education.”<sup>53</sup> While advocating for affirmative action remains important, structural change that goes beyond the goal of recruiting underrepresented candidates must occur in tandem.

### Proposed Improvement Strategies

Based on my interviews as well as secondary research, I here outline some practices that scholars have found that can increase the likelihood of hiring a faculty member of color.

Several of the people I interviewed pushed for more targeted opportunity hires and cluster hires: targeted opportunity hires to bring in people of color, and cluster hires because they force departments to consider the broader needs of the institution and not just the needs of the department. These two approaches also have some support from scholarship.

Cluster hiring is “a process in which multiple scholars are hired based on a common theme or shared research interests; [it] is not new and is continually used throughout the nation as a way to heighten interdisciplinary synergy among hired faculty members.”<sup>54</sup> However, this approach to hiring interrupts traditional hiring practices, and not much research exists to prove its effectiveness; so, HEIs have not been quick to adopt the practice.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, “faculty are left feeling perplexed about embarking on cluster hires without clear goals and directives from senior leadership.”<sup>56</sup> Susana Muñoz and colleagues find that “institutions with clear goals, communication, and systemic commitment for the cluster hiring process seem to have had the most success.”<sup>57</sup> One of my respondents was in favor of this practice because it necessitates that hiring committees speak with other campus units and consider their needs, not just those of the hiring unit. Of course, cluster hires can specify that the new hires specialize in a specific subject area (e.g., diversity, equity, and inclusion); but because federal law prohibits the consideration of race or ethnicity, this practice does not inevitably result in the hiring of faculty of color.

Some campuses have sought to hire racialized faculty by employing a “special hire” strategy, whether that be a decision to forgo a national search, a spousal hire, or a target of opportunity hire. This includes hiring postdoctoral fellows that transition into tenure-track positions, a strategy we employed to some success with C3.<sup>58</sup> Dr. Collado was excited about the potential of this approach and

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<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Susan L. Phillips, Susan T. Dennison, and Mark A. Davenport, “High Retention of Minority and International Faculty Through a Formal Mentoring Program,” *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Education Development* 35, no. 1 (2016): 153-179.

<sup>53</sup> Sturm, “Reframing Affirmative Action.”

<sup>54</sup> Susana Muñoz et al., “(Counter)narratives and Complexities: Critical Perspectives from a University Cluster Hire Focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,” *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis* 6, no. 2 (2017): 2.

<sup>55</sup> Beth McMurtrie, “The Promise and Peril of Cluster Hiring,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 13, 2016, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-promise-and-peril-of-cluster-hiring/>.

<sup>56</sup> Muñoz et al., 2.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, Rhonda Phillips, “Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Faculty,” *Planning in Higher Education* 30, no. 4 (Summer 2002): 32-39; Kelly, Gayles, and Williams, 307; Smith et al., 134.

commented, “If we actually radicalized the hiring system so that it included cluster hiring, targeted opportunity hires, and completely different routes, it would be a game changer.” Scholars have indeed shown the impact that special hires can have on faculty diversity. In their 2004 study of 700 faculty searches, for instance, Smith and colleagues found that “half of African American faculty and American Indian faculty were hired as special hires. [Whereas] Asian American and White faculty hires were almost always hired through regular searches, although they were in some instances hired through special hires and when diversity indicators were specified.”<sup>59</sup> (This finding, of course, should not minimize the discrimination experienced by Asian American faculty on the job market.) Special hires are “strategic if the institution seeks to attract prominent or promising scholars who are a part of an underrepresented minority group (as well as women in the sciences) to add strength to a department, school or college by accentuating the faculty members’ expertise and knowledge,” observe Jeanette Haynes Writer and Dwight C. Watson.<sup>60</sup> For HEIs who adopt this approach to faculty diversification, they must be cautious not to simply tokenize or commodify these new hires based on the individuals’ race or ethnicity.<sup>61</sup>

Cluster hires and target of opportunity hires are not universally celebrated. I spoke with one administrator who did not see targeted hires or cluster hires as the solution to increasing the recruitment of faculty of color, since these practices do not change how we conduct faculty searches. Instead, they leave in place the traditional approach to hiring and add these approaches as one-off options. The participant stated, “A targeted opportunity hire is a work around, but it leaves the system in place.” This same person also reflected that faculty recruited through opportunity hire programs can experience discrimination from colleagues who question their qualifications. Bridget Turner Kelly and colleagues agree; in their research on the relationship between institutional climate and the recruitment of Black professors at a large, public predominantly White institution (PWI), they write: “Notably, there is a shared sentiment among newly hired Black faculty feeling targeted and tokenized for their racial identity—especially those recruited out of opportunity hire programs designed to bring faculty of color to PWIs.”<sup>62</sup> Another respondent articulated that targeted opportunity hires also create a “revolving door” for the “most accomplished senior faculty members.” They asked, “How might this look if we looked at promising junior scholars that filled a curricular gap?” While opportunity and cluster hires attempt to increase the number of faculty of color on campus, these approaches do not necessarily disrupt traditional hiring practices, and they can have negative consequences for the faculty hired. At the same time, they may attract highly qualified senior faculty rather than junior faculty of color who have had less time to hone their teaching and research.

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<sup>59</sup> Smith et al., 153.

<sup>60</sup> Jeanette Haynes Writer and Dwight C. Watson, “Recruitment and Retention: An Institutional Imperative Told through the Storied Lenses of Faculty of Color,” *Journal of the Professoriate* 10, no. 2 (2019): 36.

<sup>61</sup> Susan VanDeventer Iverson, “Camouflaging Power and Privilege: A Critical Race Analysis of University Diversity Policies,” *Educational Administration Quarterly* 43 (2007): 593; Gasman, Kim, and Nguyen, 213.

<sup>62</sup> Kelly, Gayles, and Williams, 307. See also Tiffany D. Joseph and Laura E. Hirshfield, “‘Why don’t you get somebody new to do it?’ Race and Cultural Taxation in the Academy,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 1 (January 2011): 121-141; Jonathan R. Alger, “How to Recruit and Promote Minority Faculty: Start by Playing Fair,” *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, November 22, 2000, <https://www.diverseeducation.com/faculty-staff/article/15077320/how-to-recruit-and-promote-minority-faculty-start-by-playing-fair>; Gasman et al., 218.

Diversifying the candidate pool actively through clearly written job postings and strategic outreach—not just passively advertising a job—has proven effective, even if it does not inevitably result in the hiring of someone from an underrepresented group. Some of these approaches include placing job ads in specific list-servs or journals or organizing symposia for racially minoritized junior scholars and recruiting through personal connections.<sup>63</sup> Armando Bengochea and Roger Brooks discuss how they built diverse applicant pools at Connecticut College through “vigorous outreach,” including searching for candidates by examining conference programs, consulting lists of graduate students and PhDs of color published by professional organizations, and reaching out to faculty and alumni in their networks. This and other approaches were clearly successful, as over a 4-year period, Connecticut College increased the percentage of their faculty of color by 8 percent (from 16 percent in 2018 to nearly 24 percent in 2012).<sup>64</sup> Additionally, Stephanie J. Fuji highlights the importance of clear communication in the job ad, noting that units should be explicit about which qualifications are required versus which are preferred. She also observes that positions should be advertised for no less than six weeks. Both recommendations are attempts to minimize the structural barriers for candidates applying from underrepresented groups.<sup>65</sup> Of course, as departments and programs realized when organizing the C3 New Scholars Series, “there is simply no getting around how labor-intensive it is to ensure ourselves of diverse faculty pools.”<sup>66</sup>

Other strategies, such as equity advocates, seek to reduce bias within the existing faculty hiring committee by having some committee members hold others accountable in real time discussions of the candidates. Recent scholarship reveals conflicting findings about the efficacy of these volunteer faculty and staff. Peter S. Cahn and colleagues found that equity advocates “helped raise everyone’s awareness of how simply repeating existing practices can allow bias to reproduce.” At the same time, “search committee members credited [equity advocates] with helping to mitigate bias by questioning their assumptions and introducing standardized tools for evaluating candidates.... [even if] interventions did not always lead to a different course of action.”<sup>67</sup> When asked about their experiences, the equity advocates lamented the conflict they experienced with search committee members who questioned their motives.<sup>68</sup> In their study of faculty searches “where some members received specialized training on equity-mindedness in faculty hiring,” Liera and Hernandez found that these equity advocates were not able to improve hiring routines or ensure a racially equitable search. The authors suggest instead that all faculty on search committees “need experiential learning opportunities to grapple with how to change their practices for intersectional equity focused on race and gender.”<sup>69</sup> So while equity

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<sup>63</sup> See, for example, Gasman, Kim, and Nguyen, 217; Phillips, 32–39.

<sup>64</sup> Armando Bengochea and Roger Brooks, “How to Build a Diverse Hiring Pool for Faculty Jobs,” *Inside Higher Ed*, February 1, 2012, <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2012/02/01/essay-how-build-diverse-hiring-pool-faculty-jobs>.

<sup>65</sup> Stephanie J. Fuji, “Diversity, Communication, and Leadership in the Community College Faculty Search Process,” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* 38, no. 10 (2014): 903–916.

<sup>66</sup> Armando Bengochea, “How We Diversified,” *Inside Higher Ed*, March 10, 2010, <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2010/03/10/how-we-diversified>.

<sup>67</sup> Cahn et al., 264.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Liera and Hernandez, 205.



advocates can certainly influence search committee conversations, it is less clear that they can transform outcomes.

The experiential learning that Liera and Hernandez propose goes beyond passive learning via the training of a few or all committee members. They write, “The coupling of policy with practice and commitment to action requires all faculty search committee members to develop equity-minded competencies through self-reflection about the ways they are implicated in perpetuating racial inequality and interrogation of how the campus racial culture impedes racial equity.”<sup>70</sup> They cite two models for faculty learning in which all search committee members participate to learn from equity research and data-driven workshops and tools: the University of Michigan’s Committee on Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence (STRIDE) program and the Strength Through Equity and Diversity (STEAD) program at University of California, Davis.<sup>71</sup> This latter program was also highlighted by one of my interview participants as a model for another program on implementing holistic review for graduate admissions in a state where race and ethnicity cannot be considered when admitting graduate students. Both these examples reflect the importance of experiential learning as well as the need to focus on organizational hiring processes, not individual actions.<sup>72</sup>

Implementing holistic review as part of faculty hiring is another option for incorporating equity into a search, particularly when race and ethnicity cannot be considered (e.g., in states such as California and Michigan, where affirmative action is outlawed). One definition of holistic review, as articulated by the American Association of Medical Colleges, is: “mission-aligned admissions and selection processes that take into consideration applicants’ experiences, attributes, and academic metrics as well as the value an applicant would contribute to learning, practice, and teaching.”<sup>73</sup> In other words, holistic review evaluates applicants according to their embodied experiences and knowledge (e.g., demonstrated success at overcoming economic or social disadvantage) as well as their scholarly expertise (e.g., a research focus on underserved populations). Both these examples come from the evaluation criteria for the University of California President’s Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP), which does not consider candidates’ race or ethnicity; but because of its holistic review process, it has still been successful at hiring people from underrepresented groups, including people of color. An interview participant referenced the UC PPFP program as an important lawyer-vetted model for the institutionalization of holistic review. They themselves have explored and put into practice this framework for graduate admissions and cite it as a “critical” opportunity “to be equitable and more inclusive and to formalize it.”

While holistic review is less common in faculty hiring and the “legal parameters for employment are different from those in admissions, the basic principles of holistic review are transferable to other

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 205 n. 2.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>73</sup> “Holistic Review,” *American Association of Medical Colleges*, <https://www.aamc.org/services/member-capacity-building/holistic-review>.

selection processes including residency selection and faculty hiring.”<sup>74</sup> As studied by Toi Blakley Harris and colleagues, Baylor College of Medicine developed workshops to support academic leaders in creating a holistic review framework to hire and advance “diverse and inclusive faculty and to help promote positive institutional change.”<sup>75</sup> The report concluded that the participants gained valuable knowledge and that the framework has informed Baylor’s strategic plan. Because there are a variety of ways to define holistic review, Michael Bastedo and colleagues caution HEIs to “institutionalize a consistent conception of holistic review.”<sup>76</sup> The focus of this policy brief is on undergraduate admissions, but faculty search committees can also benefit from the authors’ recommendation to construct a definition that considers “external factors” in recognition of the “unequal playing field” faced by underrepresented candidates.<sup>77</sup>

Beyond specific strategies for promoting equity in the faculty search, my interview participants suggested implementing structural changes to hold faculty accountable for equity and inclusion in every search. Indeed, one interview participant expressed frustration at the administrators and presidents of the C3 partner schools who had committed to diversifying their professoriate but then pleaded impotence to intervene in search committees. The respondent stated, “I felt like they didn’t value the Foundation’s support of this project as much as they could have. But it’s the responsibility of the presidents who are accepting that money.” As discussed in the previous section, faculty searches typically have no oversight to ensure they conduct an equitable search, since administrators are unable “to intervene on behalf of a faculty member within the realm of faculty governance.”<sup>78</sup> In response to this challenge, Liera and Hernandez recommend that HEIs review and update faculty hiring policies to “consider positive ways to hold search committees accountable for amending their practices.”<sup>79</sup> They suggest that equity checkpoints can “be used to document committee member and chair practices with explicit sign off of all members and the dean or provost overseeing the search to ensure accountability of the process at key intervals.”<sup>80</sup> Checkpoints in faculty hiring, as initially described by Julie Posselt and colleagues, are criteria and processes throughout the decision-making process that should ensure designs align with goals and uphold racial equity. Liera and Hernandez add that checkpoint sign offs might even be made anonymous to allow untenured faculty to express their thoughts more honestly.<sup>81</sup> This is one example of how institutional intermediaries can be mobilized to support accountability for

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<sup>74</sup> Sarah S. Conrad, Amy N. Addams, and Geoffrey H. Young, “Holistic Review in Medical School Admissions and Selection: A Strategic, Mission-driven Response to Shifting Societal Needs,” *Academic Medicine* 91, no. 11 (2016):1472–1474.

<sup>75</sup> Toi Blakley Harris et al., “Advancing Holistic Review for Faculty Recruitment and Advancement,” *Academic Medicine* 93, no. 11 (November 2018): 1662.

<sup>76</sup> Michael Bastedo et al., “What is Holistic Review in College Admissions?” *University of Michigan Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education*, November 2017, <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~bastedo/policybriefs/Bastedo-holisticreview.pdf>.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Villarreal Sosa et al., 12. As an example, Liera and Hernandez found that at one private Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), the chairs of “faculty searches were not required to prove their evaluation practices were racially equitable if they could produce ‘diverse’ pools of applicants at each stage, regardless of who was ultimately hired” (206).

<sup>79</sup> Liera and Hernandez, 205.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 206

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.; Posselt, et al., 1-63.



institutional change, as Sturm recommends, in this case through “self-, peer-, and external evaluation.”<sup>82</sup>

When discussing early findings of this report with a group of C3-affiliated faculty and staff, some participants suggested holding hiring committees responsible for increasing inclusion by linking outcomes to funding. One administrator queried, “DEI is often separate from financial planning. What happens if it isn’t?” Instead of imposing judicial sanctions, they suggested, the administration might mobilize the power of the Chief Financial Officer to withhold funding from units who do not meet equity metrics. Another stated, “Money can’t buy you love, but it’s a sure sign of affection. Addressing that connection is important.” In the above-referenced article, Sturm also suggests introducing incentives to cultivate change.<sup>83</sup> She uses as an example the National Science Foundation’s ADVANCE program at the University of Michigan, which sought to reduce gender inequality by mandating that both men and women serve on faculty recruitment panels.<sup>84</sup> Of course, there is greater precedent for an outside agency to mandate that outcomes support racial equity than for the administration to do the same with institutional funding. Indeed, one respondent commented that HEIs can find it helpful to rely on a foundation’s “imprimatur and leverage to indicate to their faculty how serious this national foundation takes the diversification of the faculty.”

In the absence of an external mandate to ensure equity in faculty hiring, administrators might leverage existing, on-campus energy to make these changes. One interview participant had the creative idea for administrators to align themselves with undergraduate student activists—many of whom themselves are already demanding their HEIs hire more racialized faculty members, amongst other things—to convince their faculty and their board of the importance of diversifying the professoriate.<sup>85</sup> Rather than seeing undergraduate activists as a threat to the reputation or functioning of the institution, administrations could view them as a driving force necessary to transform institutional culture, which might otherwise go unchanged without the extra push of these activists. The respondent observed that in terms of background, including race and ethnicity, the “undergraduate population has been transformed over the last few decades, which certainly makes this a very propitious moment not to give up” on hiring more faculty of color.

Two other interview participants recommended coming together to creatively brainstorm solutions to the obstacles generated by existing campus structures. We might “freedom dream” (to use the language of Robin D.G. Kelley) what we would recreate if we were to design a college today, from the ground up.<sup>86</sup> One respondent provocatively asked, “How would you design the process of hiring and retaining faculty to ensure the outcomes that you want to see?” They added, “I’m pretty damn sure you wouldn’t build what we have now.” Dr. Collado concurred and expressed:

It is really doing not just an analysis, but real work across these institutions around what are the right set of conditions, rules of engagement, governance structures that allow us to...

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<sup>82</sup> Sturm, “Architecture of Inclusion,” 251.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>85</sup> Kelly, Gayles, and Williams, 305.

<sup>86</sup> Robin D.G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Tradition* (Beacon Press, 2003).

completely reimagine how you recruit and hire folks of color, in particular, into academia in a way that that completely allows us to actually think about better ways of hiring all faculty. A big barrier to all of this are the governance structures and requirements.... A big part of this is not having all these restrictions against cluster hiring, against targeted hiring.... So that's a big thing to think about: What sets of practices really move the needle, which we learned from C3, that need to be fundamentally addressed?

In other words, we must continue to reimagine how we conduct business on our campuses so that the processes and outcomes value all constitutes.

Of course, increasing the representation of faculty of color is just one step towards full participation for all institutional stakeholders. As Liera writes, unless diversity goals “prompt faculty to interrogate their campus culture, they may not change a culture of niceness that upholds racial inequity in hiring.”<sup>87</sup> Indeed, welcoming racially minoritized faculty to a burning building does not serve these new hires nor existing constituents. “We also acknowledge,” write Muñoz and colleagues, “that a cluster of faculty hired around issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion is not a ‘quick fix’ or a silver bullet to changing the organizational culture” of the institution.”<sup>88</sup> At the same time, Adrianna Kezar and Julie Posselt channel Paulo Freire and assert that “merely getting traditionally marginalized groups into positions of power does not automatically change inequalities and produce justice.... [M]arginalized groups tend to oppress others once they have power, for once one obtains power, one is often blinded to one’s own privilege.”<sup>89</sup> Representation matters, but to change campus culture, administrators must remain “constantly vigilant about power, its misuses, and the interlocking systems of power associated with identities and social statuses.”<sup>90</sup> This is part of the process by which we remove barriers to full participation not just in our hiring practices, but everywhere else where power exists.

To this end, and in conjunction with the above strategies for increasing the hiring of racialized faculty, we should also strive to democratize faculty decision making. As Leticia Villarreal Sosa and colleagues observe, “one of the key signs of inequitable governance is the consolidation of power and authority by social identity or campus role.”<sup>91</sup> In their study of faculty governance at a small HSI, the authors write that faculty governance continues to privilege White, male voices and limit the involvement of faculty of color.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, they add that “the coloniality of power in faculty governance” is empowered by the autonomy of faculty members who do not critically reflect on their

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<sup>87</sup> Liera, 1956. See also Estela Mara Bensimon and Lindsey Malcolm, eds., *Confronting Equity Issues on Campus: Implementing the Equity Scorecard in Theory and Practice* (Stylus, 2012).

<sup>88</sup> Muñoz et al., 15.

<sup>89</sup> Adrianna Kezar and Julie Posselt, “Introduction: A Call to Just and Equitable Administrative Practice,” in *Higher Education Administration for Social Justice and Equity: Critical Perspectives for Leadership*, edited by Adrianna Kezar and Julie Posselt (Routledge, 2019), 11.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Villarreal Sosa et al., 7. See also Adrianna Kezar and Jude Paul Matias Dizon, “Renewing and Revitalizing Shared Governance: A Social Justice and Equity Framework,” in *Higher Education Administration for Social Justice and Equity: Critical Perspectives for Leadership*, edited by Adrianna Kezar and Julie Posselt (Routledge, 2019), 21-42.

<sup>92</sup> Villarreal Sosa et al., 8.

power and who cannot be held accountable by administrators.<sup>93</sup> The authors offer five tenets geared towards decolonizing and disrupting the faculty governance structure by democratizing faculty decision making. They assert that both faculty and staff of color (including part-time faculty) should be intentionally included in formal governance structures (e.g., faculty senate), where members must have active discussions on the pervasiveness and impact of white supremacy. Likewise, equity checks and critical self-reflection must be built into decision making, which campus diversity officers should oversee and hold these constituents accountable.<sup>94</sup> It is not enough to increase the representation of faculty of color on campus, Villarreal Sosa and colleagues write, because “people of color are often not empowered to make decisions within these organizations.”<sup>95</sup> It is insufficient to simply hire people of color; these faculty must also be afforded decision-making power in faculty governance.

As one interview participant said, this equity work must be done comprehensively and with an authentic commitment to the goal of full participation for all stakeholders, including the candidates of color. The same respondent said, “You need somebody stepping forward and consistently, across the board, conveying the message that we can’t afford to be piecemeal, to have an occasional victory in hiring a person of color.” Likewise, there needs to be enough people committed to this work to allow it to continue, regardless of changes in leadership. The interview participant also cautioned that administrators should be prepared for “pushback and anger” from senior faculty and others who are committed to the status quo and a faculty governance model that, as Villarreal Sosa and colleagues write, demands autonomy without accountability or critical reflection.<sup>96</sup> “Stubbornness and stamina” are needed, the interview participant asserted, to cultivate the dynamic communities that our democratic HEIs require.

## Conclusion

Over the past 10 years, and with the support of the Mellon Foundation, C3 created opportunities for thousands of stakeholders and instituted models for undergraduate and graduate student professional development as well as faculty recruitment. With a focus on students and postdoctoral fellows from underrepresented groups, C3 developed a pathway approach to faculty diversity that relied on cross-institutional and multi-generational collaboration. These collaborative communities of practice were nimble and responsive to the changing needs of students and recent MFAs and PhDs and instituted mentoring, capacity building, and professional development that inspired another Foundation-funded initiative, the Associated Colleges of the Midwest. Staff, administrators, and faculty across our partner research universities and liberal arts colleges (and in collaboration with the LADO consortium) endeavored to ensure full participation of students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty through mentorship, professional development, and fellowships. We see the impact of this approach, for example, in the dozens of C3 postdoctoral fellows employed as tenure-track or tenured professors across the US and the increased number of faculty of color at all our partners LACs.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 14. See also Victor Ray, “A Theory of Racialized Organizations,” *American Sociological Review* 84, no. 1 (2019): 26-53.

<sup>96</sup> Villarreal Sosa et al., 11-12.

C3 also revealed the challenge of attempting transformational change at the institutional scale when authority is decentralized and accountability is lacking. In a faculty governance structure that (as of yet) permits minimal intervention from institutional administrators, it was a challenge to ensure equity in the search process. For this reason, multiple interview participants suggest that institutions and initiatives that are interested in diversifying their professoriate prioritize structural change. Recent scholarship from education scholars suggests that various strategies together could advance racial equity in faculty hiring—from including equity advocates in search committees to requiring experiential learning opportunities for committee members to implementing holistic review as part of the search. Other scholars recommend updating faculty hiring policies to include equity checkpoints or introducing financial incentives to ensure equity in the search. A multipronged approach is best, as the results of these strategies will vary, depending on the institution or the unit running the search. At the same time, the end goal of this work is not simply to increase the representation of faculty of color or ensure equity in the faculty search process. These steps are just part of a much bigger culture change and the full participation of all members of our HEI communities.

This ten-year initiative has changed lives and supported the advancement of underrepresented scholars and their families, at the same time as it has uncovered key structural issues that must be remedied if we are to ensure full participation of all institutional constituents. In other words, the work continues; and if we see all our work together in support of full participation as part of a larger effort, then it is impossible to despair. As the late Judith Heumann reminds us, “Change never happens at the pace we think it should. It happens over years of people joining together, strategizing, sharing, and pulling all the levers they possibly can. Gradually, excruciatingly slowly, things start to happen, and then suddenly, seemingly out of the blue, something will tip.”<sup>97</sup> It is our hope that you use this report—and the lessons we learned through C3—to further the objective of full participation at your own HEIs, a goal that has the potential to ensure educational access and social mobility for all stakeholders.

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<sup>97</sup> Judith Heumann, with Kristen Joiner, *Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist* (Beacon Press, 2020), 183.