



Western Washington University
Western CEDAR

WWU Honors College Senior Projects

WWU Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship

Spring 2023

Racial Diversity and Retention Rates of Psychology Faculty in Washington State Public Universities

Chiyo Aoki-Kramer

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwu_honors



Part of the [Disability and Equity in Education Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Aoki-Kramer, Chiyo, "Racial Diversity and Retention Rates of Psychology Faculty in Washington State Public Universities" (2023). *WWU Honors College Senior Projects*. 744.
https://cedar.wwu.edu/wwu_honors/744

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the WWU Graduate and Undergraduate Scholarship at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in WWU Honors College Senior Projects by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.

Racial Diversity and Retention Rates of Psychology Faculty in Washington State Public Universities

Chiyo Aoki-Kramer

Western Washington University

HNRS 490: Senior Capstone

Dr. Jackie Rose

June 9th, 2023

Abstract

Racial diversity is extremely important in higher education; not only for the students but for the faculty, as well. Diversity within education is important because it can show students of color examples of people who look like them succeeding in higher education as well as giving White students a broader education of being taught by people who have different backgrounds than themselves. Along with diversity, it is important to know that Universities are also supporting their faculty so that their Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) faculty retention rates are as high as the White faculty. This paper reviews the results of a survey that was distributed to psychology faculty across 5 Washington State public Universities; Western Washington University (WWU), the University of Washington (UW), Eastern Washington University (EWU), Central Washington University (CWU), and Washington State University (WSU), that included questions about the diversity and retention of BIPOC faculty as well as resources that each University and department supplies for them. Many universities across Washington State have put an emphasis on hiring more diverse faculty yet have a lot of work to be done to support the faculty once they are within the institution. Specific items that Western Washington University could implement are expanding resources like mandatory annual DEI training, creating community and advocacy groups across campus, and focusing on what White faculty can do to be better allies to their BIPOC colleagues.

Introduction

Diversity has been at the forefront of many issues that the nation has been tackling in recent years, especially within higher education where historically institutions were created for white men to succeed. Diversity within the workplace is extremely important. The American Council on Education states four main reasons why diversity is important in higher education with those being, enrichment of the educational experience, promoting growth and a healthy society, strengthening communities and the workplace, as well as enhancing America's economic competitiveness. It is also just as important to have diversity in higher education not just for students but for faculty as well so that those students are able to see the potential of who they could be or to see an example of someone who looks like themselves and has succeeded in something they are currently doing. There has also been research conducted that displays when BIPOC students are taught by a Black, Indigenous, & People of Color (BIPOC) teacher, they do better in their classes and have lower rates of exclusionary discipline (Lindsay & Hart, 2017; Goldhaber et al., 2019). It is also beneficial for White students to be taught by a diverse faculty so that it allows them to learn from people who have different backgrounds (Goldhaber et al. 2019).

This work is important to research because overall, women of color, as well as women from all ethnic backgrounds do not make up the same percentage of faculty in academia as they do in our general United States population (Lin & Kennette, 2022). I state this important fact because the Combahee River Collective argues that women of color, specifically Black women of color are one of the most oppressed groups within our society and until they have the same and equal rights as White men, we will not be an equal society (1977). In addition to this, BIPOC

faculty experience the consequences of systemic racism on a daily basis not just through inherent biases and microaggressions, but through funding as well. Systemic bias and systemic racism have prevented BIPOC faculty from receiving federal grants and they are less likely to go up for promotion due to the advocacy work they do for themselves and their BIPOC colleagues (Barber et al., 2020)

The original idea of this capstone project was to look at racial diversity and retention rates among students and faculty across the entire Western Washington University campus. However, that project would have been a lot longer than there was time for. Instead, the focus shifted to something smaller and more manageable, racial diversity and retention rates among psychology faculty in Public Washington State institutions with the goal of identifying specific actionable items that other public universities are doing to implement here at Western. The shift to focusing on faculty retention rates rather than student retention rates happened because there are many initiatives that universities all over the United States are doing to help ensure students have community, funding, and a sense of belonging, but I was unaware of similar resources for faculty members at Western Washington University. That coupled with the fact that throughout my whole career at Western Washington University, I only had two professors who identified as BIPOC intrigued me as to what focus, if any, was happening to ensure a diverse faculty at Western.

Methods

Participants:

All of the participants were recruited individually through email. Psychology faculty members from Western Washington University (WWU), the University of Washington (UW), Eastern Washington University (EWU), Central Washington University (CWU), and Washington

State University (WSU), were recruited. Their email addresses were accessed through their Universities Psychology department website. In order to be eligible to take the study, participants had to be 18 years old or older and a current psychology faculty member at one of the 5 institutions listed above. 1 participant from EWU, 3 participants from CWU, and 2 participants from UW did not complete their survey past the demographic questions and for that reason were not included in any of the data analyses. There was an additional participant from the University of Washington whose responses were not recorded as well because it was difficult to tell based on their answers what race they identified as. For racial demographics, any participants who indicated two or more races on their survey were grouped together in the multiracial category to protect their identity. For further analysis, those who were grouped as multiracial, were also included within the BIPOC faculty category as well. In total, out of 315 faculty contacted, there were 29 participants whose responses were recorded and incorporated into the study. All participants gave informed consent and this research was approved by the institutional review board of Western Washington University.

Survey:

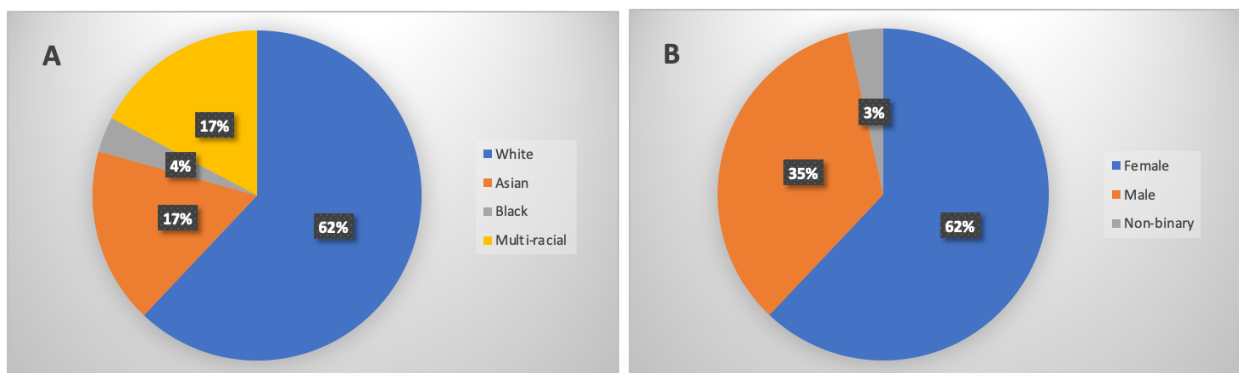
Within the email that participants were sent, they were given a link to a survey that included demographic questions like age, race, ethnicity, and their highest level of education, as well as hiring practices within their institution, their history at their academic institution, and information about faculty retention rates. Questions about Anti-racist, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) resources, BIPOC support for faculty members, as well as steps to reporting injustices, were asked as well. No statistical analysis was conducted, yet the responses given in this paper are all valid, true, and should promote more research to get a better view of the climate within each of the psychology departments within Washington State.

Results/Discussion

Based on the responses, all of these answers allow us a small look into each of the University's systems and resources. Because of the low response rate from every school, this data should not be taken to make assumptions that the responses reflect the view of the entire psychology departments of WWU, UW, EWU, CWU, or WSU. Rather, I invite you to read these results as a snapshot of the resources as well as the internal climate of how people feel. This should not diminish anyone's view on the responses given as they are still important and can give everyone an insight into the life of faculty members within psychology departments.

The response rate for each university goes as follows: 18.6% for WWU, 5.5% for UW, 9.7% for EWU, 19.0% for CWU, and 10.8% for WSU. The demographics data show that the majority of respondents identified as white and female faculty members, 62% each (Figures 1A & B). I received responses from individuals at every institution, however, the university that had the most respondents was UW with 34% (Figure 1C). This data was further separated to include racial diversity within each institution (Figure 1D). In addition, the most common age range that was seen was the 45-54 age range with 41% (Figure 1E).

Demographics:



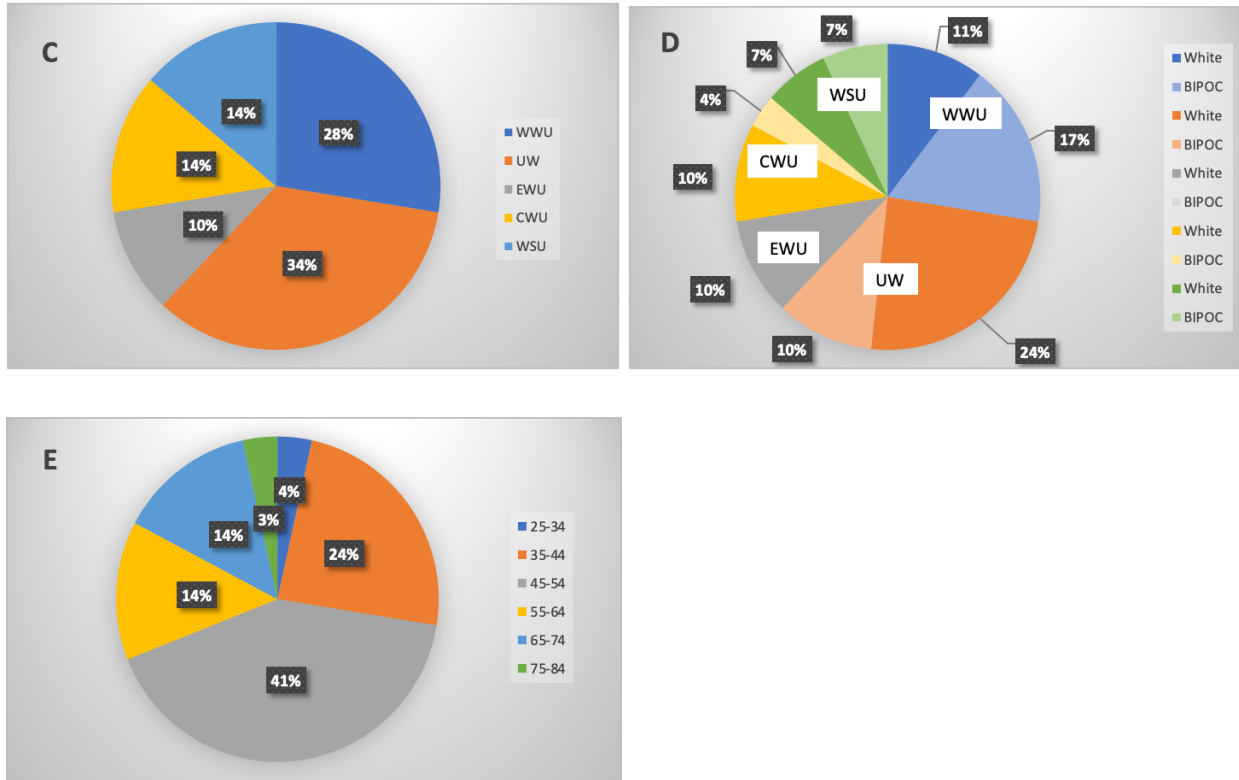


Figure 1: (A) Racial demographics of all participants. (B) Gender demographics of all participants. (C) University affiliations of all participants. (D) Further breakdown of racial diversity within each institution. The darker shade of each color that aligns with the colors given in C represent the white faculty, and the lighter shade of each color represents the BIPOC faculty. There is no lighter shade for EWU as there were no BIPOC respondents. (E) Age demographics of all participants

What practices are in place to ensure a diverse group of applicants?

Across all Universities, there was a common trend that they all had targeted ads that are focused in areas that draw a racially diverse audience. In addition to that, most of the schools also included information that they had a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) representative or committee that either assisted in the search committee or specifically in the hiring process. Some

of the items that WWU is already doing have been updating rubrics and position descriptions to allow applicants to know that diversity is valued, as well as displaying diversity effectiveness as a qualification for the position. Some of the items that the other schools mentioned that WWU could work to implement is requiring training that is specifically anti-racist and assists in identifying micro-aggressions for the hiring committees. Another item would be to require a diversity statement from applicants entailing how they would contribute to the diversity of the faculty as well as how they have assisted diverse student bodies in the past.

By requiring anti-racist DEI training as well as training geared towards identifying microaggressions, it will allow hiring committees to identify inherent biases that they have and allow them to recognize them if it happens during the search process. It is equally as important to be able to identify microaggressions as it can remove the inherent stigma a person may feel towards a specific group, as well as be able to combat microaggressions within the workplace.

How are the hiring practices different [compared to 5 years ago]?

A common theme for all of the colleges was that there was no focus on diversity for faculty 5 years ago. Those who were aware of the hiring practices stated that there is more of a focus on diversity in their hiring practices now. Some specifically identified that these changes were implemented 3 years ago which also coincides with the 2020 Black Lives Matter movement as well as an overall increased awareness towards hate crimes against the BIPOC communities all over the United States.

How long have you been at your current position?

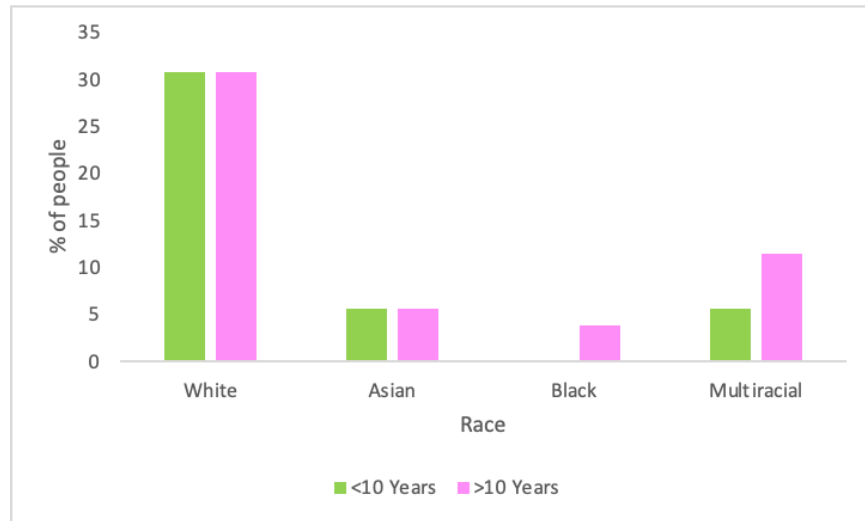


Figure 2: Racial demographic distribution of faculty across all 5 in-state public institutions based on how long they have been at their current position.

The overall trend from this group of respondents was that a majority of the faculty who have been at an institution for more than 10 years have been white and the majority of recent hires at an institution have also been white. In addition, out of the recent hires, only 1/3rd of the respondents identified as BIPOC (Figure 2).

What is your title?

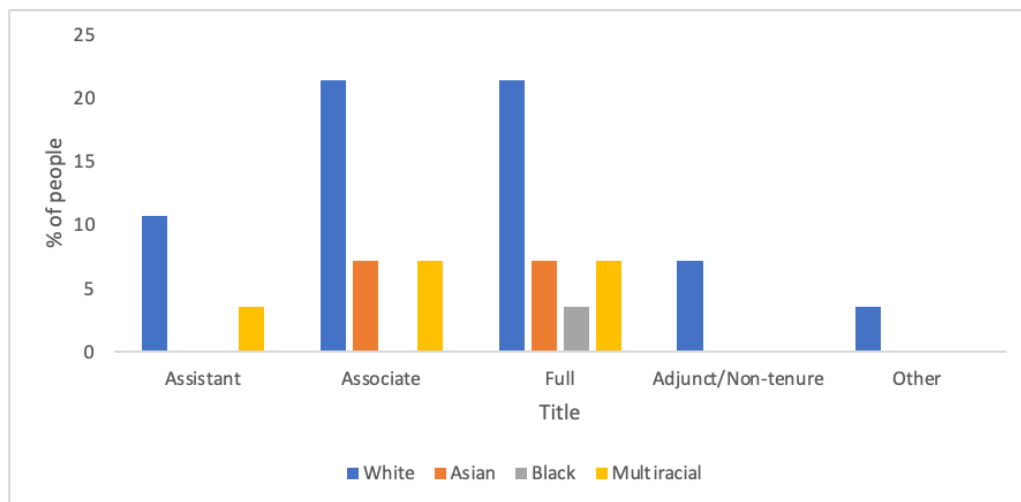


Figure 3: Racial demographic distribution of faculty across all 5 in-state public institutions based on their title.

Throughout most of the public universities in Washington State, there is a relatively even distribution of BIPOC faculty who hold Assistant, Associate, and Full positions, yet the overall majority of positions held in each of those categories are white (Figure 3). Although there is an even distribution of BIPOC faculty across Assistant, Associate, and Full positions this is data compiled across all institutions and if we were to further view this data at each individual university, the differences in positions would be much more apparent.

Do you know of any BIPOC faculty that have left your institution within the last 5 years?

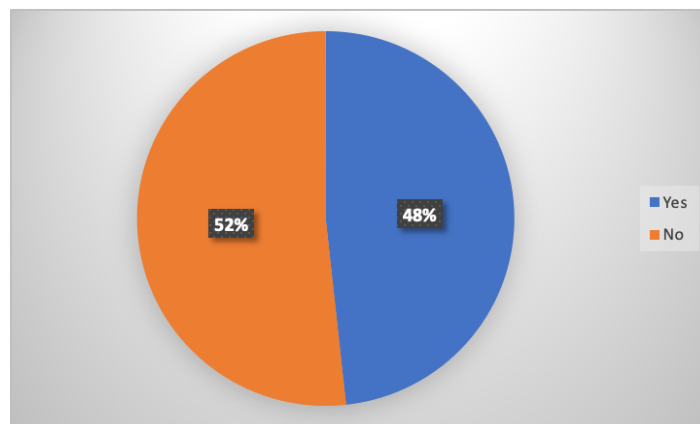


Figure 4: Distribution of how many people have known a BIPOC faculty member who has left within the last 5 years.

To try and get a glimpse of what retention rates have been like for BIPOC faculty over the past 5 years, I asked to see how many of the respondents knew of someone who had left. This was because I couldn't reach out to the individual people who had left each institution to ask their reasoning for leaving. Overall, 48% of the participants knew at least one BIPOC faculty member who had left their institution within the last 5 years (Figure 4).

How many [BIPOC faculty have left your institution within the last 5 years]?

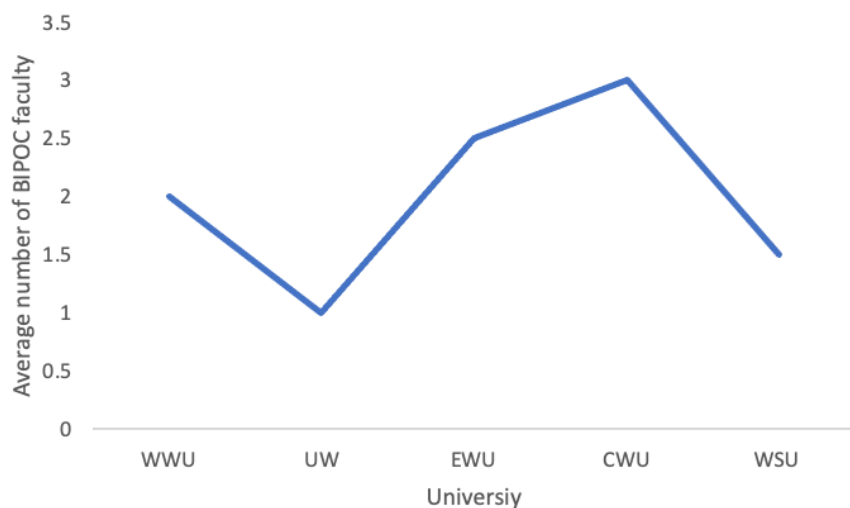


Figure 5: The average distribution of the number of BIPOC faculty who have left each institution within the last 5 years based on the varying numbers given in the responses.

The universities that reported the most number of BIPOC faculty leaving within the last 5 years were EWU, CWU, and WWU. This question, however, did not specify whether it was BIPOC faculty within each department so the responses could be skewed towards other faculty outside of their department that the participants knew. There were no two people from the same institution who included the same number of BIPOC faculty who had left so the averages of the responses were taken and are shown in Figure 5. There were also a few responses from participants who knew that there were BIPOC faculty who had left, but not the exact number. A participant from CWU specifically noted that “several [BIPOC faculty]... but there aren't that many to begin with.” Overall, the individuals who left the institutions could all have very different reasons for leaving, yet it is important to see these numbers as each BIPOC faculty member leaves, because it directly affects the diversity within an institution. It is also important to note that taken together with the last question that asked if they knew of any BIPOC faculty who had left their institution within the last 5 years, almost half of the participants knew at least

one BIPOC faculty member who had left. There is no way to tell if the participants from the same institution were referencing the same individuals.

Have you ever felt like leaving your position at your institution?

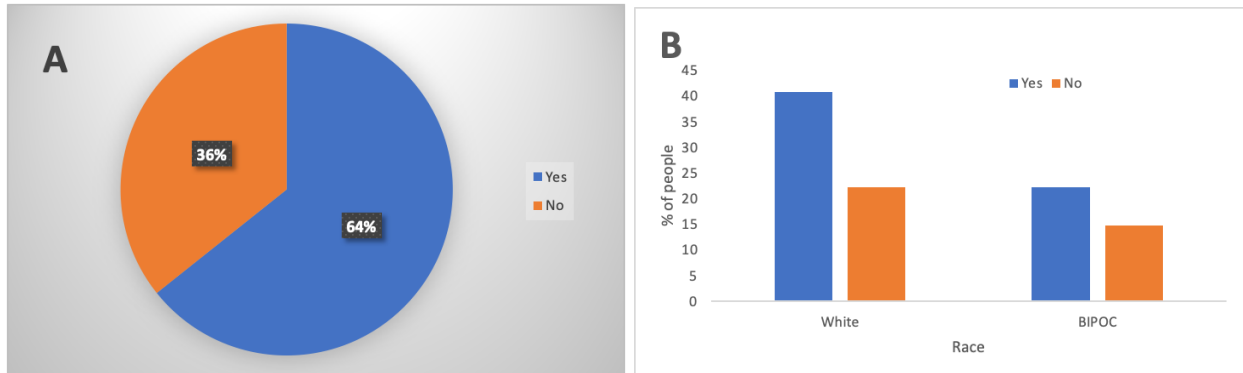


Figure 6: Participants' answers from WWU, UW, EWU, CWU, and WSU. (A) Distribution across psychology faculty who have felt like leaving their position. (B) Distribution of racial demographics of psychology faculty who have felt like leaving their institution.

The majority of psychology faculty who had responded to this survey contemplated leaving at one point during their career (64%, Figure 6A). Figure 6B also shows that most of these individuals are White faculty which helps to display that there are other things happening within their university or department that have not made them feel welcomed or that they do not belong there. It is equally as important to view these findings because although this paper is focused on race and retention rates of psychology faculty, this shows the importance of further research into why so many people have felt like leaving.

Did you feel like leaving because of an ADEI issue (anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion) issue?

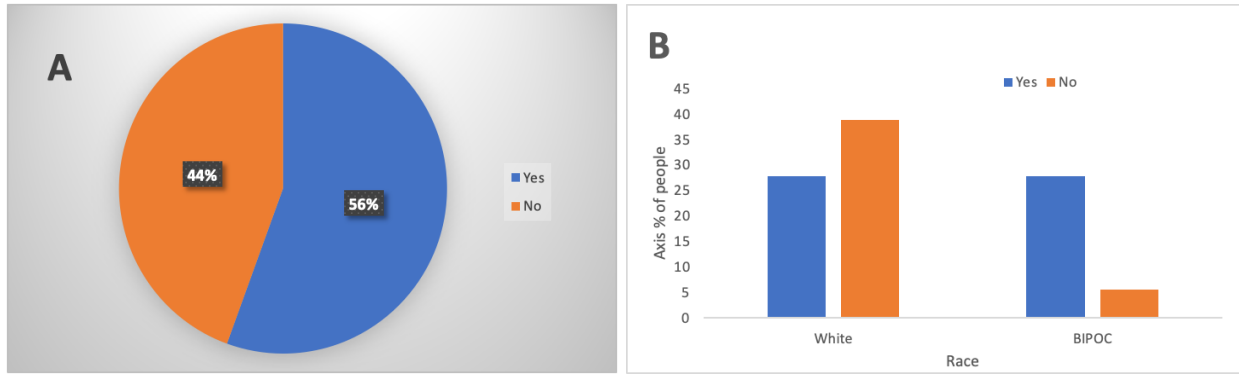


Figure 7: Participants' answers from WWU, UW, EWU, CWU, and WSU. (A) Distribution across psychology faculty who have felt like leaving because of an ADEI issue. (B) Distribution of racial demographics of psychology faculty who have felt like leaving because of an ADEI issue.

This question gets more into ADEI issues surrounding the participant's choice to leave. This question was only presented to those who had marked "Yes" on the previous question asking if they have ever felt like leaving their institution so that I could take a closer look into why people felt like leaving. It is important to note for this question, ADEI encompasses many different aspects of identity like gender, religion, sexual orientation, and disability status. This can also give a closer look at other inequities that are happening within institutions to show that there is more work to be done to ensure that all people feel welcomed within each department and each institution. In total, of the people who felt like leaving, more than half of them wanted to leave because of an ADEI issue which further shows that there is more work to be done to ensure that people feel comfortable knowing they are supported and respected at their place of work (Figure 7A). There is an interesting trend that also presents itself in that there was the same percent of White faculty members and BIPOC faculty members that felt like leaving due to these issues (Figure 7B). This should further prompt more research to be done within this area.

Was your reason for wanting to leave because of your racial identity?

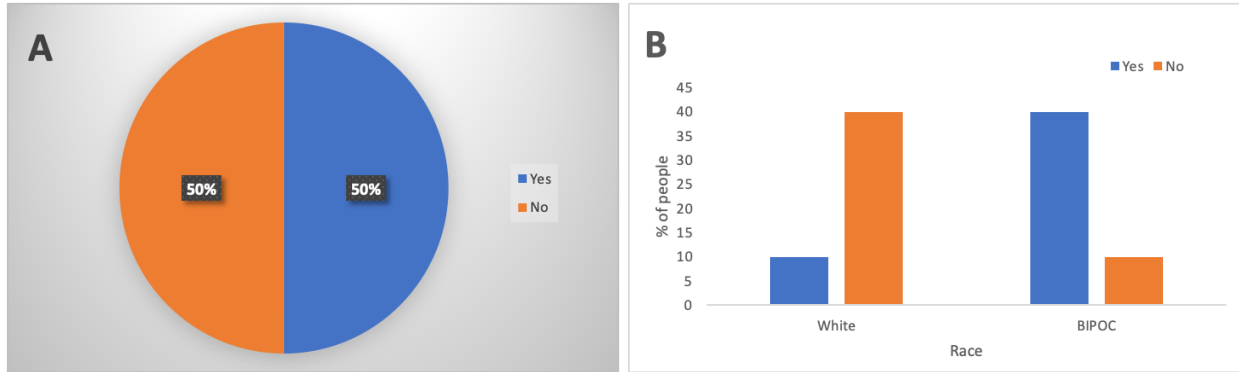


Figure 8: Participants' answers from WWU, UW, EWU, CWU, and WSU. (A) Distribution across psychology faculty who have felt like leaving because of their race. (B) Distribution of racial demographics of psychology faculty who have felt like leaving because of their race.

This question specifically looks at the responses from the previous two questions about wanting to leave their institution and if it was from an ADEI issue to see how many faculty have felt like leaving due to their race. Like the previous question, only respondents who answered "Yes" to the prior question surrounding ADEI issues were prompted to answer this question. These results clearly show that 80% of the BIPOC faculty who felt like leaving due to an ADEI issue was specifically an issue surrounding their race (Figure 7B and 8B). Whether it be because they felt like there were not enough resources, microaggressions, or any other reasons, this is direct data showing that we should be listening to the needs of our BIPOC faculty as to why they have felt this way. One important finding is that every college except UW had someone list that they had felt like leaving because of their race. Again, this is not speaking for every single faculty member from UW, but from the participants who completed the survey, that is what the data found.

Are you aware of any resources that your department or university provides for support for BIPOC faculty?

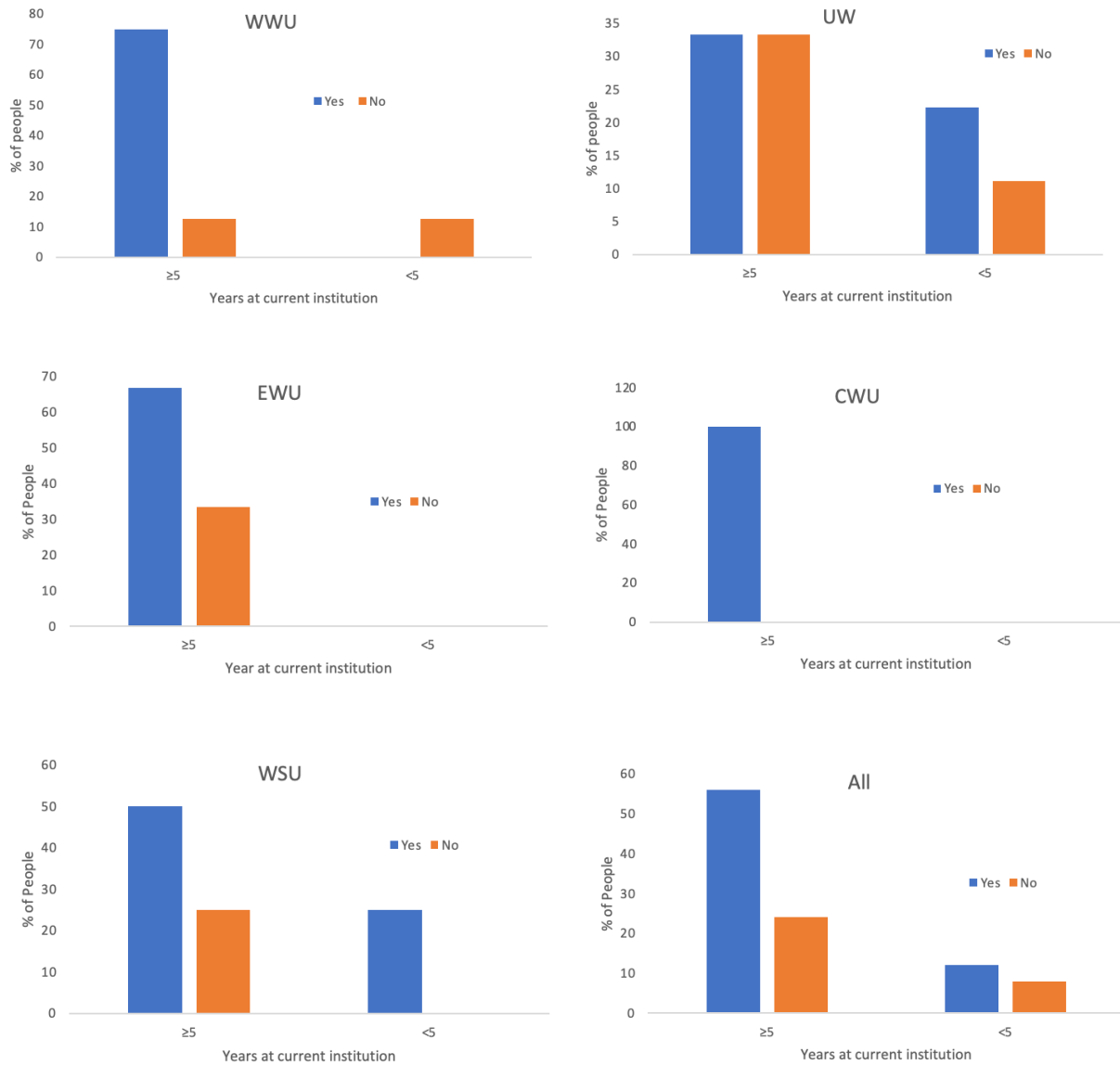


Figure 9: Distribution of faculty members who are aware of the resources for BIPOC faculty.

This information is broken down based on how many years they have been at their institution (≥ 5 years or < 5 years).

The overall majority of people across all institutions were aware of resources for BIPOC faculty members (figure 9). The distribution was separated if the participants had been at their current institution for 5 or more years or less than 5 years. This distinction was made because I assumed that around 5 years should be about the amount of time it takes for them to learn about

the resources their department and university offer. This timeline also roughly coincides with the time period that faculty members go up for promotion and tenure. For the faculty who are newer, it might make more sense if they are not aware of the resources available, but for someone who has been in their position for a while, it would be helpful for them to be aware of the resources that are available to them as well as resources that are available for their BIPOC colleagues if they are not BIPOC themselves. Knowing about resources that your department and university provide that may not be made for you is important because it can help cultivate a more welcoming environment for new colleagues who may have differing identities.

What are the resources that your department provides for support for BIPOC faculty?

All of the schools had specific resources that were made specifically for BIPOC faculty. At WWU, the psychology department established a DEI committee as well as both formal and informal mentorship opportunities. At the university level, there are also faculty/staff affinity groups as well as a diversity officer that the University has hired as well. Every university had at least some form of resource for their BIPOC faculty with the most common resource being a DEI office. Some of the items that WWU is currently not doing based on the responses from the survey, but that other schools are doing are internal trainings that are geared towards creating a more inclusive environment, professional development opportunities, as well as incentives for new hires. Some universities also included other programs like an ADVANCE program which is a resource created by the National Science Foundation (NSF) that aims to expand recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty at the university level. All of these resources would give additional communities for BIPOC faculty as well as resources to allow them to succeed in their position by not worrying about how their identity affects their work. Just as it is important

to have advocacy groups and resources, it is also equally important to have empowering and positive communities to lift each other up, like designated safe spaces.

Is there any mandatory ADEI training within your department or university?

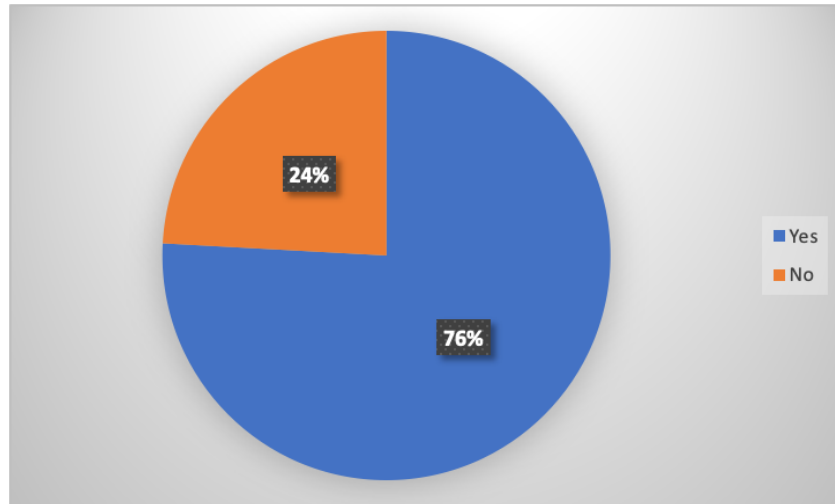


Figure 10: Distribution across WWU, UW, EWU, CWU, and WSU of mandatory ADEI training that their department or university requires faculty to complete. 76% of participants indicated there was mandatory ADEI training.

WWU, UW, and WSU, all had mixed responses as to if there were any mandatory ADEI trainings which pushes the question of how accessible is this information and how the wording is given to the faculty members. Although there may be resources available, it should be made clear at each institution as to whether or not the ADEI training is mandatory or not. Both EWU and CWU had unanimous answers that they did have mandatory ADEI training available, however, there were only 3 participants from each college, so there might be a slightly different viewpoint from more faculty members. Although Figure 10 displays the results across all institutions, all of the individuals who selected that their school did not have mandatory ADEI trainings had other respondents from the same school who also indicated that there were mandatory DEI trainings. ADEI training is important because it allows people to have designated

time to unlearn inherent biases, identify microaggressions, and how people can be better allies to people from different backgrounds.

Please list the ADEI activities/workshops provided by your institution.

The resources that were listed for WWU were anti-racism workshops, mandatory online training, voluntary training from the department, as well as an ADEI teaching workshop that is led through our Science, Math, and Technology Education (SMATE) program. Most of the other schools offered very similar items but the individual DEI trainings varied slightly. Based on some of the titles that other universities mentioned, I think that some of the trainings that could be beneficial at WWU are “De-centering whiteness”, “De-colonizing the syllabus”, as well as an online interactive training module. I do not know the specifics of the training modules that WWU provides for its faculty, but an interactive module would be beneficial to encourage engagement for the participant. I think it would also be important to maintain a yearly ADEI training for faculty and staff so that especially the White faculty and staff can continue to check their biases and ensure they are doing their part to create a welcoming and safe environment for their BIPOC colleagues.

Did you find the ADEI resources to be helpful? How so?

This question was the one that I was most interested in due to the fact that I remember completing a DEI training for students during my first and second year at WWU and I remembered it assuming the person completing the DEI training was White. This made it so that it was all information that as a BIPOC student, I was already aware of and the only important thing I learned from it was where to report injustices at my institution. Unfortunately one of the BIPOC faculty members also had a similar experience stating, “Sometimes training still assumes the viewpoint of a faculty member who is not a POC [person of color], so a faculty member who

is a POC has to "translate" or modify the content to be more personally relevant.”. The issue with this is that although it may be helpful and relatable for the White faculty, it further perpetuates the ingrained racism within institutions as well as alienates the BIPOC faculty who are also trying to learn. It is also important because although many BIPOC faculty do not need to know about the specific injustices they face on a daily basis, it is still important for them to reflect on any inherent biases they may have towards other races as well.

Across all institutions there seemed to be common trends that BIPOC faculty did not find the resources helpful. The following is a quote from one of the BIPOC faculty respondents. “No, its more performative - it makes white people feel like they’re doing something when the actual work is slower”. There were other BIPOC faculty who simply stated “No” as well. Of the BIPOC faculty who said they were helpful, the following are quotes from their responses. “Yes, raising awareness for some”, “Yes, they complement what I know from my professional training about ADEI activities and workshops.” and, “Reinforces a sense of belonging”.

Of the White faculty who responded to this question, there were some who also agreed that the DEI resources were not helpful stating, “No, the staff is great but limited support and presence. It doesn’t seem to be a priority”. However, the vast majority of White faculty stated that they found the DEI resources helpful. Some examples are, “Yes, learn strategies to improve DEI in classroom and decolonizing the syllabus, provide important mentoring considerations”, “Raised some issues I might have not been aware of. Also aghast at the behavior of some colleagues.”, and “Not the online ones provided by the university. They are unengaging and too simplistic.”.

One of the more interesting responses I found was the numerous reasons why some of the White faculty felt like they did not need to use the DEI resources or why they felt like they

weren't helpful. One participant stated, "I have not, because as a psychologist, these trainings reiterate things that have been part of my training and experience for the past 35 years.", another said, "Somewhat. By now, most of the DEI information (implicit bias, equity, fairness, inclusion) has entered common academic knowledge. But, like in the case of conflict of interest trainings, reminders are needed." Both of these responses are interesting because although the second participant noted the places where the DEI training can be helpful, they clearly have not listened to their BIPOC faculty within their institutions. Out of all of the participants, none of the BIPOC faculty who stated the DEI resources were helpful said that they were helpful because they learned something new, most had stated they were helpful because it raised awareness towards the issues they face which is always a good starting point but it can not be the ending point either.

What are the steps to reporting injustices at your university?

Every single university had multiple different avenues to go about reporting injustices. Each of these avenues is for specific injustices, for example, one of the WWU faculty participants noted "interpersonal issues go to HR, issues due to race go to the EOO [Equal Opportunity Office], sexual harassment goes to Title IX". In addition, many universities also noted an online reporting tool they could use. One of the things I noticed, however, was the vast number of different responses I received even within the same institutions. For example, another WWU faculty participant responded, "Title IX office for gender-based discrimination. I'm not sure about other types of discrimination (I know there is a system for students reporting bias but I'm not sure if this extends to faculty/staff)". Another participant from CWU stated, "Too numerous to list here. Faculty Senate Code provides information on this (4 pages worth)". Although it is good that Washington State public universities have many different ways to report

injustices that occur, it got me thinking as to if this could be streamlined in any way. For example, having an online tool where faculty can select through a list of potential topics they are trying to report like race, interpersonal, sex, religion, gender, ability, class, nationality, etc. so that it will show them which office to report to. There could also be an “other” option that would allow them to possibly connect with someone who could work with them on a case-by-case basis to assist them to which office they need to report to. This way the process can be streamlined, and it eliminates any additional and unnecessary trauma for the individual from having to repeat their story over and over to many different individuals.

Would you feel comfortable and safe using your university's reporting system?

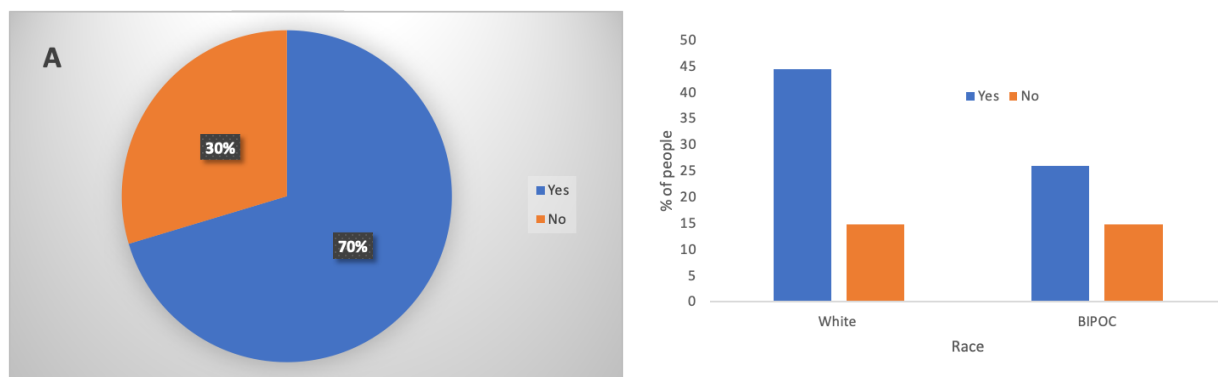


Figure 11: Distribution of faculty who would and would not feel comfortable utilizing their university's reporting systems. (A) Displays the results of all of the participants. A majority of all participants feel comfortable utilizing their system (70%) (B) A breakdown of the racial makeup of the answers to this question. The group that felt the most comfortable using their university's reporting system was white people (44.4% of total participants). Both BIPOC and White faculty had the same percent of participants who indicated that they were not comfortable using their reporting system (14.8% of total participants each).

The responses to this question both surprised me and also did not shock me. I knew that the largest group most likely to be comfortable utilizing the reporting systems were White

faculty and that is partially due to White faculty making up a majority of the participants, but also because many of the systems within institutions were not created for people of color. We are starting to see shifts in that, but the progress is slow. Although 70% of faculty feel comfortable using their institution's reporting system, there were still 30% of people who did not feel comfortable and I was interested in looking at the racial demographics of those who felt comfortable using their university's reporting system and who did not (figure 11A & B). I was pleasantly surprised to see that most of the BIPOC faculty felt safe and comfortable utilizing their reporting system (figure 11B). I do not believe that the systems that are in place are a perfect system as we still have 30% of faculty who do not feel comfortable or safe utilizing them, but it does indicate that the systems that are currently in place are a good starting place to build upon further.

Please explain why you would not feel safe using your university's reporting system

Of the participants who indicated that they did not feel comfortable utilizing their reporting systems, there were multiple trends as to why they chose their answer. To start, many felt like it was ineffective or that nothing positive has come from their reporting system. Others felt that although the report is anonymous, there are so few BIPOC faculty that it would not be hard to identify the individual. Following that thought, many were afraid of retaliation, with one individual mentioning, "There are subtle ways to punish a person for reporting an incident. Further, the incident has to be blatant or clear cut, and this is most often not the case. There are multiple microaggressions that occur that don't fit university guidelines for reporting and having positive results." On the one hand, it is good to have clear-cut guidelines as to what is tolerated behavior and what is not, but on the other hand, it allows for a lot of uncertainty and inability for action to occur on other incidents that are not direct and more obscure. It is even harder when

there are no people who look like you on the committees that oversee these reports. One participant noted “most people on those committees are not BIPOC” meaning that there is a possibility that the report may not be seen as an actual offense because White people may not be aware of the issues or why the offense is that big of a problem. This displays the issues of trying to work with a system that was not built for BIPOC individuals to be in.

I do not believe that a response to this issue should be to keep trying to hire new BIPOC faculty because if the systems that have been in place continue, it will perpetuate the same cycle that we have been seeing with little focus spent on making sure faculty want to stay at their position. Instead, there should be more focus on asking faculty members more about what their university or department could improve on and see what the faculty want to make them feel comfortable in their position and stay at their position. Then, once those changes are made and we are seeing higher retention rates of faculty members, then there should be even more focus on diversifying their programs. At the end of the day, institutions should not be valued more than the well-being of the faculty who work there.

Is there any other information you would like to provide, or other information you would like me to know about racial diversity and retention of faculty in your psychology department?

There were many faculty who wanted to include more information and I believe it is important to hear their voices. To give a spot for these voices to be heard, here is a collection of the responses to this question. I believe that it is also important to note that these answers were from both White and BIPOC faculty indicating change is being asked for from everyone.

“It's a very white department, to be honest. I wish we had more faculty of color.”

“White faculty need to learn effective allyship and to be able to identify racial microaggressions from faculty, staff and students”

“The university and department are concerned about faculty being racist, but there is little interest in student racism. A lot of microaggressions from students are directed at non-white faculty, but many white faculty don't recognize this as a problem. Also white people at PWIs, as well-intentioned as they may be, have defined the standard for what it means to be anti-racist, and no surprise, the standard reflects...exactly their preferences and their world view! This can make non-white faculty feel even more alienated because they're not "doing anti-racism" in the "right" way.”

“I am the only BIPOC faculty in a large department.”

“There is a subtle form of racism built into academia that isn't questioned. That is, that our educational system, science, and training are all anchored in a western worldview--not a global worldview. So, many faculty believe they are embracing diversity, yet still hold to the western worldview and as a consequence still perpetuate inequality, white supremacy, and colonization.”

“My department is making efforts on the side of hiring but I think severely neglects the pieces related to retention (how can we do work as a predominately white faculty to support BIPOC faculty in our workplace?)”

All of these quotes emphasize the need for more work to be done within departments. I received answers to this question from all institutions that I reached out to which shows how much is needed to be done across all Washington State public universities. I believe it also highlights the need for support specifically from White faculty. There are simple items that individuals can do to educate themselves as to how they can be a better ally to BIPOC communities and it seems the starting point is to identify inherent/unconscious biases and microaggressions. Microaggressions are often times “brief and commonplace daily verbal,

behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color” (Sue et al., 2007). Many times these are said unintentionally, but it is important for people to be able to recognize them and be able to speak out against them when they happen. It is important for White people to be able to identify them so they can stand up for their BIPOC colleagues when they are heard so that BIPOC faculty do not get burnt out from telling every single person who has done this. By standing up and speaking up when microaggressions are said, it can make it easier for more people to stand up for BIPOC faculty when larger and more systemic issues are presented.

To end, I would like to highlight one answer that was filled out by a White faculty member. They wrote, “I think that my department strives to hire the best faculty, with diversity of thought and training being more important than skin color or other factors that are independent of psychological knowledge and skill. Being able to teach content to the next generation, and being able to supervise students in their research, and being able to communicate the findings of their own research in publication and conference presentations -- those are the characteristics that are focused on.” I think this person had a very interesting point which is ideally how our systems would run if there were not such ingrained racism contained within these institutions. It is very easy to say that it is important to only hire the best faculty, but when you think about it, what are the standards of “best faculty” made from? They are made from the systems that were made for White men to succeed. It is important to incorporate race into hiring practices because without it, how are we to ensure we are able to accurately and effectively teach the diverse body of students at our institutions and ensure we are making them feel seen and heard if we do not let our BIPOC faculty be seen and heard? It is this type of

reasoning that helps perpetuate the systems that are in place that are alienating BIPOC faculty. This was a perfect example of a statement that I believe was not intended to be harmful, yet it is extremely harmful, especially for the BIPOC faculty within their university. A person's identity and especially their culture help enrich communities and create a more welcoming environment for people from different walks of life. Having a color-blind view does not allow for this change to happen.

Conclusion

This work is not easy and it is a slow process as well. This essay only includes a small fraction of the total voices of psychology faculty members across Washington State and did not even include voices from private universities within the state. My goal for this paper was to help spread light on a topic that severely needs discussion as demonstrated by the numerous responses within the survey. I believe there are small actionable items that can be done at Western Washington University within the Psychology Department to start with, with the hopes that it spreads throughout the University, starting with clear, annual mandatory DEI trainings for both faculty and students. Ideally, these DEI trainings will build off of one another and each year be able to add onto the material they learned from the previous year. These DEI trainings ideally will be geared towards a larger audience through not assuming the viewer is White, to decenter the White narrative. This is important because Gurin et al. states that in order for students to academically and socially grow, there needs to be support from colleges and universities for affirmative action and diversity efforts for their faculty. This can take the form of DEI trainings to allow faculty and especially White faculty to create a more welcoming and safe environment for their BIPOC colleagues. Brathwaite et al. argues that education and training like DEI training allow for the enhancement of an individual or a group to be able to make the distinct and needed

change from theory to practice, meaning that instead of knowing that racism exists, knowing the tools to support an anti-racist work environment and lifestyle.

Although this paper does not dive too much into the racism faculty experience from students, it does exist and there are things that the University can do to educate students as well to support their faculty. I believe there should be more efforts across the University as well to create more communities and advocacy groups for BIPOC faculty. It is clear that there have been changes made to attempt to appeal to a more diverse applicant group but before these changes can grow further, there needs to be more focus on the retention of BIPOC faculty so that once they are here, they will be able to feel like they belong and not like they should be leaving because of their race. White faculty should also take it upon themselves to learn more about the specific obstacles that present to BIPOC faculty in higher education as their experience is vastly different. Listen to what BIPOC faculty ask for and support their advocacy when needed. This work will not get done through the few BIPOC voices there are and the more support they get, the quicker change will come.

This paper was a very, very, very small look into some of the issues that BIPOC faculty are experiencing and this is only what has been happening within one discipline across 5 institutions. I hope that this paper sparks more of a conversation to improve the systems in place as well as to take a more in-depth look at the climate within the department. As was mentioned at the start of the paper, less than 20% of all WWU psychology faculty responded to this survey, so I call upon leaders within the department as well as the administration for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and Western Washington University to conduct a larger scale climate survey to hear what more faculty have to say and work together to create a community that allows everyone to thrive. There was a study that Western conducted in 2014 to learn about

the experience of BIPOC faculty at Western, but it does not appear that a new study was conducted since (Dozier, 2014). It is important to be able to conduct these studies every few years so that the administration and departments are aware of items that need to change. The sad truth of the matter is that based on the findings from this paper and comparing it to the study conducted almost 10 years ago, there seem to be many of the same issues with little progress made. I hope that another in depth climate survey is also done by a salaried individual rather than a student who is paying the university to complete this research. I also hope that there is more work done to look at the other areas of ADEI as was indicated within this survey, there were still other faculty who felt like leaving due to an ADEI issue other than their race.

If a school does not take care of and support its BIPOC faculty, how will it take care of and support its BIPOC students? Students at a University typically only spend 3-5 years completing their degree but for many faculty, this is their career and although it is important to support students, I argue that it is even more important to be able to support your faculty as they are the ones teaching and mentoring the students.

References

American Council on Education. (2012). On the Importance of Diversity in Higher Education.

Barber, P. H., Hayes, T. B., Johnson, T. L., & Márquez-Magaña, L. (2020). Systemic racism in higher education. *Science*, 369(6510), 1440–1441.

<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abd7140>

Brathwaite, C. A., Versailles, D., Juüdi-Hope, D., Coppin, M., Jefferies, K., Bradley, R.,

- Campbell, R., Garraway, C., Obewu, O., LaRonde-Ogilvie, C., Sinclair, D., Groom, B., & Grinspun, D. (2022). Tackling discrimination and systemic racism in academic and workplace settings. *Nursing Inquiry*, 29(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/nin.12485>
- Combahee River Collective. (1977). The Combahee River Collective Statement.
- Dozier, R. (2014). The Experiences of Faculty of Color at Western Washington University.
- Goldhaber, D., Theobald, R., & Tien, C. (2019). Why we need a diverse teacher workforce. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100(5), 25–30.
<https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.wvu.edu/10.1177/0031721719827540>
- Gurin, P., Dey, E., Hurtado, S., & Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. *Harvard Educational Review*, 72(3), 330–367.
<https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.72.3.01151786u134n051>
- Lin, P. S., & Kennette, L. N. (2022). Creating an inclusive community for BIPOC faculty: women of color in academia. *SN social sciences*, 2(11), 246.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s43545-022-00555-w>
- Lindsay, C. A., & Hart, C. M. D. (2017). Exposure to Same-Race Teachers and Student Disciplinary Outcomes for Black Students in North Carolina. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 39(3), 485–510. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373717693109>
- Sue, D. W., Capodilupo, C. M., Torino, G. C., Bucceri, J. M., Holder, A. M., Nadal, K. L., & Esquilin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 271–286.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066x.62.4.271>