**Black Women Faculty Transition Experiences in a Cluster Hire Initiative: A Qualitative Case Study**

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Faculty from diverse backgrounds benefit the academy through varied perspectives in research, mentoring, community engagement, and in the health professions, patient care. Cluster hiring is one method used to build interdisciplinary research teams and to build diversity in faculty bodies. This study investigated transition (smooth entry and welcome) and orientation experiences and experiences with microaggression of Black women faculty hired in the health sciences through a campus cluster initiative. Research questions included: 1) How do orientation and transition processes impact Cluster faculty feelings of welcome? 2) What acts, activities, or occurrences influence Cluster faculty feelings of welcome either positively or negatively? and 3) How have microaggressions impacted Cluster faculty feelings of welcome? Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 Black women faculty. Thematic analysis identified their nuanced experiences, perceptions, and attitudes and led to categorization across seven prominent areas including (1) recruitment and transition, (2) orientation, (3) communication, (4) community, (5) self-advocacy, (6) microaggression and bias, and (7) outside stressors. After the offer and before arrival, few departments engaged faculty beyond administrative tasks. Academic orientation was disorganized, and almost nonexistent for dually appointed faculty. Attention paid to faculty members' well-being and that of their families garnered goodwill; efforts to get to know faculty generated feelings of being welcomed. Faculty encountered microaggression and bias in departmental spaces. Findings suggest lack of attention to transition is a missed opportunity, disorganized and insufficient

orientation impacts faculty entry. Intentionally engaging new faculty in departmental culture and attending to their experiences is critical. Cluster hire programs should establish comprehensive, organized programs of information delivery for each stage of the faculty hire process and monitor progress to be sure needs are met. Future research could compare the transition and onboarding experiences of Cluster faculty vs. other groups. Results may shed light on whether faculty race or Cluster involvement is a factor. There may be implications for an institution-wide reset of orientation and onboarding processes.

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# Preface

An endeavor such as this is no solo act. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge those who have guided and supported me on this journey.

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**1.0 Framing the Problem of Practice**

**1.1 Problem Area**

Despite years of initiatives designed to prepare, recruit, support, retain, and promote faculty of color, faculty from minoritized and marginalized backgrounds continue to be underrepresented in the academy. The University Leadership Council of the Education Advisory Board (EAB, 2008) notes:

> Across the last two decades, efforts to increase faculty diversity have intensified, with a growing number of institutions launching initiatives to recruit and retain underrepresented faculty and increase the diversity of doctoral recipients. Despite these efforts, faculty diversification continues to proceed slowly. (p. 2)

By 2050, racially and ethnically minoritized groups are projected to collectively comprise over half of the U.S. population (Ortman & Guarneri, 2009). The change in the composition of the country will impact all public and private systems predicated upon the composition of the population being served, including social services, healthcare, and education (Humes et al., 2010). The increasing diversity in the population and on college campuses dictates strong efforts to diversify the faculty. Black student enrollment increased from 31% to 36% between 2000 and 2017, and Taylor et al. (2010) summarize current conditions, noting:

> Since women constitute almost 60% of U.S. college students, and because minorities will exceed 50% of the U.S. population before 2050, we must do a better job of preparing and hiring more persons from these groups for faculty positions in order to provide diverse role models for the nation's changing demographics. (para. 2)

**U.S. college students still more likely than faculty to be racial or ethnic minorities**

*% of undergraduates and postsecondary faculty who are nonwhite*
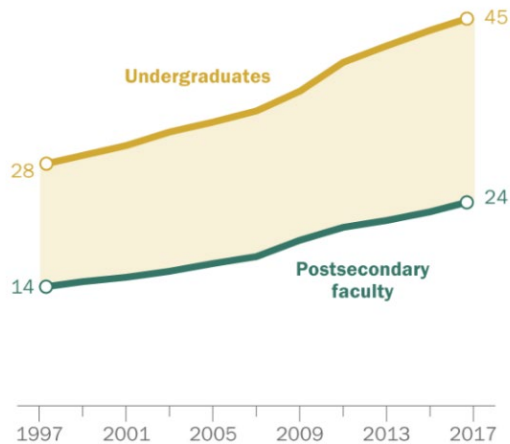
Note: "Nonwhite" includes blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Pacific Islanders, American Indians or Alaska Natives, and those of two or more races. Those categorized as "non-resident alien" and "race/ethnicity unknown" are not included in this analysis.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

**Figure 1 Pew Research Center (2019)**

A National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2019) report shows students bearing minoritized identities are increasingly present in higher education, but that increase in student enrollment has not "percolated" up to the professoriate. Undergraduates are far more likely to be nonwhite than the faculty who teach them. A Pew Research Center report on the NCES findings graphically represents the change in non-white student enrollment versus the change in non-white faculty (Figure 1). From 1997 to 2017, non-white student enrollment increased from 28% to 45% of enrolled postsecondary students. Across the same time range, non-white US faculty increased from 14% to 24%. In 2022, US full-time faculty were 6 percent Black (4 percent Black female and 3 percent Black male), 6 percent Hispanic (3 percent each Hispanic female and Hispanic male), and 1 percent two or more races. Less than one-half of 1 percent were American

Indian/Alaska Native, and less than one-half of 1 percent were Pacific Islander (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). Examining the parity between US faculty diversity and diversity in the US population, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data reveals that diversity in tenure-track faculty across the US is not proceeding any more quickly as changes in diversity in the US population. Between 2013 and 2020, the underrepresented faculty body increased at a rate of .23% per year, while the same groups in the US population increased .2% per year. In a review of the IPEDS data, Matias et al. (2022) note that, at current rates of change, parity is impossible; however, parity could be possible by 2050 if current faculty diversity efforts progressed at 3.5 times the current annual rate.

### 1.1.1 Key Terminology

The following terms serve as reference points to clarify concepts related to minoritized faculty experiences:

*Equity-mindedness:* Equity-minded action requires an awareness of the "sociohistorical context of exclusionary practices and racism in higher education and the impact of power asymmetries on opportunities and outcomes, particularly for African Americans and Latinas/os" (Bensimon et al., 2016, p. 3).

*Minoritized*: The term, "minoritized," refers to faculty whose racial and ethnic group status is produced by power dynamics rather than simple numeric representation (Griffin, 2020), though this study does examine numerical representation.

*Onboarding*: The process of integrating and engaging individuals diverse in experience level and departmental role and "socializing" them with their colleagues, departmental culture, and practices (Azour & McGuinness, 2023, p. 2350).

*Orientation*: The process of providing a new faculty hire fundamental information on functioning within the institution including policies, administrative processes, benefits, and resources. It "endeavors to accelerate the acquisition of departmental and institutional knowledge, which helps faculty acclimate to organizational culture" (Azour & McGuinness, 2023, p. 2351).

*Transition:* Transition is defined as fostering smooth and welcoming entry into the institution and campus community (Griffin & Mabe, 2016).

## 1.1.2 Barriers to Creating a Diverse Faculty

The problem of the lack of diversity in the faculty is a critical one for higher education, as homogeny in ideas and approaches inhibits progress and restricts growth. Diversity in higher education faculty benefits individuals through improvement in individual student outcomes through instruction and mentoring, benefits institutions through increasing institutional effectiveness, and benefits our society through improving the quality of life of communities (Milem, 2003). Pigott and Cariaga-Lo (2019) note:

> The promotion of inclusion, diversity, access, and equity (IDA&E) is critical to harnessing the full range of human creativity, innovation, and talent necessary to realizing the education, research, patient care, and service missions that constitute the principal objectives of such institutions. (p. S74)

Diversity within the academic setting is critical as universities drive discovery through the exchange of ideas and the pursuit of inquiry. The faculty on college and university campuses conduct research, develop the students and trainees, and, in settings including clinical service, care for the patients. The absence of diverse faculty in STEM, for example - broadly defined as women and those from minoritized or socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds (National Science

Foundation, 2023) - results in limited perspectives in research, impedes learning in the higher education classroom, and limits opportunities for mentorship for undergraduate and graduate students. The health professions sector of the academy experiences the same dearth of diverse role models and leaders as the arts, sciences, and engineering. The lack of senior role models limits the progress of underrepresented individuals (those from groups present in their profession at rates lower than their presence in the population) across the lifespan in academic medicine (Campbell, 2021). Examining the presence of underrepresented faculty in pharmacy, medicine and dental medicine, data shows little progress has been made in keeping pace with changes in the diversity of the US population (Campbell et al., 2021). The authors refer to "underrepresented minorities" or URMs and note: "In medicine, while the number of advanced degrees awarded to URM students has increased over time, the number of faculty hired to teach them has not" (p. 951). The recruitment of a diverse faculty is the first step in changing academic climates, bringing fresh perspectives to research, and meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student body.

Minoritized faculty in pharmacy have had experiences parallel to those in medicine with minoritized academic faculty representation growing slowly and professional environments remaining inhospitable or downright toxic. An investigation of the viability of academic careers for women and URM pharmacists, found that women's representation doubled between 1989 and 2009 (from 20.7% to 45.5%). Over that same twenty years, URM graduates increase was much less dramatic - from 9%-11%, URM assistant professors increased at a similar rate (7% to approximately 11%), associate professors and professors remained below 10%, and deans increased 6% to 11% (Chisholm-Burns et al., 2012). The authors posited replicating the conditions that increased the representation of women to inform efforts to increase the presence of URM faculty. What was not mentioned in that study was well-reviewed in an examination of

pharmacists' role and responsibility in mitigating systemic racism. Arya, et al. (2020) report BIPOC pharmacists' experience with the cultural tax (shouldering the responsibility of diversity efforts), and note the challenges they face:

> BIPOC individuals are also subject to racism within, and external to, their work environments, including having their work minimized by colleagues, and having to face racial discrimination from patients, intersectionality of other forms of discrimination (e.g., with issues of race and gender), and impact of past trauma from manifestations of centuries of legal discrimination and systemic racism in their daily lives. (p. e44)

The pathway to the professoriate for minoritized people is complex and fraught. At its origin, the academy was not instituted to include Black and Brown people; they were, in fact, explicitly excluded. The US has a long history of scientific and political views devaluing racial minorities and propagating notions of inferiority. Those notions prevailed in science and the academy, became ubiquitous (Anderson, 2002; Dupree & Boykin, 2021), and persist to this day. The roots of those fallacies are baked into the policies, processes, and structures that govern academia today, including access to and advancement in academic careers.

### 1.1.3 Black Women in the Health Sciences

Black women in higher education (including the academic health sciences) face the biases and barriers noted above in different ways due to their identities and the ways they experience the oppressions of racism and sexism in society. Focusing on either form of oppression in isolation ignores what Black women experience at the intersection of both identities (Crenshaw, 1989; Griffin, 2016; Priddie, et al., 2022). Historically, Black women were restricted from the health professions and once engaged, found their contributions overlooked. While the numbers have

changed to some extent, once a part of the academic health professions, Black women still find themselves ignored and unmentored. Black women physicians report being confused for nurses and support staff and encounter disbelief that they might be medical leaders (Eke et al., 2021).

Also, Black women faculty may find their work devalued, which impacts whether and how they progress through their academic careers (promotion and tenure) and whether they stay. Epistemic exclusion (Settles et. al., 2022) is the condition of delegitimization of particular types of scholarship and the marginalization of those who produce it. The standard for what and who is valuable and competent is set by those who hold the power to set the metrics that determine who and what work is deficient. Stockdill (2012) notes:

> …mainstream academics often label those who challenge the status quo— particularly those situated in oppressed groups— as 'not objective.' They question the validity of our scholarship by pointing out our status in outsider groups as indicators of our 'bias.' Yet the objectivity of men, White people, heterosexuals, and/or academics with middle and upper-class backgrounds is much less likely to be questioned. (p. 162)

Systems of oppression that marginalize women and people of color dovetail to create conditions under which minoritized and marginalized faculty begin to consider leaving their institutions and the academy. These barriers play a role in feelings of inclusion or belonging and, ultimately, retention (Edwards & Ross, 2018; Flaherty, 2021). In *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* Wallace, et al. (2012) explain, whether minoritized women faculty have entered through programs or not, views of them and their work as incompetent color their experiences.

> Because they are viewed as the product of targeted initiatives, which generate unworthy, handout attitudes, they fall victim to societal perceptions that they are

incompetent—defined as lacking ability, unskilled, amateurish, and/or inept—by students, staff, colleagues, and administrators in the academy. These women are continually challenged to prove that they do not have their job—or will be kept in their job—because of affirmative action, opportunity hiring, and/or tokenism. (p. 426)

## 1.1.4 Barriers to Diverse Faculty Recruitment and Hiring

A comprehensive review of the literature on barriers to increasing faculty diversity collates them into three areas: barriers in recruitment and hiring, barriers in transition and socialization, and barriers in retention and advancement (Griffin, 2020). All three are critical in inhibiting diversity in the faculty workforce. However, this inquiry will key on barriers in transition for Black women faculty recruited into the health sciences through a cluster hire.

Universities have employed several methods to recruit diverse faculty. The traditional academic search model is illustrated below in Figure 2 – that of posting advertisements in journals, networking at conferences, reaching out to colleague networks, and waiting for applications.

THE TRADITIONAL FACULTY SEARCH PROCESS

*Place job ad*
↓
*Accept applications*
↓
*Receive nominations from colleagues at other universities*
↓
*Review and rank candidates*
↓
*Develop short list*
↓
*Interview top candidates*
↓
*Make job offer*

**Figure 2 Bilimoria & Buch (2010)**

In this model, which tends to be more passive, diversity in the applicant pool is dependent upon marketing and the breadth of search committee members and colleagues' networks. In general, departments and divisions recruit to fill faculty vacancies most often hiring one faculty member to fill one opening in an identified area of need (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010; Thies & Hinojosa, 2023). While this approach meets the needs of incumbents in the department, it eliminates any possibility of creative hiring to meet broader systemic goals, including diversity and campus climate. In addition, typical faculty recruitment processes risk reproducing Whiteness as homogeneous search committees, charged with seeking "excellence," will tend to seek and select people like themselves (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). Planning, forethought, and attention to equity – recognizing and addressing racialized policies, processes, and structures that perpetuate racial inequities and addressing those issues in recruitment processes – can broaden the scope of searches and impact the experiences of minoritized faculty recruited through them (Bensimon & Malcom, 2012; Dowd & Bensimon, 2015).

In an examination of hiring for diversity in biomedical engineering, Cosgriff-Hernandez et al. (2023) posit that traditional faculty hiring has failed because "many faculty and administrators lack sufficient education and skills to effectively attract and hire faculty candidates from historically excluded groups" (p. 961). The authors propose a roadmap for equitable faculty hiring practices beginning with preparing the department through a process of assessing and improving department cultures keying on institutional values and accountability.

It may be perceived that the academy is dragging its feet on (or in some cases actively pushing back against) stated institutional diversity goals. Perhaps the academy simply does not want diverse faculty, skirting efforts for inclusive hiring by bemoaning the lack of ready pools of diverse candidates or passing over diverse candidates, assuming those candidates only want to

work in large, urban areas and would never accept an offer elsewhere. Using coded terms like "quality" in searches signals that diversity and excellence are mutually exclusive. It is another means of systemic racism perpetuating the academic status quo (Gasman, 2016).

**1.1.5 Cluster Hiring**

Since the late 1990s, cluster hiring has been employed to build interdisciplinary research teams and to build diversity in faculty bodies. Flaherty (2015) notes higher education began utilizing cluster hiring in 1998 with an effort put forth by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Urban Universities for HEALTH (2015) defines cluster hiring as "...the practice of hiring faculty into multiple departments or schools around interdisciplinary research topics" (p. 1). Cluster hiring can allow campuses to build expertise in interdisciplinary subject areas, serve as a vehicle for building diversity in research approach or perspective, or attract faculty with particular lived experiences who might impact the campus climate, including those with minoritized identities (Flaherty, 2015; Thayer et al., 2017).

Over time, cluster hiring as a method of recruitment for faculty diversity has met with varied success but has continued and evolved. The first instance of academic cluster hiring was at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1996. In a paper evaluating the first six years of the Cluster Hire Initiative (CHI), Greene (2003) recounted the university's desire to replace 250 faculty positions lost to budget cuts. Campus strategic planning provided an opportunity to align a recruitment effort with an effort to build the university's expertise in emerging fields. Greene summarizes the first five rounds of hiring: "By the end of Round 5, 49 clusters with 137 centrally-funded faculty lines were approved and authorized by the Provost's Office and schools/colleges matched another seven cluster positions for a total of 143 cluster faculty" (2003, p. 11). The

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success was qualified, however. Diversifying the faculty was one of seven stated goals, and the effort did result in adding diversity to the faculty. However, in the first five rounds of hiring the numbers of Asian faculty hired doubled those of Black and Hispanic faculty (Greene, 2003, p.19).

The University of California at Riverside initiated a cluster initiative that was met with a great deal of enthusiasm on campus. As the proposal selection process proceeded, the initiative began to fall apart. Faculty in departments were concerned that the interdisciplinary positions proposed might not fit departmental hiring plans. It became clear that the initiative had not been sufficiently socialized, prohibiting the faculty from "getting on board." The administrative organization of the program was not transparent and faculty perceived bias in the selection process (McMurtrie, 2016, para. 5). Ultimately, the initiative retrenched and did survive. The Riverside Provost's Office website (n.d.) lists clusters ranging from renewable nature to revitalizing communities.

While cluster hiring as a mechanism evolves, what changes more slowly is the culture and climate of the academy. Its inequities remain problematic, impacting the experiences of minoritized faculty from recruitment through tenure. Muñoz et al. (2018) describe the experiences of four faculty entering a school of education through a cluster process. Using a critical race theory lens and a counternarrative methodology, their work describes a cluster hire which can be said to be successful in recruiting faculty whose work centers on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Faculty narratives, however, reveal microaggressions, pushback, some retreat on stated commitments to equity and justice, and new faculty shouldering the work of organizational change.

Those narratives within a cluster hire reflect the experiences of minoritized faculty broadly, but Black faculty in medicine and nursing report feelings of invisibility. They are more likely to experience bias – both conscious and unconscious - and describe lower satisfaction with their

academic careers and are likely to leave the academy sooner than their peers (Blackstock, 2020; Page et al., 2011).

## 1.2 Inquiry Setting

### 1.2.1 Problem of Practice

The setting for this inquiry will be the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt). Founded in 1787, Pitt is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in the United States. It is a state-related institution, receiving a portion of its support from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A predominantly White institution (PWI), Pitt is known as a Carnegie Classification R1 institution – a doctoral university with very high research activity (Carnegie Classification, n.d.). An institution of 33,000 students, Pitt's 2021 institutional fact book reports 5,734 faculty with 200 (3.5%) identifying as Black or African American, 173 identifying as Hispanic or Latino (3.0%), and 2 individuals identifying as Native American/Indigenous (<1%). Asian faculty number 857 (14.9%) and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders number 5 (0.1%) (University of Pittsburgh, 2022).

### 1.2.2 The Race &... Cluster

The summer of 2020 was a tumultuous time in our country. The COVID-19 quarantine was in full swing when George Floyd was murdered by police in Minnesota. Protests decrying police brutality and in support of the preservation of Black lives ensued nationwide and on college campuses. The University of Pittsburgh was no different. A consortium of student organizations

created a list of demands to improve conditions for Black students on campus (Moss, 2020), among which was a call to diversify the faculty. The provost and the then-newly arrived senior vice chancellor for health sciences and dean of the School of Medicine (a combined position on the campus) initiated a cluster initiative designed to bring to the university and fund 50 new faculty members over four years working in areas related to race. In my former role as associate vice chancellor for Health Sciences diversity, equity and inclusion, I co-led with the vice provost for faculty diversity and development, a campus-wide committee that crafted the requests for proposals (RFPs) (see Appendices A and B). The committee agreed to an aggressive timeline, meeting three times to develop and refine the RFP.

In considering the focal point of the initiative, our committee heavily considered the Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race (2019) report, an examination of the health, income, employment, and education of Pittsburgh's residents through the lens of gender equity. The study revealed deep inequities in the lives of people of color in Pittsburgh with Black women faring the worst. The committee ultimately agreed that developing a cadre of faculty whose research or practice examined race and its role in equity, health, and well-being would inspire transdisciplinary inquiry, community-engaged scholarship, and service. Schools, departments, and divisions initiated efforts to recruit faculty whose background and/or work reflected the spirit of the request for proposals. The Race & Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-being Cluster Recruitment and Retention Initiative (henceforth to be referred to as Race &..., or the Cluster initiative) launched in November of 2020.

Race &... has two branches: the first consisting of the Provost Area (PA) schools (Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, Business, Computing and Information, Education, Swanson School of Engineering, General Studies, David C. Frederick Honors

College, Law, Public and International Affairs, Social Work) and the second branch consisting of the Health Sciences (HS) schools (Dental Medicine, Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health). The partnership between the PA and HS saw the inclusion of the word "Health" in the title to make it explicit that health disparities should be an intentional research thread. The Cluster proposed to help advance Pitt's vision to become an anti-racist institution and desired to accomplish the following interrelated goals:

1. Significantly increase the number of faculty who are hired, promoted, and retained who work in race, equity, health, and well-being;

2. Attract, recruit, and graduate undergraduate and graduate students for whom these issues are important;

3. Raise the University's local, national, and international profile and expertise in Race and Social Determinants of Equity Health and Well-Being; and

4. Increase the University's capacity to contribute to important and sustainable societal change (see Appendix A).

At this writing, Cluster initiative faculty have been recruited into five of the eight PA schools - the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Education, the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, Social Work, and the Swanson School of Engineering - and all six of the HS schools. While the PA faculty recruits are all tenure-stream, the HS faculty represent both the Tenure and Appointment (non-tenure) streams. The primary differences in operation between the two branches of the cluster are: 1) the amount of salary support allotted to hires (HS salaries, particularly clinical salaries, tend to be higher) and 2) the availability of loan repayment funds for the HS package, as minoritized faculty tend to carry more educational loan debt into employment (Dugger et al., 2013; Hanson, 2022). Further, the HS branch used a broader diversity

lens given the paucity of BIPOC and faculty from other marginalized backgrounds across the HS schools. It is important to mention the Race &... initiative was modeled on a Latinx Cluster mounted by the Provost's area instituted the year prior and concluding in 2023 (University of Pittsburgh, 2019, 2023). The first round of Cluster hires took place in the 2020-21 academic year, and hiring will continue over four years.

Provost-area schools (the 11 non-health science schools such as Arts & Sciences, Law, Business, Engineering, etc.) tended to follow the typical academic one-year hiring process model, which includes advertising and receiving CVs and applications through spring and summer, interviewing and job talks in late fall - spring, with an eye toward start dates the following fall. Basic science departments in the health sciences did likewise. Health sciences clinical departments can recruit dually appointed faculty (those with both academic and clinical responsibilities) and hire on a rolling basis according to the availability of open faculty lines and the necessity to meet clinical needs. In addition, as teaching residents, fellows, and students in clinics is a perpetual activity, the start of a semester start is less relevant to some HS schools – the School of Medicine, in particular.

Networking, outreach, and the caliber of Pittsburgh's programs proved attractive and faculty hiring quickly ramped up. As of February 2024, 73 faculty were hired – 58 in the Health Sciences, which exceeded the 50-faculty goal, and was well ahead of the anticipated initiative end. The initiative provided an open door, overwhelming support infrastructure, incentive funding via salary support for all Cluster faculty, and loan repayment support for Health Sciences cluster faculty. The loan repayment program was initiated in recognition of the debt burden faculty of color tend to bring into academic health sciences. The AAMC US Medical Matriculant Debt report (2019) report noted Black and Latinx medical students were more likely to bring over $50,000 of

debt into medical school. Jay et al. in the AAMC Graduate Debt Report (2020), report that Black and Latinx medical school graduates report higher medical school debt and lower family income than White graduates, hence the institution's effort to reduce debt burden as junior faculty are launching careers.

The same cross-campus committee that framed the initiative supported the development and implementation of retention programming (ranging from virtual and in-person social events to research showcase talks and an annual four-day career development retreat). Those efforts include networking/social engagements on and off campus as well as a partnership with two community organizations, Vibrant Pittsburgh (a workplace inclusion organization) and TALI (The Advanced Leadership Institute – a nationwide executive development program preparing Black leaders for advancement). The goal of the partnership is to connect and engage Cluster faculty in the broader Pittsburgh community such that they will develop roots – lives outside of the academy (e.g., friendships, civic engagements, etc.) – that will help to keep them attached.  In addition, we created Race @ Work, an annual career development retreat held over four days, which seeks to:

- Provide Cluster Hire and other early-career faculty from historically underrepresented racial/ethnic groups a safe space to share their experiences.

- Connect them to a community of colleagues and mentors; and

- Give them practical tools to enable them to thrive at Pitt, both professionally and personally. (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.)

  Other retention programming organized by the Cluster has included:

- Zoom socials (particularly during the COVID quarantine)

- Gatherings hosted at the homes of community partners

- An annual Race &... Conference – a showcase for race-related research and community-engaged scholarship

- Deans and Chairs leadership workshop

The Deans and Chairs leadership workshop was an attempt to help department chairs and division chiefs develop an equity mindset – an awareness of the sometimes-adverse experiences of minoritized faculty – and their roles and responsibilities as leaders for the cultural climate in their departments. Presenters for the virtual workshop were Edna Chun, co-author of *The Department Chair as Transformative Diversity Leader* (2015), and Charles Behling, a pivotal voice in the University of Michigan's Intergroup Dialogue initiative, a methodology wherein participants explore identity as a means of learning about social justice (Thompson et al., 2001)

What suffered in the rush to capitalize on student calls for faculty diversity and ramp up the launch of the Cluster was the opportunity to craft a standardized, identity-sensitive program of welcoming our new faculty to campus, ensuring a smooth transition into their departmental communities. Beyond the standard faculty orientation (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.) which covers research essentials, library and grant support, teaching and learning, an introduction to employee resource groups, and discrimination reporting, each hiring unit was left to follow its own onboarding procedures.

The Cluster is co-administered by the Provost's Office for Faculty Diversity and Development and the Office of Health Sciences Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Both teams are tasked with recruiting for diversity and the retention of minoritized faculty hired. We were aware going in of the pitfalls often awaiting faculty of color, particularly those who might be the "only" in their unit and Black women. We knew faculty with minoritized identities might encounter a hostile environment (Berhe et al., 2022), and experience barriers such as presumptions of

incompetence, fraught racial climates, social isolation, racial and intersectional microaggressions, and lack of a sense of belonging. Having worked over 30 years in diversity, equity, and inclusion spaces (with the last 14 as a senior leader in diversity, equity and inclusion in the Health Sciences), I have often heard minoritized faculty report being regarded and treated in this manner.

As our Cluster faculty came on board, some described being welcomed, networked, mentored, and having their work facilitated, others were simply greeted and left to manage alone, and still others were introduced throughout their divisions as "new diversity hires," almost immediately devaluing their presence. The creation of a standard, equity-focused transition experience can provide all new Cluster faculty with a common, supportive entrée with retention as the primary goal. I recognized the importance of the onboarding and transition (enculturation) experiences of our new faculty as they can inform the creation of identity-sensitive onboarding and transition programming with retention as the overarching goal.

### 1.2.3 Constituent Description

Pivotal to my problem of practice are the following constituents:

- New faculty hired into the Race &... Cluster

- Hiring department/division managers

- Departmental/division administrators

- School leaders (i.e., deans)

- Senior University leaders

Faculty hired into the Cluster, in this instance Black women in the health sciences, are central to this inquiry as their lived experiences in the recruitment, transition, and onboarding, activities mounted by departments and divisions form the way they become a part of departmental

and campus culture. The information provided and how they are treated and welcomed can be key to their transition into the department culture and the possibility of retention. Our Cluster faculty broadly bear an array of minoritized identities and are from backgrounds underrepresented in the professoriate (NCES, n.d.). In turn, the hiring department leaders and administrators are also central to the study as the decisions they make and actions they take in forming (or not forming) welcoming and equity-minded transition processes impact the Cluster faculty's experiences entering the university and their departments.

Recruitment efforts that do not attend to the transition experiences of minoritized faculty risk replicating conditions that have historically impacted minoritized faculty progress. Common pitfalls include a lack of mentoring, a lack of networking, inattention to departmental climate, and failure to support the inclusion of new hires (Coalition of Urban Serving Universities, 2015), all of which can inhibit new faculty onboarding and transition.

## 1.2.4 Significance of the Study

This study examines the way new Black women faculty experience entry to the University of Pittsburgh faculty and culture through the Race &... cluster initiative. It will add to the cluster hire literature by elucidating potential stumbling blocks in implementing cluster hire programs. The outcome may present recommendations for policies and practices designed to prevent adverse experiences for minoritized faculty as they enter PWIs.

## 2.0 Review of Supporting Literature

As presented above, the University of Pittsburgh's Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-being Cluster Recruitment and Retention Initiative has no standardized program for the transition of its new hires. As faculty from minoritized backgrounds accept new positions, the presence or absence of a welcome that centers equity - an awareness of and attempt to mitigate racialized structures in the academy - is salient as it may impact enculturation and a sense of belonging in the new institution. In this section, I discuss aspects of the literature that: 1) review the implementation of cluster hires, with attention to transition, 2) examine theories of onboarding and transition of new faculty hires, and 3) review the prevailing literature on retention of faculty from minoritized backgrounds. This grounding will provide a vantage point from which to examine the experiences of faculty hired through the University of Pittsburgh's Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-being Cluster Initiative.

### 2.1.1 Cluster Hire Implementation

Inquiry into cluster hire implementation varies but generally focuses on the mechanics of cluster hires – search committee composition and conduct, interview protocols, and selection processes. Sandekian et al. (2022) describe the search process for a campus-wide cluster designed to create a more inclusive STEM culture. Simmons and Pettit (2022) describe the execution of a cluster dedicated to the success of historically-minoritized faculty, including the execution of memoranda of understanding between the hiring department, cluster administration, and the new hires for transparency of expectations across the collective (para. 7). The authors note the intention

in their third cluster to better tailor engagement and retention efforts to support new hires. Among the activities anticipated were helping leaders to understand their role in retaining underrepresented faculty, attending to "the culture tax" to mitigate cluster faculty's service burden, and introducing cluster hires to identity-based faculty networks on campus. This effort came closest to acknowledging the importance of attending to the transition given the identities of the faculty brought in through a cluster hire.

There are a few large studies on cluster outcomes, such as Bloom et al.'s (2020) broad inquiry of whether and how 199 clusters "gelled" to form the intended interdisciplinary research collaboratories. That same team of investigators (Curran et al., 2020) examined the same body of cluster initiatives to determine whether cluster participation increased faculty research output. Bloom, et al. (2020) found cluster faculty dissatisfaction arose from institutions' poor establishment of infrastructure necessary to support the intended collaborative research. Absent regular convenings of the researchers and support to translate between departments or fields, faculty worked in typical departmental silos.

These studies describe and inquire into how or if clusters work. They examine cluster proceedings, administration, and research productivity, but do not inquire into faculty's lived experiences with entry into the clusters or their new institutions.

In an essay in *Inside Higher Ed*, Severin (2013) reflects on the onboarding and transition of cluster faculty, noting:

> Some universities have a tendency to think of cluster hire faculty as the missing pieces in their research puzzle, only to be surprised that these "puzzle pieces" are human beings who require interaction and community. Cluster hire faculty members need to be welcomed and engaged by their clusters, their home department(s), and the university as a whole. (para.4)

Severin noted that North Carolina State University collaborated with its libraries, office of research, and office of the provost to develop a yearlong program for introducing cluster hire faculty to the university. While attending to their network, it is unclear whether this effort considers the cluster faculty members' identities and socialization within their departments.

Beyond this nod, the literature is largely silent on transition in a cluster initiative.

## 2.1.2 Faculty Onboarding and Transition

The literature on faculty onboarding leans largely on human resources theory and practice. While that underpinning can be appropriate (faculty are, after all, employees), the needs of faculty as they enter new campuses and positions are different than staff. Onboarding literature clarifies the difference between orientation and onboarding for faculty and academic leaders (Roberts-Lieb & Best, n.d.; Ross et al., 2014). The distinction drawn is that orientation is "the transactional completion of paperwork needed to register as a new employee and complete documentation of required training," while onboarding is described as not only understanding organizational expectations, workload, etc. but also a welcome into the culture of the institution and the department (Roberts-Lieb & Best, n.d., para. 1). The University of Pittsburgh's faculty and other academic hiring scenarios note 52 different ways individuals might come into academic positions including external hires, internal transfers from one department to another, and hires from staff to the faculty (University of Pittsburgh, n.d.). Not all those mechanisms – including hiring from post-doc to faculty – require formal onboarding While it is true some paperwork would not be required of internal hires or transfers, assumptions are likely made as to what people who have been a part of the University in other capacities already know. Human resources tasks are satisfied, yet new faculty may be missing information pertinent to the perspectives of their new roles.

The welcome into the institution is an opportunity for new faculty members to begin to move from cultural outsiders to insiders, or their organizational socialization. Bauer et al. (2007) theorize that organizational socialization incorporates three dimensions: role clarity (understanding the tasks necessary to be successful in a role), self-efficacy (mastery of those tasks and confidence in one's ability to complete them), and social acceptance (tied to community connections and feeling liked and accepted). Bauer notes this frame and others do not speak explicitly to the experiences of minoritized faculty, but I would suggest that attention to minoritized faculty concerns about how they might be perceived because of their racialized identities may carry some weight in social acceptance and could be worth exploring.

In an *Inside Higher Ed* opinion piece on the role of department chairs in organizational change, Chu (2023) notes:

> At their best, departments are where new majors are proposed, curricula are written, academic and research programs are developed, faculty members are professionally developed. They are also where job descriptions are written and junior faculty members are hired, professionally nourished, made to feel safe and supported—or, in contrast, where they may feel isolated, unrecognized and professionally lonely. (para. 17)

A perceived gap in the literature on onboarding/transition is inquiry into interventions built upon the experiences of those who entered before innovation. Baker and DiPiro (2019) come closest, having constructed and launched a faculty onboarding tool for schools of pharmacy. While the tool does not center minoritized faculty experiences, the foundation of its development was an inquiry into the lived experiences of junior faculty during onboarding and transition.

## 2.2 Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

This work examines the experiences of faculty joining our campus through the Race &.. initiative using onboarding and organizational socialization as the theoretical grounding. An "Affinity Groups" piece for the Association of American Medical Colleges, describes onboarding as going beyond the introduction of facilities, work, and policies to welcome a new faculty member into the culture of the institution and set them up for success (Roberts-Lieb & Best, n.d.). Bauer et al. (2007) discuss organizational socialization as the process by which newcomers make the transition from being organizational outsiders to being insiders. I posit that these processes are impacted by the minoritized identities of the faculty. The aim is to characterize minoritized faculty experiences and elucidate the ways institutions can prepare to receive and support faculty with minoritized identities as they enter the cultural climates of new academic spaces.

Griffin (2020), as part of an APLU INCLUDES project, presents a model for the recruitment and retention of minoritized faculty. The Institutional Model for Increasing Faculty Diversity provides a framework for action, illustrating the pathway, processes and inflection points that impact whether and how institutions might recruit and retain diverse faculty. The model identifies barriers to faculty diversity and where institutions might intervene to mitigate them. Explicit in the model is the Transition phase. After institutions have recruited diverse faculty (long-term efforts to develop pools of candidates, attention to hiring processes, and see a yield – getting applicants to accept offers), the secondary phase in the model is Transition, or fostering the smooth and welcoming entry into the institution. Griffin describes the phase as "the process by which faculty are welcomed and incorporated into campus communities between their hiring and formal initiation of employment" (2020, p. 92). It is in this phase where socialization begins, where faculty come to see themselves as a part of the institution. While the broader institutional context is

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important (campus culture, institutional commitment to diversity, commitment of resources to efforts, etc.), the transition is a "boots-on-the-ground" effort that takes place at the department level. See Figure 3 below.
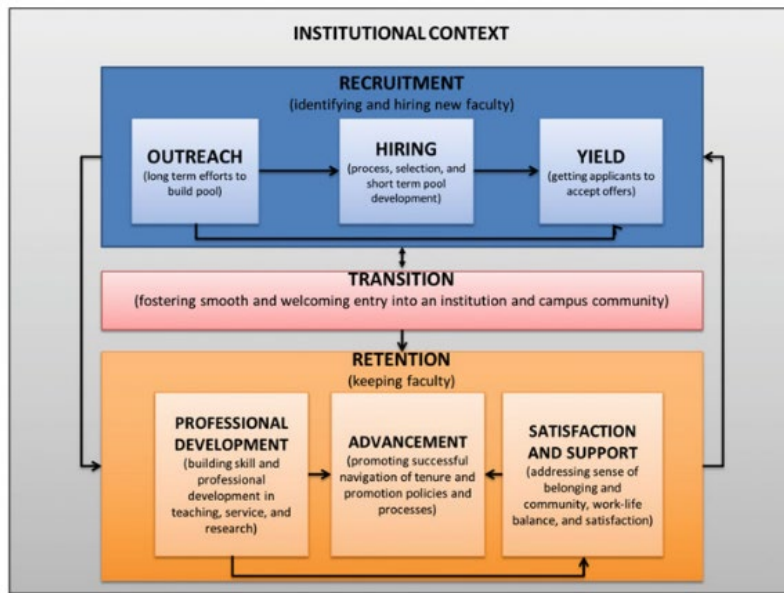


**Figure 3 Griffin (2020)**

The programming mounted within the transition phase not only exists for entrée into the new institution but should have retention as its goal. In addition, the presence of comprehensive programs that attend to professional support as well as successful transition programming may prove to be attractive to other faculty seeking positions, thus attention to transition can prime recruitment (Griffin, 2020, p. 38).

## 3.0 Methods

The qualitative study presented here examined the onboarding and transition experiences of Cluster faculty and their perception of belonging. Three questions guided the study:

1. How do orientation and transition processes impact Cluster faculty's feelings of welcome?

2. What acts, activities, or occurrences influence Cluster faculty feelings of welcome either positively or negatively?

3. How have microaggressions impacted Cluster faculty feelings of welcome?

## 3.1 Inquiry Approach

### 3.1.1 Sample

The study was introduced to the HS Black women Cluster faculty by an email wherein I re-introduced myself as past co-chair of the Cluster initiative and as a student researcher. The email (see Appendix C) detailed the purpose of the inquiry and made it clear that participation was voluntary. Those who chose to respond to the overture completed a 10-item response form on the Qualtrics platform which collected demographic information and availability for interviews.

The inquiry involved data collected through in-depth, semi-structured in-person or virtual interviews, which were coded for areas of common concern or experience. The semi-structured interviews elicited perspectives and nuanced responses on participants' onboarding and

organizational socialization experiences. Menter et al. (2011) define semi-structured interviews as those where the interviewer has an outline of what they might like to explore informed by the research goals, but the direction of the interview is co-created by the interviewer and the interviewee (p. 131). The interview protocol blended questions from Baker and DiPiro (2019) (Appendix D) with questions reflecting Cluster faculty experiences as recounted in informal support encounters. The Baker and DiPiro instrument was appropriate as a base as it is a comprehensive baseline assessment of faculty orientation/onboarding experiences and does not simply evaluate an onboarding initiative (Farakish et al., 2022), is not limited in scope to simple satisfaction/effectiveness (Cuaron et al., 2023), nor does it assess the presence and content of orientation/onboarding processes from the perspective of those who coordinate or host them (Semenza et al., 2021). This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board as a quality improvement project and not as research on human subjects (declaration on file). Following good guidance, the request for participation and the preamble of the interview protocol (Appendix E) once again made clear that participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were also informed that outcomes would be communicated in the aggregate, and any quoted material would be anonymized and carefully redacted to omit any reference to specific work sites, identifying roles, life or career paths that might lead to discovery or risk causing conflict within their respective workspaces.

**Table 1 Recruitment Results**

| Health Sciences (HS) Cluster Faculty Total (as of 2/2024) | 58 | |
|---|---|---|
| Black Women in HS Cluster as of 2/2024 | 30 | (52%) |
| Black Women who had Left | 2 | |
| # Participants Invited | 30 | |
| # Participants Agreed | 11 | (37%) |
| Attrition | 0 | |

As of February 2024, 30 Black women had been recruited into the HS cluster (see Table 1) and two of them had left. All, including those who had departed, were deemed eligible to participate in the study. Email invitations went out first to the 28 who remained employed by the university (en masse and blind copied to maintain confidentiality). Two reminders followed (each time eliminating those who had responded), one at the end of the first week of recruitment and another exactly one week later. Individual invitations (acknowledging their separation from the university) went to the personal email accounts of the two Black women faculty who had left. Neither responded, and I did not pursue them further to avoid exacerbating any negative feelings that might have existed.

The faculty who chose to participate represented academic appointments from assistant to full professor (see Table 2), including 9 junior, 1 mid-career, and 1 senior. Nine were appointment stream and 2 were in the tenure stream.

**Table 2 Participant Rank and Appointment Status**

| Participant Rank and Appointment | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Appointment Stream | Tenure Stream |
| Assistant Professor | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| Associate Professor | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Professor | 1 | 1 | 0 |

## 3.2 Data Collection and Transcription

As described above, this qualitative inquiry employed semi-structured interviews to elicit nuanced experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of the faculty concerning their transition into positions at the University of Pittsburgh. The benefit of semi-structured interviews is their flexibility, allowing the capacity to move beyond description to assist in understanding why people think or act in certain ways (Menter et al., 2011, p. 126). Data were collected via individual interviews, 60 minutes in duration. Questions on the interview protocol were crafted to encourage faculty to reflect on their experiences during recruitment, transition, and onboarding and to reflect upon the institution's capacity to facilitate their welcoming and inclusion. The interview protocol is attached as Appendix E.

As of February 2024, 58 new faculty members had been hired through the Health Sciences Cluster including a substantial number (30 of 58 or 52%) of Black women. I aimed for a sample size of 10 and was able to recruit 11 respondents.

Interviews with Cluster faculty were face-to-face or virtual (on the Zoom platform), according to the participant's preference. In-person interviews were held in locations convenient

to participants, largely but not solely in campus spaces away from their offices or clinics. Permission to record interviews was elicited in advance, along with the participation agreement. To avoid back-and-forth email communication on scheduling, participants received a Calendly link into which my availability had been recorded and selected a time that worked for them. I followed up with a request for their desired location. More than 50% of the interviews took place in person and the majority of those took place in the interviewer's office space (see Table 3); the remainder were conducted on the Zoom virtual meeting platform.

Table 3 Interview Method and Location

| Interview Method and Location | |
| --- | --- |
| **Method** | **Tally** |
| | |
| Face to Face | 6 |
| - Interviewer's office space (4)<br>- Other Academic Building (1)<br>- Clinical Office Building (1) | |
| Zoom | 5 |
| | |
| **Final Count** | 11 |

I recorded in-person interviews using the Voice Memos app on my iPhone and transcribed them using Otter.ai, a service that uses artificial intelligence to provide real-time transcription for face-to-face interviews or transcription from recordings. I uploaded MP4 files of the recorded interviews to Otter.ai for processing; Otter produced transcripts including speaker designation and time stamps. Interviews conducted over Zoom were recorded and transcribed using Zoom's

transcription function. Textual responses were subject to intelligent verbatim transcription, eliminating filler speech (um), and repeated words (I, I) for readability (McMullin, 2021).

## 3.3 Data Analysis

The data were coded through inductive thematic analysis, pulling dominant and emerging themes from the interviews. Nowell et al. (2017) recommend a six-step process of thematic analysis to ensure trustworthiness: 1) become familiar with the data, 2) generate initial codes, 3) search for themes, 4) review themes, 5) define and name themes, and finally, 6) produce the report. A seasoned qualitative researcher in the School of Medicine provided coding assistance; therefore I de-identified interview transcripts, redacting the names of participants, departments, colleagues, staff, etc.- any information that might be used to identify a participant. Each interview transcript was saved in a cloud-based folder and named "Participant _" with numbers appended ranging from 1-11, assigned at random (not in the order the interviews occurred). A list of paired names and numbers was created for my reference and stored separately from the deidentified interview transcripts. Second coder access to transcripts stored in the cloud was retracted after submission of this document.

Each reader consolidated the text of half of the transcripts, unifying sentence fragments into cohesive paragraphs of text. The transcripts were then segmented, highlighting participant response data in red for ease of reading. Each interview transcript was read again, and the two researchers discussed what codes we saw emerging from the raw data. Miles et al. (2014) describe codes as labels used to retrieve and categorize data units so they might be clustered for further analysis relating to research questions, themes, concepts, or hypotheses (p. 63). The codes were

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collected into a code book containing 13 parent codes and 31 child codes identified as meaningful to the participants' experiences related to their recruitment, transition, orientation and onboarding at Pitt and engagement in the Race &…Cluster initiative. Codes were assigned to segments of the text that were meaningful to participants' lived experiences and related to the research questions. The coded text was then categorized thematically.

The data display is the medium from which the final step in the analysis, drawing and verifying conclusions, grows (Nowell et al., 2017). In this instance, I created an Excel spreadsheet data table with themes displayed as row headers. Transcripts were mined to assign participants' quotes to illustrate each categorized area. The display generated allows for the examination of participants' lived experiences expressed in their own words.

**Table 4 Data Display – Themes and Illustrative Quotes**

| Themes | Illustrative Quotes |
|---|---|
| **Primary** | |
| **Communication** | |
| - Insufficient | *Participant 7: Not that in detail? I think it was, you know, it was we have this program, some general information. Go look, look it up kind of thing. So, yeah. Yes, I did. Again, I don't know if it was specifically told me to me or it was through my reading, but I was aware of it. Yes.* |
| - Incomplete<br>- Inappropriate | *Participant 9: I received only, so I initially received the loan repayment information from (redacted), our manager of our department. And that was just about like the amounts. And then, in terms of specifics of the program, I received information that is a part of the program, an invitation to the recent lecture series, probably in August of 2021. In terms of the academic benefits, I did not receive that information in terms of academic support until April 2022. When I contacted you about finding funding for a undergrad, medical students, undergrad student to work with me for the summer. Yeah, I didn't receive any right information until then. So that was like right before I signed my contract, that's probably May of 2021. But there was nothing else. It's very vague.*<br>*see Microaggression* |

In addition, I wrote hand notes during each interview as this helped in documenting my thoughts about pertinent events and comments as I made meaning from interviews and the analytic

process. I was able to reflect upon the participants' experiences (and the experience of interviewing them) in ways that differed from my prior "knowing" of them or their experiences.

As the former co-chair of the Health Sciences side of the Cluster, I had prior relationships of varying depth with the participant faculty, having known some as students or trainees and having met and supported others post-hire. In the conduct of this inquiry, the ethical principle of beneficence is salient – maximizing possible benefits and minimizing possible harms (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979). To preserve the anonymity of the participants, illustrative quotes were further redacted to remove any other contextual information that might allow anyone to be singled out, risking professional retaliation. Brake (2005) discusses the role of retaliation in suppressing challenges to perceived inequalities and maintaining established power structures. Situated narratives are not included for that same reason. The goal was to put no participant at risk.

### 3.4 Reflexivity

I approached this work from my positionality as a Black woman who spent a 40-year career in predominantly White institutions (PWIs) of higher education and 14 of those years as a senior-level administrator. My experience as a higher education administrative practitioner provided the impetus to interrogate campus systems, structures and processes in this fashion. I also am a Black woman who has spent a career without a terminal degree while responsible for the institutional and departmental cultures created by those who occupy academic spaces with privilege conferred by their research and clinical doctorates.

My reflexivity also created the potential for bias in engaging in this inquiry. As a two-time alumna and current student of the focal institution in this inquiry, and as a former executive leader within it, I maintain a deep interest in the institution's capacity to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for minoritized faculty, leading to their success.

Finally, as a founding co-chair of the initiative being studied, I was responsible for implementing the effort and supporting the faculty recruited. In providing that support (and sometimes acting as a mediator or advocate) I forged close relationships with Health Sciences Cluster faculty, particularly while assisting those whose arrival and inclusion may have been suboptimal. Those relationships may have compelled some to agree to participate when they might otherwise have refused. I also found that I had to consider my role as a researcher along with my former role as Cluster co-chair, listening without judgment or rationalization to instances where my own leadership or efforts may have been lacking.

## 3.5 Trustworthiness

Nowell et al., (2017) note credibility of the analytical procedure is enhanced if the data are analyzed by more than one researcher (p. 7), and peer debriefing throughout the coding process helps researchers examine how their thoughts and ideas evolve as they engage the data. The addition of a trusted peer researcher to the process proved to be of great assistance in reflecting upon and coding the qualitative data.

Working under the guidance of my committee (my advisor, a second member of the School of Education faculty, and a practitioner) ensured trustworthiness in this inquiry. Given the applicability of this study to daily work in the Cluster initiative, I expected the practitioner member

of the committee (a PhD sociologist, expert on race and my former Cluster co-chair) to be a keen questioner of the process and the findings as the results of this inquiry may inform the practice of the ongoing Cluster initiative.

Finally, participant voices as recorded and transcribed are featured as objective reflections of the data.

## 3.6 Reciprocity

I hope this work featuring faculty voices aligns with their need to be heard on issues of inclusion in the organization where they research, teach, and practice. I have tried to be sensitive and responsive to their contributions understanding that, as Black women in the academy, they encounter a range of difficulties and pick their battles daily while adding value to the impact and standing of the university. I hope to have portrayed them as their authentic selves, reflecting and honoring their voices. This work will be shared with those who participated. I intend to continue to support programs instituted to improve conditions for minoritized faculty inclusion and development, to the extent my current role allows.

## 3.7 Limitations

The small sample size and qualitative methodology may limit the generalizability of the study's findings; however, it illustrates the experiences of faculty hired through or participating in a Cluster hire initiative. The study will, to the greatest extent possible, accurately reflect their

experiences such that recommendations for improving practice in the support of minoritized faculty through cluster recruitment and retention programs are possible. Situated narratives (contextualized vignettes) are not included in these findings as contextualizing the stories presented a risk for exposing participants.

While I am in a different position than when the Cluster initiative began, I remain engaged on our campus and continue to work with the Cluster from an administrative perspective. Having been privy to difficulties some participants experienced in real-time (and having been responsible for mediating or ameliorating them), I did my best to assure study participants that my goal in this effort as a researcher was to honor their stories while attending assiduously to confidentiality.

# 4.0 Findings

## 4.1 Introduction

The faculty have a collective status of being recently hired to the University of Pittsburgh, but their experiences are distinct and unique. Commonalities emerged that illustrate if, how, and why they felt welcomed and included in their departments and on campus. Coding of participants' interview responses led to categorization across seven prominent areas. These areas include: (1) recruitment and transition, (2) orientation, (3) communication, (4) community, (5) self-advocacy, (6) microaggression and bias, and (7) outside stressors. The nomenclature P1-P11 will be used to designate participants for this section.

## 4.2 Recruitment and Transition

### 4.2.1 Recruitment

Pathways for recruitment in the academic Health Sciences (the School of Medicine, particularly but not exclusively), are varied and often less formal than other academic schools and departments. Participants recounted experiencing the traditional months-long academic hiring processes (largely non-clinician researchers and teaching faculty), hires of opportunity (dually appointed faculty), transitions from traineeship (fellow-to-faculty), recruitment from instructor to the full-time faculty, and alumni recruited back to Pitt. Six of the 11 participants were recruited by

school or department-level leaders, four applied to open positions, and one transitioned from trainee to faculty (after having interviewed other places, deciding to stay).

Faculty, as candidates, proceeded through their recruitment processes individually, so the new hires arrived at different times, in different ways, and alone. P5 recalled a rapid recruitment (three months total) and rushed arrival:

> …My process of being recruited and then coming onto campus, and everything was a little nontraditional. So, they were trying to fill in the position quickly... Talking about recruitment to signing, it was a very fast process. I felt rushed at times…but again, it was a one-month turnaround after the holidays.

P11, a lecturer, was encouraged by her department mentor to apply for an open full-time position. She had a typical interview-to-hire process and was recruited to the full-time faculty for a fall semester start. P3 sought a position and reached out to contacts here, where she had trained, and found the school was preparing to post a position to hire someone with her skill set. She was hired into an available staff role until her faculty position was approved. P8 was offered a different position than the one for which she had originally applied, noting:

> I initially (had) applied for another position and thought I was getting that position. (I) then was then called and told that there was a cluster hire position available, and I would be able to be tenure track, and would that be of more interest to me than an appointment stream (position)? And I said, yes.

The experiences of P3, 5, 8, and 11 illustrate the variety in methods and pace of hiring in the HS. Other than feeling rushed, none of the participants expressed dissatisfaction with their recruitment processes. Opportunity seems to be a characteristic of their experiences, not just hires of opportunity (which P3 and P5's recruitments had been), but faculty seeking or being encouraged

to seek opportunity here and departments recognizing and leveraging opportunity in the form of alternative position pathways and resources, in the form of the Cluster. P8's department could have extended an offer for the position for which she applied and moved on but saw the Cluster as a means of hiring her into a more desirable position.

The Cluster served as an incentive for faculty to consider coming to Pitt if they were made aware of it prior to or during recruitment. However, not all faculty learned about the Cluster at the same point in their hiring process. Most were informed during their recruitment. Two had prior knowledge from publicity about the program and learned more during recruitment, and two learned as they transitioned into positions. Two others learned about the program after they started their new jobs. P11 was informed by leadership as she sought a position and was able to consider participation as she was recruited:

> …I found out about it through (former chair), who reached out to me when I was inquiring about academic positions…and he (said) there's this cluster hire initiative. And you know, that could be a really great way to ensure that you would have support because our department is rather homogeneous and would not offer the same types of opportunities as being in kind of a cluster hire initiative that would allow you to foster relationships across the university.

The timing and quality of information communicated on the Cluster and the care departments took in considering the benefits of faculty participation made a difference in how the faculty felt about their departments and their recruitment.

**4.2.2 Transition**

It is in the transition phase where socialization begins, where faculty come to see themselves as a part of the institution (Griffin, 2020), so interviews explicitly explored this stage in hiring. Most participants revealed their departments had done nothing by way of networking them within their departments or the institution. The faculty report departmental attempts to help them establish social networks and begin to understand departmental culture primarily occurring at or after their start date. Almost all participants recall this time as one of little communication, except for follow-up on administrative details such as documentation required for clinical credentialing, security clearances, etc. P1, for example, indicated communication on submitting her drug testing results and transferring her grant, but little else, noting "There wasn't much communication…the basic things that are about making sure that you have well-being right, like that. You're well situated. None of that." P4 noted she had a lot of communication from her department – but all related to credentialing and licensure; however, her departmental DEI officer did reach out during that time.

P3, working remotely, was networked by her dean in her school and was provided mentors. She felt well-supported.

> I think the fact that like I said (Dean) mentioned mentors right from the beginning. And so kind of set up that support system for me to rely on if I needed anything, that it felt good to have that, to know that there were people that I could reach out to.

P4 put the onus of transition communication on departments, noting her department got it right:

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It can't just be words; they've got to put their money where their mouth is - got to put an effort to making people feel welcomed by helping them make connections. And I feel like (my) Department (redacted) did all those things.

The representative data show the faculty understood the concept of transition as explained, yet when responding to the question, most drifted to administrative topics, desiring more information on what to do, and where to find information. If there was any departmental contact mentioned, it was the desire to have, as P3 had, a "sherpa" or guide to help answer questions. P10's department chair provided her with contacts when she was onboarded. Considering her transition phase, however, she reflected on what would have helped during that time.

…Definitely more contact on the Pitt side of things. And I don't even know how my department would handle that. You know, like, if they have like a liaison? I mean, certainly they have enough dually appointed faculty. Yes. But I think if I had had a mentor, just to check in about that, and then to orient me to the resources, that would have been immensely helpful.

## 4.3 Orientation and Onboarding

### 4.3.1 Orientation

The orientation experiences for Black women faculty coming through the Health Sciences side of the Race &…Cluster are haphazard and, in many cases, nonexistent. Departmental orientation processes are unplanned, incoherent, and lack uniformity. There is no coordination of parts (particularly between the university and the health system), and no one office or unit is

responsible for the breadth of the experience. There is no clear delineation of which unit bears responsibility for informing faculty of fundamental administrative details and as a result, there are details that fall through the cracks and or are lost in information silos. Schools, departments, and divisions mount activities in-house, and results vary widely. P1 noted disorganization in her orientation and realized the disconnect between varied administrative processes.

It just seems disorganized, I think, from an institutional standpoint …I didn't have an ID for a long time, I remember. My HR stuff wouldn't go through, like, for some reason I wasn't in the system…it was very disorganized.

Most participants do not recall a central university orientation, although one certainly exists. P9 recalls a pre-recorded dual faculty information module in her health system orientation.

P10 realized it was more than 6 months before she learned about the "nuts and bolts" on the Pitt side, noting the single-minded perspective of those engaged in orienting new faculty, when both Pitt and health system perspectives should be considered and presented:

When I started, my department, of course, heavily oriented me to the (health system) side. So, my first day was literally like, Let's get your badge. This is your office. Let's get you a login. And more of the procedural…I don't think I really learned about the Pitt side of my appointment probably until that Race @ Work. That's like, almost seven months later. And I think a lot of it is because the individuals responsible with (sic) my orientation in my department are not dually appointed.

Several faculty recalled being invited to the university faculty orientation and did not attend or do not recall attending.

### 4.3.2 Onboarding

Onboarding processes are equally hit or miss. There are no standards for managing logistics, leaving faculty to experience challenges with space assignments, receiving computers and other vital equipment, inhibiting their ability to get their programs of research up and running. Those who are dually appointed between the university and the health system experienced a particular dissonance in the "Venn diagram" of organizational overlap. There is no coordination between the two organizations in orientation or onboarding and often assumptions are made as to who is responsible for which facets of faculty entry. Faculty who had positive experiences at other institutions felt the shortcomings and deficiencies most. P1 discussed her response to her first space assignment – a dark, dusty office.

> I remember thinking 'I came in here with a K (award)! like 75% of my funding is covered. So, if I was somewhere else, they'd be rolling (out) the royal carpet for me, right?' And I remember thinking, this is inappropriate.

> While the data show gaps from transition through onboarding, the data also show singular instances of comprehensive provision of contacts, tailored, intentional orientation, and thoughtful onboarding processes.

### 4.4 Communication

Communication is the one of the key themes that emerged from the experiences of Black women faculty hired through the Cluster. As is noted above in the Orientation and Transition themes, basic "nuts and bolts" information on life within the university was communicated

inconsistently or not at all.  In almost all cases, participants received incomplete information with gaps in important areas like accessing IDs, finding housing, tapping into mentoring, the funding included within the Cluster program, and city and culturally relevant resources. While the content needs of each may have differed, the common theme is that they were not informed.

Of the clinical departments onboarding dually appointed faculty, few shared details on the university side that would impact faculty lives.

I didn't have a Pitt ID; you literally need it. I needed it for a research study…for the Vincent (research participant payment) cards. (It) would certainly have, I think, eased the transition a bit (to) be a little more proactive, instead of like having to run into a problem… and just (to) be able to have some of that already in place would have been nice for sure. – P2

Using the frame posited by Bauer et al. (2007), P2 was missing a facet of organizational socialization, role clarity, or understanding the tasks necessary to be successful in a role, simply because she had not been informed. In our interview, P2 – a dually appointed clinician - mentioned wishing information had been shared *in one place* on what being a member of the faculty means, who the important people are in that context, how the university and the health system interdigitate, noting it would have eased her transition.

Communication difficulties around details of the Cluster itself was another prominent theme in the interviews. Many health sciences departments seemed to be ill-informed on details of the Cluster in general, particularly the funding structure, and the impact of the thin information was passed along to faculty in the hiring pathway such that the gaps in information persisted long after onboarding.

Participants discussed how they received information on the Cluster and the role of departments in communicating cluster information accurately or at all. P10 was informed later of her Cluster professional development funds, noting:

> Okay, so at the end of my first year was when I found out about the funds that I had through the cluster hire. I did not have any loans that needed to be repaid. They did push that a lot in the beginning, but I wish they had said, okay, because you don't have loans, here's this pot of money. So at least from my perspective, they honored all the commitments, but now learning that I'm like, they could have communicated more about that commitment.

P2 and P10's experiences reflect the impact of the communication deficits on the daily lives of faculty. P2 finds herself having to play catch-up on research administration details, while P10 had an incomplete or unclear view of her own funding a year into her hiring. Although each of the study participants received varying amounts of communication around key tasks and processes, the overarching condition is one of a group of new faculty beginning their tenure as academic or academic/health system employees without a clear picture of the tasks that might help or hinder their progress from the outset.

## 4.5 Community

Transition and onboarding are meant to welcome new faculty and begin the process of enculturating them into departmental, campus, and broader communities, but the sense of community varied by individuals, departments, and divisions. Most participants, at minimum, were welcomed and introduced to their departments at in-person or virtual faculty meetings upon

starting their new positions. Several noted being invited to gatherings, though none had events structured just to welcome them. P1 noted that might be a bit too much:

> Well, I think there's a fine line between tokenism and welcoming right? So I think that may be like a line that they have to straddle very, very carefully, and maybe some of them don't do it because they're afraid of tokenizing the person, or they (may hear). Oh, you're giving her such an elaborate welcome. What about the others? I think that it boils down to simply respecting the fact that someone new is joining an institution.

P9 note her department's ability to access tickets to sporting or arts events and fundraising galas and taking advantage of some of those, though she doesn't necessarily see those activities as creating community. Some participants mentioned a disconnect from community and a sense of isolation. The Race@Work faculty retreat, Race &… Lecture Series and research collaboratories served as the connection many needed to feel a part of the university, a part of the faculty and begin to feel a sense of community. P6 noted,

> So, what was done well is everything connected to the Cluster hire to me and the Race & initiatives, because that creates a space where we have that sense of community where we have that psychological safety, where we can connect with other individuals who look like us or have research … interests similar to us. And even where we can find out where to go to buy hair (products), or where to buy food or where to buy whatever it is that you need. So that was that was done really well.

Our protocol interrogated participants' experiences with departmental efforts to connect them to others with whom they shared intersectional identity, in effect, other Black women on the faculty or in the community. Some had been connected and appreciated the effort. One dean and several hiring managers connected faculty to those with concordant backgrounds, from gender,

race and ethnicity to research interests to common locations of past practice/training.–One department chair acted as a sponsor to the new faculty member, taking her along to meetings of institutional and local organizations for BIPOC professionals.

Two participants had some reservations about being connected with others based solely upon identity, on one hand appreciating the effort, but wondering if some might find those connections to feel forced. However, one of the two also mentioned lacking culturally relevant connections for well-being and having to seek those among staff, almost at random. Several noted Race@Work and the Race &…Lecture Series as the beginning of their sense of welcome and community, P10 noted,

> Race@Work I loved, but any event like that, I would almost have twice a year, maybe have a more extensive one, and then like a lighter version. Because, you know, the connections that I made, I left with definitely a sense of I belong here. (And) we need to be reminded of that.

## 4.6 Self-Advocacy

Silent transitions, haphazard orientations, and inadequate communication led our participants to rely heavily on their ability to advocate for themselves to fill in gaps and obtain necessary information. P1 discussed her ability and capacity to self-advocate, noting that she had to negotiate space, equipment and boundaries, while P9 prided herself on her capacity to reach out to others. All credit past experience in the academy with giving them the capacity to stand up for themselves and note how difficult it can be for young faculty. P1 would not recommend this campus for a first faculty appointment, noting academic political challenges explaining:

If there was a new faculty who was thinking about joining. I would tell them, no, don't do it because I needed to come in with past experience because it became protective. I could rely on that. Oh, I've had this experience before, so I know what to do. But if you were fresh from post doc-ing going through what I went through …you would quit in the water. There's no way.

P1, 6 and 9 had few of the information lapses experienced by other Cluster faculty because they took a purely proactive approach to the process, visiting campus ahead of start date, reaching out to Cluster administration to gather information, and/or networking across campus. P6 left nothing to chance, proactively initiating contact with the vice provost for Faculty Diversity and Development and Cluster co-chair upon learning about the initiative, informing him of her race-based research and expressing an interest in joining the Cluster. Networking led her to a connection at another university who had colleagues here, and a referral resulted in a hire. In the meantime, she created her own network.

I just took it upon myself. (I thought) I'm just gonna reach out to people and if they respond back to me, we can build a relationship. That's great. And if we can't then at least we tried because I understand the importance of having a sense of community and having your village and not only that personal support but professional also because this is a new …environment (and) you (come) to know the context and how to navigate and the contrast. Right? So, you need peer to peer support and you need support from individuals and higher administration that look like you. Some representation is provided.

Self-advocacy is certainly a skill one develops moving through life, realizing that not all information or resources come directly to you, so the capacity to rely upon oneself to seek answers and sometimes to be creative in doing so is both a life and an academic survival skill. P6 also

called HR and requested assignment to an orientation session, leaving nothing to chance. Some faculty, in realizing they had missed the Pitt orientation blamed themselves for missing key pieces when, in actually, systems should be in place to reinforce key information and ensure participation for the good of the faculty member.

## 4.7 Microaggressions, Bias and Stigma and the Diversity Tax

### 4.7.1 Microaggressions and Bias

Experiences with microaggressions and bias (conscious or unconscious) were common, and most participants reported experiencing some (though one had not). Most participants had heard of microaggressions experienced by colleagues. The experiences can be characterized along a continuum from clumsy attempts at anti-racism falling flat to outright traumatic encounters with leaders. Primary forms of microaggression faculty noted were typical slights (you're so well-spoken), the diversity tax (having too many demands placed upon them), their communication styles being interpreted as too aggressive or demanding (diva behavior, being uppity), being stigmatized for being participants in the Race &… Cluster as though they were not otherwise qualified. Some were not always sure what they were experiencing, trying to ascertain whether some encounters or situations they observed were due to racial differences or other conflicts, including generational ones.

P7 regularly experiences surprise that she is a competent professional in a leadership role, noting:

… I've been in rooms and spaces where people haven't assumed that I was in a senior leadership role, despite the fact that I was in rooms with senior leaders. I think that has come up quite a bit, or people have been surprised when I open my mouth and have conversations that I have a knowledge base and that, you know that I'm actually qualified for the jobs that I have taken on.

P8 noted regularly experiencing assumptions about her family structure, as well as experiencing epistemic exclusion - being marginalized as a researcher. P10 recounted an incident where clinical staff had not followed through on a directive she issued. Her manager alleged racism when P10 felt sure the team had simply not known her long enough to trust her judgment. My notes reveal a memory of being a part of a mediation team with P10, her manager and their division leader. I recall the very allusion to racism created a tense encounter.

P9 and P8 were both told directly they are diversity or affirmative action hires. It is difficult to believe the individuals who did so are unaware that a Black professional would find that to be offensive. P9 was castigated for asking for a signing bonus, a practice common in her field (which is largely comprised of White men). P5 discussed addressing microaggression with a colleague,

Would I say, outward discrimination has happened? No, nothing, nothing that has been blatant, or from places that are clear biases. A lot of it is unconscious bias and microaggressions that they are not aware of, so at least the time that I have addressed it where it was interfering with my well-being. It was addressed, and you know, an apology was made.

P1 talked about academic trauma she carries from fighting microaggressions and racism at a prior institution, trying to keep new instances from dysregulating her, and having her trauma response misunderstood. She noted:

I don't think that they're aware that (Black women academics) come from a lot of trauma. I came from a lot of baggage and trauma that I walked in the door with. And when (a conflict occurred) my reaction to (it), that triggering response…(it was assumed) that I just was overreacting.

Note P5's mention of microaggressions from a colleague interfering with her well-being until she addressed it. Confronting instances of micro- and macroaggression takes a great deal of self-advocacy in either calling it out and addressing it when it happens, or instead relying upon departmental or other administrative officials seeking resolution. In either case, there is a burden carried by the faculty member who seeks resolution.

### 4.7.2 Stigma

Three participants (P3, 8, and 9) experienced others making comments about their being "diversity hires," or in P9's case (while advocating for administrative support needed to function clinically) being called "an affirmative action hire holding the department hostage." P3 experienced online trolling after her hire as a part of the Cluster was announced online. Stigma surfaces feelings of being marginalized and minimized. P3 would like to see messaging that reinforces the purpose of the Cluster and the caliber of the faculty hired:

But if there's some way to like, make it known that it's part of an initiative to make sure that we are being hired and being put into places where we deserve to be without making it also seem like that is just to meet some quota that would be perfect, the perfect mix. But I wouldn't say otherwise, I wouldn't say there's anything else that should or could be done any differently than the way that our counterparts are treated when they accept roles, because when they accept roles, they're just welcomed, because that's what you do. And so

that's what I would appreciate, too, being welcome, because that's what you do when someone is new and they're on faculty, and in every sense of the word.

P11 offered a framing that puts the onus on the system instead of the faculty member, that it's likely departments needed assistance in hiring faculty they otherwise could not have.

…Everyone's like, "oh, that's the only reason you're here." I've done a lot of labor, a lot of work to get here, a lot of hard work to get here. So, to minimize that… Acknowledg(ing) that they are a hire that you all could not potentially hire on your own without additional support, is probably a better framing. How else are you going to recruit people from diverse backgrounds into this department, and maybe it's a lot more challenging for y'all than it has been in the past. And why is that?

There was also awareness among the participants that there was some racial commodification occurring, Two faculty members in one school, (but different departments), have been introduced collectively as "our Cluster Hires" as opposed to being introduced individually as the professionals they are. P2 warned of faculty becoming "poster children," the only representation of diversity efforts in the department.

The faculty members' reflections on stigma revealed great sensitivity to having their presence reduced to membership in the Race &…Cluster as a primary attribute. Something seemingly benign as an introduction to colleagues or a mention in a school newsletter became an act of stigmatization or objectification, subtly communicating the faculty members' relative value in the department. Participants note wanting no more than any other newcomer - to simply be welcomed – without being characterized as part of the Cluster hire. The responses also ask departments to be self-reflective and consider why they, absent programs like a cluster hire,

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otherwise lacked the capacity or ability to hire faculty from diverse backgrounds. The intimation is that the impediment rests in the departments.

**4.7.3 The Diversity Tax**

The cultural or diversity tax refers to BIPOC faculty having to shoulder the responsibility of diversity efforts or excessive service in their departments. Several of our Race &…Cluster faculty also found themselves shouldering some of those burdens. P9 was approached by her division chief and an administrator asking what she intended to do for health equity - no guidance, no departmental goals - just what was her plan to address health equity in their field.

> And I (said), "Well, do you think there's a problem? Are you concerned about access? You concerned about outcomes? Tell me what you think," "Oh, we don't know...we want you to tell us what you're gonna do." And I asked, "What type of money is available to do it? Do you guys want me to do research, (do) you want me to do advocacy, (do) you want me to do quality?" So, I don't know how you expect us to research outcomes to different populations, if right now we don't have any systems in place.

> P8 was confronted with a decidedly untenable situation. She was asked to teach a course that she had never taught before, beginning the preparation uncompensated, and before her official start date. Realizing the teaching evaluations might come back to haunt her, she extricated herself from the situation.

> I was given a class I should not have taught. I started officially on September 1; I moved here August 2, and August 15 I find out I'm teaching a Statistics II course. I don't have the textbook; I ordered it, it comes in on August 31st…and then September 1 was the class. And it was for (a different department's) students, so not even (my) field. And I told (the

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vice chair for education) I didn't feel comfortable or confident teaching that course. She said well you taught a research methods course. I said research methods is not statistics. And this was Statistics II, so they already had Statistics I with a data format program that I've never used before, so I had to learn it, or try to learn it, and then teach it. So, I went as far as I could with that class…I realized that I was never going to be able to get them to the finish line. I went to (former chair) and I said, I'm feel like I'm being set up to fail. I also had some PTSD of how I felt about what happened to me at (postdoc university) with the students with implicit bias, outright racism (in course evaluations), actually. So, I was feeling very overwhelmed by it… I said, I should have never been asked to teach this class, I didn't want to teach this class. I'm still trying to teach it. I'm not teaching it anymore. You need to find somebody else to teach it. I'm not teaching it so my course evaluations will come back and bite me in the butt later.

The department found someone else to teach the class. Both of these situations are sadly typical. Minoritized faculty are given unfunded mandates to solve systemic problems that those leading the systems have not attempted, as if simply inserting a Black or Brown body into the situation will fix it. P8's situation is common in that new faculty are assumed to be available because they are new and do not yet have commitments carved in stone. However, to ask a faculty member to teach a course they have never taught before with almost no preparation time, no pay for the little preparation time there is, and before her start date created a no-win situation. It took an act of self-advocacy to push back and step out of that situation.

Faculty who wish to be helpful to their new institutional homes may attempt some of these herculean efforts, but it is critical that minoritized faculty not be placed in situations where their

potential for success in the institution is irreparably harmed by overwhelming and impossible tasks.

## 4.8 Outside Stressors

Stressors unrelated to the Cluster and out of the control of any constituent in this study, impacted faculty experiences with transition and onboarding. The Cluster initiative was instituted in 2020, one of the most volatile years in recent US history. The convergence of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the Black Lives Matter protests mounted in the wake of George Floyd's death at the hands of law enforcement formed our broader cultural context for two years and impacted everything from the ability to work on-site to disruptions in the supply chain for basic office supplies and overwhelming needs for workplace technology at home. The larger context and extenuating circumstances (such as the death and departure of departmental leaders) certainly played a role in the onboarding of some of the faculty who arrived during that period. P3 noted,

> I would say I walked into chaos. But maybe it was because of the pandemic and the unique situation. I don't think that was typical. But any other given year like, had I walked in on January 3, 2022, maybe that would have been a little less chaotic.

> P3 recognized the situation, not the institution, created the stress that led to her having to hit the ground running. She felt supported, nonetheless. In this instance, some sense of university resources was invaluable, allowing her to have an impact on the pandemic-driven problem.

> There will always be a need for institutions of higher education to respond to external forces that shift plans and expectations. In the meantime, it is important that new Cluster faculty

be supported such that their entrée into the institution at times of stress does not place them at risk of adverse outcomes or early departure.

## 4.9 Summary

Black women faculty interviewed for this study shared a great deal of rich information concerning their arrival, welcome, and inclusion in their departments and on campus as well as roadblocks and challenges encountered as they navigated new waters. Their experiences shed light upon areas that require intentional efforts to improve both climate and systems designed to create conditions for faculty success.

The means by which faculty are recruited into the university may vary greatly. Knowing this, it is critical to embrace that variety and understand that regardless of timing, method or speed of entry, all faculty need to be welcomed and socialized within their departments. Most faculty received no communication beyond that focused on administrative tasks during transition. This presents missed opportunities to enculturate new faculty and foster relationships between them and current faculty. When diversity in the department is minimal, facilitating that connection can begin to grow some comfort in engagement.

Certainly, communication ramped up as Black women faculty entered the university, primarily being introduced to colleagues in faculty meetings, and often being connected to researchers with common interests. But orientation processes show gaps, revealing no standardization in the provision of fundamental information on how to navigate Pitt, the health system, and the intersection between the two, informed by thoughtful assessment of the juncture. Dually appointed faculty received reasonable information on their health system functions such as

information and billing systems (clinicians must chart and bill) but had not been informed of how to access university identification, or what their positionality should be when seeking IRB clearance, bearing two roles as dually appointed researchers. Interview data shows there are dually appointed faculty who never experienced a University of Pittsburgh orientation, acquiring necessary information in a "trial by fire" process. The information gaps fostered feelings of frustration and disrespect borne from constantly managing minutiae about which they had never been informed while trying to acclimate to new jobs.

Connection to community was infrequent and inconsistent. At least 3 participants' hiring managers connected them to other Black women faculty, other Black faculty and other women faculty. Only two participants were connected by their departments to individuals in the broader Pittsburgh community. Faculty who had local ties via family or past Pitt education/training experience were sometimes assumed to have community connections, but that was not always true. It was a common feeling that Black women faculty in the Cluster began to feel welcomed and a sense of community after attending the Race@Work retreat and meeting BIPOC faculty from other parts of the Health Sciences and the university.

Self-advocacy skills proved to be invaluable in helping new faculty to mitigate the information and communication gaps left by lax orientation and onboarding. Faculty insisted upon receiving resources committed during the recruitment process, extricated themselves from diversity tax driven tasks and activities, and accessed necessary resources that forethought given to their jobs and roles would have made available. Having been employed at other institutions and learned how to navigate these situations left faculty better equipped to do the same here. Several members of the Cluster faculty mentioned that untested junior faculty would have a difficult time in this environment, and this is not the place for a first academic position.

All faculty either experienced microaggression and bias or demonstrated knowledge of microaggression and bias experienced by colleagues in the broader university. More seasoned faculty were circumspect about both accepting that microaggressions are part of academic life for minoritized people. More seasoned faculty also felt more comfortable and more confident in addressing microaggressions and calling them out when they occurred. Those same faculty noted this space might prove to be difficult for a minoritized first-time faculty member if they have not been trained to respond to the inevitable appearance of microaggression and bias. However, two faculty members were called diversity hires to their face and a third was called an affirmative action hire holding her department hostage. Some faculty, while appreciating the support from the Cluster, felt stigmatized by others overlooking the fact that they are qualified or overqualified for their jobs. In sync with common stereotypes and tropes, Black women faculty were labeled as divas, uppity, or their forthright communication was characterized as harsh or disrespectful. Comments such as these will be ever-present until departmental climate is addressed.

Outside stressors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning born from the death of George Floyd added an extra layer of tension to several new Cluster faculty members' arrivals. Those who arrived during the quarantine found units isolated (or "desolate") or found themselves quickly engaged in tasks that would have been impossible to manage without prior knowledge of campus resources. Two leaders who recruited new faculty left and one unfortunately passed away. Those occurrences left a few of our Black women faculty with additional stress having lost people who would have provided them entree into their departmental cultures.

Despite the range of challenges present for this population, it is important to note of the 11 participants in this study, only two mentioned having thoughts of leaving and have since found resources here ("it's possible in Pittsburgh!) and advancement.

# 5.0 Discussion

*"I mean, you have to be intentional about actually welcoming, figuring out and making sure people have an orientation, checking in with folks. And, trying to make sure that the larger culture is one that is valuing and respecting the diverse perspectives. That just has to be there." – Participant 7*

Cluster hiring continues to be a popular method of recruiting faculty for interdisciplinary and collaborative research endeavors, for building diversity in faculty ranks, or both. Once hired, institutions of higher education should attend to the way minoritized faculty transition into their departmental culture. The transition phase offers opportunities for: 1) communication characterizing the new faculty member as "one of the team," 2) sowing connections both formal and informal, 3) inquiry into what the new hire (and/or family) needs for moving and settling (including initiating spouse job search), and 4) smoothing administrative hurdles known to be challenging. An equity lens on transition processes can increase the likelihood that faculty enter campus and clusters feeling welcomed and supported, having their identity affirmed and honored, and that they belong. The ultimate goal is increasing the likelihood of retention.

The quote opening this chapter is by one of the faculty participants who states very clearly that one must be intentional about welcoming, orienting, and monitoring inclusion to ensure new faculty are on solid ground as they move in and move forward. Absent well-informed, well-planned action, faculty entry experiences are left, unmonitored, to departments.

The research questions governing this inquiry were:

1. How do orientation and transition processes impact Cluster faculty feelings of welcome?

2. What acts, activities, or occurrences influence Cluster faculty feelings of welcome either

positively or negatively?

3. How have microaggressions impacted Cluster faculty feelings of welcome?

To revisit our definitions, transition is defined as fostering smooth and welcoming entry into the institution and campus community (Griffin & Mabe, 2016). Orientation is the process of providing a new faculty hire fundamental information on functioning within the institution including policies, administrative processes, benefits, and resources. Orientation "endeavors to accelerate the acquisition of departmental and institutional knowledge, which helps faculty acclimate to organizational culture" (Azour & McGuinness, 2023, p. 2351). Onboarding is the process of integrating and engaging individuals diverse in experience level and departmental role and "socializing" them with their colleagues, departmental culture, and practices. That integration and engagement could include mentoring by peers or more seasoned faculty (Azour & McGuinness, 2023, p. 2351).

The typical faculty recruitment process of virtual or in-person interviews, campus visits and/or job talks leading to offer seems to have proceeded smoothly for all. Even with the awareness that new faculty arrive all the time, there is no overarching plan for the variety of timing in arrivals. Even so, no participants mentioned glitches with their recruitment processes. Departments, in most instances administrators, are left to guide new faculty into the institution. Though variation in recruitment pathways and timing presents challenges for collective action, there is no informed and managed plan to insure arriving individuals have a comprehensive introduction to the institution.

The literature shows that the transition phase of a faculty hire is often misunderstood or

ignored (Griffin, 2020). Those recruiting may not realize that the transition period is one where an opportunity exists to introduce new faculty into the departmental culture and have them arrive, networked, with a nascent community, and ready to move forward in their new role.

The faculty participants in this study largely had no transition experiences as described by Griffin (2020), so feelings of being welcomed or belonging were not fostered during that phase. One participant (who had a prior connection to her hiring manager) experienced a consistent pattern of follow-up prior to arrival to be sure she was faring well as she prepared to relocate. A second had been assigned mentors to assist her during that time. Even given that experience, she did not recount feeling networked upon arrival. My observation in interviews was the faculty were dismayed by the silence during transition and the relative disorder of orientation. The result was feelings of confusion. Most of the faculty seemed to feel unsettled and to have had many unanswered questions during that time. The lack of contact, which might be rectified to an extent by assigning departmental mentors during that pivotal phase, leaves transition as a missed opportunity to engage incoming faculty and make them feel as supported members of the departmental and campus community.

The data solidly supports anecdotal reports of faculty orientation as nonexistent or disorganized. The participants are all faculty in the health sciences, and five of the 11 are dually appointed (university and health system). The dually appointed faculty report having had no university orientation, though a few recall receiving an invitation. There is no follow-up to ensure participation, so information that could ease adjustment to campus is never communicated, and is gained through repeated questioning over time, creating frustration. Whether dually appointed or "Pitt-only," faculty report disorganized and seemingly incomplete orientation processes. Only one faculty member had a thoroughly planned, personalized orientation and onboarding. This

fragmented delivery of information pivotal to academic life leaves new faculty to rely upon self-advocacy skills to seek and leverage resources to fill in gaps.

In general, administrators, not faculty, are left to organize orientations and onboard new faculty. As is said, they "don't know what they don't know." In particular, administrators on the health system side may not know about correlate activities or processes in the university, so if that orientation is the only one faculty experience, gaps remain. Faculty and leaders must be engaged in orientation and onboarding processes to share their knowledge and experience. Dually appointed faculty who have lived experience must be involved with dually appointed faculty inclusion processes.

Disorganized, incomplete or nonexistent transition and orientation processes left faculty unsettled, or as one participant called her process "bewildering." Equally, disjointed or convoluted administrative processes left faculty managing minutiae and fostered negative feelings (leaving one faculty participant to consider departure less than one year after arrival).

Attention paid to faculty members' lives and the well-being of their families garnered a great deal of goodwill, as it demonstrated caring. Actively getting to know the faculty also generated feelings of being welcomed. As faculty members' (in particular, those with leadership responsibilities) time is valuable, disorganized and convoluted administrative processes that left faculty to tend to minutiae and close loops on their own generated feelings of disrespect. Any attempts to prevent, support or provide assistance with administrative minutiae were appreciated.

The retention programming established under the Cluster, the Race &… Lecture Series as well as the Race@Work retreat have been pivotal, particularly for younger faculty who, in addition to lacking a community, also lacked basic information about the progression of their careers within the academy. Those programs also introduced them to the broader community of minoritized

faculty outside their departments and dispelled the mystery around publications and grants, the currency of tenure and promotion, and enabled them to move forward with greater confidence in forming a career plan. Participants reported appreciation for the efforts made to support their growth and development, as well as the convening wherein they began to build a community of concordant scholars.

The data shows Cluster faculty encountering microaggression and bias in departmental spaces. More seasoned faculty tended to be circumspect about it, acknowledging it as an undesirable part of academic life, but knowing how to deal with it. Additionally, faculty for whom this was not a first academic position posited that our campus might not be the best site of a first job, given the self-advocacy skills required to address and withstand some of the microaggressions and sensitive political situations they have encountered. Power differentials played a part in the most dire situations reported, one leading to mediated discussions with school leadership and human resources. That situation negatively impacted the faculty member's feeling of welcome and belonging, but she was able to leverage resources to position herself to be successful, even in the face of feeling unsafe in her division.

Some departmental cultures may not be prepared to welcome faculty of differing backgrounds, especially if they have never hired minoritized faculty. While they may intellectually understand the reason for efforts like the Cluster initiative, their capacity to work through or move past biased thinking, or as Heidegger would characterize it, their historicality (Laverty, 2003), to provide an enriching experience for new minoritized faculty may be strained. Unconscious bias and microaggression can severely impact the experience of a new minoritized faculty member, and Black women face intersectional harms. As mentioned in Findings, faculty who had experienced microaggressions at other institutions dealt with them head on. Those responses ranged from

conversations with perpetrators to formal complaints. There was no sentiment of generalized, institution-wide racism that completely tainted the participants' experience, but certainly episodes that had great impact on several. Only one considered leaving because of the issue. Thus, I cannot say microaggressions did not impact faculty feelings of welcome, but they do not appear to have outweighed other positive connections and engagements. That being said, it is unclear whether the question of microaggression and bias impact upon feelings of welcome was clearly answered based upon the results.

## 5.1 Implications for Practice

The experiences shared in this study echo other cluster studies in that there are clear implications for practice that will benefit faculty hired through cluster initiatives and may ultimately benefit all faculty. Echoing Severin (2013), we find that departments may be recruiting without considering the responsibility for the essence of the people joining our campus. Severin noted faculty hired through clusters are human beings who require interaction and community. Further, that Cluster hire faculty members need to be welcomed and engaged by their clusters, their home department(s), and the university as a whole. (Severin, 2013, para. 4)

### 5.1.1 Comprehensive Information Delivery for New Faculty

Following Severin's tenet, and in keeping with participants' recounted experiences of fragmented transition, orientation and onboarding, there must be established a program of comprehensive, organized, delivery of information critical at each stage with check-ins to be sure

faculty needs are met. These programs should activate as soon as recruitment has ended with an acceptance of employment. At that moment, the process of engaging Cluster faculty in a monitored process of reception must begin, attending stepwise to transition, orientation and onboarding, all of which build the base for retention. P7 noted:

> I know the financial investment, I know the time investment into bringing someone onto campus, and to lose people for reasons that probably are all addressable. But just nobody asked. …But I think the major issue is that there's no follow through to make sure that people are being retained and that their needs are being met.

> Faculty must be followed up regularly to ascertain progress, identify problems and provide means of resolution…and individuals must be assigned to follow these tasks through and be held accountable.

In turn, participants recommend, and I concur, that HS leadership regularly check in with leaders of departments and divisions that have hired Cluster faculty to drive home the commitment to ensuring the success of the investment in the humans recruited. Focused attention must be given to the experiences of dually-appointed faculty as they must be oriented and onboarded in two different, yet complimentary, organizations. As the health system side involves patient care (and billing, which pays the bulk of dual-appointment salaries and sustains the organization), the lion's share of attention will likely always be focused on health system orientation and onboarding tasks. However, when those dually appointed faculty miss the university orientation, the other two legs of the academic health sciences stool, teaching and research will be impacted. Attendance at the university faculty orientation must be ascertained and recorded.

**5.1.2 Attention to Department Culture**

Department culture should not be overlooked. Health Sciences tends to be a resource-seeking academic area as departments, schools and, in fact, institutions rise and fall on funding. That being stated, minoritized faculty must not be treated as a means to attract funding to departmental coffers or used as marketing tools to raise departmental or school visibility (or as P2 referred to being considered "poster children"). Senior leadership must impress upon departmental leaders that the price of their involvement with the Cluster initiative and access to funding is a commitment to the care and development of the people they hire, including mounting cultural and equity awareness initiatives for their units. These efforts can help to raise awareness of the impact of microaggression and where bias might seep in. P8 recommends departments:

> Get training on how not to be a jerk. I think faculty that are white or Caucasian or privileged or whatever, socioeconomically wealthy, need training on how to work with people that don't look like them. And how to provide support without being offensive. Educate themselves on what it is to work with a diverse faculty. I think people have this stuck in their mind that all people of color grew up poor, (in) single family household(s) and are - had lack of educational opportunities. And that can be the case, but it's not mostly the case.

To hire minoritized individuals without attention to the way they may be treated by people in their midst is inappropriate. As P11 described it, "So it's like inviting people into your home and you know the kitchen is on fire but you're not going to try to put it out?"

### 5.1.3 Mentoring

The identification of a team of mentors to guide the professional development and/or research career of the new faculty hires was a requirement of a department's proposal for Cluster funding. Interview responses revealed that only two of 11 Black women HS Cluster faculty are aware of and in contact with their assigned mentors. Others have no knowledge of who is meant to be on their mentoring team. This condition raises the question of whether the teams identified in the funding proposals were assembled to meet the career development needs of the new faculty members or simply to meet the requirement for proposal. Mentors from within schools, if not departments, must be trained and incentivized, and the occurrence of mentor/mentee meetings should be recorded, monitored, and addressed if lagging.

### 5.1.4 Participant Designed Cluster Hire

The research protocol contained the question, "If you were designing a cluster hire program, what would it look like?" As discussed above, participants reported appreciation for the primary components of the Health Sciences Cluster (salary support, loan repayment, seed funds) as well as the retention efforts (Race &…Lecture Series, Race@Work Faculty Development Retreat, and research collaboratories). They provided suggestions for addition/improvement collected into Table 5 below, separated into suggested program components or processes.

Repeated suggestions (transition mentors, Cluster responsibility sheets) are worth exploring as they have occurred to multiple members of the Cluster.

**Table 5 Participant Designed Cluster Hire Program**

| Participant | Program | Process |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | •Introduce hires to campus/clinical leaders <br> •Provide Promotion and Tenure information | |
| 2 | •Chair/chief-assigned transition mentors <br> •Create PDF of logistic information <br> •Tangible DEI support <br> •Quarterly Cohort Connections <br> •Social and academic touchpoints <br> •Infrastructure for community-building | Make onboarding logistic info available to all |
| 3 | •Create an onboarding manual | Work with departments and supervisors to ensure a training week prior to official start of new role. |
| 4 | •Create a Cluster summary document for new recruits including all program elements. <br> •Assign Transition Mentors <br> •Have a Cluster meeting with new hires within a month of arrival; provide DEI resources and contact people. | |
| 5 | •Monthly coffee chat between new and more seasoned Cluster members. <br> •Maintain periodic virtual socials <br> •Non-UR month-long mentors from other departments | |
| 6 | •Surviving academic politics boot camp <br> •Leadership boot camp <br> •Trainings for leaders hiring faculty in the Cluster & mentors <br> •Help with housing | •Ascertain mentors' willingness to serve in and **commit** to that role |
| 7 | •Regular check-ins with Cluster faculty <br> •Inquire into first performance evaluations and career plans | •Follow through to make sure that people are being retained and that their needs are being met <br> •Senior leadership should ping hiring managers at regular intervals to monitor faculty adjustment <br> • |

**Table 5 Participant Designed Cluster Hire Program (continued)**

| 8 | •Comprehensive Research "How To" <br> •Chat group (Slack channel or WhatsApp group) <br> •Welcome breakfast at the beginning of each term. <br> •Holiday event <br> •Book club <br> •Peer Pairing with current junior faculty | •Mentoring starts day 1 for tenure track faculty <br> •Codify research mentor/mentee inputs and expectations <br> •Create environment of anti-racism; hold malignant leaders accountable |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | •Facilitate meetings with university/hospital leadership <br> •Provide financial planning resources to aid in loan repayment personal financial decision-making. <br> •Initiate a structured program of mentorship oversight. <br> •Create a Cluster Primer for departments | •Ensure departments take ownership of learning content of primer before capacity to hire |
| 10 | •Create a governing committee for the Cluster comprised of university administration and faculty at varying career stages. <br> •Have a separate committee of chairs and chiefs. Orient them and direct them to orient their teams and supervisory staff. <br> •ID a housing buddy for search support. <br> •Ensure T&P conversations occur on the clinical side <br> •Mentors from the School but not the department. <br> •Formula onboarding | •Have mentors brief the Dean. The chair/chief may be the issue. |
| 11 | •A one-page Cluster Expectations sheet for hires <br> •A Canvas professional page for cohort connection and development | |

I am reluctant to suggest the responsibility for all suggested programming and monitoring rests with Cluster administration without noting that staff capacity must reflect the magnitude of the duty required to carry these tasks forward. Partnership with schools, departments, and divisions

will be critical in the creating materials, crafting and disseminating processes and procedures and socializing the need for attention to documented differential experiences for minoritized faculty.

## 5.2 Implications for Further Research

The purpose of this inquiry was to examine the impact of transition, orientation, onboarding and microaggressions on feelings of welcome and inclusion for Black women faculty in a cluster hire initiative. With outcomes from this study, comparative inquiry may be indicated.

As academic culture is the medium in which our faculty grow, insight might be gained from comparing the experiences of our Black women health sciences Cluster faculty to Black women Cluster faculty onboarding in Provost-area schools. The milieu of the two cultures may provide some insight.

Second, a comparison of transition and onboarding experiences of Cluster faculty vs. non-BIPOC faculty might shed some light on the extent to which faculty race or Cluster involvement is a factor in those processes. Should outcomes show those processes as occurring just as poorly for non-BIPOC faculty, there could be implications for an institution-wide reset of institutional orientation and onboarding processes.

Third, the extensive list of recommendations offered by the faculty participating in this inquiry provides opportunities for small tests of change for incremental improvement at varying points along the transition to onboarding path, including the development of tools and instruments to be used to institute or improve programming.

## 5.3 Conclusion

This research sheds light on cluster hiring not just as a mode of focusing research effort or building diversity in a faculty. It makes plain the lived experiences and feelings of Black women faculty who are supported by cluster efforts. It also makes plain the impact on Black women faculty who may not be adequately supported by the workplaces that hired them. It serves as a reminder that cluster programs cannot just be initiated, there must be infrastructure to support every facet and aspect that might facilitate or hinder the progress of faculty hired.

Academic leaders must move beyond recruitment to view recruitment, transition, orientation, onboarding, and retention as a continuum activated to support the faculty they have hired. That support can be seen as infrastructure to bolster faculty as they move forward in their careers as funded researchers, clinicians, educators, or all the above. Those leaders must also approach the hiring of minoritized faculty with humility. Not all faculty are the same; not all minoritized faculty are the same. An equity lens dictates that institutions realize the onus of faculty success rests with them. The best chance for success is to make time to learn about how to support minoritized faculty, then listen to those faculty to be certain their needs are being met.

Cluster administrators must realize that new faculty require close and regular monitoring as they settle in. Departments may or may not put everything in place to support the faculty. We must make open and frequent communication a priority so faculty can more readily share when things are amiss. Seemingly small events and issues can corrode the stability we hope to provide for faculty making it easy for them to consider moving on. Departments and cluster administration should band together to create plans for cluster faculty support that will sustain the faculty as they establish lines of research and collaborative engagement.

This study is relevant as it will add to cluster hire literature serving as both instruction and guidance. If we are to meet one of the primary goals of cluster hiring, that of diversifying faculties and ultimately ameliorating disparities, our Cluster faculty – in this case our Black women Cluster faculty – cannot be left to fend for themselves. Our goal must be retention.

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**

**Call for proposals**

**Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-being Cluster Hire**

**and Retention Initiative**

**Deadline for proposals: January 31, 2021**

Apply at: facultydiversity@pitt.edu

**OVERVIEW**

Building upon the Plan for Pitt, the University of Pittsburgh is committed to becoming an anti-racist institution and a national leader in efforts to understand and address race and social determinants of equity and well-being.  Aligned with these commitments, Pitt's **Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being** Cluster Hire and Retention Committee (John Wallace and Paula Davis co-chairs) invites proposals from all Pitt schools and campuses to hire a cohort of at least 50 faculty (25 in the Provost's area and 25 in the Health Sciences), over the next four years, whose research and experience focuses on issues of Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being.

We are particularly interested in proposals that cross disciplinary boundaries and that promote multidisciplinary "team science" approaches that explicitly seek to understand and address local, national and global grand challenges associated with Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being, including Pittsburgh's widely recognized racial disparities, (see "Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race"
https://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/redtail/images/7109_Pittsburgh's_Inequality_Across_Gender_and_Race_09_18_19.pdf)

The University of Pittsburgh's Center on Race and Social Problems (https://crsp.pitt.edu) will work with the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences to assist units' efforts to recruit, hire,

and onboard, cluster faculty and provide ongoing networking, intellectual exchange and social support.

**Vision**

The vision of the **Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being** Initiative is to successfully identify, recruit, hire, retain and promote 50 or more faculty, across Pitt's campuses, schools, disciplines and departments. These faculty will work with, and build upon, the expertise of existing Pitt faculty to conduct research, educate students and engage in service designed to eliminate racial disparities in the social determinants of equity and to improve measures of well-being in the Pittsburgh region, nationally and across the globe

**Goals**

Through this university-wide cluster hire and retention initiative, Pitt will significantly advance its expertise in, and research on, **Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being**. The initiative will focus on three interrelated goals: 1) significantly increase the number of faculty, particularly Black faculty, who are hired, promoted and retained who work in these fields; 2) attract, recruit and graduate undergraduate and graduate students for whom these issues are important; and 3) raise the University's local, national and international profile and expertise in **Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being.**

**Key Dates and Activities**

December 1, 2020 to January 31, 2021
- Interested stakeholders will draft and submit proposals to the committee. It is recommended that applicants review and use the URF Cluster Hire Handbook, as well as the recently published report, "Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race," to inform the rationale and focus of their proposals.

February and March 2021
- The Cluster Hire and Retention Committee will review and select proposals to recommend for the first year of funding. Proposals that are not selected can be revised and resubmitted for the following year. We anticipate that members of the Cluster Hire committee will serve on departmental or unit hiring committees (committees in subsequent years may include members of the cluster itself, being mindful of service load for junior faculty).
  •Each school, department or unit will create a Cluster Hire search committee to identify and recruit candidates for the first round of hiring.

March 2021 and Beyond
- Hiring of the first set of cluster colleagues in the order approved by the Office of the Provost. The hiring of the entire cluster will take place over four academic years.

**Key Definitions**

**Social Determinants** "…are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks."[1]  These include 1) Economic Stability; 2) Education Access and Quality; Neighborhood and Built Environment; 4) Social and Community Context; 5) Health Care Access and Quality.[1]

**"'Equity'** is the absence of avoidable, unfair, or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically or by other means of stratification." [2]

This proposal defines equity broadly, to include five frames: 1) Procedural Equity; 2) Distributional Equity; 3) Structural Equity; 4) Transgenerational Equity; and 5) Transformational Equity [3] where "equity" aims for the highest attainable standards; generally, those enjoyed by the socially advantaged.

**"Well-Being**" is defined as a positive outcome indicating individuals' perception that their lives are going well, taking into consideration availability and access to basic resources, physical and mental health (including the pursuits which help to improve and maintain well-being such as engagement in the arts, faith practices, etc.)

Over the next four years, we will recruit and support a cohort of at least 50 tenure-stream scholars focused on **Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being**, across the University, over the span of four years.

**HIRING PROCESS**

Supported by the Offices of the Provost and the Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences, the university-wide Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being Cluster Hire and Retention Initiative will begin in Academic Year (AY) 2021-2022 and proceed over four years.

The general hiring plan for the Provost' area schools, by year, is as follows:

**Appendix Table 1 General Hiring Plan**

|  | Number of New Faculty | Rank | Number per Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **AY 21-22** | 6 | Junior | 4 |
|  |  | Senior | 2 |
| **AY 22-23** | 7 | Junior | 5 |
|  |  | Senior | 2 |

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[1] Social Determinants of Health, Healthy People 2030 https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health

[2] World Health Organization https://www.who.int/healthsystems/topics/equity/en/

[3] Natural Resources Defense Council, "Definitions of Equity, Inclusion, Equality and Related Terms" https://www.broward.org/Climate/Documents/EquityHandout_082019.pdf

| AY 23-24 | 6 | Junior | 4 |
| | | Senior | 2 |
| AY 24-25 | 6 | Junior | 4 |
| | | Senior | 2 |

**NOTE:** This process does not exclude searches (e.g., Diversity Hires) of faculty outside of the focus of this Initiative or that may already be in progress. Those candidates may still be considered a part of the Initiative.

**The Office of the Provost** will support these lines for four years on a declining scale. The subsidy is intended to support existing lines that are currently available or will be available within the time frame of the subsidy. The support structure will be as follows:

**Appendix Table 3 Office of the Provost Subsidy Scale**

| Academic Year | Rank | % Subsidy | Total Subsidy ($) |
|---|---|---|---|
| AY 21-22 | Junior | 100% | Up to $100,000 salary |
| | Senior | 100% | Up to $120,000 salary |
| AY 22-23 | Junior | 100% | Up to $100,000 salary |
| | Senior | 100% | Up to $120,000 salary |
| AY 23-24 | Junior | 75% | Up to $75,000 salary |
| | Senior | 90% | Up to $90,000 salary |
| AY 24-25 | Junior | 50% | Up to $50,000 salary |
| | Senior | 50% | Up to $60,000 salary |

**Health Sciences:**
**The Senior Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences** will support these lines for four years, but on a flat annual support model, irrespective of rank.

**Appendix Table 4 Senior Chancellor for Health and Sciences Subsidy Scale**

| Academic Year | Rank/Status | % Salary Subsidy | Loan Repayment | Total Subsidy ($) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AY 21-22 | Non-UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $25,000 | $100,000 |
| | UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $50,000 | $125,000 |
| AY 22-23 | Non-UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $25,000 | $100,000 |

|  | UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $50,000 | $125,000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AY 23-24** | Non-UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $25,000 | $100,000 |
|  | UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $50,000 | $125,000 |
| **AY 24-25** | Non-UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $25,000 | $100,000 |
|  | UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $50,000 | $125,000 |

Startup packages will be the responsibility of the relevant dean/school in negotiation with the Provost or Senior Vice Chancellor. When Provost area deans or campus presidents provide their annual recruitment memos to the Office of the Provost, they must indicate if a particular search is anticipated to be one supported by the **Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being Cluster Hire Initiative**. Additionally, when the Provost area, dean's office or campus president's office prepares a request to negotiate for an identified candidate, they must indicate on the Faculty Recruiting and Equal Employment Opportunity (FREEO) form if the new hire is being supported by this initiative.

**Proposal Process**

**Although proposals to recruit individual faculty members are acceptable, units are strongly encouraged to collaborate to submit proposals for multiple hires.**

Proposals should clearly identify the unit or units involved, the leadership consulted as part of the preparation of the proposal (program or department chairs, deans, etc.), and the ways in which the hiring of one or more scholars in **Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being** studies will accomplish the following broad imperatives: meet the goals of the cluster hire; provide value to the unit, department, or school; and advance the University's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Proposals should leverage **existing faculty lines**; cluster hire funds will support those lines.

Proposals must address each of the criteria listed below, drawn from the University Research Forum, EAB *Playbook for Effective Cluster Hiring: 16 Imperatives for Planning and Implementation (pp.31-32).* [4]

- Title of Proposal
- Names of Proposing Faculty and Participating Schools/Colleges
- Include brief overview as well as official endorsements and evidence of support from the appropriate dean.
- Outline the rationale for the cluster. Provide evidence that the cluster is aligned with the Plan for Pitt and supports our commitment to become an anti-racist institution.
- Identify cluster leader, potential home department(s) for the cluster hire(s), and members of cluster steering/search committee. For cross unit cluster efforts, create a plan to ensure interdisciplinary collaboration and work. Describe your strategy to manage cluster activities and meet cluster administration needs.
- Identify potential benefits of the cluster and its impact on knowledge and practice.
- Describe how the proposed cluster satisfies the mission and vision of the University's cluster hiring and retention initiative.
- List number of proposed hires and each new proposed position, as well as rationale for why these are necessary. If more than one is proposed, the list must be prioritized.
- Provide preliminary draft of position description.
- Identify senior faculty who might potentially participate in the cluster and serve as mentors, along with the general mentoring structure for new hires. Explain cluster activities (e.g., conferences, meetings, trainings) that will foster teamwork.
- Include a budget plan with information about potential faculty salaries and/or possible ranges, desired start-up funding, and infrastructure requirements (e.g., lab space, offices, IT needs). Identify possible sources of external funding.
- Describe potential research relationships and collaborations for the cluster, both internally and externally.
- Provide metrics by which the cluster should be evaluated (e.g., publications, grants, promotions, etc.). Present a plan to obtain necessary data and a timeline for evaluation.
- Proposals must address each of the criteria listed above. Proposals should be submitted electronically ***in PDF format*** to [facultydiversity@pitt.edu](mailto:facultydiversity@pitt.edu).

The **Race and Social Determinants of Equity and Well-Being** Cluster Hire Committee is comprised of the following representatives:

- Ann E. Cudd, PhD, Provost, ex officio
- Anantha Shekhar, MD, PhD, SVC for Health Sciences, ex officio
- John Wallace, Office of the Provost, co-chair
- Paula K. Davis, Health Sciences, co-chair

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[4] University Research Forum, EAB. Playbook for Effective Cluster Hiring: 16 Imperatives for Planning and Implementation, 2017, https://eab.com/research/university-research/whitepaper/a-playbook-for-effective-cluster-hiring/.

- Mario C. Browne, Health Sciences/Pharmacy
- Yolanda Covington-Ward, Africana Studies, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
- T. Elon Dancy, School of Education
- Rosta Farzan, School of Computing and Information
- Tiffany Gary-Webb, Graduate School of Public Health
- Janet Grady, Pitt Johnstown
- Jacqueline Horrall, Pitt Greensburg
- James Huguley, Center on Race and Social Problems, School of Social Work
- Jeff Inman, Katz School of Business
- Michael Kenney, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
- Julius Kitutu, School of Nursing
- Adam Leibovich, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
- James Martin II, Swanson School of Engineering
- Thomas Nolin, School of Pharmacy
- Adriana Modesto Vieira, School of Dental Medicine
- Chenits Pettigrew, Jr., School of Medicine
- Tomar Pierson-Brown, School of Law
- Frits Pil, Office of the Provost
- Laurel B. Roberts, Office of the Provost
- Anne Robertson, Swanson School of Engineering
- Bernard Rousseau, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
- Randall Smith, School of Pharmacy
- Erin Walker, School of Computing and Information
- Emily Williams, Pitt Bradford

Questions may be directed to [facultydiversity@pitt.edu](mailto:facultydiversity@pitt.edu).

**Appendix B Call for Proposals – Health Sciences**

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH – HEALTH SCIENCES**

**Call for Proposals**

**Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-being**

**Cluster Hire and Retention Initiative**

**Deadline for proposals: Rolling**

Apply at: facultydiversity@pitt.edu

**OVERVIEW**

Building upon the Plan for Pitt, the University of Pittsburgh is committed to becoming an anti-racist institution and a national leader in efforts to understand and address race and social determinants of equity and well-being.  Aligned with these commitments, Pitt's **Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-Being** Cluster Hire and Retention Committee (Paula Davis, MaCalus Hogan and Naudia Jonassaint co-chairs) invites proposals from Pitt's Health Science schools to hire a cohort of at least 25, over the next four years, whose research and experience focuses on issues of Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-Being.

The Committee invites faculty hiring proposals from the six Schools of the Health Sciences.  It is expected that all proposals will address how the hiring will help build our understanding of the local, national and global grand challenges associated with Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-Being, including Pittsburgh's widely recognized racial disparities, (see "Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race" report, https://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/redtail/images/7109_Pittsburgh's_Inequality_Across_Gender_and_Race_09_18_19.pdf).  Particular preference will be given for proposals that explore crossing disciplinary boundaries and that promote multi-disciplinary "team science' approaches, including proposals that are co-developed by departments and units for this purpose.

The University of Pittsburgh's Center on Race and Social Problems (https://crsp.pitt.edu) will work with the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences to assist units' efforts to recruit, hire, onboard and retain cluster faculty through

ongoing campus and community networking, intellectual exchange, career development and social support.

**Vision**

The vision of the **Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-Being** Initiative is to successfully identify, recruit, hire, retain and promote 50 or more faculty, across Pitt's campuses, schools, disciplines and departments. These faculty will work with, and build upon, the expertise of existing Pitt faculty to conduct research, educate students and engage in service designed to eliminate racial disparities in the social determinants of equity and to improve measures of health and well-being in the Pittsburgh region, nationally and across the globe.

**Goals**

The parallel Provost's area and Health Sciences cluster hire and retention initiatives will transform Pitt's expertise in, and research on, **Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-Being.** These initiatives will focus on four interrelated goals: 1) significantly increase the number of faculty who are hired, promoted and retained who work in these fields; 2) attract, recruit and graduate undergraduate and graduate students for whom these issues are important; 3) raise the University's local, national and international profile and expertise in **Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-Being**, and 4) increase the University's capacity to contribute to important and sustainable societal change.

**NOTE**: This process does not preclude searches outside of the focus of the Cluster Hire Initiative (e.g., Diversity Hires).

**Key Dates and Activities**

The RFP will be released in December 2020 with the first round of applications being **due on February 15, 2021**.

- Interested units will draft and submit proposals to the committee. It is recommended that applicants review and use the URF Cluster Hire Handbook, as well as the recently published report, "Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race," to inform the

rationale and focus of their proposals.  Proposals for multi-year, staged hiring (in anticipation of vacancies in subsequent years) are welcomed.

- The Cluster Hire and Retention Committee will review and select proposals to recommend for the first year of funding. Proposals that are not selected can be revised and resubmitted for the following year. We anticipate that members of the Cluster Hire and Retention committee will serve on departmental or unit hiring committees (committees in subsequent years may include members of the cluster itself, being mindful of service load for junior faculty).

- Each school, department or unit will create a Cluster Hire search committee to identify and recruit candidates for the first round of hiring.

- Hiring of the first set of cluster colleagues will occur in the order approved by the Office of the Provost and the Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor, Health Sciences.

**HIRING PROCESS**

Supported by the Offices of the Provost and the Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences, the university-wide Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-Being Cluster Hire and Retention Initiative will begin in Academic Year (AY) 2021-2022 and proceed over four years.

Startup packages will be the responsibility of the relevant dean/school in negotiation with the Senior Vice Chancellor.

**Proposal Process**

**Although proposals to recruit individual faculty members are acceptable, units are strongly encouraged to collaborate to submit proposals for multiple hires.**

Proposals should clearly identify the unit or units involved, the leadership consulted as part of the preparation of the proposal (program or department chairs, deans, etc.), and the ways in which the hiring of one or more scholars in **Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-Being** studies will accomplish the following broad imperatives: meet the goals of the cluster hire; provide value to the unit, department, or school; and advance the University's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Proposals should leverage **existing faculty lines**; cluster hire funds will support those lines.

Proposals must address each of the criteria listed below, drawn from the University Research Forum, EAB *Playbook for Effective Cluster Hiring: 16 Imperatives for Planning and*

*Implementation (pp.31-32).* [5]

- Title of Proposal
- Names of Proposing Faculty and Participating Schools/Colleges
- Include brief overview as well as official endorsements and evidence of support from the appropriate dean.
- Outline the rationale for the cluster. Provide evidence that the cluster is aligned with the Plan for Pitt and supports our commitment to become an anti-racist institution.
- Identify cluster leader, potential home department(s) for the cluster hire(s), and members of cluster steering/search committee. For cross unit cluster efforts, create a plan to ensure interdisciplinary collaboration and work. Describe your strategy to manage cluster activities and meet cluster administration needs.
- Identify potential benefits of the cluster and its impact on knowledge and practice.
- Describe how the proposed cluster satisfies the mission and vision of the University's cluster hiring and retention initiative.
- List number of proposed hires and each new proposed position, as well as rationale for why these are necessary. If more than one is proposed, the list must be prioritized.
- Provide preliminary draft of position description.
- Identify senior faculty who might potentially participate in the cluster and serve as mentors, along with the general mentoring structure for new hires. Explain cluster activities (e.g., conferences, meetings, trainings) that will foster teamwork.
- Include a budget plan with information about potential faculty salaries and/or possible ranges, desired start-up funding, and infrastructure requirements (e.g., lab space, offices, IT needs). Identify possible sources of external funding.
- Describe potential research relationships and collaborations for the cluster, both internally and externally.
- Provide metrics by which the cluster should be evaluated (e.g., publications, grants, promotions, etc.). Present a plan to obtain necessary data and a timeline for evaluation.
- Proposals must address each of the criteria listed above. Proposals should be submitted electronically *in PDF format* to diversity@hs.pitt.edu AND facultydiversity@pitt.edu.

The **campus-wide** Cluster Hire Committee is comprised of the following representatives:

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[5] University Research Forum, EAB. Playbook for Effective Cluster Hiring: 16 Imperatives for Planning and Implementation, 2017, https://eab.com/research/university-research/whitepaper/a-playbook-for-effective-cluster-hiring/.

- Ann E. Cudd, PhD, Provost, ex officio
- Anantha Shekhar, MD, PhD, SVC for Health Sciences, ex officio
- John Wallace, Office of the Provost, co-chair
- Paula K. Davis, Health Sciences, co-chair
- Mario C. Browne, Health Sciences/Pharmacy
- Yolanda Covington-Ward, Africana Studies, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
- T. Elon Dancy, School of Education
- Rosta Farzan, School of Computing and Information
- Tiffany Gary-Webb, Graduate School of Public Health
- Janet Grady, Pitt Johnstown
- Jacqueline Horrall, Pitt Greensburg
- James Huguley, Center on Race and Social Problems, School of Social Work
- Jeff Inman, Katz School of Business
- Michael Kenney, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
- Julius Kitutu, School of Nursing
- Adam Leibovich, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
- James Martin II, Swanson School of Engineering
- Thomas Nolin, School of Pharmacy
- Adriana Modesto Vieira, School of Dental Medicine
- Chenits Pettigrew, Jr., School of Medicine
- Tomar Pierson-Brown, School of Law
- Frits Pil, Katz Graduate School of Business
- Laurel B. Roberts, Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
- Anne Robertson, Swanson School of Engineering
- Bernard Rousseau, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
- Randall Smith, School of Pharmacy
- Erin Walker, School of Computing and Information
- Emily Williams, Pitt Bradford

Questions may be directed to facultydiversity@pitt.edu.

**APPENDIX**

**Key Definitions**

**"Social Determinants** "…are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks."[6] These include 1) Economic Stability; 2) Education Access and

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[6] Social Determinants of Health, Healthy People 2030 https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health

Quality; Neighborhood and Built Environment; 4) Social and Community Context; 5) Health Care Access and Quality.[1]

"**Equity**" is the absence of avoidable, unfair, or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically or by other means of stratification."[7]

This proposal defines equity broadly, to include five frames: 1) Procedural Equity; 2) Distributional Equity; 3) Structural Equity; 4) Transgenerational Equity; and 5) Transformational Equity [8] where "equity" aims for the highest attainable standards; generally, those enjoyed by the socially advantaged. The Health Sciences cluster also centers Health Equity that also includes 'disparities in disease prevalence' and 'disparities in health outcomes'

"**Well-Being**" is defined as a positive outcome indicating individuals' perception that their lives are going well, taking into consideration availability and access to basic resources, physical and mental health (including the pursuits which help to improve and maintain well-being such as engagement in the arts, faith practices, etc.)

Over the next four years, we will recruit and support a cohort of at least **25** tenure-stream scholars focused on **Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-Being,** across the Schools of the Health Sciences, over the span of four years.

**The Senior Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences** will support these lines for four years on a flat annual support model, irrespective of rank.

<div align="center">

**Appendix Table 5 Senior Vice Chancellor Subsidy Scale**

</div>

| Academic Year | Rank/Status | % Salary Subsidy | Loan Repayment | Total Subsidy ($) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AY 21-22** | Non-UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $25,000 | $100,000 |
| | UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $50,000 | $125,000 |

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[7] World Health Organization https://www.who.int/healthsystems/topics/equity/en/

[8] Natural Resources Defense Council, "Definitions of Equity, Inclusion, Equality and Related Terms" https://www.broward.org/Climate/Documents/EquityHandout_082019.pdf

**Appendix Table 6 Senior Vice Chancellor Subsidy Scale (continued)**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AY 22-23** | Non-UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $25,000 | $100,000 |
| | UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $50,000 | $125,000 |
| **AY 23-24** | Non-UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $25,000 | $100,000 |
| | UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $50,000 | $125,000 |
| **AY 24-25** | Non-UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $25,000 | $100,000 |
| | UPP | 50%/salary or $75K, whichever is higher | $50,000 | $125,000 |

**Appendix C Email Invitation to Participate in the Research Project Faculty Transition**

**Experiences in a Cluster Hire Initiative: A Qualitative Case Study**

To: Cluster Faculty

Subject: Invitation to Participate in Cluster-Focused Inquiry

Dear (Cluster Faculty Member),

We are conducting interviews as part of a research study to increase our understanding of the onboarding and transition experiences of our faculty hired through the Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-being Cluster Recruitment and Retention Initiative. Your perspective, as a member of the Cluster, will be invaluable in this inquiry.

This research serves dual purposes: 1) partial fulfillment of the EdD for Paula K. Davis, and 2) the task of learning more about the implementation of the Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-being Cluster Recruitment and Retention Initiative.

The interview takes around an hour and is semi-structured. Your responses to the questions will be kept confidential; any quoted material will be anonymized with a fictitious name. No department or division will be identified.

There is no compensation for participating in this study. However, your participation will help us to understand the entry experiences of underrepresented and minoritized faculty.

You will find the response collector HERE (*URL to be inserted*). If you have any questions,

please do not hesitate to ask.


Paula K. Davis, MA, CDE (investigator)

**Appendix D Consent And Participant Survey**

CONSENT TO ACT AS A PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH STUDY

**Q1.**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

Paula K. Davis, MA, CDE
5050 Somerville Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15201
pkd100@pitt.edu
412-979-3532

**Appendix Figure 1a Consent and Participant Survey**

**Q2.**

INTRODUCTION: This research is being conducted for the dual purposes of 1) completing a dissertation at the University of Pittsburgh, in partial fulfillment of the Doctorate in Education degree, and 2) the administrative task of learning more about the implementation of the Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-being Cluster Recruitment and Retention Initiative (the Cluster). The aim of this study is to assess the on-boarding experiences of faculty hired in the Cluster. The goal of the research is to inform practices for welcoming and including underrepresented faculty on campus.

PARTICIPANTS: You are being asked to participate in your role as a faculty member supported by the University of Pittsburgh's Race and Social Determinants of Equity, Health and Well-being Cluster Recruitment and Retention Initiative. Your decision to participate or refuse participation will have no impact on your capacity to access the resources available to you through the Cluster.

DURATION: This process will involve an interview of approximately 60 minutes in duration.

RECORDING: Interviews will be recorded only for purposes of transcription and analysis.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Survey data will primarily be reported in the aggregate. Fictitious names will be used to communicate any quoted material and any identifying information (department, division, individuals referenced) will be removed to protect the identity of the participant.

SUPERVISION: This study is being conducted under the guidance of Dr. Linda T. DeAngelo, associate professor of higher education in the Department of Educational Foundations, Organizations, and Policy at the University of Pittsburgh School of Education. She can be reached at deangelo@pitt.edu.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary.

**Appendix Figure 1b Consent and Participant Survey**

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- You are at least 18 years of age.
- Interviews will be recorded for purposes of transcription and analysis.
- You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time for any reason.

○ I give my consent. I will participate in the study.

○ I do not consent, I do not wish to participate.

**Q3.** Name

[                                                          ]

**Q4.** Email address

[                                                          ]

**Q5.** Academic Rank

[                                                          ]
[                                                          ]

**Q6.** Please indicate your tenure status.

○ Tenured

○ Tenure Stream

○ Appointment Stream

**Appendix Figure 1c Consent and Participant Survey**

**Q7.** In which school(s) of the University are you appointed?

☐ Arts and Sciences

☐ Business

☐ Computing and Information

☐ Dental Medicine

☐ Education

☐ Engineering

☐ Health and Rehabilitation Sciences

☐ Law

☐ Medicine

☐ Nursing

☐ Pharmacy

☐ Public and International Affairs

☐ Public Health

☐ Social Work

**Appendix Figure 1d Consent and Participant Survey**

**Q8.**

Please select your racial/ethnic identity (select as many as apply).

☐ Native American/Alaska Native

☐ East Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese)

☐ Filipina/o/x

☐ Southeast Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Vietnamese, Hmong)

☐ South Asian (e.g., Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese, Sri Lankan)

☐ Other Asian

☐ African American/Black

☐ African

☐ Caribbean

☐ Other Black

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ Mexican American/Chicana/o/e/x

☐ Puerto Rican

☐ Central American

☐ South American

☐ Other Hispanic or Latina/o/e/x

☐ Middle Eastern

☐ European

☐ Other White

☐ Other

**Appendix Figure 1e Consent and Participant Survey**

**Q10.** Please indicate your gender identity.

- ◯ Man
- ◯ Woman
- ◯ Non-binary/third gender
- ◯ Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
- ◯ Self identify
- ◯ Prefer not to respond

**Q11.** Please indicate your general availability.

| | Time of day | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Morning | Afernoon |
| Monday | ◯ | ◯ |
| Tuesday | ◯ | ◯ |
| Wednesday | ◯ | ◯ |
| Thursday | ◯ | ◯ |
| Friday | ◯ | ◯ |
| Saturday | ◯ | ◯ |

**Appendix Figure 1f Consent and Participant Survey**

**Appendix E Semi-Structured Interview Protocol: Race & Social Determinants of Equity, Health, and Well-being Cluster Recruitment and Retention**

**Purpose of the Interview**

The purpose of this interview is to understand your experience as a member of the Race & Social Determinants of Equity, Health, and Well-being Cluster Recruitment and Retention Initiative.

**Duration**

The interview is expected to last approximately 60 minutes.

**Benefits of Participation**

While there may not be direct benefit to you, your participation will provide valuable information that will help to evaluate the effectiveness of the Cluster Hire program and understand and improve the experience of future Cluster Hire faculty.

**Confidentiality Assurance**

- Limited Access:

  The information you provide will be accessible only to the principal investigator and designated members of the research team.

- Non-Disclosure:

  We commit not to disclose, share, or disseminate any information obtained during this interview to third parties without your explicit consent, unless required by law. No personally identifying information will be disclosed and there will be no release of data in a fashion that will allow you to be identified. Data will be presented in the aggregate and fictitious names will be employed, if necessary.

- Storage and Handling:

  Any notes, recordings, or documentation generated from this interview will be securely stored and handled to prevent unauthorized access.

- Retention:

  The collected information will be retained for [specified duration] and will be disposed of securely thereafter.

- Exceptions:

  Confidentiality may be breached in instances where there is an imminent risk of harm to yourself or others, or if required by law.

**Voluntary Participation**:

Your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Your decision will not affect any current or future relations with the University of Pittsburgh.

**University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approval:**

This research has been waived by the University of Pittsburgh Institutional Review Board (IRB) as a quality improvement project. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a participant, you may contact the University of Pittsburgh IRB at (412) 383-1480 or askirb@pitt.edu.

By continuing with the interview, you indicate your understanding of the information provided and your voluntary agreement to participate. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to ask before we begin.

Thank you for your time, cooperation, and valuable contribution.

**Race & Social Determinants of Equity, Health, and Well-being Cluster Hiring and**

**Retention Initiative Questionnaire**

1. Tell me about how and when you were made aware of the Race &.. Cluster Hire

    Recruitment and Retention Initiative.

2. What information on the Cluster Initiative did you receive prior to your start date and

    from whom?

    a. How clearly were the details of the program communicated to you?

    b. Were you made aware of the loan repayment program before your arrival?

3. How would you describe your first day as a faculty member at the University of

    Pittsburgh?

    a. Who facilitated your onboarding (<u>introduction into department culture</u>) process?

    b. How/when were you shown to your desk or office?

4. Describe the process of receiving necessary equipment (laptop, lab equipment) and

    supplies.

5. How were you introduced to necessary administrative systems and resources?  (e.g.,

    purchasing, financial processes, space needs?)

6. Did anyone from your departmental leadership reach out to you over the first 2 weeks of

    employment? If so, who?

7. When you started your position, did you revisit any commitments that were made during

    your recruitment? How comfortable were you in doing so?

    a. If there were any commitments, have they all been honored?

8. What activities (social or otherwise), if any, did your school/department host to introduce

    you to other faculty with whom you would be working?

9. During your <u>recruitment</u>, what efforts, if any, were made to introduce you to faculty with whom you shared a similar background (e.g., e-mail introductions)?

10. During your <u>onboarding</u>, what efforts, if any, were made to introduce you to faculty with whom you shared a similar background (e.g., coffee meetings, etc.)

11. In what ways, if any, have you been made to feel welcome and included in your department or division?

12. What efforts were made by your department to connect you to the broader community?

13. In what ways, if any, have microaggressions, racism, or discriminatory behavior shown up <u>in your department</u>?

14. In what ways, if any, have microaggressions, racism, or discriminatory behavior shown up <u>on campus</u>?

15. What was done well during your <u>transition</u> (the time between accepting the offer and beginning the job)?

16. What was done well during your <u>onboarding</u>?

17. What was done poorly during your transition?

    a. What would have made you feel more welcome?

18. What was done poorly during your onboarding?

19. If you were designing a cluster hire program, what would it look like?

20. What do departments and schools need to <u>know</u> and <u>do</u> to help minoritized faculty feel welcome?

21. What can the Cluster initiative do to improve/ensure appropriate onboarding and inclusion for minoritized faculty?

22. Are there any additional questions that I should have asked you that I did not?"

**Appendix F Pre-Tool Onboarding Interview Protocol**

**Baker, DiPero (2019) – Pre-Tool Onboarding Interview Protocol**

Questions Asked of Recently Hired Faculty Members Prior to Implementation of an Onboarding

Tool in a School of Pharmacy

Who is your department chair?

How soon before your start date did you begin receiving onboarding emails/documents from the

school of pharmacy (eg, registration forms, instructions for first day, etc.)?

When did you receive your VCU HR packet (eg, before/after your start date)?

Did you receive any emails from your department chair or a representative prior to your start date?

Who facilitated your onboarding process?

How would you describe your first day?

Were the following activities conducted on or before Day 1 of your employment?

Parking permit obtained

Tour of the school/health system

Access to VCU system granted

Shown to desk/office

Provided necessary equipment (eg, laptop, laboratory equipment, etc.)

Introduced to other faculty members you would be working with

Any social activities

Overview of school policies, job expectations, etc.

How long was your onboarding process? Do you feel your onboarding process was long enough

or could it have been shorter?

Did anyone reach out to you to schedule meetings with you over the first 2 weeks of employment? Who were they?

Is there anything you wish you would have been exposed to or trained on that you felt was overlooked or there was no time for?

What did you enjoy or receive the most benefit from with the current onboarding process?

What were your social interactions over the first 3 months? Did people reach out to you? Were there any functions organized so you could get to know your peers?

Have you experienced any beneficial onboarding activities at other institutions that you feel VCU should consider?

Do you have any additional comments?

**Appendix G : Representative Quotes by Area**

**Area 1: Recruitment and Transition**

**1.1 Recruitment**

P5: So, they were trying to fill in the position quickly. I was busy trying to wrap up a job within, you know, a very short time, and moving… it was a one-month turnaround after the holidays… So it wasn't the easiest transition, and even, one, talking about recruitment to signing. It was a very fast process…

P7: …I started in July, and then I probably was here physically, full time in September. In general, I heard about (the Cluster) probably a few years even before being approached about a recruitment opportunity. …I remember seeing some kind of more national press about the things that were happening in the School of Medicine and Pittsburgh… I was either sent a link to the website or given a brochure. I'm pretty sure I was given that by (one of the Health Sciences Cluster co-chairs).

**1.2 Transition**

P7: …I think they did a really nice job of checking in, making sure I knew what I needed to do or to make - help me with arrangements … (The person who recruited me) absolutely checked in probably multiple times during that experience, just to see what he could do to help and make sure I felt welcomed, for sure.

P11: I think the constant communication was really helpful… and everyone just kind of being willing to answer all of my questions (and) direct me to people when they

didn't know. So like if it was a question for HR, they would make sure I had the email for HR. It wasn't just 'call HR or email, HR', right? I think that was probably the best and just offering like, hey, these are things that you should potentially consider doing as a new faculty as you onboard, or as you start.

**Area 2. Orientation and Onboarding**

**2.1 Orientation**

P1: But I will say it wasn't necessarily (an) orientation…it just seems disorganized, I think, from an institutional standpoint…I also now understand why: people have their own little silos and their own little bubbles that they live in…

**2.2 Onboarding**

P5: It was a great onboarding…from the department as a whole it … felt like they thought about me. And even with onboarding with clinic, I had a schedule, like everything was given to me in advance...It made that first 2 weeks with the move and everything easier to know exactly where I needed to be, and how the process would go... It was a lot more organized, and it felt like people were prepared to have me at that time..

P3 …If the (Cluster) initiative could just communicate to the schools to make sure that there is some sort of training period or, or onboarding process before faculty are expected to just start the role. I just feel like that would be more efficient than making everyone figure it out themselves when we're figuring out the same things.

**2.2.1 Dual Appointment Factors**

P10: … When I started, my department, of course, heavily oriented me to the (health system) side. So, my first day was literally like, Let's get your badge. This is your office.

Let's get you a login. More of the procedural…I don't think I really learned about the Pitt side of my appointment probably until that Race @ Work (retreat). That's like, almost seven months later.

P2: How does (sic) Pitt and (the health system) fit in? ..Is (chair) my boss for Pitt? Clinical? for everything? I don't know... When I go into the IRB website, am I (academic) or am I (clinical)?...(S)illy stuff to some degree, but like, kind of basic stuff that matters.

**Area 3: Communication**

**3.1 Cluster Details**

Participant 9: …I initially received the loan repayment information from (redacted), our manager of our department. And that was just about like the amounts. And then, in terms of specifics of the program, I received information that is a part of the program, an invitation to the Race &… lecture series, probably in August of 2021. In terms of the academic benefits, I did not receive that information in terms of academic support until April 2022, when I contacted you (the interviewer) about finding funding for a (sic) undergrad, medical student, undergrad student to work with me for the summer…It's very vague.

P10: As part of my department's offer, loan repayment was mentioned, but not, not the funds that later I learned were startup funds, essentially… So that piece I wish had been made clear earlier...I definitely feel like it falls on my department, though, because they knew about the funds. Yeah. Buffering my salary with it...But from a startup perspective, I think as a researcher, I could have come in and requested certain things earlier…Fortunately, those funds rolled over. So, I didn't lose access to them. Yeah. And

I'm kind of banking them for some bigger purchases. Like if I get a K (NIH career development award), I can use them for a research assistant, like, buy back some time…So, once I learned what they could be used for that was very helpful, too, because it sounds like, in a sense, as long as I can demonstrate how it supports my well-being, retention and growth here, I have access to it.

P2: …I think it's one thing to put mentors on paper; I would think there needs to be some way of checking in with the mentors to make sure that the meetings were attended. And (those) meetings are documented…I didn't even know who my mentor was, for that matter. 'Cause no one told me, right? Like, I have no idea.

P8: …I applied to be a CEED (Career Education and Enhancement for Health Care Research Diversity Program) scholar, reached out to (dean) and met with (faculty affairs dean). And the guidance was, you know, you need a research mentorship plan, which I didn't know was a thing. I didn't even know I had a research mentorship plan…I've never seen it...I heard that there's one written in order for me to have come here... But I don't - I've never seen it. So, I don't know what was written. Or who was meant to be in my research mentorship plan, but I had to create my own.

I also received a document that mentioned one other name, (redacted), who's faculty. And at least he was described as, like, kind of helping me understand, like, more the department structure, I think, within both systems, but he and I never met (and) we've yet to meet. Although I know communication goes both ways. But he did not reach out to me. So, and honestly, it fell off my radar too. Yeah. I will say too, I don't think they were intentionally part of it. But because I was part of their grant…two of our research faculty, I spent quite a bit of time with them early on, okay, but I will say that was more study

specific. So even learning about the research infrastructure? Yeah, that piece - until Race@Work - still a mystery.

**Area 4: Community**

P1: So that authentic, like, you know, balls-to-the-wall culture is sort of what I was used to, and I loved it. I love people who don't hold back. They're just direct. And then suddenly, I'm in (department), and everyone is so friendly. They want to know about my wellness, you know. I mean, people scheduled meetings literally just to know how my family was adapting. And I was like, are we not going to talk about research? But they didn't care. So that was really, really nice to be introduced to, like you matter first. You come first; you know.

Participant 7:...I know, there was someone who did a try to do some kind of a, you know, "strangers for dinner" kind of thing. (And) they did some kind of social events to try to bring random people from across the department to come together. So, I think there were more attempts in the last, say, six to nine months or so to try to do that. But, but, but nothing concerted at first, when I first got here at all… I am constantly being recruited someplace else...unlike others, I don't have roots here... I didn't feel connected to the department, to the school, (or) any of that. I'm just off into this space. So pretty much from about late September, October-ish, until maybe about three weeks ago, I'm still within that space of, I'm out of here.

P5: I wouldn't say there's (sic) any efforts. I have had certain faculty members take their time to come and say, hi to me. One in particular (redacted) is sweet and came to me the first week and knocked on my door, and, you know, told me about Pittsburgh and the art (and) culture, and all of this…I would say he's been a very kind person to do that. And

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then just various colleagues in, we're in this (niche) kind of field. So, the different players in that department, the faculty members are nice and kind of talk about different locations of Pittsburgh and in between work. So again, no formal process, more of me going out or someone else taking the time to do it on their own.

P2 …I did not feel like Pitt faculty when I came. I felt like I was UPMC faculty who (taught) med students. I (had) started teaching more in the last like year and a half, two years. …I could have seen it (the orientation invitation) and (been) like, 'well, I'm not really faculty'. Like this is for like, English professors. (No one said) yes, you are in this sort of weird space in this medical space, but …the things that say Pitt faculty are not just for the English professors, like it is actually applicable.

P2: I probably would try to maybe have something that was like, these are your people. And here, we're going to put some infrastructure to facilitate your continued connection and community building. And I think it's why I loved Race@Work so much when I was like, this feels like what I want, to be in this space with these people, share openly, learn from them.

P6: Okay. So, for me, this is probably sad to say, but outside of the Race &… and Race@ initiatives, or outside of being with other African Americans, I try to stay off campus, so I can create a sense of psychological safety for myself…And so when… I am on campus, it is usually for the initiatives that are given by… the Race@ -  the cluster cohort  - along with the Race &… series, or (it's) with other individuals that I have a sense of safety with, who are normally African American individuals. So, if it's not those events,

unless I have to attend to show (a) presence, yeah, I'm not attending, okay? Because I have to create some space and safety for myself.

P5: During my recruitment I was introduced to the only other minority, Black professors or faculty. So (the diversity dean), one of them, being part of my recruitment and also introduction, and then another member of the cluster, the first cluster hire (Black woman colleague) who's in the (redacted) department as well. So, I met with her a few times to kind of…and that was on my own time, reaching out to her and E-virtually meeting her and talking about her experience which was really instrumental to me deciding to come back to campus…

P10: That's a fair question. I mean, I was pleasantly surprised. So that was exciting. Part of me says, No, just because then it's that assumption of, Oh, here's another black person. Yeah, of course, you too, will get along. But part of me is like, well, if I had had that expectation, I don't know how I could have approached it differently. Yeah. But maybe I would have been more offended by the assumption that like, you guys should get along.

P10: (There was) nothing like, relevant to well-being. Granted, I probably could have asked, but to be fair, yeah, things like churches, a hair salon…I had to find those on my own. Because even on the medical side, like, we step outside of faculty, there were some staff, but not a lot that I could reach out to and talk with, right? Yeah. And they were usually on other units. So, I would either have to go out of my way to find them. Or it was like, we'd just catch each other in passing in the cafeteria… And they'd be like, how are you doing? Do you need anything? So, they were very, like willing to offer but it was the chance of seeing them? Yeah, that made that struggle…

P2: ...different people are more comfortable, or different levels of comfortable, with like actually like pointing out your BIPOC-ness...I guess it depends somewhat on the person and how much/how big of a deal you want to make about their minoritized status. But really, don't give them any less than other people.

**Area 5: Self Advocacy**

P6: The details of the program for me were clear because I did my own research. And I did my own research to get an understanding of the program. And if information wasn't clear, I asked questions to get clarity…I actually reached out to the, I believe it was the HR office, just -look - could I be involved in what's the word they when you're onboarding and you have…? Orientation. Yes, I participated in the orientation so that I can get an overview of the main Pittsburgh campus; an overview of resources for faculty and staff, as well as benefits, etc.…I had previously worked to just start forming relationships with individuals because I understand the importance of having a community and professional relationships. So, I started reaching out to people…so that I could begin to have those supports in place. And to know perhaps what individuals I could reach out to for ... research collaborations so that I could hopefully get a jump on my research.

Participant 1: One thing I realize (is) that I'm very persistent, you know, and I really advocate for myself, really well. And so, I don't think that I really knew that I just knew that some things needed to be corrected. I'm gonna be 100. Honest. Okay. I exist as (myself), right? And if you want to call me an ABW (Angry Black Woman), that's up to you. You are wrong, or you have offended me. And, therefore, I am responding the way that I am... I will have a very polite conversation with you. And a very, you know, logical intellectual conversation with you about why XY and Z happened and then you can take it

where you would like. But I will say that again. That's one of the reasons why I wouldn't recommend anyone who's new, right? Because there's a skill set (in which) we are not trained. That is not part of your training. It's like acquired. And it's almost like you have to have these role-playing - these extreme role-playing experiences - to know how to react. If there was a new faculty who was thinking about joining. I would tell them, no, don't do it because I needed to come in with experience because it became protective, right? I could rely on that. Oh, I've been.. I've had this experience before, so I know what to do. But if you were fresh from post doc-ing … you would quit in the water. There was no way. There's no way.

P9: I met a lot of people because I was just squeaky, which is good. Yeah. And I have the ability to be squeaky because, I mean, had I come here as a brand-new attending? It would have been disaster. Oh, I had three years of practice before I came here.

**Area 6: Microaggression and Bias**

**6.1 Microaggressions and bias**

P5: There's (sic) been instances, especially in the first bit. The good thing is, I'm not too early in my career any more to not speak up for myself. And so, I have addressed it with my (colleague) in general. But just telling her "this is not how you're gonna talk to me" and now this feels like it's becoming a microaggression and something that, I can't stay in this environment if this, how it's gonna go, she apologized. So, I definitely think it'd be a lot harder if I was if I was early in my career. So, there's that aspect in just little things, right? So even being here after a year and still getting like, 'Oh, are you a student?", or, you know, kind of feeling like, what are you doing here? Yeah, there, that's definitely gonna

be part of it. And it's not great. It doesn't feel great. Would I say, outward discrimination has happened. No, nothing, nothing that has been blatant, or from places that are clear, biases. A lot of it is unconscious bias and in microaggressions that they are not aware of, so at least the time that I have addressed it where it was interfering with my well-being. It was addressed, and you know, an apology was made.

P9: (A departmental leader) (said) I was an affirmative action hire holding the department hostage. Said that to somebody else. Said point blank to me that I was an affirmative action hire. And then the current (an administrative leader) also said I was an affirmative action hire. And I said to them, which one of you all went to (Ivy league schools) - twice? Right. Since that meeting about (a) corrective action plan, a plan to keep me safe, there's - no one ever got back to me about it.  It's one thing to say we support these things. But if they don't have the policies in place to deal with disruptive behavior, (then) yeah, that is kind of nothing.

P9: ...when I was making my contract, I asked for a signing bonus, because I got a lawyer to negotiate my contract. And I got feedback indirectly that that was, I was thought to be a little bit of a diva or uppity for asking for that. I got it. But that was indirect feedback that was given to me…came from a (colleague) in a community practice who is affiliated with UPMC. He was a practice president so he's aware of how, okay, the financial exists. He gave me feedback from (sic) family friend. I got feedback that it was perceived as uppity by asking for it.

P7: ...still I've been in rooms and spaces where people haven't assumed that I was in a senior leadership role, despite the fact that I was in rooms with senior leaders. I think that has come up quite a bit, or people have been surprised when I open my mouth and

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have conversations that I have a knowledge base and that, you know, that I'm actually qualified for the jobs that I have taken on. I think that I get that sense a lot. It was like, oh, wow! you know. Oh, and I, even recently, there's a kind of circumstance I was part of. And I keep hearing from other people that somebody has remarked, oh, my goodness, you know, I didn't know this or that. And there was nothing remarkable (about) anything I said or did in that meeting, I just think that I stood out because I was not the same demographic of other people in the room. And I think they were just really surprised by not having seen someone that looks like me to have the strong, confident position that I had… They didn't say it to my face. Because that I would have called that out, but they might have said that to somebody else, though.

P8: Well, I have microaggressions for days. Comments from one leader here… (I won't say who…) …you know that I was a diversity hire. Comments like that - I was viewed as a diversity hire. …It has shown up in my course evaluations, it has shown up in my teaching, it has shown up in one-on-one meetings with leadership. You know, there's a general consensus that I was never going to make it. Colleagues liked me as a person, but were not... So, the former (senior research administrator) never helped me. And that was their role. Never helped me; if anything rubbed into my face that I didn't have enough pubs, rubbed it in my face that I didn't have, you know, the chops for grants and just didn't…and he was the type person if he doesn't believe in you, he's not going to help you. So, he never helped me.


## 6.2 Stigma and Tokenism

P3: But if there's some way to like, make it known that it's part of an initiative to make sure that we are being hired and being put into places where we deserve to be without

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making it also seem like that is just to meet some quota that would be perfect, the perfect mix. But I wouldn't say otherwise. I wouldn't say there's anything else that should or could be done any differently than the way that our counterparts are treated when they accept roles, because when they accept roles, they're just welcomed, because that's what you do. And so that's what I would appreciate, too, being welcome, because that's what you do when someone is new and they're and they're on faculty, and in every sense of the word.

P3: …I wouldn't call it the cluster hire because, like, there's a stigma around the notion of diversity hire even when it's a positive thing even when it's highly qualified candidates that deserve to be in their roles. I feel like there's just this negative stigma that automatically makes you feel like you've been hired because of the color and not because of your achievements.

P1: Well. I think there's a fine line between tokenism and welcoming right? So, I think that may be like a line that they, they have to straddle very, very carefully, and maybe some of them don't do it because they're afraid of tokenizing the person, or they do amazing like, 'Oh, you're giving her such an elaborate welcome. What about the others?' I think that it boils down to simply respecting the fact that someone new is joining an institution.

P11: …also, you know, not attaching the cluster hire as their only attribute, or the only reason they got hired, because I know, like, for some folks, you know, their leadership is like, 'oh, these are our cluster hire people. This is how we're supporting diversity.' But then it really does become like a diversity hire conversation, and that changes the relationship that you have in the department with the people that you engage with and that can be very challenging, especially if you're someone who's doing research and things like, not necessarily for my purposes, but in conversations with like (cluster colleague) and

folks, it's like I don't want the (redacted) stigma. Yeah, to say, like, Oh, these are diversity…our cluster hires. So, everyone's like, oh, that's the only reason you're here. Like, I've done a lot of labor, a lot of work to get here, a lot of hard work to get here. So, to minimize that and just, you know, acknowledge that they are a hire, that you all could not potentially hire on your own without additional support, is probably a better, a better framing. How else are you going to recruit people from diverse backgrounds into this department? And maybe it's a lot more challenging for y'all than it has been in the past. And why is that?

## 6.3: The Diversity Tax

P9: I think I remember the thing that was really noticeable was, I was partly within, like six weeks of my start date, I was approached by my division chief and one of our department administrators to say "we need to know what you're going to do for health equity". And I was like, what do you perceive as a problem with health equity in (field of care) in Pittsburgh? We don't know just write something. We want you to tell us what you're going to do.... And I was like, well, do you guys think there's a problem? Are you guys concerned about access? You guys concerned about outcomes? Tell me what you think, 'Oh, we don't know.' And so but then I said, tell me what this proposal is on so that it's like, a little bit intimidating for me to show up and they say we need to fix health equity for (field of care) for this city. So okay, I'm not like, really fresh, yeah, but like... Not like fix it but like, we want you to tell us what you're gonna do. And I was like, well, what type of money is available to do it? Like do you guys want me to do research, you want me to do advocacy, you want me to do quality? Yeah, but the fact that I was told you need to do this and I'm like, well, (to) what ends?

P8: I moved here August 2, and August 15 I find out I'm teaching a Statistics

II course. I don't have the textbook for it. I ordered it, it comes in on August 31, or

30th, whatever the last day of August is, and then September 1 was the (first) class. So, I

was set up to fail from the start. And I went to (former chair) I said, I should have never

been asked to teach this class. I said, I didn't want to teach this class. I'm still trying to teach

it. I'm not teaching it anymore. You need to find somebody else to teach it. I'm not teaching

it so my course evaluations will come back and bite me in the butt later. And I don't want

this happening to me again.

**Area 7: Outside Stressors**

Participant 3: I would say I walked into chaos. But maybe it was because of the

pandemic and the unique situation. I don't think that was typical. But any other given here

like, had I walked in on January 3, 2022, maybe that would have been a little less chaotic.

Participant 1: I started during COVID. So, when I came there was like one person there...I had met

when I interviewed. So, it was like isolated, right? Not isolated, but like, desolate.

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