



# ADVANCE BU

Advancing and Maintaining Equity

November 2023

Monthly Newsletter

## Now More than Ever, Equity Work is Crucial

Amidst Bradley's current fiscal challenges, it is understandably difficult to focus on issues of equity and diversity. Indeed, when organizations experience deep structural cuts, diversity and equity efforts are frequently among the casualties. Funding is often reduced, initiatives are put on the back burner, and employees from underrepresented groups (who are more likely to have been recently hired), are often let go due to lack of seniority. Such outcomes reflect the reality that many organizations view diversity and equity work as a lower-tier priority, something to pursue in times of plenty, but not central to the institution's mission or to its bottom-line. But this is indisputably not the case for institutions of higher learning. Countless studies have demonstrated that a more diverse faculty has both a positive educational impact on *all* students, and a positive impact on the university's balance sheet through improved student recruitment and retention. As social psychologist Daryl G. Smith notes, "Several decades ago, as technological shifts began, campuses all across the country understood that their viability as institutions would rest on building capacity for technology, and indeed understood that without continuing development in technology, the institutions could not be excellent... We're now at a time when we must understand that diversity, like technology, is central to higher education..." (2020: viii). Colleges and universities that prioritize diversity and equity are stronger and more resilient in the face of changes in the higher education market, while institutions that undervalue diversity and equity do so at their own peril. Bradley's strategic plan prioritizes a "welcoming, caring, diverse and inclusive" environment; and as our campus navigates these difficult times, ADVANCE BU will do everything we can to help realize that vision. We invite you to join us.

Source:

D.G. Smith (2020) *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making It Work*, Third Edn. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD.

### Make Your Voice Heard on Important Equity Issues

If you're not able to attend one of our events, check out the ADVANCE BU discussion board. Visit our [events](#) page to see discussion boards and supporting documents from past events. Only faculty and staff have access to the discussion boards and comments are posted without names to protect confidentiality. Let's keep the conversation going!

### Upcoming Events

#### Advocates and Allies training sessions | Jan 24–25

Well-researched and well-tested, skills-based workshops, offered by a team from North Dakota State University, will help us effectively detect and respond to bias. All faculty are invited with multiple time slots available.

**Watch for announcements of our Spring 2024 events, and don't miss our session at the Spring Forum.**



## **ADVANCE BU Spotlight: Dr. Kerrie Schattler Wins Putnam Award**

In the wake of recent announcements about proposed program discontinuations and faculty cuts, we have been touched to hear so many students and alumni speaking out about the Bradley professors who changed their lives, not only by teaching them, but by inspiring them, mentoring them, and helping them find their life path. This month we want to acknowledge one such professor, Dr. Kerrie Schattler, 2023 recipient of the Charles M. Putnam Award for Excellence in Teaching. Since joining the Department of Civil Engineering and Construction in 2005, Dr. Schattler has engaged countless students in high quality research, resulting in the publication of 13 articles with 27 Bradley student co-authors. She has mentored more than 2,200 students in real-world design projects that challenge them to put what they learn into practice. With nearly \$2 million in external grants, she has also funded almost 100 students on their journey to an Engineering degree. As Graduate Coordinator, she has worked particularly

closely with international students. "This work is important to me because I strive to make a difference and impact on their experience while at BU. They are traveling very far from home and from their families, and it is critical that they feel welcomed and a part of our Bradley community." Not only is Dr. Schattler a dedicated mentor and award-winning teacher, but she is also a nationally recognized expert in her field. "The impact of her work in the field of transportation engineering has been truly transformative," notes Dr. Krishnanand Maillacheruvu, Interim Dean of the Caterpillar College of Engineering and Technology. By supporting improvements to federal transportation policy, highway design, traffic signal practices, urban traffic management, and pavement quality, Dr. Schattler's research saves lives on our roads every day by reducing motor vehicle accidents. In addition to being an exemplary teacher-scholar, she is also the first woman to chair Bradley's Department of Civil Engineering and Construction. When she first joined Bradley, she was one of very few women professors in her college. Now women make up 38% of faculty in her department, and the number of female engineering students has grown as well, which she attributes to the increase of women leaders and role models in both industry and academia. As a leader in Bradley's College of Engineering, Dr. Schattler is leading the way to greater equity in STEM.

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### **Equity Quick Takes: *Be Aware of Bias in T&P Deliberations***

It's that time of year again. Tenure and Promotion binders have been submitted and review committees are convening to discuss the merits of each application. To ensure that all candidates receive fair and equal consideration, it is important to be aware of (often subtle) biases that impact outcomes. Growing numbers of studies find patterns of bias in letters written about women and minoritized faculty. For instance, letters for women are shorter on average and are more likely to emphasize their work ethic and teamwork rather than the quality of their scholarship or their leadership roles. Letters for minoritized faculty are longer on average, but more often emphasize their DEI contributions rather than their scholarship. Such practices can (largely unconsciously) affect T&P deliberations, leading to more "split votes," and more negative decisions for women and minoritized candidates. Even seemingly "objective" measures such as student course evaluations and h-index scores have been shown to reflect gender and racial biases. Moreover, data shows that teaching evaluations are not reliable measures of teaching effectiveness and h-index scores are not a predictor of long-term research productivity. To minimize such biases, be aware of things such as gender-coded language commonly seen in review letters, and reflect on how it might shape your perceptions of the candidate's merits.

## Men

## Women

<i>stand-out, brilliant, a star</i>	←	Exceptional Abilities vs Efforts	→	<i>hard-working, meticulous, reliable</i>
<i>leading, directing, founding, driving</i>	←	Leadership vs. Relationships	→	<i>collaborating, organizing, coordinating, team-player</i>
<i>well-developed, respected, robust, ground-breaking</i>	←	Research Mature vs. Immature	→	<i>promising, developing, novel, intriguing, junior</i>
<i>guide, push, inspire, direct, lead (actions)</i>	←	Directing vs. Caring (in Teaching & Mentorship)	→	<i>care, nurture, assist, support, compassionate (emotions)</i>
<i>Dr. Smith, Professor Smith</i>	←	Terms of Address	→	<i>Ms. Smith, Susan</i>

### Sources:

- Chávez, K., and Mitchell, K. M. W. (2020). Exploring bias in student evaluations: Gender, race, and ethnicity *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 53(2), 270–274.
- Madera, JM, Hebl, MR, & Martin, RC. (2009) Gender and letters of Recommendation for Academia: Agentive and Communal Differences. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 2009
- Roper, R.L. (2022) The *H-Index* in Medicine and Science: Does It Favor *H-im* or *H-er*? Successes and Hurdles for Women Faculty. *Dig Dis Sci* 67, 388–389.
- Spitzmueller, C., Madera, J., Henderson, E., Penn-Marshall, M., Lindner, P., Edema-Sillo, E., Gutierrez, A., & Gu, W. (2023). External review letters in promotion and tenure decision making: Validity and fairness. Project report Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Sloan G-2021–16750. University of Houston.

### Higher Ed Equity In the News:



- [New Report Finds Disparities for Black STEM PhDs \( Inside Higher Ed\)](#)

- [Workplace Climate Pushing Women Out of Professoriate \( Inside Higher Ed\)](#)

- [Promotion Rejected? Your Record May Not Be the Problem \( The Chronicle of Higher Education\)](#)

- [Adjunct Professors Struggle to Make Ends Meet \( The Chronicle of Higher Education\)](#)



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