



Representation and Pay Equity in Higher Education Faculty: A Review and Call to Action

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Introduction

Higher education leaders understand, and most are committed to, promoting equitable work opportunities and pay for all employees, cultivating inclusive learning and working communities, and building a higher ed workforce that reflects the community it serves. The call for a faculty that better represents the student population isn't always matched by action, highlighting the need for a deeper look at opportunities to enhance our efforts.¹ This challenge has historically been exacerbated by a dearth of up-to-date, comprehensive data on faculty demographics and compensation disparities. There are a limited number of sources that collect faculty salary data at scale, and these sources are limited in that: 1) they are not current; 2) they do not collect data by discipline, tenure status, and/or rank; or 3) they do not collect data by gender and/or race/ethnicity.²

This report uses CUPA-HR data to assess the current state of representation and pay equity for women and racial/ethnic minorities across tenure status, rank, discipline, and the total operating expenses of higher ed institutions. The report highlights areas of progress and stagnation, noting trends over the time period of 2016-17 to 2022-23. These findings are particularly salient for higher ed human resources and diversity professionals, offering them the information they need to understand and benchmark representation and pay equity gaps within their own institutions.

Data Analyzed for This Report

This report draws on the comprehensive data sourced from the *CUPA-HR Faculty in Higher Education Survey*, which has historically collected data on faculty salaries by discipline since its inception in 1981-82.³ Data are collected annually on full-time tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty positions.⁴ The collection of these variables has provided the

¹ Lewis, N.A. (2022). What universities say versus do about diversity, equity and inclusion. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6, 610. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01339-1>

² These sources include the [Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System](#) (IPEDS) and the [American Association of University Professors](#) (AAUP).

³ CUPA-HR. (2024). *Faculty in Higher Education Survey, 2016-17 to 2022-23*. Data are reported by higher ed professionals from departments of human resources, institutional research, and the provost's office.

⁴ Tenure-track faculty include both tenured faculty and those on the tenure track. Non-tenure-track faculty refer to full-time contract faculty whose primary responsibility is instruction. Additional information is available in the [Faculty in Higher Education Survey Methodology](#).

opportunity to conduct intersectional analyses on the representation and pay equity of women and faculty of color by discipline over the past seven years.⁵

This report begins with an analysis of tenure-track (TT) faculty and proceeds to explore findings related to non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty. The first section is an investigation of trends in representation and pay equity by gender and race/ethnicity among TT faculty spanning the previous seven years (from 2016-17 to 2022-23). The report will then cover the 2022-23 composition and pay equity for TT faculty, broken down by gender and race/ethnicity across academic discipline and institutional expenses. The second half of this report will then present these analyses specific to NTT faculty. In conclusion, we will provide the key takeaways from the data and offer recommendations for higher ed leadership.

Tenure-Track Faculty

Tenure-track faculty comprise the majority of faculty when compared to non-tenure-track faculty; however, the proportion of TT to NTT faculty has decreased over time. In the 2016-17 academic year, TT faculty constituted nearly three-fourths (73%) of faculty, with NTT faculty accounting for the remaining 27% (Figure 1). Since then, the proportion of TT faculty has decreased to two-thirds (66%), with NTT faculty comprising one-third (34%) of faculty in 2022-23.⁶ Mirroring this shift, the composition of new faculty hires has changed, with TT new assistant professor appointments decreasing from 64% in 2016-17 to 61% in 2022-23. Conversely, NTT new hires increased during this period, from 36% to 39%. Particularly notable is the change following the COVID-19 pandemic, where — during a period of reduced new faculty hires — the proportion of TT new assistant professor appointments decreased from 68% in 2020-21 to 59% in 2021-22, with a pronounced shift toward more NTT new hires (Figure 1).⁷

⁵ CUPA-HR has been collecting gender and race/ethnicity data on all higher ed workforce incumbents since 2016-17. Although an option for “nonbinary” appears in our surveys, there are not yet enough nonbinary incumbents reported to allow for meaningful comparisons. Therefore, only comparisons between men and women are provided in this report. Race/ethnicity is reported as Asian, Black, Hispanic or Latina/o, Native American or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, or two or more races. “Faculty of color” refers to all race/ethnicity designations other than White.

⁶ Data for Figure 1 reflect full-time faculty reported on the *CUPA-HR Faculty in Higher Education Survey* with “All Faculty” sample sizes as follows: 2016-17, $N = 223,485$; 2017-18, $N = 220,699$; 2018-19, $N = 240,782$; 2019-20, $N = 253,665$; 2020-21, $N = 243,234$; 2021-22, $N = 250,604$; 2022-23, $N = 251,752$.

⁷ Sample sizes for “New Faculty Hires” are as follows: 2016-17, $n = 8,405$; 2017-18, $n = 7,902$; 2018-19, $n = 8,589$; 2019-20, $n = 8,128$; 2020-21, $n = 6,239$; 2021-22, $n = 6,998$; 2022-23, $n = 8,419$.

2016-17 to 2022-23 Faculty in Higher Education Survey
Proportion of Faculty by Tenure Status

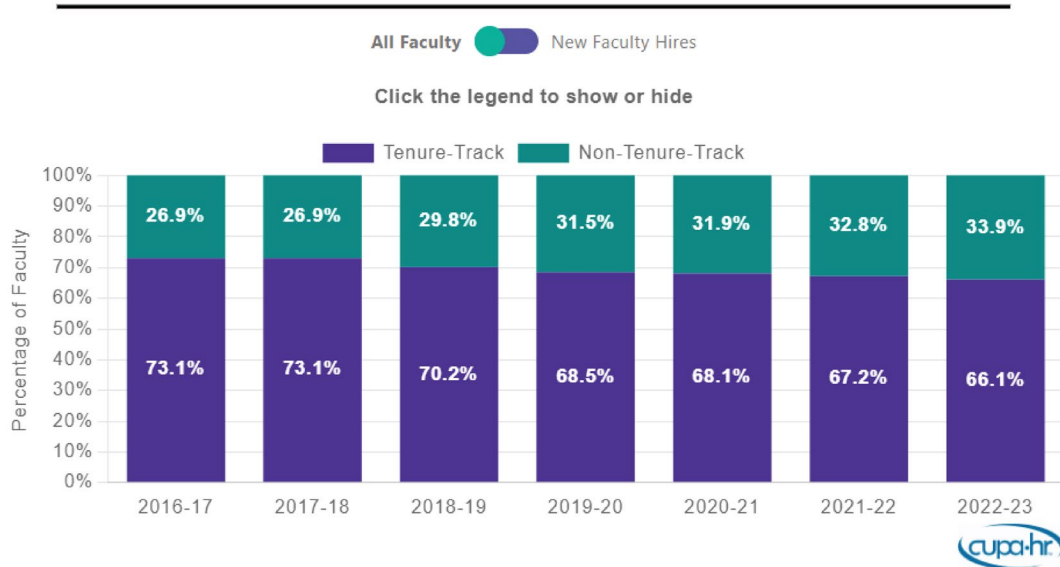


Figure 1. Proportion of Faculty by Tenure Status⁸

The Representation of Women and Faculty of Color in Tenure-Track Faculty Has Increased Over the Past Seven Years

Figure 2 shows the changes in the representation of women and racial/ethnic minorities in TT faculty over the past seven years. In 2022-23, more than one-fourth (26%) of TT faculty were people of color. This marks a 28% increase over the span of seven years, compared to 2016-17, when faculty of color constituted closer to one-fifth (21%) of all TT faculty. Notably, the growth among faculty of color predominantly came from Asian and Hispanic or Latina/o faculty, whereas there was a more modest increase in Black faculty over the seven-year period.

Between 2016-17 and 2022-23, faculty of color had the most substantial increase at the assistant professor rank. The representation of faculty of color at the assistant professor rank rose by 42% over these seven years, followed by professors (28% increase) and associate professors (17% increase). These representational gains occurred incrementally over time.

⁸ If reading the pdf version of this report, graphs are not interactive. Ensure you’re reading the [online version](#) of this report to enable interactive graphics.

[<https://www.cupahr.org/surveys/research-briefs/representation-and-pay-equity-in-higher-ed-faculty-trends-april-2024/>]

The representation of women also increased from 2016-17 to 2022-23. The representation of women among TT faculty showed a moderate 7% increase over seven years (Figure 2). This increase was driven by an increase in women of color, whose representation increased by 36%. In contrast, White women’s representation decreased 3% over the seven years depicted.

The representation of women of color has increased at a higher rate over the years compared to men of color, particularly within the rank of full professor. Figure 2 shows that the percentage increase in representation of female professors of color more than doubled from 2016-17 to 2022-23 compared to male professors of color (36% increase for women versus 15% increase for men). Further, the representation of Asian women at the rank of professor increased by a remarkable 74% from 2016-17 to 2022-23, and the representation of female Hispanic/Latina professors increased by 73% — both substantially surpassing the increases observed for their Asian male (21%) and Hispanic/Latino (25%) counterparts.

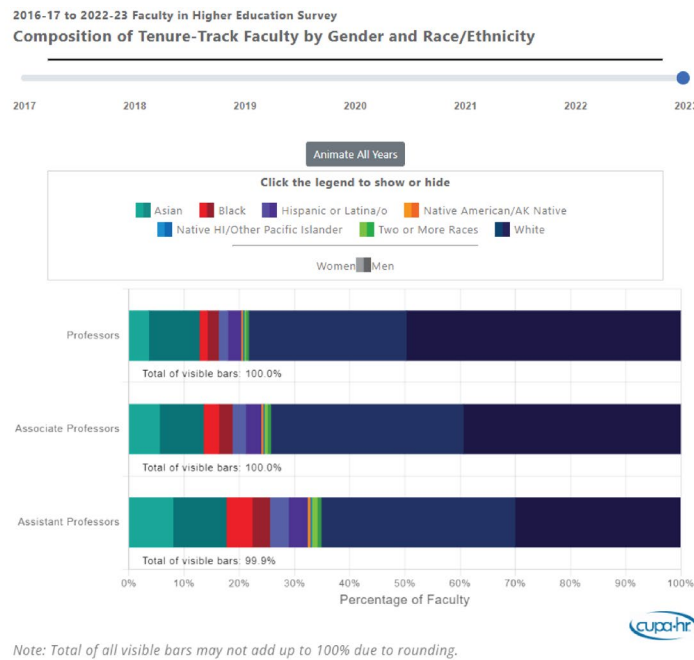


Figure 2. Composition of Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Composition of Tenure-Track Faculty Compared to U.S. Doctoral Degree Holders

One method for assessing whether women and faculty of color are sufficiently represented involves comparing the composition of TT faculty with that of individuals in the U.S. holding doctoral degrees. This comparison offers a baseline understanding of whether certain groups are over- or underrepresented relative to those possessing the advanced qualifications typically required for TT faculty roles in higher education.

In 2022-23, TT faculty of color were less represented compared to U.S. doctoral degree recipients of color, making up 26% of TT faculty versus 32% of doctoral degree holders.⁹ However, women within TT faculty positions in 2022-23 were on par with female doctoral degree holders, each group constituting 44% of their respective populations.

This picture shifts a bit when examining assistant professors. Assistant professors of color (35%) and female assistant professors (52%) are both overrepresented in comparison to U.S. doctoral degree recipients (32% and 44% respectively). This reveals a nuanced picture: Although women and faculty of color are adequately represented at the assistant professor level in comparison to the pool of doctoral degree holders, they are underrepresented among TT faculty overall. This points to significant disparities across academic ranks. The following section explores these disparities.

Disparities for Women and Faculty of Color Persist at Senior Tenure-Track Faculty Ranks

Despite the overall increases in representation for women and faculty of color over time, representation varies by faculty rank. Figure 2 shows that as rank increases from assistant to associate to full professor, the proportions of faculty of color and women decrease. In 2022-23, 35% of assistant professors were faculty of color, and 53% were women. At the next rank of associate professor, which is generally the first promotion faculty receive along with tenure, the representation of faculty of color reduces to 26%, and the representation of women reduces to 47%. At the highest rank of full professor, people of color represent only 22% and women represent only 36% of faculty. This finding of diminished representation with each increase in faculty rank is observed in each of the past seven years.

For faculty of color, the representational gap between associate and full professor has remained relatively constant over the past seven years; however, the gap has steadily widened from assistant professor to associate professor. In 2016-17, there was a 3-percentage point gap for faculty of color's representation when comparing assistant professors (25%) to associate professors (22%), and we see this grow to a 9-percentage

⁹ Flood, S., King, M., Rodgers, R., Ruggles, S., Warren, J. R., & Westbery, M. (2022). [Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 10.0](#) [Data set].

point gap in 2022-23 (35% assistant to 26% associate). The widening gap in the representation of faculty of color from assistant to associate professor over the past seven years indicates a significant attrition of faculty of color during a critical period for securing tenure.

When examining women's representation gaps by rank, the opposite is true. The gap between the two lowest ranks, assistant to associate professor, has narrowed over time, yet the representational gap between associate to full professor has not greatly changed. In 2016-17, there was a 14-percentage point gap for women's representation when comparing associate professors (45%) to professors (31%) and we see this narrow to an 11-percentage point gap in 2022-23 (47% to 36% respectively) (Figure 2).

These results show that faculty of color and women continue to be better represented in the lowest-ranking and lowest-paying positions and are underrepresented at the highest-ranking and highest-paying positions. The only group that experiences greater representation with each rank increase is White male faculty. The denial of promotion through TT faculty ranks results in more than a deprivation of status for women and faculty of color. Promotion from assistant to associate professor is often accompanied by tenure, which provides a certain amount of job security. Denial of this promotion generally means the faculty member must secure an academic position in another institution or drop out of academia altogether. In addition, promotions to associate professor and full professor are often the only two times that TT faculty receive substantial increases in salary.¹⁰ Therefore, promotion denials are salary increase denials. Finally, the lack of representation of women and people of color in promotions from associate to full professor results in diminished representation in the pipeline for senior leadership positions at the institution, including those of dean, provost, and president.¹¹

There Has Been Progress in Pay Equity for Tenure-Track Faculty, Except for White Women

Pay gaps for women on the tenure track persist, but the nature of these gaps has changed in the past seven years (Figure 3). In 2022-23, within ranks, women are at or near pay equity with their White male peers. The lowest paid group is White women, who are paid 97 cents on the dollar compared with White men at both the assistant and associate ranks.

White women have consistently faced the widest pay gap over the past seven years across all ranks. The most significant disparity across all data points is observed among White female full professors, who were paid \$0.92 for every \$1.00 paid to White male professors

¹⁰ [CUPA-HR Annual Workforce Data](#) show that tenure-track faculty consistently and historically receive the lowest regular pay increases of any aspect of the higher ed workforce.

¹¹ Fuesting, M., Bichsel, J., & Schmidt, A. (2022). [Women in the Leadership Pipeline in Higher Education Have Better Representation and Pay in Institutions With Female Presidents and Provosts](#). CUPA-HR.

in 2018-19 (Figure 3). Among White female assistant professors, the pay gap widened from \$0.99 in 2016-17 to \$0.97 in 2022-23. In nearly every instance, White female faculty do not have pay equity with their White male peers in the same rank during the entire seven-year period assessed.

In 2022-23, Asian, Black, and Hispanic or Latina/o faculty were paid the same or more than White men across all ranks (Figure 3). Moreover, Asian, Black, and Hispanic or Latina/o faculty across all ranks were generally paid more relative to their White male peers in 2022-23 than they were in 2016-17. Notably, in 2016-17, Black associate and full professors, along with Hispanic/Latina female associate professors, were paid less than White men in equivalent ranks; however, by 2022-23, they received equal or higher pay. Black faculty showed notable pay increases from 2016-17 to 2022-23 across all ranks and gender.

However, 2022-23 data reveal two substantial pay gaps between male and female full professors of the same race/ethnicity. Asian male professors (median pay ratio = \$1.10) and Hispanic or Latino male professors (\$1.11) are paid considerably more than their female counterparts (\$1.02). This indicates that pay disparities by gender still exist and may be most pronounced at the senior rank, where women are least represented.

It is important to note that attending only to pay gaps within rank, as many pay equity studies do, misses the larger picture of decreasing representation across ranks shown in the previous section and obscures the fact that women and people of color have decreased career incomes when they are not promoted to associate and full professor ranks. Faculty, both TT and NTT, receive the smallest year-to-year pay increases compared to other higher education employees.¹² This context of modest pay increases and gaps in promotion highlights the broader income challenges faced by some faculty. When faculty only receive substantial pay increases through promotions, disparities in promotion rates can affect the long-term financial security and retirement savings of women and faculty of color.

¹² [CUPA-HR Annual Workforce Data](#).

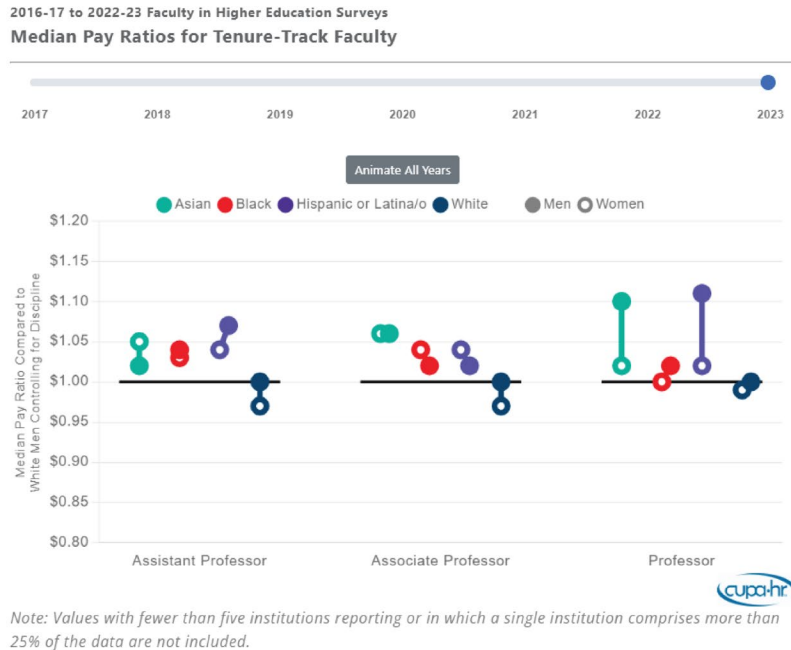


Figure 3. Median Pay Ratio for Tenure-Track Faculty¹³

Disparities in Tenure-Track Faculty Composition and Pay Across Disciplines

One of the most important factors that determines the salary of TT faculty is the discipline in which they are employed. For example, the median salary of new assistant professors of History was \$67,000 in 2022-23, whereas the median salary of new assistant professors of Business was \$121,000.¹⁴ Given these disparities, we analyzed whether the composition and pay equity of TT faculty in 2022-23 differ with various faculty disciplines.¹⁵

Figure 4 shows the composition of TT faculty in each discipline by rank, gender, and race/ethnicity. Disciplines in which women make up more than two-thirds of TT faculty (collapsed across all ranks) include Consumer Sciences (74%), Library Science (69%), Education (66%), and Public Administration/Social Service (66%). Notably, these disciplines are among the lowest paid TT disciplines overall. (Library Science is the lowest-paid TT

¹³ Due to smaller sample sizes and limited generalizability, faculty pay ratios for Native American/AK Native, Native HI/Other Pacific Islander, or two or more races were excluded from pay ratio analyses.

¹⁴ Salary information is from the 2022-23 CUPA-HR Faculty in Higher Education Survey. New assistant professors are those who have been in their positions for less than a year. Therefore, these figures represent starting salaries in these disciplines. Salary information for other disciplines and ranks is available in [DataOnDemand](#).

¹⁵ CUPA-HR uses the [Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\) codes](#) developed by IPEDS to collect data by faculty discipline. Disciplines with fewer than 500 TT faculty reported were not included in this analysis.

faculty discipline with a median salary of \$74,000, collapsed across rank.) In contrast, women make up fewer than one-fourth of faculty in Computer Science (24%), Engineering (20%), and Engineering Tech (17%). Two of these disciplines, Engineering and Computer Science, rank third and fourth respectively in the highest salaries paid to TT faculty.¹⁶

Disciplines in which people of color represent more than 40% of faculty (collapsed across rank) include Area/Group Studies (59%), Computer Science (44%), and Engineering (43%). People of Asian descent make up more than one-third of Computer Science (35%) and Engineering (34%) faculty, representing the largest minority group in these high-paying disciplines. Black faculty are best represented in Area/Group Studies, where they make up one-fourth (25%) of that discipline. Hispanic or Latina/o faculty are best represented in Foreign Languages/Literature, making up nearly one-fourth (23%) of that discipline. The discipline that has the fewest people of color (by far) is Philosophy/Religious Studies (14%).

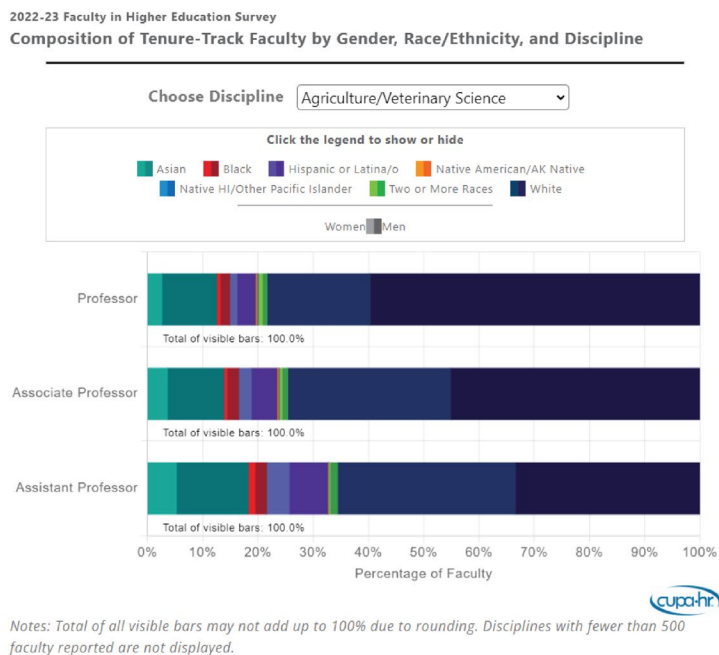


Figure 4. Composition of Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Discipline

For nearly every discipline, we see the same pattern described earlier in this report for TT faculty overall: White men are the only group whose percentage representation gets larger with increases in rank. The representation of both women and people of color decreases with increases in rank from assistant to associate to full professor (Figure 4). There are no notable exceptions to this pattern for any discipline, suggesting that whatever is driving the

¹⁶ Engineering has a median salary of \$119,000, and Computer Science has a median salary of \$113,000, collapsed across rank. For comprehensive salary information by rank, tenure status, and discipline, subscribe to [DataOnDemand](#).

drop-off in promotion from assistant to associate to full professor for both women and people of color is systemic.

In addition, women and faculty of color are underpaid in many disciplines compared to their White male counterparts (Figure 5). Some of the lowest pay ratios are found in Health Professions at the rank of professor – Black female professors make only \$0.70 on the dollar compared to their White male counterparts, White female professors make \$.0.71, Hispanic or Latina/o female professors make \$0.75, and Asian female professors make \$0.85. In contrast, women and people of color have relative pay equity at each rank in the disciplines of Area/Group Studies, Communication/Journalism, Engineering Tech, English Language/Literature, History, Psychology, Recreation/Fitness, and Visual/Performing Arts.

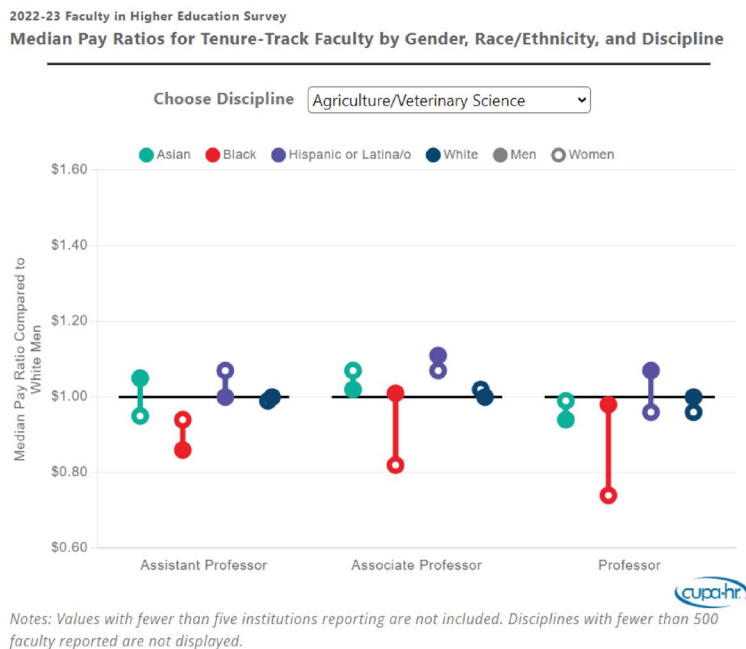


Figure 5. Median Pay Ratios of Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Discipline

The Representation of Women and Faculty of Color Differs Depending on an Institution's Total Expenses

We examined variations in representation and pay equity patterns based on the financial expenses required to operate an institution and structured our analysis by total expense quartile. Total expense quartiles divide the total number of institutions in the analysis into four groups based on the size of their total operating expenses, with each quartile representing 25% of the total institutions in the analysis.¹⁷ The first quartile encompasses institutions with the lowest total expenses (<\$51,275,807), followed by the second quartile (\$51,275,807-\$107,851,901), third quartile (\$107,851,902-\$268,129,985), and fourth quartile (>\$268,129,985).

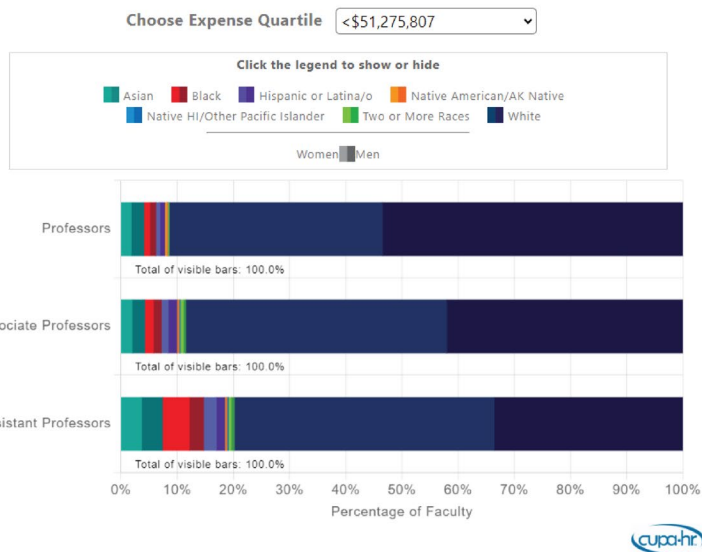
One notable finding for 2022-23 data is that the representation of White women decreases with each increase in expense quartile (Figure 6). In institutions with the lowest total expenses (<\$51,275,807), White women represent 38% of full professors, 46% of associate professors, and 46% of assistant professors. These percentages diminish to 25%, 32%, and 31%, respectively, in institutions with the highest total expenses (> \$268,129,985).

Conversely, the representation of faculty of color increases with each ascending expense quartile (Figure 6). In institutions with the lowest operating expenses (< \$51,275,807), women of color represent 4% of full professors, 6% of associate professors, and 12% of assistant professors. These percentages increase to 8%, 13%, and 20%, respectively, in institutions with the highest operating expenses (> \$268,129,985). Similarly, men of color are better represented with each successive expense quartile. At institutions in the lowest expense quartile (<\$51,275,807), men of color are least represented as professors (5%), associate professors (6%), and assistant professors (9%), compared to 17%, 17%, and 20%, respectively, in institutions in the highest expense quartile (> \$268,129,985). This suggests that institutions with higher operating expenses tend to have greater racial minority representation among faculty; however, they also have the lowest representation of White women, particularly in higher-ranking positions.¹⁸

¹⁷ Total institutional operating expenses are reported to CUPA-HR each year and represent the same figure reported to IPEDS in their [2022-23 Spring Finance Survey](#).

¹⁸ Analysis of median pay ratios by expense quartile did not yield significant insights for either TT or NTT faculty and so is not included in this report.

Composition of Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Expense Quartile



Note: Total of all visible bars may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 6. Composition of Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Expense Quartile

Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

The second part of this report focuses on non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty. The following section highlights changes in NTT faculty representation and pay equity over time for women and racial/ethnic minorities.

Women Represent the Majority of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

Women are better represented in NTT faculty (58% in 2022-23) than in TT faculty (44% in all ranks combined). Their percentage representation in NTT faculty has increased by 2.5% percent since 2016-17 (Figure 7). This modest growth in representation has been driven by an increase in women of color over the past seven years, rising from 10% of NTT faculty in 2016-17 to 13% in 2022-23 (a 26% increase). On the other hand, the representation of White women in NTT faculty decreased by 2.6% over this period.

The representation of faculty of color in NTT positions increased by 24% from 2016-17 to 2022-23, now comprising more than one-fifth (22%) of NTT faculty (Figure 7). The most substantial growth in representation of NTT faculty occurred among Hispanic or Latina/o faculty, rising 33% from 2016-17 to 2022-23.

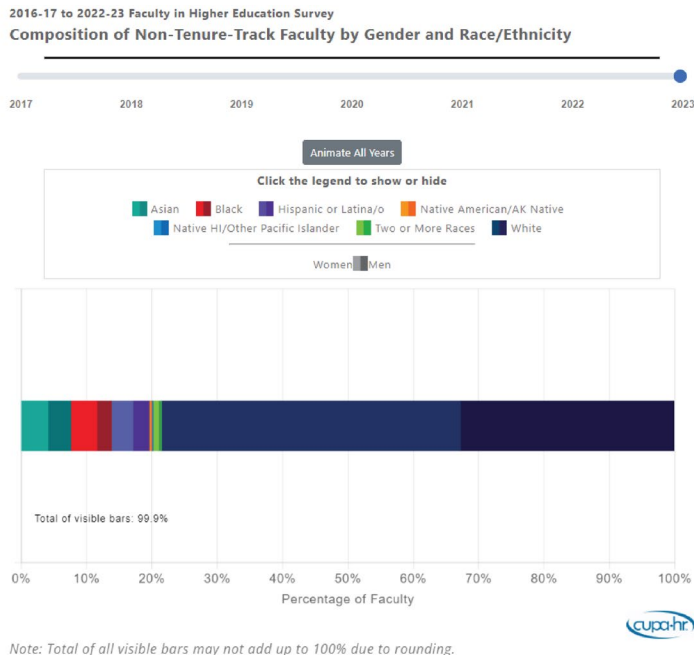


Figure 7. Composition of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender and Race/Ethnicity

Composition of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Compared to U.S. Master's Degree Holders

To evaluate representation in NTT faculty, we compared their demographics to those of U.S. residents who have earned master's degrees, as a master's would be a minimum requirement for most NTT faculty positions. In the 2022-23 academic year, faculty of color in NTT positions were less represented than their counterparts among U.S. master's degree recipients, comprising 22% of NTT faculty as opposed to 31% of individuals with master's degrees.¹⁹ In contrast, the representation of women in NTT roles closely aligned with that of female master's degree holders, with women making up 58% of NTT faculty and 57% of those holding master's degrees.

Although Pay Gaps Have Narrowed, Inequities Persist

Although TT faculty of color generally receive salaries comparable to or higher than those of their White male peers, disparities persist for Black and Hispanic or Latina/o NTT faculty, as well as for White female NTT faculty, who are paid slightly less than White male NTT faculty. In 2022-23, Black and Hispanic or Latina/o NTT faculty, along with White female NTT faculty, were paid \$0.98-\$0.99 for every dollar paid to White men, as illustrated in Figure 8.

¹⁹ Flood, S., King, M., Rodgers, R., Ruggles, S., Warren, J. R., & Westbery, M. (2022). *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 10.0* [Data set].

The period from 2016-17 to 2022-23 has seen a narrowing of pay gaps in NTT faculty. The median pay ratio for Hispanic or Latina/o faculty increased from \$0.94 in 2017-18 to \$0.98 for women and \$0.99 for men in 2022-23. White female NTT faculty were paid only \$0.92 for every dollar paid to White men in 2016-17; however, the pay gap narrowed to \$0.98 on the dollar by 2022-23. The pay gap for Black female NTT faculty also narrowed, from \$0.96 to \$0.98. Pay gaps for Black male NTT faculty have fluctuated over the past seven years.

Asians were the only NTT faculty paid more than their White male counterparts over this period. In 2022-23, NTT Asian faculty received notably higher pay, at \$1.06 (Asian women) and \$1.05 (Asian men) per \$1.00 paid to White men. Although there have been slight variations over the past seven years, Asian NTT faculty pay ratios in 2022-23 were very similar to those in 2016-17.

Although pay gaps have narrowed for many, persistent salary disparities underscore the inequities impacting White women, as well as Black and Hispanic or Latina/o NTT faculty. Given that White women represent a significant portion (46%) of all NTT faculty and Black and Hispanic or Latina/o faculty together make up 12% of the NTT demographic, this demonstrates that the majority of the NTT faculty population are making less than White male NTT faculty.

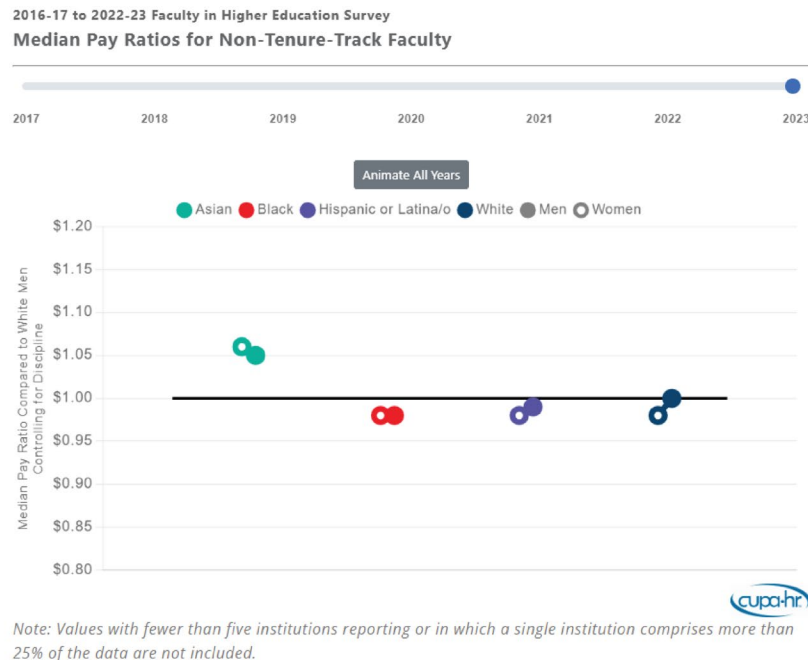


Figure 8. Median Pay Ratios for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

Women, Black, and Hispanic or Latina/o Faculty Are Better Represented in NTT Than TT Positions Across Almost All Disciplines

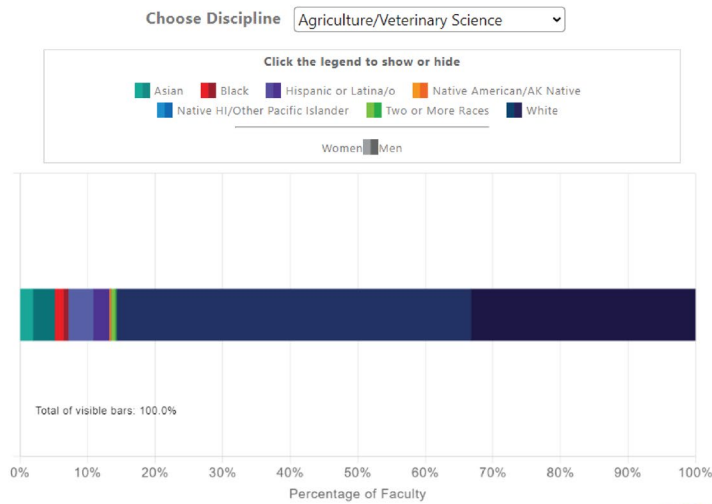
Figure 9 displays the composition of NTT faculty in each discipline by gender and race/ethnicity. Disciplines in which women make up more than two-thirds of NTT faculty include Public Administration/Social Service (80%), Education (75%), Health Professions (72%), Foreign Languages/Literatures (71%), and Psychology (70%). Disciplines in which women make up less than one-third of faculty include Engineering Tech (18%), Philosophy/Religious Studies (27%), and Engineering (28%). There is no discernible pattern wherein women have greater representation in lower-paying disciplines or less representation in higher-paying disciplines.

The disciplines in which NTT faculty of color have the greatest representation (by far) is Foreign Languages/Literatures (41%). This is also the discipline in which Hispanic or Latina/o faculty are best represented (24%). Notably, this is the discipline with the second-lowest median salary for NTT faculty, at \$56,000. Black faculty are best represented in Public Administration/Social Service (18%). Faculty of color are least represented in Philosophy (13%), Agriculture (14%), History (14%), Recreation/Fitness (14%), and English Language/Literature (15%).

Figure 9 shows that for nearly all disciplines, women have greater representation in NTT positions than in TT positions.²⁰ Similarly, for most disciplines, Black and Hispanic or Latina/o faculty have better representation in NTT positions than in TT positions. These findings are notable in that TT positions have substantially higher salaries than NTT positions.

²⁰ Discipline comparisons between TT and NTT include only those disciplines that overlap. Some disciplines do not have enough faculty reported (at least 500) to be included in our analyses, and these disciplines differ between TT and NTT faculty.

2022-23 Faculty in Higher Education Survey
Composition of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Discipline



Notes: Total of all visible bars may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Disciplines with fewer than 500 faculty reported are not displayed.

Figure 9. Composition of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Discipline

Women and faculty of color in NTT positions are underpaid in many disciplines compared to their White male counterparts (Figure 10). As with TT positions, some of the lowest pay ratios are found among women who teach in Health Professions – White female faculty make only \$0.70 on the dollar compared to their White male counterparts, Black female faculty make only \$0.71, and Hispanic or Latina/o female faculty make only \$0.72. In contrast, women and people of color have relative pay equity in the disciplines of Agriculture/Veterinary Science, Engineering, Engineering Tech, English Language/Literature, and Social Sciences.

2022-23 Faculty in Higher Education Survey
Median Pay Ratios for Non-Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Discipline



Figure 10. Median Pay Ratios of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Discipline

NTT Faculty of Color Are Best Represented at Institutions With the Highest Total Expenses

Paralleling the approach taken with TT faculty, we analyzed representation by quartiles of total expenses. The relationship between NTT faculty of color and institutional expense quartile mirrors the findings observed for TT faculty. Figure 11 illustrates that as total expense quartile increases, there is a corresponding rise in the representation of NTT faculty of color, ranging from 13% in the lowest expense quartile (<\$51,275,807) to 25% in the highest expense quartile (>\$268,129,985). Conversely, White women are least represented at institutions in the highest expense quartile (32%) and best represented at institutions in the lowest expense quartile (37%). This pattern also resembles the findings for TT faculty, although the percentage-point difference between the highest and lowest quartiles is higher for TT faculty (13 percentage points) than that for NTT faculty (5 percentage points).

Most racial/ethnic groups are better represented at institutions in the highest expense quartile compared to those in the lowest expense quartile. However, the most notable difference in representation is observed among Black and Asian NTT faculty with a 184% and 157% increase respectively from the lowest expense quartile (<\$51,275,807) to the highest expense quartile (>\$268,129,985).

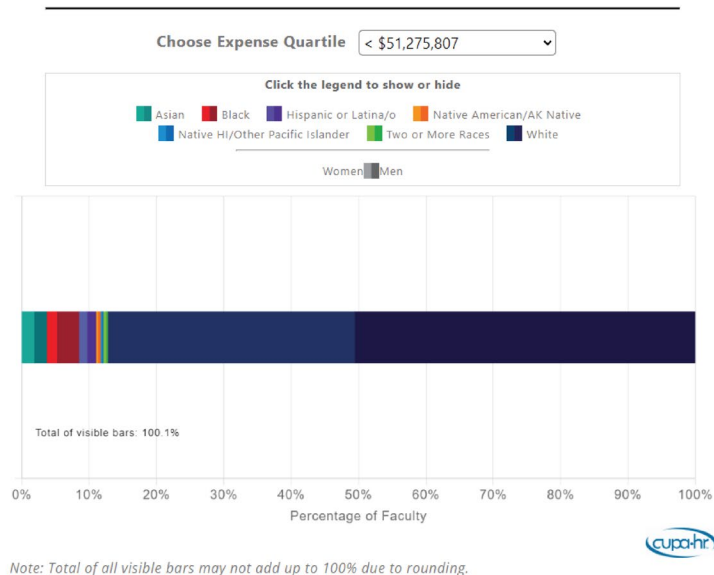


Figure 11. Composition of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Expense Quartile

Conclusions

Tenure-track appointments are on the decline. There has been a noticeable decline in tenure-track positions and a corresponding increase in non-tenure-track positions. In 2016-17, tenure-track roles accounted for 73% of faculty, but by 2022-23, this proportion fell to 66%, with a marked increase in non-tenure-track positions over the last two years. Additionally, the percentage of new tenure-track assistant professor hires dropped in recent years, indicating a trend toward more new non-tenure-track hires. These trends reflect changes in faculty composition and suggest an increasing reliance on non-tenure-track faculty.

The representation of women and people of color in tenure-track faculty positions is increasing, yet challenges remain. There was a notable increase in the representation of tenure-track women and faculty of color from 2016-17 to 2022-23. However, the growth in racial/ethnic representation still lags when compared to the demographic composition of U.S. doctoral degree holders. Further, despite strides toward pay equity for tenure-track faculty of color, White women in tenure-track positions still face persistent pay gaps in 2022-23, highlighting lingering issues of discrimination and the need for comprehensive measures to ensure equitable pay.

Advancement barriers persist for women and faculty of color on the tenure track.

Despite the growth in representation among tenure-track women and faculty of color in new hires, advancement to higher faculty ranks remains a barrier. The data highlight a troubling pattern: White male tenure-track faculty members are promoted to the rank of professor more often than White women and faculty of color. Challenges experienced by women and people of color during the tenure and promotion process create systemic underrepresentation of women and faculty of color in senior faculty positions, and these barriers occur in all disciplines. Despite some progress, women and faculty of color are not being promoted to senior faculty ranks at the same rate as White men, and White men remain the only demographic group whose representation expands with increases in rank.

Pay inequities persist in non-tenure-track faculty positions. Women, Black, and Hispanic or Latina/o faculty are better represented in non-tenure-track than in tenure-track positions. Further, pay gaps in non-tenure-track positions persist for these groups. Combined with the fact that these groups are less likely to be promoted to higher ranks in tenure-track positions, the result is that a substantial segment of faculty, primarily women and people of color, are employed in positions that pay lower salaries throughout their careers.

Institutions with higher operating expenses have a higher representation of faculty of color but a lower representation of White women. The connection between institutional operating expenses and faculty composition, for both tenure-track and non-tenure-track positions, presents a nuanced picture: Institutions with higher operating expenses tend to have greater racial and ethnic diversity among their faculty, but this is coupled with a decrease in the representation of White women.

Recommendations

Higher education leaders should be aware of the persistent gaps in representation, pay equity, and promotion within faculty ranks as highlighted by these findings. Substantial work is needed to ensure equitable compensation and career advancement. Adopting some of the following recommendations may assist with institutions' progress toward fostering an environment that supports equitable opportunities for all faculty members, enhancing pay equity and promotional pathways.

Examine promotion processes for tenure-track faculty. Institutions should critically evaluate and refine the tenure-track promotion pathways for women and people of color, who are already well-represented at the assistant professor level. To continue their investment and success in hiring women and people of color, leaders should strengthen efforts to promote them through the academic ranks with clear, transparent promotion criteria, effective communication, and actionable feedback. Additionally, institutions should implement robust mentorship and allyship programs tailored to help women and faculty of color navigate the promotion and tenure process. Furthermore, it is imperative to address and mitigate biases that may influence promotion and tenure processes, ensuring that all faculty members have equitable opportunities to advance in their discipline.

Conduct comprehensive pay equity audits. Salary equity studies in higher education can be used to uncover and address gender and racial pay disparities among faculty.²¹ Furthermore, transparent salary policies and guidelines can help mitigate unconscious biases in compensation.²² In committing to transparency and accountability, institutions need to establish specific goals for equity and inclusion, track progress with clear metrics, and openly share outcomes with the academic community. Regular compensation and advancement opportunity audits for both tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty, benchmarked against internal, peer, and national standards, are vital for rectifying pay inequities and removing barriers to advancement, particularly for women and faculty of color.²³ It is important that — for tenure-track faculty — pay equity assessments do not stop at analyses within ranks but also include an assessment for gaps and biases in the promotion process that result in lifelong pay discrepancies and missed opportunities for senior leadership positions.

²¹ Haignere, L. (2002). [Paychecks: A Guide to Conducting Salary-Equity Studies for Higher Education Faculty](#). American Association of University Professors.

²² Ku, G., Macias, M., & Lacetera, N. (2014). Transparency in Pay: Its Impact on and Determinants Within Individual Compensation Allocations. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 71(1), 246-259. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2089993

²³ CUPA-HR maintains a [list of resources](#) for HR professionals interested in learning more about pay equity, including a [webinar](#) that introduces the process of conducting a pay equity analysis.

Prioritize inclusive retention strategies. Beyond competitive compensation, retention efforts should encompass flexible work options, remote work opportunities, and a culture that prioritizes inclusive communities, fosters belonging, and recognizes faculty contributions.²⁴ Institutions should consider targeted retention initiatives, such as mentorship programs, faculty stay interviews, climate surveys, and strategic inclusivity plans, to enhance job satisfaction and retain talent.²⁵ Additionally, specific attention should be given to the retention of non-tenure-track faculty by outlining clear policies that offer avenues for advancement, recognition, and professional development.

Leverage institutional resources for equity. The relationship between higher institutional operational expenses and greater racial and ethnic representation among faculty suggests that targeted resource allocation can be a tool for effectively attracting more women and people of color. However, this approach will only be effective if institutional leaders embed a commitment to creating and sustaining an equitable, inclusive culture and prioritize funding initiatives that support these principles.²⁶

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²⁴ Bichsel, J., Fuesting, M., Tubbs, D., & Schneider, J. (2023). *The CUPA-HR 2023 Higher Education Employee Retention Survey*.

²⁵ CUPA-HR members can learn more in the Knowledge Center's [Screening/Selection Committees](#) toolkit and inclusive search [e-courses](#).

²⁶ Turner, C. S. V., Gonzalez, J. C., & Wood, J. L. (2008). Faculty of Color in Academe: What 20 Years of Literature Tells Us. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1(3), 139-168. DOI: 10.1037/a0012837