ACS FOCUS – Faculty of Color Uniting for Success
Year 1 Final Report

Name of project lead: Alicia Moore, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education
Campus: Southwestern University
Project Title: ACS FOCUS – Faculty of Color Uniting for Success
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I. PROJECT SUMMARY

Purpose: ACS FOCUS–Faculty of Color Uniting for Success–addresses the challenges that faculty of color face in their path to professional success in the academy. This national issue manifests itself in particular ways at liberal arts colleges, where faculty of color are far less likely to have colleagues of color in their department or area. Moreover, the increasing enrollment of students of color at our three institutions–Southwestern University, Millsaps College and Hendrix College–has not been matched by increased numbers of faculty of color. As a result, these faculty often have outsized responsibilities for mentoring students and service.

This project consists of a two-pronged approach to improving the recruitment, retention, and success of faculty of color at ACS institutions. First, ACS FOCUS provides a summer institute for faculty of color. The institute addressed scholarly productivity through specific goal setting, designated time for scholarship each day, and follow-ups on progress made. The project also brings in trained facilitators to assist faculty with topics such as self-care, cultivating mentors, navigating tenure and promotion, and managing service demands. Along the way, it aims to explicitly build a peer mentoring network by facilitating cross-institutional relationships. Second, the project seeks to raise awareness and support for the challenges that faculty of color face within ACS consortia schools through educating our institutions.

Goals: The three-year project aims to advance these faculty and institutional goals:
- Increase awareness of and collaboration among faculty of color/minority faculty at ACS institutions by developing a cross-institutional network of faculty.
- Increase participants' self-efficacy and success in pursuing their personal and professional goals, moving toward improved recruitment, retention, tenure, and promotion of faculty of color/minority faculty at participating institutions.
- Increase knowledge by institutional leadership (especially department chairs, deans and/or provosts, and tenure and promotion committees) of challenges for faculty of color, as a route to adopting strategies and policies to strengthen faculty diversity and success.

Spring 2018 Activities
- *Regular cross-institutional meetings;* Biweekly videoconference calls took place across the spring semester. Led by Alicia Moore, these calls enabled steering committee members from our three institutions to participate in decision making at all stages.
- *Publishing and advertising the CFP:* We published a call for proposals at our three institutions on March 6, and we also asked the ACS's Anita Davis to help us recruit from beyond our institutions, including at Centenary, Sewanee, Birmingham-Southern, and Trinity.
- *Applicants notified of acceptance:* Applicants were notified by early April and were asked to pay a small deposit in order to signal a commitment to attend.
- *Institute planning:* Alicia Moore, with the help of other steering committee members, designed the program, selected workshop topics, recruited speakers, and planned a comprehensive schedule. With the help of the SU Center for Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship, on-campus housing was reserved, travel logistics were planned, and registration deposits were processed.
- *Pre-institute survey:* The SU steering committee developed a pre-institute survey to learn participants' needs and interests and they administered it in May.

- *Institute materials:* Alicia Moore, with steering committee help, developed materials, including recommended readings and resources on the experiences of faculty of color, campus maps, post-workshop surveys, brief and complete program information, session evaluation packets, participant lists, and toolkits related to various workshops.

Annual summer institute: We held the first ACS FOCUS institute June 10-15, 2018 on the campus of Southwestern University. It included the following elements:
- Mornings with individual time and space for work on scholarly projects.
- From 11–5, workshops relevant to faculty of color. Internal and external presenters spoke to topics such as tenure and promotion, service expectations, and mentoring.
- Shared evening meals and field trips helped build interpersonal connections.
- For full information about the 2018 institute, see the [ACS FOCUS 2018 website](#).

Summer and Fall 2018 Additional Activities
- In June, we submitted the interim report to the ACS. We also began assessment, reviewing institute evaluations, initiating the drafting of the post-institute survey, and planning for campus climate surveys.
- In October, we administered the post-institute survey.
- In November, Southwestern leaders participated in an AAC&U webinar on "Advancing Diversity and Inclusivity through Multilevel Strategic Leadership." We also began planning for workshops to educate Southwestern University leadership.
- We submitted the continuation grant proposal in November.

II. ATTAINMENT OF GOALS

The steering committee designed a three-year assessment plan that tracks short-term, mid-term and long-term outcomes for each of our major goals. This report includes short-term outcomes that we can report on at this stage in the project.

Goal 1: Increasing awareness of and collaboration among faculty of color / minority faculty at ACS institutions by developing a cross-institutional network of faculty.

In Year 1, we increased collaboration among ACS faculty of color primarily through the summer institute.
- Our total participant number was 14, which included 7 tenure-track, 5 tenured, and 2 non-tenure track faculty from Southwestern University (8); Hendrix College (2); University of the South (2); Centenary College (1); and Millsaps College (1).
- Our post-workshop survey revealed that, for 7 out of 8 participants who answered, an important outcome was the creation of a support network that provided mentoring and affirmation for faculty of color. They pointed out how they plan to be more deliberate in their approach to community building.
  - 100% of survey respondents have stayed in touch with fellow ACS FOCUS alumni. Those who share a home institution have met personally. Several respondents mentioned email and social media in cases of remote contact.
  - 40% noted that they had reached out to the workshop facilitators, but only half of them did so in connection to the topic of their workshop.
This goal was met. Ongoing online meetings among institute participants will continue to build and strengthen this network. Finding ways to sustain the momentum generated by the institute will remain important for future years of the program.

Goal 2: Increase participants self-efficacy and success in pursuing their personal and professional goals, moving toward improved recruitment, retention, tenure, and promotion of faculty of color at participating institutions.

We planned to measure this goal through pre- and post-workshop surveys, post-workshop self reports on writing outcomes, and also through a longitudinal follow-up study on participants. To date, we are able to share the post-workshop survey and self-report results from the first institute.

- o Participants who completed surveys all agreed that, overall, the workshop and activity schedule at the institute was productive and valuable, and the overwhelming majority strongly agreed to its positive impact.
- o All participants agreed or strongly agreed about the value of each workshop and activity session. Between 66% and 84% of respondents strongly agreed to the effectiveness and usefulness of workshops on mentorship, self-care, tenure and promotion, and administrative positions.
- o 90% of respondents indicated they had created a three-to-four-year service and scholarship plan, albeit with varying degrees of specificity.
- o 100% of respondents said the institute helped them identify self-care strategies that they will implement during the academic year.
- o Around 70% of respondents shared that they had made significant progress in their scholarly projects during the institute. More than half of those who reported progress claimed to have finished at least one paper, article or book chapter. Other respondents advanced in some form in their research and preparation for teaching.
- o Six out of eight total respondents found the institute had significant impact on their writing and research productivity. Eight out of nine respondents then reported they continued to feel productive after the institute.

This goal was met. The strength of the institute's content and workshops was a big part of our Year 1 successes, and we feel confident that the institute in Year 2 can deliver similarly strong support for faculty self-efficacy and success.

Goal 3: Increasing knowledge by institutional leadership of challenges for faculty of color

Our original assessment plan for this goal included administering a benchmarking survey on campus climate *before* the first institute, and then conducting follow-up surveys on campus climate at our institutions. Southwestern and Millsaps were unable to administer a pre-institute benchmarking survey, because additional planning was required with administrative leadership. However, we have since set these assessment processes in motion. Southwestern will participate in the HERI (Higher Education Research Institute) faculty survey with the campus climate module starting in the Fall 2019 data collection cycle. Hendrix has already had a survey process in place for several years).

In addition to the climate survey, we also planned to track participation data and survey results for workshops and webinars, co-led by the ACS's Anita Davis, designed to educate campus leadership about the challenges of faculty of color and strategies for supporting them. This piece of our project has been delayed due to the departure of Dr. Anita Davis from the ACS. However, we do have some results to report:

- o Southwestern's Center for Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship hosted an AAC&U webinar on "Advancing Diversity and Inclusivity through Multilevel Strategic Leadership" attended by the Dean, Associate Dean, Associate VPAA, several department chairs, and faculty leaders.
- o Starting this year, Southwestern's faculty evaluation ("status") committee will receive training on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion as they relate to evaluation, tenure and promotion processes, particularly issues that relate to bias and problems with student evaluation data.
- o In early spring 2019, SU will provide a workshop for campus leadership related to outcomes/feedback from the Institute. Hendrix's Chief Diversity Officer will engage its senior leaders in a conversation regarding the outcomes/feedback early spring semester.
- o Hendrix and SU are both now in their second year of engaging faculty search committees in conversations regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion in the hiring process.
- o Millsaps College has put together a Task Force in charge of formalizing a Teaching and Learning initiative. A FOCUS steering committee member heads the task force.

o   Next Spring semester, Millsaps's Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Center will begin a regular opportunity for faculty and staff to participate in healing circle work together.

III.   IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

The impact on participants is documented in the "attainment of goals" section. Participants indicated that the workshop was valuable for their own development and success this year. We anticipate that longitudinal surveys will give us a better sense of whether these effects have a longer-term impact.

We are interested in the question of whether we might have a long-term impact on institutional processes and structures. The decision to provide training on equity, diversity, and inclusion to the Southwestern University faculty evaluation committee is one example of a change that resulted from this program. As the program continues to unfold and the workshops for institutional leadership get underway, we will look to continue tracking this institutional form of impact. [*Note:* While it is our hope that a program like FOCUS could move the needle on our campus's ability to recruit and retain faculty of color, there are too many entangled factors to assert a direct causal relationship between this program and recruitment and retention numbers. As a result, it is not our intent to measure impact in that way.]

IV.   CONSORTIAL (ACS-WIDE) VALUE OF THE PROJECT

A primary impact of this project is at the consortial level. This project was designed to create an ongoing network of support for faculty of color in the ACS. The project included training of campus leaders, building an inclusive community, and setting in motion processes that should ultimately improve our institutions in fundamental ways by facilitating cross-consortial relationships. We have created, from scratch, a multi-institutional model for addressing serious challenges facing our institutions. If our project helps recruit and retain faculty of color at ACS institutions, and if we are able to educate and transform our institutions in order to make them more equitable and inclusive, this will be an enormous benefit to the schools individually and as a consortium.

V. LESSONS LEARNED

Surprises: The steering committee was pleasantly surprised by the fact that every session and facilitator were so well received. The content they provided seemed to resonate with the participants. Participants also bonded with each other in the short period of the institute. Another surprise was the openness and honesty surrounding the personal narratives and lived experiences of participants, which began on the second morning of the institute. This indicated that participants were in need of this kind of bonding/community.

Challenges:
- Anticipating childcare needs will be important for future institutes, since at least one participant felt inhibited from participating due to this issue. Many faculty have child care responsibilities in summer months, when the institutes take place.
- The labor required of the program director is quite high, even with support from an engaged steering committee and a university office with administrative staff. We initially tried to address this issue through the director's stipend, which could be taken monetarily or used for a course release. However, the stipend cap is limited to $2,500, regardless of workload, and does not cover the cost of a course release. And although SU's dean authorized a course release in lieu of the stipend, the program director was not able to take one because her department could not spare her. As a result, the program director's workload this semester was intense and was layered on top of all of her regular teaching, scholarship, advising, and service expectations. We are particularly concerned about high levels of minimally compensated labor because the program director will always be a faculty member of color already dealing with the challenges that this grant was designed to address.

- Concerns about invisible and uncounted labor also apply to steering committee members. Because this project is not part of the formal university committee structure, it counts as extra service, but not as fulfilling the required service obligations for faculty on the steering committee at some of our institutions.
- It was challenging to launch this program in such a short time frame, and extending the invitations to potential participants in mid-spring probably limited the number of applications. We are pleased that the Year 2 grant application was able to be reviewed in November, to allow the call for applications to be posted in the December.
- Finally, we decided to shorten the workshop in Year 2, since some faculty will find it hard to commit to a full week, but might be able to participate in a 3-4 day program.

VI. NEXT STEPS

- *Year 2 institute at Hendrix College in summer 2019:* The call for proposals was announced in December with applications due January 31. We hope for a strong cohort for Year 2.
- *Developing an ongoing peer mentoring network among participants:* Our participants want to stay in touch and continue to support and mentor one another. One participant already created a Google Group for such activities. We are exploring how best to maintain this community of support going forward. We also need to identify the resources required to develop and sustain such a network, since there is no current model for staffing this program element.
- *Educating our institutions:* Although the primary goal of this project is to support faculty of color and to create a safe space for them to engage in cross-institutional peer mentoring, we also anticipate that this project will result in institutional changes. Each participating campus has committed to trainings and workshops dedicated to improving institutional climate, practice and policies. In particular, institutional leaders—such as department chairs, deans and/or provosts, and other faculty leaders—will be encouraged to participate in a series of webinars, originally conceived as being led by Anita Davis, ACS's Director of Diversity and Inclusion. We hope a new ACS diversity director can continue to support our efforts in this area, since these webinars will broaden the project's impact through exploration of the literature on the experiences of faculty of color and discussion of proven strategies and methods for creating inclusive campuses. Institutional leaders will be encouraged to articulate initial steps towards institutional change at their perspective campuses.

VII. FEEDBACK/SUGGESTIONS for the ACS GRANT PROGRAM (optional)

- *Commit to hiring a new ACS Director of Diversity and Inclusion:* This project was planned with the expectation that we would work closely with the ACS's Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Anita Davis. We need the ongoing support of a central ACS leader in order to facilitate this cross-institutional collaboration for faculty of color. We urge the ACS to continue its commitment to diversity and inclusion by hiring someone to carry on the work that Anita Davis did so skillfully.
- *Increase the top-level stipend allowance for PIs.* This project, unfortunately, replicated some of the problems it was designed to address, by requiring a lot of uncompensated labor from a faculty member of color. The PI stipend for this program was out of line with the kinds of PI stipends our faculty have received for leadership on other institutional grants, leading to an inequity issue on our own campus. If the ACS could create a higher cap for PI stipends, that would help.
- *Create an option for multi-year projects* that does not require creating a pre-proposal, proposal, interim report, and final report for each year of the project. The additional labor involved with annual reporting requirements has led to challenges, including not having enough time to assess goals before having reports due and time lost to proposal and report writing that could be spent developing the project.