









Climate Case Study #7 - Distribution of Labor

How to foster respect and inclusion in your unit when...

A BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) faculty member tells you, the chair, that large courses and time-intensive, undervalued service are disproportionately assigned to junior BIPOC (jBIPOC) faculty, and that the resulting inequities are exacerbated by so-called “invisible” service.

The Climate Case Studies are organized around RISE’s *Eight Levers to Shift Climate for Respect and Inclusion* framework. RISE uses the eight levers above to think about the ways in which more inclusive, respectful, and civil climates might be intentionally cultivated in the higher education workplace context.

LEVER	APPROACH	WHAT IT MIGHT LOOK LIKE
<div></div> <div>ENVIRONMENT</div>	Reflect on how the physical and virtual ENVIRONMENT might influence the demands of service and teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on the perceived availability of faculty in your unit, as conveyed by physical presence, open doors, posted office hours, etc. Who is expected to be available, and thus more likely to be tapped by colleagues and students?• Examine how your department’s website and social media reflect faculty work. Who gets kudos for their service and teaching work, and who is lauded for their scholarship?
<div></div> <div>EXPECTATIONS</div>	Enforce EXPECTATIONS that service and teaching will be equitable within rank and clarify expectations for every rank.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish benchmarks for faculty work activities and communicate them at least annually.• Don’t assume that the types of service a faculty member wants to do are identity-based.
<div></div> <div>INTERACTIONS</div>	Promote INTERACTIONS that provide jBIPOC and all faculty the opportunity to regularly discuss and bring visibility to their level of service and teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regularly meet with jBIPOC faculty to discuss their professional development goals and to assess how assignments might hinder or further these goals.• Be aware of the interactions that contribute to “invisible” service: special requests (e.g., “can I pick your brain?”), care work (e.g., mentoring students outside of normal assignments), and cultural taxation (e.g., helping a colleague debrief a microaggression).
<div></div> <div>LANGUAGE</div>	Continually use LANGUAGE that values service and teaching and demonstrates their importance to your unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• So-called “invisible” service is not invisible to the person performing it, or to those who benefit. Acknowledge it as unrecognized or undervalued service, and note that it often falls disproportionately on jBIPOC faculty.• Call committee work “faculty governance” or “leadership” more often than “service.”
<div></div> <div>MODELING</div>	Use your personal actions to MODEL how all service work can be valued and rewarded equitably.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn about inequities in service and teaching and how they disproportionately impact jBIPOC faculty; review the literature and talk to experts. Share what you learn (discussions, invited speakers).• Recognize service and teaching contributions at faculty meetings and in other contexts, calling attention to how they advance your unit’s mission and goals.
<div></div> <div>OPPORTUNITIES</div>	Consider how service work can be presented positively and provide all faculty with OPPORTUNITIES , rather than obstacles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reward strong contributions in teaching and/or service with awards, course exchanges, resources, and access to opportunities.• Identify high-status service assignments that develop leadership skills; make these available to junior faculty based on their career interests.
<div></div> <div>ROUTINES & STRUCTURES</div>	Consider long-term ROUTINES & STRUCTURES to ensure that teaching and service work are allocated equitably and rewarded accordingly for all faculty members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regularly gather and analyze data on teaching and service, including unrecognized service, and make these data and findings accessible to all faculty. Designate someone to use these data to assess inequities in teaching and service over time and relative to reward structures, e.g., merit reviews.• Routinize turn-taking for service and teaching assignments, e.g., 3-year terms.
<div></div> <div>TIME</div>	Consider TIME as a resource, and work to make the importance of the roles assigned to jBIPOC faculty be reflected in the time they demand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet with junior faculty to provide feedback on the most efficient use of their time.• Make sure that every committee and every meeting has a goal that is aligned with the unit’s values and priorities; eliminate those that do not.

Additional Resources:

- [Equity Minded Faculty Workloads](#) (O’Meara et al., 2021)
- [Faculty Time Allocation at Historically Black Universities and Its Relationship to Institutional Expectations](#) (Frontiers in Psychology, 2021)
- [Undoing the Can of Worms](#) (Inside Higher Ed, 2018)
- [The Hallway Ask](#) (Inside Higher Ed, 2018)
- [The Burden of Invisible Work in Academia](#) (Humboldt Journal of Social Relations, 2017)