

The Complicit, the Compliant, and the 6%: Using Critical Race Theory to Analyze Tenure Track Position Announcements and Evaluate Institutional Commitments of Diversity and Inclusion

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Abstract: *As many colleges and universities educate a much larger percentage of students of color than they employ faculty of color, this study applies Neuendorf's (2016) content analysis via critical race theory to tenure-track faculty position announcements (n = 150) posted by public flagships (n = 50) to analyze institutional use of diversity-specific diction therein. Data reveal 64.7% of position announcements include the word "diverse" or "diversity," 15% include diversity statements, but only nine position announcements (six percent) directly solicited people of color. Furthermore, 12% of all announcements omitted an EEO statement. Implications for policy, practice, and future research is addressed.*

Keywords: faculty, diversity, inclusion, human resources, equal opportunity employment

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Introduction

While Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employment discrimination based on race and color, a wealth of extant research supports the notion that tenure-track faculty in institutions of higher education (IHEs) across the United States are not as racially and ethnically diverse as they should be (Stanley, 2006; Smith, 2015; Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999) and that faculty of Color often experience innumerable inequities pertinent to their positions (Bernal & Villalpando, 2002; Thompson, 2008; Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008; Turner & Myers, 2000; Villalpando & Bernal, 2002). Although the Human Resources Department of IHEs must comply with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's (EEOC) guidelines for "Prohibited Employment Policies and Practices," there is no state or federal law requiring IHEs to explicitly solicit people of Color in publicly-available position announcements.

Over fifty years after President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law, on September 26th, 2016, University of Pennsylvania Professor of Higher Education Marybeth Gasman published an opinion in *The Washington Post* regarding faculty of Color working in elite IHEs. In a related interview, which Gasman included in her piece, she wrote, "The reason we don't have more faculty of color among college faculty is that we don't want them. We simply don't want them" (Gasman, 2016a, para. 5). After Gasman's provocative remarks quickly made headlines in the higher education community, she published a follow-up opinion, on October 11th, 2016, in which she relayed anecdotes shared with her by people of Color aspiring to faculty positions in IHEs. Gasman (2016b) wrote:

Ten people sent me their resumes and asked if I knew of institutions that were seriously seeking a diverse faculty. An African-American woman asked, "Can you introduce me to colleagues who will value me and help me grow as a professional? Can you offer advice on my resume?" Others wrote

¹ I have intentionally capitalized "Color" throughout this manuscript, as I believe this capitalization critically and consciously affirms people of Color, akin to the capitalization of "Black" when referring to Black people.

about the many times they were “told privately that [they] didn’t fit in by a member of a search committee” or that they “weren’t good enough to join the faculty” at various institutions “due to their institutional pedigree.” (paras. 10-12)

A poor departmental “fit” and an inadequate “institutional pedigree” may be indirectly tied to the race of an applicant to a tenure-track faculty position, yet Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 directly outlined a number of “Unlawful Employment Practices,” including an employer failing or refusing to hire or to discharge “any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin” (Civil Rights Act, 1964). Still, Gasman (2016a, 2016b) strongly implied that IHEs—chiefly search and screen committees charged with hiring faculty members across the United States—were directly or indirectly violating a U.S. Statute by, somehow, failing to search and screen potential tenure-track faculty candidates in an equitable fashion. In short, Gasman (2016a, 2016b) claimed that IHEs continue to employ discriminatory hiring tactics, echoing decades-old research (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010; Smith et al., 2004; Thompson, 2008; Turner et al., 2008). However, it is curious that this extant research has ignored perhaps the most salient and philosophically revelatory element of the tenure-track hiring process: the language of the position announcement.

Ultimately, this study aims to answer two critical questions: How do IHEs operationalize the term “diversity” and its derivatives in tenure-track position announcements? And do IHE’s actively solicit racial and ethnic diversity in their tenure-track position announcements? Employing Neuendorf’s (2016) content analysis via critical race theory, this study examined 150 tenure-track position announcements posted by 50 public flagship institutions from July to November of 2016 and analyzes the use of diversity-specific diction therein to learn whether IHEs actively solicit racially and ethnically diverse tenure-track faculty members.

Literature Review

Legal Framework of Diversity Hiring Practices in Higher Education

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the “Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity,” or the EEOC, in E.O. 10925. Therein, President Kennedy claimed “discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin is contrary to the Constitutional principles and policies of the United States” and asserted that “it is the plain and positive obligation of the United States Government to promote and ensure equal opportunity for all qualified persons, without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin, employed or seeking employment with the Federal Government and on government contracts.” In Section 201, the EEOC, as Kennedy charged it, must “scrutinize and study employment practices of the Government of the United States, and to consider and recommend additional affirmative steps which should be taken by executive departments and agencies to realize more fully the national policy of nondiscrimination within the executive branch of the Government,” effectively positioning the EEOC as the legal enforcer of civil rights laws against workplace discrimination.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, specifically Title VII, makes it unlawful for employers to “fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin,” a federal statute applying to college and universities. Furthermore, Title VI of the same act echoes much of what Title VII prohibits, including discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance, also applying to most postsecondary institutions.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed E.O. 11246 which requires postsecondary institutions that receive federal contracts “to take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin,” further strengthening Titles VI and VII

of the Civil Rights Act and birthing modern Affirmative Action. Focusing on position announcements of federal contractors (e.g., colleges, universities), Section 202 of E.O. 11246 asserted that Affirmative Action shall “include, but not be limited to the following: employment, upgrading, demotion, or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship,” and that “The contractor will, in all solicitations or advertisements for employees placed by or on behalf of the contractor, state that all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin.” Here, government contracting agencies—colleges and universities included—must provide some form of Equal Employment Opportunity statement affirming their compliance with E.O. 11246 and the Civil Rights Act in all position announcements.

Similarly, the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution affirmed that “No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States... nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.” In 1978, the Equal Protection Clause was put to trial focused on medical school affirmative action admissions policies in *Bakke v. Regents of the University of California*, 438 U.S. 265, and two related Supreme Court cases—2003’s *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306 and *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 244—focused on both undergraduate and graduate school admissions. Collectively, these three cases have established that a state university’s “decisions based on race or ethnic origin... are reviewable under the Fourteenth Amendment” using a strict scrutiny standard (*Bakke v. Regents of the University of California*, 1978), the use of race as one of many “plus factors” in an admissions program which considers the overall individual contribution of each candidate is permissible (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003), but an admissions program automatically awarding points to applicants from certain racial minorities is unconstitutional (*Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003).

In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court found that the Equal Protection Clause permits the consideration of race in undergraduate admissions decisions

under a standard of strict judicial scrutiny in *Fisher v. The University of Texas at Austin*, 570 U.S. ____ (*Fisher I*), and in 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court again held that The University of Texas at Austin's race-conscious admissions program was narrowly tailored to serve a compelling, legitimate state interest of promoting a diverse student body, satisfying strict scrutiny, and was therefore constitutional in *Fisher v. The University of Texas at Austin*, 579 U.S. ____ (*Fisher II*).

However, in the over forty years since *Bakke v. Regents* (1978), no Supreme Court case has specifically addressed the Equal Protection Clause as it pertains to diversity *hiring* in higher education. Subsequently, race considerations in the context of educational employment and race-conscious institutional policies are subject to strict scrutiny in Equal Protection Clause cases, as the IHE must demonstrate that the action "is narrowly tailored to achieve a compelling state interest" and then satisfy strict scrutiny by establishing that "the race-conscious plan is narrowly tailored to achieve the goal of diversity" (*Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003).

Higher Education's Efforts to Recruit a Diverse Faculty

Expanding upon the legal guidelines forged by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, many IHEs have financed and established diversity departments, divisions, and/or offices charged with advancing institutional guidelines and strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse faculty members (e.g., Ball State University, 2008; Boston University, 2016; Columbia University, 2016; Johns Hopkins University, 2009; University of Chicago, 2015; Virginia Commonwealth University, 2001). Additionally, extant research has examined the effective recruitment of faculty of Color at highly selective, private institutions (Gasman, Kim, & Nguyen, 2011), the effect of diverse student bodies on recruiting and retaining diverse faculty members (Antonio, 2003), and general strategies for hiring diverse faculty (Josey, 1993; Springer & Westerhaus, 2006; Thompson, 2008; Van Ummersen, 2005). However, this body of research has not examined the specific language of the position announcement.

Kayes (2006) specifically focused on cultural biases present in the search and hiring process of faculty in higher education, namely the desire for inexperienced faculty members to participate in the hiring process without first discussing and learning of the advantages of a diverse faculty, the false dichotomy of diversity recruitment and retention, and the incompatibility of White communication styles pervasive in search committees and the idiosyncratic racial and cultural identity of African American candidates. Ultimately, the author asserted that diversity-focused, “intercultural competence” professional development is necessary for all faculty members—not just those serving on search committees—and that all search committees must adopt and adhere to institution-wide policies that seriously address the barriers of the recruitment and retention of people of Color in faculty positions.

Smith et al. (2004) examined 700 faculty searches to determine whether diversity-focused interventions produced diverse hires. Of the three core interventions employed—the position announcement engaged diversity at the department level, “special hire” strategies such as a waiver of a search or a targeted hire, and a concerted effort to diversify the search committee itself—only 26% of searches employed one of these three inventions. However, 86% of African American hires, 100% of American Indian hires, and 57% of Latino hires were made via searches employing one of these three interventions. In short, the interventions worked but remain underutilized.

Research has also addressed the faculty pipeline and its flawed concepts, beginning with the notion that diversifying the faculty requires a diversification of the “supply side” of the faculty pipeline, or the diversification of the Ph.D.-holding population (Laden & Hagedorn, 2000). Building upon Laden and Hagedorn (2000), Myers and Turner (2004) refuted the conventional wisdom that “underrepresentation of minority faculty stems principally from the underrepresentation of Ph.D.’s,” and that common policy interventions to increase the numbers of people of Color in faculty positions are overwhelmingly focused on this absent, indeterminate supply-side issue (p. 300). In short, amplifying Gasman (2016a, 2016b), the supply-side of the diversification of the

faculty is not at issue, contrary to popular belief (Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Myers & Turner, 2004).

Other studies have approached the faculty diversity problem through reverse engineering by examining the lived experiences of faculty of Color to inform inclusive hiring practices, yet Stanley (2006) found that people of Color already occupying faculty positions are under-researched, especially the experiences of those working in predominantly White institutions (PWIs). Faculty of Color in these institutional types often use terms such as “marginality,” “alienation,” “isolation,” and “invisibility” to describe the campus climate of the PWI, perpetuating Allen et al.’s (2002) notion of the academic prestige hierarchy built upon White normative culture and behavior. Furthermore, faculty of Color often suffer from poor mentoring structures, the perception of tokenism which leads to overcommitting to advising and service duties, and a feeling of academic and personal isolation at degrees not experienced by their White counterparts (Laden & Hagedorn, 2000).

The Population Has Rapidly Diversified, The Faculty Has Not

Six years after Smith et al. (2004) outlined a number of best practices to solicit, recruit, interview, and hire people of color to faculty positions, Bilimoria and Buch (2010) analyzed the faculty search process at 60 IHEs and found that many search committees lacked experience in basic recruiting and hiring practices, echoing Kayes (2006), which led to simply repeating time-honored protocol without actively soliciting people of color, producing a homogenous, non-diverse applicant pool, and thus, a homogenous, non-diverse hire.

Although efforts have been made to diversify the faculty, the hierarchy which favors Whites over non-Whites has persisted through the decades, marginalizing people of Color (Allen et al., 2002). Because of this time-honored, White-normative hierarchy, Turner et al. (2008) found that only 12% of full professors in U.S. institutions were people of Color. Five years later, the National Center for Education Statistics (2013) reported that 16% of full professors in U.S. institutions were people of color, yet on college campuses, students of Color comprised nearly 32% of all

students in all types of postsecondary institutions from 2014-2015 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), representing a substantial diversity gap which reinforces the need for faculty of Color (Abdul-Raheem, 2016; Collins & Kritsonis, 2006; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002; Hurtado, 2001). Couple these findings with the Center for American Progress (Progress 2050, 2015)—estimating that by 2044, people of color will comprise 50.3% of the U.S. population—and it is clear to see that faculties in higher education still do not accurately represent the racial and ethnic diversity apparent in the college-going and general population of the United States.

Analyses of Faculty Position Announcements

Content analyses of job advertisements are common in fields outside of tenure-track, faculty of Color research, as such examinations have focused on private employer demands for personal skill transferability (Bennett, 2002), inferring required skills included in an operational researcher position announcements (Sodhi & Son, 2010), and the effect of company-, job-, and task-focused message specificity in the recruitment of high-quality candidates in the business sector (Feldman, Bearden & Hardesty, 2006). In higher education, content analyses of faculty position announcements have been dominated by the study of academic librarian positions and their corresponding job duties (Beile & Adams, 2000; Choi & Rasmussen, 2009; Croneis & Henderson, 2002; Heimer, 2002; Osorio, 1999; Reser & Schuneman, 1992; Sproles & Ratledge, 2004).

No research has analyzed the specific language of tenure-track faculty position announcements with a focus on the use of diversity and its derivatives (e.g. diverse, diversify), thus revealing institutional biases, attitudes, preferences when filling tenure-track faculty positions, yet an analysis of this type of literature is necessary to break down and remove the hierarchical, institutional barriers facing people of Color pursuing a tenure-track faculty position.

Allen et al. (2002) argued that “Attempts to improve the status of people of color and women must therefore consider how higher education is

organized and how it functions,” (p. 189) as higher education’s academic prestige hierarchy reduces access to the networks, resources, and experiences available to people of Color, which produces a racist, biased academic prestige hierarchy (p. 192). Here, one cog in this wheel of inequity is the composition and employment of the tenure-track position announcement. Similarly, Smith et al. (2004) found that position announcements which specifically engaged with diversity at the department subfield level worked to solicit and recruit faculty of Color. Here, diversity-focused language in a position announcement has already been established as an important factor in soliciting, recruiting, and hiring faculty of Color, yet no extant research has examined the language of the entire position announcement to help articulate whether position announcements actively solicit people of Color to tenure-track faculty positions.

Conceptual Framework

Critical race theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework chiefly concerned with racial oppression apparent in many facets of society, and for twenty years, this theory has been applied to a variety of educational fields to eliminate racism (Capper, 2015).

Bell (1995) and Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, and Thomas (1995) argued that CRT is a necessary framework to analyze policies and policy making in a historical context to deconstruct any extant racialized content, thus challenging the dominant, White, cisgender, patriarchal hierarchy pervasive throughout United States culture. Since its inception, scholars have employed CRT to define the contours of racialized barriers present in educational institutions and processes, often examining how educational policies perpetuate institutional racism and subordinate people of Color, such as Latino college students (Bernal, 2002), African American college students (Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000), Asian American students (Buenavista, Jayakumar, & Misa-Escalante, 2009) faculty members of Color (Villalpando & Bernal, 2002), and postsecondary administrators of Color (Wolfe & Dilworth, 2015).

While the CRT canon does not address the tenure-track position announcement, two extant studies are particularly relevant to the one at hand. First, Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, and Crenshaw (1993) first defined several CRT-specific elements to help inform scholarly examinations of the many racialized barriers facing people of Color pursuing faculty positions. Therein, critical race theory:

- recognizes racism is endemic to American life.
- expresses skepticism toward dominant claims of neutrality, objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy.
- challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/historical analysis of institutional priorities.
- insists on recognizing the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing society.
- is interdisciplinary and crosses epistemological and methodological boundaries.
- works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression.

Second, Patton Davis (2016) proposed a critical race theory of higher education aimed at informing three critical inequities facing people of Color in postsecondary institutional contexts:

- The establishment of U.S. higher education is deeply rooted in racism/White supremacy, the vestiges of which remain palatable.
- The functioning of U.S. higher education is intricately linked to imperialistic and capitalistic efforts that fuel the intersections of race, property, and oppression.
- U.S. higher education institutions serve as venues through which formal knowledge production rooted in racism/White supremacy is generated.

Considering the work of these scholars, CRT is an appropriate conceptual framework through which diversity-related language of position announcements can be analyzed and discussed.

Per Matsuda et al. (1993), a job posting is endemic to American life: nearly all types of companies, organizations, and institutions of higher education utilize job postings or position announcements to solicit applications, and thus, nearly every American of working age has read a job posting or position announcement and used the information gleaned from the posting or announcement to inform their application. When considering CRT's skeptical view of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy, extant research has already demonstrated that such attitudes are present on faculty search committees, yet people of Color remain underrepresented in the professoriate, due in part to the fear of reverse racism (Smith et al., 2004) and the inexperienced nature of many members of search committees (Kayes, 2006; Smith et al., 2004).

Furthermore, countless IHEs have launched diversity and inclusion initiatives, attempting to remedy both contextual and historical trends of non-diversity and exclusion, yet the position announcements produced by these initiatives have not been analyzed through a CRT lens and only cursorily by Smith et al. (2004). An interdisciplinary, CRT approach to analyzing the language of the position announcement would work toward ending one form of systemic oppression facing people of Color: the inaccessibility of tenure-track faculty positions. Additionally, these diversity and inclusion initiatives purport to recognize the experiential knowledge of people of Color and their communities of origin per Matsuda et al. (1993). Yet, extant literature has already demonstrated that people of Color are underrepresented in the faculty and are subsequently underrepresented on search committees (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010; Smith et al. 2004; Thompson, 2008; Turner et al., 2008), effectively undermining any experiential knowledge contributed by the faculty member of Color during the search process, including the composition of the position announcement.

For Patton Davis (2016) and the application of CRT to higher education, the faculty hiring process—including the composition of the position announcement—is absolutely perpetuated by predominantly White search committees continuing to engage in past practices which have not produced a racially and ethnically diverse professoriate. As the

functioning of U.S. higher education is linked to imperialism, capitalistic mindsets have sustained the status quo (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2004). As a result, the lack of faculty diversity and all institutional structures responsible for that lack must be addressed, especially those serving as capitalistic, imperialistic gatekeepers such as the faculty search and screen process, which leads to employment and thus, a higher standard of living for people of Color. Patton Davis (2016) also argued that these institutions and their structures serve as venues for formal knowledge production: current faculty of Color have produced two decades worth of CRT-focused research, yet because Patton Davis' (2016) sense of formal knowledge production is so rooted in racism and White supremacy, many of the institutional processes catalyzing this knowledge production have gone unstudied, undocumented, and unreported.

In no uncertain terms, a legacy of CRT research has illustrated that racism still pervades countless educational institutions and systems (Capper, 2015). By synthesizing Matsuda et al.'s (1993) six tenets of CRT and Patton Davis' (2016) three fundamental inequities facing people of Color in higher education through a CRT lens, this study aims to analyze the language used in position announcements to mitigate the racial oppression faced by people of Color and open the doors to the professoriate to a population as diverse as American society's.

Methodology

Catalyzing an application of critical race theory to tenure-track position announcements, Neuendorf's (2016) content analysis is an appropriate, effective methodology given its already expansive use in analyzing position announcements, the flexibility of its analytical framework, and its compatibility with CRT.

To begin, content analysis is "the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics," including both "human-coded analyses and computer-aided text analyses (CATA)" (Neuendorf, 2016, p. 1). The process itself is nine-fold: theory and rationale for the content analysis, defining variables and definitions, defining categories and units

of measurement, creating a code book database, sampling, assessing coder reliability, coding, ensuring reliability, and reporting on findings. For the purposes of this study, content analysis is first appropriate for its widespread use in analyzing position announcements, largely focused on academic librarians (Beile & Adams, 2000; Choi & Rasmussen, 2009; Croneis & Henderson, 2002; Heimer, 2002; Osorio, 1999; Reser & Schuneman, 1992; Sproles & Ratledge, 2004). Although this body of research bolsters the credibility of content analysis as an appropriate methodology for analyzing tenure-track position announcements, its implementation as a mixed methods approach is especially fitting for this study.

As a mixed methodology complementary to CRT, Neuendorf's (2016) content analysis demands that both quantitative and qualitative data be extracted from the text: both data types were extracted for the purposes of this study, as quantitative data (e.g. word usage, frequency, location) informed the qualitative data (e.g. diversity-specific statements in position announcements) gathered and examined. Furthermore, Equal Opportunity Employment laws require position announcements to include textual data regarding institutional compliance but do not outline specific, federally-mandated statements about expressing attitudes toward hiring people of Color. Per Neuendorf (2016), this language is considered "canonical text" (p. 266) in a position announcement, as such text establishes a thematic consistency across all textual instances but is not necessarily linguistically consistent across all textual instances. As a form of discourse analysis within the content analysis framework, quantitatively and qualitatively examining how, where, and what EEO language is incorporated into position announcements will inform all audiences as to how public flagship institutions operationalize federal law in hiring practices, further revealing institutional attitudes toward the hiring of people of Color to tenure-track faculty positions.

Content analysis of a position announcement is also appropriate given that because Neuendorf's (2016) content analysis is not limited to the types of variables measured or content in which the textual messages are created or presented. The position announcements analyzed in this study were posted on dozens of different institutional websites and included

various, institutional idiosyncrasies in each instance, some featuring institutionally-composed “diversity statements” embedded within the announcement. Also, understanding that position announcements—although including some institutionally-mandated information—are predominantly written by smaller department- or college-level hiring units and not the overarching institution itself, having such variable dynamism is necessary to decode both macro- and micro-level institutional attitudes toward people of Color aspiring to tenure-track faculty positions.

Most importantly, Neuendorf’s (2016) content analysis is an appropriate CRT catalyst, as CRT is interdisciplinary and crosses epistemological and methodological boundaries (Matsuda et al., 1993), akin to the type of epistemological and methodological flexibility offered by content analysis. Employed in hundreds of studies across dozens of epistemologies and theoretical frameworks, content analysis allows grounded theory coding strategies to identify thematic variables which inform the values, goals, and biases of those composing the message itself (Neuendorf, 2016). This is especially pertinent when analyzing the diversity-focused language and its location in position announcements, as an absence of such language perpetuates racism, oppression, and White supremacy, effectively silencing people of Color. Per Matsuda et al. (1993), CRT questions traditional, dominant ideologies of neutrality and colorblindness and challenges institutional priorities: these priorities can be made apparent in position announcements, as active soliciting and recruiting of people of Color conveys a diversity-friendly message, whereas a lack of diversity-focused language runs counter to many of the diversity- and inclusion-friendly practices purported to be priorities for institutions of higher education. If diversity is truly an institutional priority, a proper content analysis of position announcements helps define the discourse and messaging of these institutional priorities and ideologies, revealing institutional attitudes toward diversity through examination of the institution’s language.

Content analysis is not without its limitations, however, especially when analyzing web-based content such as a tenure-track position announcement. Kim and Kuljis (2010) found that many content analyses

suffer from three core deficiencies: being devoid of a theoretical framework, giving a one-dimensional perspective on a topic without combining other methods such as interviews or surveys, and analyzing web-based content that changes and is fluctuant and problematic. For the purposes of this study, I tie CRT to content analysis given their mutual flexibility, extant research already addresses other crucial perspectives of the faculty search process and the experiences of faculty of Color using a multitude of qualitative and quantitative measures, and I immediately archived all position announcement text to ensure consistency and fidelity of the position announcement's language.

Data

Justification of public flagships. The decision to focus on the position announcements made by public flagship institutions was influenced by three factors: the availability of position announcements made by public flagships, Professor Gasman's assertion that "elite" IHEs do not want people of color in faculty positions (Gasman, 2016a, 2016b), and the student-faculty diversity gap apparent on these campuses (College Factual, 2017).

First, after reviewing the nature and number tenure-track faculty position announcements made public by other types of IHEs, I found that all public flagships announced at least three tenure-track faculty positions and made these announcements publicly available during the traditional faculty recruitment and hiring season (October through January), whereas many private institutions, community colleges, and trade schools did not announce tenure-track faculty positions or did not make these announcements public. Furthermore, given the proximity to the Supreme Court's most recent Fisher II opinion permitting the University of Texas at Austin's use of race as an admissions factor in a holistic review of undergraduates (*Fisher v. University of Texas*, 2016), capturing the language of newly-published tenure-track position announcements in Fisher II's wake seemed appropriate given the precedent-setting nature of the ruling. These exploratory findings led me to examine three tenure-track position announcements per public

flagship, resulting in a total of 150 tenure-track position announcements included in this study.

Second, per Gasman's (2016a) quote, public flagships are often considered "elite" institutions of higher education given their usually low acceptance rates, predominantly R1 classifications, and number of tenure-track faculty positions compared to smaller private institutions or institutions that do not traditionally award tenure, such as community colleges and trade schools. Furthermore, of the over 2,400 four-year institutions in the United States, every public flagship ranks in the top 15% according to *U.S. News & World Report* (2017). These institutions also rank in the top 30% according to *Forbes* (2017) using a plethora of quantitative and qualitative criteria such as post-graduate success, student satisfaction, student debt load, academic success, retention rate, graduation rate, student-faculty ratio, and many other factors. And although many public flagships have suffered severe budget cuts in the face of shrinking state funds in recent years (Dirks, 2016), public flagships have pragmatically enrolled more out-of-state students to cover lost revenue and further diversify their student body (Powell, 2016). Here, the public flagship is often considered elite and is well-positioned to increase their on-campus diversity.

Perhaps most importantly, an incredible diversity gap exists when considering students of Color and faculty of Color on public flagship campuses. For instance, the average public flagship educates a 34.6% student of Color population yet employs a 25.5% faculty of Color population (College Factual, 2017). This nine percent gap varies wildly from institution to institution. The University of Alaska at Fairbanks has the largest student-faculty diversity gap of any public flagship at 36.4%, as 57.6% of its students are people of Color, whereas the faculty is 21.2% people of Color. Contrast UA-Fairbanks with the University of South Carolina, which has the largest faculty-student diversity gap of any public flagship: 43.3% of its faculty are people of Color, whereas 23.4% of its students are people of Color, constituting a 19.9% gap as of 2017 (College Factual, 2017).

Most telling of the underrepresentation of faculty of Color at public flagships is only four out of fifty institutions employ a higher percentage of faculty of Color than educate students of Color (University of South Carolina, 19.9% gap; University of Mississippi, 13.5% gap; University of New Hampshire, 2.7% gap; University of Tennessee, 1.6% gap). Otherwise, forty-six public flagships employ a lower percentage of faculty of Color than they educate students of Color. Furthermore, one public flagship employs only 10.3% faculty of Color, with fifteen other flagships employing a faculty of less than 20% people of Color (College Factual, 2017).

Ultimately, public flagships emerged as an appropriate type of IHE to examine in this study, given their number and availability of tenure-track position announcements, generally elite status, and the apparent diversity gaps between students and faculty of Color on these campuses. A complete listing of public flagships included in this study can be found in Table 1 below.

Table 1
List of Public Flagship Universities

State	Institution	State (cont'd)	Institution
Alabama	U of Alabama, Tuscaloosa	Montana	U of Montana
Alaska	U of Alaska, Fairbanks	Nebraska	U of Nebraska, Lincoln
Arizona	U of Arizona	Nevada	U of Nevada, Las Vegas
Arkansas	U of Arkansas	New Hampshire	U of New Hampshire
California	U of California, Berkeley	New Jersey	Rutgers
Colorado	U of Colorado, Boulder	New Mexico	UNM, Albuquerque
Connecticut	U of Connecticut	New York	SUNY, Buffalo
Delaware	U of Delaware	North Carolina	UNC, Chapel Hill
Florida	U of Florida	North Dakota	U of North Dakota
Georgia	U of Georgia	Ohio	Ohio State U
Hawaii	U of Hawaii, Manoa	Oklahoma	U of Oklahoma

Idaho	U of Idaho	Oregon	U of Oregon
Illinois	U of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania State U
Indiana	IU Bloomington	Rhode Island	U of Rhode Island
Iowa	U of Iowa	South Carolina	USC, Columbia
Kansas	U of Kansas	South Dakota	U of South Dakota
Kentucky	U of Kentucky	Tennessee	U of Tennessee, Knoxville
Louisiana	Louisiana State U	Texas	U of Texas, Austin
Maine	U of Maine, Orono	Utah	U of Utah
Maryland	U of Maryland, College Park	Vermont	U of Vermont
Massachusetts	U of Massachusetts, Amherst	Virginia	U of Virginia
Michigan	U of Michigan, Ann Arbor	Washington	U of Washington, Seattle
Minnesota	U of Minnesota, Twin Cities	West Virginia	West Virginia U
Mississippi	U of Miss, Oxford	Wisconsin	U of Wisconsin, Madison
Missouri	U of Missouri, Columbia	Wyoming	U of Wyoming

Data gathering procedures. Data for this study were gathered over a four-month period from October 2016 through January 2017; all position announcement data was extracted using computer-aided text analysis (CATA) software—per Neuendorf (2016)—to eliminate human error during the extraction, cleaning, automatic tabulation of variables, and content organization processes. The data were extracted from each institution’s “.edu” or a third-party host the institution uses as its official position announcement medium (e.g. *Inside Higher Ed* or *Academicjobsonline.org*). Once the data were extracted, cleaned, and organized, all text were inputted into a database including the following metadata: institutional name, position announcement date, rank of position (e.g., Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Open Rank), Hiring Unit (e.g., Department of Chemistry, College of Pharmacy), URL of the position announcement, and all text included in the position announcement, excluding hyperlinks on the menu bar and sidebar, institutional copyright information, and institutional images and logos.

Per Neuendorf (2016), I then sorted textual data using CATA software and isolated the root term “diversity” and its derivatives—“diverse,” “diversify,” “diversified,” and “diversification”—to avoid nonrandom errors and bias during the coding process. Once these terms were isolated, each position announcement was classified into “yes, includes diversity” and “no, does not include diversity” categories using a binary coding strategy (0 = no, 1 = yes). Then, once each “diversity” occurrence was identified, I coded each “diversity” occurrence as either “self-reflexive” or “candidate-focused.” Here, I needed to distinguish utility of “diversity” from a self-reflexive, self-descriptive usage (e.g., “Our student body is thoroughly diversified.”) and candidate-focused usage (e.g., “We seek diverse candidates.”). Likewise, once textual data were coded and organized based on diversity-focused language, I coded each “yes, includes diversity” position announcement using the aforementioned binary coding strategy: “includes an official diversity statement” and “does not include an official diversity statement.” I also noted how many times a position announcement featured the term “diversity” or a derivative, as well as if the position announcement included a word or phrase to address “marginalized” or “underrepresented” groups or “people of Color.” This simple word frequency analysis mitigated coder bias, especially given the usage of CATA software (Neuendorf, 2016).

Furthermore, I sorted each position announcement’s textual data into “yes, includes EEO statement” or “no, does not include EEO statement” using the same binary coding strategy. I included this data in the study as EEO statements, per the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which must be included in any position announcement and must make clear that the government contractor (employer) does not discriminate against race, creed, color, or national origin, all of which directly apply to an analysis of diversity-focused language. Once textual data were coded and organized based on EEO data inclusion, I extracted only EEO-specific language featured each position announcement’s “EEO Statement on Diversity” or similar statement to analyze what specific EEO diction each public flagship employs, as there are no federal laws requiring IHEs to use specific EEO diction.

Once the initial textual variables were coded, I performed keyword searches of each variable in each position announcement to examine the location of the diversity-focused language. For this measure, I defined the most common sections of a tenure-track faculty position announcement across all instances: job summary, job duties, job qualifications, institutional information, application instructions, diversity statement (if applicable), and EEO statement (if applicable). Coding the diversity- and EEO-specific language based on the section(s) in which they appear provides insight into how and where a hiring unit—and institution—operationalizes and discusses attitudes toward the recruitment of people of Color to tenure-track faculty positions.

Finally, to ensure trustworthiness of the data and reliability of the findings, I coded extracted text once in November 2016 and again blindly in April 2017 using the outlined protocol and achieving the same results, in addition to archiving all text for reanalysis and recoding.

Limitations

There exist three primary limitations in this study: the number and type of institutions examined, the nature and number of position announcements analyzed, and the phenomenon of radically inconsistent diversity interventions and hiring practices employed during the faculty search and screen process (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010; Smith et al., 2004).

Thousands of IHEs post tenure-track position announcements online. Of those announcements, an equally large number of individuals are involved in the composition of said announcements. This study solely focuses on public flagship institutions ($n = 50$) and does not include the thousands of community colleges and trade schools who also compose position announcements and hire tenure-track faculty members, although in smaller numbers than their public, four-year counterparts. These limitations can be addressed in future research, which can analyze community college and four-year tenure-track hires on a comparative basis or juxtapose private versus public tenure-track hiring practices.

Ultimately, this study does not purport to examine the entire faculty search process—extant research has performed this work and will continue to do so. Yet, this study fills an important gap in the literature that decades of faculty-focused research has not addressed. Although limited in its scope, this study acknowledges best practices in soliciting, recruiting, interviewing, and hiring faculty of Color (Smith et al., 2004) while seeking to augment extant literature and examine one often overlooked element of the faculty search and screen process: the language of the position announcement.

Findings

Results from a content analysis of tenure-track faculty position announcements (n = 150) posted online by public flagship institutions (n = 50) can be found in Table 2 below. Data in Table 2 is broken into three main sections. First, data related to occurrences of “diversity” within position announcements is at the top, specific uses of “diversity” is next, followed by alternative language used to describe “diversity,” and Table 2 concludes with EEO-focused analysis of position announcements in this study (n=150).

Given the data in Table 2, only 64.7% of all position announcements included the term “diversity,” bringing into question whether these position announcements adequately solicited diverse candidates, including people of Color. Moreover, institutions predominantly used “diversity” to describe themselves and not their ideal candidate for their tenure-track faculty position. As alternative references to “diversity,” both “race” and “color” were commonly used within tenure-track position announcements, echoing EEO language that is mandated within position announcements. Also related to mandatory EEO language, 12% of all position announcements did not include a mandatory EEO statement. This finding brings into question both the legal compliance of these position announcements and whether public flagship institutions “want” people of Color in tenure-track faculty positions, echoing Gasman’s (2016a, 2016b) prior work.

Table 2

Content analysis of tenure-track faculty position announcements (n = 150) posted online by public flagship institutions (n = 50)

Including the term “diversity” or derivative:	64.7% (97 pos. ann.)
Total instances of “diversity” or derivative:	264
Average frequency of “diversity” or derivative per announcement:	1.8
Including an official diversity statement:	15%
% of self-reflexive uses of “diversity” or derivative:	79.5% (210 instances)
Most common location for self-reflexive uses:	
<i>Job summary</i>	24.3% (51 instances)
<i>Job duties</i>	13.8% (29 instances)
<i>Job qualifications</i>	5.2% (11 instances)
<i>Institutional description/information</i>	33.3% (70 instances)
<i>Application instructions</i>	4.8% (10 instances)
<i>Diversity statement</i>	10.5% (22 instances)
<i>EEO statement</i>	8.1% (17 instances)
% of candidate-focused uses of “diversity” or derivative:	20.4% (54 instances)
Most common location for candidate-focused uses:	
<i>Job summary</i>	1.8% (1 instance)
<i>Job duties</i>	1.8% (1 instance)
<i>Job qualifications</i>	3.6% (2 instances)
<i>Institutional information</i>	9.2% (5 instances)
<i>Application instructions</i>	5.5% (3 instances)
<i>Diversity statement</i>	42.6% (23 instances)
<i>EEO statement</i>	35.1% (19 instances)
Most common candidate-focused alternative language addressing people of color in position announcement:	
“race”	(97 instances)
“color”	(94 instances)
“minorities/minority group members/underrepresented minorities”	(26 instances)
“underrepresented groups/populations”	(12 instances)
“people/persons of color”	(5 instances)
“racial and ethnic minorities/groups”	(4 instances)
Not including EEO statement:	12% (18 pos. ann.)
Not including EEO statement or “diversity” or derivative:	4.6% (7 pos. ann.)

Discussion

Position announcements analyzed in this study fall into three categories and articulate three different, racialized institutional priorities. Per Matsuda et al. (1993), these findings resemble somewhat of a bell curve: position announcements that omit diversity-related language and EEO statements (“We Are Complicit”), announcements that solicit diversity but not racial and ethnic diversity (“We Are Compliant”), and announcements that actively solicit people of Color (“We Are the 6% Who Want People of Color”).

Institutional Message 1: “We Are Complicit”

Of 150 position announcements, 18 position announcements (12%) did not include an EEO statement. Of these 18 position announcements, seven did not include an EEO statement or any diversity-focused language. Although close to an EEO statement, the institutional “.edu” website hosting two position announcements included the words “EEO is the law” in the menu screen, however, these words were not part of the position announcement itself. In this case, one had to hover the mouse over the website’s menu for “EEO is the law” to appear. Consequently, this position announcement was coded as “does not include an EEO statement,” as no EEO statement or related language (e.g. race, color, creed, nationality) was included in the text of the position announcement itself.

To be clear, seven position announcements did not include an EEO statement or any discussion of diversity in any form: not only were people of Color not solicited, but these position announcements did not describe the job or the institution’s students, community, or faculty members as diverse. Furthermore, per Section 202 of E.O. 11246 and its requirement that state contractors must state that “all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, creed, color, or national origin” in every position announcement, these seven position announcements violate federal law and Affirmative Action statutes.

In short, these announcements effectively send the institutional message, “We are complicit” with the academic prestige hierarchy articulated by Allen et al. (2002), thus sustaining the racialized barriers faced by people of Color in higher education (Matsuda et al., 1993) and facilitating U.S. higher education’s formal knowledge production rooted in racism and White supremacy (Patton Davis, 2016).

Institutional Message 2: “We Are Compliant”

Of 150 position announcements, 64.7% (n=97) included the word “diversity” or a derivative, with these terms occurring an average of 1.8 times per announcement. Putting these numbers into perspective, the average length of a position announcement was 1,079 words: diversity-focused language comprised 0.01% of words in the average position announcement.

However, of 264 total instances of the word “diversity” or a derivative, 210 instances (79.5%) were self-reflexive and none directly addressed or solicited people of Color. To be clear, none of these 210 instances described a candidate as diverse, nor did the position announcement use a phrase such as “people of Color” or “racial and ethnic minorities” to solicit people of Color to tenure-track faculty positions. Here, an absence of a discussion of racial and ethnic diversity reinforces Matsuda et al.’s (1993) racialized barriers and sustains Patton Davis’ (2016) racist, White supremacist venue of formal knowledge production which has produced a less-than-diverse professoriate as extant research has already demonstrated (Smith et al., 2004; Turner et al., 2008).

The most popular position announcement location for these self-reflexive uses was the “Institutional Description/Information” section (33.3% or 70 instances):

The (INSTITUTION) values candidates who are committed to fostering and furthering the culture of compassion, collaboration, innovation, accountability, diversity, integrity, quality, and trust that is integral to the mission of the (INSTITUTION).

The (INSTITUTION) is dedicated to the (INITIATIVE) to building and sustaining an inclusive campus community that welcomes and respects all members from diverse backgrounds.

The (INSTITUTION) is committed to enhancing efforts to attract and retain top students and faculty, educating the region's diversifying population and workforce.

Another popular location for these self-reflexive uses was the "Job Summary" section (24.3% or 51 instances):

The (INSTITUTION) is interested in candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to excellence by providing leadership in teaching, research and service towards building an equitable and diverse scholarly environment.

The (INSTITUTION) consists of two programs, in art history and in art practices, both of which embrace diversity and place value on interdisciplinary inquiries.

Likewise, self-reflexive uses were commonly found in the "Job Duties/Responsibilities" section (13.8%; n=29 instances):

Other desirable qualities include experience with diverse student populations, successful infusion of technology into teaching, and the ability to work collaboratively with colleagues, teachers, and schools.

Provide leadership in developing pedagogical techniques designed to meet the needs of diverse learning styles and intellectual interests.

Other self-reflexive uses ignore extant research and require candidates to carry the burden of recruiting and educating a diverse student body, producing a tokenizing effect for people of Color (Trower, 2003):

The (INSTITUTION) values candidates who have experience working in settings with students from diverse backgrounds, and possess a strong commitment to improving access to higher education for historically underrepresented students.

Successful candidates will also be expected to broaden participation among members of diverse, under-represented groups.

Tokenism—the symbolic inclusion of minorities in a group for the sake of appearances rather than inclusiveness or true diversity (Hirshfield, 2015)—is an appropriate definition of the nature of these statements. These tokenized statements do not solicit diverse faculty members, much less define what a commitment to diversity looks or feels like on a given public flagship campus. Symbolically, placing the statement “Commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion” underneath the “Minimum Qualifications” section—without explicating its terms or describing how these values shape a campus and its facilitated experiences—produces a sense of linguistic tokenism, or, a mentioning of diversity and inclusion for appearance’s sake. Through a CRT lens, engaging with buzzwords such as the familiar triad “diversity, equity, and inclusion” results in a series of banal platitudes that do little to eliminate the racialized barriers facing people of Color (Matsuda et al., 1993) or address any of the three critical inequalities facing people of Color in U.S. higher education (Patton Davis, 2016).

Here, these position announcements require candidates to recruit and educate students from diverse backgrounds but do not necessarily need to come from a diverse background, either racially, ethnically, or otherwise. Extant research has outlined the benefits to diverse student bodies by recruiting and retaining tenure-track faculty from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds (Antonio, 2003), yet it seems that these statements, if addressing people of Color, require these people of Color to carry the burden of recruiting and educating students of Color, a racialized barrier facing faculty of Color across many institution types (Smith et al., 2004). Similarly, other position announcements used self-reflexive, diversity-

focused language to prepare candidates to work with students from socioeconomically-diverse groups:

The (INSTITUTION) encourages applications from candidates whose skills and/or background prepare them to work effectively across socially diverse atmosphere and economic classes.

Again, this use of diversity-focused language speaks to the academic preparation of diverse students without soliciting a diverse faculty, and more specifically, people of Color.

The “Job Qualifications” section of the announcement was a less common location for self-reflexive uses (5.2% or 11 instances). Ironically, even though the “Job Qualifications” pertained directly to the candidate, the discussion of diversity was not candidate-focused and instead focused on a candidate’s ability and willingness to serve with and work for diverse people:

Demonstrated commitment to working collaboratively and with diverse populations.

Experience engaging with diverse stakeholder groups.

We are particularly looking for candidates who can operate effectively in a diverse community of students and faculty.

A “Diversity Statement” was included in 15% of all position announcements, yet institutions were nearly as likely to use “diversity” or derivative to describe an aspect of the institution (23 instances) as the candidate (23 instances):

The (INSTITUTION) is committed to a diverse and inclusive workforce by ensuring all our students, faculty, and staff work in an environment of openness and acceptance.

The (INSTITUTION) recognizes and values the importance of diversity and inclusion in enriching the employment experience of its employees and in supporting the academic mission.

The (INSTITUTION) is fully committed to achieving the goal of a diverse and inclusive academic community of faculty, staff and students.

Every statement above was extracted from a position announcement where “diversity” or a derivative was used, yet no mention was made of people of color or racial and/or ethnic diversity. In short, these position announcements send the messages that candidates will work in a diverse environment, perform diverse job duties, excel in diverse disciplines, educate diverse students, and contribute to a diverse academic environment without addressing the importance of racially and ethnically diversifying the professoriate.

Although each institutional identity has been removed, each above statement was extracted from a position announcement posted by an institution with a racial and ethnic diversity gap of at least 10%. Here, when an institution asserts that they are “fully committed to achieving the goal of diversity,” this goal has not been operationalized to actively solicit people of color to tenure-track faculty positions. Ultimately, position announcements including diversity-focused language without addressing people of color are simply compliant with institutional diversity initiatives: no special or extra effort is being made to recruit people of color to faculty positions, even though these methods have been proven successful over a decade ago (Smith et al., 2004).

Other compliant institutions used diversity-related language to address the candidate, and an overwhelming percentage of these candidate-focused uses of “diversity” or a derivative were included in the position announcement’s “Diversity Statement” (42.6% of all candidate-focused uses) and “EEO Statement” (35.1% of all candidate-focused uses). However, these uses of “diversity” failed to address people of color. For instance, these candidate-focused statements were extracted from the

“Diversity Statement” of position announcements and were the only candidate-focused statements in the entirety of the announcement:

The (INSTITUTION) is committed to attracting and retaining outstanding and diverse faculty and staff that will enhance our stature of preeminence in our three missions of teaching, scholarship, and full engagement in our community, the state of (OMITTED), and in the world.

As a former (OMITTED) institution, the (INSTITUTION) is committed to diversity in our workforce and to dual-career couples.

The (INSTITUTION) invites diverse applicants to consider our employment opportunities.

Here, these “Diversity Statements” solicit a broad, vague sense of diversity without addressing people of color or those from racial and/or ethnic backgrounds. The same was true of candidate-focused uses of “diversity” in “EEO Statements”:

Because broad diversity is essential to an inclusive climate and critical to the (INSTITUTION’S) goals of achieving excellence in all areas, we will holistically assess the many qualifications of each applicant and favorably consider an individual’s record working with students and colleagues with broadly diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds in educational, research or other work activities.

The (INSTITUTION) values diversity among its faculty, staff and students, and invites applications from all qualified individuals, including minorities, females, individuals with disabilities and veterans.

The (INSTITUTION) welcomes individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and ideas who embrace and value diversity and inclusivity.

Again, these EEO statements purport to value “diversity” in its prospective faculty, yet they make no mention of people of Color or those from racial and/or ethnic backgrounds. Instead, this study found that it was more likely for women and/or females to be solicited in tenure-track position announcements than people of color, even though the gender gap at public flagships is lesser than the student-faculty racial and/or ethnic diversity gap (College Factual, 2017) and women have substantially closed the gender gap in tenure-track hires in recent years (Finkelstein, Conley & Schuster, 2016), especially in STEM fields (Bernstein, 2015). Here, these compliant institutions—through their position announcements—purport to value diversity and even include diversity statements in their announcements, but do not address people of color and those from racial and/or ethnic backgrounds. This omission may be owed to novice search committees (Kayes, 2006), yet these announcements sustain Matsuda et al.’s (1993) racialized barriers facing people of color in faculty positions and perpetuates the predominantly White formal knowledge production of U.S. higher education institutions (Patton Davis, 2016).

Another form of compliance articulated in position announcements was a compliance with EEO laws, beyond a discussion of “diversity.” These compliant institutions often used linguistic placeholders to address people from underrepresented backgrounds, yet these institutions failed to include or address people of Color or those who belong to diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Of these linguistic placeholders, a discussion of “minorities” was often conflated with other underrepresented groups, such as women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities:

The (INSTITUTION) encourages applications from Minority Group Members, Women, Individuals with Disabilities, and Veterans.

Women, minorities and people with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Women and Minorities are encouraged to apply for all employment vacancies.

The phrase “underrepresented groups” or “underrepresented minority groups” was terse and broadly applied:

Applications from women and under-represented groups are strongly encouraged.

Application by members of all underrepresented groups is encouraged.

Women and underrepresented minority groups are especially encouraged to apply.

Overall, there were 38 instances of a position announcement soliciting “minorities/minority group members/underrepresented minorities” or those from “underrepresented groups/underrepresented populations,” yet none of these solicitations directly addressed people of Color.

However, the words “race,” “color,” and “minorities” were extremely common in EEO statements, many of which did not directly solicit racially and ethnically diverse faculty. Here, the EEO statement merely operationalized an institution’s compliance with federal laws and echoed President’s Kennedy’s 1961 claim that “discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin is contrary to the Constitutional principles and policies of the United States.” In fact, there were 97 instances of the word “race” and 94 instances of the word “color” in tenure-track faculty position announcements: of the 191 total instances, 139 instances were included in EEO statements and did not use “diversity” or a derivative to describe a candidate. Moreover, 189 instances, or 99% of the uses of “race” and “color” were included in EEO statements.

Even though incredibly detailed, some EEO statements omitted a discussion of diversity, instead employing boilerplate legalese to articulate compliance with EEO laws:

The (INSTITUTION) is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender identity and expression, age, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, disability, genetic information, marital status, breastfeeding, income assignment for child support, arrest and court record (except as permissible under State law), sexual orientation, domestic or sexual violence victim status, national guard absence, or status as a covered veteran.

Other EEO statements went as far as to mention specific legislation and the institution's required compliance:

The (INSTITUTION) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation in its employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions as required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other applicable statutes and University policies.

Other EEO statements used "minorities" as a linguistic placeholder for other types of diversity, again conflating the term with women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities, failing to directly solicit or address people of Color:

The (INSTITUTION) is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer with an eye on creating success for every employee by appreciating the uniqueness that each person brings to the workplace. The (INSTITUTION) strongly encourages applications from qualified women, minorities, veterans and individuals with disabilities.

The (INSTITUTION) is an equal opportunity employer. Women, minorities, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

However, not all EEO statements were written in such detail:

The (INSTITUTION) is an Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer.

The (INSTITUTION) is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

The (INSTITUTION) is committed to diversity and is an equal opportunity / equal access employer.

To be clear, the three statements above were extracted directly from three separate position announcements and were the only statements addressing EEO laws and/or anti-discriminatory hiring practices. The remaining text of each position announcement was completely devoid of diversity-related language of any form. Here, for Matsuda et al. (1993), a lack of diversity-focused language and a tendency to borrow EEO terminology perpetuates the dominant ideologies of neutrality, color blindness, and the continuation of White-centric practices, that for Patton Davis (2016), enables the institution to sustain a formal knowledge production pipeline rooted in racism and White supremacy. Furthermore, an articulation of compliance with EEO laws is markedly different than an active solicitation of people of Color. Through a CRT lens, compliant institutions do not prioritize a recognition of the valuable, experiential knowledge of people of Color, nor do they work to actively eliminate racialized barriers endemic to American life (Matsuda et al., 1993) by actively soliciting people of Color to tenure-track faculty positions.

By operationalizing “diversity” and its derivatives in self-reflexive, vague, broad ways and failing to address people of Color in any way, shape, or form, these institutions effectively send the message that “diversity” may be important, but specifically soliciting people of Color and closing the student-faculty racial and/or ethnic diversity gap is not a priority. From a CRT perspective, these position announcements—and their institutions—convey a message of passive compliance, perpetuating the inequities articulated by Matsuda et al. (1993) and Patton Davis (2016), and supporting Smith et al.’s (2004) study which found that only

11% of 300 scholars of Color felt actively recruited by IHEs, resulting in a failure to racially and ethnically diversify the professoriate.

Institutional Message 3: “We Are the 6% Who Want People of Color”

In total, 9 position announcements directly solicited people of Color and those from racial and/or ethnic backgrounds, representing 6% of the sample. However, of these nine announcements, only five institutions were represented out of fifty public flagships.

One institution preferred to use “racial and ethnic minorities” to address and solicit people of Color, included in all three of their position announcements as an EEO statement:

The (INSTITUTION) is an Equal Opportunity Employer committed to building a diverse workforce. We encourage applications from women, racial and ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities and veterans.

Another institution included “minority racial/ethnic groups” in two of their announcements:

Women, members of minority racial/ethnic groups and other designated classes are especially encouraged to apply.

Although conflated with other underrepresented groups, one institution included “persons of color” in one of their position announcements outside of the EEO statement:

The department encourages applications from persons of color, women, persons living with disabilities, and veterans.

The final three instances were included in one institution’s “diversity statement,” which was included in all three of its tenure-track position announcements, signaling an institution-wide commitment to soliciting people of color:

At the (INSTITUTION), we value our inclusive climate because we know that diversity in experiences and perspectives is vital to advancing innovation, critical thinking, solving complex problems, and creating an inclusive academic community. We translate these values into action by seeking individuals who have experience and expertise working with diverse students, colleagues and constituencies. Because we seek a workforce with a wide range perspectives and experiences, we encourage diverse candidates to apply, including people of color, women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.

Only one public flagship included a “Diversity Statement” in its position announcement, coupled with a direct solicitation of people of Color to its tenure-track position announcements. Upon further analysis, this institution has a student-faculty racial and/or ethnic diversity gap of 9.6%, which is slightly above the average of 9.1% (College Factual, 2017). However, the strategy of including a diversity statement in a position announcement and directly soliciting people of Color in the same announcement effectively adheres to Smith et al.’s (2004) best practices when recruiting faculty of Color, while also working to break down the racialized barriers articulated by Matsuda et al. (1993) and to disrupt the racist, White supremacist formal knowledge production which has typified U.S. higher education for decades (Patton Davis, 2016).

Implications and Conclusions

The implications for practitioners, tenure-track faculty hiring units, and educational researchers are numerous and profound. First, for many practitioners at public flagships and other IHEs, a two-fold diversity paradox exists: IHEs prefer to express their diversity as a trait possessed by their intellectual brain trust and their student body instead of their tenure-track faculty, with IHEs continuing to invest in diversity-focused departments, divisions, and units without monitoring and auditing crucial pieces of institutional discourse, such as tenure-track faculty position announcements. As a result, institutional mission statements and diversity initiatives, which commonly express an institution’s embracing

of diversity and inclusion, seem hollow and disingenuous (Taylor, Jones, & Hartman, 2019).

Furthermore, if documented racial and ethnic diversity gaps exist, public flagships—along with all other IHEs that hire teaching faculty both on and off the tenure track—should reevaluate their commitments to diversity and ask the question, “How are we operationalizing diversity?” and “Are we doing everything in our power to solicit people of Color?” Satisfactory and affirmative answers to these questions would undoubtedly lead the human resources practitioner and on-campus diversity officer to revisit their hiring practices and front-facing communication structures to ensure that faculty of Color are, indeed, being solicited in manner which does not tokenize or condescend the person of Color as is commonly practiced (Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Smith et al., 2004; Stanley, 2006; Trower, 2003). If the tenure-track faculty position announcements analyzed in this study truly do serve as a barometer for the current hiring climate of faculty of Color, that climate is lukewarm at best.

More importantly, individual hiring units across all IHE types must perform the same style of introspection and reflection when it comes to what diversity means and how a racially and ethnically diverse tenure-track faculty can be achieved. Perhaps it is truly best for institutional-level diversity statements and standardized EEO language to be automatically included in each tenure-track position announcement, but that does not necessarily mean hiring units will give equitable credence and attention to aspiring faculty of Color. In no uncertain terms, institutional racism has been apparent, given the extant student-faculty racial and/or ethnic diversity gaps, even though the faculty of Color “pipeline theory” has been debunked (Myers & Turner, 2004). As a result, institutions serious about hiring people of Color to tenure-track faculty positions must compose their position announcements in an inviting, solicitous manner toward people of Color. Hiring units can immediately alter their position announcement language to reflect a much more inclusive, racially and ethnically diverse mindset when soliciting people of Color to tenure-track faculty positions. Thus, it may be entirely possible that, upon reading a position announcement, a person

of Color is more likely to apply, increasing the size of the applicant pool and thus increasing the opportunity for a faculty to become racially and ethnically diverse: this paradigm shift would benefit all educational stakeholders.

However, educational researchers must proactively investigate educational position announcements of all kinds, including those in academic and non-academic roles, to examine whether the 21st century institution will be a racially and ethnically diverse one. There is an aching need for quality teachers in urban areas across all disciplines, as well as teachers who identify as men at the elementary grade level, in addition to faculty of Color in academe. Educational researchers must begin to audit front-facing forms of communication with diverse people from all walks of life to ensure that position announcements, as well as institutional policies and other forms of institutional communication, are equitable and unambiguously solicit people of Color, instead of continuing to marginalize and ignore said population. Above all, educational researchers need to familiarize themselves with educational and diversity-focused laws to analyze whether institutions at all levels are maximizing their resources to maximize their potential to racially and ethnically diversify their faculties and staffs. And it will take more than 6% to accomplish such a goal.

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