

# SCHOLARSHIP, TENURE & RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE

April 15, 2022

*Co-Chairs:*

**Patricia Diaz**, Empire Innovation Professor &  
Director of UB Microbiome Center

**Robert Granfield**, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

 **University at Buffalo** The State University of New York



## Subcommittee members:

- **Patricia Diaz**, Co-Chair, *Empire Innovation Professor of Oral Biology, Director of UB Microbiome Center, School of Dental Medicine*
- **Robert Granfield**, Co-Chair, *Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs*
- **Diana Aga**, *Henry M. Woodburn Professor of Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences; Director of UB RENEW Institute*
- **Rajan Batta**, *Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Diversity, SUNY Distinguished Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences*
- **Laina Bay-Cheng**, *Associate Dean for Faculty Development, Professor, School of Social Work*
- **Suzanne Dickerson**, *Division Chair – Biobehavioral Health and Clinical Sciences, Professor, School of Nursing*
- **Cecil Foster**, *Professor and Director of Graduate Studies, Africana and American Studies, College of Arts and Sciences*
- **Joseph Gardella**, *SUNY Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences*
- **Yoly Gonzalez-Stucker**, *Interim Department Chair and Associate Professor of Oral Diagnostic Sciences, School of Dental Medicine*
- **Fabiola Henri**, *Assistant Professor of Linguistics, Romance Languages and Literatures, College of Arts and Sciences*
- **Makau Mutua**, *SUNY Distinguished Professor, Margaret W. Wong Professor, School of Law*
- **Krishna Rajan**, *Erich Bloch Chair, Professor of Empire Innovation, Materials Design and Innovation, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences/ College of Arts and Sciences*
- **William Solomon**, *Interim Department Chair and Professor of English, College of Arts and Sciences*
- **Henry Louis Taylor, Jr.**, *Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, Director of Center for Urban Studies, School of Architecture and Planning*
- **Miriam Thaggert**, *Associate Professor of English, College of Arts and Sciences*

# CHARGE AND BACKGROUND



# Charge summary

- Subcommittee was tasked with:
  - Reviewing tenure and promotion (T&P) processes and policies to determine whether they could lead to racial inequities and whether they recognize all kinds of scholarship, and to suggest ways to address those issues based on best practices
  - Examining procedures for recognizing faculty and nominating faculty for awards to identify potential for bias

## Background: assumptions

- While the subcommittee recognizes the importance of diversity writ large, it focused on the lived experiences of faculty from historically underrepresented minority (URM) backgrounds.
- This subcommittee is working on issues and questions that are at the heart of UB's mission and vision as a public research university; the recommendations will positively impact all UB faculty.
- The subcommittee is dedicated to making changes to T&P and recognition guidelines/processes to make them more equitable and inclusive, not less rigorous.
- The success of the implementation of the recommendations requires broad support and commitment across the university, as well as monitoring to ensure that changes are implemented/maintained and to hold leadership accountable.

# Background: observations

- Unlike many of our AAU peers, UB's T&P guidelines do not address diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.
- The subcommittee identified the following kinds of research/scholarship as being undervalued and overlooked at the university and within T&P guidelines:
  - Publically engaged research
  - Public scholarship
  - Scholarship focused on issues of racial and social injustice
- Service generally is also undervalued, which is particularly problematic as faculty of color and women at UB and nationally perform more and often invisible service.
- Student evaluations have been shown to be biased against women and people of color, but they are the primary way of assessing teaching in T&P.
- The 2017 COACHE survey of faculty career satisfaction at UB showed that URM faculty express greater dissatisfaction around the clarity of process and standards for promotion to full professor.
- Currently, there is little diversity within the most distinguished internal UB and SUNY awards.
- There are a range of practices to nominate faculty for awards across UB. In departments that do not have a systematic practice for nominating faculty, the process is opaque and seems to be based on favoritism/bias.

# KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



# Key recommendations

- Add a vision and research statement to preamble of UB T&P guidelines that directly connects faculty contributions to the university’s mission and acknowledges the myriad kinds of scholarly work faculty undertake. Subcommittee drafted a statement.
- Better recognize and support civic engagement and service activities:
  - Add a statement to the service section of the university T&P guidelines that clearly states that service is important and that faculty are expected to engage in service.
  - Evaluate civic engagement activities as research when they entail applying one’s scholarly expertise/skills to positively impact communities.
  - Change the word “service” to “engagement” to destigmatize engagement activities.
- For T&P dossiers, broaden the groups from which letters of recommendation are solicited beyond AAU to ensure the most appropriate evaluators are assessing faculty contributions.
- Provide faculty members with more power in choosing how to present teaching and demonstrate effectiveness in the classroom.
- T&P materials should address contributions to advancing racial equity and social justice to assure accountability for advancing UB’s goals.
- Ensure that T&P guidelines/standards at all levels are clear, written out, and well defined to help clarify processes.

## Key recommendations (cont.)

- To advance UB's research and engagement missions, provide university-wide support for public engagement, particularly that which addresses racial and social justice (e.g., civic engagement grant, research institute, endowed chairs, etc).
- Ensure that all departments/schools have an equitable system (i.e., a faculty awards committee) and sufficient resources for faculty award nominations to assure that departments are equitably and actively pursuing awards for faculty, and particularly those faculty members who have historically been overlooked.
  - For smaller departments, this may require working with faculty in other departments to broaden representation.
- Require chairs/deans to equitably and transparently assign service and create a process for faculty to report when they are undertaking unassigned service such as mentoring or community engagement.
- Require each unit to develop policies of accountability and training to prevent abuse of power and bias at the department, school and university level for faculty T&P and recognition. Ensure that faculty who serve on tenure/promotion/awards committees and/or as internal reviewers are committed to upholding equity.
- Include contributions to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in the 5-year decanal review and chair review procedures. Require chairs and deans to describe the contributions they have made and plan to make moving forward, and also ask for constituent feedback, where appropriate.

# IMPLEMENTATION



# Mechanisms for implementation

- Hold a series of town halls in Spring 2022 to introduce and build wide support for the proposed changes.
- Changes not requiring Faculty Senate approval can and should be implemented before Fall 2022 to align with new faculty joining UB.
- Changes to university T&P guidelines will require approval from Faculty Senate and can be made in 2022-23 for Fall 2023 implementation.
- The subcommittee recommends that the President/Provost communicate and endorse recommendations and changes to T&P to deans and chairs who should hold conversations with their faculty about the changes being made.
- The subcommittee recommends that the Provost meets with departments to set expectations, talk about why changes are being made, and ensure that departments are following changes.
- Create a special university-level oversight committee with responsibility for shepherding and reporting progress on the actions we are recommending and making sure that changes are being made, particularly within departments and schools. Committee members should also work with Faculty Senate to make changes to university T&P. Associate deans tasked with overseeing T&P may be most appropriate to serve on committee.