



Advancing Equity in Your Role as a Faculty Evaluator

At Villanova University, equitable evaluation is the responsibility of each individual committee member. This responsibility is particularly critical in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The University acknowledges broad and varied impacts of the pandemic for faculty, does not require faculty to include personal impact statements in their materials, and seeks to mitigate risks to faculty careers through careful application of existing policy (read the *University Statement* and Provost's cover letter [here](#)). The practices suggested below are intended to help you carry out your responsibility for equitable evaluation in faculty promotion processes with and without tenure considerations.

Frame your evaluation in terms of contribution to mission. Refresh your knowledge of the University Mission, Diversity Statement, and Strategic Plan and related statements from college, school, or department to orient your perspective. Consider relevance and significance of the candidate's efforts not only for the intended scholarly audience but also for our students, institution, and external community, as we strive to embody our core values of *Veritas, Unitas, and Caritas*.

Resist the natural tendency to compare a candidate to others. The candidacy in your hands may reflect a very different life history and path than those familiar to you. Your own expertise and experiences may not be a reliable point of comparison. Different journeys yield different priorities and perspectives, and these differences add richness and value to our shared work and life.

Bring a spirit of self-awareness and reflection. Relying on quick decision-making and placing confidence in fair-minded intentions can inadvertently disadvantage a candidate. Rubrics or similar evaluation tools are important for implementing a fair process, but they can also give a false sense of objectivity and embed unexamined preferences and expectations. If the effect of your rubric has been to exclude a candidate from career advancement, consider whether there is a problem with the rubric rather than with the candidate. Allocate sufficient time for committee work, thorough review of materials, and formulation of an independent opinion prior to considering the perspectives of other committee members.

Consider the full range of evidence provided by a candidate in assessing scholarship, teaching and service. Quantitative metrics may be relevant measures of quality but could very well be insufficient. Such metrics (e.g., journal impact factors, citation metrics, and student evaluation scores) can reflect and magnify structural biases within the academy and society; thus, it is important not to lean into them as the ultimate standards for evaluation. Be attentive to context for a candidate's choice of journals, publishers, or teaching methods, and consider how these contribute to the overall strategy for impact. Faculty may also differ in their



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approach to their profession; some may favor individual effort while others may choose a collaborative approach. Collaborative work and service work are explicitly valued at Villanova.

Approach expectations for continuous progress with a broad perspective. Evaluators have discretion in contextualizing a candidate's overall progress and career trajectory (both past and forward looking) as well as the contributions a candidate has made and will likely make in the future. Become fully conversant in the Rank and Tenure statements of the University and your college/department; these statements map boundaries of discretion within agreed expectations.

Grow your understanding and competencies for recognizing and responding to equity barriers. Critically examine assessment criteria with the intent to remove elements that work against equitable evaluation. Learning opportunities designed for non-faculty audiences can offer knowledge that transfers to the faculty context; take advantage of workshops, lectures, and materials available through university initiatives, college-level offices, the press, other institutions, and community groups. Find some resources to get started [here](#) and [here](#).

Hold one another accountable for your conversations and reports. Discussion and debate among committee members and the narrative within any reports you develop have a strong impact on campus climate for faculty. Biases can occur at the individual and group levels in decision making processes; a periodic review of implicit bias [training materials](#) will prove useful. Although a committee's deliberations are confidential, the examples set and lessons learned by its members while serving in the evaluator role do have a ripple effect. The written products of the evaluation process reflect not only upon the candidate, but also on you as an evaluator and on the institution.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Goodwin, S. A., & Mitchneck, B. (2020, May 13). [STEM equity and inclusion \(un\)interrupted?](#) Inside Higher Ed.

O'Meara, K. (2021, February 24). [Seizing discretion to advance full participation.](#) Inside Higher Ed.

Padilla, D. (2020, November 11). [Hrabowski: Reversing structural racism at higher ed institutions starts with equity.](#) Diverse Issues in Higher Education.

Russell, J., Brock, S., & Rudisill, M. (2019). [Recognizing the impact of bias in faculty recruitment, retention and advancement processes.](#) *Kinesiology Review*, 8(4), 291-295.

Valian, V., & Stewart, A. (2021, March 31). [Inclusive academic science: Achieving diversity and excellence](#) [Presentation]. 2001 to 2021 - Celebrating 20 Years of NSF ADVANCE.

Developed by VISIBLE: The Villanova Initiative to Support Inclusiveness and Build Leaders, November 2021.

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant Number 1824237. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.



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