EQUITY IN FACULTY HIRING INSTITUTE

FACULTY HIRING TOOLKIT

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HOW TO CITE

Center for Urban Education. (2017). *Institute on Equity in Faculty Hiring at Community Colleges Toolkit*. Los Angeles, CA: Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California

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SELECTED SURVEY FINDINGS

Prior to the Institute, CUE asked participants to complete a survey on the faculty hiring process at their institutions. These responses helped broaden our understanding of the particular opportunities and challenges facing community colleges that seek to diversify the faculty and embed equity into hiring policies and practices. Here, we present selected survey findings. We hope these findings will be a point of discussion within and across the campus teams during the Institute and at your campuses upon your return.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

119 individuals responded to the survey, representing 21 community colleges and 4 community college districts in California, and two community colleges from outside the state. 9 did not note their institutional affiliation.

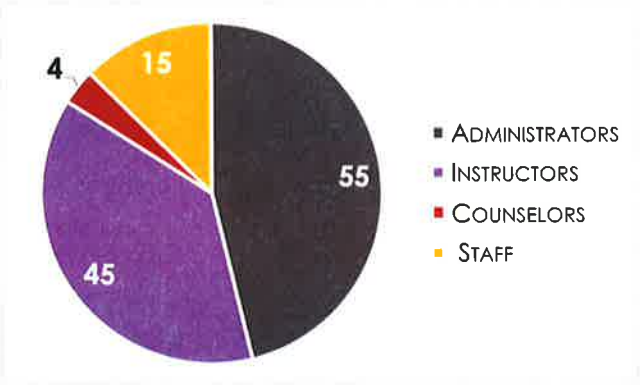

Figure 1. Survey respondents by role (n=119).

Respondents include 55 administrators, 45 instructors, 15 staff, and 4 counselors (Figure 1). Close to half have been at their institutions for more than 10 years (Figure 2).

92 respondents have been involved in at least 1 faculty hiring process, while 27 have not (Figure 3).

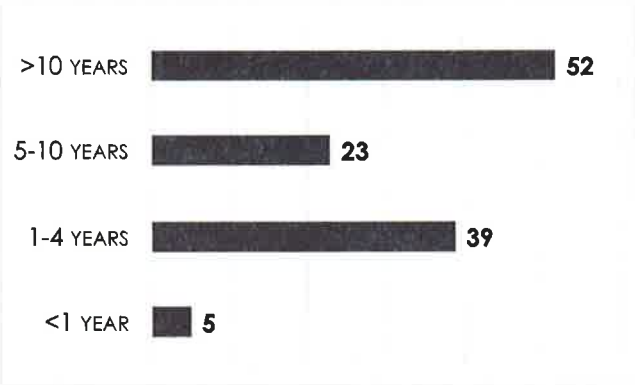

Figure 2. Respondents' length of time at current institution (n=119).

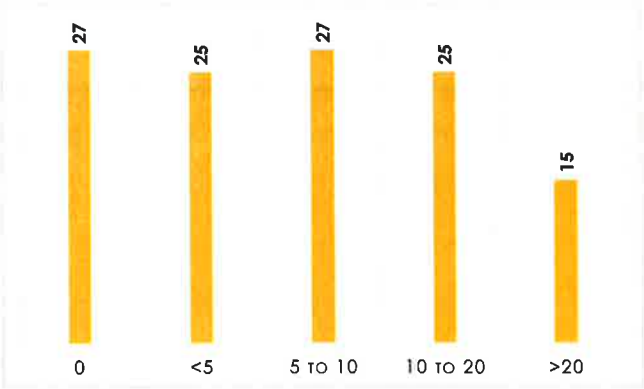

Figure 3. Number of faculty hiring processes in which respondents have been involved (n=119).

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IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS FOR FACULTY CANDIDATES

Respondents who have been involved in the faculty hiring process were asked to rank from 1 (most important) to 6 (least important) characteristics sought in faculty candidates. Of the 6 characteristics presented, content and/or disciplinary expertise was considered the most important and ability to connect with and support students the second most important (Table 1).

Table 1. Important Characteristics for Faculty Candidates (n=91)

	Number of Responses Per Rating					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Content and/or disciplinary expertise	36	15	13	21	6	0
Pedagogical or teaching approach	18	23	21	21	2	6
Ability to connect with and support students	22	33	25	10	1	0
Ability to connect with and support students from racially minoritized groups	13	19	25	24	6	3
Fit with department culture	2	1	4	7	58	18
Fit with campus culture	0	0	4	7	17	61

OUTCOMES OF THE FACULTY HIRING PROCESS

Respondents who have been involved in the faculty hiring process were also asked what they consider a 'successful' outcome of this process to be. In general, responses focused on (1) specific aspects of how the hiring process unfolded, and (2) ideal characteristics of the faculty member(s) hired.

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Table 2. Success Outcomes of Faculty Hiring Process (n=89)

	Success Outcomes	Number of Responses
Hiring Process	Strong and diverse pool of candidates	11
	Fair and equitable process	10
	All committee members agree on candidates to hire	9
Faculty Characteristics	Student centered	31
	Serves the department and/or college	16
	Bring new perspectives	9
	Qualified	9
	Bring demographic diversity	8
	Care about teaching and learning	8
	Who stay and are tenured	6
	Equity-focused	4
	Focus on marginalized students	3
	Passionate	3
	Understand the community college mission	3

EVALUATING CANDIDATES

79 respondents noted that the committees on which they have served used a rubric to evaluate candidates, while 13 stated that no rubric was used. When asked whether those rubrics include criteria for assessing candidates' contributions to racial/ethnic equity and diversity at the department and/or campus levels, respondents were equally split: 25 said yes; 23 said somewhat or in a limited fashion; and 28 said no.

Those who suggest that racial/ethnic equity and diversity are treated in a limited way offered a number of insights. For example, several respondents noted that rubrics do not focus directly on racial/ethnic equity and diversity, but on 'inclusivity in the classroom' and 'experience with supporting diverse student populations and community members.' Others add that if included, racial/ethnic equity and diversity are 'awarded minimal points' and are 'not weighted as heavily as other factors such as relevant experience' or 'teaching pedagogy.'

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DIVERSIFYING THE FACULTY

Over 30 percent of respondents said that diversifying the faculty means having a faculty composition that mimics the college's current student body or hiring faculty who know and understand how to support students (Figure 4). For 28 percent of respondents, to 'diversify' means hiring faculty with varied identity backgrounds—for example, race/ethnicity, gender, ability, LGBTQ, etc.—while for 23 percent, it means hiring more racially/ethnically diverse staff.

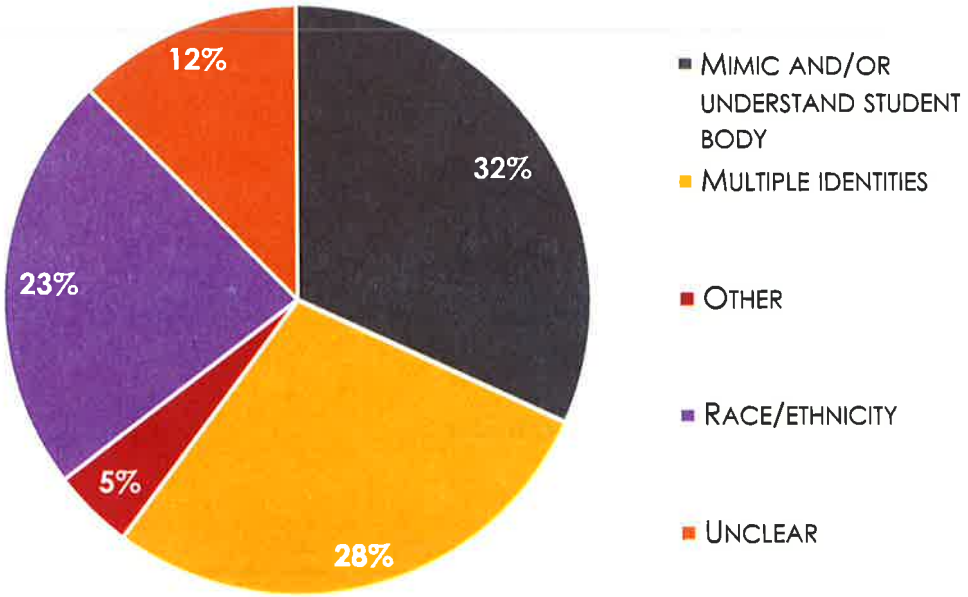

Figure 4. What does it mean to 'diversify' the faculty? (n=113)

60 percent of respondents said that the faculty hiring process at their institution does *not* yield a diverse pool of candidates (Figure 5), while 91 percent said that their institution faces challenges when trying to hire faculty of color in particular (Figure 6).

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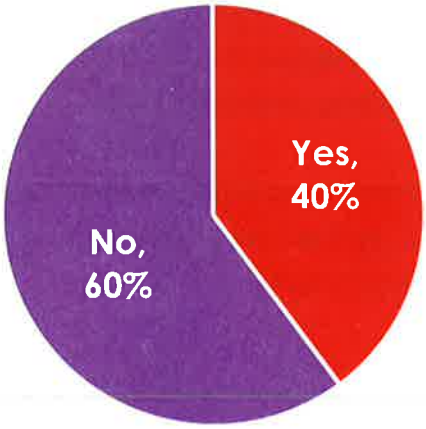

Figure 5. Is the hiring process designed to yield a diverse faculty? (n=113).

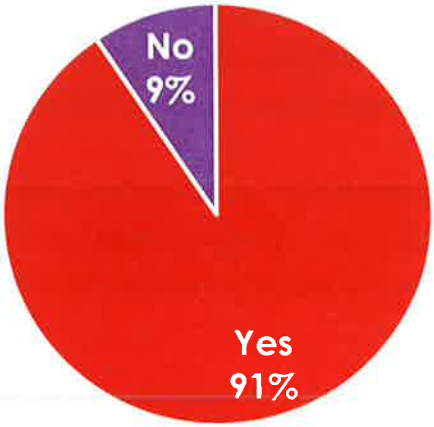

Figure 6. Does your college face challenges when hiring faculty of color? (n=117).

Table 3. Why does the hiring process *not* yield a diverse pool of candidates? (n= 68)

Rationale	Number of Responses
Not designed to yield a diverse faculty	21
Inadequate outreach	20
Qualifications sought do not align with diversity	10
Lack of understanding, commitment to diversity	11
Inadequate training	9
Candidates are screened out	8
Reputation (e.g., 'white' campus, high cost of living)	7
Recruitment materials do not convey commitment to diversity	4
Lack of specific diversity goals	4
Other (e.g., Proposition 209, having homogenous [white] faculty)	4
Not enough qualified candidates of color	3
Geographic location	2
Inadequate resources	2

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Among respondents who said that the hiring process at their college does not yield a diverse pool of candidates, about a third said that this process is *not* designed to achieve this outcome and that their institutions are not doing enough to recruit diverse candidates (Table 3).

Respondents who said that their college faces challenges when hiring faculty of color suggested that not having enough qualified candidates of color in the applicant pool, biases in the hiring process, and lack of commitment to hiring faculty of color are factors (Table 4).

Table 4. What are the biggest challenges with hiring faculty of color? (n=101)

Rationale	Number of Responses
Not enough qualified candidates of color	29
Implicit and/or explicit biases in hiring process	25
Lack of commitment to hiring faculty of color	17
Homogenous (white) campus and community	15
Inadequate outreach	13
High cost of living	12
Geographic location	11
Lack of diversity on search committees	9
Inadequate pay/incentives	7
Inadequate policies	7
Other (e.g., reputation issues, collective bargaining policies)	7
Limited understanding of faculty of color contributions and value	6
Limited support for faculty of color	4
Lack of emphasis on screening criteria	3

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While most respondents believe that their college leaders are committed to diversifying the faculty in terms of race and ethnicity, less than half said the same when asked about whether this commitment is widespread across their institution (Figure 7).

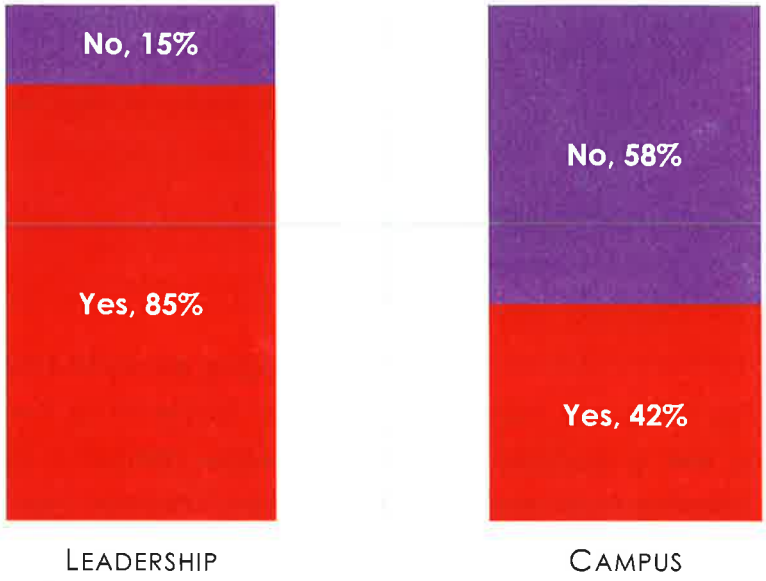

Figure 7. Leadership (n=112) versus campus (n=114) commitment to diversifying the faculty in terms of race and ethnicity

The lack of commitment to diversify the faculty in terms of race and ethnicity manifests in a number of ways, including:

- Limited explicit discussion of racial and ethnic diversity 'outside of people of color circles or equity committees.'
- Push back on attempts to include 'understanding of success, equity, and culturally competent pedagogy' in job announcements.
- 'Talking the talk' but not 'walking the walk' with respect to hiring faculty of color.
- Not acknowledging the importance of diversity
- Not seeing the lack of racial/ethnic diversity in the faculty as a problem
- Considering 'diversity' a 'bonus' rather than 'requirement of a qualified candidate.'
- An unwillingness to 'ruffle feathers and hold departments accountable for not diversifying their faculty.'
- An unwillingness to 'discriminate against white people.'

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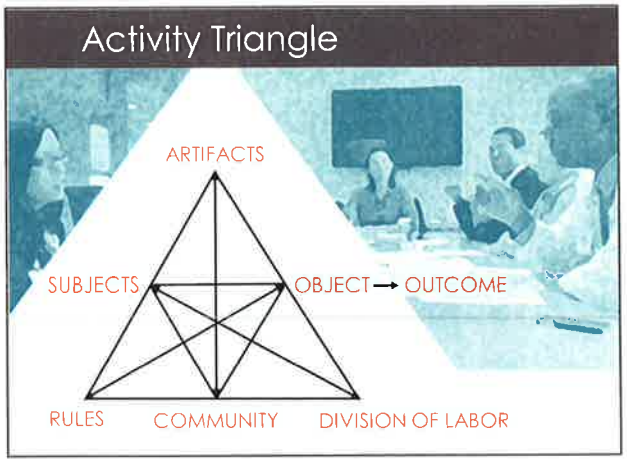
Activity Triangle as the Framework for Racial Equity in Faculty Hiring



The activity triangle represents the principles of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), a theory of learning and change that falls within the broad family of sociocultural perspectives. At the heart of this model is the idea that *institutional practices such as hiring, teaching, leading, and managing cannot be understood independently of social, cultural, political, and historical influences.*

In applying the CHAT framework to the goal of racial equity in faculty hiring, our intent is to show that faculty hiring is a process that involves people in interaction that is mediated by tools. The people involved in the hiring process have multiple identities, including racial, gender, and disciplinary. They also have different sources and kinds of power. And they may have different beliefs and goals. Being conscious of the identities of the individuals who are engaged in the hiring process is important. Committees that have racial, gender, and thinking diversity are likely to be more open to equity in faculty hiring.

Additionally, the tools that support faculty hiring have a history as to how they came about. Hiring tools can become ossified. They can become normalized and operate as if they were rules that are inviolable. Ossification and normalization of outdated tools operate at cross-purposes of racial equity in faculty hiring. They can bias the process so that faculty of color are excluded based on position descriptions and requirements that are, in addition to being irrelevant, prevent the hiring of faculty who possess equity-minded competence.

To change the hiring process to focus on racial equity, CUE finds that the concept of hiring as an activity setting that is governed by the elements of the activity triangle provides a process that makes change less daunting. The elements of the activity triangle consider the structural, political, human, and cultural factors that touch every aspect of the hiring process.

While we recognize that racial beliefs, attitudes, and power asymmetries can undermine efforts to create a practice and culture of racial equity in faculty hiring, we believe that attending to the material aspects of hiring such as the content of the job announcement, the questions asked of candidates, and the assessment criteria may be an easier path to changing people's minds. Sometimes changes in practitioners' beliefs happen after they have made changes in practices.

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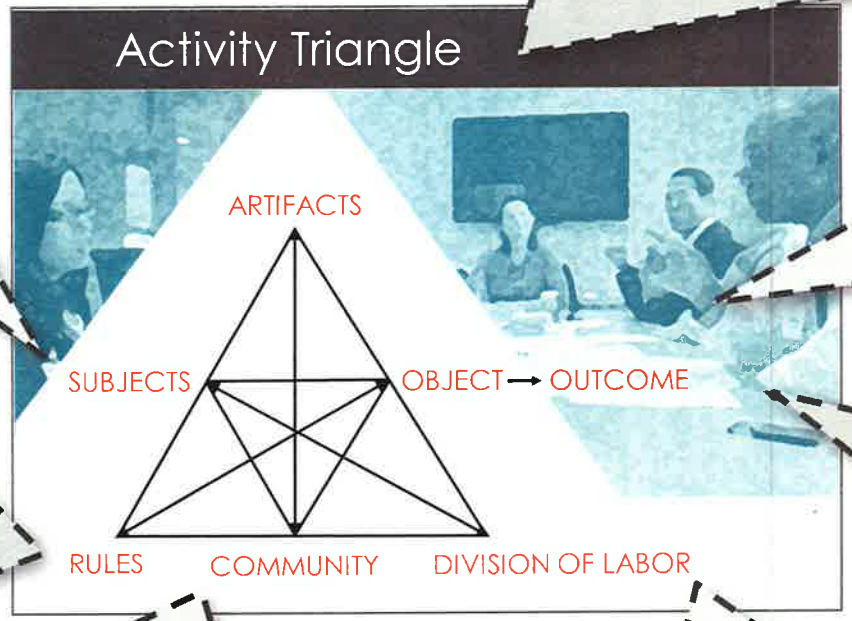
Elements of the Activity Setting

For example, the hiring process can become more equity-focused by creating new requirements and criteria for evaluating candidates, or by creating new forms of interviewing designed to assess candidates' knowledge of concepts that impact the success of minoritized populations such as "sense of belonging" or "validation theory."

Tools: All *artifacts*, including language, that are the tools subjects/participants use to carry out the hiring process. These artifacts/tools include hiring guidelines, job descriptions, means of communicating with candidates, templates for reviewing candidates, interview questions, and more.

The **subjects / participants** involved in the hiring process have multiple identities, including racial, gender, and disciplinary. They also have different sources and kinds of power. And they may have different beliefs and goals.



The **object** is 1) to increase the representation of racial/ethnic minoritized faculty and 2) build a critical mass of equity-minded faculty.

Explicit and implicit **rules** shape the hiring process. Rules are set by the institution and the state. There are also cultural practices that over time have taken the appearance of rules. There are also procedural rules, e.g., who qualifies to serve on a search committee, how interviews are conducted, where positions are announced, etc.

The **outcome** is to achieve the equity goals delineated in Vision for Success: eliminate racial equity gaps in degree attainment and transfer.

The **community** involved in the hiring (the department, academic senate, etc.) have their own shared beliefs and goals.

Division of labor The distribution of tasks, responsibilities, and decision-making power among the participants in the hiring process.

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Competencies of Equity-Minded Practitioners

1	Understands the accountability and critical dimensions of equity.
2	Reframes race-based inequities as a problem of practice and views their elimination as an individual and collective responsibility.
3	Encourages positive race-consciousness.
4	Reflects on institutional and teaching practices and aims to make them more culturally responsive.
5	Strategically navigates resistance to equity efforts and aims to build buy-in among colleagues.