

CTL Mellon Inclusive Teaching and Advising Grant Application

Collaboration Group: Professors Davarian Baldwin, Seth Markle, and Diana Paulin and Anita Davis, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Phase I - Discovery and Plan:

This past summer of protests and calls for an end to systemic racism against Black people have also sparked renewed conversation about the historically-rooted, racialized power dynamics that exist in higher education. One of the major problems associated with racism in academia is the underrepresentation of Black faculty, especially at tenure-track/tenured level. At Trinity, this problem has been identified by faculty, administrators, and students alike.¹ Diversity and inclusion initiatives at PWIs in the past 30 years have fallen short of stated aspirations, especially when it comes to hiring and retaining Black faculty. While there is unquestionably an overlap in terms of common experience with systemic racism in academia for all faculty of color, the history of anti-Black racism within U.S. institutions, requires strategies that focus specifically on the experiences of Black faculty. For Black faculty, policies, practices, and procedures that perpetuate discrimination or forms of bias at PWIs can manifest in teaching, research, advising and service, posing significant obstacles for hiring and promotion as well as professional development at all stages of their careers. In addition, the lack of representation of Black faculty has been identified by Black students at Trinity (and beyond) as having a negative impact on their academic success.

We have come together as three Black tenured faculty members, representing History, American Studies, English, and International Studies in response to this ongoing, multi-layered problem. We are applying for a Mellon Grant to gauge the possibilities of forming what we are tentatively calling **the Black Faculty Consortium of Connecticut (BFCC)**. A consortial approach enables us to engage with a larger network of Black faculty given the small number of Black faculty at a single institution. This initiative's first phase is to work in partnership with Anita Davis (VP for DEI) to bring together Black academics and DEI practitioners from Trinity College, Connecticut College, and Wesleyan University for a minimum of two meetings. At these meetings, these stakeholders will engage in facilitated conversations to determine the viability of a consortium model of Black faculty professional development as an effective approach to increasing recruitment and retention of Black faculty at PWIs. The next phase would entail moving forward with the creation of a pilot program that is well-researched and responsive to the identified needs of Black faculty across the three institutions.

¹ See Umoja Coalition, "Trinity College Demands 2020" (Summer 2020), pp. 1-4.; Racial Justice Committee, "Final Report" (November 19, 2020), pp.1-7.