

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION OF POSTSECONDARY FACULTY AND SCHOLARS: RHODE ISLAND

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WHY DIVERSITY IN THE POSTSECONDARY FACULTY WORKFORCE MATTERS

The existing literature presents three major arguments for diversifying the postsecondary faculty workforce:

- **Instructors of color serve as role models to students of color.** A number of studies convey the positive theoretical and empirical impact that instructor "role models" (i.e., own-race teacher-student matches) have on students of color:
 - a. *Students of color benefit from seeing adult role models in positions of authority* (Villegas and Clewell 1998, King 1993, Villegas and Lucas 2004, Irvine 1988). One study found that the racial and ethnic composition of the instructor workforce sends strong messages to students about our society's distribution of power (Mercer and Mercer 1986). If students did not see adults of color in professional roles at educational institutions and instead saw them over-represented in non-professional positions, they implicitly deduced that people of color are not cut out to hold positions of authority in society. As role models, instructors of color can improve students' sense of self-worth and motivate them to strive for success (Cole 1986, King 1993, Waters 1989).
 - a. *Instructors of color can help overcome the "soft bigotry of low expectations"* (Beady and Hansell 1981, Ferguson 2003). Research shows that instructors of color are more likely to set higher expectations for students of color, who are more sensitive to instructor expectations than white students (Irvine 1988, Kash and Borich 1978, McKown and Weinstein 2002).
- **Instructors of color can improve student outcomes.** Studies suggest that minority students are more likely to persist in their college degree program if they have an introductory course that is taught by a minority professor (Price 2010). Among community college students, gaps between minority and non-minority students in pass rates, grades, and courses dropped are smaller when classes are taught by professors who are minorities themselves (Fairlie, Hoffmann, & Oreopoulos 2011).
- **Scholars of color have made an enormous impact on students and society as a whole.** In addition to publishing numerous influential scholarly articles in academic journals, many scholars of color have gained recognition outside of academia for their other notable contributions. Some of the most influential scholars of color include **Dr. Cornel West**, professor emeritus at Princeton University and Professor of the Practice of Public Philosophy at Harvard University, **Dr. Ta-Nehisi Coates**, Distinguished Writer in Residence with the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute at New York University, and **Dr. Mario Molina**, a former MIT chemistry professor who won a Nobel Prize in 1995 for "his research on how man-made compounds affect the ozone layer."

Yet, despite these demonstrated benefits, the data below show **gaps that exist between Black and Hispanic doctoral scholars and instructional staff and their white colleagues.**

FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

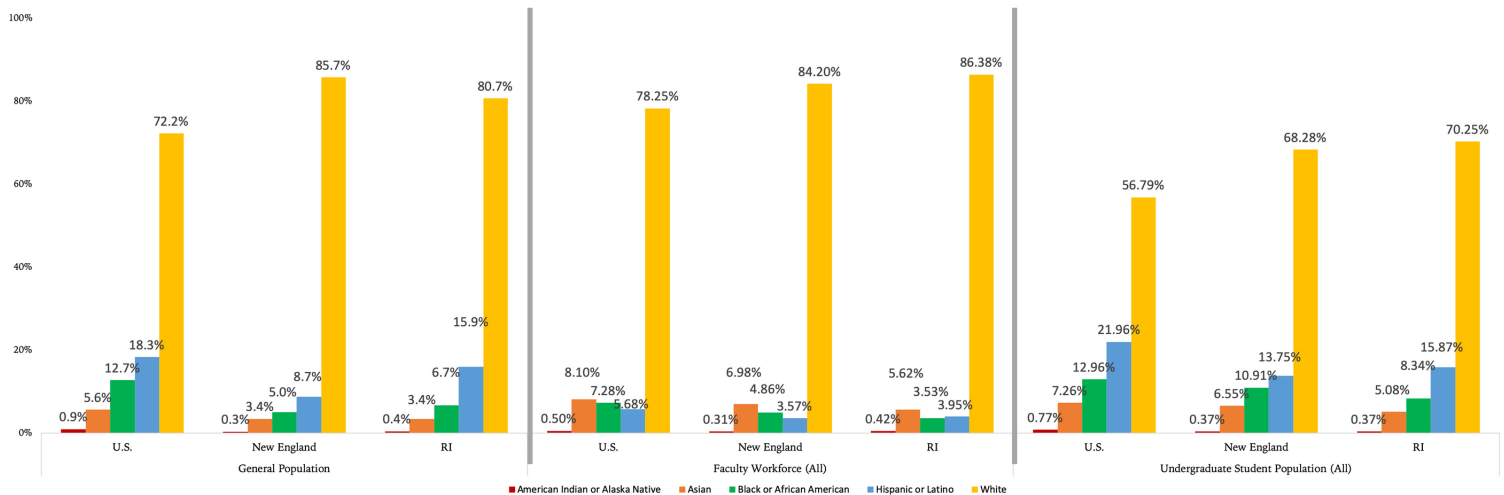
- Survey results from the Harvard Graduate School of Education
 - highlight disparities in perceptions about the academic workplace between faculty of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.
 - demonstrate that white faculty's perception of diversity and inclusion efforts on campus still outpaces genuine progress — a phenomenon that has been dubbed “the illusion of inclusion” (Heilig, Brown, and Brown 2012).
- Among the survey's key findings:
 - White faculty are much more likely to agree (73%) than are Black faculty (55%) that there is visible leadership for the support and promotion of diversity on their campus. Nearly one out of every three Black faculty (31%) disagrees.
 - By an even wider margin, more white faculty (78%) than Black faculty (58%) agree that their department colleagues are committed to supporting and promoting diversity and inclusion in the department. More than one out of every four Black faculty (28%) disagrees.
 - Research suggests that a faculty member's feelings of “fit” produce workplace benefits, such as greater job satisfaction and likelihood of retention. The advantages of fit, the survey finds, are enjoyed more often by white faculty, who to a greater extent than any other racial or ethnic category reported feeling satisfied or very satisfied (69%) with their fit—their sense of belonging—in their departments.



DEMOGRAPHIC "MISMATCH" IN RHODE ISLAND

The racial/ethnic composition of the general population, faculty workforce, and undergraduate population: U.S., New England, Rhode Island

All Sectors (community college, public 4-year, private not-for-profit 4-year): 2018



Percentage Point Change: 2015 to 2018

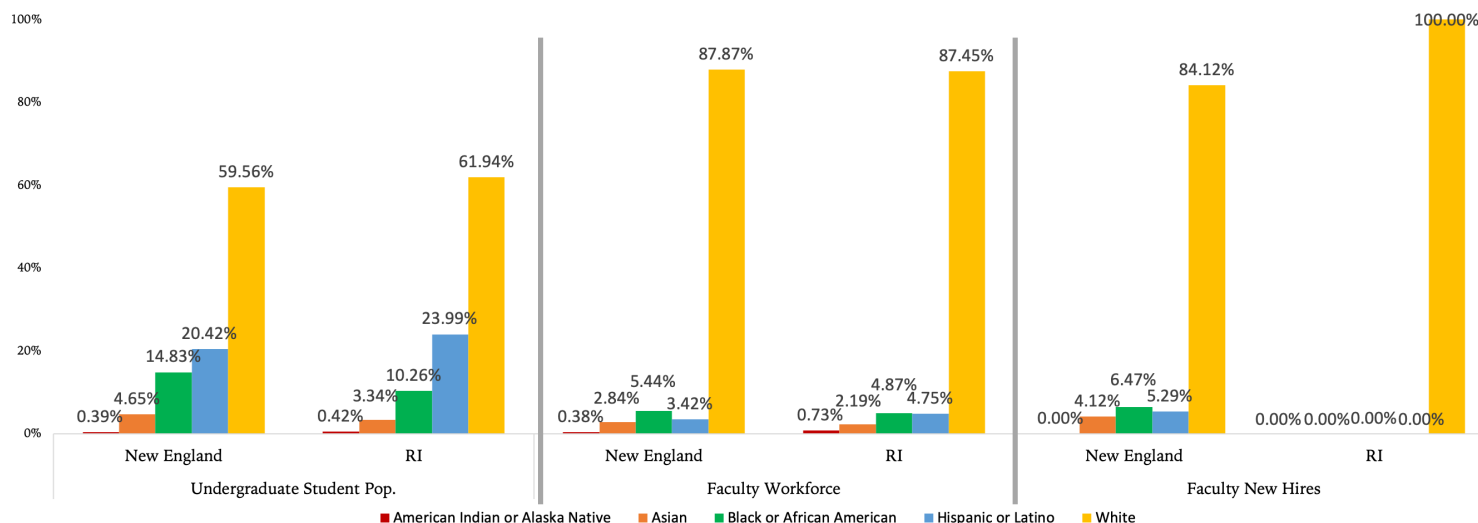
		American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
General Population	New England	+0.0	-1.2	-1.7	-1.7	+3.8
	Rhode Island	+0.0	+0.0	+0.5	+1.5	+0.3
Faculty Workforce	New England	+0.0	+0.7	+0.9	+0.5	-2.1
	Rhode Island	+0.1	+0.7	+1.2	+0.9	-3.0
Undergraduate Population	New England	+0.0	+0.4	+0.9	+1.4	-2.7
	Rhode Island	+0.0	+0.4	+0.3	+1.5	-2.2

While New England's undergraduate population is becoming increasingly diversified, there is still a **demographic "mismatch"** between the percentage of students of color relative to faculty of color in Rhode Island. While Black undergraduates represented 8.3% of Rhode Island's student population in 2018, only 3.5% of the state's faculty were Black. Likewise, Hispanics students made up 15.9% of the student population, but less than 4% of the state's faculty were Hispanic. By contrast, white students made up 70.3% of Rhode Island's undergraduate population, but about 86% of faculty were white.

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and U.S. Census Bureau 1-Year Estimates

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Racial/Ethnic Composition of Faculty and Student Populations : 2018



Percentage Point Change at Community Colleges: 2015 to 2018

		American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
Faculty Workforce	New England	-0.7	+0.5	+0.9	+0.9	-2.2
	Rhode Island	+0.2	+0.3	+2.8	+3.1	-6.5
Undergraduate Population	New England	+0.0	+0.5	+1.0	+2.2	-3.6
	Rhode Island	-0.1	-0.3	+0.4	+2.3	-2.4

Demographic Mismatch Between Community College Faculty and Students: 2018

In the region, **Rhode Island has the second largest demographic "mismatch" between the state's Hispanic community college faculty and students**, after Connecticut (-21.0). It has a the **third highest Black community college faculty-student mismatch in New England**, after Connecticut (-11.0) and Massachusetts (-10.8).

	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
New England	+0.0	-1.9	-9.4	-15.7	+27.0
Rhode Island	+0.0	-1.7	-7.7	-20.1	+29.6

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and U.S. Census Bureau 1-Year Estimates

PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR Racial/Ethnic Composition of Faculty and Student Populations : 2018



Percentage Point Change at Public Four-Year Institutions: 2015 to 2018

		American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
Faculty Workforce	New England	+0.1	+1.1	+0.4	+0.4	-1.9
	Rhode Island	-0.1	+1.2	+1.1	+0.1	-2.6
Undergraduate Population	New England	-0.6	+0.6	+0.8	+1.9	-3.3
	Rhode Island	-0.1	-0.1	+0.5	+1.5	-1.8

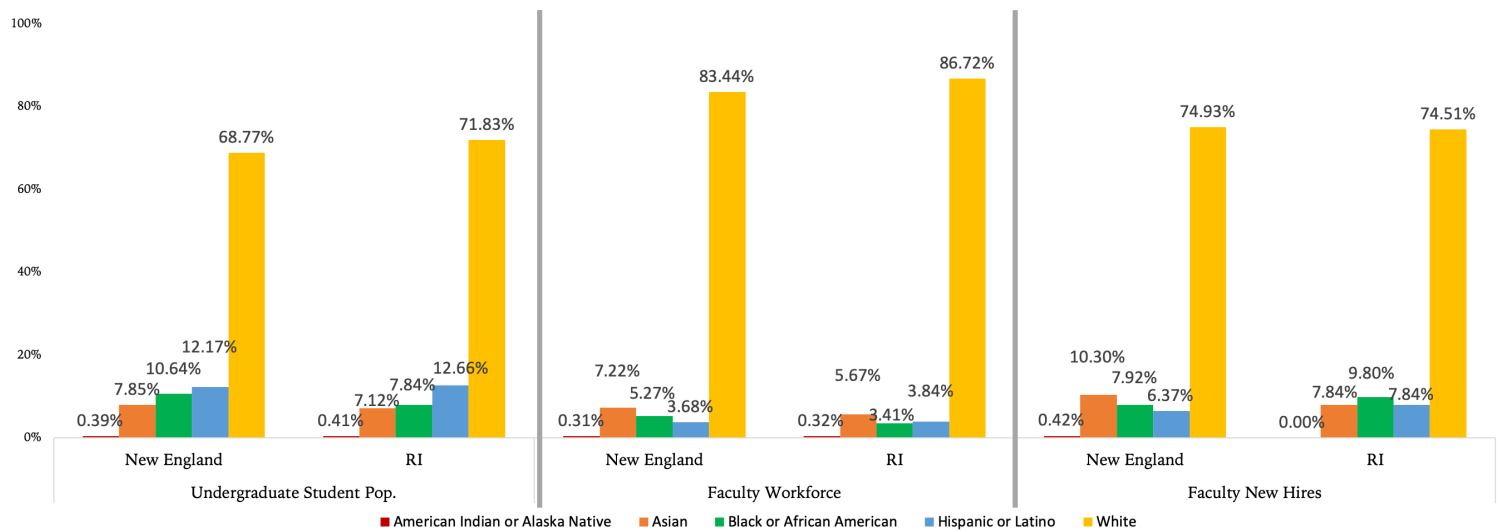
Demographic Mismatch Between Public Four-Year Faculty and Students: 2018

Rhode Island's public four-year institutions have the **largest faculty-student demographic "mismatch" between the state's Hispanic faculty and students** in New England. These institutions have the **third highest demographic gap between Black faculty and students** in the region, surpassed by Connecticut (-6.6) and Massachusetts (-5.3).

		American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
New England		-0.1	+2.5	-4.3	-6.0	+8.0
Rhode Island		+0.2	+2.4	-5.2	-9.6	-12.2

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and U.S. Census Bureau 1-Year Estimates

PRIVATE NOT-FOR-PROFIT FOUR-YEAR Racial/Ethnic Composition of Faculty and Student Populations : 2018



Percentage Point Change at Private Not-for-Profit Four-Year Institutions: 2015 to 2018

		American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
Faculty Workforce	New England	+0.7	+0.5	+1.1	+0.4	-2.1
	Rhode Island	+0.1	+0.6	+0.9	+0.7	-2.4
Undergraduate Population	New England	+0.0	-0.1	+1.2	+1.3	-2.4
	Rhode Island	+0.1	+1.2	+0.3	+1.5	-3.0

Demographic Mismatch Between Private Not-for-Profit Four-Year Faculty and Students: 2018

Rhode Island's private not-for-profit four-year institutions **rank third in the region in terms of the demographic gaps between Black and Hispanic faculty and students**. While the Hispanic faculty-student gap in Rhode Island is larger than the regional average, the gap among Black faculty and students is slightly lower than the regional average.

	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
New England	-0.1	-1.3	-5.3	-7.5	+14.3
Rhode Island	-0.2	-0.9	-5.1	-8.0	+14.3

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and U.S. Census Bureau 1-Year Estimates

R1 AND R2 INSTITUTIONS

Racial/Ethnic Composition of Faculty and Student Populations : 2018



Percentage Point Change at R1 and R2 Institutions: 2015 to 2018

		American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
Faculty Workforce	New England	-0.1	+1.1	+0.5	+0.5	-2.1
	Rhode Island	+0.0	+1.1	+1.3	+0.5	-3.0
Undergraduate New England Population	New England	-0.1	+1.2	+0.5	+1.4	-3.1
	Rhode Island	-0.1	+0.5	-0.1	-0.1	-0.5

Demographic Mismatch Between R1 and R2 Faculty and Students: 2018

Rhode Island's research institutions have the **second highest demographic gap between Black faculty and students**, surpassed only by Massachusetts (-4.3). These institutions in Rhode Island have the region's **largest demographic gap between Hispanic students and faculty**.

	American Indian/Alaska Native	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic/Latino	White
New England	+0.0	-1.5	-3.3	-6.6	+11.5
Rhode Island	+0.0	+1.1	-3.8	-8.6	+11.3

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and U.S. Census Bureau 1-Year Estimates

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO CLOSE THE MISMATCH GAP?

As the data on the previous page show, in all postsecondary sectors in Rhode Island, there is a significant **mismatch in the racial/ethnic composition of faculty relative to the demography of the undergraduate student population**. The greatest mismatch is at the region's **community colleges**, which tend to have more diverse student bodies but a whiter faculty workforce than four-year colleges.

Given projections by the U.S. Department of Education on undergraduate enrollment between 2015 and 2016 (Hussar and Bailey 2018), if the average rate at which part- and full-time postsecondary faculty are hired annually in Rhode Island (all sectors) were to remain constant, for the racial/ethnic composition of the region's faculty to match the racial/ethnic composition of the projected undergraduate student population in 2026, Rhode Island's postsecondary institutions would need*

- **136% (299)** **more** Black faculty
- **301% (742)** **more** Hispanic or Latino faculty
- **10% (33)** **fewer** Asian faculty
- **19% (1,004)** **fewer** white faculty

To reach faculty-student racial/ethnic parity by 2026, the rate of growth of Black and Hispanic/Latino faculty populations in Rhode Island would need to accelerate significantly beyond current modest growth levels (shown on page 1).

To put into perspective just how much these populations' growth would need to increase, if current faculty hiring patterns stayed the same, it would take:

19.7
years

to reach the goal of
hiring 136% more
Black faculty in
Rhode Island

50.1
years

to reach the goal of
hiring 301% more
Hispanic faculty in
Rhode Island

*Relative to the 2018 faculty population size. Projections for the faculty population are extrapolated from projections of the national undergraduate student population, with the understanding that population composition varies across the country, and the average annual hiring rate of new faculty in the state. The ED's projections do not account for changing state and local policies, the changing cost of a college education, the economic value of an education, the impact of distance learning due to technological changes, and the impact of COVID-19 on postsecondary enrollment patterns.

DOCTORAL DEGREE-GRANTING (2019)

NEW ENGLAND	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	White
Public Institutions	0.43%	10.81%	4.98%	5.08%	0.05%	78.65%
Private Institutions	0.23%	16.26%	6.26%	8.51%	0.10%	68.64%
RHODE ISLAND	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	White
Public Institutions	0.87%	15.28%	3.06%	3.49%	0.00%	77.29%
Private Institutions	0.53%	11.97%	7.71%	8.24%	0.00%	71.54%

Many of today's doctoral students are tomorrow's postsecondary faculty.

Relative to New England, the doctoral degrees granted to Rhode Island's **white** scholars were **1.36 percentage points lower** at public higher education institutions (HEIs) and **2.70 percentage points higher** at private HEIs. Doctoral degrees granted to Black scholars were **1.92 percentage points lower** at public HEIs and **1.45 percentage points higher** at private HEIs. Those granted to Hispanic scholars were **1.59 percentage points lower** at public HEIs and **0.27 percentage points lower** at private HEIs.

ACADEMIC RANK IN RHODE ISLAND, BY RACE/ETHNICITY (ALL SECTORS, 2018)

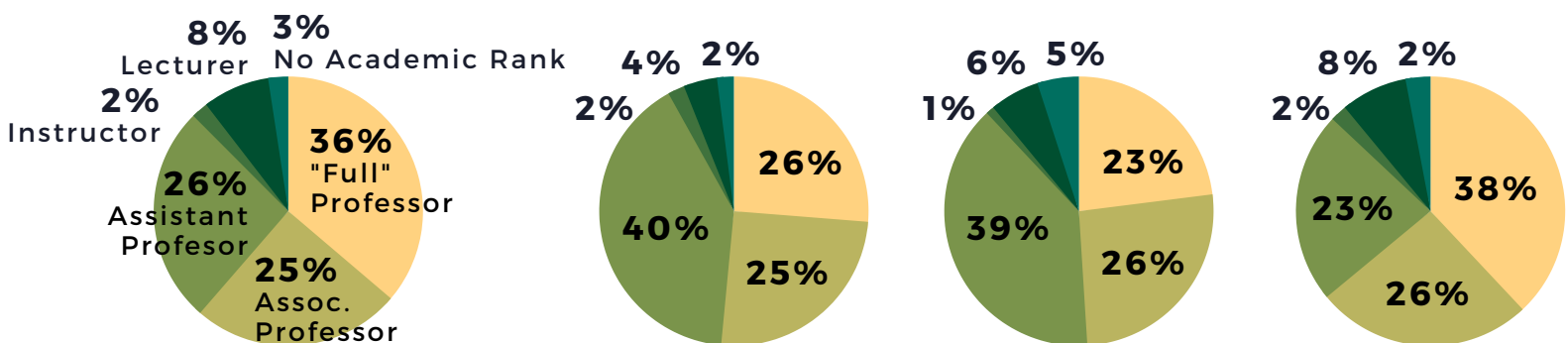
At Rhode Island's colleges and universities, a disproportionately greater share of white faculty hold the most senior title of "full" professor. Black and Hispanic faculty tend to hold the more junior titles of assistant professor and associate professor.

ALL FACULTY

BLACK

HISPANIC

WHITE



Source: IPEDS, Spring 2019, Human Resource component, Fall staff section. Status is designated by the institution according to the institution's policies. Doctoral degree completion data are for 2019. Doctoral degrees counted include Ph.D., Ed.D., D.M.A., D.B.A., D.Sc., D.A., or D.M., as designated by the awarding institution