



REPARATIVE JUSTICE: THE NEXT STEP TOWARD FACULTY EQUITY IN NEW ENGLAND

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Institutions of higher education in New England support structures of racial hierarchy that harm Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) faculty. Many institutions have taken up diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives to try to change this reality. However, [DEI initiatives have not been effective](#) in addressing racial inequalities and systemic harm, and often do not center the needs and well-being of BIPOC faculty in academia.

NEBHE is proposing a different, more effective path to faculty equity: [reparative justice](#). It is a way of thinking about justice that centers and restores those who have been harmed, and focuses on repairing past harms, stopping present harm, and preventing the reproduction of harm. [Several institutions of higher education in the U. S. have pledged reparations](#), financial compensation to the people who have been harmed by their practices. However, what we are proposing is a much deeper, more nuanced application of justice. It is not a one-time check or public policy. [Informed by the work of BIPOC scholars and community activists](#), we are thinking of reparative justice as practices that redress systemic harms against BIPOC faculty and support their healing.

To be clear, reparative justice work is already being done by individual programs and institutions in the region, though often in silos and without a clear, comprehensive institutional vision. NEBHE's goal is to create a shared, regional vision or blueprint and provide resources for institutions wanting to embark on faculty equity and those already engaged in the work. Ultimately, we want to create a long-standing consortium of postsecondary institutions that will pool resources, share best practices and expertise, and provide support and accountability to ensure that reparative justice in its various forms is achieved in higher education in New England - and beyond.

We organize reparative justice around Three Pillars: Transformation, Restoration, and Nourish and Uplift. Each pillar addresses specific areas of harm for BIPOC faculty and each requires its own work.

PILLAR 1: TRANSFORMATION

The first pillar, **Transformation**, acknowledges that it isn't BIPOC faculty who need to be fixed in order to thrive in the academy. Rather, [institutions need to transform how they operate so as to not harm BIPOC faculty](#). Transformation involves leveraging power, influence, and resources to ensure cessation and non-repetition of harmful practices that uphold white supremacy. For example, [changing hiring and advancement procedures](#), [investing in cluster hires](#) of BIPOC faculty, pursuing pay equity, and creating anti-racist onboarding and professional development for all faculty, staff and administrators.

PILLAR 2: RESTORATION

The second pillar, **Restoration**, acknowledges that [there have been constant and ongoing assaults on the intellectual capacity of BIPOC faculty](#). BIPOC faculty have seen their bodies, work, and their time disrespected, devalued, and dismissed. Restoration involves taking steps to repair these cultural and epistemic damages done to BIPOC faculty in the institution. Examples of restorative practices are to make visible the work of BIPOC faculty in your state and on your campuses through webinars or local publications, and to offer small awards, course releases, or moratoria for BIPOC faculty so that they can focus on research.

PILLAR 3: NOURISH AND UPLIFT

The third pillar, **Nourish and Uplift**, addresses the reality that [institutions neglect the emotional, psychological, and physiological toll of being BIPOC faculty](#) on a campus and living in the surrounding environs where they are not supported. Institutions need tailored, targeted investments in services and programs that specifically support BIPOC, nourishing them holistically and creating spaces for their healing, imagination, and innovation.

These Pillars should not be treated as multiple choice options. Rather, institutions should address all these areas in their plan. Only focusing on one or two will bring us back to this point where racial inequities abound. It is also important to note that there is no one-size-fits-all solution that will “fix” white supremacy across the region; states and institutions will have to do the work of operationalizing these pillars in ways that best suit the needs of BIPOC faculty in their states and on their campuses.

Institutions serious about faculty equity must commit to full reparative justice for their campuses. While each will make different strides and progress across each area, we should not rest or consider the work done until it is all done.