

**TESTIMONY OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF CONGRESS/CUNY  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL HEARING  
APRIL 25, 2014**

*Delivered by PSC President Dr. Barbara Bowen,  
Treasurer Dr. Michael Fabricant and Secretary Arthurine De Sola*

**SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL FINDINGS  
PSC STUDY: CUNY, RACE AND GENDER, PART I: FULL-TIME FACULTY**

*An introduction was delivered orally, and outlined the intellectual, ethical and pedagogical reasons for the urgency of a study on race and gender at CUNY. We also described such a study as a responsibility for a union, because the workplace is racialized and gendered, and the conditions of work cannot be understood without an understanding of how they are affected by race and gender. The introduction also cited the New York State Education Law on the reasons for the founding of a city university—a primary one being the need to reflect in its hiring decisions the diversity of the city’s population.*

*In addition, the oral introduction briefly outlined the scope and limitations of the data with which we worked in developing our analysis. We made it clear that this is a summary only of Part I, and that subsequent parts of the study would examine part-time faculty and professional staff. Finally, we mentioned that the word “faculty” in what follows would refer to full-time faculty—simply for ease of reading.*

**PRINCIPAL FINDINGS**

- Although CUNY’s faculty is diverse by national standards, the racial and ethnic demographics of the CUNY faculty do not reflect the demographics of either the CUNY student body or the city.
- CUNY failed to seize the opportunity to increase the proportion of faculty of color during a 10-year period during which the number of full-time faculty rose by 20 percent.
- The full-time faculty at CUNY is highly stratified by race/ethnicity and gender in relation to both college type and faculty rank.
- For most categories of faculty of color, rates of tenure and promotion are lower than rates for White faculty.
- Adjunct faculty positions are an important pipeline to full-time faculty positions, especially for Black and Hispanic faculty.

**FINDING 1: Although CUNY’s faculty is diverse by national standards, the racial and ethnic demographics of the CUNY faculty do not reflect the demographics of either the CUNY student body or the city.**

The CUNY full-time faculty is far less diverse than the CUNY student body, or than the population of New York City. The University continues to fall short of its own goal of achieving a faculty whose demographics resemble those of the student body.

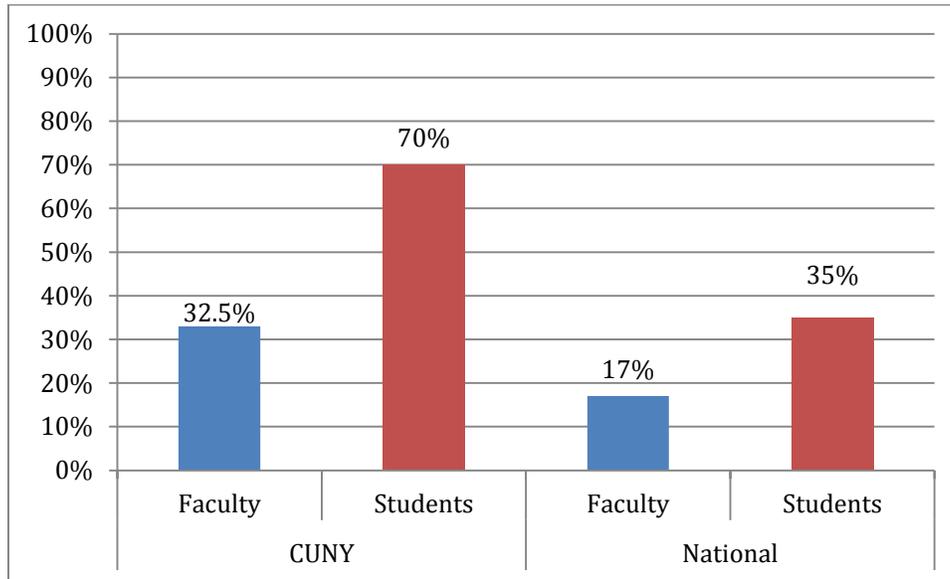
Faculty and Student Demographics across CUNY

In 2008-09, the final year for which the data were collected for the PSC study, the total CUNY full-time faculty was 30 percent people of color. During the same year, the student body was 70 percent people of color—a difference of 40 percentage points. The CUNY faculty is also dramatically less diverse than the population of New York City, which during the same time period was 64 percent people of color.

The CUNY Administration frequently notes that its faculty is more diverse than the national average (32.5 percent faculty of color at CUNY versus 17 percent nationwide in 2011). While the national comparison is important, and CUNY’s higher rate of diversity is the result of conscious effort, the national average is based on colleges and universities whose student bodies are typically far less diverse than CUNY’s.

This can be seen in comparing the *variance* between percentages of faculty and students of color. The U.S. Department of Education statistics for the most recent year available, 2011, show that among all faculty nationally—including both full-time and part-time faculty—17 percent are people of color, while 35 percent of undergraduates are minorities. CUNY’s percentage of undergraduates of color, however, is twice the national average. Nationally, the gap between percentages of faculty and students of color is on average 18 percentage points; at CUNY it is 40 percentage points. The gap at CUNY between the diversity of the faculty and the undergraduate student body is more than double the national average.

## Comparison of Faculty and Student Diversity at CUNY to the National Average (2011)



### Differences in Diversity among Colleges

There are also significant differences among the various CUNY colleges in the size of the gap between faculty and student racial and ethnic demographics. The most dramatic difference is at community colleges. Even though CUNY's community colleges employ the highest percentage of faculty of color, they have substantially higher enrollments of students of color than CUNY's senior and comprehensive colleges. The result is a difference of 43 percentage points between students and full-time faculty of color at community colleges. The smaller variances observed at the comprehensive and senior colleges are the result of smaller percentages of students of color, not higher percentages of minority faculty.

### Closing the Gap

Closing the gap is not about achieving an essentialist one-to-one correlation of faculty and students by race, ethnicity and gender. A discussion of the academic impact of the gap between faculty and student demographics is beyond the reach of this study, but such a discussion should be an urgent priority for a CUNY Administration committed to increasing student retention and graduation rates. There is strong evidence to suggest that lack of diversity among faculty has a negative impact on student retention, student graduation rates, and faculty retention. The gap between student and faculty racial demographics may also have a subtler impact on pedagogy, faculty/student relations, student activism, students' sense of freedom in raising dissenting views, opportunities for student/faculty research collaboration and other areas.

**FINDING 2: CUNY failed to seize the opportunity to increase the proportion of faculty of color during a 10-year period during which the number of full-time faculty rose by 20 percent.**

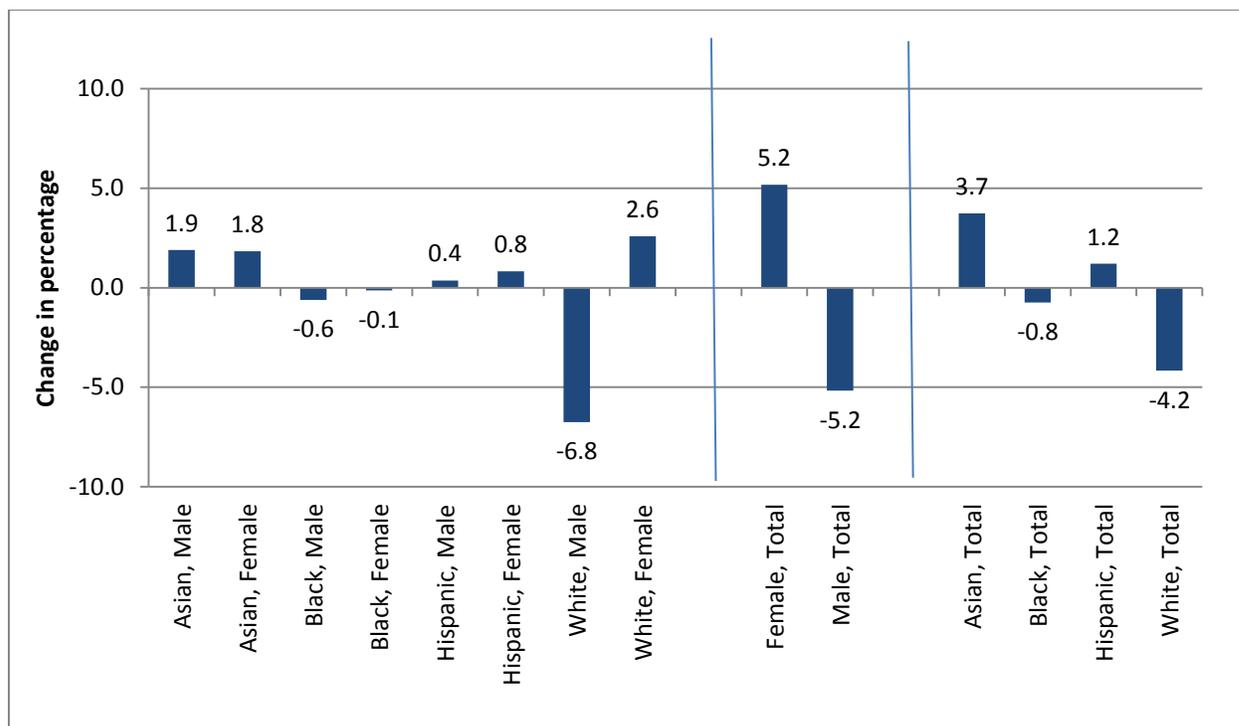
This may be the most salient of all our findings. Despite a hiring initiative that resulted in more than 1,000 new full-time faculty positions, the racial and ethnic diversity of the faculty was largely unchanged.

In conjunction with a sustained advocacy effort by the PSC, and with the support of the City Council, CUNY was able to secure funding to increase the full-time faculty from 5,801 in 1999-00 to 6,970 in 2008-09, a 20 percent increase. At the same time, student enrollment grew by 25 percent. Yet the racial and ethnic diversity of the full-time faculty did not significantly increase. The proportion of faculty of color increased by only four percentage points, from 26 percent to 30 percent. The most important gains were for Asian faculty, who accounted for most of this four percent increase; their share rose from seven percent to 10 percent.

At the senior colleges, the share of faculty of color stagnated or declined.

Over the last decade, the share of Black faculty at senior colleges decreased by 0.8 percentage points, while the share of Hispanic faculty increased by 1.2 percentage points. The share of White male faculty declined by 6.8 percentage points, largely because the shares of White women and Asian men and women increased slightly (2.6 percentage points and 3.7 percentage points respectively).

Change in distribution of faculty by race/ethnicity and gender, senior colleges: 1999-00 to 2008-09

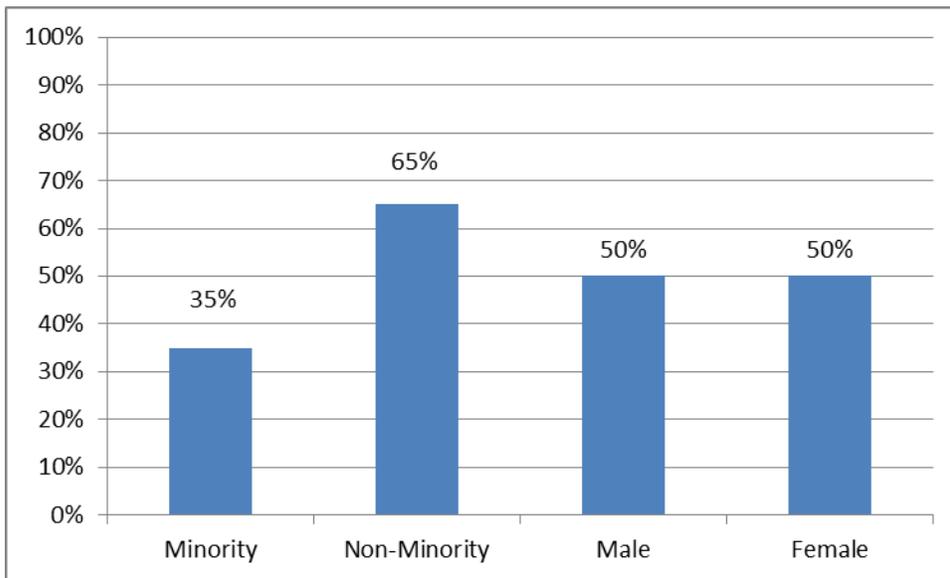


1999-00: n = 3,075    2008-09: n = 3,474

At all college types, White faculty continue to be hired into assistant professor positions at higher rates than faculty of color.

The most important portal for resetting or expanding CUNY’s share of faculty of color is the assistant professor position. Among the 4,671 full-time instructional faculty members hired between 1999-00 and 2008-09, the majority (57 percent) came in as assistant professors. Only 14 percent joined the CUNY faculty at the associate or professorial level.<sup>1</sup> Yet only 35 percent of the assistant professors hired during this period were minorities. In order for CUNY to increase the share of people of color at all ranks in its faculty, more minorities must be hired at the assistant professor level.

Percentage of assistant professor new hires by race/ethnicity and gender: 1999 to 2008



**FINDING 3: The full-time faculty at CUNY is highly stratified by race/ethnicity and gender in relation to both college type and faculty rank.**

The CUNY faculty is distributed among senior, community and comprehensive colleges, with the senior colleges enrolling the majority of students. While, during the period of our study, 52 percent of full time faculty were employed by senior colleges, only 36 percent of Black faculty—women and men—held senior college positions. Twenty percent of all faculty were in positions in comprehensive colleges and 26 percent in community colleges. Yet women of any race or ethnicity were more likely to teach in community colleges than men (29 percent versus 23 percent). These trends in turn exacerbate the problem of retaining minority faculty and women of all races because

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<sup>1</sup> The remainder were hired as lecturers (14 percent) or instructors (15 percent).

faculty salaries tend to be higher and working conditions tend to be better at senior colleges.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout CUNY, faculty of color and women occupy lower faculty ranks, resulting in lower average salaries than White males. Overall faculty of color were:

- 42 percent of lecturers,
- 38 percent of assistant professors/instructors,
- 27 percent of associate professors and
- 21 percent of full professors.

Women comprised:

- 52 percent of lecturers,
- 52 percent of assistant professors/instructors,
- 47 percent of associate professors and
- 36 percent of full professors.

The greater concentration of women and faculty of color in lower ranks could reflect the average age of full professors and recent efforts to hire more faculty of color and women into assistant professor positions.

**FINDING 4: For most categories of faculty of color, rates of tenure and promotion are lower than rates for White faculty.**

Tenure

In 1999-00, 73 percent of all faculty held tenured positions. The percentage of faculty who are tenured declined over the decade by 11 percentage points, to 62 percent in 2008-09.<sup>3</sup> The decline may be the result of retirements among senior faculty and the increase in the total number of faculty positions, most of which were allocated to new, untenured faculty.

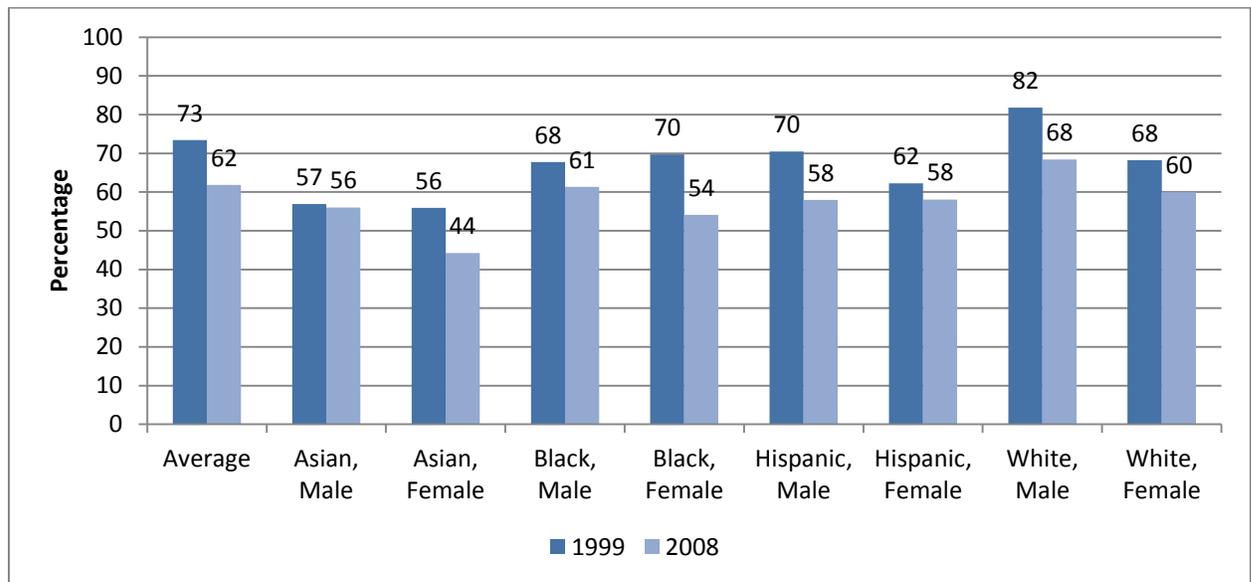
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<sup>2</sup> Salary and workload are determined by the PSC/CUNY collective bargaining agreement. However, regression analysis revealed that salaries were higher at senior colleges than at community and comprehensive colleges. This result was highly statistically significant. As for workload, faculty at senior colleges have an annual teaching load of 21 credits per year, while faculty at community colleges have a teaching load of 27 credits. CUNY's senior colleges also tend to have more funds available to ameliorate faculty working conditions, such as teaching load.

<sup>3</sup> The decline in the overall percentage of tenured faculty is most likely due to a significant reduction in the hiring of full-time faculty from the mid-70s to the mid-90s combined with the retirement of older faculty.

Black women (54 percent) and Asian women (44 percent) ended the period of study with the lowest percentage tenured among the racial/ethnic groups. Their proportionate representation relative to the entire faculty declined by 16 percentage points for Black women and by eight percentage points for Asian women. Although White men experienced a decline of 14 percentage points in the proportion of those tenured, they remained the ethnic/racial group most likely to hold a tenured position (68 percent).

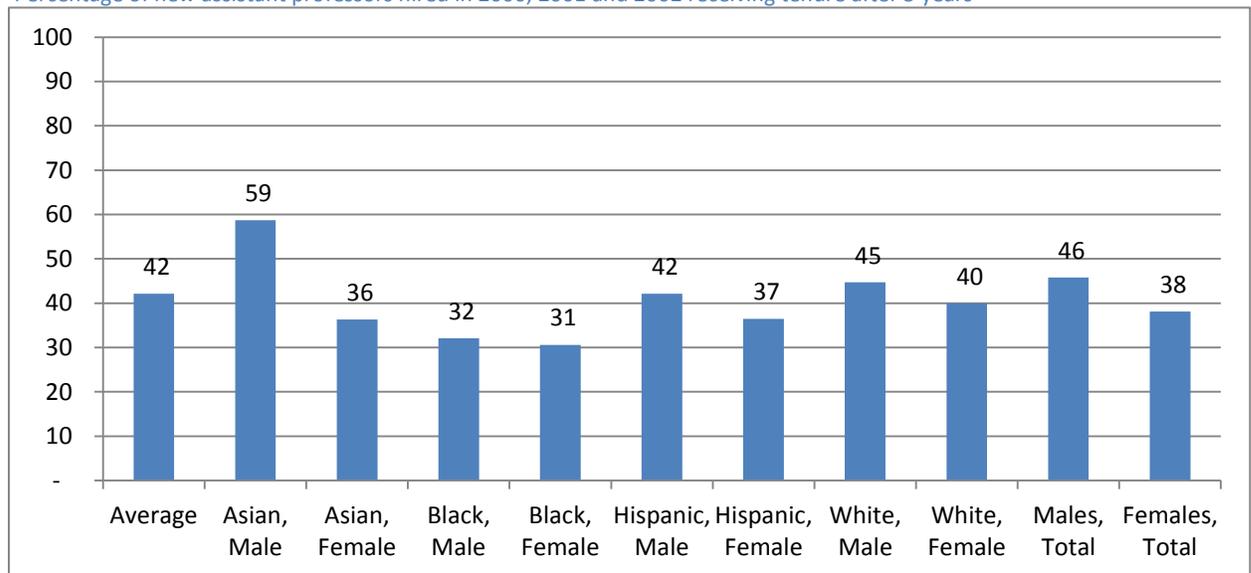
Percentage of faculty tenured by race/ethnicity and gender: 1999 and 2008



1999: n = 5,683

2008: n = 6,849

Percentage of new assistant professors hired in 2000, 2001 and 2002 receiving tenure after 5 years



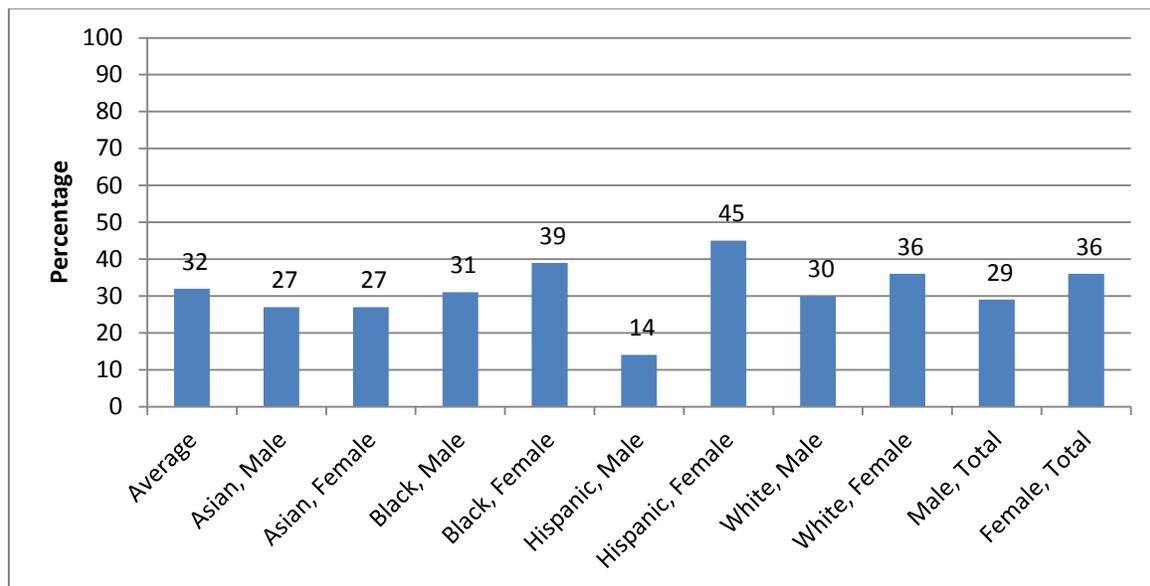
n= 632

More telling, however, is the evidence about the *rates* of tenure and promotion among new faculty cohorts, as these numbers indicate not the history of who has tenure at

CUNY but the success of different groups in attaining tenure. The proportion of the cohort of assistant professors hired between fall 2000 and spring 2003 receiving tenure after five years was 42 percent. Within this cohort, White men (45 percent) and Asian men (59 percent) were most likely to be granted tenure, while Black men (32 percent) and Black women (31 percent) were least likely. These trends reflect, among other factors, the higher attrition rates among women and faculty of color. But they may also reflect additional obstacles or difficulties for these groups in attaining tenure. Without exit interview data, however, we cannot be sure: among the faculty of color who do not achieve tenure at CUNY may be significant numbers who leave before the tenure decision to accept other faculty positions—with more attractive salaries and teaching loads.

The average rate of attrition for assistant professors hired between fall 2000 and spring 2003 was 32 percent after five years. One-third of all assistant professors leave CUNY within five years of being hired—a much higher rate than is generally acknowledged. The attrition rate for all women (36 percent) was above the average; for Hispanic women (45 percent) and Black women (39 percent), it was substantially above. Interestingly, the attrition rate for Black men was 31 percent. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that attrition does not seem to account for the lower tenure rate among Black men.

Cumulative attrition after 5 years for assistant professors hired in 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03



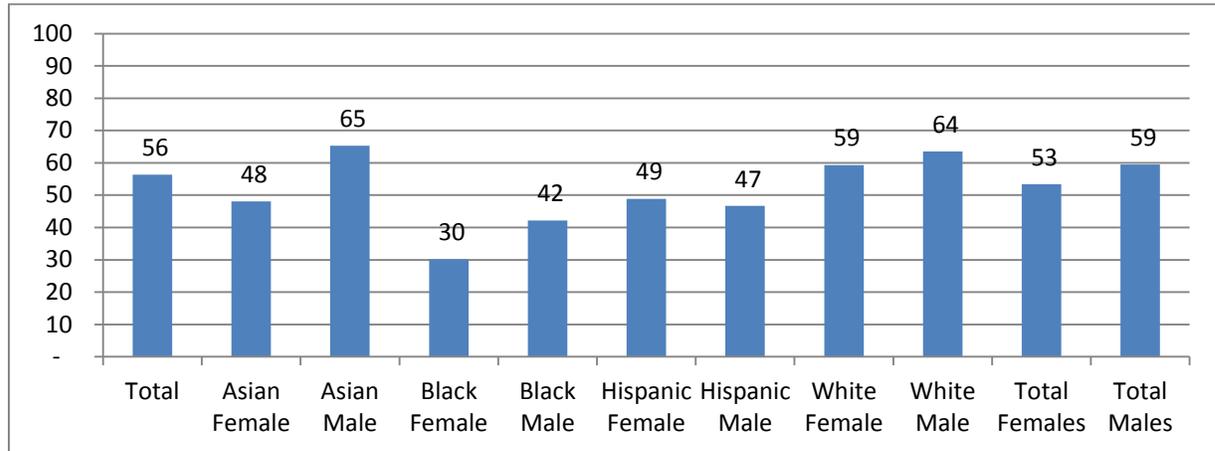
*n* = 670

### Promotion

Black and Hispanic faculty were the least likely cohorts of faculty by race and ethnicity to be promoted. For faculty hired between 1995 and 2000, the data show that 56 percent of all assistant professors were promoted to associate professor. In turn, 45 percent of those who achieved associate professor status by 2000 were promoted to full professor by 2008.

Black women were least likely to be promoted from assistant to associate professor (30 percent), followed by Black men (42 percent), Hispanic men (47 percent), Asian women (48 percent) and Hispanic women (49 percent). On the other hand, Asian men (65 percent) were promoted to associate professor at the highest rate followed by White men (64 percent) and White women (59 percent).

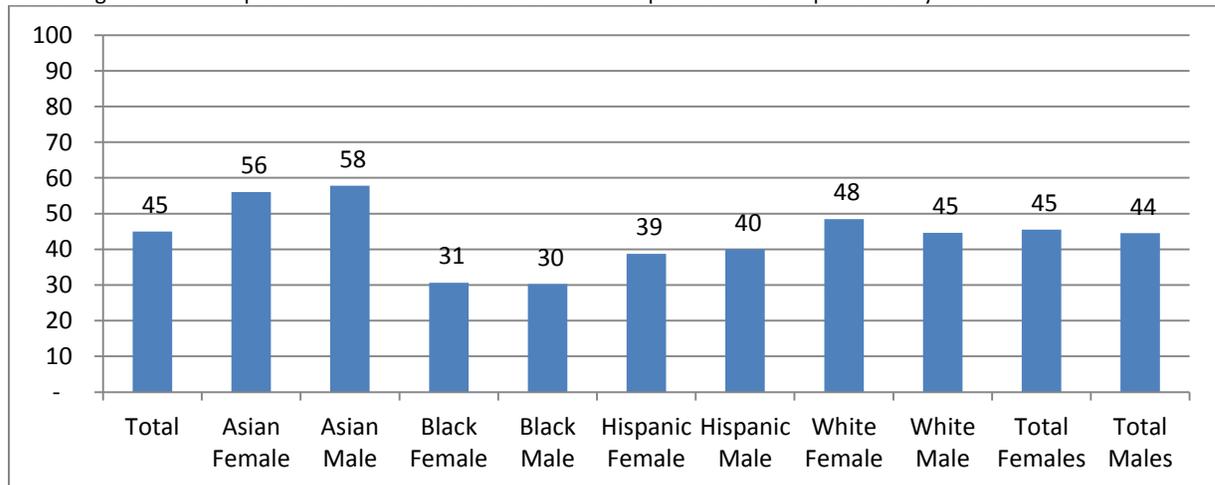
Percentage of assistant professors hired between 1995 and 2000 promoted to associate professor by 2008



*n* = 1,065

The pattern is the same for promotion from associate to full professor, with the exception of the results for Asian women. Black men and women and Hispanic men and women were promoted to full professor at rates below the average of 45 percent—30 percent, 31 percent, 40 percent, and 39 percent, respectively. Asian men (58 percent) were promoted from associate to full professor at the highest rate, followed by Asian women (56 percent), White women (48 percent) and White men (45 percent). Hispanic and Black faculty of both genders are less likely to be promoted to more senior positions than White faculty, and in most instances, Asian faculty.

Percentage of associate professors hired between 1995 and 2000 promoted to full professor by 2008



*n* = 683

At CUNY tenure can be granted without promotion. The rates of receiving tenure without promotion vary by race/ethnicity and gender, but the difference is largely attributable to the prevalence of awarding tenure without promotion at the community and comprehensive colleges. A relatively large percentage of Black assistant professors were granted tenure but did not receive promotion within two years—58 percent of Black men and 52 percent of Black women. This compares to an overall average of 29 percent who did not receive promotion within two years of tenure. Critically, the proportion of Black men and women achieving promotion without tenure is twice as large as for the rest of the faculty.

**FINDING 5: Adjunct faculty positions are an important pipeline to full-time faculty positions, especially for Black and Hispanic faculty.**

One of the more surprising findings of our study was the high percentage of full-time faculty members who move into the position after serving as CUNY adjunct faculty. This is especially true for Black faculty—both women and men—and for Hispanic men.

Among full-time faculty employed at CUNY in the final year of our study, 29 percent of assistant professors (767 out of 2,644) and 65 percent of lecturers (469 out of 721) had been previously employed as adjunct faculty. Community and comprehensive colleges were more likely than senior colleges to hire permanent faculty from the adjunct ranks. When we look at *all* previous employment on CUNY's instructional staff, including professional staff positions, we find an even larger number with previous CUNY employment: 34 percent of assistant professors and 78 percent of lecturers.

For Black faculty, the percentages are still higher: 41 percent of Black men and 46 percent of Black women enter assistant professor positions from adjunct faculty or professional staff positions. Among Hispanic men, the share is 39 percent. When these numbers are compared to the percentage of all assistant professors who were previously employed as adjuncts or professional staff, 34 percent, the importance of a pipeline from within CUNY becomes clear.

Especially in a university that benefits from thousands of long-serving adjuncts, some with Ph.Ds., it should be logical that an adjunct position would be a stepping-stone toward full-time faculty employment. Holding a prior adjunct faculty position is the most powerful occupational predictor of transition to a full-time faculty position within CUNY. Yet thousands of adjuncts who hope to teach full-time at CUNY are not able to move to full-time appointments, often because of a shortage of funding for full-time positions. A serious effort to increase faculty diversity at CUNY should include paying much closer attention to the importance—especially for Black and Hispanic faculty—of the possibility of movement from a previous adjunct position. We could speculate on why this is a more important route to full-time faculty positions for these groups than for Asian or White faculty, but an accurate answer would require further study.

And no transformation of faculty diversity is possible without a transformation of funding. The overall number of full-time faculty at CUNY remains 4,000 below the number when CUNY last had enrollments as high as the current enrollment. An essential

step in any serious plan to increase faculty diversity at CUNY must be a restoration of the University's budget.

## CONCLUSIONS

### **Shortcomings of CUNY's Analysis**

Before turning to the PSC's preliminary recommendations arising from our findings, we want to comment briefly on the study the CUNY administration will be citing at today's hearing, its 2012 report: *Building on a Strong Foundation: A Strategy for Enhancing CUNY's Leadership in the Areas of Faculty Diversity and Inclusion*. Through the report the University tells part of the story regarding the composition of the faculty. Critically, the CUNY narrative explores the experience of diversity almost exclusively through aggregated data sets and undifferentiated comparisons of faculty diversity at CUNY to national averages and to other statewide public university systems. Consequently the analysis of the data does not explore the differentiated experience of faculty of color or women, for example, in relationship to college type. It is through this more refined conjunction of workplace variables and career choices that the complicated story of retention and recruitment of faculty of color is most accurately told.

Equally important, simply comparing the proportion of faculty of color at CUNY to other "similar" statewide public university systems does not satisfactorily explore the impact of the recent and historic increase in the diversity of CUNY's student body on establishing appropriate goals for faculty diversity. To the contrary, the ratio of students of color in a university or host city as compared to the proportion of faculty of color offers a more complete understanding of adequacy of effort in diversifying a faculty. Moreover, CUNY's numerous graphs focusing on the increase in *absolute numbers* of minority faculty from 2001 to 2009 without regard to the overall increase in the number of faculty over this time period obfuscates the fact, documented elsewhere in the report, that there was virtually no change in the *proportion* of Black and Hispanic faculty, and a moderate increase in Asian faculty. The PSC analysis of faculty diversity is more refined and complete than CUNY's. Perhaps most importantly, the PSC's refined dissection of aggregated data begins to unearth the often variant and undermining experiences of faculty of color and better explains persistent issues of retention and recruitment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The PSC's complete report will provide detailed recommendations, but a few might be useful here. They include:

- CUNY should conduct exit interviews to determine why faculty leave. Without exit interviews the University cannot determine the factors that influence the decision to leave--if in fact it was a voluntary decision--and has no data on which to act in implementing changes and helping to retain faculty members, including faculty of color.
- CUNY should disaggregate the data it collects on faculty demographics in order to reveal the way in which each racial/ethnic category interacts with gender to affect stratification by rank and college type.
- CUNY must collect more consistent and better data, particularly among job applicants, to allow for an assessment of the role of race and gender in the recruitment process. CUNY should commit to ensuring the reliability of all demographic data.
- CUNY should allocate additional funds for departments to recruit faculty of color. Aggressive and successful recruitment may require several trips to professional meetings, more funding for campus visits, and other expenses.
- More support must be provided to department chairs to offer resources on best practices and to enable them to devote more time to the recruitment and professional development of women and faculty of color.
- CUNY must offer competitive compensation and working conditions for all faculty. It is unreasonable to expect any potential faculty member, but especially candidates most likely to have extra demands on their time—typically women and people of color—to sacrifice either their personal or professional lives to come to CUNY. The University must make it a priority to reduce class size, create a manageable teaching load and bring salaries to competitive levels if accepting a job at CUNY is not to be seen as a sacrifice.