



# ADVANCE BU

Advancing and Maintaining Equity

August 2024

Monthly Newsletter

## Snapshot of Equity in the Higher Education Workforce

As we prepare for the start of the 2024-25 academic year, we take a moment to look at the state of equity in the higher ed workforce to consider where there is room for improvement. **Recent data** released by AAUP found that the number of higher ed jobs increased last year, but has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. There has also been a continuing shift toward contingent employment, particularly among faculty, leading to greater job insecurity. Average salaries for full-time faculty across US colleges and universities increased by 3.8 percent last year (yet salaries are still significantly below pre-pandemic levels), with women's earnings lagging 17.4 percent behind men's earnings on average. Earnings for part-time faculty remained critically low, averaging \$3,903 per three-credit course. While support staff salaries remain among the lowest on US campuses, **new federal rules** promise additional compensation for (often uncompensated) overtime work. Among university presidents, salary increases outpaced faculty salary gains again last year, with presidents at independent private institutions now earning an average of five times as much as full professors. Likewise, **head coach salaries** broke new records in the Power Five conferences last year. In terms of job satisfaction and workforce wellbeing, **a new study** by the University of Massachusetts found diminished feelings of inclusion (feeling connected and respected) among faculty. Perhaps not surprising given persistent inequalities, **women** and **faculty of color** were more likely than majority men to leave the academy, and **turnover rates among support staff** were problematically high. As a program dedicated to increasing campus equity, ADVANCE BU will continue to present research, programming, and concrete suggestions to address such persistent inequalities, and to make Bradley a more welcoming and inclusive campus for all. Please send your suggestions and feedback to [ADVANCEBU@bradley.edu](mailto:ADVANCEBU@bradley.edu).

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## Spotlight: Using the Power of Theater to Change Hearts, Minds and Actions

Playwright Arthur Miller once observed that other than being a doctor who saves people's lives, writing a "worthy play" was the most important thing a person could do. After all, he said, "The mission of the theater...is to raise the consciousness of people to their human possibilities." On September 17, ADVANCE BU brings the award-winning FLS Theater group to Bradley to present a one-hour interactive workshop that allows participants to more effectively navigate workplace bias. This NSF ADVANCE-supported program, which uses engaging research-based scripts performed by professional actors, has been presented to more than 100 academic institutions in the US and abroad. The unique program harnesses the power of theater to move us, provoke us, and prompt us toward action.

Travis Stern, Associate Professor of Theatre History and Dramatic Literature at Bradley, notes that theater is an "art of empathy. We have to not just sympathize with what's happening on stage, but see it from that character's eyes to help us fill in the gaps of our own experience." Several recent Bradley productions provide powerful examples of this, from *These Shining Lives*, which explored the plight of young women exposed to cancer-causing radium in their watch-painting jobs, to *The Wolves*, which focused on young athletes navigating the road to adulthood, to *Voices of Ukraine*, which presented stories from the ongoing conflict there, to Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop*, which dramatized the last night of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life. "It's one thing to know about that last night...but it's different to see a person walking and talking, standing and breathing in front of you to humanize that experience and move it from a historical story of injustice and struggle to one that seems to be really happening in front of you. It's that way of engaging empathy through embodiment and presence that makes theatre unique in not only showing what even the smallest injustices look like, but helping people to understand that these

things are not abstract concepts that happen elsewhere to others.”

Indeed, Stern notes that Bradley’s Theater program endeavors to produce shows that engage with significant social issues and are drawn from a wide range of literatures and points of view. “It’s something we think about and discuss every season. It’s not a quota that we’re trying to hit, but it’s really about what is best serving our performers, our production artists, and our audiences. The canon has its place, but our students are going to be working with people from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives when they graduate, some who look and think like they do and some who will not,” he notes. So, the program challenges students to reach beyond their own experiences, to delve into other ways of thinking and moving through the world.

Bradley’s first production this Fall is a staged reading of *Tiny Beautiful Things* (**September 5-8**), which, Stern says “delves into the traumas that shape us and break us, how we find ways to remold ourselves in the shadows of what has happened and the light of what still might be.”

ADVANCE BU recognizes that equity work is, in part, empathy work. That is, only by understanding how our actions (or inactions) affect others in profound, but sometimes invisible, ways will we recognize the need to change—change our views, our actions, our longstanding policies and practices. Please join Bradley’s Theater department in its exploration of “the art of empathy” in its upcoming season, and join FLS Theater in its innovative interactive workshop aimed at helping us interrupt acts of workplace bias.



Cast of Bradley’s 2020 production of Sarah DeLappe’s *The Wolves*

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## Equity Quick Takes

A **new study** out of the University of Massachusetts Amherst found that the COVID-19 pandemic decreased feelings of inclusion among faculty and that this effect has persisted. Across all disciplines and identity groups in the study, faculty felt less connected (with their colleagues and their departments) and less respected (their expertise, their opinions, their time, and their labor). This has a negative impact not only on individual faculty but on the institution as a whole, leading to lower job satisfaction, higher faculty turnover, and loss of the talented people needed by the university to face significant challenges. A **tool for inclusive departments** developed by the researchers offers multiple ways for departments to increase a sense of inclusion among faculty.

- A communal space where colleagues are encouraged to have coffee or lunch together
- Regular department meetings that include opportunities for informal conversations
- Regular scholarship/work-in-progress talks by faculty to share their work and exchange ideas
- Departmental communications that highlight faculty achievements
- Regular opportunities to share teaching practices
- Rotation of service assignments, which increases interactions between colleagues and promotes a sense of fairness and shared purpose
- Formal departmental **mentoring plans**, including non-tenure-track and mid-career mentoring
- Periodic one-on-one meetings between faculty and chair, not just for annual evaluation
- Departmental writing groups
- Social events (coffee breaks, welcome back or end-of-semester get-togethers, etc.)

Try one or more of these in your department and contact us at [ADVANCEBU@bradley.edu](mailto:ADVANCEBU@bradley.edu) to share your experiences.

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## Higher Ed Equity in the News

[Race, Ethnicity, and Gender of Full-Time Faculty Members at 3,300 Institutions](#)

[Survey Shows Faculty Inclusion Declines](#)

[Claims of “Overspending” on University DEI are Challenged](#)

[AAUP Faculty Compensation Survey](#)

[Academics versus Athletics: The Protection and Prioritization of College Athletics in an Era of Neoliberal Austerity](#)

## Upcoming ADVANCE BU Events

**ADVANCE-informed Chair Training | Aug. 14, 9:40–10:25 a.m.**  
Peer Problem Solving for Past, Present and Future Chairs and Directors (*Fall Forum*)

**ADVANCE-informed Chair Training | Aug. 14, 10:35–11:20 a.m.**  
A Fresh Look at Faculty Evaluation for Past, Present and Future Chairs and Directors (*Fall Forum*)

**FLS Theatre Bystander Intervention Workshop | Sept. 14, Noon–1:15 p.m.**  
This virtual, live workshop uses evidence-based scripts performed by professional actors to explore issues of bias, equity, and inclusion in university settings. Free and open to all faculty, staff, and administrators. [Register here.](#)

**ADVANCE BU Book Club | Fall 2024**  
Join us as we read Tricia Hersey’s New York Times Bestseller **Rest is Resistance: A Manifesto**, which critics have called “vivid, deeply researched and moving,” “one of the most vital interventions of our time.” Open to all faculty, staff, and administrators. [Register here.](#)

**Faculty Award for Excellence in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion | Applications Due: Sept. 1**  
This annual award honors faculty who have made significant contributions to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion through advocacy, curriculum development, community building, research/creative production or leadership and service. The successful nominee will receive a monetary award, and will be recognized at the University’s Founder’s Day celebration. Applications will be accepted by the Provost’s Office until Sept. 1. Find full details on eligibility and the nomination process in the [award outline document.](#)



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