Metric-Centric Policy, Practice, and Faculty Equity Issues

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Abstract

This case study of Florida International University is part of a 12-year line of research on intentional change in public metropolitan research universities. Using IPEDS data, this study focuses on changes (2011-2020) in 20 intersectional, full-time faculty categories that combine Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Appointment Type. In these results, the analysis explores diversity, equity, and inclusion issues connected to metric-centric faculty hiring policies. The answers to the study’s three research questions are all affirmative: (a) during the study period, 2011-2020, the FIU full-time faculty composition changed in intersectional categories of Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Appointment Type; (b) the results reveal patterns of change; and (c) these patterns of change have diversity, equity, and inclusion implications. FIU’s metric-centric policies appear to favor the exchange of full-time Permanent lines (tenured or tenured-track) for full-time Contingent contracts (non-tenure). If gains are made by non-White faculty, they tend to be in Contingent categories rather than Permanent. The discussion situates the results in the Culture Wars currently occurring in Florida that involve attacks on academic freedom and tenure.

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