SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT OF THE FACULTY INSTITUTE FOR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

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INTRODUCTION

What role can faculty play in creating a more inclusive, equitable institution? How can professional development programs support faculty in cultivating knowledge and practices that support inclusive excellence and equity in the classroom and beyond? In 2014, the CSU Office of the Vice President of Diversity (OVPD) and The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TiLT) created the Faculty Institute for Inclusive Excellence (FIIE), a unique year-long faculty development program designed to address these questions. This study examines the individual and institutional impact of the program through interviews with faculty participants over a five-year period.

Research Question: What is the individual and institutional impact of FIIE in supporting and constraining Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) at CSU?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Across the country, educational organizations are promoting diversity, equity, & inclusion (DEI), which in practice range from "celebrating diversity" to "engaging equity." Adding a "J" to DEI work, our research positions education through a social justice framework (Adams, Blumenfeld, Castañeda, Hackman, Peters, & Zúñiga, 2013) where "our challenge is to appreciate social diversity while working to dismantle social inequality" (Adams, et al., 2013, p. 1). In this view, social justice is both a process and a goal: full and equal participation of all members (Bell, 2013, p. 21). Moving an institution toward a multicultural organization that is *Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive & Just* in its policies, structures, practices, and culture requires all members to contribute to the transformative process (Holvino, 2008; Jackson, 2006). Recognizing that short-term diversity trainings have limited success in cultivating DEIJ practices (Jennings & Smith, 2006), the OVPD created several long-term professional development (PD) programs for different constituencies of CSU. The FIIE is a unique year-long program designed by the OVPD and CSU faculty to cultivate inclusive excellence in teaching specifically and to integrate DEIJ into the broader sphere of work engaged by faculty on campus and in their professions.

Faculty Institute for Inclusive Excellence

The goal of the Faculty Institute for Inclusive Excellence (FIIE) is to create a learning environment for faculty to engage in topics of diversity and inclusion in pedagogy, curriculum, and university communities. The purpose of FIIE is to transform classrooms and positively influence campus climate such that awareness regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is integrated within pedagogical practices. FIIE seeks to develop awareness, knowledge, and skills that promote equity and social justice in educational settings.

FIIE is a full-year program held January through December annually. Three-hour sessions are held biweekly during the first semester, then participants develop and implement a project with the aid of a mentor during the remaining time. In December, participants present their projects and are named Faculty Institute Fellows. Since its inception in 2015, FIIE has been administered five times and graduated 43 Fellows representing Tenure-track and Non-Tenure track faculty.

METHODS

The research team engaged in a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews of FIIE participants (Tenure-Track and Non-Tenure Track Faculty at CSU)

Participants
- 42 email invitations sent to all faculty who completed FIIE as Fellows
- Interviewed 30 participants (71% positive response rate), representing all 8 Colleges and 18 departments at CSU.
- Interviews in person or, after COVID-19 restrictions, through video meeting.
- Informed consent letter included option to choose a pseudonym.
- No identifying data (e.g. participant name, department, rank) reported.

Data Collection
Semi-structured interview protocol organized around three broad categories:
- Experiences of FIIE participants in the year-long program.
- The development and implementation of their FIIE project.
- The impact that their participation had on them, their work, the institution.
Interviews were audio recorded for transcription.

Data analysis
- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006;).
- We used a research team approach to collaboratively construct codes, categories, and themes through a 3-phase inductive coding process and analytic memos (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008).

> "You can't do [DEI work] in your classroom only or to do it in your departmental committees only, right? Once it's been seen it can't be unseen. If you really see it and you really do this work, you can't help but do it everywhere because you see it everywhere" - Gabrielle
>
> "It's come a long way because now our department has these [FIIE & DEI trained] postdocs and faculty who can contribute to that process, who have a much deeper understanding. I think it's percolated upwards." - Marta

FIIE FELLOW PROJECTS

With the support of an FIIE mentor, FIIE Fellows created and implemented a project that integrated equity & diversity perspectives into their teaching and/or departmental work. These projects allowed Fellows to further develop DEIJ practices individually and to contribute to DEIJ practices throughout CSU.

Project types:
- Classroom (revise syllabi and content, cultivate an inclusive pedagogy)
- Curriculum (multiple courses created/revised with DEI focus)
- Evaluation of department/college enrollments, climate
- Presentations to department/college on DEI topics
- Create department/college DEI seminars
- Create DEI resources for Fellows' departments

FINDINGS

Individual Impact: How Fellows were impacted by their participation in FIIE
- **Awareness:** Mindset change/equity lens; DEIJ as lifelong learning
- **Knowledge:** pedagogical knowledge; knowledge of DEI topics: social identities, implicit bias, privilege, microaggressions, multicultural organization development; knowledge/use of DEI language
- **Skills:** using DEI knowledge, mentoring, having difficult conversations in class and in personal life
- **Action:** Join DEI committees; encourage colleagues to do DEI training; DEI in department and college policies, practices, meetings; search processes; professional organizations; equity perspective in research

Institutional Impact: Ways that CSU was impacted by Fellows at various levels
- **Classroom:** teaching effectiveness; changes to syllabi/content; bringing one's own identities into the classroom
- **Department:** committees; sharing information with faculty; creating new major or curriculum with DEI knowledge; develop departmental actions
- **College:** committees; taking students abroad; integrating learning into college-wide curriculum; presenting to college-level audiences
- **Institution:** university-level committees and programs; presenting at workshops
- **Discipline:** research; conference presentations; editorials contributions
- **Community:** volunteering, church, talking to people in their lives
- **Multiplier Effect:** participate in other DEIJ trainings and conferences; applying earning in other courses; new majors, programs, trainings
Barriers: Resistance from departments, administrators; lack of time

IMPLICATIONS

The findings indicate that FIIE supported Fellows in deepening DEIJ work on an individual and institutional level in significant ways. In general, participants reported cultivating an equity lens that recognizes and addresses institutional practices, policies, and structures. They brought this equity lens to multiple contexts of their work, including their classrooms, search committees, and interactions with their colleagues. Beyond the impact of their FIIE projects on their classrooms, departments, and colleges, many Fellows have pursued additional opportunities to engage in DEIJ work that relates to their areas of expertise, thereby creating a multiplier effect of the impact of FIIE, particularly in units with multiple Fellows and supportive administration. These effects demonstrate an individual and institutional move from diversity & inclusion toward equity & justice (Stewart, 2017). Institutional impact is limited by resistance from colleagues and administrators reported by many Fellows, the small number of Fellows that can be supported annually, and limited opportunities for ongoing collaboration within and across FIIE faculty cohorts.

Participants' enthusiastic response to participate in this study along with their claims of the value of FIIE suggests that the impact of FIIE can be further multiplied. With additional investment, FIIE can support a larger, critical mass of Fellows within and across departments, with ongoing professional development and collaboration for existing Fellows as requested by most study participants.

References: https://colostate-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/louise_colostate_edu/EZ1UW1-FGUpMvwK-If094ecB-KarHRxL8HzMUGu_IHtooQ?e=dRfFii

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