Writing communities to (re-)engage faculty: The U See I Write Initiative

Ilona S. Yim, Nina Bandelj, Olga V. Razorenova
and Peiyi Wang

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on university faculty, unduly those from underrepresented groups, causing many faculty to disengage. Writing communities represent a promising tool to (re-)engage faculty and build an inclusive climate. As part of U See I Write, a faculty development initiative at the University of California, Irvine, we convened a series of monthly writing retreats between March and June of 2021, with between-retreat weekly writing sessions in smaller groups and an expectation to write daily for at least 30 minutes. In a diverse cohort of 34 faculty writers, program participation resulted in a significant increase in writing and work engagement. Similar initiatives at other institutions of higher education may prove successful in faculty (re-)engagement while also advancing faculty diversity.

Keywords: writing retreats, faculty engagement, faculty diversity

The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it an unprecedented disruption to every facet of our lives, including the work lives of university faculty who experienced multiple major pivots, dramatically altering their ability to conduct research, teach their students, and serve their university and profession. These challenges have left a toll. A research brief by *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Tugend, 2020) suggests that the rates of stress, anxiety, and fatigue have doubled between 2019

and 2020, career satisfaction is low, and many are considering a career change. While there is some evidence that staff and faculty turnover has increased, it also appears that two years into the pandemic, "faculty are not walking away in droves" (McClure & Fryar, 2022). Instead, faculty are disengaging, citing frayed connections to the institution, feeling undervalued, and a lack of enthusiasm about work: "The work is getting done but there isn't much spark to it" (McClure & Fryar, 2022).

Pandemic-Related Burnout and Exacerbation of Inequities

While the pandemic has affected many faculty, we are not all sitting in the same proverbial boat. Faculty from underrepresented minority (URM) groups in academia have been disproportionately impacted, both professionally and personally, in ways that affect their career progression. These groups include, in particular, women (Deryugina et al., 2021; Squazzoni et al., 2021) and faculty of color (Crooks et al., 2021; Jones, 2021), who have taken on more service, teaching, and mentoring responsibilities in their professions while also shouldering more caretaking responsibilities related to school closures and illnesses. One study of academics randomly contacted six times per day over the course of a week showed that mothers were 4.25 times more likely to be caring for children compared to fathers (Pebdani et al., 2023). In parallel with these increased demands, scholarly productivity has decreased more strongly for women, widening the gender gap in publication rates, in particular among women with young children (Andersen et al., 2020; Krukowski et al., 2021) and early and mid-career researchers (Kotini-Shah et al., 2022). About half a year into the pandemic, women faculty compared to male faculty were more likely to report that their work-life balance had deteriorated; that their workload had increased; and that they experienced a stronger increase in how stressed, overwhelmed, and overworked they feel (Tugend, 2020).

The challenges faced by URM faculty are hardly new, nor is the lingering problem that women in STEM disciplines and faculty of color are

underrepresented in academia. Many URM faculty still enter departments where they are the very first URM faculty member ever hired; some face a climate that is not welcoming or, worse, characterized by discrimination and hostility; and many carry a disproportionate burden related to both visible service (e.g., demands on minority representation on campus committees) and invisible service (e.g., advising the substantial number of students from minoritized groups). Of note, these concerns have an intersectional dimension, such that female URM faculty are at greater risk of overlapping disadvantages (Crenshaw, 1991). The reality is that long-standing challenges faced by URM faculty in academia have been greatly amplified by COVID-19, posing new threats to these faculty's retention and dealing a blow to overarching goals of diversifying the professoriate.

Climate, Workload Inequities, and Faculty Retention

In a landmark study, O'Meara et al. (2014) reported that the quality of the work environment is one of the most frequently cited reasons given by faculty resigning from their academic positions. A difficult work climate can unquestionably affect any faculty member, but there is convincing evidence that this problem disproportionately impacts URM and women faculty. Many studies point to the fact that difficult or hostile work environments, discrimination, and invisible labor are regrettable characteristics of the work experience for minoritized groups (Jayakumar et al., 2009; O'Meara et al., 2014).

Moreover, research based on data from national surveys of faculty and on exit interviews after moves to other institutions shows that women and URM faculty are dissatisfied with their workload (Bozeman & Gaughan, 2011; Eagan & Garvey, 2015; Winslow, 2010). Compared to men, women spend more time on teaching and service and less time on research, engaging in a pattern of activities that is less likely to be rewarded in the academic review process (O'Meara et al., 2018). This is particularly true for women of color, who are often asked to engage in service activities that are related to enhancing diversity and inclusion—a

phenomenon referred to as the minority tax (Trejo, 2020). That very type of service is also often invisible to their White counterparts (Bird et al., 2004; Fox & Colatrella, 2006; Hare, 2018; Xu & Martin, 2011). These systemic workload inequities have been identified as critical to lower tenure rates and slower career trajectories (O'Meara et al., 2018).

Scholarship in positive organizations suggests that to achieve positive work outcomes, employees must be given opportunities for "active, intentional engagement in the process of personal growth" (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007). Gappa et al. (2007) proposed that respect, both expressed and felt, is the cornerstone to faculty thriving on campus. When faculty have a sense of employment equity, academic freedom and autonomy, flexibility, professional growth, and collegiality, they are more satisfied, more committed to their organization, and more likely to stay at that organization.

For URM faculty, creating conditions conducive for (re-)engagement to achieve positive work outcomes is more complex because of pre-pandemic inequities that have only become exacerbated. To recognize URM-specific concerns and apply them in the context of re-engaging faculty in a post-pandemic climate, we took guidance from research on URM faculty success by Daley et al. (2011) and Wright-Mair (2017). Daley et al. followed 30 URM faculty members over the course of 10 years. Successful URM faculty cited "the presence of role models and mentors, peer networking and support, knowledge of institutional culture, and professional skill development" as relevant factors contributing to their success. Based on their findings, Daley et al. developed a four-dimensional model of faculty success, emphasizing the importance of instrumental mentorship, networking, professional skill development, and understanding institutional culture. Similarly, Wright-Mair identified practices to support racially minoritized faculty at predominantly White institutions, including the importance of validating identities and strengthening community; providing opportunities for collaborations that forge allyship; humanizing environments; and fostering "meaningful relationships with peers [which provide] a sense of belonging and comfort in their setting" (p. 110).

Writing Communities to (Re-)Engage Faculty

In efforts to support URM faculty, workshops and talks are often convened with the goal of improving the climate for inclusive excellence and for recognizing and countering implicit bias. While these activities are important, they are not sufficient for enhancing faculty diversity and may even backfire, for example, by activating instead of suppressing stereotypes or by fostering the idea that the presence of diversity trainings implies a workplace free of discrimination (Bezrukova et al., 2016; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016, 2018, 2022; Kalinoski et al., 2013).

Our faculty development initiative, called U See I Write (a play on words in reference to the University of California, Irvine's acronym, UCI), involves writing retreats and offers an alternative way to build community and improve climate. Traditionally, writing retreats are referenced as a successful means to increasing writing productivity (e.g., Grant & Knowles, 2000; Moore et al., 2010; Murray & Newton, 2009). More recently, academic writing retreats have also been discussed in the context of connectivity and well-being interventions, highlighting their role in ameliorating academic pressures such as isolation and conflicting work priorities (Eardley et al., 2021; Stanley et al., 2017). By following the best practices and recommendations for supporting URM faculty from Daley et al. (2011) and Wright-Mair (2017), we propose that writing communities can also serve an important role in supporting URM faculty and enhancing URM faculty post-pandemic re-engagement.

Following Daley et al. (2011), but incorporating important elements proposed by Wright-Mair (2017), U See I Write provides *instrumental mentorship* through access to senior faculty in campus leadership roles who serve as group conveners; *networking* through formal and informal opportunities to forge within-group and across-group allyship, thereby strengthening community, meaningful relationships with peers, and a sense of belonging; *professional skill development* through coaching sessions on writing skills and strategies to protect writing time; and an *understanding of institutional culture* through its

strong alignment with productivity expectations for faculty advancement at research-intensive institutions of higher education. The professional skill development components of U See I Write primarily serve the career progression of participating faculty members. At the same time, the components of networking, instrumental mentorship, and understanding of institutional culture serve as central pathways for connecting U See I Write to broader efforts toward building inclusive climate and work culture at the university. Mentoring underrepresented faculty and providing them with the time and welcoming space to engage in activities that advance their own career progression is a way to give back to a group of faculty who have been unduly burdened and disadvantaged. It is also a way through which an institution can show faculty that they are appreciated, respected, and valued. In that regard, U See I Write provides a unique opportunity to foster URM faculty's careers, contributes to a sense of belonging and inclusion, which is a crucial component of URM faculty retention. Importantly, allocating time for research writing in an organized setting contributes to scholarly productivity and supports timely advancement of faculty through the ranks.

The U See I Write Initiative to Increase Faculty Engagement

The U See I Write initiative grew out of quarterly writing retreats we organized on campus since 2016. It implements many of the best practices and strategies for writing success taught by the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity's Faculty Success Program. Funded by the UCI Office of Inclusive Excellence, U See I Write retreats would bring together somewhere between 20 to 30 faculty from across campus for full-day, on- or off-campus retreats. In the 2020–2021 academic year, we offered for the first time, and supported by a University of California, Office of the President, Advancing Faculty Diversity Grant, an expanded program for faculty to participate in monthly, half-day writing retreats as well as between-retreat weekly, at

least one-hour-long writing sessions in smaller groups of three to five faculty members. Participants in the program were further asked to write at least 30 minutes on their own every workday.

We advertised this program through a campus-wide email, our List-serv reaching prior U See I Write participants, and through leadership in each school (e.g., deans, chairs, equity advisors) who were asked for their active engagement in identifying interested individuals. These leaders either recommended individuals whom we could reach out to, or they contacted faculty in their school directly. Our goal was to offer this program to an initial cohort of 12 faculty, but because of the overwhelming interest, we expanded the scope and admitted all 43 interested applicants, of whom 39 eventually enrolled. Being a faculty member at UCI was the only eligibility criterion for program admission.

Four 3-hour writing retreats were convened via Zoom, in monthly intervals between March and June of 2021. Each retreat included a 20-minute training session, facilitated by three of the authors, some-times jointly with another senior faculty. These training sessions covered topics including strategic planning for writing success, creating a weekly and daily writing schedule, protecting writing time from competing commitments, and building a mentorship network to support writing. The remaining time was devoted to writing, with a 10-minute break after 90 minutes. Participants were asked to keep their cameras on to the degree possible, to establish a sense of community similar to that of an in-person meeting. Anecdotally, the vast majority of participants kept their cameras on. To provide additional accountability and networking opportunities between the monthly sessions, participants were divided into 10 groups of three to five faculty. Groups were built purposefully, keeping them mostly uniform in terms of academic rank, discipline, and gender; none of the groups had only one racial/ethnic minority member. These small groups decided on a time to meet once a week for a total of 13 weeks via Zoom to write together for at least one hour.

Participants completed baseline and endpoint surveys regarding scholarly writing engagement, perceptions of inclusion, leadership,

work environment, work engagement, fairness, and intention to leave the university, as well as demographic information. Each week, participants reported in a short survey sent out by coordinators on Fridays on whether they attended their small group meeting, how many hours they devoted to scholarly writing that week, whether they met their weekly goals, and what their writing goals were for the following week. They were also asked to share three "wins," which could be small or large, writing- or non-writing-related, professional or personal successes they experienced. Aggregated results from these check-ins were shared on Mondays with the whole cohort, reporting the collective amount of time spent on writing in the past week and sharing a word cloud of accomplishments, to emphasize wins and generate further motivation for writing and excitement within the cohort.

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Writing Initiative

To assess the effectiveness of the writing initiative, we asked participants whether we could use the data they provided as part of the program for research purposes. The aims of the proposed study were to test whether work and writing engagement would increase throughout participation in U See I Write and whether elements of program participation (e.g., number of retreats attended, number or hours written) are associated with these changes. Participants indicated their consent by checking "I agree" on the study information sheet. Thirty-five of the 39 participants consented, but one later discontinued participation in U See I Write. Data from the remaining 34 participants are included here. The research was approved by the UCI Institutional Review Board (IRB #: 2021–6485).

Participant Demographics

Most participants identified as women (79.4%). The largest share identified as White (41.2%), followed by Black/African American or

Hispanic/Latinx (17.6%; categories combined to protect the identity of participants belonging to racial/ethnic groups considered under-represented on the UCI campus; see UCI, n.d.), Asian/Asian American (14.7%), and faculty with more than one race (8.8%). The diversity in U See I Write is notably higher than reflected in the gender and racial/ethnic composition on our campus, where women faculty represent only 36.5% and White faculty are 63.6% of all faculty (University of California, n.d.). Most participants were assistant professors (55.9%), 29.4% were tenured associate professors, and 14.7% were tenured full professors. Faculty in our study represented 12 of the 15 units/schools on campus, and 71.4% had participated in one of U See I Write's quarterly, pre-pandemic full-day writing retreats.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data on writing and work engagement were collected using validated questionnaires, and U See I Write participation was assessed by recording event attendance and writing time.

Writing Engagement

We assessed writing engagement with 10 items (Table 1), using a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*), which we constructed based on the U See I Write program goals of providing protected writing time and building a supportive and inclusive community; on recommended best writing practices in the literature (e.g., Boice, 1983); and on recommendations for productive writing from the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity. A mean score was calculated to reflect overall writing engagement. Cronbach's alphas were .67 (baseline) and .65 (endpoint). An unrestricted exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis and varimax rotation yielded three factors, using an Eigenvalue cut-off of 1. These were labeled Writing Process (Factor 1: % variance: 22.69; Eigenvalue:

Table 1. Factor Loadings and Communalities for Varimax-Rotated, Three-Factor Solution for the 10-Item Writing Engagement Scale

	Factor loading			Communality
	1	2	3	
I write every day (five days a week) for at least 30 minutes.	−.25	**.79**	.06	.69
I am focused during my writing time.	**.59**	.27	−.37	.56
I am a productive writer.	.42	**.61**	−.40	.70
I find writing enjoyable.	**.79**	.04	.11	.64
I am confident in my writing skills.	**.88**	−.03	−.07	.78
I protect my writing time from teaching, mentoring, and service obligations.	.15	**.86**	.24	.82
I protect my writing time from family and personal obligations.	.25	**.60**	.49	.66
I have access to a supportive community of other writers.	−.08	.18	**.72**	.55
I seek feedback about my writing from others.	**.44**	.003	.39	.35
I value writing alongside others.	.01	.07	**.73**	.54

Note. All items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all*; 2 = *a little bit*; 3 = *neutral*; 4 = *for the most part*; 5 = *very much*). The highest factor loading for each item is in bold.

2.77; 4 items), Writing Productivity (Factor 2: % variance: 22.02; Eigenvalue: 2.10; 4 items), and Writing Community (Factor 3: % variance: 18.09; Eigenvalue: 1.41; 2 items).

Work Engagement

Using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006), participants rated themselves on a 7-point Likert scale, from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*always/everyday*). The scale has three subscales measuring, with three items each, Vigor, reflecting energy, resilience, willingness to invest effort, and persistence (e.g., "At my work, I feel bursting with energy"); Dedication, reflecting significance, feelings of pride, inspiration, enthusiasm, and challenge (e.g., "My job inspires me"); and Absorption, reflecting immersion in work and time passing quickly and positively (e.g., "I am immersed in my work"). Mean scores were calculated for the overall scale and each subscale. At baseline, Cronbach's alphas were .95 for the overall scale and .86, .85, and .88 for the subscales. At endpoint, Cronbach's alphas were .90, .91, .86, and .74, respectively.

U See I Write Participation

The number of monthly retreats and weekly small writing groups attended, as well as weekly hours devoted to scholarly writing, was recorded.

Statistical Approach

Data analyses were conducted using SPSS 25.0 (SPSS, Chicago, IL). There were three missing cases for baseline measures and 12 to 14 missing cases for endpoint measures. Missing data were completely at random, χ^2 (49) = 37.49, *p* = .995 (Little, 1988), and were excluded from analyses. Changes in the mean values of overall scales and sub-scales from baseline to endpoint were examined using paired samples *t* tests. All correlations are Pearson product-moment correlations. Hierarchical linear regression models were computed, with change scores (endpoint to baseline) for the overall as well as the subscales of Writing Engagement and Work Engagement defined as outcome variables; the corresponding baseline scores entered in Step 1 (method enter); and monthly retreat attendance, weekly small group meeting attendance, and hours writing per week entered as predictor variables in Step 2 (method stepwise). Prior to regression analyses, statistical assumptions were examined. The P–P plots showed that residuals were normally distributed and homoscedastic, and variance inflation factor values indicated multicollinearity was not a major concern. No statistically significant outliers existed in the outcome variables. Statistical assumptions were met.

Results

The U See I Write intervention resulted in a significant improvement in overall Writing Engagement (*t* = 2.76, *p* <. 05; Table 2). The subscales

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Paired Samples t Tests for the Writing Engagement Scale and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli et al., 2006), at Baseline and Endpoint

Variable	Baseline	Endpoint	T	df	p
	M (SD)	M (SD)			
Writing Engagement	2.81 (0.60)	3.32 (0.57)	2.76	17	.013*
Writing Process	2.84 (0.81)	3.18 (0.67)	2.57	19	.019*
Writing Productivity	2.56 (0.94)	3.08 (0.85)	2.05	19	.055†
Writing Community	3.43 (0.91)	4.03 (0.72)	3.15	19	.005**
Work Engagement	4.07 (0.84)	4.31 (0.81)	2.09	19	.051†
Vigor	3.70 (0.86)	3.62 (1.02)	-0.51	19	.617
Dedication	4.30 (0.92)	4.60 (0.88)	1.92	19	.070†
Absorption	4.23 (1.03)	4.72 (0.93)	3.37	19	.003**

Note. **< .01, *< .05, †< .10.

Writing Process (t = 2.57, p < .05) and Writing Community (t = 3.15, p < .001) also emerged as significant, with trend-level improvements for Writing Productivity (t = 2.05, p = .055). Work Engagement increased at a trend level (t = 2.09, p = .051), with significant improvements in Absorption (t = 3.37, p < .01). The small sample size precluded a test of the impact of gender, race/ethnicity, and academic rank on these effects.

On average, participants attended 3.09 (SD = 1.00) of the four monthly retreats. Weekly surveys were completed by an average of 52.94% of participants. Among those who responded, an average of 70.23% attended their weekly writing meetings and wrote an average of 5.14 (SD = 3.56) hours per week. A greater number of hours written was associated with more pronounced increases in Overall Work Engagement (r = .46, p = .04) and Absorption (r = .45, p = .05). No other correlations emerged as significant.

A hierarchical linear regression predicting changes in Overall Work Engagement was significant in Step 2 (Step 1: R^2 = .14, $F(1,19)$ = 2.93, p = .10; Step 2: R^2 change = .20, $F(2,19)$ = 4.41, p = .03; Table 3), with weekly hours written emerging as the sole significant predictor variable (β = .45, p = .04). For Absorption, significance was found in Step 1 (R^2 = .22, $F(1,19)$ = 5.03, p = .04) and Step 2 (R^2 change = .19, $F(2,19)$ = 5.26, p = .01); lower baseline absorption (β = -.45, p = .03) and more hours written per week (β = .43, p = .04) were significant

predictor variables. Finally, a model predicting the Writing Engagement subscale Writing Productivity emerged as significant (Step 1: R^2 = .45, $F(1,19)$ = 14.53, p = .001; Step 2: R^2 change = .15, $F(2,19)$ = 6.21, p = .02); lower writing productivity at baseline (β = -.70, p < .001) and more hours written per week (β =.39, p = .02) were significant predictor variables. These findings suggest that more hours spent writing per week are associated with increases in Work Engagement and its subscale Absorption as well as increases in Writing Productivity. They also suggest that these associations exist above and beyond any effects of baseline levels of each respective measure, which were also significant for Absorption and Writing Productivity but not for Overall Work Engagement. Models predicting other outcome variables (Work Engagement: subscales Vigor and Dedication; Writing Productivity: Overall Scale, Writing Process, and Writing Community subscales) did not emerge as significant.

Table 3. Hierarchical Regression Models Predicting Change in Work Engagement, Absorption (Work Engagement subscale), and Writing Productivity (Writing Engagement subscale)

		Predictor	b	β	p	
Model 1	Work Engagement					
	Step 1	Baseline Work Engagement	−0.23	−.37	.10	R^2 = .14 $F(1, 18)$ = 2.93, p = .10
	Step 2	Baseline Work Engagement	−0.22	−.36	.09	ΔR^2 = .20 $\Delta F(1, 17)$ = 5.20, p = .04
		Hours spent writing	0.11	.45	.04	
Model 2	Absorption					
		Predictor	b	β	p	
	Step 1	Baseline Absorption subscale	−0.30	−.47	.04	R^2 = .22 $F(1, 18)$ = 5.03, p = .04
	Step 2	Baseline Absorption subscale	−0.29	−.45	.03	ΔR^2 = .18 $\Delta F(1, 17)$ = 5.25, p = .04
		Hours spent writing	0.14	.43	.04	
Model 3	Writing Productivity					
		Predictor	b	β	p	
	Step 1	Baseline Writing Productivity	−0.79	−.67	.001	R^2 = .45 $F(1, 18)$ = 14.53, p = .001
	Step 2	Baseline Writing Productivity	−0.83	−.70	< .001	ΔR^2 = .15 $\Delta F(1, 17)$ = 6.21, p = .02
		Hours spent writing	0.21	.39	.02	

Note. n = 20.

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted faculty morale and engagement. Campuses need to develop strategies for (re-)engaging faculty and to re-strengthen or re-build connections faculty have to their institutions beyond their students and classrooms. To address this "wicked problem" (Churchman, 1967; Rittel & Webber, 1973), we recommend faculty writing communities as an attractive, relatively low-cost means to measurably increase faculty work and writing engagement.

Several observations are of note. First, compared to our campus's faculty demographics, the U See I Write program was disproportionately attended by women faculty and faculty of color, pointing perhaps to a particular need from these groups to belong to spaces for communal scholarly writing. Because U See I Write significantly increases work and writing engagement and predominately services and benefits underrepresented groups on campus, initiatives like ours may serve to support important goals of diversifying academia (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2021). Second, this initiative led to substantive improvements in how participants rated themselves in terms of their writing engagement. This is important given that scholarly productivity is a necessary component of research faculty professional advancement, in particular for faculty on track to tenure. Third, because this writing intervention was carefully designed to focus on building community and positive reinforcement, it resulted in the intended increased sense of overall work engagement, even in a remote setting. Finally, some of the improvements in writing and work engagement were predicted by hours spent writing per week, affirming our premise that organizing spaces for writing communities is a useful faculty development tool.

The U See I Write initiative was not primarily intended as a research study. There are inevitable weaknesses in the empirical approach and the quality of the data collected, most prominently the small sample

size. Nevertheless, for the purposes of presenting and evaluating a program that was aimed to increase faculty engagement, we have solid evidence that the program had a positive effect. We therefore recommend it as a practice to other universities as part of their faculty development initiatives to increase engagement, or re-engagement. Of note, while UCI is a research (R1) university, our initiative is open to professors of teaching who regularly apply into this program. We therefore think that our initiative could be implemented, with little to no modifications, at more teaching-intensive schools.

For efforts that may be adopted at other institutions of higher education, we add some further considerations. First, faculty writing initiatives need to be carefully planned and convened. It is not sufficient to simply provide space and ask faculty to attend. We start engaging with faculty as early as with the information collected on the application form. For instance, we ask applicants to provide information about their personal writing struggles and expectations for participation, and we follow up on many of these during the training sessions at the writing retreats. Second, it is important to actively engage in community building throughout the program. Each writing retreat incorporated opportunity for faculty to engage with and bond with one another. Third, the formation of small writing groups should be a deliberate process. Investing time in thoughtfully combining faculty into groups that share common interests, either professionally or personally (perhaps because all are parents of young children), pays off. Finally, while the retreats described here were virtual, we also know from pre-pandemic experience that location matters. Holding retreats off campus or at a somewhat remote campus location, with easy access to outside seating areas for impromptu conversations, was particularly appreciated.

In conclusion, the U See I Write initiative successfully increased writing and work engagement. The positive impact on underrepresented groups of faculty, including women and faculty of color, who were strongly represented in our program but remain at higher risk of

leaving academia was an important added benefit. Similar initiatives could work to (re-)engage and help continue to diversify faculty at other institutions.

Biographies

Ilona S. Yim, PhD, is Professor in the Department of Psychological Science and Equity Advisor in the School of Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine. She co-founded and oversees the U See I Write faculty writing initiative. Her research examines biopsychosocial pathways linking stress and health, with a particular focus on women's health.

Nina Bandelj, PhD, is Chancellor's Professor in the Department of Sociology and Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Development at the University of California, Irvine. She joined the organizing team of U See I Write in 2020 to help expand it into the annual program. Her research examines how social relations, culture, power, and emotions influence economic processes.

Olga V. Razorenova, PhD, is Associate Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at the University of California, Irvine. She co-organizes the yearly Stem Cell Research Center Symposium and U See I Write faculty writing retreats, both centering on faculty engagement. Her research focuses on therapeutic development for breast and kidney cancers.

Peiyi Wang, MA, is a PhD student in the Department of Psychological Science at the University of California, Irvine. She is the student assistant and graduate student researcher for the U See I Write faculty writing initiative. Her research is centered on stress, culture, and minority health.

Acknowledgments

References

Andersen, J. P., Nielsen, M. W., Simone, N. L., Lewiss, R. E., & Jagsi, R. (2020, June 15). Meta-research: COVID-19 medical papers have fewer women first authors than expected. *eLife*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.58807

Bezrukova, K., Spell, C. S., Perry, J. L., & Jehn, K. A. (2016). A meta-analytical integration of over 40 years of research on diversity training evaluation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *142*(11), 1227–1274. https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000067

Bird, S., Litt, J., & Wang, Y. (2004). Creating status of women reports: Institutional housekeeping as "women's work." *NWSA Journal*, *16*(1), 194–206.

Boice, R. (1983). Contingency management in writing and the appearance of creative ideas: Implications for the treatment of writing blocks. *Behavior Research and Therapy*, *21*(5), 537–543. https://doi.org/10.1016/0005-7967(83)90045-1

Bozeman, B., & Gaughan, M. (2011). Job satisfaction among university faculty: Individual, work, and institutional determinants. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *82*(2), 154–186. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2011.0011

Churchman, C. W. (1967). Guest editorial: Wicked problems. *Management Science*, *14*(4), B141–B142.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and

antiracist politics [1989]. In K. Bartlett (Ed.), *Feminist legal theory: Readings in law and gender* (pp. 57–80). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429500480-5

Crooks, N., Smith, A., & Lofton, S. (2021). Building bridges and capacity for Black, Indigenous, and scholars of color in the era of COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter. *Nursing Outlook*, *69*(5), 892–902. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.outlook.2021.03.022

Daley, S. P., Broyles, S. L., Rivera, L. M., Brennan, J. J., Lu, E. R., & Reznik, V. (2011). A conceptual model for faculty development in academic medicine: The underrepresented minority faculty experience. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, *103*(9–10), 816–821. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0027-9684(15)30435-1

Deryugina, T., Shurchkov, O., & Stearns, J. (2021). COVID-19 disruptions disproportionately affect female academics. *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, *111*, 164–168. https://doi.org/10.1257/pandp.20211017

Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2016). Why diversity programs fail. *Harvard Business Review*, *94*(7), 14.

Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2018). Why doesn't diversity training work? The challenge for industry and academia. *Anthropology Now*, *10*(2), 48–55.

Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2022). *Getting to diversity: What works and what doesn't*. Harvard University Press.

Eagan, M. K., Jr., & Garvey, J. C. (2015). Stressing out: Connecting race, gender, and stress with faculty productivity. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *86*(6), 923–954. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2015.0034

Eardley, A. F., Banister, E., & Fletcher, M. (2021). Can academic writing retreats function as wellbeing interventions? *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *45*(2), 183–196. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2020.1744542

Fox, M. F., & Colatrella, C. (2006). Participation, performance, and advancement of women in academic science and engineering: What is at issue and why. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*, *31*(3), 377–386. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-006-7209-x

Gappa, J. M., Austin, A. E., & Trice, A. G. (2007). *Rethinking faculty work: Higher education's strategic imperative*. Jossey-Bass.

Grant, B., & Knowles, S. (2000). Flights of imagination: Academic women be(com)ing writers. *International Journal for Academic Development*, *5*(1), 6–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/136014400410060

Hare, H. E. (2018). *Service work of underrepresented faculty* [Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles]. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.

Jayakumar, U. M., Howard, T. C., Allen, W. R., & Han, J. C. (2009). Racial privilege in the professoriate: An exploration of campus climate, retention, and

satisfaction. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *80*(5), 538–563. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.0.0063

Jones, J. M. (2021). The dual pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism: Navigating our path forward. *School Psychology*, *36*(5), 427–431. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000472

Kalinoski, Z. T., Steele-Johnson, D., Peyton, E. J., Leas, K. A., Steinke, J., & Bowling, N. A. (2013). A meta-analytic evaluation of diversity training outcomes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *34*(8), 1076–1104. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1839

Kotini-Shah, P., Man, B., Pobee, R., Hirshfield, L. E., Risman, B. J., Buhimschi, I. A., & Weinreich, H. M. (2022). Work–life balance and productivity among academic faculty during the COVID-19 pandemic: A latent class analysis. *Journal of Women's Health*, *31*(3), 321–330. https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2021.0277

Krukowski, R. A., Jagsi, R., & Cardel, M. I. (2021). Academic productivity differences by gender and child age in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine faculty during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Women's Health*, *30*(3), 341–347. https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2020.8710

Little, R. J. A. (1988). A test of missing completely at random for multivariate data with missing values. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, *83*(404), 1198–1202. https://doi.org/10.1080/01621459.1988.10478722

McClure, K. R., & Fryar, A. H. (2022, January 19). The great faculty disengagement: Faculty members aren't leaving in droves, but they are increasingly pulling away. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *68*(11), 40.

Moore, S., Murphy, M., & Murray, R. (2010). Increasing academic output and supporting equality of career opportunity in universities: Can writers' retreats play a role? *The Journal of Faculty Development*, *24*(3), 21–30.

Murray, R., & Newton, M. (2009). Writing retreat as structured intervention: Margin or mainstream? *Higher Education Research & Development*, *28*(5), 541–553. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360903154126

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2021). *The impact of COVID-19 on the careers of women in academic sciences, engineering, and medicine*. National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/26061

O'Meara, K., Jaeger, A., Misra, J., Lennartz, C., & Kuvaeva, A. (2018). Undoing disparities in faculty workloads: A randomized trial experiment. *PLoS ONE*, *13*(12), Article e0207316. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0207316

O'Meara, K., Lounder, A., & Campbell, C. M. (2014). To heaven or hell: Sensemaking about why faculty leave. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *85*(5), 603–632. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2014.0027

Pebdani, R. N., Zeidan, A., Low, L.-F., & Baillie, A. (2023). Pandemic productivity in academia: Using ecological momentary assessment to explore the impact of COVID-19 on research productivity. *Higher Education Research & Development*, *42*(4), 937–953. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2022.2128075

Rittel, H. W. J., & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences*, *4*(2), 155–169. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01405730

Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *66*(4), 701–716. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164405282471

Spreitzer, G. M., & Sutcliffe, K. M. (2007). Thriving in organizations. In D. L. Nelson & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Positive organizational behavior* (pp. 74–85). SAGE Publications.

Squazzoni, F., Bravo, G., Grimaldo, F., García-Costa, D., Farjam, M., & Mehmani, B. (2021). Gender gap in journal submissions and peer review during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. A study on 2329 Elsevier journals. *PloS ONE*, *16*(10), Article e0257919. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0257919

Stanley, I. H., Hom, M. A., Chu, C., & Joiner, T. E. (2017). Increasing research productivity and professional development in psychology with a writing retreat. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, *3*(3), 249–256. https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000089

Trejo, J. (2020). The burden of service for faculty of color to achieve diversity and inclusion: The minority tax. *Molecular Biology of the Cell*, *31*(25), 2752–2754. https://doi.org/10.1091/mbc.E20-08-0567

Tugend, A. (2020). "On the verge of burnout": Covid-19's impact on faculty well-being and career plans [Research brief]. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. https://connect.chronicle.com/rs/931-EKA-218/images/Covid%26FacultyCareerPaths_Fidelity_ResearchBrief_v3%20%281%29.pdf

University of California. (n.d.). *UC workforce diversity*. Retrieved March 29, 2022, from https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/about-us/information-center/uc-workforce-diversity

University of California, Irvine (UCI). (n.d.). *OIE data dashboard*. Office of Inclusive Excellence. Retrieved March 29, 2022, from https://inclusion.uci.edu/responsive-research/oie-dashboard/

Winslow, S. (2010). Gender inequality and time allocations among academic faculty. *Gender & Society*, *24*(6), 769–793. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243210386728

Wright-Mair, R. (2017). *A phenomenological exploration of how campus environments shape the success of racially minoritized faculty at Predominantly*

White Institutions [Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver]. https://digitalcommons.du.edu/etd/1262

Xu, Y. J., & Martin, C. L. (2011). Gender differences in STEM disciplines: From the aspects of informal professional networking and faculty career development. *Gender Issues*, *28*(3), 134–154. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-011-9104-5