



ADVANCING FACULTY EQUITY & RESILIENCE



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Advancing Faculty Equity & Resilience

The aim of this publication is to promote faculty diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) in a resilient, empowering, and healthy academic environment.

This newsletter will present articles and other relevant materials on DEIB in addition to publishing news and activities from the Office for Faculty Equity and Resilience (OFER).

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ABOUT OUR OFFICE MISSION & STRATEGIC VISION

> The mission of ADVANCE office for Faculty Equity & Resilience (OFER) is “to promote an equitable, inclusive, and empowering environment in which all faculty receive support, resources, and opportunities in order to thrive at UMass Lowell.”

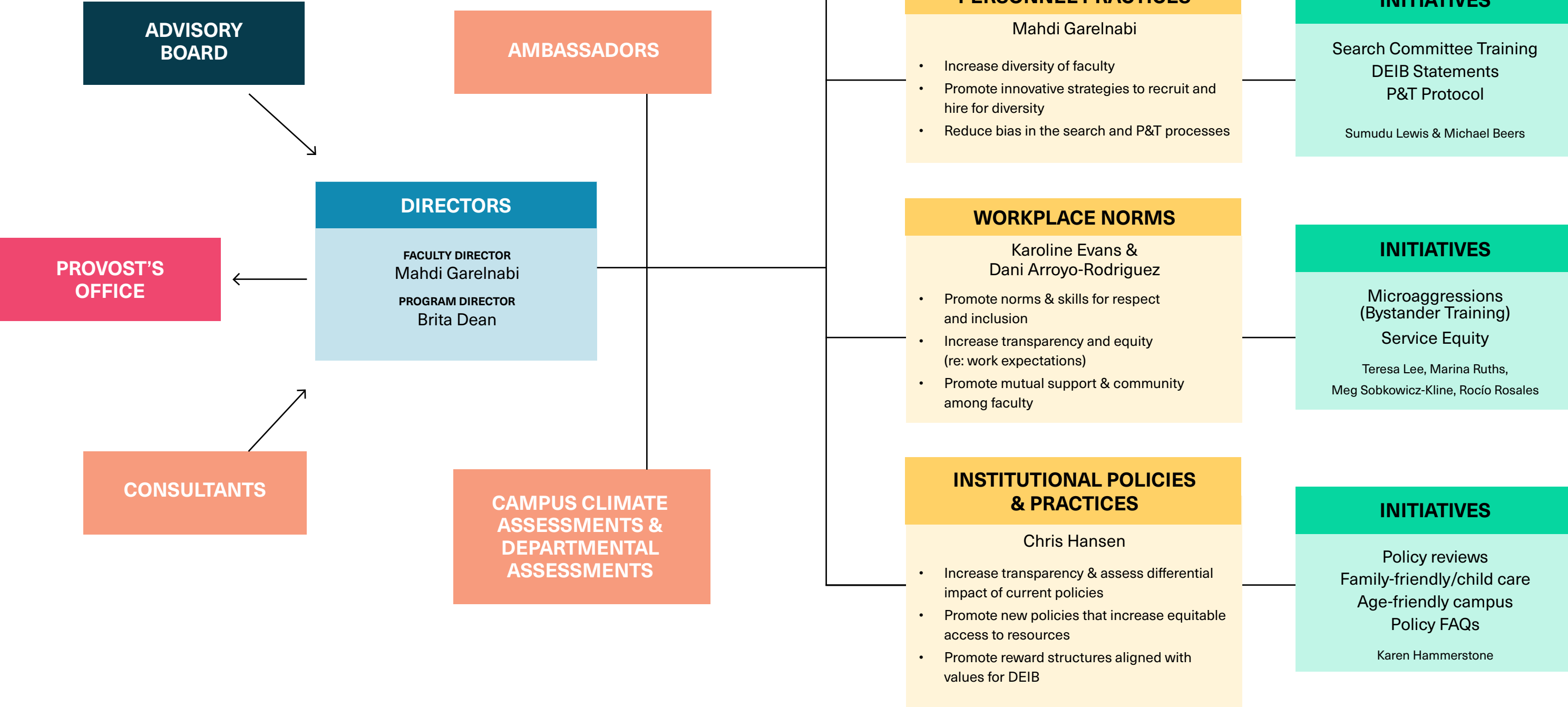
OFER promotes equity through initiatives at multiple levels of analysis, which include increasing supports for marginalized faculty, promoting an inclusive work environment, addressing interpersonal biases, and identifying policies and practices in which biases can get embedded. This is multi-faceted, organizational, transformation work.

The mission and scope of OFER address key values that define UMass Lowell as an institution. Among these values are respect for all people, equity, transparency, fairness in our interactions, safety, and inclusion. One of the core pillars of the university’s strategic plan is a commitment to a “diverse, welcoming, and inclusive campus.” OFER is a critical and central body for action and advocacy for this aspiration vis-à-vis faculty recruitment, retention, and quality of work life.

OFER works in partnership with other entities at the university that share our commitment to elevating voices from all sectors of our faculty community. To uplift all faculty, OFER prioritizes addressing barriers and promoting opportunities for faculty from minoritized groups and does so by acting at multiple levels including providing mentoring, addressing workplace norms, building an inclusive culture and work climate, and analyzing policies to better promote access and equity.

OFFICE STRUCTURE

- IN COLLABORATION WITH CONSULTANTS: CENTER FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION & DIVERSITY-EMBRACING RESEARCH INITIATIVE
- STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS
- SPECIFIC INITIATIVES WITHIN EACH PRIORITY & EQUITY LEADERS INVOLVED



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WELCOME FROM OUR DIRECTORS

PROMOTING EQUITY IN OUR FACULTY COMMUNITY

“ TOGETHER, WE CAN CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE **ALL FACULTY MEMBERS** THRIVE, REGARDLESS OF BACKGROUND OR IDENTITY.”



BRITA DEAN

PROGRAM DIRECTOR, ADVANCE OFFICE FOR FACULTY EQUITY

> Welcome to the ADVANCE Office for Faculty Equity and Resilience (OFER)

The foundation of this program started in 2011 when the research began for the first National Science Foundation ADVANCE grant that was awarded in 2013, then grew into an ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grant awarded in 2016 that we titled “Making WAVES” to address equity for STEM female faculty. Our focus broadened significantly over the years to reach all faculty, and we sustain the program through support from the Provost’s office. After working successfully on this project for many years under the leadership of Meg Bond, I am now the Program Director for OFER, and pleased to be working closely with Mahdi Garelnabi, the selected new Faculty Director since July 1, 2023. Over the last few months, under Dr. Garelnabi’s guidance, OFER has experienced many structural changes leading to the inclusion of a significantly increased number of UMass Lowell faculty members directly connected to the ADVANCE Office with reactive approaches to addressing equity. The future looks bright for OFER and I am excited to be a part of this growing office. We hope you will visit us at the Faculty Success Center (UC 140) to learn more and engage with us.



MAHDI GARELNABI

DIRECTOR OF FACULTY EQUITY

> Dear UMass Lowell Faculty Colleagues,

I hope this message finds you well. As the Director of Faculty Equity, I am honored to address you through this newsletter, and I would like to take this opportunity to share some insights and updates regarding our ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of equity within our academic community.

Our institution is built on the foundation of diversity, and it is crucial that we continually strive to create an inclusive environment where every faculty member feels valued and supported. Equity is not just a goal; it is a journey that requires our collective dedication and action.

In the spirit of transparency, I would like to highlight some of our initiatives and progress in recent months. Our office has been working closely with various departments to identify departmental ambassadors who will help us assess and address disparities in recruitment, retention, mentoring, workload and service equity, and professional development. We are currently working on implementing targeted training programs to raise awareness about unconscious biases and to equip our faculty with the tools needed to create an inclusive classroom environment. Additionally, we are proud to continue the faculty mentoring program aimed at supporting all faculty and particularly underrepresented groups. The goal of this initiative is to foster meaningful connections between seasoned faculty members and those who may benefit from mentorship, guidance, and advocacy.

As we move forward, our commitment to equity remains steadfast. We will continue to engage in dialogue with faculty members to better understand the challenges they face and to identify areas where improvement is needed. Your input is invaluable, and we encourage you to reach out to our office with any suggestions or concerns.

In closing, I want to express my gratitude for the dedication and passion that each of you bring to our academic community. Together, we can create an environment where all faculty members thrive, regardless of background or identity. I look forward to our continued collaboration and progress in building a truly equitable institution.

Thank you for your commitment to excellence and equity.

THE ROLE OF AMBASSADORS

OFER Ambassadors are UMass Lowell faculty members. They play a crucial role in serving as official representatives of their department. These individuals are selected by their departments based on their commitment and enthusiasm to promoting DEIB in their work and within the department. OFER Ambassadors are the key communicators conveying the mission and vision of OFER by both sharing input to guide OFER and communicating information from OFER back to their departments.

Among their responsibilities, the OFER Ambassadors:

1. Serve as a representative of the department to gather input about equity and share those issues with OFER.
2. Facilitate possible OFER visits to department meetings, and coordinate department DEIB training.

FROM THE PROVOST'S OFFICE

JOSEPH C. HARTMAN

PROVOST & VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC & STUDENT AFFAIRS

Among its many roles, the Provost Office is here to support faculty in all aspects of, and throughout, their professional careers. The ADVANCE Office for Faculty Equity and Resilience was developed to help in that support of faculty, from best hiring practices to helping ensure a welcoming, working environment. With a direct link from OFER to my office, I hope we can continue to make UMass Lowell a great destination, and a career choice, for faculty.



JULIE NASH

VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

A thriving university starts with a thriving faculty. When our faculty work in an equitable and diverse environment, they are better equipped to bring their best perspectives, ideas, and approaches to teaching and scholarship. It is an honor to work with the ADVANCE Office for Faculty Equity and Resilience to help provide professional development opportunities, foster a sense of belonging, and address inequities for all faculty members. The Office is doing important work and it's just getting started.



AMBASSADORS 2023-2024

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FINANCE	Eunju Lee
MANAGEMENT	Elissa Magnant
MARKETING, ET AL	Yuerong Liu
OIS	Wen Zhu

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NURSING	Mayum Zaidi
PT + KINESIOLOGY	Maggie O'Neil
PUBLIC HEALTH	Herpreet Thind

FRANCIS COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING	
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CHEMICAL	Stephen Lam
CIVIL + ENVIRONMENTAL	Arghavan Louhghalam
ELECTRIC/COMPUTER	Xingwei Wang
MECHANICAL	Xiangfan Jin

FAHSS	
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CRIMINOLOGY + JUSTICE	Wilson Palacios
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EDUCATION	Minjeong Kim
ENGLISH	Shelly Barish
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MUSIC	Janet Welby
POLITICAL SCIENCE	Emma Rodman
PSYCHOLOGY	Jana Sladkova
WORLD LANG + CULTURE	Kristen Stern

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DEPARTMENT	AMBASSADOR
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	Teresa Lee
CHEMISTRY	Kwok Fan Chow
COMPUTER + INFO STUDIES	Hugo Atikaya
MATH & STATISTICS	Carly Briggs

OTHER DEPARTMENTS	
DEPARTMENT	AMBASSADOR
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UNIVERSITY RELATIONS	Sarah Eisenklam
MSP	Johanna Choo
FACULTY SENATE	Kevin Peterson

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NOTES FROM TEAM LEADERSHIP OFER COMMITTEES



KAROLINE EVANS

DANI ARROYO-RODRÍGUEZ

COMMITTEE: WORKPLACE NORMS

> Karoline Evans, Associate Professor of Management, and Dani Arroyo-Rodríguez, Associate Professor of World Languages and Cultures are leading efforts to promote equitable Workplace Norms.

Our goals are to promote social norms and skills that engender respect, inclusion, mutual support, and community among the faculty. Our initiatives also hope to increase transparency and equity around work expectations. To promote these our office is currently focused on two initiatives: combating microaggressions and promoting service equity.

Many of you know our work in raising awareness of microaggressions and have taken a [bystander intervention training](#) (formerly as part of the Making WAVES grant). We'll continue to offer that training to ensure that everyone is equipped with tools to remove barriers and reduce bias in their work. We're happy to work with your groups to discuss how we can help challenge subtle biases that faculty encounter.

We also are developing a number of offerings to help departments promote the equitable distribution of service. Our dedication to promoting transparency in this area serves as the cornerstone of our efforts as we explore innovative ways to propel UMass Lowell towards a more inclusive work environment. Building upon several discussions that took place during the 22–23 academic year at the Faculty Symposium and in different programs and departments, we are excited to continue working on this initiative. We understand that meaningful change requires not just dialogue but intentional strategies, tools, and support that will help foster a culture of service equity. We are poised to deepen our impact by collaborating closely with individual departments and programs so that, together, we continue to build a culture in which every faculty member feels valued and supported in their contributions to the academic community.

The journey toward creating norms for a more equitable workplace is a collaborative one, and we are grateful for the collective dedication of our colleagues. Thank you for your continued commitment to fostering equity and resilience within UMass Lowell.



YANFEN LI

COMMITTEE: INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTS

> Yanfen Li, Assistant Professor in Biomedical Engineering, is leading efforts to foster the personal and professional advancement of individual faculty members.

Our goal is to ensure that every faculty member gains access to personalized resources and support tailored to their distinct career aspirations and requirements. Our initiatives include the [Collaborative Mentoring Seed Grant](#) series which aims to broaden faculty access to mentoring networks within our institution. This grant supports the development and growth of interdisciplinary and diverse groups of faculty who can serve as peer mentors for each other. Another initiative includes the [50/50 mentoring series](#) which has a long history of empowering faculty to find and establish mentoring relationships with external mentors who are well known in their field. This mentor will not only support the professional development of their mentees but will also share their expertise and unique career journey with all faculty at UMass Lowell. This unique 50/50 seminar aims to highlight the varied pathways and definitions of success.



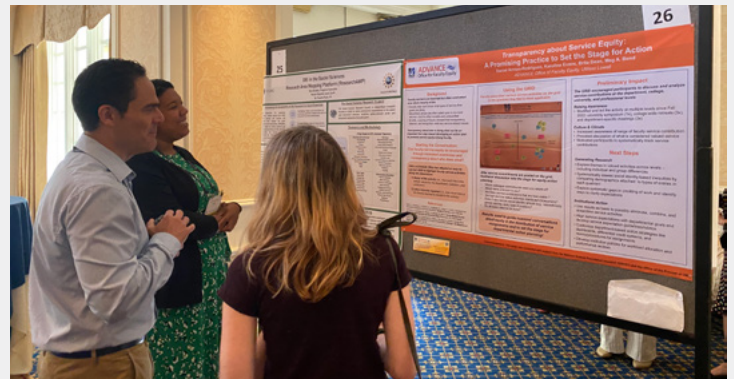
CHRIS HANSEN

COMMITTEE: INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES & PRACTICES

> Chris Hansen, Professor and Chair of Mechanical & Industrial Engineering, is leading efforts to promote Institutional Policies & Practices that are transparent, reduce differential impact on faculty members, increase equitable access to resources, and promote reward structures aligned with DEIB values.

The team has established frequently asked questions (FAQ) websites for [parental leave](#) and [medical leave](#), and have established partnerships with local daycares for faculty, staff, and students' children. Ongoing efforts include reviewing institutional policies to suggest improved policies and connecting with campus resources regarding the age-friendly campus designation.

UMASS LOWELL | **ADVANCE** Office for Faculty Equity



Contact Us

ADVANCE_office@uml.edu

Faculty Success Center (UC-140)