Office of the Provost

2008-2020
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FACULTY INITIATIVE
(SPFI) REPORT

Faculty Affairs

Faculty Affairs Equity Statement

One of the University of Arizona's distinctive strengths is advancing Inclusive Excellence via equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion as outlined in the University of Arizona's Purpose and Values. It is a time for action on equity and diverse representation. Faculty Affairs honors that commitment by recognizing the Indigenous lands on which we are privileged to teach and learn, those of the Tohono O'odham and the Pascua Yaqui. We honor the responsibility of being both a Land Grant Institution and a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Innovation, critical thinking, and problem-solving are greatly enhanced in a diverse and inclusive academic community. In Faculty Affairs we create, develop, and support institutional structures that lead to programs, resources, and services to cultivate faculty promotion and success in their scholarship, teaching, and service. *We are actively engaged in partnership with leaders across campus to build affirming and inclusive systems for faculty advancement* (see McNair, Bensimon, & Malcom-Piqueux, 2020).

We take an ecosystem approach to improving faculty equity that considers (1) recruitment (2) retention and (3) excellence. Recruitment focuses on improving diversity in recruitment and hiring efforts of faculty that includes search committee training and materials rooted in best practices. Recruitment also includes the Strategic Priorities Faculty Initiative described in this report. Retention focuses on building affirming environments and anti-oppressive structures for faculty advancement. Retention efforts include promotion opportunities, multi-year contracts for career-track faculty, regular salary equity review, and faculty mentoring community programs. Excellence focuses on ensuring a culture to enable a high performing academic enterprise. This includes all faculty development programs and resources including leadership programs.

Executive Summary

Since fiscal year 2009, the Strategic Priorities Faculty Initiative (SPFI) has provided temporary University financial support to academic departments enabling them to hire additional full-time, tenure-track faculty or continuing track academic professionals who enhance UArizona's distinctive strengths in advancing Inclusive Excellence via equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion as outlined in the University's Purpose and Values. The focus of this program is to support hiring of new faculty who can help address the pressing issues in teaching, research and service that have been raised by the Black Lives Matter movement. Additionally, given the University of Arizona's Hispanic Serving Institution designation, there is a need for more faculty whose work can increase capacity of the institution to serve Latinx students. Arizona has the highest percentage of Native Americans among all the U.S. states, students and faculty have been significantly underrepresented on campus and there is a need for greater attention to teaching, research and service that speaks to this community. Candidates will be considered whose work will:

1. Foster new and creative ways of involving our diverse student body in an accessible and engaging educational experience that is aimed at producing highly capable graduates who will meet our state's critical workforce needs,
2. Develop new approaches to discoveries and cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, scholarship or creative work that benefits our diverse communities and addresses complex global problems, and
3. Expand collaborations with community and business partnerships, including those involving traditionally underserved groups.

The SPFI program provides funding to hire faculty who are not recruited through an open search with designated funding. This is a targeted opportunity hire. The pool of available funds increased by $175,000 during the 2020-2021 academic year due to increased financial support from President Robbins.

67 individuals received offers for faculty positions at the University of Arizona through the SPFI program between the years of FY2009 – FY2020. During FY2021, 7 SPFI applications were submitted as of January 2021, with 4 approved for hiring. Currently, 44 faculty who were hired as part of the SPFI program currently remain active at UArizona as of Fall 2020. There is an 80% retention rate for faculty hired through the SPFI program.

The first ever survey of active faculty hired through the SPFI program was conducted in Fall 2020. There were 31 respondents out of 44 with a 70% response rate. Data demonstrates diversity in representation with 45% identifying as Hispanic or Latina/o/x, 21% identifying as American Indian, Indigenous, or Alaska Native, 10% identifying as Asian or Asian American, and 7% identifying as Black of African American[1]. 32% identified as white. The majority (60%) self-identified as female or woman. Survey participants demonstrate a clear progression in promotion and tenure, 54% of eligible SPFI faculty have been promoted since the program started in 2009. 32 faculty were hired at the assistant rank, 7 at the associate rank, and 5 as full professors. There are 41 TT faculty, 16 have been promoted from assistant to associate, 2 have been promoted from associate to full, 2 others progressed from assistant to associate to full status, and 5 were hired as full professors. Faculty have received recognition and awards within the institution, nationally, and internationally. They are invited as speakers and keynotes nationally and internationally. Overall, faculty shared positive feedback regarding the SPFI program and offered positive support for engaging with current and newly hired faculty through the SPFI program.

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[1] Survey participants were encouraged to select all racial and ethnic categories that applied.

SPFI Program Description

Purpose: The Strategic Priorities Faculty Initiative (SPFI) provides temporary University financial support to academic departments enabling them to hire additional full-time, tenure-track faculty or continuing track academic professionals who will enhance UA's distinctive strengths in advancing Inclusive Excellence via equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion as outlined in the University of Arizona's Purpose and Values.

The SPFI program provides funding to hire faculty who were not recruited through a search with designated funding. Candidates will be considered whose work will

1) foster new and creative ways of involving our diverse student body in an accessible and engaged educational experience that is aimed at producing highly capable graduates who will meet our state's critical workforce needs,

2) develop new approaches to discoveries and cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, scholarship or creative work that benefits our diverse communities and addresses complex global problems, and

3) expand collaborations with community and business partnerships, including those involving traditionally underserved groups.

UA's long tradition of access and inclusion has enabled us to recruit a diverse student body. Our recent designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution provides new opportunities to expand our capacity to serve Latinx students. The broad diverse range cultures, experiences, social and economic backgrounds of our students include, but are not limited to

- first-generation college students;
- students underrepresented in higher education in comparison to Arizona and national high school university eligibility rates;
- students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds including socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds;
- U.S. ethnic minorities;
- geographic location including rural communities;
- students who identify as LGBTQ;
- students with disabilities;
- international students, who speak and communicate in a variety of languages;
- non-traditional students, including adult learners;
- students with diverse gender identities or gender expression; and
- students with varying religious backgrounds, or who identify with no particular religious background.

Research indicates that innovation, critical thinking, and problem-solving are greatly enhanced in a diverse and inclusive academic community that supports the participation and success of all its members by advancing efforts to increase collaborations across traditional disciplinary and ideological divides, develop inclusive and engaged modes of instruction, and expand community and business partnerships, including those with traditionally under-served populations.

Criteria: Departments seeking financial support to recruit academic professionals and faculty must establish that those individuals demonstrate competency in one or more of the following critical areas. Interdisciplinary hires are strongly preferred. We have particular interest in hires that can help address the current issues in teaching, research and service that have been raised by the Black Lives Matter movement. Additionally, given the University of Arizona's Hispanic Serving Institution Designation, there is a need for more faculty whose work can increase capacity of the institution to serve Latinx students. In addition, although Arizona has the highest percentage of Native Americans among all the U.S. states, students and faculty have been significantly underrepresented on campus. These bulleted items are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive.

Engagements with Students That Advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

- The potential to contribute to our understanding of the conditions that enhance access and full participation and success of a diverse academic community,
- Experience with developing innovations in pedagogy and curriculum to engage a diverse student body,
- Experience with mentoring students from groups that have been underrepresented in higher education, in particular African American, Latinx, and Native American students.

Innovations in Research, Scholarship and Creative Achievements that Advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Research and scholarship that address the needs of our diverse society;
- Artistic expression and cultural production that reflects culturally diverse communities or voices not well represented in the arts and humanities;
- Research that addresses the experiences of groups underrepresented in higher education, including women as well as ethnic minorities in Stem disciplines;
- Potential for collaborations with UA's interdisciplinary strengths and programs that serve our diverse students and communities.

Partnerships in Outreach and Service that Advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:

- A record of service aimed at expanding educational access, including building or leading bridge and mentoring programs for undergraduate and graduates,
- Particular expertise with serving the needs of our state and region's economic, social and cultural needs, as well as our unique populations in the borderlands region (Native American populations, Mexican descent populations, and immigrants) and
- Broader programs of research concerned with eliminating disparities such as access to health programs, educational advancement, political engagement, social mobility, and civil and human rights.

Funding Model : The Initiative is funded and administered by the Executive Office of the President and the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. Funding of no more than $100,000 per hire is available for up to three years based on the formula below. The total amount of funding available each year depends on the hires that have been made in the previous two years. The Process described under "Application Review" will be used to determine the funding awarded. Salary funding will include associated fringe benefits. In some cases, lesser levels of funding may be offered to maximize the number of hires under this program. The typical funding model employed by the Initiative is included below. Awarded funds will be transferred to the colleges/units in the form of State funds, unless otherwise noted on the approval notification.

SPFI Frequently Asked Questions

Hiring Fund

1. **Can SPFI funds be used to hire a candidate identified in a current open search?**

No. SPFI funds cannot be used to support a candidate who has applied to an open position. If there are candidates in an open search, they must be considered equally within that applicant pool.

SPFI applications are submitted at the end of every month from September thru March. This will allow departments time to make an early offer to competitive candidates. This may be off the typical hiring cycle.

2. **Should a SPFI candidate be identified prior to applying for SPFI funds?**

Yes. Candidates must be identified prior to submitting a SPFI hiring application. However, they cannot be a candidate in a current open search. The application requires details about the candidate.

3. **How could departments find top candidates that satisfy SPFI criteria?**

We recommend identifying and reaching out to possible candidates. Often, the best candidates are high performing post-docs or early career faculty. You may invite them to give a talk in your department in order to learn more about their work and to actively recruit them. Departments/colleges can connect with special interest groups or national organizations that focus on research and teaching for underrepresented groups.

4. **Does a SPFI candidate approval involve both the faculty line and the startup funds?**

SPFI funds only partially cover the salary for a faculty line (see the sample table of faculty salary in the SPFI guidelines). The college/department will need to identify additional funds to support the remaining part of the salary, startup funds, and other expenses needed to support the faculty hire. In year 4, the college/department is responsible for 100% for salary support.

5. **Will temporary Faculty and Staff Hiring Slowdown affect SPFI applications?**

No. Faculty and Staff Hiring Slowdown will not be a barrier for approved SPFI hires.

6. **Must a hiring wavier be obtained before a SPFI application can be submitted?**

No. A hiring waiver is not required before submitting a SPFI application. A waiver will have to be requested after SPFI funding is confirmed but will be fast-tracked upon confirmation that the SPFI funding has been approved by the SPFI review committee and the Provost.

7. **What is the expected application and approval schedule for SPFI hiring funds?**

Applications are due the last Friday of the month, opening in September 2020 and ending in March 2021. Reviews will occur monthly and conclude with the final decision from the Provost.

8. **Can SPFI funds be used to hire Career-track faculty?**

No, SPFI hiring funds are only for tenure-track and continuing status track faculty because it is a multi-year commitment and investment in the long-term.

Funding for Recruitment

1. **Can departments use SPFI recruitment funds to reach out to recruit candidates?**

Yes. There is a separate fund for SPFI recruitment. Recruitment funds are available to cover costs associated with recruitment, which may include honorarium for a virtual lecture, on-campus visit costs, or participation in special interest groups with national organizations, or activities to develop relationships with Tribal Colleges, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), or women's colleges. The support funding commitment for the expenses may not exceed $1,500.

2. **Can recruitment SPFI funds be requested before identifying a specific candidate?**

Yes. Recruitment funds may be used to develop relationships with Tribal Colleges, HSIs, HBCUs, or women's colleges without having a specific candidate identified. They can be used to connect with special interest groups or national organizations that focus on under-represented groups. This may include buying an advertisement in a journal or at a conference that is aimed at the target group.

3. **What is the expected application and approval schedule for SPFI recruitment funds?**

Applications for funding recruitment may be submitted by the 15th of the month, during the regular academic year. Letters of approval/denial are issued by the end of the month in which the application was submitted.

For more information about the SPFI Program & guidelines for submission see this link:
https://facultyaffairs.arizona.edu/strategic-priorities-faculty-initiative

Achievements of Faculty Hired Through the SPFI Program

Faculty supported through the SPFI program are award winning, nationally and internationally recognized faculty from across a wide variety disciplines at the University of Arizona. Their exceptional scholarship has been recognized through awards and funding. According to data entered in UAVitae, from 2009-2020, SPFI faculty were active on sponsored research projects **totaling over $23 million**. They were active on non-sponsored (e.g. internal, institutional, international, foundation, corporate and/or donor funds) research projects **totaling over $4 million.** Funding sources include: Alliance Foundation, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society American Psychology Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Dana Foundation, Grass Foundation, Headland Center for the Arts, Mellon Foundation, National Academy of Education, National Cancer Institute, National Heart, Lunch, and Blood Institute, National Institute of Health, National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, National Science Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Spencer Foundation, Weil Foundation, and more.

Between 2009-2020, they also **reported 1,980 scholarly works** in UAVitae. Scholarly works are captured through faculty engagement in books, case studies, chapters, creative performances or productions, journal publications, patents, poster presentations, presentations, proceedings, and other forms.

Faculty supported through the SPFI program have also received numerous awards and recognition for their scholarship, teaching, and service. Internal awards have included:

- The Provost's Author Award
- Provost's Investment Fund
- The Office of Diversity & Inclusion Travel Award
- Edith Sayre Auslander Emerging Visionary Award
- Teaching Awards
- Service Awards

- Career Development Awards
- Research, Innovation, & Impact Technology Award
- Research, Innovation, & Impact Core Facilities Pilot Program
- Participation in the Academic Leadership Institute

External awards and recognition have included:

- Elected positions and fellowships in national organizations
- Book awards and publication awards from discipline specific organizations
- Distinguished Alumni Scholar Awards
- Emerging and Promising Scholar Awards
- Career Awards

SPFI Faculty Hiring 2008-2020

How many SPFI positions have been offered since the program started?

-67 offers were made since the program launched.

-Additionally, during FY2021, 7 SPFI applications have been submitted thus far, with 4 approved for departmental use.

How many faculty remain active UArizona as of Fall 2020?

-44 faculty members remain active at UArizona

-10 faculty members are no longer with UArizona

-1 faculty member retired.

How many faculty declined a SPFI position between fiscal year 2009 and 2020?

-12 faculty members declined the offer.

What is the average number of SPFI offers per year?

An average of 7 offers are made each year with support of SPFI funds.

On average, how many new SPFI faculty start every year?

An average of 4.2 SPFI faculty begin each academic year.
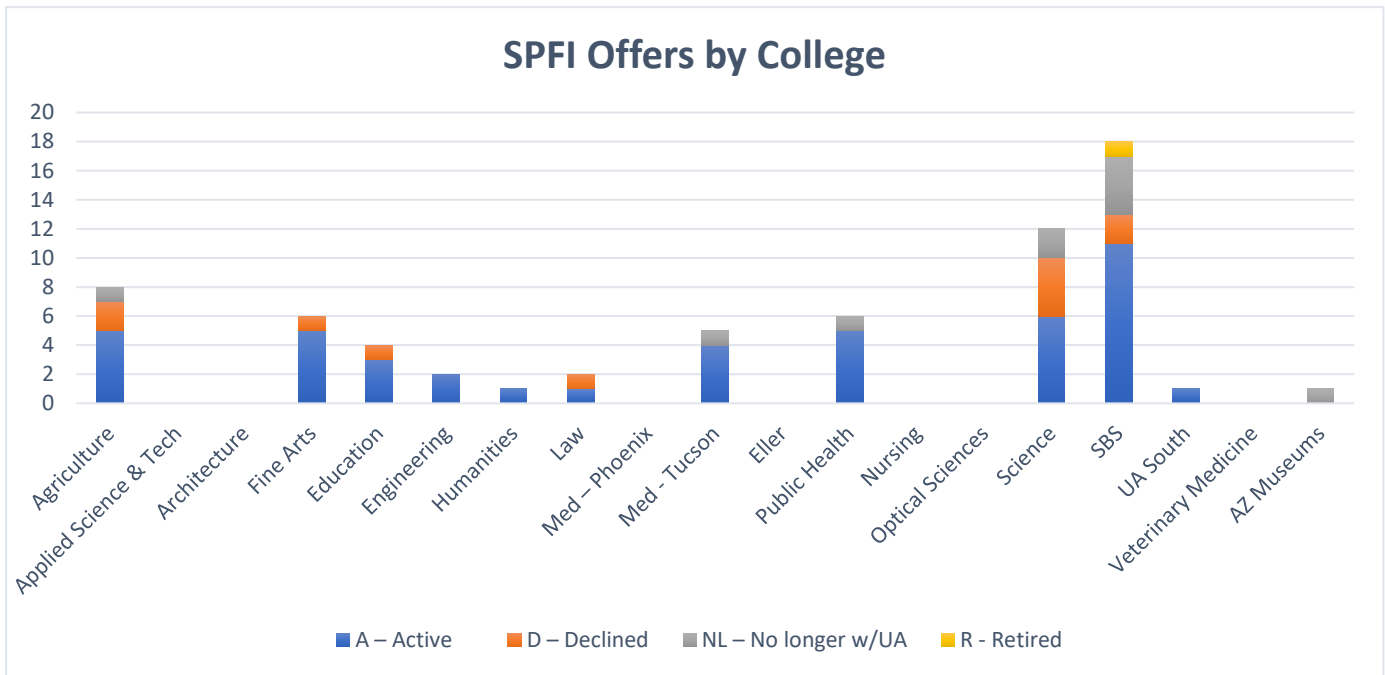
SPFI Faculty Snapshot

SPFI Offers

2%
18%
80%

- Active
- Left UA
- Retired
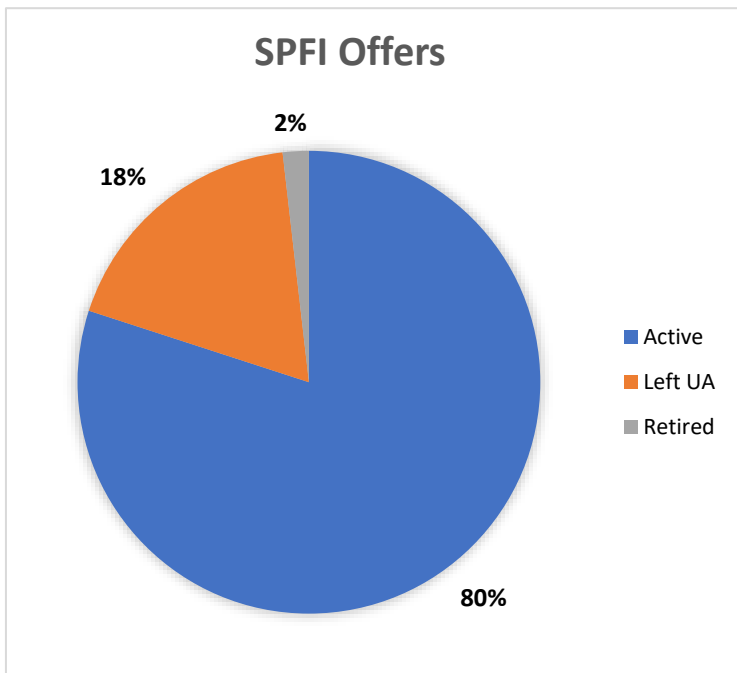
Key facts

SPFI began in AY2008

67 total offers

80% retention of those hired

SPFI Faculty Offers by College


SPFI Offers by College

Fall 2020 Survey of Current SPFI Faculty

In Fall of 2020, a survey was distributed to all active UArizona SPFI faculty (n=44). 31 faculty members completed the survey for a response rate of 70%.

Faculty Demographics

SPFI 2020 Survey Respondents identify as 45% Hispanic or Latina/o/x, 21% as American Indian, Indigenous, or Alaska Native, 10% as Asian or Asian American, and 7% as Black or African American. 31% identified as white. 11 faculty indicated two or more racial/ethnic categories. This is in comparison to all 3,454[2] UArizona faculty who in the Fall of 2020, identified as: 2.1% African American, 9.8% Asian, 10.5% Latina/o/x, 0.9% as Native American, <1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific, and 3.5% international.

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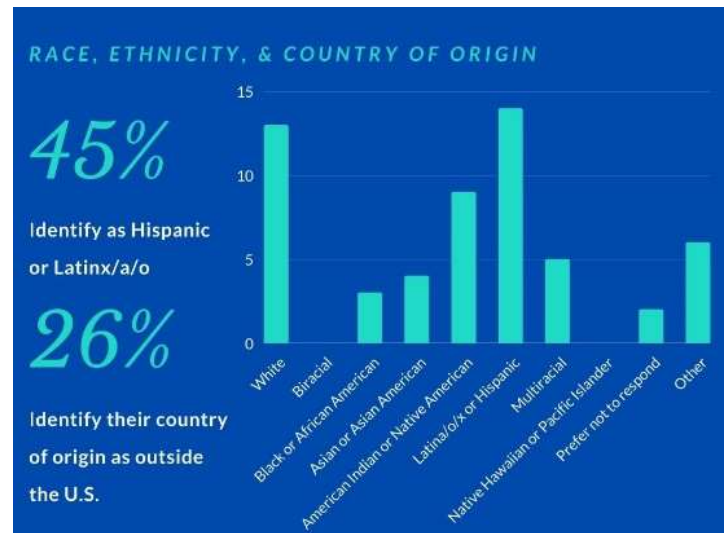
[2] According to UAIR: Faculty counts include all faculty who were active as of the Fall census date. This will include department heads but exclude faculty that have moved into primarily administrative roles. Counts by 'ethnicity' are based on individual's self-identification at time of census snapshot and may be subject to change from one snapshot to the next.

Gender & Sex Identity

Of the 26 faculty who responded to this open item, 34% self-identified as male, 3% self-identified as man, 57% self-identified as female, 3% identified as woman, and 3% self-identified as transgender. 1 individual noted not supporting gender distinctions.

Gender & Sex Identity

- 34% Self-identified as male
- 3% Self-identified as man
- 57% Self-identified as female
- 3% Self-identified as woman
- 3% Self-identified as transgender

Legend:
- Self-identified as male
- Self-identified as man
- Self-identified as female
- Self-identified as woman
- Self-identified as transgender
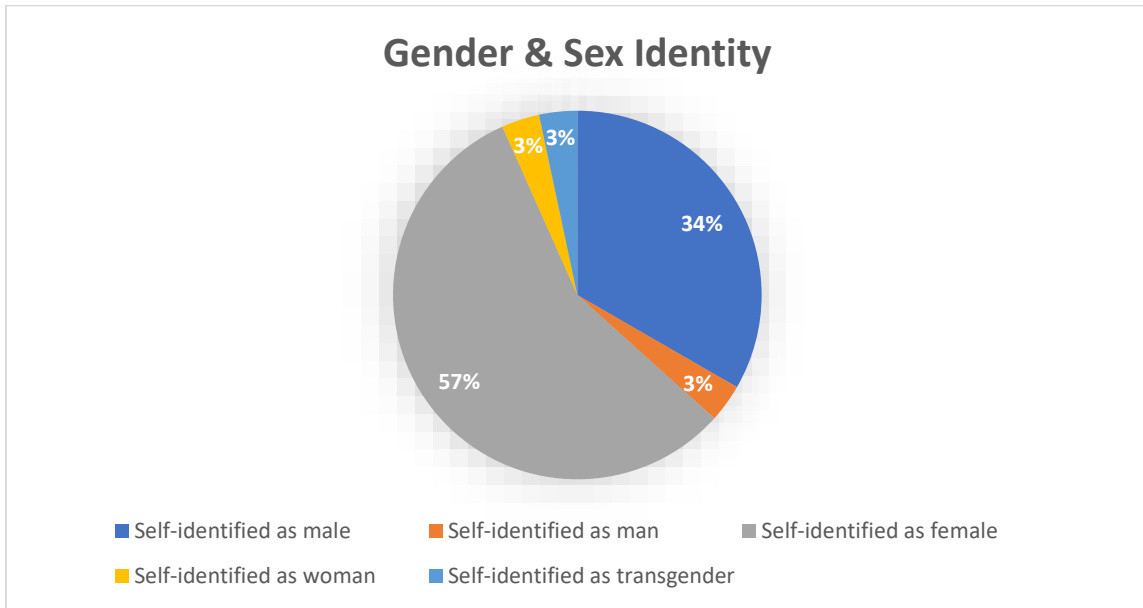
Sexual Orientation

Of the 26 faculty who responded to this open item, 50% indicated that their sexual orientation is heterosexual or straight, 11% queer, 8% bisexual, 4% gay and 27% did not specify. 5 individuals preferred not to respond.

Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual/straight 50%
- Not specified 27%
- Queer 11%
- Bisexual 8%
- Gay 4%
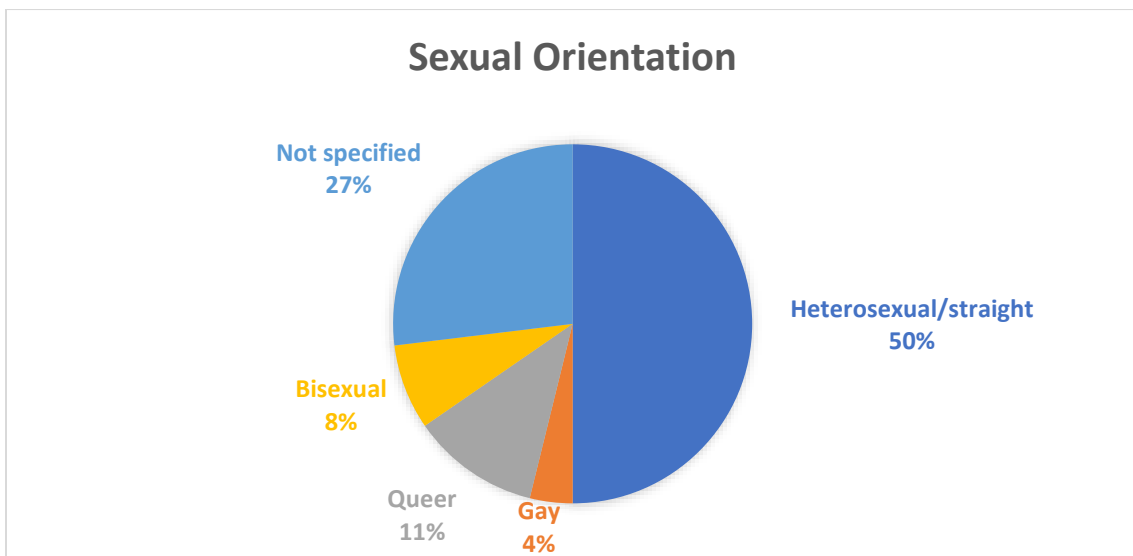
Age range

Nearly half of respondents (42%) indicated an age range between 40-49. 32% indicated an age range of 30-39, and 26% indicated 50-59. This is in comparison to all UArizona faculty whose age range is: 25-34 comprise 7.4% of faculty, 35-54 comprise 51%, and 55-59 comprise 12.3%.
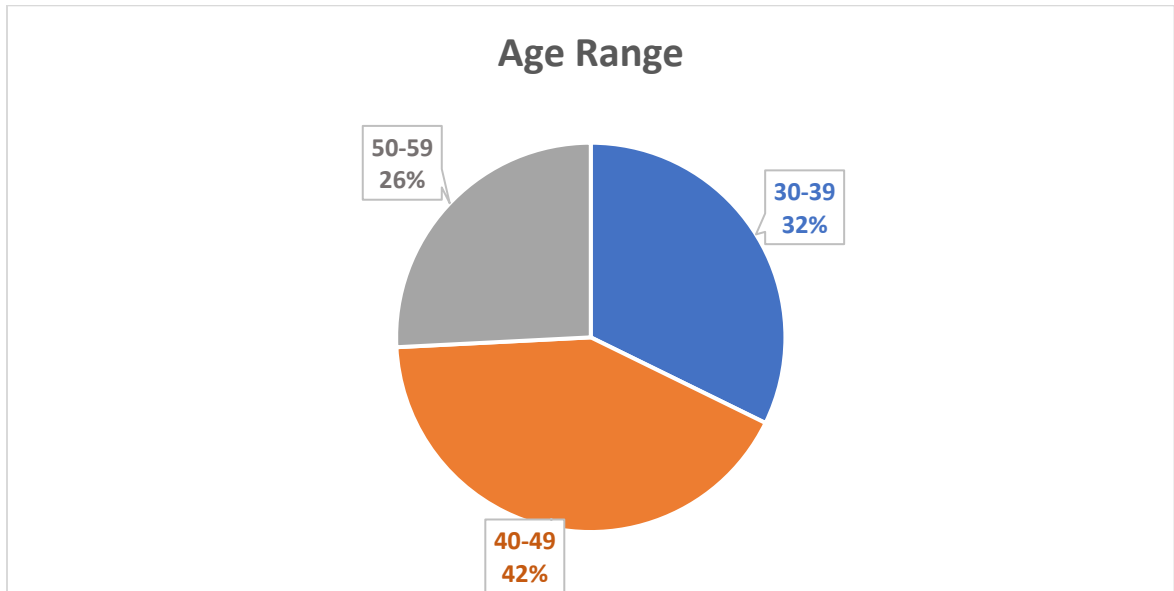

Faculty Career Progression

Faculty demonstrate a clear progression in promotion and tenure. 54% of eligible SPFI faculty have been promoted since the program started in 2009. There are 41 TT faculty, 16 have been promoted from assistant to associate, 2 have been promoted from associate to full, and 2 others have gone from assistant to associate to full status. 5 were hired as full professors.
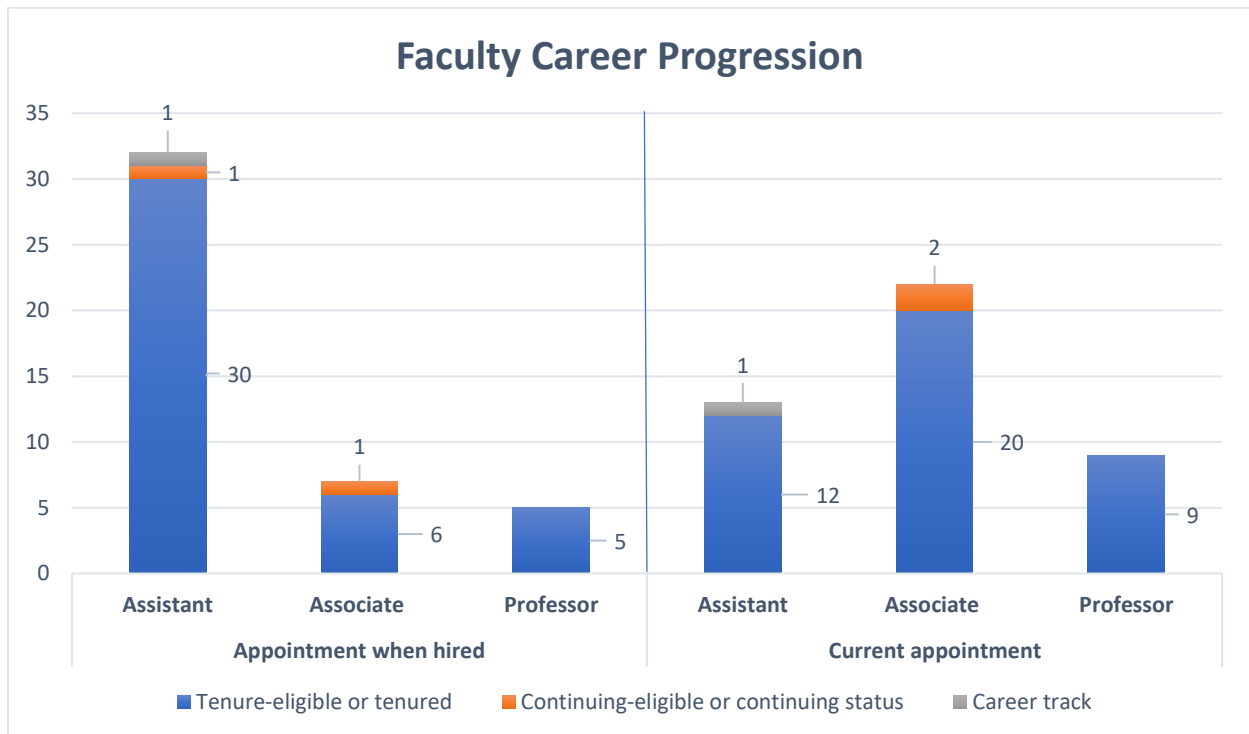
Stigma Related to SPFI

Institutional efforts to diversify the faculty can be met with misperceptions or stigma related to what has been problematically referred to as a "diversity hire" (Hughes, Horner, & Vélez Ortiz, 2012; p. 596[3]). When these misperceptions present, difficulties related to faculty identity negotiation, tokenism, departmental politics, and assumptions about qualifications and/or preferential treatment can also manifest (Hughes, et al., 2012; Medina & Luna, 2000[4]).

We asked faculty: **Have you encountered situations in which you felt stigma related to being hired through the use of SPFI funds?**

Stigma Related to SPFI

Yes, 32.26%

No, 67.74%
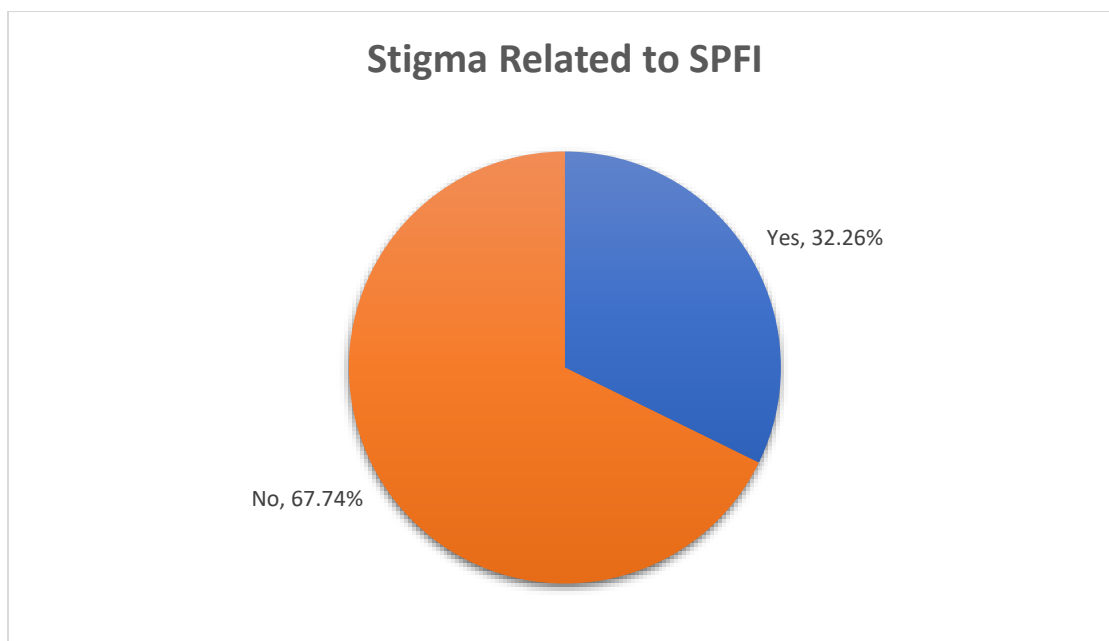
Of those who responded yes, some of the stigma related to:
- Other faculty in their department implying that they were a "diversity hire."
- Faculty viewing SPFI as outside of the "traditional" hiring process
- Jealousy from other faculty regarding career progression
- Microaggressions
- Hearing comments suggesting that because someone with their identities was hired, a precedent was set, and the department would need to hire someone else who shared those identities.

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[3] Hughes, A.K., Horner, P.S., & Vélez Ortiz, D. (2012). Being the Diversity Hire: Negotiating Identity in an Academic Job Search, *Journal of Social Work Education,* 48(3), 595-612, DOI: 10.5175/JSWE.2012.201000101

[4] Medina, C., & Luna, G. (2000). Narratives from Latina professors in higher education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 31, 47–66.

Resources for Faculty

Numerous institutional resources are in place at UArizona to support faculty development across scholarship, teaching, service, career progression, and work/life responsibilities. We asked SPFI faculty specifically about the on-campus resources they turned to for support.
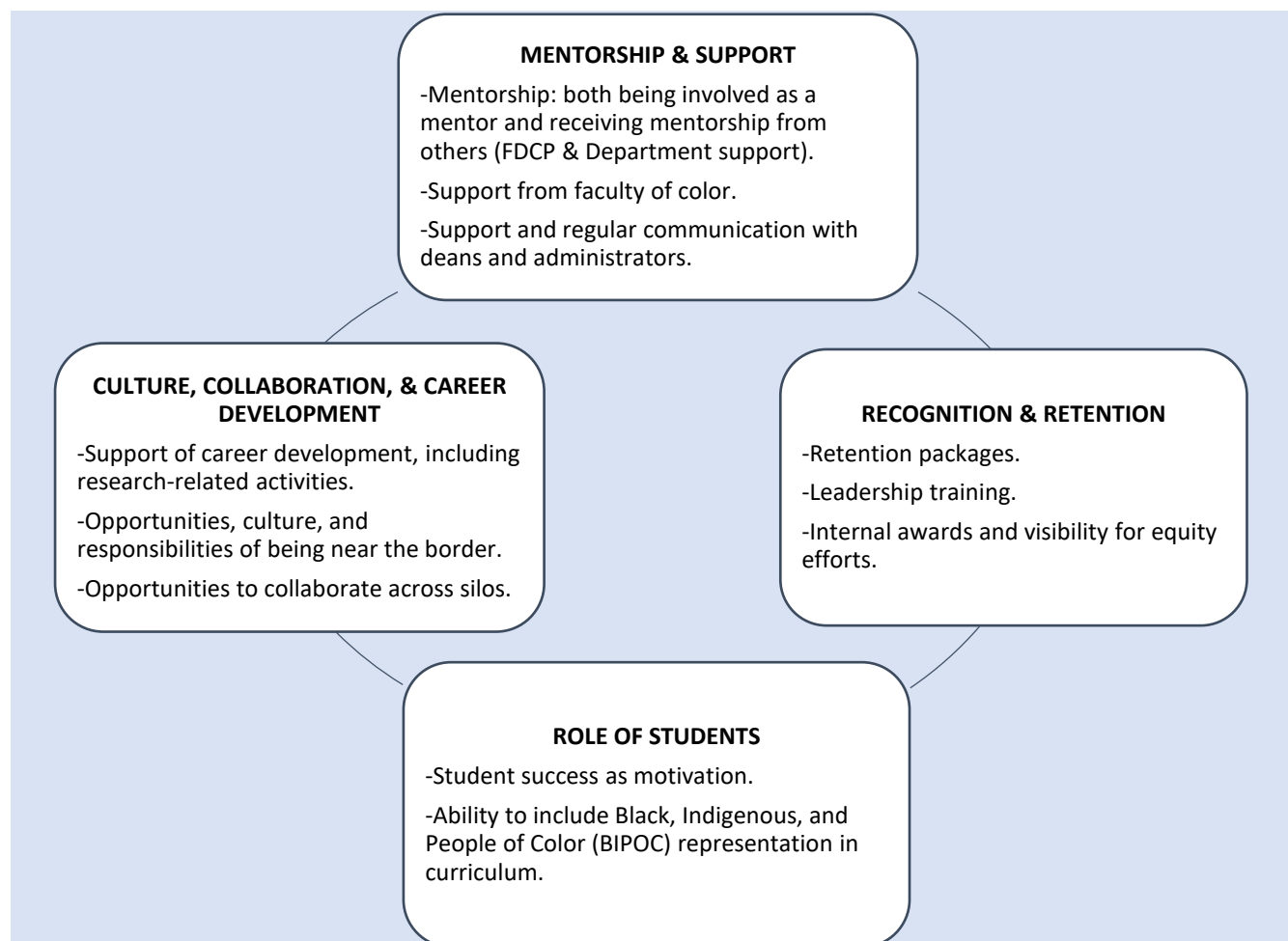
Most frequently noted were **"mentors, mentorship, and/or mentoring programs" (6 times), "affinity groups and/or inclusive faculty groups" (6 times)** and **"libraries / librarians" (5 times)** Faculty also received support from:

- Faculty Development Workshops (3)
- The Office of the Provost (3)
- Academic home departments and colleges (2)
- Ombuds Office (2)
- Arizona's Science, Engineering, and Math Scholars Program (1)
- Faculty Learning Communities (1)
- The Office of Diversity & Inclusion (1)
- Hispanic Serving Institution Initiatives (1)
- Disability Resource Center (1)
- Faculty Writing Group (1)
- Junior Sabbatical (1)
- Research Services & IRB (1)
- Academic Affairs (1)
- Leadership Programs (1)
- STEM Learning Center (1)

*Important to note were the responses that indicated **no resources were offered** to faculty members and/or their support came from self-initiation. **This response was noted 5 times.***

In addition to the resources noted above, faculty shared experiences that contributed to their retention and persistence at UArizona. **These included 4 broad areas: Mentorship & Support, Recognition & Retention; Role of Students; and Culture, Collaboration, & Career Development**

MENTORSHIP & SUPPORT

-Mentorship: both being involved as a mentor and receiving mentorship from others (FDCP & Department support).

-Support from faculty of color.

-Support and regular communication with deans and administrators.

CULTURE, COLLABORATION, & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

-Support of career development, including research-related activities.

-Opportunities, culture, and responsibilities of being near the border.

-Opportunities to collaborate across silos.

RECOGNITION & RETENTION

-Retention packages.

-Leadership training.

-Internal awards and visibility for equity efforts.

ROLE OF STUDENTS

-Student success as motivation.

-Ability to include Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) representation in curriculum.

Overall, faculty were very positive about the SPFI program. Faculty described the SPFI program as follows:
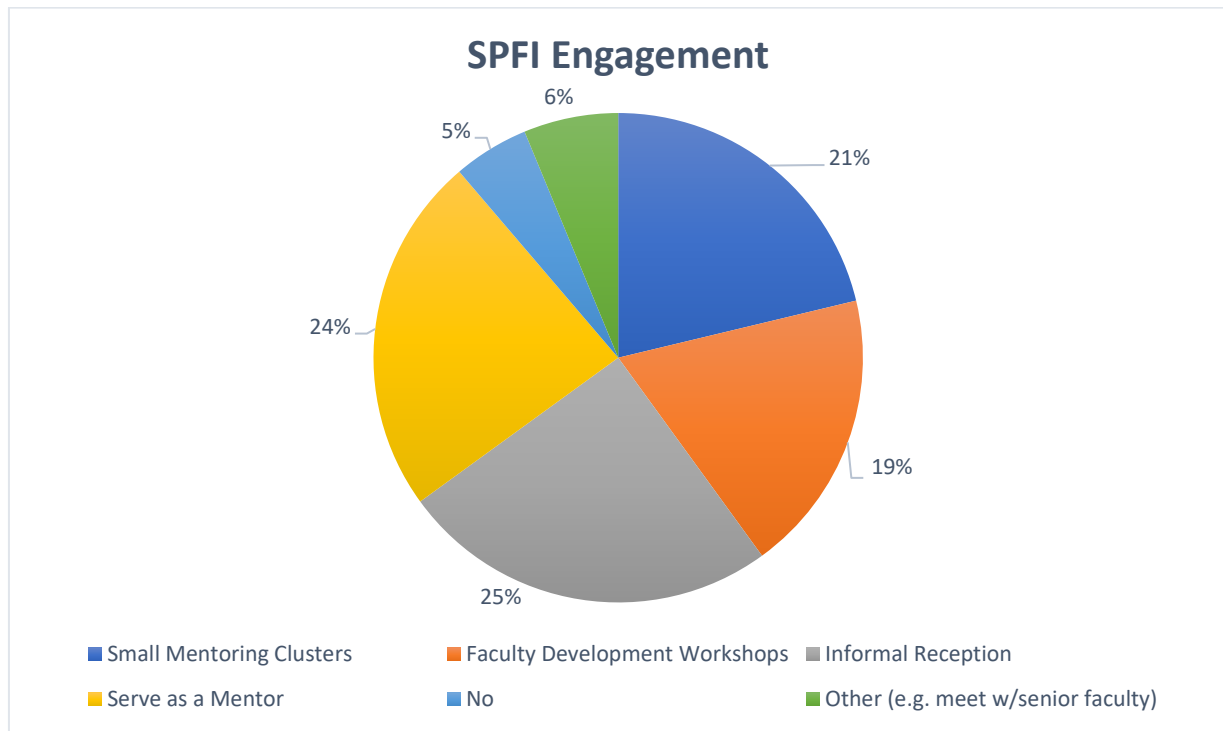
- Was exceptionally helpful
- Offered a sense of connection
- Laid the groundwork for their career
- Excellent program to attract and hire diverse faculty
- Assisted them in switching institutions

Faculty also offered ways to build upon and improve the SPFI program, including:

- Add a retention program
- Offer a mentoring component
- Offer start-up funds
- Expand the program
- Utilize current SPFI faculty with recruitment of new faculty
- Integrate community building
- Examine salary and promotion of SPFI faculty in comparison to non-SPFI faculty
- Develop cluster hires
- Share resources like the book, [Presumed Incompetent](#).

Faculty Engagement

Faculty (25%) indicated they would be interested in engaging with other SPFI faculty in an informal reception. Another nearly 25% indicated willingness to serve as a mentor to incoming SPFI faculty, and 21% are interested in engaging in small mentoring clusters. Last, 19% indicated interest in faculty development workshop settings (e.g. mentoring, writing, promotion, etc.), and 5% indicate no interest on engaging with other SPFI faculty.

SPFI Engagement

Legend:
- Small Mentoring Clusters
- Faculty Development Workshops
- Informal Reception
- Serve as a Mentor
- No
- Other (e.g. meet w/senior faculty)

Values shown: 6%, 5%, 21%, 24%, 19%, 25%

Summary & Recommendations

The SPFI Program has grown into a robust initiative aimed at advancing Inclusive Excellence via equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion since it began in fiscal year 2009. The Program has evolved and adapted with the pressing diversity and equity priorities at UArizona, including most recently, a focus on the Hispanic Serving Institution designation, Native American representation, and a focus on the Black Lives Matter movement.

Faculty hired with the support of SPFI funds demonstrate high retention rates at UArizona, at 80%. When compared to all faculty at UArizona, SPFI faculty represent greater diversity across race and ethnicity. Faculty hired through the SPFI program are actively engaged in securing both external and internal funding, have impressive records of scholarly work, and demonstrate a clear progression in promotion and tenure as 54% of eligible faculty have been promoted since the program started in 2009. These data underscore that the SPFI Program has been successful as a recruitment initiative at UArizona and is associated with positive retention and faculty career progression.

Some faculty have experienced stigma related to their association with the SPFI program and at least 5 noted they did not receive any support or resources as a faculty member, noting their support was largely self-initiated.

Yet, some faculty expressed a positive experience with the process. Faculty shared the numerous areas on campus that have offered support and contributed to their retention. Most notably were the specific mentions of mentors and mentoring programs, affinity groups, and library resources.

The SPFI Program offers important opportunities for expansion, particularly when considering intentional efforts around faculty development and retention. 4 areas emerged as promising next steps for the SPFI Program:

1. Ensure all SPFI faculty are connected to resources upon their hiring.
2. Engage active SPFI faculty in the outreach efforts when recruiting potential new SPFI faculty.
3. Establish a mentoring component that pairs new SPFI faculty with senior SPFI faculty.
4. Offer regular opportunities for engagement across SPFI faculty including receptions, workshops, and community connections.

Acknowledgements