



ADVANCE BU

Advancing and Maintaining Equity

February 2025

Monthly Newsletter

ADVANCE BU to Present Faculty Climate Data and Policy Recommendations

Since ADVANCE BU was launched in the Fall of 2023, seven teams encompassing almost 60 faculty and staff from all five colleges and the library have been hard at work. We have gathered feedback from faculty regarding campus climate, and examined a range of institutional data that shed light on persistent concerns. (While staff concerns are beyond the scope of the grant, we have also addressed such concerns to the best of our ability with HR.) We have also undertaken systematic reviews of key policies and practices at Bradley and compared them with best practices in the scholarly literature and at peer institutions. Based on this work, we have drafted findings and recommendations that will be shared with the campus during the Spring semester. Far from being top-down directives, these recommendations are generated by faculty and staff as a starting point for campus conversations about strengthening our existing practices, particularly those related to tenure and promotion, and evaluations of teaching. Please join us for a presentation of Faculty Climate Data on February 6 from 12–1 p.m. in BECC 1122. Review [our recommendations and our presentations](#) as we post them. And share your thoughts, suggestions and concerns through the surveys and feedback links we make available. We look forward to working with you on these much-needed changes.

Spotlight: Bradley Professors Work to Increase Accessibility for All

In recent years, many scholars who focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) have been talking about DEIA, adding an “A” for “accessibility.” This is because to create truly diverse, equitable and inclusive environments, we need to ensure that everyone has the ability to fully access what the organization offers. Two Bradley professors are international leaders on improving accessibility for people with disabilities, Jeffrey P. Bakken (Professor of Special Education), and Patricia Saleeby (Professor of Social Work).

Jeff Bakken came to Bradley in 2012 and served as Dean of the Graduate School from 2013 to 2021. When he was still in graduate school himself, he realized that he wanted to conduct research that would provide teachers better tools for educating students with disabilities—ranging from learning disabilities, to autism, emotional and behavioral disorders, intellectual disabilities or extensive support needs, and students with sensory disabilities (vision and hearing). That realization came when he was working with students who had been told that they were “dumb” and unable to learn. However, as he taught them new learning strategies, he noticed a dramatic change. “The best thing was seeing them answer questions correctly, realizing that they were learning, and watching them increase their confidence. This lit a fire in me.” Over the course of his career, he has published widely in the field, with more than 200 publications including 31 books. And he has made it a priority to translate his research into practical how-to strategies for teachers, so they can more easily incorporate evidence-based practices into their classrooms.



*Jeffrey
Bakken,
Professor of
Special
Education*

Trish Saleeby joined Bradley in 2020 and serves as the Director of the Social Work program. As an internationally recognized expert on classifications of disability and functioning, she was elected Co-Chair of the World Health Organization's Functioning and Disability Reference Group (FDRG) in 2024; appointed to the International Advisory Board of the *WHO Collaborating Centre for Capacity Building and Training in Global Mental Health* at Columbia University in 2023; and served as a Keynote Speaker at the United Nations *Creating a More Inclusive World: Overcoming Barriers to Enable Environments* forum, also in 2023. For over two decades, she has been a key player in advocating for a more nuanced understanding of patient functioning. After all, she notes, two people with the same diagnosis or condition might have very different functioning needs and require very different supportive services. The new standards include an updated version of the WHO's *International Classification of Diseases (ICD)* which contain functioning codes and the *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)*. Taken together, these now enable clinicians worldwide to better identify patient needs and improve patient outcomes.



Patricia Saleeby,
Professor
and Director
of Social
Work

Both Bakken and Saleeby bring discussions of disability and accessibility into their Bradley classrooms, even though it is often a topic that makes students uncomfortable. “We need to teach our students that by discussing difficult topics, sharing ideas and opinions that may differ, and working together, we can learn from each other,” says Bakken. And because disability is a reality in every society, it is crucial to learn from each other and work together to ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities. “If we don’t consider accessibility,” Bakken notes, “we not only fail to meet the needs of everyone, but we are showing people with disabilities that they are not an important part of the society.”

Equity Quick Takes: Response Rates Raise Concern for Reliability of Student Evaluations of Teaching

In her Bradley Spring Forum keynote, “**Reimagining Evaluations of Teaching**,” Dr. Nicole Barta, Associate Professor at Gonzaga University's School of Education and Director of their Center for Teaching and Advising, reviewed problems with the statistical validity and reliability of Student Evaluations of Teaching. One of these is the response rate, which is often not considered in tenure and promotion discussions. The recommended response rates vary by class size.

<u>Class Size</u>	<u>Recommended Response Rate</u>
< 30 students	>80%
31-50 students	66-75%
50 students	≥50%

Sources: **Barta (2025); James et al. (2015); Al Kuwaiti et al., (2016)**

Bradley’s response rates vary considerably. However, in Spring of 2023 most course response rates were in the 20% to 70% range, with an overall average around 50%. This is well below the recommendation for the average course size at Bradley. ADVANCE BU is investigating strategies for increasing response rates. Send your suggestions to ADVANCEBU@bradley.edu.

Higher Ed Equity in the News

AAUP Warns Universities Against “Anticipatory

Upcoming ADVANCE BU Events

Campus Brownbag: Faculty Climate Survey Findings
Thursday | Feb. 6, noon–1 p.m.

BECC 1122 or by Zoom

Please join us as we present an overview of faculty campus climate surveys

Obedience”

Low Online Degree
Completion Rates Raise
Concerns over Equity for
Vulnerable Students

Gender Gaps on Boards
Persist

from 2018 through 2024. ADVANCE BU Director Jackie Hogan will identify trends and invite discussion of possible responses to ongoing concerns. Coffee and cookies will be served. [Register here](#).

ADVANCE BU Spring 2025 Book Group discussing Berg and Seeber’s (2016) *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*. Email jlhogan@bradley.edu to sign up.

Bradley Bookshelf

Starting in 2025, ADVANCE BU will update the campus on research and creative production by Bradley faculty and staff that focuses on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. Please send details of your new and recent scholarship to jlhogan@bradley.edu.



Obiakor, F. E., & Bakken, Jeffrey P. (Education). *Special education: Advancing values* (Advances in special education, Vol. 38). Bingley, United Kingdom: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Xu, Q., Kim, E. & Guo, Sitong (Communication). Digital selves: A cross-cultural examination of athlete social media self-presentation during the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*.

McQuerry, Claire (English) “On Domesticity.” *Seneca Review*. 54.1 (2024).

Metzger, Cyle (Art History) “Envisioning Non-Binary Gender: The Art of Forrest Bess,” *Archives of American Art Journal* 61, no. 1

Vollmer, Rachel L. (Family & Consumer Sciences) and Taylor, Abbi. (forthcoming). Perceptions of Nonprofit Market in an Urban, Midwestern Food Desert. *Journal of Family & Consumer Sciences*



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This material is based upon work that is supported by the National Science Foundation, under award No. 2303732

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