# 7 roadblocks to faculty engagement

## How to cultivate a positive faculty culture at your higher ed institution

You've already heard that with great power comes great responsibility. Whether it is through shaping minds, breaking ground with new research, or shifting cultural conversations, higher education institutions hold a lot of power. To rise to the occasion, many colleges and universities are asking harder questions of themselves — especially about faculty experience.

Where could you be going wrong? Explore these roadblocks to faculty engagement and learn what steps your institution can take to create a culture where everyone can thrive.
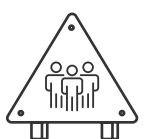
1. Homogeneity

As of fall 2021, 76 percent of full-time professors were White. Faculty diversity and student success go hand in hand — when students of color see their own identities represented among the faculty, they are more likely to enroll in an institution, and both students of color and White students have better academic outcomes when taught by diverse faculty.
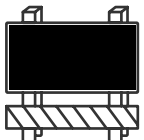
2. Opacity

A healthy culture is founded on transparency and accountability. However, people must feel safe to admit and call out mistakes. Tenure is one protection given to faculty to challenge mainstream ideas, but it isn't the only way. Conducting routine anonymous surveys and town hall meetings can also help establish a culture of transparency

3. Inefficiency

Small daily habits can have far-reaching effects. Software solutions that eliminate repetitive data entry save faculty from hours of tedious work, freeing them up to spend their time doing more enriching activities like mentoring students or doing research.

4. Hierarchy

A culture that demands adherence to an inflexible hierarchy risks doing so at the expense of inclusivity and insight. Instead, institutions ought to aspire to systems of shared governance, which encourage flexibility, collaboration, and empowerment.
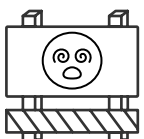
5. Complacency

Too many institutions make the mistake of treating ongoing faculty development as an afterthought rather than a priority. The right technology can help you easily highlight faculty achievements, better quantify credentials, and run more streamlined, informed review cycles that create a roadmap for growth.
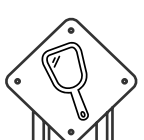
6. Superficiality

Cultivating a culture you can be proud of requires regular reflection — but make sure you're looking at more than just appearances. This kind of institutional soul-searching should be the first step in establishing a defined mission and set of values. These can serve as your institution's "north star," guiding its decisions, routines, and goals.

7. Inconsistency

Rather than relying on one or two events a year to direct people's behaviors, find innovative ways to nurture this culture all year long. Cultivating a positive faculty culture is a practice in consistency over time — a commitment to evolution that never stops.

Make your institution a place where people want to be. See how Watermark can help.

Sources:

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