

Faculty Diversity by Rank

Tennessee

College Faculty Are Less Diverse at Higher Ranks

While faculty diversity has seen small improvements over the past few decades, there is still a considerable gap in demographic representation between faculty members and students they serve. Additionally, there are differences in faculty diversity based upon faculty rank.

Typically, only professors who progress to higher ranks — associate professor and full professor — are awarded tenure by their institution. Higher education faculty often work toward tenure, which allows for the free exchange of ideas, promotes career stability and strengthens the pursuit of research.

Black and Hispanic scholars remain largely underrepresented at the faculty level. Asian faculty demographics are not listed below because they are not historically underrepresented in the faculty context.

Faculty Types in Tennessee, by Race/Ethnicity

At Tennessee's higher education institutions, Black faculty are more likely than their white peers to have more junior roles, such as assistant professor, instructor or lecturer. When looking at the race and ethnicity of tenured faculty, typically associate or full, a disproportionate number of white faculty have received tenured status compared to their Black and Hispanic peers. Across all institution types listed below, as the academic rank goes up, the representation of white faculty disproportionately rises compared to their Black and Hispanic counterparts.

Public 2-Year and Technical Colleges	SREB Region			Tennessee		
	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic	White
Full Professor	319 8.12%	254 6.46%	2,994 76.2%	18 8.61%	3 1.44%	177 84.69%
Associate Professor	414 11.3%	168 4.59%	2,836 77.42%	46 6.32%	16 2.2%	634 87.09%
Assistant Professor	419 11.75%	264 7.4%	2,626 73.66%	43 9.93%	7 1.62%	356 82.22%
Instructors, Lecturers and Faculty with No Academic Rank	3129 13.84%	1,075 4.76%	17,227 76.2%	35 7.92%	10 2.26%	365 82.58%

(IPEDS, 2021)

Prepared by Andrea Kiely, program specialist. Please contact andrea.kiely@sreb.org with any questions.

Public 4-Year Institutions	SREB Region			Tennessee		
	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic	White
Full Professor	2,352 5.85%	1,881 4.68%	29,070 72.29%	141 6.52%	50 2.31%	1,692 78.19%
Associate Professor	3,022 8.17%	2,174 5.88%	24,670 66.72%	143 7.64%	65 3.47%	1,346 71.94%
Assistant Professor	3,777 9.64%	2,361 6.03%	22,438 57.28%	225 10.76%	70 3.35%	1,370 65.52%
Instructors, Lecturers and Faculty with No Academic Rank	3,392 9.38%	3,055 8.45%	18,004 69.49%	99 7.02%	45 3.19%	1,141 80.86%

(IPEDS, 2021)

Private Not-for-Profit 4-Year Institutions	SREB Region			Tennessee		
	Black	Hispanic	White	Black	Hispanic	White
Full Professor	822 5.28%	578 3.71%	12,357 79.38%	88 6.31%	30 2.15%	1,142 81.86%
Associate Professor	1,281 8.86%	719 4.97%	10,356 71.59%	131 9.75%	44 3.27%	1,015 75.52%
Assistant Professor	2,143 11.42%	1,011 5.39%	11,829 63.04%	189 12.47%	49 3.23%	1,010 66.62%
Instructors, Lecturers and Faculty with No Academic Rank	1,094 11.5%	739 7.77%	6,428 67.59%	61 8.52%	15 2.09%	543 75.84%

(IPEDS, 2021)

Sources

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