



Power to the People: Measuring Social Media and Mass Media Impact for Promotion and Tenure in Social and Applied Sciences

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Abstract

Promotion and tenure (P&T) is the process by which academic faculty are evaluated on the trajectory and impact of their scholarly career. Faculty are typically assessed on their grants, publications, teaching, and service. Ethnically minoritized faculty face disparities in P&T, perhaps due to the lack of standards for quantifying their efforts in the community and scholarship that is relevant to issues of social justice and public concern. Efforts in social and mass media to translate research findings and to disseminate evidence-based prevention and intervention efforts, however, are not often considered in P&T despite their direct impact on the community and contribution to the field. This paper discusses how the academy can quantify and qualify the impact of social media and mass media work in existing P&T considerations, particularly for departments with faculty in social and applied sciences. We discuss how social media and mass media work can be evaluated within existing P&T review criteria, and we provide suggestions for committees to quantify the impact of online and media efforts. Last, we conclude with suggestions for departments, colleges, academic medical centers, and universities in higher education to support early career faculty who are engaging in this extremely important, often under-rewarded work.

Keywords social media · mass media · promotion · tenure · academic policy

Introduction

In higher education, tenure is the status granted to a faculty member at a college or university, indicating an indefinite appointment designed to provide job security and protect academic freedom. Promotion and tenure (P&T) is a fundamental process that influences every stage of a scholar's career. P&T considerations require faculty

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to demonstrate exceptional scholarship as defined by their department, institution, and field. Perhaps the biggest driving force that leads lack and other ethnically marginalized faculty out of academia (i.e., institutions of higher education) is the elusiveness and ambiguous nature of tenure (Fairclough, 2000). Broad and poorly defined P&T criteria, for example, tend to benefit White faculty due to racial bias in the P&T voting process and can contribute to lower rates of tenure among ethnically marginalized faculty (Edema-Sillo et al., 2022). Disparities exist in rates of tenure for ethnically marginalized researchers such that of all tenured faculty, 74% identify as White compared to 12% Asian, 5% Latinx, 5% Black, 0.4% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System, IPEDS, 2020). While traditional requirements for tenure include research, teaching, and service, the value of activities varies across institutions and departments. Consistent among these requirements, however, is the lack of reward for community-based research, teaching, and service that has implications for social justice and public policy. As such, this paper seeks to provide recommendations and examples to better facilitate P&T considerations concerning community-based strategies, particularly those that benefit marginalized groups in local communities and society, through disseminating research findings, psychoeducation, and evidence-based coping skills and resources. Although we emphasize the benefit of the included suggestions for marginalized faculty, we recognize and suggest that these recommendations be applied throughout the academy for all faculty.

Systemic and Structural Barriers in Promotion & Tenure: Research, Teaching, and Service

In 2019, ethnically marginalized faculty representation increased to 12%, and 74% of tenured positions were held by White faculty (IPEDS, 2020). Several systemic and structural barriers contribute to this disparity. First, a lack of clarity around the P&T process across disciplines and institutions, guidelines, and assessment metrics is a major barrier to ethnically marginalized faculty obtaining tenure (Alperin et al., 2019; Prottas et al., 2017; Ward, 2003). Without explicit, transparent policies (e.g., definitions, means of assessment, and weights for research, teaching, and service activities), P&T decisions are likely subjected to implicit and explicit bias from supervisors, senior faculty, and committees (Schimanski & Alperin, 2018), which could result in marginalized faculty being disproportionately less likely to achieve tenure (Agathangelou & Ling, 2002; Price & Cotten, 2006). Although the specific guidelines can be nebulous, there is some consistency in P&T criteria across social and applied science disciplines, which generally include research, teaching, and service.

Research

With respect to research, publications are often valued when they are peer-reviewed, considered “high-quality,” and advance the faculty’s field of study (Harley et al., 2010; Schimanski & Alperin, 2018). Common metrics include the number of

journal article citations, journal impact factor, and authorship order (Moher et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2010), with the number of publications per year, and name recognition of journals considered the most important factors for P&T considerations (Niles et al., 2020). Despite being equally productive (e.g., hours engaged in research or scholarly writing, use of intra- or extramural funds for research) as White faculty (Antonio, 2002; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002), ethnically marginalized faculty are disadvantaged in terms of the scientific impact of their publications and number of publications per year (Willis et al., 2021). One explanation for these findings is that the nature of the research conducted by ethnically marginalized faculty is often not rewarded in the same way as their White colleagues (Antonio, 2002; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Turner, 2003; Villalpando & Delgado Bernal, 2002). Specifically, many scientists from ethnically marginalized backgrounds pursue research involving other marginalized populations, research with a social justice orientation (or both), which has documented challenges for acquiring funding necessary to produce publications as it may not be considered “mainstream scholarship” by the academy (Antonio, 2002; Diggs et al., 2009; Jayakumar et al., 2009). Further, publications on these topics and community-based research are typically accepted by special interest journals with lower impact factors rather than mainstream “prestigious” journals due to using alternative research methods (Marrero et al., 2013).

Institutions emphasizing research in P&T requirements consider whether faculty contribute to the university’s ranking, growth, and prestige by applying for and acquiring external grant funding (Gardner & Veliz, 2014; Shapiro, 2006). Faculty are commonly assessed on the number, prestige, and amount of funded grants (Marrero et al., 2013; Schimanski & Alperin, 2018). Several studies demonstrate that Black faculty are significantly less likely (i.e., 17.1% funding rate for African American compared to 69.9% for White applicants) to receive federal funding from the National Institutes of Health compared to White, Asian, and Latinx faculty (Ginther et al., 2011; Hoppe et al., 2019; Taffe & Gilpin, 2021), with similar disparities noted for the National Science Foundation regarding Black and Asian researchers (Chen et al., 2022). A recent study by Hoppe et al. (2019) demonstrated that topic choice contributes to this inequity, with Black faculty more likely to submit grant proposals on topics at the community level (e.g., health care, disparities, lifestyle, psychosocial factors, and intervention and prevention). In addition, there are increased barriers to research engagement and overcoming mistrust with Black and other ethnically marginalized populations that have historically been mistreated or misrepresented in research but who may also be the populations of interest for many ethnically marginalized scholars. The effortful engagement required to redress this historical and contemporary residue is often an oversight, as is the inclusion of review criteria that recognize the efforts of community-based researchers in P&T.

Teaching

In P&T decisions, teaching performance is typically based on student evaluations of instructor preparedness, knowledge of the subject, enthusiasm for the material, lecture quality, and respect for students rather than on student learning and outcome data (Forsyth, 2003; Shapiro, 2006). Relying on student evaluations negates

research and often yields lower ratings that reflect identity-based biases against women (Wolfe, 2022), faculty who identify as LGBTQIA+ (Anderson & Kanner, 2010; Russ et al., 2010), and faculty of color (Williams, 2007). With regard to racial bias, ethnically marginalized faculty often receive lower ratings than White faculty (Arnold et al., 2016; Chavez & Mitchell, 2019; Kreitzer & Sweet-Cushman, 2022; Reinsch et al., 2020). Unfair consequences for ethnically marginalized faculty are further exacerbated by course content. For example, ethnically marginalized faculty often teach courses on “loaded” topics, including diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice. Such courses are not only emotionally taxing, but also subject to lower ratings due to the political nature and potentially controversial topics (Miller et al., 2019; Sue et al., 2011).

Additionally, ethnically marginalized faculty often spend more time preparing for courses, teaching outside the classroom, and mentoring students than White faculty (Allen et al., 2000; Jayakumar et al., 2009). Because marginalized students may be more likely to seek both formal and informal mentorship from ethnically marginalized faculty due to shared cultural identity and research interests, these faculty often spend significantly more social and emotional resources, and devote significantly more time to mentoring marginalized students compared to their White colleagues (Blake-Beard et al., 2011; June, 2015; Menges & Exum, 1983). This contributes to ethnic-racial disparities in P&T by taking away from the time allotted to scholarly activities, which are generally considered more important for academic success (Allen et al., 2000; Diggs et al., 2009). Further, greater emphasis on research and teaching can outweigh faculty’s exceptional achievements in other scholarly domains that are typically under-valued when considering P&T, primarily service activities.

Service

Most academic institutions include service in their mission statements and P&T guidelines (Jaeger & Thornton, 2006; Ward, 2003). Service activities are categorized as either internal or external (Ward, 2003), with internal service referring to activities that positively contribute to the department or institution’s functioning (e.g., serving on committees and in administrative roles) and external service consisting of activities that support or benefit the profession, community, or public (e.g., professional leadership, service-learning, community outreach; Mamiseishvili et al., 2016; Ward, 2003). Similar to teaching, the academy lacks consensus for defining and measuring service beyond this distinction, which poses challenges for incorporating service efforts into P&T decisions (Ward, 2003).

Although P&T guidelines usually do not disclose specific weights assigned to research, teaching, and service activities (Macfarlane, 2008; Schimanski & Alperin, 2018), historically, service activities are considered least important (Green, 2008; Harley et al., 2010; Schimanski & Alperin, 2018). Research indicates that ethnically marginalized faculty spend significantly more time engaged in internal and external service activities compared to White faculty, especially internal service efforts concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion and external service that benefits the community (Allen et al., 2000; Frazier, 2011; Jayakumar et al., 2009; Martinez et al., 2017;

O'Meara, 2002; Ross & Edwards, 2016). Ethnically marginalized faculty also report feeling pressured to fulfill internal service roles and fearful of the consequences of declining such opportunities (e.g., being perceived as unmotivated or uninvolved by colleagues and superiors), leading to acceptance of the service position rather than protection of research time (Arnold et al., 2016). This, in turn, results in less time for research activities that are more heavily weighted in P&T evaluations.

Additionally, many racially and ethnically marginalized faculty's research activities overlap with external service in ways that greatly benefit the lay community. For example, consider a Black assistant professor who conducts racial trauma research, disseminates that research via social and mass media, and provides consultation regarding evidence-based coping strategies that benefit the community. To facilitate an authentic, reciprocal relationship with the local community, the professor's external service activities likely include administrative duties, serving on community boards, and participating in community service. These efforts progress ongoing research in the long-term, exceed service expectations, and meet institutional aims of public engagement; however, they are unfairly less likely to be highly valued for P&T under current structures (Jaeger & Thornton, 2006). Given the time, effort, and public benefit associated with external service activities, especially those related to social justice, many academics support increasing the weight of external service activities in P&T evaluations.

The Current Paper

Overall, current approaches of P&T decisions fail to adequately account for and reward faculty writ large and those from ethnically marginalized backgrounds, particularly for their research, teaching, and service that fall outside mainstream scholarly activities. This includes community service, outreach, product development (e.g., clinical resources and manuals), and public engagement efforts that are necessary and valuable yet need to be accounted for in the process that typically only assesses research funding and publications, teaching, and internal and academic service. The aforementioned barriers demonstrate the root of P&T inequity for ethnically marginalized faculty conducting social justice and community-based research and the stark contrast between how the academy values and rewards scientific efforts at the community level. The longstanding pattern of discounting the profound public impact of this research and failing to acknowledge and reward it in P&T decisions understandably lead to attrition among scientists performing this work, especially those from ethnically marginalized backgrounds. There is a pressing need for institutions and disciplines to account for additional forms of scholarship that accompany social justice and community-level research, such as using translational efforts like social and mass media to facilitate outreach and public engagement.

The reach and community impact of these methods (e.g., disseminating research, psychoeducation, or public health messaging; delivering education and training to practitioners; engaging with media, news, podcasts, and interviews; and writing non-academic blogs or books for the public) can extend the benefit of the social sciences far beyond mainstream scholarship. The current paper explores how scientists

performing social justice and community-based research utilize social and mass media to engage with the public and how these activities can be incorporated into existing P&T guidelines in research, teaching, and service. We will also highlight current best practices in P&T, including critiquing faculty on their ‘impact’ as a separate review criterion. These changes will be a step toward establishing equity in P&T and restoring power to the people. Knowledge is power, and the ability to effectively communicate, translate information, and disseminate scientific knowledge to the public (i.e., “the people”) via service facilitated by translational, social, and mass media efforts should be celebrated, rewarded, and incentivized in the academic P&T process.

Power to the People: The Importance of Social Media and Mass Media

Realizing the importance of returning power to the people, a growing number of scholars engaged in community-based science are utilizing social and mass media to connect with, serve, and disseminate research, evidence-based psychoeducation and coping strategies to the public.

Social Media

Americans have increasingly used social media to obtain information from 45% to 73% between 2009 and 2019 (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). In recent years, social media has become a popular method of highlighting the latest research findings from various academic disciplines, disseminating psychoeducational resources to the public, promoting mental health literacy and awareness through public health campaigns, advocating for social issues, providing resources for marginalized families on how to access mental health services, and facilitating conversations about race and ethnicity (Turner et al., 2021). While many different social media platforms currently exist, some shared characteristics include a focus on user-created content and tools that facilitate two-way communication, information-sharing, and collaboration between individuals and communities (Tutelman et al., 2018). Social media can include different forms, such as social networking sites (Facebook, X, LinkedIn), photo-sharing sites (Instagram), video-sharing sites (TikTok, YouTube) and others. Social media trends suggest that app use is influenced by users’ preferences for receiving information and engaging with content. As just one example, younger generations using TikTok more than older generations may reflect a preference for engaging with video-based, short content (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Clinically, social media is a way to overcome individual (e.g., stigma) and organizational (e.g., hours of operation) barriers to engaging in services that impact underserved groups, and to reach the majority of our population who are experiencing mental health symptoms but are not engaged in clinical care (Galea et al., 2023).

In addition to informing effective, targeted strategies for disseminating science, social media also reaches more community members, practitioners, and policy makers than traditional efforts (Ross-Hellauer, 2020, Brownson et al., 2018). More than 80% of research findings fail to be put into clinical practice due to the amount of

papers published annually making it difficult to stay current with the latest research (Scott et al., 2013, as cited in Tutelman, 2018). Social media is an effective way of disseminating up-to-date research, providing resources and support for using evidence-based coping strategies, engaging with different populations including mentoring students, and networking with other scholars (Burns et al., 2020).

By reaching out to community partners and leaders working with populations of interest and sharing research results showing its positive impact to their community, researchers can address the historical mistrust that exists among minoritized groups that have been abused and mistreated by the scientific community (Goldberg-Freeman et al., 2010; Opara et al., 2020; Teufel-Shone et al., 2019). Social media can help researchers build partnerships with community leaders or “gatekeepers” and facilitate retention in studies through messaging, commenting, replying to posts, and other means of information sharing and providing access to research participants who are hard to reach (Glazier & Topping, 2021; Topolovec-Vranic & Natarajan, 2016). Researchers can use platform features to recruit individuals that fit their target audience based on their sex, age, and geolocation (Connor et al., 2022). Since many social media apps (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) collect people’s location, this information can be useful both in providing communities with more contextual psychoeducation and in improving our understanding of structural barriers affecting populations (Garett & Young, 2021).

Mass Media

Podcasting, books, and broadcast news, can also be useful resources for mass research communication that allows for disseminating findings and implications to a more general audience and making the “ivory tower,” or academia, more accessible (DeMarco, 2022). Peer-reviewed publications are geared toward scientists and researchers and not the lay public. Therefore, critical empirical information is not utilized by the general population who needs the information the most. Mass media featuring medical professionals, scholars, and scientists overcome this barrier and increase accessibility by making complex research topics more comprehensible and relatable to the average person (Middleton, 2016, as cited in Demarco, 2022; Turner et al., 2021). Although less bidirectional and real-time than social media, a unique feature of podcasts, for example, is providing opportunities for direct engagement between listeners from the general public to experts in their respective fields (e.g., through listener questions; Demarco, 2022). The growth of academic podcasts has significantly contributed to the discourse on topics related to psychology, anti-Black and anti-Asian racism, health misinformation, and wellness (Jones & Anderson, 2020; Turner et al., 2021).

Local and national news coverage can also help overcome barriers to access to research findings and psychoeducation by reaching broader and larger audiences. For example, daily viewership of cable news networks (e.g., CNN, MSNBC) hovers at 500,000, with online clips and recasts tipping a million views per segment. Collaborations between university communications departments and news agencies can allow faculty to serve as subject matter experts on current events and lead to press that describes the results and implications of recently published studies

(Ross- Hellauer, 2020). Blogging is another way to reach the public and news outlets. In summary, as media experts or contributors, scholars have the opportunity to represent their work and university to a broader national and international audience (Kim, 2015). This is an essential form of public scholarship in which research dissemination beyond academia benefits not only faculty but also the general public (Giles, 2019).

Social and Mass Media Focused Changes to Existing Promotion & Tenure Requirements

Social media and mass media are effective tools that can be used in everyday practice to facilitate communication and collaboration with colleagues, disseminate high-quality information to the general public, learn of additional training opportunities, raise awareness and advocate for various causes, and increase research impact. Regarding the P&T process, disciplines dedicated to disseminating research to inform policy and practice, such as social and behavioral sciences, should consider the following suggestions for ways to quantify and reward the efforts of scholars who are actively engaged in media efforts to disseminate their work. Certain changes must be made to how institutions quantify efforts of impact with a need to incorporate social and mass media. For example, by collecting and utilizing analytics on the number of followers and engagement with posts as measured by number of views, comments, likes, reposts, and shares. Through researching impact using social media as a medium, these altmetrics can substitute or complement more traditional measures of research impact, such as a scholar's h-index or the impact factor of the journals they publish in (Burns et al., 2020). This measurement is derived through various platforms (e.g., social media sites and podcasts) and tracking actions (e.g., downloading, tweeting, commenting, blog posts mentioning the topic and hashtags utilizing key terms) and has been used by many high-impact journals to measure performance of journal articles (e.g., counting the number of times an article is cited) that can be used as a model for quantifying online efforts (Bornmann, 2014).

In accordance with large social science associations such as the American Anthropological Association and the American Sociological Association, we recommend that a scholar's social media impact be included in P&T criteria as an extension of reach and referencing of research (American Anthropological Association, 2017; McCall et al., 2016). Some healthcare sites, such as Mayo Clinic, have already implemented this recommendation and changed their criteria for P&T to include social and mass media (Cabrera et al., 2017).

Community Impact

Within psychology and public health, social media applications have played an important role in community outreach and health promotion (Charmaraman, 2013; Turner et al., 2021, 2022). Public impact, which refers to research's influence on communities, is a fundamental goal of faculty and researchers performing community-based research and should be added to P&T criteria. Scholars conducting

community-engaged research should be able to demonstrate how their work directly benefits the targeted population (Glazier & Topping, 2021), such as through the Altmetric platform (<https://www.altmetric.com>), which has been adopted by many universities. As more faculty engage in translational research and social media applications to promote outreach and disseminate research, it is important that the tenure process evolves to reflect advances in impact. Further, P&T committees should consider and reward the informal mentoring that faculty engage in with students seeking research opportunities based on the impact and visibility of their social media platform and mass media presence.

The work done through social media and mass media requires substantial time, effort, and energy by faculty outside of their typical workday while balancing other P&T requirements that are typically more valued. As such, videos, shared stories, and images created to engage the public by highlighting common misperceptions, providing psychoeducation about the experiences of marginalized people and communities, and sharing research findings to increase dissemination of science to the public, should be recognized within P&T requirements given larger contributions to society (Turner et al., 2021).

Community-Focused Changes to Existing Promotion & Tenure Requirements

Given the aforementioned, it is necessary for the academy to begin to reimagine the P&T process to ensure equitable processes. In doing so, departments, colleges, and institutions of higher education (universities, academic medical centers) will be better positioned to determine mechanisms to support junior faculty who are engaging in community-based, social justice, and prevention and population-based approaches by utilizing a more progressive and holistic metric of evaluation. We recommend formally recognizing and protecting the time and effort required of faculty who engage in community outreach and public engagements as quintessential to the success of their scholarship and research agendas. As noted, activities such as public speaking and engagement, collaboration and service to community-based agencies, and dissemination of research findings to the communities most impacted and in need of the information are critical components of ethical and responsible scholarship. Instead of the typical practice of reporting such activities on annual faculty reports as ancillary activities, academic institutions can create systems that allow for percent effort for public engagement and community outreach, including engagement through social media and mass media.

Shifting policies related to the criteria for P&T will inevitably facilitate additional changes to institutional practices that benefit early career faculty. For example, if P&T committees begin to recognize the importance of community engagement, policies and practices related to the provision of financial support for junior faculty should also shift. Institutional policies that serve to support funding for

public relations or marketing related to community-based work have the potential to become common practice. Additionally, allowing faculty to leverage internal resources such as university communications to support translational scholarship is mutually beneficial in that it serves to promote the ability of junior faculty to expand their presence while also promoting the connection and relevance of the work of faculty affiliated with the university, relative to their surrounding communities.

Potential Barriers and Benefits

With the suggestion that community engagement and public impact through social and mass media should be considered as a pillar of P&T, there is a recognition that there are barriers to the successful implementation of integrating this innovation. The P&T process was developed during a period in which the field of psychology was predominantly White and male. Additionally, efforts to disseminate science on social media were absent until recent years. As the field has changed, there have not been any wide-scale efforts to measure the effectiveness of a system inclusive of faculty of color and those from multiple minoritized backgrounds that were not built for them, thus fostering inequitable outcomes in P&T. One way to address these inequitable outcomes is to recognize the different levels of effectiveness of the tenure process across ethnic-racial groups and build in multiple resources and opportunities to bolster each group. Departments and programs can have conscious and reflective conversations about the evolution of the public impact of research, including the translation of research and dissemination of evidence-based coping strategies through social media and mass media. An understanding of the barriers to integrating social media and mass media into the P&T process will be critical. Here, we outline several barriers that, if addressed, can promote facilitation.

First, those with limited skill sets in this arena may be hesitant about the ability or expectation to translate their research findings and engage the public through social media. We encourage and challenge faculty and departments to recognize that academic psychologists' (i.e., faculty) work can expand impact by reaching beyond the ivory tower and journal paywalls and targeting community members who could benefit from access to clinical and community research findings, resources, and tools. As such, research could produce knowledge for the good of the general public and marginalized groups. Second, the time demands of creating content and engaging different communities on social media can be substantial. Departments should work with faculty to assess the benefit of the public impact and the time spent engaging with these media platforms. Departments can also create infrastructure and provide seed/startup funds to help with this process. This may help tenure-track faculty prioritize social and mass media opportunities. Another consideration is balancing personal values with those of the academy. For many faculty of color, the communities they engage with on social media resonate with their social identities. Online content reduces barriers to research-based knowledge and stigma about mental health and research participation. While these efforts may contribute to national

and international recognition as an expert, which is aligned with P&T expectations, scholars from marginalized backgrounds may grapple with how to use their time and authority to serve communities while staying productive in data collection, grant writing, teaching, and service.

The benefits for departments integrating social media and mass media into their P&T process are significant. The public health impact that can result from social media engagement is massive. Meta-analyses have demonstrated social media is helpful in significantly improving mental health knowledge (Ridout & Campbell, 2018). An example of the potential impact is the youth mental health crisis. In 2021, the Surgeon General issued a youth mental health advisory. Psychology faculty were uniquely poised to respond to this crisis via social media, translational research, and community engagement. The growing popularity of social network sites (SNS) has led to many youths seeking mental health information and support online (Rickwood et al., 2015). The development of curated resources available on SNS is useful in addressing barriers to treatment (e.g., cost, inaccessibility, stigma, lack of knowledge) for youth. Creating content that engages youth is labor intensive, and faculty of color who support these efforts should be rewarded for this work in the P&T process. Another significant benefit of these efforts align with key components of equitable implementation science, such as developing community-defined, evidence-based, cultural adaptations, fostering and nurturing trusting relationships, and dismantling power structures (Metz et al., 2021). Social media and mass media are potential alternative pipelines for this form of translational research, helping to more efficiently move scholarship and prevention/intervention research forward.

Discussion

Without question, P&T is a multifaceted tool for academic institutions. If the P&T process is a tool, it is reasonable that it be inspected from time to time to ensure that it has not grown “dull,” therefore minimizing its effectiveness and ultimate utility. Indeed, between 1915 and 1970, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and the American Association of Colleges and Universities have revised and reevaluated the principles associated with P&T no fewer than four times (AAUP, 2022). It is important to note and highlight that some innovative academic and clinical institutions have recently begun laying out a framework for assessing and adapting digital and social media scholarship into their P&T criteria (Cabrera et al., 2017; Rice et al., 2020, 2021). However, due to the slow widespread adoption of incorporating social media and mass media into the review process, there is not yet enough data to determine the impact and usefulness for marginalized faculty across disciplines. The foregoing sections represent an opportunity for sharpening and refining the P&T process, especially for ethnically marginalized faculty and, in particular, those committed to research on marginalized communities.

Although typically considered as an evaluation of an individual's scholarly career and trajectory, the P&T process deserves to be evaluated for its systemic implications and trajectory, including academic gatekeeping, principles of diversity, inclusion, and equity, and, overall, a commentary on the values and priorities of a given institution or field of study. The statistical realities surrounding the underrepresentation of ethnically marginalized faculty possessing tenure to imply that academic institutions offering the applied and social sciences, wittingly or unwittingly, are surrounded by invisible gates that are disproportionately keeping diverse scholars from the “means to certain ends”—namely, the freedom and economic security that are afforded to those who are protected by tenure (AAUP, 1940). Moreover, the implications of the current state of P&T matter not only for retaining ethnically marginalized faculty within the ivory tower but also for recruiting future faculty and current and prospective graduate students. Without attention and intention, academic institutions representing the applied and social sciences may find themselves with a tenured faculty body that only continues to look less and less like the students and societies they serve.

With authentic commitment to recruit and retain academics from diverse identity-based backgrounds, addressing the concerns and experiences of faculty of color concerning the P&T process should be a priority. Faculty of color experience disproportionate amounts of stress and anxiety related to the P&T process, particularly at predominantly White institutions (Jayakumar et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2018). They also report that their P&T processes are racialized, with prominent issues related to meritocracy and race evasiveness (McGee, 2020). As many higher education institutions grapple with racial justice, equity, inclusion, and increasing the diversity of faculty, recognition of the factors that lead to reduced satisfaction and increase the likelihood of poor recruitment efforts and attrition is important (AAC&U, 2022). To this end, rewarding and supporting the diverse methods of community-based scholarly activities in P&T can reduce stress and, subsequently, attrition among ethnically underrepresented faculty doing this work. As noted, these suggestions and changes are recommended to be applied standardized across all P&T criteria for all faculty.

As we have outlined, translational community-engaged efforts and social and mass media are multifaceted tools increasingly used by ethnically marginalized scholars in particular. Importantly, the myriad ways scholars use these platforms align with the goals of the AAUP's principles: *Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition* (AAUP, 1940, p. 14). In other words, the work of scholars in the translational and media spaces undeniably contributes to the common good, gives power to the people, and should be acknowledged and rewarded. Table 1 summarizes these recommendations.

Table 1 Recommendations regarding P&T considerations

1. Modify P&T criteria to include community-based efforts, indicating different levels of effectiveness and reach
 2. Provide resources to support funding for public relations or marketing related to community-based work, as well as allow faculty to leverage internal resources such as university communications to support translational scholarship
 3. Increase support and advocacy, especially for junior faculty across the academy (departments, colleges, academic medical centers, and universities in higher education) who are engaging in social justice and community-based work, by protecting the time and effort required in community outreach and public engagements
 4. Increase the weight of external service activities and translational efforts (e.g., social and mass media to increase outreach and public engagement) in P&T evaluations
 5. Critique faculty on their “impact” as a separate review criterion
 6. Quantify effort of impact with a need to incorporate social and mass media (i.e., using analytics to measure audience engagement with posts)
 7. Consider and reward the informal mentoring that faculty engage in with students seeking research opportunities based on the impact and visibility of their social media platform and mass media presence
 8. Efforts such as videos, shared stories, and images created to engage the public by highlighting common misperceptions, providing psychoeducation about the experiences of marginalized people and communities, and sharing research findings to increase dissemination of science to the public, should be recognized within P&T requirements given larger contributions to society
 9. Create systems that allow for percent effort for public engagement and community outreach, including engagement through social media and mass media
 10. Recognize the different levels of effectiveness of the tenure process across ethnic-racial groups and build in multiple resources and opportunities to bolster each group
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Conclusion

There are glaring disparities in P&T within higher education. Updating P&T guidelines to consider the impact of scholarly activities using social and mass media, and community impact to facilitate outreach, research, and public engagement is one way to overcome barriers to P&T inequity. It is imperative that institutions and disciplines account for additional forms of scholarship that often accompany social justice and community-based research and can extend far beyond traditional mainstream scholarship. As such, the current paper highlights the value and imminent need for expanding research dissemination activities.

Given the challenges in quantifying the impact and process by which social media and mass media supports wide public knowledge and community engagement with research, this paper offers tangible suggestions on how academics can quantify and qualify the impact of additional forms of scholarship into current P&T guidelines. Related to media efforts, dissemination of and public engagement with media and online resources is an example of the reach and referencing of research knowledge. Community impact and engagement serve multiple benefits, including disseminating research knowledge, facilitating research partnerships, increasing participant recruitment, addressing mistrust of researchers, and in some examples providing translational tools that directly benefit society. Given the current system, scholars must clearly articulate and include the value and impact of translated research,

social media, and mass media work across established research, teaching, and service review criteria as outlined above. We also posit the need for every scholar who touches the academy to re-envision a more just and equitable system, which empowers and provides power to the people through research production beyond traditional ivory tower metrics and journal paywalls that targets communities who could benefit from access to knowledge, tools, and resources.

Importantly, this paper is a call to action for institutional-level change that prioritizes establishing equity in P&T. Such changes may help reduce retention and existing disparities for ethnically marginalized faculty, particularly those with multiple marginalized identities, and who engage in community-engaged social justice work. Departments and schools must first have conscious and reflective conversations about the evolution of the public impact of research (including social media, mass media, and the translation of research) for the public and historically marginalized faculty. It is important to note that these recommendations are based on the personal opinions of the authors of the current manuscript who are experts in the field with experience in social media and mass media. We highlight several recommendations above for review committees to quantify and support such work, such as modification of P&T criteria to include these efforts indicating different levels of effectiveness and reach and providing resources to support funding for public relations or marketing related to community-based work have the potential to become common practice. Support and advocacy, especially for junior faculty across the academy (departments, colleges, academic medical centers, and universities in higher education) who are engaging in this extremely important and often under-rewarded work, should be evident on paper and in practice. Such changes can reflect a larger value of the academy in reducing barriers to scientific knowledge and service for the public facilitated by the translation of research via multiple avenues, including social and mass media.

Aligned with the AAUP's principles referenced above, translational scholarship and social and mass media utilization undeniably contribute to the common good and center communities' public impact. As such, this work should be valued, rewarded, and baked into the current day fabric of P&T! Further, the translation and dissemination of scholarship to communities who have historically been misused, mistreated, or ignored in research is one way to promote equitable access to research to communities and may foster recruitment and retention of faculty engaged in community social justice scholarship. Knowledge is power, and giving "power to the people" by disseminating scientific knowledge to the public should be celebrated, rewarded, and incentivized in the academic P&T process.

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Declarations

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