



# ARCB Exceptional Work Recommendations

## Project Description

The Anti-Racism in Collective Bargaining project has previously produced CBA recommendations for advancing anti-racism in employee recruitment, hiring and retention, faculty performance evaluation, safety in the workplace and complaint processes.

The current project seeks to develop recommendations for establishing what constitutes exceptional work and to formally recognize it in CBA's. At the same time, the project seeks to identify ways to adequately compensate "exceptional work."

Exceptional work is the labor, visible and invisible, emotional, intellectual, and physical, done by faculty members of color in order to provide cultural representation, extraordinary leadership and initiative relating to EDI advancement. It also includes mentorship, formal and informal, of students and peers. Importantly, this labor often occurs in contexts in which the employees doing the labor are vulnerable because they are minoritized, lack seniority and/or job stability, and/or are asked to "carry the water" for ideas and initiatives that challenge orthodoxy and authority within their departments, programs, and/or institutions. This while they contend with attempts to appropriate their voices and persons to endorse shallow and tokenistic shows of inclusion and diversity.

Overall, this work is critical to the stated mission and goals of the SBCTC, and it takes an unjust toll on black and brown employees.

We seek to name this and make it explicit in our Collective Bargaining Agreements and, especially, to provide compensation and/or workload adjustments for it. While we are first and foremost motivated by creating just working conditions, it should be noted that the goals of this project also support recruitment and retention of employees of color at our institutions and stand, therefore, to advance stated institutional and/or system-wide EDI goals.

While the goal of this project is to create a toolkit to help locals mitigate the burden of cultural taxation, it is important that we recognize this toolkit as not a "one size fits all" solution. Instead, we seek to provide a base to guide our institutions' efforts to attain a more just set of working conditions for employees of color and minority groups.

### *A Note on Scope and Application*



These recommendations focus on anti-racism in an effort to contribute to completion of AFT-WA’s resolution to become an anti-racist union. However, we encourage application of the principles and even specific recommendations to the advancement of a just workplace for other marginalized communities as may be appropriate and/or needed.

In this document, we will refer to “black and brown employees,” but we recognize that the practices of different institutions may be to use terms such as “BIPOC employees” or “employees of color.” We encourage locals to discuss which terminology makes the most sense to use within their institutional culture.

## Recommendations

### Key Guiding Principles

- Name the work.
- Meaningful and adequate compensation and recognition.
- Automatic rather than contingent-on-approval policies.
- Equitable labor distribution.

### Recommended Policy Goals in Your CBA

The recommendations below are intended to be a kind of menu rather than a holistic set of recommendations intended to be adopted together. We encourage locals to consider which of these policy approaches may work best within the culture, work structures, and governance of their institutions and bargaining units.

#### **Define “Exceptional Work” within a DEI Framework**

What it is, who does it, and why it is critical to the DEI mission and goals of the college.

#### **Workload**

Create a “trigger” to automatically reduce teaching or other workload requirements to account for exceptional work.

- A criterion could be developed of conditions that can combine to or singly trigger reduced workload. Examples might be:
  - Providing representation on X number of projects/committees.
  - Being the sole person of color in a department/program/work area.
  - Being the sole or one of very few faculty members who develop and teach curricula in areas such as AIIS, American Ethnic Studies, or Black Studies.
- Employees may be given the option to reduce other workload or receive additional compensation.



- Employees should be offered an explicit “opt in” to this work rather than it being assumed unless the work is explicitly included in the job description for which they were hired.

### **Compensation/Professional Service Credits**

Create explicit and automatic policies for compensating “exceptional work.”

- Compensation should be **at least equal to full-time pay** (for example, for faculty members at CTC’s, it should not be calculated on the contingent faculty pay scale, which essentially pays full-time faculty members less for essential overtime labor, rather than more).
- Offer employees the option of receiving direct compensation or professional service or longevity credits that go towards a more rapid base salary advancement.

### **Job Descriptions**

Write release into the job descriptions of positions that can be anticipated to include significant exceptional work. Examples could be:

- Positions in American Ethnic Studies, Black Studies, LGBTQ studies.
- Positions intended to add cultural knowledge and experience currently lacking in a particular work area (e.g., hiring a Spanish-speaking, Latinx paraeducator into a program with a significant population of Latinx students and families).
- Position preferences that add cultural knowledge and experience that other candidates do not bring.

### **Institutional Accountability**

Require employee workload and salary audits that are reported to local union leadership and analyzed jointly by management and the agent. This is to create an information foundation to address disparity in workload, advancement rates, job satisfaction, etc.

- Audits should seek to identify workload levels and job satisfaction, salary placement, and salary advancement.
- Audits of salary should account for stipended work, high demand increases, and other “supplemental” compensation provided above and beyond contracted salary.
- Ideally, union leadership and affinity groups should be involved in how these audits are conducted to guard against unintended consequences (e.g., “desk audits”).



## **Equitable Labor Distribution**

Consider systems for assigning and distributing service work that do one or more of the following:

- Account for current individual workload levels and assign work to those with less.
- Follow a rotation of some sort (e.g., rather than asking for volunteers, when a new project or committee requires departmental representation, the work is given to the next person in line).
- Involve leadership (department chair/lead and dean/supervisor, for example) in identifying who should be asked on the basis of current service levels.

The above can all have elements of flexibility built in. The idea is to avoid piling undue “regular” work on those already carrying significant “exceptional work” burden and to minimize the pressure that junior or more vulnerable employees may feel to “step up.”

## **Name the Work**

Work cannot be accounted for unless it is acknowledged. Consider the labor that occurs unofficially or informally and how it might be formalized and named.

- Example: We recognize that a great deal of unofficial peer and student mentorship is taken on by faculty members of color. This can easily be named as exactly what it is: DEI Peer Mentor or DEI Student Mentor.
- Workload audits that ask employees to describe aspects of their work that are not currently named can help to support naming and making the work explicit.

## **Key Terms**

These are terms locals might consider incorporating into their CBA's.

- Exceptional Work
- Representational Labor
- Culture Tax
- Invisible Labor
- Emotional Labor
- Scholar Activist
- Scholar-Role Model
- Community Liaison
- Scholar Consultant
- Engaged Scholar



## Resources

Canton, Cecil. "The 'Cultural Taxation' of Faculty of Color in the Academy." California Faculty Association. [www.calfac.org](http://www.calfac.org). 2021. [https://www.calfac.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/cultural\\_taxation\\_cfmagfall2013.pdf](https://www.calfac.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/cultural_taxation_cfmagfall2013.pdf)

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AFT CONTRACT PORTAL DATABASE. [aftlaborcontracts.org](http://aftlaborcontracts.org)