

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES DIVERSITY POSTDOCTORAL FACULTY PROGRAM

2021-2022 Final Report

Committee Members: Kate Boersma, Christopher Carter,  
Esteban del Río, Angel Hinzo, Kristin Moran, Pauline Powell, Sally Yard

---

The College welcomed three diversity postdocs to campus during the 2021-2022 academic year. They were appointed after a successful national search that prioritized appointing faculty who advanced the perspectives of African Americans (see 2020-2021 report for details). These faculty are: Jennifer Tillman, PhD (Philosophy and Women's and Gender Studies), Jersten Seraile, MFA (Theatre) and Steven Berkley, PhD (Psychological Sciences). Given the funding structure, the committee did not search for new faculty for Fall 2022. The next search cycle will begin next year for a new three-person cohort beginning in Fall 2023.

The faculty successfully integrated into the USD community and taught courses across the curriculum. Dr. Berkley taught "Black Families" in both Fall and Spring as well as "Developmental Psychology: Children" in the Psychological Sciences department. Prof. Seraile taught in both the undergraduate and graduate theatre programs, specifically "Fundamentals of Acting," a "Special Topics in Theatre" and the MFA course, "Acting IV." Dr. Tillman's appointment serves both Women's and Gender Studies and Philosophy and taught "Introduction to Gender Studies" and two ethics courses, "BioEthics: Gender & Health" and "Justice, Disability and Healthcare."

The College hosted a research panel where faculty shared current research projects on March 17, 2022 in the Humanities Center. The salon was packed with colleagues and students who learned from each of the presenters. From the 2019 Cohort, Wilnelia Recart Gonzalez presented "A Pollination Ecologist Ventures into the World of Insect Disease." Other presentations included: Jennifer Tillman: "A 'Disability' Reading of the Principle of Fair Equality of Opportunity and Health Care;" Jersten Seraile: "Becoming the Artist-Citizen;" Steven Berkley: "Racial Discrimination and Sleep Among African American and Latinx Young Adults: Examining Racial Socialization as a Moderator." The faculty were able to highlight their expertise demonstrating the breadth and depth of faculty in the College.

### Engagement with Campus

In addition to teaching and scholarship, faculty have been active members of their department and College. Jersten Seralie directed the undergraduate theatre production, *Pieces of Me*. Jennifer Tillman is a member of a faculty working group identifying ways to support Disability Studies across the curriculum, including the addition of an interdisciplinary minor.

Steven Berkely presented his work for student clubs and DEI initiatives in the Psychological Sciences department. More specifically, Steven invited a USD Psychology alumna, Alysia Brown to participate in the Diverse Voices Psychology Sciences Speaker Series this past spring. Alysia was the 2016 Alcala Award recipient and she graduated in August from the University of Missouri-Columbia with a doctorate in Human Development and Family Science with an emphasis in social inequality and statistics. She will be a postdoctoral research fellowship as part of the Harvard Inequality in America Initiative beginning September 2022. Here's a link to the [fellowship](#) and to her [biography](#).

### On being a model for College hiring

The College of Arts and Sciences launched a cluster hiring strategy for faculty searches that begin in Fall 2022 and has been increasing the number of faculty of color on the tenure track for the past ten years. Faculty openings across the College led to the opportunity to hire a large number of faculty at one time and the Dean implemented a strategy that would increase the diversity of the candidate pools. Each department included common language that connected their curricular needs with the overall thematic clusters. These included: Climate Change & Environmental Justice; Technology & Human Experience; Borders & Social Justice. We were able to update the candidate review rubric used for postdoc positions and apply it in all departments in the College who were participating in the search. Following the postdoc template for candidate materials, all searches required a diversity statement from candidates describing “A) your values with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion; B) your experience working with minoritized populations and/or on issues that disproportionately affect diverse populations, and C) your plans related to diversity and inclusion in your teaching and research.” While many departments had been attentive to recruiting faculty of color, this search cycle was the first time that all searches included a diversity statement and we credit the success of the diversity postdoc program. The program has provided clear evidence that attention to candidates’ experience with DEI initiatives ensures that new faculty align with the College’s DEI goals.

The Committee was able to place diversity postdoctoral faculty in departments where future tenure-track openings were possible. As a result, both Steven Berkely and Jersten Seraile have accepted tenure-track assistant professor positions beginning in Fall 2022. Dr. Wilnelia Recart Gonzalez will begin a tenure-track appointment in Fall 2023 after completing a National Science Foundation funded postdoctoral project.

The committee members for 2022-2023 include continuing members, Sally Yard and Angel Hinzo and new members, Arietta Fleming-Davies, Chad Kishimoto, Leonora Simonovis-Brown, Evan Crawford and Michele Watkins. We will recruit a student representative as well. We look forward to the next search cycle with an emphasis on supporting the University’s goal of becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution with a call that states, “We are especially interested in scholars who advance the perspectives of historically marginalized ethnic communities with a focus on the domestic Chicana/o/x, Latina/o/x community.”

### Recommendations

1. Continue to create opportunities for postdoc faculty to gain experience presenting and sharing research with the campus community.
2. Ensure that the mentoring relationship is strong within the department and seek an external mentor when appropriate for the postdoc faculty member.
3. Support bringing faculty of color to campus for speaking engagements and/or other events.
4. Continue to work with the CEE and CID to support mandatory training for current faculty and staff related to anti-racism and DEI initiatives.
5. Support USD's goal to become a Hispanic Serving Institution.

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES DIVERSITY POSTDOCTORAL FACULTY PROGRAM

The Committee on Faculty Diversity Recruitment and Retention solicits interest in hiring postdoctoral (or other terminal degree) faculty beginning in the fall semester of 2023. The College seeks to support three U.S. faculty members with a commitment to empowering students from U.S. communities that are underrepresented in academia through research, creative scholarship, teaching, service and/or mentoring. We are especially interested in scholars who advance the perspectives of historically marginalized ethnic communities with a focus on the domestic Chicana/o/x, Latina/o/x community. The Dean's office will place the advertisement across academic listings.

The purpose of the Diversity Postdoctoral Faculty Program is to mentor faculty in teaching excellence in the context of a primarily undergraduate institution within Catholic Higher Education and to cultivate inclusive communities within departments at the University. USD is poised to serve as a resource for faculty who are interested in pursuing an academic career that follows a teacher/scholar model.

Please submit a 2-3 page proposal to [usdpostdoc@sandiego.edu](mailto:usdpostdoc@sandiego.edu) that addresses the following areas:

### Impact on department:

- How will the addition of a postdoctoral faculty impact your department's goals toward an equity agenda?
- Is your department interested in collaborating with another department to host a postdoctoral faculty with interdisciplinary interests or to participate in a joint appointment?
- How will the addition of a diversity postdoctoral faculty member provide momentum to your department's future hiring plans?

### Curricular need:

- Provide a brief statement that describes how the expertise of the postdoctoral faculty will be integrated into your curriculum.
- Explain specific details about the area of expertise that most aligns with the department's curricular goals or research needs.
- List possible courses to be taught by the postdoctoral faculty.

### Mentoring plan:

- Describe your department's mentoring plan and identify potential mentors.
- How will the faculty member be integrated into the department, college, and USD?
- How does the plan work to serve an equity agenda within your discipline?

### Requirements for participation:

- Department provides the equivalent non-benefit-based teaching units that will be used by the postdoctoral faculty member (9-12 units per year for two years). These must come from the department's budget, including faculty replacement for FRGs, sabbaticals, chair or other administrative reassigned times. Benefits and travel funding will be provided through the Dean's office.
- Provide office space and/or research facilities. The Dean's office does not have funding to provide a computer.
- Departments, in consultation with the committee, can create a discipline-specific call to advertise the position through their disciplinary networks.

**DEADLINE: September 16, 2022. If you have questions, contact: [usdpostdoc@sandiego.edu](mailto:usdpostdoc@sandiego.edu)**