

VOICE Final Report

Project: Red Faculty, Blue Faculty: Exploring Faculty Insularity and Social Connections Across the American Professoriate

Grantee: Nicholas Havey, PhD

- Were your project's objectives met?

The objective of this project was to investigate whether there was any evidence of insularity or political homophily within the American professoriate. As an extension of previous VOICE work, this project drew upon the social media data of more than 4,000 professors to explore social connections and interactions between faculty along political lines. We calculated estimated political ideologies for these faculty members, as well as their fields, subfields, and tenure status, and analyzed how political ideology influenced social organization among the faculty in our sample. We are currently exploring the massive dataset we created (more than 200,000 interactions between the faculty) and analyzing whether certain fields (such as Law), feature more insularity and political homophily than other fields. Our project objectives were met.

- Who attended, listened, etc. and how many?

As this project was a research study, we did not host an event or otherwise record data on attendance. We have yet to publish our study, so we do not have metrics on the reach of our findings, but hope it will be broadly cited and read as it offers unique and dynamic data on faculty politics that has been previously unavailable.

- What demographics did attendees represent? (Students, staff, etc.)

Pursuant to the nature of this research project, we do not have attendee demographics.

- What were your actual expenses?

Expenses were directly paid as stipends to the researcher and research assistant. We spent all \$5,000 of the research funds provided.

- What was challenging about completing your project?

The actual work necessary to create the dataset and analyze it required a tremendous amount of time (hundreds of hours) that fell outside the time paid for by the research funds. We knew this, but the main challenge remains that we need more time to complete the research. The project also required immense technical skill that is still in development (i.e., the main researcher, Nick, knew how to execute many of the analyses already but is still learning how to engage in some of the more nuanced and intricate analyses that will make this data the most interesting it can be).

- What impact do you think your work had on the campus community?

The impact of this project is currently not easily measured, as we have not presented it as widely as desired. That being said, we did present our work in a research apprenticeship course and the reach of our previous VOICE project, which created the dataset, was presented at a well-attended workshop (100+ attendees) and has been asked after by reporters at Inside Higher Ed and the Chronicle. We hope, once these projects are published, they will have more impact and reach as they will be easier to disseminate and talk about.

- How might the Center change the process moving forward to further support VOICE initiative awardees' efforts?

A targeted publishing strategy, such as the promise of a VOICE cohort repeat that the Center publishes or presents at the national conference, would 1) ensure timeliness in terms of deliverables and 2) incentivize early career researchers. Outside of that, I think you're doing more than enough.