

Exploring Faculty Retention at Community Colleges: Insights from Demographic and Institutional Factors

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative cross-sectional survey study investigates the relationships between demographic characteristics, campus climate perceptions, and retention plans of faculty at community colleges in the North Atlantic Region of the United States. Data were collected from 335 faculty members across three institutions using the "Faculty Retention Questionnaire". Findings indicate that age, ethnicity, relationships with students, and personal satisfaction significantly influence faculty retention plans. Younger faculty reported higher satisfaction levels across campus climate, role clarity, and personal satisfaction, while faculty of color scored lower in campus climate satisfaction and role clarity compared to their White counterparts. Key factors influencing retention include salary, job security, and career advancement opportunities, while geographical location and visa sponsorship had minimal impact.

Keywords: Faculty retention, Community colleges, Campus climate, Personal satisfaction, Faculty demographics, Role clarity, Higher education workforce, Faculty of color

INTRODUCTION

Community colleges are vital to the U.S. higher education system, serving over 1,132 institutions nationwide and providing accessible education to diverse populations. These institutions enroll 22% of Hispanic students, 14% of African American students, less than 5% of Asian American or Pacific Islander (AAPI) students, and 3% of Native American students (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2019). Despite the demographic diversity of their student populations, community colleges face persistent challenges in achieving faculty diversity. Only 16% of full-time faculty at community colleges come from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, while 75% of faculty, 73% of administrators, and 63% of student services professionals are White (Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System [IPEDS], 2019).

Efforts to recruit faculty of color have often been undermined by insufficient retention strategies, resulting in high turnover rates (IPEDS, 2019). While the proportion of Black and Hispanic faculty has slightly increased over the decades—rising from 3.2% to 5.7% and from 2.4% to 4.7%, respectively, between 1988 and 2016—these gains have not translated into equitable representation in tenured or senior faculty roles (American Council on Education [ACE], 2016). Faculty of color play an essential role in advancing institutional diversity, fostering inclusive pedagogies, and serving as mentors and role models for underrepresented students. However, systemic barriers, including inequitable campus climates and marginalization, continue to hinder their retention (Moreno et al., 2006).

This study examined the factors influencing the retention of faculty of color at community colleges in the North Atlantic Region of the United States. Retention is critical for ensuring faculty members' long-term success and satisfaction, particularly those from underrepresented groups. The study focuses on understanding the relationships between demographic characteristics, perceptions of campus climate, and employment continuation plans among community college faculty. This research aims to inform institutional strategies that promote equity and inclusion in higher education by identifying key predictors of faculty retention.

Faculty retention is a cornerstone of success in STEM education, particularly in community colleges where faculty are the primary drivers of student engagement and innovation. Retaining a diverse and qualified faculty ensures that STEM programs are equipped to address the needs of increasingly diverse student populations while fostering equity in education (Bennett, et. Al., 2020; Varty, 2022). This study examines the organizational factors influencing faculty retention, focusing on community colleges in the North Atlantic region, emphasizing faculty of

color. The study highlights the institutional and cultural dynamics affecting faculty retention and contributes to the broader discourse on diversity, equity, and innovation in STEM fields. The following research questions guide this study:

1. What are the differences in faculty retention and departure plans, job satisfaction, campus climate perceptions, and professional relationships between faculty of color and their counterparts at community colleges?
2. What key factors best predict the employment continuation plans (stay or go) of faculty of color and their counterparts at community colleges?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Faculty Retention and Departure Plans

Retention of faculty of color in community colleges remains a pressing issue due to the systemic barriers embedded in institutional practices. Faculty of color are more likely to report dissatisfaction with job security, campus climate, and professional relationships compared to their White counterparts. Disparities in tenure-track opportunities and career advancement significantly influence retention. Abdul-Raheem (2016) highlighted that faculty of color often experience marginalization and unequal workloads, which exacerbates turnover rates. Similarly, Yoshinaga-Itano (2006) identified isolation and microaggressions as persistent barriers for faculty of color. To address these challenges, institutions must adopt equity-driven strategies, such as equitable workload distribution and mentoring programs (Menifield et al., 2024).

Job satisfaction is another critical determinant of faculty retention. Research by Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) demonstrated that leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, positively influence faculty job satisfaction by fostering a supportive work environment. Conversely, exclusionary practices and perceived lack of recognition undermine job satisfaction and increase the likelihood of departure (Sahl, 2017). Studies further suggest that collegial relationships, professional autonomy, and fair evaluation practices are vital predictors of job satisfaction (Schulze, 2006). Professional learning communities have also been shown to support faculty retention and performance, offering collaborative spaces that enhance job satisfaction and institutional commitment (Rosenblatt et al., 2024).

Campus Climate and Professional Relationships

Campus climate profoundly affects the professional experiences and retention of faculty of color. Supportive and inclusive climates encourage faculty engagement and satisfaction, whereas exclusionary environments lead to dissatisfaction and higher turnover rates (Samuels et al., 2024). Faculty of color often encounter microaggressions and overt discrimination, which create hostile work environments. Mena and Vaccaro (2017) documented how faculty of color experience invisibility and devaluation of their contributions, impacting their sense of belonging and professional identity.

Institutional policies play a significant role in shaping campus climate. Institutions with chief diversity officers have demonstrated improved accountability and inclusivity. For example, Northampton Community College's diversity initiatives involve climate audits and direct support for faculty experiencing discrimination (Clay, 2012). Moreover, faculty retention is bolstered by recruitment efforts prioritizing diverse hiring and retention strategies, particularly in rural-serving community colleges, where external factors often exacerbate attrition (Carrier et al., 2024).

Predictors of Employment Continuation Plans

Factors influencing employment continuation plans among faculty include job satisfaction, professional relationships, and perceived institutional support. Faculty of color are disproportionately affected by inequities in tenure-track positions, often bearing additional responsibilities as cultural representatives or diversity advocates. Matthew (2016) described this "invisible labor" as a significant burden contributing to burnout and departure plans.

Cluster hiring and cohort-based recruitment have emerged as effective strategies for building a critical mass of diverse faculty. Sgoutas-Emch et al. (2016) found that these approaches foster community among faculty and improve retention rates by reducing feelings of isolation. Professional learning communities and mentorship programs further enhance faculty retention by fostering collegial relationships and providing support for career advancement (Strickland-Davis, 2024). Furthermore, rural-serving institutions must address unique external factors to improve faculty retention (McNamee & Van Horn, 2024).

Faculty-Student Relationships and Retention

Faculty-student relationships are pivotal in faculty retention, particularly for faculty of color who often mentor students from similar

backgrounds. This mentorship enhances students' sense of belonging and academic success but can lead to burnout when institutions fail to recognize or support these efforts (Martinez et al., 2024). Nachman (2024) highlighted that faculty-student interactions are critical for fostering engagement and job satisfaction among faculty.

Hagenauer and Volet (2023) posited that positive faculty-student interactions contribute to faculty retention by enhancing their sense of purpose and professional fulfillment. However, faculty of color face unique challenges in navigating these relationships, particularly when addressing sensitive topics in predominantly White classrooms (Matthews, 2024). Faculty who support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder also face unique pressures that influence retention (Hanks et al., 2024).

Institutional Policies and Retention Strategies

Intentional institutional efforts are essential for recruiting and retaining diverse faculty. Dumas-Hines et al. (2001) proposed a comprehensive strategy involving diversity-oriented philosophy statements, measurable goals, climate assessments, and targeted recruitment and retention plans. Institutions adopting these strategies have reported improved diversity and retention outcomes.

Cluster hiring and cohort-based recruitment strategies have effectively addressed systemic barriers to faculty retention. These approaches foster a sense of community among faculty and provide built-in support networks (Sgoutas-Emch et al., 2016). Addressing inequitable workloads and biased evaluation criteria is critical for sustaining diverse faculty populations (Rosenblatt et al., 2024). Community colleges can also leverage HR strategies to enhance faculty retention and institutional performance (Samuels et al., 2024).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in Critical Race Theory (CRT), a framework that examines systemic inequities and highlights the role of race in shaping institutional structures, policies, and practices. CRT originated in American legal studies during the 1980s, emerging as a critique of critical legal studies and focusing on how racism is embedded within societal systems (Baez, 2000). CRT posits that institutional racism is pervasive and often normalized, manifesting in everyday practices and interactions (Levin et al., 2014).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) emphasized the significance of race in the United States and its impact on education. They argued that higher education reflects broader racial inequities, evident in disparities among

faculty of color in recruitment, retention, and career advancement. Faculty of color often experience systemic barriers, including marginalization, microaggressions, and unequal workloads, which perpetuate inequities in their professional experiences (Mena & Vaccaro, 2017). These challenges underscore the importance of CRT as a lens to examine and address the systemic issues affecting faculty retention and satisfaction in community colleges.

Central to CRT is the concept of intersectionality, which explores how overlapping identities—such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status—compound discrimination and inequity. This intersectional perspective is particularly relevant in examining the experiences of faculty of color, who navigate complex power dynamics within predominantly White institutions. Williams et al. (1993) criticized traditional civil rights approaches for focusing narrowly on intentional acts of discrimination rather than addressing the broader conditions of racial inequality. By broadening this focus, CRT provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and transforming institutional practices to achieve racial equity.

CRT also challenges the ideology of colorblindness, which denies the significance of race and perpetuates structural inequities. In the context of community colleges, CRT highlights how seemingly neutral policies, such as hiring practices and performance evaluations, often reinforce existing power structures. Levin et al. (2014) argued that these practices disproportionately disadvantage faculty of color, limiting their opportunities for advancement and contributing to their underrepresentation in leadership roles.

Incorporating CRT into this study allows for a critical examination of the disparities in faculty retention and departure plans, job satisfaction, campus climate perceptions, and professional relationships. By centering the voices and experiences of faculty of color, CRT provides a framework to identify and address the systemic factors influencing their employment continuation plans. For example, the "invisible labor" often performed by faculty of color—such as mentoring underrepresented students and serving on diversity committees—is frequently unrecognized and undervalued, contributing to burnout and dissatisfaction (Matthew, 2016).

This study also draws on CRT to explore predictors of employment continuation plans among faculty. CRT emphasizes the importance of examining institutional policies and practices through a racial equity lens, identifying areas where systemic change is needed to support faculty of color. Strategies such as cluster hiring, mentorship programs, and equity-focused professional development initiatives align with CRT principles by fostering inclusive environments and addressing barriers to retention (Rosenblatt et al., 2024; Sgoutas-Emch et al., 2016).

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to explore the relationships between demographic characteristics, campus climate perceptions, and the retention plans of faculty of color at three selected community colleges in the North Atlantic Region of the United States. The approach allows researchers to collect data at a single point in time, providing a snapshot of the population's current state (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). It measures variables, identifies patterns, and analyzes relationships between factors without establishing causality. However, since it captures data at only one moment, it cannot track changes over time or infer cause-and-effect relationships. While unable to establish causation, correlational research is a valuable tool for identifying patterns and associations that inform future research and interventions (Creswell, 2014; Zigler & Ye, 2019).

Sample and Participant Recruitment

A total of 330 participants ($N = 330$) completed the survey, representing a survey completion rate of 30%. The sample consisted of faculty members from three selected community colleges in the North Atlantic Region of the United States. Participants included full-time and part-time faculty, spanning a range of demographic characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, and employment status. Participants were recruited using a combination of purposive and convenience sampling methods. Invitations to participate were distributed through institutional email lists and professional networks, with efforts made to reach a broad and representative faculty population. Faculty members were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, ensuring informed consent before participation.

Instrumentation

The study utilized the Faculty Retention Questionnaire (FRQ), developed by Ribeau-Whetsel (2007). The FRQ is a validated and reliable instrument that measures factors influencing faculty retention, including campus climate, role clarity, job satisfaction, and demographic characteristics. The FRQ consists of four sections:

Campus Climate: This section assesses inclusivity, diversity, and institutional support perceptions. Sample items include "My college is welcoming" and "I feel supported by my supervisors."

Employment Values and Retention Intentions: Participants indicated their intentions to remain in their positions and align with institutional values.

Demographic Information: This section gathered data on age, gender, race, years of experience, and tenure status.

The FRQ's reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha coefficients, ranging from .758 to .860 across subscales, indicating acceptable internal consistency (Ribeau-Whetsel, 2007). The study obtained approval from the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). Ethical considerations included ensuring voluntary participation, obtaining informed consent, maintaining participant anonymity, and protecting data confidentiality.

RESULTS

This study aimed to examine the factors that influence the retention of faculty of color and their counterparts in three community colleges located in the North Atlantic region of the United States. Participants were asked questions related to demographic factors and faculty retention. Faculty retention questions related to campus climate, relationship with students, role clarity, personal satisfaction, and other factors related to workplace choices.

Demographic Information

Out of 330 participants, most participants (63.50%, $n = 177$) were females, whereas males represented 36.30% ($n = 121$), and 36% ($n = 1$) were gender nonconforming or transgender. Of the total, 81.23% ($n = 225$) were White, and 18.77% ($n = 52$) were faculty of color. Most participants, 91.0% ($n = 304$), were born in the United States, whereas 8.70% ($n = 29$) were born outside of the United States. Fifty-five percent ($n = 184$) of the sample were part-time faculty, and 44.9% ($n = 150$) were full-time faculty. Of the respondents, 68.9% ($n = 230$) were married, 10.2% ($n = 34$) were divorced, 16.20% ($n = 54$) were single, 2.4% ($n = 8$) were widowed, and 2.10% ($n = 7$) were classified as other. More than half of the respondents—51.51% ($n = 172$)—were adjunct professors, 13.93% ($n = 39$) were full professors, 12.9% ($n = 43$) were assistant professors, 10.5% ($n = 35$) were associate professors, 7.2% ($n = 24$) were instructors, and 8.1% ($n = 27$) were classified as other (see Table 1).

Table 1
Demographic Descriptions of Study Participants (N = 330)

Variables	Code	<i>n</i>	Percent
Gender	Female	212	63.50%
	Male	121	36.30%
Age	Under 30	7	2.10%
	30-39	45	13.50%
	40-49	60	18.00%
	50-59	118	35.30%
	Over 60	103	30.80%
Country of Birth	U.S. Born	304	91.0%
	Born Outside the U.S.	29	8.70%
Employment Status	Full-Time	150	44.90%
	Part-Time	184	55.0%
Marital Status	Single	54	16.20%
	Married	230	68.90%
	Divorced	34	10.20%
	Widowed	8	2.40%
	Other	7	2.10%
Rank	Instructor	27	8.10%
	Lecturer	8	2.40%
	Adjunct Professor	172	51.50%
	Assistant Professor	35	10.50%
	Associate Professor	24	7.20%
	Full Professor	43	12.9%
	Other	24	7.20%
Faculty of Color	Yes	52	18.77%
	No	255	82.30%

Ethnicity	Black or African American	38	12.30%
	Asian	5	1.50%
	Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0.30%
	Hispanic	24	7.20%
	Multi-Racial	11	3.30%

Faculty Retention and Departure Plans at Community Colleges

Faculty of color and their White counterparts reported varying likelihoods of leaving their *current positions* for opportunities at other institutions. Among faculty of color, 53.3% indicated they were likely to accept a full-time job at another institution, compared to 32.2% of their White counterparts (see Table 2). *For part-time jobs*, 48.3% of faculty of color expressed interest, slightly higher than the 39.6% of White faculty.

Table 2

Likelihood to Accept a Full-Time Job at Another Institution in Next 3 Years and Faculty Responses (n = 269)

Faculty of color	Likelihood	Frequency	Percent
Yes	Likely	32	53.3
	Not likely	25	41.7
	Total	57	95.0
No	Likely	87	32.2
	Not likely	182	67.4
	Total	269	99.6

Note. It was not 100% in the sample because of a few missing cases

Regarding *non-teaching positions*, 46.7% of faculty of color indicated they were likely to pursue such roles, compared to 38.9% of White counterparts. Conversely, 51.7% of faculty of color and 60.4% of White faculty reported being unlikely to pursue non-teaching roles.

Faculty of color and White faculty reported similar patterns *regarding retirement*. Among faculty of color, 41.7% stated they were likely to retire within three years, compared to 33.7% of their White counterparts. Most of both groups (55.0% of faculty of color and 65.6% of White faculty) indicated they were unlikely to retire within the next three years.

Community college faculty identified several *key factors influencing their decisions to leave* their current positions for opportunities at other institutions. Among faculty of color, 58 out of 60 (96.7%) indicated that salary level was a very important factor, and 59 (98.3%) emphasized job security and tenure-track positions. Similarly, 58 (96.7%) cited opportunities for advancement, and 60 (100%) noted the importance of a good geographic location.

White faculty echoed similar priorities, with 254 out of 269 (94.4%) highlighting salary as a significant factor, 268 (99.6%) emphasizing tenure-track positions, and 269 (100%) stressing job security and opportunities for advancement. Geographic location was important to 268 (99.6%) of White faculty. Less influential factors included visa sponsorships and spouse or partner employment opportunities.

Faculty Satisfaction with Institutional Factors

Community college faculty reported varying levels of satisfaction with key aspects of their employment. Faculty of color and their White counterparts shared similar satisfaction levels in several areas, including workload, salary, and time available for staying current in their respective fields.

- **Workload:** Faculty of color had a mean satisfaction score of 2.02, closely mirroring their White counterparts at 2.03 (on a 5-point scale).
- **Salary:** Faculty of color reported a slightly higher mean satisfaction score of 2.89, compared to 2.71 for White faculty.
- **Time for Professional Development:** Both groups indicated similar satisfaction, with means of 2.53 (faculty of color) and 2.54 (White faculty).

However, White faculty reported higher satisfaction levels in areas such as:

- **Job Security:** White faculty had a mean satisfaction score of 2.25, compared to 2.02 for faculty of color.
- **Benefits:** White faculty reported higher satisfaction with benefits (2.73) compared to faculty of color (2.34).
- **Opportunities for Advancement:** White faculty scored 2.99, compared to 2.59 for faculty of color.

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Four Dependent Variables and Faculty Groups

	Are you a faculty of color?	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Campus Climate Scale	Yes	60	2.24	.81
	No	270	1.93	.70
Relationship with students' scale	Yes	60	1.6667	.60581
	No	270	1.6570	.49248
Role Clarity Scale	Yes	60	2.2333	.77079
	No	270	2.0237	.66398
Personal Satisfaction	Yes	60	2.4283	.83362
	No	270	2.4542	.81603

Differences in Job Satisfaction and Experiences

Faculty of color reported higher satisfaction with campus climate ($M = 2.24$) and role clarity ($M = 2.23$) compared to their White counterparts ($M = 1.93$ and $M = 2.02$, respectively), with significant differences observed ($p = .002$ and $p = .033$). No significant differences were found in relationships with students ($p = .896$) or personal satisfaction ($p = .83$). These results highlight areas where faculty of color perceive more favorable experiences while maintaining similar satisfaction levels in other domains (see Table 3, Table 4).

Differences in Employment Continuation Plans Among Faculty Groups

Tenured vs. Adjunct Faculty.

Tenured and adjunct faculty displayed notable differences in their job experiences, particularly in role clarity and personal satisfaction. Tenured faculty scored higher on role clarity ($M = 2.13$) than adjunct faculty ($M = 2.03$), although this difference was not statistically significant ($p = .228$).

In contrast, adjunct faculty reported significantly higher personal satisfaction ($M = 2.59$) compared to tenured faculty ($M = 2.13$), with a significant difference ($p = .000$). No meaningful differences were observed in campus climate or relationships with students between the two groups. These findings indicate that adjunct faculty may derive greater personal satisfaction, while tenured faculty maintain an advantage in role clarity.

Table 4

Independent Sample t-test Between Faculty Groups and Four Dependent Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>MD</i>	<i>SED</i>	95% CI of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Campus Satisfaction Scale	1.99	.74	3.13	328	.002	.32	.10	.12	.52
Relationship with students' scale	1.65	.51	.13	328	.896	.01	.07	-.13	.15
Role Clarity Scale	2.06	.69	2.15	328	.033	.21	.10	.02	.40
Personal Satisfaction	2.45	.82	-.22	328	.83	-.03	.12	-.26	.20

Note. *MD* = mean difference; *SED* = standard error difference.

Full-Time vs. Part-Time Faculty

Full-time faculty reported higher levels of role clarity ($M = 2.19$) compared to part-time faculty ($M = 1.96$), with a significant difference ($p = .002$). However, part-time faculty exhibited significantly greater personal satisfaction ($M = 2.61$) than their full-time counterparts ($M = 2.25$, $p = .000$). Both groups scored similarly in campus climate and relationships with students, as indicated by non-significant p-values. These findings suggest that full-time faculty benefit from clearer role expectations, while part-time faculty experience higher overall personal satisfaction, potentially due to differing job expectations and responsibilities.

Table 5

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Four Dependent Variables and Faculty Groups (Adjunct vs. Tenured or Tenure-Track)

	Adjunct vs tenured or tenure-track faculty	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Campus satisfaction scale	Tenured or tenured track faculty	102	1.99	.75	.07
	Adjunct faculty (part time, lect, instructor)	232	1.99	.73	.05
Relationship with students' scale	Tenured or tenured track faculty	102	1.70	.46	.05
	Adjunct faculty (part time, lect, instructor)	232	1.70	.54	.04
Role clarity scale	Tenured or tenured track faculty	102	2.13	.69	.07
	Adjunct faculty (part time, lect, instructor)	232	2.03	.68	.05
Personal satisfaction	Tenured or tenured track faculty	102	2.13	.68	.07
	Adjunct faculty (part time, lect, instructor)	232	2.59	.83	.05

N = Sample size; *M* = Mean (average); *SD* = Standard deviation; *SE* = Standard error of the mean

Younger vs. Older Faculty

Younger faculty (aged 49 or below) scored higher than older faculty (aged 50 or above) in all four categories of job experiences. Significant differences were found in role clarity ($M = 2.30$ for younger faculty vs. $M = 1.96$ for older faculty, $p = .000$) and personal satisfaction ($M = 2.60$ for younger faculty vs. $M = 2.40$ for older faculty, $p = .022$). However, no significant differences were observed in campus climate or relationships with students. These results suggest that younger faculty perceive greater clarity in their roles and higher personal satisfaction compared to their older colleagues, which may reflect generational differences in job expectations or workplace dynamics.

Table 6

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Four Dependent Variables and Faculty Groups (Part-Time vs. Full-Time)

	Status	N	M	SD	SE
Campus Satisfaction Scale	Full Time	150	2.05	.79	.06
	Part Time	184	1.951	.70	.05
Relationship with students' scale	Full Time	150	1.69	.53	.04
	Part Time	184	1.62	.50	.04
Role Clarity Scale	Full Time	150	2.19	.71	.06
	Part Time	184	1.96	.65	.05
Personal Satisfaction	Full Time	150	2.245	.70	.06
	Part Time	184	2.61	.87	.06

Table 7

Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Four Dependent Variables and Faculty Groups (Younger vs. Older faculty)

	Age group	N	M	SD	SE
Campus satisfaction scale	49 or below	112	2.10	.77	.07
	50 or more	222	1.95	.72	.05
Relationship with students' scale	49 or below	112	1.72	.56	.05
	50 or more	222	1.62	.49	.03
Role clarity scale	49 or below	112	2.30	.75	.07
	50 or more	222	1.96	.63	.04
Personal satisfaction	49 or below	112	2.60	.85	.08
	50 or more	222	2.40	.79	.05

N = Sample size; M = Mean (average); SD = Standard deviation; SE = Standard error of the mean

Predictors of Employment Continuation Plans for Community College Faculty

A binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to identify the key factors predicting community college faculty's employment continuation plans (stay or leave) in the North Atlantic Region. Assumptions for logistic regression, including independent observations and linear relationships to the logit, were met. The dependent variable,

representing stay or go, was coded dichotomously, and the sample size exceeded the required threshold. Eight predictors were tested, including demographic factors (age, gender, employment status, and ethnicity) and four faculty retention scales (campus satisfaction, relationships with students, role clarity, and personal satisfaction).

Table 8

Logistic Regression Predicting Who Will Stay or Go from Eight Predictors

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	(<i>B</i>)	<i>P</i>
Campus satisfaction	-.43	.27	.65	.110
Relationship with students	.84	.30	2.31	.005*
Role clarity	-.30	.29	.74	.300
Personal satisfaction	-.64	.21	.53	.002*
Employment Status (Full time/part time)?	-.11	.29	.90	.707
Are you a faculty of color? (Yes/No)	.88	.34	2.40	.010*
Age group (less or more than 50)	1.10	.28	2.94	.000*
				*
What is your gender? (Male/Female)	.249	.28	1.28	.373
Constant	-1.25	.99	.29	.209

Note. * $p > .05$ ** $p > .001$ (*B*) = Odds ratio/exp

The regression model was statistically significant ($X^2 = 73.44$, $df = 8$, $N = 334$, $p < .001$) and explained 20% to 28% of the variance in employment continuation plans, as indicated by Cox and Snell R^2 and Nagelkerke R^2 values. Among the predictors, age group, ethnicity (faculty of color vs. others), relationships with students, and personal satisfaction emerged as significant factors. Faculty under the age of 50 had 2.94 times higher odds of staying compared to older faculty ($p < .001$). Faculty of color were 2.40 times more likely to stay than their White counterparts ($p = .010$). Increased scores in relationships with students (OR = 2.31, $p = .005$) and personal satisfaction (OR = 0.53, $p = .002$) were also associated with greater likelihood of remaining.

Other variables, including campus satisfaction, role clarity, gender, and employment status, did not significantly predict employment continuation plans. The model correctly classified 86% of faculty who planned to stay and 51% of those who intended to leave, demonstrating a strong predictive capacity. These findings suggest that fostering positive

relationships with students and improving personal satisfaction may be crucial for retaining faculty, especially for younger and faculty of color. Table 8 summarizes the logistic regression results, including odds ratios and statistical significance for all predictors.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study examined factors influencing faculty retention at selected community colleges in the North Atlantic Region of the United States. It focused on faculty of color, exploring their experiences with salary, job security, tenure-track opportunities, professional advancement, geographic location, campus climate, faculty-student relationships, role clarity, and overall satisfaction. The discussion connects the findings to relevant literature, highlights implications for theory and practice, and addresses limitations and future research directions.

Salary as a Retention Factor

Salary was a critical determinant of faculty retention, particularly for faculty of color. The study revealed that 58 faculty of color and 257 White faculty cited salary as a primary reason for separating from their institutions. These findings align with Fhartey (2018), who identified salary disparities as a significant issue in higher education, particularly in the face of budget cuts and underfunding of public pensions. Similarly, Peñaflor (2024) emphasized the importance of salary in fostering organizational commitment among faculty, noting its direct impact on adaptive performance and retention in private colleges.

Faculty dissatisfaction with compensation mirrors national trends. Fhartey (2018) highlighted disparities in average salaries across academic ranks, with full professors earning \$104,820, associate professors \$81,274, and assistant professors \$70,791. These figures underscore faculty's financial pressures, particularly at community colleges where resources may be limited. Addressing these disparities through equitable pay structures and transparent salary policies is crucial for improving retention among faculty, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds.

Job Security

Job security emerged as a significant factor influencing retention, with 75% of faculty of color identifying it as a key consideration. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the precarious nature of adjunct faculty positions (Childress, 2019). Adjunct faculty often face

uncertainty due to limited benefits and lack of long-term contracts, leading to higher turnover rates.

Trower and Chait (2005) noted that a lack of job security contributes to feelings of isolation and alienation, particularly for faculty of color. This study corroborated these findings, as adjunct faculty reported lower satisfaction levels compared to their tenured counterparts. To mitigate these challenges, institutions must create clear pathways to tenure and full-time roles, providing stability and fostering long-term commitment.

Tenure-Track Opportunities

The availability of tenure-track positions is a crucial factor in faculty retention, particularly for faculty of color. However, systemic barriers often limit access to these opportunities. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) discussed the myth of meritocracy, noting that faculty of color face structural challenges that hinder their ability to secure tenure-track roles.

This study revealed that while tenured faculty scored higher on role clarity, they reported lower personal satisfaction compared to adjunct faculty. Warner (2020) critiqued tenure as an administrative tool that, while offering job security, often imposes additional stress on faculty of color. These findings suggest that institutions must increase access to tenure-track positions and ensure that these roles provide meaningful support and opportunities for growth.

Opportunities for Advancement

Professional growth opportunities are essential for retaining faculty. In this study, 75% of participants indicated that opportunities for advancement were very important in their decision to stay at an institution. This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting the significance of organizational support, leadership, collegial interactions, and professional development in job satisfaction and retention (Lawrence et al., 2014; O'Meara et al., 2014; Peñaflo, 2024). O'Meara et al. (2014) also underscored the importance of mentoring, leadership opportunities, and career development in fostering faculty satisfaction. Institutions that invest in the development of their faculty not only enhance individual careers but also contribute to a more dynamic and effective educational environment.

Geographic Location and Campus Climate

The geographic location of an institution and its campus climate were significant predictors of faculty retention. This study found that faculty of

color scored higher than their White counterparts in campus climate satisfaction, relationships with students, and role clarity. These findings align with Slaten et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of belonging and connection in fostering retention among faculty and students. Trower and Chait (2005) highlighted that a welcoming campus environment and strong community ties enhance recruitment and retention efforts. Institutions prioritizing inclusivity and engagement can create environments where faculty feel valued and supported.

Comparative Analysis of Faculty Groups

The study revealed demographic differences in retention factors:

Full-Time vs. Part-Time Faculty: Full-time faculty reported higher role clarity, while part-time faculty expressed greater personal satisfaction. These differences reflect varying job expectations and institutional support systems.

Younger vs. Older Faculty: Younger faculty scored higher in role clarity and personal satisfaction, suggesting generational differences in workplace expectations and priorities.

Faculty of Color vs. White Faculty: Faculty of color reported higher scores in campus climate satisfaction and role clarity but lower personal satisfaction than their White counterparts.

These findings align with Nachman (2024), who found that faculty perceptions of support and preparedness varied significantly across demographic groups, particularly in relation to their roles and responsibilities.

Implications for Theory and Practice

The findings support Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, particularly in the domains of security, belonging, and self-actualization. Faculty dissatisfaction with salary and job security suggests unmet foundational needs, hindering their ability to achieve professional growth (Maslow, 1964). Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, Ladson-Billings et al., 2024) also provides a valuable lens for understanding the systemic barriers faculty of color face. The study's findings highlight the need for institutions to address these challenges through intentional policies and practices that promote equity and inclusivity.

Practical Implications

To address faculty retention challenges, institutions should consider the following strategies:

Enhance Compensation: Equitable and competitive salary structures are essential for retaining diverse faculty.

Increase Job Security: Providing clear pathways to tenure and full-time roles can reduce turnover among adjunct faculty.

Invest in Professional Development: Mentorship, leadership training, and career advancement opportunities are critical for fostering faculty satisfaction and retention.

Promote Inclusivity: A welcoming campus climate and strong community ties enhance the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty.

Leverage Location: Institutions in desirable locations should capitalize on their geographic assets to attract and retain talent.

This study was limited to community colleges in the North Atlantic Region, which may affect the generalizability of its findings. Future research should expand to other regions and institutional types to provide a more comprehensive understanding of faculty retention. Qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could also provide deeper insights into the experiences of faculty, particularly those from underrepresented groups.

CONCLUSION

This study identified several critical factors influencing faculty retention, including salary, job security, tenure-track opportunities, professional advancement, and geographic location. Faculty of color reported greater satisfaction with campus climate and role clarity but expressed lower personal satisfaction than their White counterparts. These findings highlight the persistent need for institutions to address systemic barriers and inequities that impact faculty experiences. Faculty retention is particularly significant for STEM education, as it directly affects the continuity and quality of programs that prepare students for high-demand careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Community colleges can enhance faculty retention and improve STEM educational outcomes by implementing equitable policies, fostering professional development opportunities, and promoting inclusivity, ensuring that

diverse learners have access to innovative and high-quality education. Addressing these challenges is essential for sustaining a thriving, diverse STEM workforce that can meet the demands of an increasingly complex and technology-driven world.

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