

## ACTORS

### 4. Elevate research on student experience by scholars of color and early career scholars and invest in their development and leadership within academia and education

The people we engaged in the past several months appreciated SERN's **elevation of scholars of color and early career scholars** in multiple aspects of our work. (See this [list of participants](#) in our initiatives, as well as relevant points in this [article](#) on SERN's efforts to mobilize research for structural change in education.) They expressed strong demand for such efforts to continue and be expanded in the field of student experience going forward.

#### [Elevate scholars of color and early career scholars and their research on student experience.](#)

**Visibly cite the research of scholars of color and early career scholars in materials and conversations, both in academia and in education circles.** When producing scholarly or translational materials, check to ensure that relevant research by scholars of color and early career scholars is included.

**Advocate for academic journals to diversify their editorial boards, the scholars they publish, and the participants and approaches in their published research.** These decisions have far-reaching consequences for [the completeness of the field's knowledge base](#) and which research knowledge [shapes practice and policy and is seen as legitimate](#).

**Recommend scholars of color and early career scholars for funding, awards, and partnership opportunities.**

**[Address the various forms of exclusion](#) faced by scholars of color in academia,** which create a harmful professional culture and compromise and marginalize their research.

#### [Fund scholars of color and early career scholars and compensate them for their work.](#)

**Fund scholars of color and early career scholars and [rectify public and philanthropic grantmaking practices](#)** that advantage white scholars and more established scholars and

[disadvantage scholars of color](#) and earlier career scholars. These disparities have [deleterious effects](#) on retention and promotion and the research that is produced.

**Transparently share information on speaker and advisory fees** (those that your organization pays and those that you receive) so that people can be paid appropriately and equitably.

**Consider how mentorship and professional service burdens are carried disproportionately by scholars of color** and [how to change practices and policies](#) in ways that recognize, compensate, and share this responsibility.

#### [Design opportunities that are responsive to the needs and interests of scholars of color and early career scholars.](#)

**Seek and act on information from scholars of color and early career scholars to understand how to better support and partner with them.** They are not monolithic groups and time and care should be taken to understand the complexity of individuals' identities, needs, and aspirations.

**Create, contribute to, and fund opportunities that explicitly [call for meaningful involvement and development of early career scholars, are responsive to the expressed interests of the scholars you wish to support and elevate](#), and align with the academic context** (e.g., align with the timing of the academic schedule, buy out scholars' time, equip scholars with the types

of experiences and deliverables that are recognized by academia in hiring and promotion).

**Engage in more inclusive practices for developing priorities for funding research and designing calls for proposals / applications, cultivating a diverse pool of potential applicants, and evaluating applications** with reviewers and holistic methods that value the relevant expertise, approaches, and strengths brought by diverse teams (e.g., see *Lessons from SERN's funded portfolios* in this [brief](#); [Stevens et al. 2020](#)).

**Invest in the development and leadership of scholars of color and early career scholars studying student experience who want to [bridge between research and education practice and policy](#).**

**Advocate for and fund new opportunities to recognize early career scholars and scholars of color for their work bridging research with practice and policy**, which is currently undervalued and disincentivized in academia. These opportunities could include endowed positions, professional awards, and university initiatives. Nominate scholars from these groups who study student experience for such opportunities and integrate these efforts with [broader shifts in academia to recognize, incentivize, and support bridging work](#).

**Support relationship-building between early career scholars and scholars of color and practitioners, policymakers, funders, and other researchers** in ways that extend their networks, exposure, and the use and amplification of their research.

**Contribute to initiatives and organizations designed to support professional learning opportunities and relationship-building**

**between researchers and education actors**, especially those that are designed by and for scholars of color and early career scholars.

**Consider how you can advocate for, contribute to, and fund steady, year-over-year investments that support scholars of color and early career scholars committed to conducting practically relevant research and mobilizing research with education practice and policy groups.** This might look like a dedicated funding stream that makes targeted grants each year or repeated annual funding for fellowship programs. It may also entail investments in entities that know research and researchers well and are poised to effectively recruit and support a diverse pool of early career scholars and scholars of color via re-granting. These investments should consider access beyond the highest status and best resourced higher education institutions, as well as a targeted focus on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Minority Serving Institutions. Given many foundations' and other education actors' strategic focus on supporting the success of students from minoritized groups, this type of sustained, targeted funding is essential to building and elevating a [diverse group of researchers](#) who are creating practically relevant scholarship and who are well-networked to education decision-makers. One-off and occasional investments will not be sufficient to counter long-standing patterns of investing in and privileging the expertise of white researchers, researchers who are men, and researchers from the highest status institutions.

**Advocate for structural changes in academia and funding structures to better support scholars of color and early career scholars (see cross-cutting priorities [#12](#) and [#13](#)).**