

Biography

Dr. Jonathan Lightfoot is a Professor in the Teaching, Learning & Technology Department at Hofstra University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Chicago, master's degree from Harvard University's Graduate School of Education and bachelor's degree in economics from Cornell University. His research agenda focuses on anti-racist/ anti-oppression schooling, education and leadership for social justice, civil rights, school desegregation and critical review of legal and public policy. Dr. Lightfoot has led numerous workshops and professional development training at various school districts in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. He received the Educational Advancement Foundation, Inc. Salute to Excellence in Community Education Award, was honored by Hofstra's Collegiate Women of Color as Professor of the Year and was the recipient of a Long Island Legacy Award by the Islip Town Branch of the NAACP.

As a member of the 2016 collective bargaining team for Hofstra's AAUP chapter, Dr. Lightfoot successfully negotiated with administration to commit to the foundational principles of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), particularly as it pertains to Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) faculty recruitment and retention. Part of that commitment led to establishing Hofstra's Center for "Race," Culture and Social Justice, where he continues to serve as its Founding Director. The Center was instrumental in Hofstra hiring its first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, opening an Office of Equity and Inclusion and reviving the Africana Studies Program as a principle component of Ethnic Studies at Hofstra. Now that the current presidential administration is aggressively seeking to dismantle DEI in higher education, Dr. Lightfoot believes it is critically important for national AAUP to be the canary in the coal mine and build the kind of infrastructure that protects and strengthens the power of DEI to save academic freedom and champion racial justice.

Candidate Statement for Jonathan Lightfoot, PhD

I seek a Region 4 Council seat because I am passionate about **D**iversity, **E**quity and **I**nclusion (DEI) in higher education and its ability to promote academic freedom and champion racial justice. I am also concerned about the erosion of tenure, shared governance and federal attacks on scientific research funding. The rise of contingent faculty who lack job security, health care benefits and academic freedom protections should concern us all. However, the greatest threat to higher education today is political interference at the federal level. The current presidential administration has aggressively sought to dismantle Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion resulting in over 175 institutions restructuring or removing DEI offices. Executive orders and federal funding threats have prompted many institutions to eliminate DEI statements, offices, training, and staff roles. Unfortunately, federal appeals court have been largely complicit.

As a member of the 2016 collective bargaining team for Hofstra's AAUP chapter, I led our team to successfully negotiate a stronger commitment to the foundational principles of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), particularly as it pertains to the recruitment and retention of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) faculty. Part of that commitment led to establishing Hofstra's Center for "Race," Culture and Social Justice, where I continue to serve as its Founding Director. The Center was instrumental in Hofstra hiring its first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, opening an Office of Equity and Inclusion and reviving the Africana Studies Program as a principle component of Ethnic Studies at Hofstra. With the current presidential administration aggressively seeking to dismantle DEI in higher education, it is critically important for national AAUP to build the kind of infrastructure that protects and strengthens the power of DEI to save academic freedom and promote racial justice. I am active with two of my alumni groups, Crimson Courage at Harvard and Cornell Courage at Cornell, as we resist the administration's authoritarian takeover of these institutions. I seek coalition between AAUP and all member institutions who are willing to fight to maintain independence from overreach and interference by the federal government into campus affairs.

Another important goal of mine is to help develop AAUP's commitment to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). AAUP has a role in protecting and strengthening faculty at HBCUs. Part of my job as Regional Representative will be to assist AAUP in articulating its role in support of HBCUs. Additionally, BIPOC faculty at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) are also in need of better protections at regional and national levels of AAUP. Oftentimes, the bond between HBCU faculty and PWI BIPOC faculty is the mutual experience of racial discrimination and the struggle for academic freedom and credibility. National AAUP must acknowledge and support such vulnerable faculty at both institution types. As your Regional 4 Representative, I promise to bring **D**edication, **E**nergy and **I**nsight.

I agree with legendary abolitionist and orator, Frederick Douglass, who declared:

“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

Thank you for your Vote!