

# **The Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Faculty**

**A Proposal by the Deans' Diversity Subcommittee**

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## **Educational value of a diverse faculty:**

The University of Arizona has made slow but steady progress over the past two decades in diversifying its student body. This trend will accelerate in the coming years as America and Arizona's diverse population swells. According to a recent study conducted by the Educational Testing Service, a significant transformation will occur over the next decade. By 2015, 80 percent of the anticipated 2.6 million new college students will be African American, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian. The number of these students enrolled in our colleges and universities will increase from 29.4 percent to 37.2 percent. In Arizona, the number of Latino (mainly Mexican American) students enrolled in Arizona's higher education institutions is expected to grow even more rapidly.

As the premier state institution, the University of Arizona is responsible for educating the future leaders of this state and this nation. We must prepare our increasingly diverse and heterogeneous student population for the complexly diverse world that is their future by creating a working and learning environment that values diversity and the right of all students, faculty and staff to participate fully in university life. Studies have shown that students are more successful when they have professors they can identify with. In addition, a diverse faculty gives students the opportunity to learn from individuals who differ from them, fosters mutual respect and teamwork, and helps students to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. It is therefore urgent that we undertake the challenge of recruiting and retaining a faculty that reflects the rich diversity of this university, Arizona, and the country.

\* "Diverse faculty" includes women faculty, faculty of color (members of underrepresented minority groups), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered faculty, and faculty with disabilities. The designation "faculty" includes tenure eligible, tenured, continuing eligible, continuing, and research faculty. A diverse faculty is a community of individuals, differing along many dimensions. Not all possible dimensions of difference are targeted in this report, but only those that have been identified as a particular matter of concern at the University of Arizona. Diversity may be limited by exclusion of individuals or systematic underrepresentation of groups, creating unequal opportunity and unequal benefit. Recruitment processes capable of producing diversity are critical as are general day-to-day practices that promote respect for differences among individuals—most notably differences in gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, religious belief, and disability.

Diversity is not just a good idea. It is the evidence that we are fair in our thinking and just in our practices. Twenty years ago, a lack of diversity within a university faculty was a consequence of unequal opportunity in American society. Today, a lack of diversity within a university faculty suggests unequal opportunity in that university.

As President Peter Likins said in his first “ABC Bulletin” to the campus community, “the shared evidence of the past year or so demonstrates beyond reasonable argument that the goal of equal opportunity on our campus remains elusive.” This evidence comes from several sources including our recent North Central Association re-accreditation review, the Millennium I Project report, the GRACE Project, and the Campus Climate Survey conducted by the President’s Diversity Council.

We must cultivate and value diversity within the faculty, and the fact that we have not done so, despite our frequent expressions of good intentions, means that something is wrong about how we do business. A philosophical commitment to diversity can co-exist with practical barriers to diversity when our decisions and our decision-making procedures reproduce unexamined preferences and presumptions that make it difficult for our university to make significant strides towards creating a diverse faculty.

Establishing a diverse faculty demands a highly developed, multi-faceted, and rigorous action plan that is embraced by the entire campus. This plan must demonstrate through actions as well as resources this institution’s commitment to diversity. The plan that fulfills this task will convey and adhere to the University’s firm commitment to recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty. Recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty will enrich the educational experience of the students and the working environment of the faculty and will create a welcoming environment for all persons at the University of Arizona.

An effective action plan begins with the search process. A search that advertises in the normal ways and draws exclusively on the pool of applicants that responds to those announcements as historically posted may not produce the deepest possible pool of candidates and may result in persistent under representation of candidates from diverse cultural, intellectual and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The University of Arizona seeks to encourage vigorous proactive searches that are designed to maximize the opportunities to recruit a diverse faculty. As E. Gordon Gee, former president of Ohio State University points out: “There are few activities in which we engage that have more powerful public impact than searches. Every search committee leaves in its wake literally hundreds of candidates whose impression of Ohio State will be based largely on the courtesy, timeliness, and professionalism of our communications. Furthermore, the way searches are conducted speaks volumes about our individual and institutional values” (Office of Human Resources and Office of Academic Affairs at Ohio State University 1994, 1).

## Short-term recruitment strategies

The following recruitment strategies should be implemented immediately in order to positively affect the university's next cycle of faculty recruitment (i.e., new faculty whose hire dates begin as early as July 1, 2003).

College deans must initiate a dialogue with their respective departments as early as possible in order to promulgate the creation of a positive culture for recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty. "If there is dissonance between departmental practices during a search and the institution's professed commitments to diversifying the faculty, the fault line will be evident" (Turner, 6). Departments can promote a welcoming environment that will assist in the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty.

- The appointment of search committees committed to diversity is essential to influencing the outcome of a search. Heads and deans should appoint senior faculty members from other departments who are known for their commitment to diversity.
- Provide search committee members with information and education about diversity. Committee members need to understand the importance of a diverse faculty as well as how to properly evaluate individual candidates. Human Resources, the Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office, and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs are resources that the committee chair should draw on to discuss diversity with the search committee **before** the search is initiated.
- An individual or individuals should be assigned responsibility to determine whether the plans for recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty are effective, whether the plan should be altered to better accommodate the goal of diversity and to generally monitor the actions of the search committees. In addition, either a college-based committee or a university-wide committee should review each search committee's plan for recruitment of a diverse faculty for effectiveness, and recommend whether the plan should be altered to better accommodate the goal of diversity and to generally monitor the actions of the search committees.
- Identification of a diverse pool of candidates through professional networking must be an ongoing process. It is important that the department head and the departmental faculty establish and maintain contacts with diverse Ph.D./M.F.A. candidates and new assistant professors. These contacts may even begin as early as the undergraduate years when faculty who may have mentored diverse candidates can track their progress towards an advanced degree.

- The position description should contain language such as “The department is seeking an individual who is able to work with diverse students or colleagues, or who has experience with a variety of teaching methods and curricular perspectives.” The description should avoid delineating narrow or overly stringent criteria (e.g., requiring a certain number of years of experience or publication in specific journals).
- Advertise faculty positions across a wide array of media in addition to the usual disciplinary listservs, job lists, and publications. For suggestions of media that departments should utilize in advertising positions, consult with diverse faculty in the appropriate divisions as well as with Human Resources that maintains a list. Some examples are: Black Issues, Issues in Black Higher Education, the National Minority Faculty Identification Program, and Hispanic, African American, Native American, Asian American, and Gay and Lesbian caucuses of national educational and discipline specific associations.
- Contact all promising candidates directly and early in the search process to encourage the candidates to apply for positions.
- Provide opportunities for candidates to meet with diverse faculty, staff, and students when they come for campus visits.
- Information on community-based cultural, political, social, and religious organizations should be made available to the candidates, and the candidates should have the opportunity to visit with representatives from these organizations.
- Provide potential candidates with relevant University of Arizona documents and recruitment materials on diversity such as statements from the President on the importance of diversity at the University, the Millennium Project Summary Report, and the President’s Council on Diversity recommendations.
- Plans that violate Title VII or the Equal Protection Clause should be rejected and reformulated.

Deans are ultimately responsible for monitoring searches in their respective colleges. Deans should be prepared to cancel or postpone searches that do not address specific ways that will maximize the development of a robust pool of diverse candidates. Deans should meet with department heads and search committees very early in the search process and then at various stages in the search process in order to:

- Communicate the importance of engaging in a search process that achieves the most diverse pool of candidates possible.
- Ensure that faculty recruitment and vacancy plans submitted by deans to the provost include departmentally specific ideas for increasing the diversity of the hiring pool. Presumably these strategies will be developed through consultation with department faculty and search committees.
- Monitor the pool of candidates that search committees propose interviewing at national professional meetings or at other venues.

- Examine additional search techniques that may be implemented to further increase the hiring pool if current search techniques are only yielding limited diversity.
- Ensure that deans and their staff are available to meet with candidates during campus visits.
- Ensure that deans, department heads, and search committees use campus visits to create a welcoming environment for candidates. All individuals involved in the hiring process should be prepared to “sell” candidates on the University of Arizona. The itinerary for a campus visit should include events with a wide cross-section of campus groups. Participation of these groups as well as graduate and undergraduate students should be encouraged in open forum sessions.
- The provost’s office should monitor all faculty and academic administrative searches, making sure that appropriate procedures were followed, before an official offer can be made to a candidate. The provost should be prepared to cancel or postpone searches.

### **Long-term recruitment and retention strategies**

The following recommendations are made with the intent of assisting departments and colleges in recruiting and retaining diverse faculty. The provost should implement these recommendations as soon as possible.

- Encourage hiring faculty with interconnected fields of expertise with a view to enhancing cultural and intellectual diversity and playing to university strengths.
- Encourage the creation of a vigorous mentoring program at the college level in order to provide incoming and current diverse faculty strong support during the early years of employment when faculty face a variety of professional, social, and personal challenges in the academy.
- Create a fund for incentive startup packages, research packages, and guaranteed summer stipends for colleges and departments that have not had access to such funds in the past.
- Create funds to assist colleges and departments in offering competitive starting salaries to candidates who are entertaining offers from many schools.
- Facilitate cross-department hires with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs in a close working relationship with deans and heads.
- Restructure promotion and tenure policies to allow recognition for all aspects of the faculty role that contribute to the learning environment.
- Reward faculty that pursue scholarship in diversity via part time teaching schedules, special grants, etc.

- Establish and maintain modes of public and academic recognition for current faculty who make exceptional contributions to academic and educational diversity via research, teaching or service activities.
- Issue periodic reports to the university community and the community at large based on recruitment policies and practices and the results obtained there from.
- Create a program to hire diverse post-docs or ABDs as prospective faculty and encourage them to remain at the institution as full-time faculty once the term of the pos-doc has ended.
- Create a “pipe-line” project to encourage advanced graduate students to remain at the University as tenure-track faculty members or to return to the University after several years at another institution.
- Initiate partnerships with other institutions such as Historically Black Colleges, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and Native American institutions to attract their graduates to faculty positions.

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