Strategies for Achieving Faculty Diversity

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STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING FACULTY DIVERSITY

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1) Why be concerned about diversification of the faculty?
   a. Social justice considerations
   b. Enriches our lives, perspectives, curriculum and students
   c. Promotes understanding and mutual respect
   d. Helps recruit a more diverse student body and staff
   e. It cannot be taken for granted

2) Bases of my perceptions and suggestions
   a. Review of relevant literature
   b. Experiences at several universities, notably UMass Amherst
      i. Addressing “the diversity gap” — Caucasians constitute about 67% of the overall population of the U.S., but almost 80% of university faculty; African-Americans and Hispanics constitute close to 30% of the overall population, but only about 9% of university faculty identify as these 2 groups; women are a little over half of the general population, but less than a third of university faculty.
      ii. Over the past several years, UMass Amherst has achieved substantial increases in the proportion of women, minorities and other under-represented minorities hired into tenure-track positions

3) What challenges do we face to the goal of promoting diversification of the faculty?
   a. The belief that qualified diverse candidates, especially from under-represented minorities, are very scarce.
   b. Passivity in recruitment - tendency to rely on published ads and traditional networks.
   c. “Academic cloning”—tendency to hire people similar to oneself.
   d. The fear that concern with diversity and equity will distract from the pursuit of academic excellence.
e. The concern that administrative layers and review may slow down the search process or, worse, interfere with the pre-eminence of the faculty in the search and hiring process.

4) **What strategies or promising practices appear to enhance diversification?**

   a. support and leadership from administration, union, senate and rank and file
   b. “myth-busting”: disseminate up-to-date availability estimates, demonstrate that quality has not been and will not be sacrificed, show that timing will not suffer, etc.
   c. entry interviews with new hires
   d. mentoring program
   e. Provost’s “checkpoints” at the requisition, invitation, offer stages
   f. composition of search committees
   g. language of the position announcement
   h. the nature of the position
   i. cluster searching and hiring
   j. proactive and personalized search strategies
   k. review applicant pools, short lists and search strategies
   l. scrutinize proposed offers to hire
   m. praise effort and accomplishment
   n. protect the primacy of faculty decision-making while strengthening existing structures of communication and accountability

5) **Where might we go from here?**

   a. Be careful not to become complacent about what progress has been made. Reaffirm commitment to this goal.
   b. Build “pipelines” and pathways to prepare, recruit, and support more diversity at every level, and from early on (reaching down into middle and high schools) through post-doctoral opportunities.