

New Paradigms for Diversifying Faculty and Staff in Higher Education: Uncovering Cultural Biases in the Search and Hiring Process

Notes from the training on November 2, 2007

Question #1: What strategies, resources, policies, practices etc. can the University of Rhode Island (as an institution, a community and a workplace) adopt, create, or reform in order to increase the recruitment, hiring and retention of diverse faculty and staff in the next 10 years?

- Hire a chief diversity officer to provide some university-wide coordination of diversity/inclusion efforts on campus.
- Host a Diversity Council. Council on inclusion.
- Initiate a major fundraising campaign to support the diversification of the campus community. (Endowment)
 - Recruitment of faculty and staff
 - Climate enhancement activities
 - Institutional financial aid/undergrad and grad students
 - needs and wants/incentives
 - Academic support
 - middle school through college
- Restructure Human Resources and AAEOB
 - Work collaboratively – develop strategies to diversify classified and temporary staff positions.
 - Develop advocacy and support systems.
 - Develop and train diversity/search consultants.(State law – relocation expenses can't be paid for.)
- Develop programs to involve faculty/staff in student/community mentoring.
- Include community organizations in recruitment.
- Conduct regular conversations about recruitment, retention and climate within all departments. Be inclusive in those interactions.
- Have a greater presence and involvement in professional and community activities beyond the university.
- Develop a more holistic, intentional structure to enhance diversity initiatives – seek and apply perspectives and suggestions from our diverse individuals and populations.
- Develop more resources to support various diversity programs.
- Community connections
- Better job of accountability (ex: fraternity house) and conflict resolution.
- Affirmative Action Committee should be vital.
- Be GLBT inclusive in all diversity initiatives, practices and programs.
- More programs on campus like this one so faculty and staff will be aware of the need for more diversity.
- We need more opportunities for faculty and staff of color to meet and share their research. They also need opportunities to socialize.
- We need opportunities for faculty and staff of color to serve as mentors to students of color on a formal basis. Mentoring goes both ways.

- Make more visible the University's commitment to diversity by doing targeted living of faculty and staff.
- Show commitment through the creation of a position for the Chief Diversity Officer.
- Provide resources to support position of minority faculty recruiter who attends national meetings/conferences that showcase emerging university Ph.D.'s (there are a number of these in addition to NCORE).
- Provide resources to intensify the recruitment of university graduate students and in this way, help to increase the size of the pool from which university faculty is drawn.
- Centralize and integrate activities through accomplishing #2.
- Focus on retention issues through serious commitment to faculty and student mentoring activities.
- Union contracts institutionalize inequity. Clericals union severely limits their opportunities for advancement. Faculty contract institutionalizes pay inequities based on discipline – but the scale used is outdated. For example, contract fails to recognize that top PR executives make big bucks. So why are comm studies professors on low tier? (for example)
- Job qualification write-ups force a narrowing of diversity in candidate pool. They focus too much on degrees at the expense of skills and areas of expertise as measured in different ways.
- Diversity training for every search committee.
- Define measurable goals for diversity and hold search committees accountable.
- Examine why current efforts are not working and then develop solutions.
- Encourage everyone in the community to take responsibility for making the community welcome to all.
- Identify departments and program's specific challenges and solutions.
- Put together a special budget upon which searches can draw to diversify their pool of candidates. Have this presentation made to the Board of Governors.
- Include statement that URI is committed to diversity in all advertisements and marketing. Treat all hires as if recruiting an athlete – actively and personally recruiting minorities.
- Institutionalize Advance
 - Require search workshop representatives from all divisions.
 - Emerging leaders prog.
 - Require diversity class in each college.
 - Institutionalize better data collection.
 - Climate survey
 - Benchmarks
 - Promote mentoring program.
- Strengthen advising and staff support for diverse student organizations
- Training courses/manuals on search practices to enhance diversity.
- Dual career policy.
- Service evaluation should include a diversity/outreach component.
- Networking/support group for new faculty.
- Create brochure with info on resources (social) sought by under-represented faculty, e.g. clothing, hairdresser, daycare and social organizations.
- Place signs over campus "you are welcome here".

- Go to conferences to recruit.
- Brochures – identity networks and community connections, grocery stores, hair products.
- Increase staff to support under-represented students.
- More discussion at the interaction level to increase interactions with people of different cultural perspectives, including students/faculty/and staff with disabilities.
- Communicate resources, develop identity network – graveyards/history, hair products, community connections.
- Make funds available (as discussed this morning) for representatives of the University to attend diversity conferences.
- Establish mentoring programs for faculty/staff.
- Determine to what degree high cost of living in this area may be discouraging excellent diversity candidates from accepting positions here.
- Create chief diversity officer.
- Create diversity advocates/search experts (ideally per college or division).
- Put some resources towards recruitment.
- We need strategies for recruiting staff members.
- Mentoring after hiring is a key.
- Endorsement for graduate fellowship.
- Adopt the Swift Report (or at least review and consider).

(Statement of Support)

Athletics Dept: Coaches of women's sports (especially head coaches) will be female. Since 1972, female coaches of women's teams have dropped from over 90% to a low of 42%. We have more women participating in athletics – why aren't we giving them an opportunity to be a coach? In the past four years, we lost four female head coaches – two were replaced by men – how can that happen? The University president and the director of athletics should be advocates for hiring females to coach women's teams.

(Help to Retain)

Exit Interviews – must be required of every person (especially women and minorities) who leaves this University!

(Help in hiring/recruiting)

Diversity Advocates: named in every department to chair certain searches, be part of each committee (some ex-officio), and/or at least monitor the conduct/discussions of search committees to eliminate bias in the search process.

Pre/post doctoral fellowships – “underrep” fac with access to TT lines.

- At professional conferences, network with admission professionals of color to talk about career opportunities at URI (when we have them).
- “Brown bag diversity lunches” – invite faculty, staff and students to hear people speak about their cultural/ethnic backgrounds.
- We could produce a recruitment piece targeted at attracting more students of color.
- “Culture fest” – food, clothing art displays and performances.

- Establish procedures for approving hiring that assures that search committees are on the front of hiring and graduation cycles in their field – so other universities aren't hiring all the best before URI gets an offer out.
- Articulate with state and financial leaders the need to make URI salaries truly competitive – within the standards of each discipline so that URI can make competitive offers to hire and retain – obtain the financial resources.
- Create a pool of new positions (not replacements) requesting that departments compete for hiring a specialization within their discipline that is likely to attract scholars of diversifying backgrounds.
 - Position to teach and research on environmental racism but within a disciplinary department.
 - A position on engineering recovery from natural disasters in ethnically diverse coastal or urban regions.
 - A position for an ecologist and the land use legacies of different human cultures.
 - Sustainable fisheries linked to cultural groups.
- URI needs to assist, fund and sustain the efforts of colleges and departments to establish proactive recruiting activity in all fields.
- Have a diversity advocate who knows all searches in each department review search procedures and applicants and use as the upper administration of where additional resources may be needed to hire diverse faculty.
- Learn about each field – e.g., in psychology to hire an associate or full Professor in multicultural studies requires an outlet of a lot of money. University should make decisions about whether they want to go that route (or retain faculty as they progress).
- Strategic Plans by field needs to be developed.
- There should be outreach to departments, especially departments interested in increasing diversity.
- Creative efforts to increase desirability of positions including offers to sparse/cabinet denied/research positions.
- Make research space in Providence available to faculty who want to study minority populations.
- Fund conference attendance two to four times a year by team of six (faculty, HR, staff, std?) “Advance Team”. Recruit before job is available.
- Be sure each department/college/division has mentoring program for newcomers.
- Support advancement of work-like issues.
- Create assistant VP/provost level position with resources to broadly advance diversity across all colleges and departments (not a silo).
- Compile on-line lists of identity networks in 3 state areas – RI, MA and CT. Have ambassadors who can introduce newcomers personally.
- Hire a chief diversity officer.
- Competency training with ALL search committees including debriefing on the search. The debrief report can speed up the job offer.
- Revisit the Dr. Swift Report.
- Retention:
 - Create “welcome” receptions

- Create university-wide cultural celebrations such as fundraising for heritage months.
 - Utilizing diversity Website – transition classes towards Ph.D.
- Early notice to search - \$\$ to recruit (go to conferences, etc.).
- \$\$ Resources for wider advertising?
- Brochures for applicants, new hires, etc. – about community resources would be useful.
- Part of our mission should be to include the student population in the dialogue.
- How can we foster diversity without their input?
- The students should be treated as one of our most important resources in recruiting.
- Create a student committee for diversity.
- Partner with state and federal agencies to hire (pay salaries) for a certain amount of time with commitment for university to fund position.
- Resources (existing programs, departments etc., can be allocated to helping/hiring others.)
- Everyone is a recruiter on every level.
- Managing diversity.
- Hiring and retention of faculty with a strategy and focused approach.
- When faculty raises questions/concerns about offensive practices/talk/procedures, they should be taken serious and remedies should follow a consistent procedure for redress.
- For each level of administration/administrative office or significant committee opportunities should exist for minority faculty to “shadow”/interim and/or learn about first hand.
- Timely payment/reimbursement for new faculty.
- Effective mentorship programs for new hires.
- Require diversity training for all new hires.
- Invite faculty of color/diversity to sit on committees other than those associates with diversity concerns.
- Work with the community to make it more welcoming to diversity through demonstration of knowledge, skill and abilities, as well as the warmth of the campus community.
- Encourage faculty and staff to network within colleges and professional organizations to increase knowledge of URI as an institution and inclusive community.
- Encourage participation in the search process to include contact with the local community and minority faculty and staff.
- Evaluate the search process for efficiencies in the totality of the hiring process to make it timely to take advantage of opportunities.
- Welcome each new faculty and staff with assignment of a volunteer “sponsor” to mentor the new person on how to accomplish.....at the university or in the state.

Bottom Line:

Inclusion and diversity are issues of climate and environment creating a diversity/inclusion czar will not, in and of itself, create a diverse environment. It is, in my opinion, a bringing together with an institutional focus that has potential – so a good first violin would appear the best bet given resources/roles!

From the community:

- Making a difference – the commercial in full length is very nice but having seen it 20 times on television, I have only once seen it inclusive of AA student/or students of color. Who is editing the commercial and approving the edit before it is placed on TV?
- There are no historically black sororities/fraternities on campus in the p.m. – Hellenic Greek council? Why?

From me:

- Salary for faculty regardless of color – is it competitive?
- When the student body is more comfortable, they may assist in faculty recruitment by name of faculty researching on environment before accepting a job – they usually dialogue with the student population.
- Faculty on campus – across various disciplines must be involved in the process; many don't see it as a problem that involves them so they do nothing.
- Training for search committee.
- Debriefing
- We have a police model, which doesn't encourage the process - it slows them down.
- Put incentives or disincentives in place.
- Follow the recommendation of the Swift Report.

Question #2: What can you do as an administrator, academic professional, or faculty member to assist your department, area, or the university as a whole to increase the recruitment, hiring and retention of diverse faculty and staff at the University of Rhode Island?

- The Women's Center can work with women of color to give women an opportunity.
- Work to develop diversity staff from within through use of students.
- Ensure that those under-represented in the community feel welcome by us when in their presence.
- Tune in to interactional dynamics.
- Adopt more democratic approaches to decision making.
- Address family responsibilities of the new hire.
- Encourage additional education that might lead to career advancement.
- Offer to post ads in WIS, NSBE listserves.
- Go to conferences to recruit.
- Give technical presentations at different places – community colleges, HBCU's, inner-city schools.
- Continue projects of inclusion and partnerships.
- Continue disability-training project (interactional model) to eliminate stereotypes.
- Host more meetings regarding diversity to include equal opportunity issues and issues of socio economic issues.
- Be available to carry forward knowledge given in today's workshop.
- Be involved in reviewing the University's diversity needs and be part of determining future direction of re-organization of diversity needs/recruitment process.
- As an administrator:

Recruitment:

- Search committees – make-up important.
- Guidance early in the process relative to classified write-up, distribution/advertisement, networking.
- Assure there is a clear understanding in the search committee on the strategic plans of the department, college and higher administration.
- Recognize the statistics, trends of the student population in the department college.

Hiring:

- Interviews need to be structured to allow candidates to see the community both in and out of the institution.
- Help with networking.
- Be a positive mentor for new faculty and staff.
- Be the search chair for every head coach of women's sports search, participate in searches for administrative support services where predominately white males are hired. I will recruit women and minorities into the search pool.
- I will speak to all of the women's teams to encourage our players to consider jobs in athletics when they graduate. (coaches, officials, administration, etc.)
- Be a mentor (or assign a mentor) to all young/new professionals in our department.
- Encourage new people to be on search committees so they can understand the process and can learn how to avoid biases and how to view the quality of the applicants.
- I can personally network with admission professionals of color and form closer relationships with them so that when openings exist, I can reach out to them as hiring resources.
- Build network of contacts across U.S.
- Generate conversation, continue to appreciate existing diversity.
- Build connections with high schools and universities that produce scholars interested in our field.
- Sustain a culture based on merit of work.
- Develop expectations for recruitment strategies higher than set by Affirmative Action.
 - Tables at conferences.
 - Data Bank of mailing labels.
- Training of search committees, chairs and deans should be specific to search committees that this is a priority.
- Keep current on new initiatives.
- Be proactive in recruiting.
- Start searches early. The new hires should have a years overlap with the person being replaced (in case of retirement.)
- Stress to search committees, department chairs etc., that enhancing diversity has equal (near equal?) priority to hiring into a specialty area.
- Identify folks that we meet.
- Prepare students.
- Attend conferences – bring info back to university.
- Go to where they are in state.
- Go to where they are out-of-state.

- Advertise where they are.
- Make contacts with faculty and staff of color who can recommend others.
- Listen to challenges and seek effective solutions to challenges associated with change.
- Capital Campaign committee for the purpose of fundraising. i.e. make a difference, should be diverse.
- Discontinue giving lip service to real concerns with regard to challenges based on diversity.
- As a search committee chair or member, encourage open dialogue regarding inclusion – the current environment and opportunities for the future – honest and open dialogue might assist with retention.