

**AFT HIGHER EDUCATION
PROGRAM AND POLICY COUNCIL
WORKING GROUP ON
FACULTY AND STAFF DIVERSITY**

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Long-term Project Plan: 2009-2010

Reports on Obstacles to Diversity/Relevant Practices in the Field/AFT Recommendations

- Racial and ethnic diversity among faculty and instructors
- Gender diversity among faculty and instructors
- Diversity issues among professional staff
- LGBT diversity issues
- Diversity issues re: the disabled

Initial Focus of Discussions:

Racial and ethnic diversity among faculty and instructors

PRELIMINARY WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS RACIAL/ETHNIC FACULTY DIVERSITY

Initial Findings

By any measure, the representation of racial and ethnic minorities of college and university faculty is disproportionately low compared to the general population or to the demographics of the college student population or graduate students, who are the training pool for higher education. In 2005-2006, approximately 5.4 percent of all tenure-eligible and contingent faculty members were black, 4.5 percent were Hispanic, and 0.04 percent were Native American, even though these groups represented, respectively, 12 percent, 14 percent and 0.8 percent of the total U.S. population.ⁱ

Administrators and faculty members around the country express strong support for improving faculty and professional staff diversity. College officials can point to some increases in the hiring of underrepresented groups as evidence of progress. Overall, however, it also appears that there has not been very significant movement on the diversity front and, in many cases, new hiring among the ranks of underrepresented groups has been centered on contingent rather than tenure-track jobs. Furthermore, it is often reported that dropout rates are higher among racial/ethnic underrepresented faculty members, but we need more data to state that authoritatively.

Our initial inquiries lead us to believe that the institutional culture of higher education may sometimes breed a sense of isolation and exclusion, a sense of confusion about how to meet job responsibilities and advance professionally, and that it may impose unreasonable work burdens on faculty from racial and ethnic minority groups. We also believe that these obstacles can be eliminated or reduced in the face of serious, coordinated efforts by institutions and by higher education unions, and we've seen evidence of this in the field. As our report takes shape, our intention will be to provide faculty and administrators with an understanding of the obstacles in hiring and retaining a faculty that is diverse racially and ethnically, to highlight a number of activities already going on in this area, and to develop recommendations for consideration by the AFT program and policy council. The information we're developing is organized under two headings: one on hiring and one on retention.

The Hiring Process

The Educational Pipeline

Obstacles

We are finding that not enough students from racial/ethnic minorities are receiving PhDs, which limits the pool of potential faculty from these groups. Many racial/ethnic minority students who *do* receive PhDs reportedly do not seek faculty positions and instead enter other fields. A shortage of faculty mentors from racial/ethnic minority groups is often cited as a key factor in this.

The number of faculty members from racial and ethnic minorities reflects a gradual narrowing of the pipeline leading up to a faculty position for underrepresented groups in the educational system. For example:

- Approximately 25 percent of the total number of associate's degrees awarded in 2006 was awarded to students from underrepresented groups (black, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic).
- Approximately 17.5 percent of the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded in 2006 was awarded to students from underrepresented groups.
- Approximately 9.3 percent of the total number of doctorates awarded in 2006 was awarded to students from underrepresented groups.

Field Initiatives to Address these Obstacles

We encountered a number of efforts to address these obstacles. Here are some of them.

1. *The PhD Project*

A mentorship program designed to support African-American, Hispanic and Native American students on the path to earning PhDs and becoming business school faculty members.

- a. Result: The PhD Project claims to have tripled the number of underrepresented business school professors from 294 to 898 since 1994.ⁱⁱ

2. *Duke University*

Finances two postdoctoral positions for underrepresented candidates each year.ⁱⁱⁱ

3. *University of Wisconsin–Madison*

Developed a fellowship program at the school of engineering aimed at underrepresented graduate students, encouraging them to pursue research.^{iv}

4. *W. K. Kellogg Foundation Comprehensive Underrepresented Dental Faculty Development Program*

Makes grants to U.S. dental schools for direct educational assistance to increase the number of underrepresented students recruited to, entering, and persisting in dental academic careers.^v

5. *Underrepresented Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP)*

An initiative of the Department of Education, this program is designed to increase representation of underrepresented students in science and technology by improving science and engineering programs at underrepresented institutions.^{vi}

6. *Future of Minority Studies Research Project*

One of FMS's long-term goals is to make the humanities departments of American colleges and universities more diverse, both culturally and intellectually. In order to realize this goal, they created a Summer Institute in which minority scholars provide one another with mentorship.^{vii}

Potential Recommendations

Government agencies, educational institutions, community organizations, advocacy organizations and the union movement need to join forces to expand current programs (and create new ones if necessary) aimed at identifying, nurturing and retaining students from racial and ethnic minority groups throughout the educational pipeline. We will look particularly at efforts to offer mentoring to promote careers in academe.

Outreach and Recruitment

Obstacles Cited

Coordinated campaigns to ensure recruitment of minority faculty are often difficult to implement; authority over faculty hiring is very dispersed in higher education and the criteria are in many ways idiosyncratic. Advertising of position openings is often at the discretion of department chairs and announcements sometimes do not reach minority-targeted listservs and publications. Often, there is also a lack of transparency with regard to whom CVs should be sent to on university campuses.

Some Field Initiatives to Address these Obstacles

1. Virginia Tech draws on the resources of Historically Black Colleges and Universities by asking professors from HBCUs to deliver lectures on campus.^{viii}
2. *Black Faculty Strategic Initiative* (Duke University; 1993) introduces potential black faculty to black faculty members in and outside of the candidates' departments.^{ix}
3. Cornell University, along with five major businesses, formed a council to deal with equity issues in the community and has created more than a dozen public service announcements that focus on diversity, equity and

race. To attract faculty and staff members, the university tries to showcase social programs both on and off the campus. Officials bring prospective black faculty members and other employees to Cornell during "First Fridays," a networking and social group for young black professionals that holds monthly events. The university also recruits at an annual festival run by the Greater Ithaca Activities Center, a hub of the African-American community, as well as at the annual Dragon Boat Festival, which is run by the Ithaca Asian-American Association, and at the Latino Civic Association's yearly picnic.^x

Potential Recommendations

Within the context of the dispersed responsibility for faculty hiring at most institutions of higher education, we should develop and publicize best practices for developing an institution-wide coordinated focus on outreach and recruitment of faculty from racial/ethnic minority groups. We should consider the potential role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in expanding the pool of potential faculty members. Some ideas discussed:

- Union outreach to hiring committees and departments.
- Create consensus between faculty/departments and administrators on recruitment and hiring practices.
- Brainstorm ways to focus recruitment in minority publications and listservs.

Attacks on Affirmative Action

Obstacles Cited

State referenda have been passed banning preferential treatment to groups or individuals based on their race, gender, color, ethnicity or national origin. Campaigns to enact such referenda are coordinated by a well-financed national organization led by Ward Connerly of California with the misleading name, the American Civil Rights Institute. Four states have enacted such bans. The passage of these referenda had a demonstrably negative effect on faculty hiring of racial/ethnic minorities and may contribute more subtly to a sense that higher education is not a welcoming terrain for racial/ethnic minority faculty.

- In the four years following the passage of Proposition 209 in California, many UC campuses experienced a drop in the rates of hiring women and underrepresented faculty members.^{xi}
- After Initiative 200 passed in 1998, the expected enrollment of the freshman class of 1999 at the University of Washington was down 40% for African-American students and 30% for Hispanic/Latino students.^{xii}
- On the other hand, forces opposing anti-affirmative action initiatives won their first victory in November 2008 when Colorado rejected such an initiative.

Some Field Initiatives to Address this Obstacle

- The AFT is a leading member of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, which coordinates opposition to anti-affirmative action initiatives in the states.
- The AFT provides financial support to, and serves on the board of, the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, which does background research and voter education in opposition to state anti-affirmative action initiatives.

Potential Recommendations

Bans on affirmative action in college admissions and hiring too often have the effect of perpetuating the recruitment of white and privileged individuals over individuals from racial and ethnic minorities. Affirmative action remains a necessary tool in ensuring equal access to higher education for all members of our society, which is an indispensable social condition of democracy. As it has in the past, the union should work closely with, and contribute “member power” and financial resources to, coalitions fighting anti-affirmative action initiatives and legislation. Ideas discussed:

- Institute local union diversity committees to brainstorm ways to dispel the misconceptions surrounding affirmative action and educate the academic community on its role in higher education.
- Establish more pro-active partnerships with potential coalition partners to educate the public before attacks arise.

Lack of full-time tenure-track positions

Obstacles Cited

The decreasing number of full-time tenure-track positions complicates the process of offering stable, well-paid careers to faculty and instructors from ethnic and racial minority groups. Two-thirds of new hiring in the ranks of faculty has been in contingent positions.

- In 1997, blacks represented 4.8 percent of instructional staff in higher education. In 2007, blacks represented 5.4 percent of instructional staff in higher education. At the same time, 57% of them (in 2007) held contingent faculty positions rather than tenured or tenure-track positions.
- In 1997, American Indians/Alaska Natives represented 0.4 percent of instructional staff in higher education. In 2007, they represented 0.5 percent of instructional staff in higher education. Of these, 60% held contingent faculty positions.
- In 1997, Hispanics represented 3.7 percent of instructional staff in higher education. In 2007, Hispanics represented 4.5 percent of instructional staff in higher education. Of these, 53% held contingent faculty positions.
- In 1993, Duke University took on an initiative to double the number of black faculty over the next ten years; however, the majority of those faculty positions were nontenure-track.

Potential Recommendations

Along with emphasizing minority hiring, unions should increase their advocacy for tenure-track positions. The AFT has launched the Faculty and College Excellence (FACE) initiative, a national campaign to reverse the crisis in instructional staffing at our nation's colleges and universities. Local unions should engage faculty and administrators on this issue and utilize FACE as a resource.

Retention and Navigating the University Culture

Isolation from the Institution and/or Surrounding Community and Lack of Mentor Support

Obstacles Cited

A body of research, usually in the form of case studies, indicates that faculty from underrepresented groups experience higher levels of job dissatisfaction. Findings suggest that faculty of color experience lower levels of job satisfaction than their white counterparts, especially when there are few (or not any) fellow faculty members from a racial/ethnic minority in their departments. Even when the authors controlled for academic rank, the pattern of dissatisfaction among underrepresented faculty remained powerful. Most dissatisfied were black and Hispanic faculty members, who reported feeling the most singled out and alone in their departments.^{xiii} Nearly 70 percent said the racial climate at work affected their job satisfaction.^{xiv}

Underrepresented faculty members may feel tokenized, stigmatized, left out or out of place. In addition, racial/ethnic minority group faculty often cite an inability to connect with mentors to help them navigate the institutional culture and the demands of their departments and disciplines as a primary reason why they leave their institutions. In particular, some studies cite the confusion engendered by the tenure and promotion process.

Some Field Initiatives to Address these Obstacles

A number of programs improve or create services that provide academic/social guidance to lessen transition difficulties.

1. *The PhD Project* – In addition to providing support during the hiring process, this program can also serve as a resource in retention. A network of corporations, organizations and universities sponsoring a mentorship program designed to support African-American, Hispanic and Native American students on the path to earning PhDs and becoming business school faculty members.
 - o **Result:** The PhD Project claims to have tripled the number of underrepresented business school professors from 294 to 898 since 1994.^{xv} <http://www.phdproject.org>

2. *Ford Foundation Diversity Fellowships* – Seeks to increase the diversity of the nation's college and university faculties by increasing their ethnic and racial diversity, to maximize the educational benefits of diversity, and to increase the number of professors who can and will use diversity as a resource for enriching the education of all students. To facilitate this goal the Fellowship grants awards at the Predoctoral, Dissertation and, Postdoctoral levels to students who demonstrate excellence, a commitment to diversity and a desire to enter the professoriate.^{xvi}
<http://www7.nationalacademies.org/FORDfellowships/>

Potential Recommendations

Local unions should make a major effort to provide inclusion and support to faculty members from underrepresented groups in order to enhance the quality of their professional and personal lives and foster faculty retention. Existing best practices should be expanded and new ones developed. Specific ideas discussed:

- Facilitate local union advisory groups in which senior faculty mentor junior faculty on issues such as establishing a tenure-competitive scholarly record and how to understand the culture of their department and university.
- Mentors should serve as advocates for their junior colleagues.

Occupational Stress

Obstacles Cited

Given their visibility as a member of an underrepresented group, faculty members from racial and ethnic minority groups often report that, in addition to their regular responsibilities, they are asked to serve on committees, participate in organizations, speak at events, etc. as a representative of their racial/ethnic group, leaving them with much less time to devote to their research and other academic duties. Faculty from underrepresented groups also report experiencing a double standard with regard to their credentials. (For example, some find it an impediment to be graduates of an HBCU or to pursue research in racially sensitive areas.)

- Study: Faculty of color are involved in a Catch-22; they feel they cannot refuse to serve on committees, but heavy service loads means less time for research that is the focus of tenure review.^{xvii}
- Study: African-American faculty have higher stress levels relating to research and service than do white faculty.^{xviii}
- Study: One example of special demands involves excessive committee assignments. Another is the expectation that faculty of color should be the "ethnic" resource for the entire institution.^{xix}
- Study: Women and underrepresented scholars in the academy suffer under disproportionate loads of student advising and service directly related to their visibility as "the only one" of their group in the department. These faculty members report that this extra service is

expected only for underrepresented scholars, while their academic interests in studying pressing social, political, and economic questions involving race and gender are often devalued in the faculty-promotion process.^{xx}

Nearly 70 percent of black faculty surveyed said that the racial climate at work had caused stress for them.^{xxi}

- Study: Faculty of color find that research on underrepresented issues is not considered legitimate work. Other studies find that the research interest of faculty of color are denigrated, either because the research area is not traditional or because the faculty themselves are seen as inferior due to race or ethnicity.^{xxii}
- Study: Eighty-four percent of the questionnaire respondents in a study on black faculty said that cultural insensitivity is common at their institution, and 84 percent said that racism is common. Seventy percent had experienced racism from one or more colleagues, 51 percent had experienced racism from an immediate supervisor, 57 percent had experienced racism from other administrators on campus, and 74 percent had experienced it from students.^{xxiii}

Potential Recommendations

Local unions can play a leading role in helping faculty from racial and ethnic minority groups to cope with the demands of their jobs and to handle the difficulties of promotion. Local unions should facilitate ways in which mainstream faculty can advocate for underrepresented faculty on issues ranging from workload demands to the need for research on minority issues. Local unions should promote diversity at the contract level, at the public policy level, and with boards of trustees. Specific ideas discussed:

- Develop local union policy statements on faculty diversity and implement such “diversity commitments” on campus.
- Engage administration and fellow faculty on the issue of excessive service workloads for underrepresented faculty.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ Jacobson, Jennifer. *AFT On Campus*. “Scaling the Ivory Tower.” January/February 2008. http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/on_campus/janfeb08/feature.htm.

ⁱⁱ The PhD Project. <http://www.phdproject.org>.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Chronicle of Higher Education. *Diversity in Academe*. “Whatever Happened to All Those Plans to Hire More Minority Professors?” September 26, 2008. <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v55/i05/05b00101.htm>.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v American Academic. *Faculty Diversity in Higher Education: Perspectives on race, ethnicity, gender and disability*. "The Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Faculty Diversity." Volume 4, Number 1. March 2008: 23.

^{vi} American Academic. *Faculty Diversity in Higher Education: Perspectives on race, ethnicity, gender and disability*. "The Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Faculty Diversity." Volume 4, Number 1. March 2008: 23.

^{vii} <http://www.fmsproject.cornell.edu/>.

^{viii} The Chronicle of Higher Education. *Diversity in Academe*. "Whatever Happened to All Those Plans to Hire More Minority Professors?" September 26, 2008. <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v55/i05/05b00101.htm>.

^{ix} The Chronicle of Higher Education. *Diversity in Academe*. "Whatever Happened to All Those Plans to Hire More Minority Professors?" September 26, 2008. <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v55/i05/05b00101.htm>.

^x Ibid.

^{xi} UCLA: Affirmative Action Guidelines for Recruitment and Retention of Faculty. <http://www.faculty.diversity.ucla.edu/affirm/index.htm>

^{xii} McCormick, Richard. "Maintaining Diversity at the University of Washington after Initiative 200" <http://www.lib.washington.edu/specialcoll/collections/uarchives/mccormick/mccormick142.pdf>.

^{xiii} Murray, Bridget. APA Online. *Why are some minority faculty unhappy?* Volume 29, Number 6. June 1998. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun98/frus.html>.

^{xiv} <http://insidehighered.com/news/2005/09/13/black>.

^{xv} The PhD Project. <http://www.phdproject.org>.

^{xvi} <http://www7.nationalacademies.org/FORDfellowships/>.

^{xvii} Myers, Samuel and Caroline Turner. *Faculty of Color in Academe*. "Elements Influencing the Workplace Environment." p25.

^{xviii} Ibid.

^{xix} Ibid. 33.

^{xx} The Chronicle of Higher Education. *Diversity in Academe*. "Diversity and Merit: How One University Rewards Faculty Work That Promotes Equity." September 26, 2008. <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v55/i05/05b04101.htm>

^{xxi} <http://insidehighered.com/news/2005/09/13/black>.

^{xxii} Myers, Samuel and Caroline Turner. *Faculty of Color in Academe*. "Elements Influencing the Workplace Environment." p26.

^{xxiii} <http://insidehighered.com/news/2005/09/13/black>.