

STUDY ON FACULTY DIVERSITY: PLANS AND PROCESS

Submitted for: Information.

Summary: In coming months, the Illinois Board of Higher Education will conduct a study of faculty diversity in Illinois higher education. The study is prompted by a Governor's Executive Order asking the Board and Illinois colleges and universities to examine ways to improve minority faculty representation, as well as a April 2002 Board decision to extend a study of student diversity to include faculty. This board item outlines the reasons for addressing this issue, anticipated avenues of inquiry, and the process envisioned for collecting information and opinion.

The study will center on faculty diversity with particular attention to minority faculty. It will also examine representation among female faculty and faculty with disabilities. At this time, staff has identified three issues about which further information and opinion will be sought: the "pools" of potential faculty and in-state placement of diverse graduate students, the hiring process and campus leadership, and retention of faculty and campus climate. The item presents questions on each topic on which information is sought. Hearings and small group meetings will seek to identify other study questions.

This study will gather information on best programs and practices at Illinois institutions, and solicit information and opinion from minority faculty in Illinois, as well as majority faculty and administrators. Public information will be obtained through formal hearings, a "web hearing," and focus group meetings. After the completion of the report, the Board will hold a conference on faculty diversity to highlight issues and help campuses develop effective strategies to broaden faculty representation.

Action Requested: None.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
ILLINOIS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**STUDY ON FACULTY DIVERSITY:
PLANS AND PROCESS**

A Timely Topic

In coming months, the Illinois Board of Higher Education will conduct a study of faculty diversity in Illinois higher education. The study is prompted by a Governor's Executive Order asking the Board and Illinois colleges and universities to examine ways to improve minority faculty representation, as well as an April 2002 Board decision to extend a study of student diversity to include faculty. The lack of diversity among higher education faculty remains a widely discussed problem at Illinois colleges and universities and throughout the nation. This board item outlines the reasons for addressing this issue, anticipated avenues of inquiry, and the process envisioned for collecting information and opinion.

Governor's Executive Order Number 6 (2001) entitled "Reaffirming a Commitment to a Quality and Diversified Higher Education Faculty" directs the Illinois Board of Higher Education to work with public and independent institutions of higher education on outlining "steps to increase minority faculty in institutions of higher education." The resolution asks the Board and Illinois colleges and universities to examine and strengthen fellowship programs for minority graduate students, such as the state's Illinois Consortium for Education Opportunity Program (ICEOP) and the Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program (IMGIP), and to ensure that the state's community colleges and public universities recruit faculty from these programs and maintain a strong commitment to a diversified work force. The resolution also directs the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and the Department of Human Rights to "make available training on effective recruitment."

In August 2001, the Illinois Board of Higher Education issued *Gateway to Success: Rethinking Access and Diversity for a New Century*. Although focused on students, the report's ideas and orientation have broad relevance for this faculty study. For instance, the Board's report points out that colleges and universities historically have sought diversity as a means of broadening student experience and increasing student learning. It cites recent research that racially and ethnically diverse educational environments improve student academic performance and provide long-term economic and civic benefits for students, as well as the society at large. Illinois citizens are aware that a high quality college education offers students diverse educational experiences. The "ability to get along with people different from themselves" ranked second among the essential outcomes that Illinois respondents hoped a student would "gain from college" in a survey of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

This study will center on faculty diversity with particular attention to minority faculty. It will also examine representation among female faculty and faculty with disabilities. Traditionally, the concept of student diversity has been broadly conceived encompassing differences not only in student talents and interests, but also in region, class culture, gender, age, race/ethnicity, and disability. Should the term faculty diversity be similarly construed? The report will examine the definition of this term and its implications for Illinois higher education.

In the past decade, higher education has given greater visibility to the issue of faculty diversity. Reports by scholars and distinguished organizations such as the American Council on Education, Midwest Higher Education Commission, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, as well as campus studies by different types of institutions such as the University of Minnesota, the University of Indiana, Kansas City, Kansas Community College, and Evergreen State College have examined this subject in detail. All express a sense of urgency and cite numerous reasons for addressing this subject at this time:

- *A Symbol of Excellence.* Growing population diversity characterizes our nation, state, and educational institutions. Systems and institutions of higher education that have diverse leadership and faculty will offer a richer and more dynamic learning environment and increasingly will be viewed as more responsive to the needs of their students and state residents. Such institutions and systems will set the national standard for excellence.
- *Impact on Student Learning and Development.* Faculty are the core of the institution. “Faculty create the curriculum [as well as create and legitimize knowledge] and determine the quality of experience in every classroom [and in every department]” (from Caroline Turner and Samuel Meyers, *Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success*).
- *Low Level of Faculty Representation.* Within higher education institutions, race/ethnic diversity is lowest in faculty ranks and faculty diversity contrasts unfavorably with student diversity. African-Americans constitute thirteen percent of enrollment and five percent of all faculty at Illinois higher education institutions. Hispanics constitute seven percent of enrollment and two percent of all faculty.
- *Growth in the Supply of Potential Faculty.* The number of minority master’s and doctoral degree recipients has grown significantly in the past decade in both the nation and state, increasing the supply of potential minority faculty. The number of African-American doctoral degree recipients rose by 84 percent in Illinois in the last decade. The number of Hispanic doctoral degree recipients rose by 74 percent in Illinois in this period.
- *Effect on Student Diversity.* A diverse faculty contributes to student diversity and minority student success. Studies and surveys consistently show that minority students place a strong emphasis on the presence of a diverse faculty (see the Board’s *2002 Report to the Governor and General Assembly on Underrepresented Groups in Illinois Higher Education*). At primarily white institutions that draw their students from a racially homogenous region, hiring represents the primary method for introducing racial diversity to the campus.
- *Dissatisfaction Among Minority Faculty.* Recent studies and surveys have shown that minority faculty often feel isolated and report less satisfaction with their jobs than majority faculty. Strategies that increase retention of minority faculty will benefit entire institutions and the state system of higher education.
- *Examples of Success.* Some institutions in the state and nation are making progress. Opportunities now exist to learn from these efforts by sharing examples of best practice.
- *A Window of Opportunity.* Faculties across the state and nation are aging. Many institutions will hire greater numbers of faculty in the next few years, providing an opportunity for institutions to make significant strides in improving faculty diversity.

Study Priorities

This report will seek to capitalize upon national and state data bases and recent literature, including evaluations of state programs, such as the *Performance Audit of Illinois Minority Graduate Fellowship Programs: IMGIP and ICEOP* by Dr. Jack McKillip and a HECA project led by Southern Illinois University at Carbondale that examined ways to improve IMGIP/ICEOP

and broaden minority faculty diversity in Illinois. At this time, staff has identified three issues about which further information and opinion will be sought. Hearings and small group meetings will seek to identify other study questions. Given the nature of the Governor's Executive Order and the constellation of issues that appear repeatedly in the general literature, the Board believes that a focused conversation offers the best way to produce thoughtful and responsive policy recommendations on this subject.

The "Pools" of Potential Faculty and In-state Placement

The ability to increase and maintain faculty diversity depends, especially in the long run, on the ability to create a robust supply of diverse faculty candidates. Since faculty must have advanced training in their fields, the issue of supply turns on the size and diversity of graduate student enrollment and, more specifically, the number of diverse master's and doctoral degree recipients that are the source of entering faculty.

While the proposition that faculty diversity depends upon the diversity of graduate enrollment seems unassailable, this generalization obscures much. Vast differences exist in institutional hiring practices, expectations, and graduate training. For instance, as a minimum qualification, four-year institutions expect candidates to have a doctoral degree, while community colleges expect a master's degree. Among four-year institutions, practices vary among research, comprehensive, and liberal arts institutions. For all institutions, hiring practices vary for tenure-track and nontenure-track faculty. Given these variations, it is more appropriate to speak of pools rather than a single pool as the source for entering faculty. The size and diversity of each pool differs considerably.

In 2001, African-American students received nine percent of master's degrees and six percent of doctoral degrees awarded by Illinois institutions. In 2001, Hispanic students received three percent of master's degrees and two percent of doctoral degree recipients awarded by Illinois institutions. African-Americans represent five percent and Hispanics two percent of all full-time faculty at Illinois institutions of higher education.

In 2001, female students received 57 percent of all master degrees and 43 percent of all doctoral degrees awarded in Illinois. However, females received only a small proportion of doctoral degrees awarded in many science and technology fields. Females represent 39 percent of all Illinois full-time faculty. There is no information on the distribution of graduate degrees to students with disability, or on the number of faculty with disabilities. This study will examine the feasibility of collecting such information.

Faculty diversity is also affected by the linkages between graduate programs and institutional employers that lead to faculty hires. The nature of these relationships is of particular importance to states that have large graduate programs within their borders. Unfortunately, given the mobility of the national market, most doctoral degree recipients leave the state after completing their education. This "out-migration" is common in the Midwest, which is the largest exporter of PhDs, with minority doctoral recipients leaving the region at a higher rate (67 percent) than white doctoral recipients (63 percent). The extent to which diverse graduate degree recipients decide, or can be influenced, to remain within state boundaries increases the ability of Midwestern states, such as Illinois, to diversify their faculty.

Illinois is one of a few states that has programmatic initiatives to increase faculty diversity. The Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program seeks to increase the number of minority faculty and professional staff in the fields of physical sciences, life sciences,

mathematics, and engineering. The Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunity Program (ICEOP) seeks to increase minority graduate enrollment in all fields at the master's and doctoral levels. Minority graduate students have received nearly 1,000 two, three, and four-year fellowships since the creation of these programs in 1985. This study will examine and seek to improve the effectiveness of these state fellowship programs.

In summary, the Board seeks information on the following questions about the supply of diverse faculty. The Board welcomes suggestions of other pertinent questions.

- What are the pools for entering faculty on which Illinois institutions of higher education draw? How do these pools differ by type of institution and field, and for tenure-track and nontenure-track faculty? How have these pools changed over time?
- How do IMGIP/ICEOP contribute to the pools of available minority faculty for Illinois institutions? How might these programs better enhance the pools and hiring patterns for diverse faculty?
- What practices/processes facilitate the placement of ICEOP/IMGIP degree recipients in faculty positions in Illinois? What has been the placement experience of ICEOP/IMGIP? What statewide and institutional policies and practices might increase the number of diverse graduate degree recipients placed at faculty positions in Illinois?

The Hiring Process and Campus Leadership

Faculty knowledge, skills, and expertise constitute the core resource of higher education. The nature and quality of a college or university's faculty affect that institution's quality, reputation, and capacity for development. Given the centrality of the faculty role, it is not surprising that hiring decisions, replete with long-term financial implications, are often made with careful deliberation. Any discussion of faculty diversity, therefore, has to examine the forces and processes that shape hiring decisions, as well as how practices may inhibit or enhance diversity.

An academic hiring decision, at least for a tenure-track faculty member, emanates from the deliberations of a search committee. How search committees are organized and led, as well as how they recruit, identify, and select candidates, have critical importance for faculty diversity. Past changes to improve search performance centered on recruitment. More recently, some have advocated making structural changes in the search process itself, for instance, by broadening position descriptions, seeking candidates from less traditional academic backgrounds, and training members of search committees. The Board will examine the impact of these new practices and initiatives and their general applicability to other institutions.

Institutions that have achieved success have articulated their support for faculty diversity and carried out this commitment through coordinated decision-making processes. The Board is interested in understanding how the roles of the president, provost, deans, department chairs, faculty, and affirmative action officers can increase faculty diversity and how various campus wide programs and practices, such as incentive and campus-wide diversity funds, training for search committees, and performance evaluations, can support effective leadership.

In summary, the Board seeks information on the following questions about the hiring process and campus leadership. The Board welcomes suggestions of other pertinent questions.

- How can the search process be strengthened to broaden faculty diversity? How can the search process integrate institutional, as well as departmental, goals to advance faculty diversity?
- What constitutes effective campus leadership in support of faculty diversity? How can the roles of presidents, provosts, deans, department chairs, faculty, and affirmative action officers be shaped to support faculty diversity? How can campus leaders best work together to achieve this objective?
- What types of campus programs are most effective in support of faculty diversity? How effective are incentive pay and campus diversity funds, campus training programs for search committees, and performance evaluations? What other types of programs and practices have proven successful?
- What statewide efforts should the Illinois Board of Higher Education undertake to help institutions strengthen their ability to achieve faculty diversity?

Retention of Diverse Faculty and Campus Climate

Strengthening faculty diversity requires attending to issues of faculty retention, as well as hiring processes. Recent research has shown that minority faculty tend to remain at an institution longer than is widely perceived. With the exception of a few individuals at elite institutions, the peripatetic minority scholar who is the continued object and benefactor of a bidding war for his services is a myth. Rather, research finds minority faculty who are often dissatisfied with their working conditions and their institution's commitment to diversity.

In their study, *Faculty of Color in Academe: Bittersweet Success*, based on interviews of minority faculty at Midwest institutions, Turner and Meyers concluded that a “chilly climate” afflicts the region limiting the personal and professional satisfaction of many minority faculty. The homogeneity found on most campuses contributes to a sense of isolation and disenchantment among minority scholars and adds to the tension and stress that often accompanies the tenure process. Minorities face a unique set of circumstances and challenges as faculty members, such as requests to mentor and advise minority students and to serve on an inordinate number of departmental and campus committees as “diversity” representatives. These heightened instruction and service expectations can reduce time available for needed research. Also, some minority faculty report that white colleagues often undervalue race/ethnic research and pursuit of such academic interests can hurt prospects for tenure and academic recognition.

Opportunities exist to recruit and retain minority faculty by addressing retention issues such as campus climate. Research findings about the impact of campus climate upon minority faculty have prompted responses such as the creation of peer networks within and across institutions, as well as the establishment of formal and informal mentoring activities and programs. The Board will examine the nature of the climate for minority faculty at Illinois institutions and seek to discover what practices and programs contribute to the development of a supportive environment for all faculty.

In summary, the Board seeks information on the following questions about the retention of diverse faculty. The Board welcomes suggestions of other pertinent questions.

- Does a “chilly climate” exist for underrepresented faculty at Illinois institutions of higher education? What has been the experience of members of various groups?
- What kind of policies and practices most contribute to a chilly climate?

- What kind of statewide and institutional policies and practices should be adopted to provide a more supportive environment for diverse faculty?

Information Gathering Strategies

This study will gather information on best programs and practices at Illinois institutions, and solicit information and opinion from minority faculty in Illinois, as well as majority faculty and administrators. In this way, the study will build a body of information about existing practices and attitudes in Illinois, and institutions throughout the nation, to inform the development of Board policy. The following mechanisms will be used to gather public information.

Public Hearings—During the month of September, the Illinois Board of Higher Education will hold public hearings on this topic. The Board will post information about the date, time, and location of each hearing on its website, www.ibhe.org.

Web Hearing—During the months of September and October, the Board will solicit and collect information on its website, www.ibhe.org on the topic of faculty diversity. Persons testifying on the Web will be asked to address one or more of the topics discussed above, as well as identify other issues. This mechanism is intended to solicit ideas and opinion, especially from members of underrepresented faculty, and the Web site will have sections for their input.

Focus Groups—The Board will hold focus group meetings after the conclusion of the public and Web hearings. About three or four focus group meetings are anticipated on topics such as the search process, campus leadership, faculty retention, and faculty with disabilities. Board staff also has begun meeting with various higher education constituent groups, such as the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education and the advisory board of the IMGIP/ICEOP, to discuss pertinent issues. Such meetings will continue throughout the study process.

Conference on Faculty Diversity

The Board will hold a conference on faculty diversity after the completion of its report. The intent of this conference is to highlight issues and help campuses develop effective strategies to broaden faculty representation. Community colleges, public universities, and private institutions will participate in the conference. Information collected for this study will help identify and shape issues to be discussed at the conference, as well as develop policy recommendations for Board action. An announcement about the subject, date, and location of the faculty diversity conference will appear on the Board's Web site.