

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING
FACULTY DIVERSITY IN ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION**

Submitted for: Action.

Summary: In April 2003, the Board presented a study on ways to increase faculty diversity at Illinois colleges and universities entitled *Opportunities for Leadership: Strategies for Improving Faculty Diversity in Illinois Higher Education*, and directed staff to circulate the study and its preliminary recommendations among members of Illinois higher education and other interested persons for their comments and suggestions. The final report, revised as a result of these consultations, is included in these Board materials.

This companion document highlights the final report's recommendations, itemizes the cost of implementation, describes comments received on the April preliminary report, explains changes made to that report, and presents the list of final recommendations for consideration by the Board. There is also a brief summary of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision on the use of race/ethnic criteria in admissions at the University of Michigan. This case is the first U.S. Supreme Court ruling on this issue since the landmark *Bakke* decision one quarter century ago.

Action Requested: That the Illinois Board of Higher Education accepts the report entitled *Opportunities for Leadership: Strategies for Improving Faculty Diversity in Illinois Higher Education*, and approves the recommendations put forward in that report.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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FACULTY DIVERSITY IN ILLINOIS HIGHER EDUCATION**

In April 2003, the Board presented a study on ways to increase faculty diversity at Illinois colleges and universities entitled *Opportunities for Leadership: Strategies for Improving Faculty Diversity in Illinois Higher Education*, and directed staff to circulate the study and its preliminary recommendations among members of Illinois higher education and other interested persons for their comments and suggestions. The final report, revised as a result of these consultations, is included in these Board materials.

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Final Report Highlights

The Board's study on faculty diversity and its previous study on student access and diversity have focused on the educational challenge of preparing all students to live and work in a state and nation that is increasingly diverse in its population and where communication and interaction among different types of people is more varied and frequent. Since higher education is a pathway that about three quarters of all high school graduates eventually will follow, colleges and universities have a unique responsibility for ensuring that diversity is a source of our society's strength, not a cause of division and weakness. To accomplish this goal requires that Illinois colleges and universities are themselves diverse both in their student enrollment and staff. Unfortunately, as the study documents, the number and proportion of minority faculty is shockingly low. African-Americans represent five percent and Latinos two percent of Illinois' professorate. Yet, these two groups total 27 percent of our state's population and 24 percent of enrollment at Illinois colleges and universities.

The Board's study puts forth wide-ranging recommendations to advance faculty diversity at Illinois colleges and universities. It proposes revising existing programs, redirecting and expanding project support, and undertaking new efforts to increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty, as well as develop the pool from which these faculty are drawn. The recommendations are grouped in four strategic areas: preparation and development, search and hiring process, campus climate, and accountability.

The Board's study explores most fully the issues of developing the potential pools of faculty and strengthening the search and hiring process. The Board has found that those

interested in faculty diversity have concentrated on enlarging the size of the minority doctoral student pool and overlooked the fact that the master's degree is the entry-level credential that many institutions, particularly community colleges, require. It also points out that community colleges often hire permanent faculty from their own part-time teaching staff and that this resource constitutes another potential pool for permanent faculty positions.

The Board's report argues that policy development needs to more fully accommodate the varieties of institutional hiring practices. Developing the full potential of the underrepresented faculty pool also has promise because of the large number of minority students (2,311 African-Americans and 978 Latinos in 2001) who graduate each year with a master's degree from an Illinois college or university compared with the smaller number of doctoral award recipients (127 African-Americans and 66 Latinos in 2003).

To address the above issues, the Board recommends making changes in the governance structure and award criteria of the state's fellowship programs, the Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program (IMGIP) and the Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunities Program (ICEOP). Recent studies have shown that these programs have had limited success in placing graduates in faculty positions at Illinois higher education institutions, a longstanding goal. The report advocates establishing new criteria that would prioritize awards according to the demand for faculty positions in a candidate's field of study, as well as the past placement record and support offered by the applicant's sponsoring institution. It also proposes combining the two fellowship programs under a smaller, policy-making board as a means of strengthening accountability and placement performance. Additional program modifications will be considered in the following year as part of an intense program review process.

The Board's study advocates going beyond the two hundred or so students served each year by the state's minority fellowship programs to engage more broadly the thousands of underrepresented graduate students and nontenure-track faculty at Illinois institutions. Such an undertaking would increase the number of underrepresented persons in faculty pools aware of the immediate and long-term opportunities for faculty members and prepare them for this career path. It would also make campus and departmental leaders more aware of the demand for specific types of faculty, especially at community colleges, so they could better mentor underrepresented students, and help prospective higher education employers identify underrepresented faculty candidates. The study recommends that the Board itself should assume major responsibility for leading this new outreach effort.

The report also examines the benefits that can accrue from strengthening hiring and search processes. In recent years, a number of institutions in Illinois and elsewhere have extensively reviewed their recruitment and hiring practices. Through these reviews, institutions have identified various, often subtle, forms of bias in the search process, as well as institutional and departmental assumptions and practices that in the words of the report can "lead to the hiring of candidates with similar interests and backgrounds while excluding from consideration others whose qualifications are different in kind, not quality." In order to share information, experience, and expertise about ongoing improvements in recruiting, search, and hiring practices, the Board will sponsor a statewide conference on this topic in the coming year.

The above recommendations and others that address program accountability and campus climate, as well as the needs of various underrepresented faculty, including faculty with disabilities, are fully explained in the accompanying Board report.

Cost of Implementation

To implement the recommendations in the Board's report will require fiscal resources. In some cases, funding could come from existing programs such as the Higher Education Cooperation Act (HECA), or from a redirection of existing program and staff efforts. A few initiatives will require a specified funding amount. However, the costs of many recommendations are not absolute and expenditures can be set according to the intensity and scope of an activity and overall higher education budgetary needs.

HECA's access and diversity grants could fund some of the Board's recommendations. For instance, the recommendations for a conference on the search process (\$10,000 to \$15,000), a workshop for college and university staff to identify strategies to increase the number of underrepresented undergraduate students interested in graduate education (\$5,000 to \$7,500), and outreach activities to increase minority graduate students' awareness of faculty careers and positions (\$40,000 to \$60,000) could be funded through project(s) over a single year or multiple-year effort. Another initiative would support underrepresented nontenure-track faculty who seek career tenured positions in higher education (\$60,000 to \$100,000). The latter project would provide funds for one release course and for professional development activities for 15 to 30 nontenure-track faculty. Those selected for participation would have the interest and qualifications to become tenure-track faculty members. This project would take about one year to develop and would require active institutional participation in planning efforts. The Illinois Board of Higher Education will need to exercise strong statewide leadership to implement the above projects and other activities.

A number of recommendations will require a modification and reallocation of existing support. For instance, the report proposes combining the state's two fellowship programs for minority students and restructuring the programs' governance and award criteria and process. Through such changes the Board is confident that the placement record of these programs will improve and the number of underrepresented Illinois faculty will rise. However, no new funds will be needed to realize these improvements. In the same way, the recommendations for enhancing institutional and statewide accountability and campus climate will involve changes in existing administrative and staff practices and procedures that can be accomplished without new funds.

Comments Received on the April Preliminary Report

The Illinois Board of Higher Education has received letters and email and staff has held meetings on various aspects of the preliminary report. Most discussion has concerned ICEOP/IMGIP since the April recommendations left for subsequent deliberation the identification of preferred methods for making changes in the governance structure and award criteria and process. In the past few months, staff has met with the ICEOP/IMGIP Boards and its executive committee. Staff also conducted a focus group with other higher education administrators who are knowledgeable about these programs, as well as faculty diversity issues.

The ICEOP/IMGIP boards concur with the report's recommendation to combine the ICEOP/IMGIP programs but seek to retain current flexibility in some practices. The Board's final recommendations would permit the distinctions sought by the ICEOP/IMGIP boards, such as awarding higher stipend levels for science, mathematics and engineering students, as well as for master's and doctoral fellows. The ICEOP/IMGIP boards have responded positively to many recommendations in the Board's April preliminary report. For instance, they support requiring ICEOP fellows to complete an exit survey and requiring participating institutions to report annually on their efforts to place and hire ICEOP/IMGIP fellows.

The ICEOP/IMGIP boards also have made suggestions that have been incorporated in whole or part into the report's final recommendations, such as creating a placement committee to advise the Illinois Board of Higher Education and encouraging institutions to provide fellows with teaching opportunities. The ICEOP/IMGIP boards recommended making modest changes in the ICEOP/IMGIP governance structure by increasing the size of the current boards (now composed of 47 members) to include representatives from the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Community College Board, and representatives from Latino and African-American higher education organizations. The recommendations in the report on governance differ from the latter approach and instead favor a proposal that emerged in a focus group discussion.

The focus group on ICEOP/IMGIP was generally critical of the performance of the fellowship programs, and many participants favored making major structural revisions. Participating institutions should be accountable for program placement, it was argued, and there should be consequences for those institutions with a poor placement record. A number of participants also criticized the lack of community college involvement, which, they believed, contributes to the poor program placement of fellows at two-year institutions. The state should not hold community colleges accountable for increasing faculty diversity, it was argued, if two-year institutions do not have a substantial role in statewide programs that address this need. Finally, many participants felt that the current size of the ICEOP/IMGIP boards was unwieldy and supported the creation of a smaller policy-focused board with separate subcommittees responsible for the selection of fellows and other matters.

In response to the April report, the Board has received nine commentaries from faculty, administrators, and public university system staff covering a wide range of topics. One public university provost strongly supported the recommendation that each public college and university assess its climate for underrepresented faculty. A public university department chair thought that the attention given to community colleges might indicate a lack of Board interest in increasing diversity at public universities. A related concern was that the report did not adequately reflect the diverse hiring practices that exist among different types of institutions. In regard to the latter comments, it should be noted that the Board's report emphasizes that campus leaders must adapt to the needs and circumstances of their institution's environment if they are to achieve results.

Other comments received by the Board included a proposal to use performance indicators to communicate the quality of an institution's campus climate and a call for increased diversity among campus administrators. Two persons criticized the use of race/ethnic considerations in hiring decisions. Other persons addressed various institutional practices. A number of comments were received in opposition to a statewide incentive system. For instance, one person wrote that "tying funding to individual institutional yearly success rewards universities that just now 'get it,' and penalizes those that have been working hard at diversifying faculty and staff over the years."

Supreme Court Rulings

While respondents in Illinois were offering opinions on the Board's faculty diversity report, the United States Supreme Court, as anticipated, issued its opinions in two landmark cases involving the use of race/ethnic criteria in admissions decisions at the University of Michigan. In the *Gratz v. Bollinger* case, the court ruled against the use of an undergraduate admissions policy that assigned weight to each minority applicant based on a point system. However, in the *Grutter v. Bollinger* case, the court supported the law school's use of race/ethnic considerations when part of an individualized and holistic admissions process. Writing for the majority, and affirming the educational benefits derived from diversity, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor supported Justice Powell's opinion in the 1978 *Bakke* case, which permitted the use of race/ethnicity as a

“plus factor” in admissions decisions. Taken together, the two cases support the idea that the state has a compelling interest in diversity in higher education but make clear the court’s intention that diversity be broadly defined.

In contrast to states that in recent years discontinued the use of race/ethnic criteria in college admissions, Illinois higher education is little affected by these Supreme Court rulings which support current Board policy. Both the Board’s August 2002 report on student access and diversity (*Gateway to Success: Rethinking Access and Diversity for a New Century*) and this new report on faculty diversity indicate the benefits that all students receive by attending diverse higher education institutions. Also, these reports advocate that Illinois institutions should continue to look for opportunities to advance diversity and should support the use of race/ethnic considerations as originally outlined in *Bakke* and now in *Grutter*. The access and diversity report, for instance, defines diversity “in its broadest sense: the bringing together of persons of different backgrounds and perspectives to create a community in which all ideas are respected and explored and all students benefit. Diversity refers not only to differences in student talents and interests, but also differences in region, class, income, culture, religion, gender, age, race/ethnicity, and disability.” The Supreme Court ruling is also consistent with the Board’s recommendations that colleges and universities look for avenues to advance student and faculty diversity that do not require the use of race/ethnic criteria alone.

In order to help institutions continue their efforts to increase campus diversity, as well as to understand the Supreme Court rulings, the Board will cosponsor a conference on this subject in fall 2003.

Changes to the April Preliminary Report and Recommendations

Because the Board issued its preliminary report before the Supreme Court decision, the report’s initial recommendations were worded generally. With the court’s action, the final recommendations have been made more policy focused. The main change in the final report concerns further elaboration of changes in governance and award criteria and process for ICEOP/IMGIP that were only generally discussed in the preliminary report. Three other changes are proposed including the addition of a Board policy on the importance of student and faculty diversity in higher education, creation of a statewide advisory council for placement of minority faculty, and deletion of language from the preliminary report that the Board consider establishment of an incentive funding program for minority recruitment.

Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program/Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunities Program

The April Board report on faculty diversity concluded that the governance structure of the Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program and the Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunities Program should be changed. While these programs, controlled primarily by graduate school deans or their designees, are well positioned to recruit, select, and aid in the retention of ICEOP/IMGIP fellows, they have had a poor placement record. The most recent evaluation indicates that only 19 percent of IMGIP doctoral graduates, 35 percent of ICEOP master’s graduates, and 46 percent of ICEOP doctoral graduates are employed in higher education positions in Illinois.

The current size and composition of the current fellowship boards are a hindrance to policy development, accountability, and improvement. Including representatives from all participating institutions makes the boards unduly large and creates inefficiencies. Nevertheless,

even with a combined total of 47 ICEOP and IMGIP board members, the community colleges are not represented. As a result, hiring qualifications and placement potential in this higher education sector are mostly unknown and not factored into the combined board's decision-making or planning. Placement is also complicated by the fact that ICEOP and IMGIP representatives lack authority and influence in the hiring processes of their home institutions. Moreover, the fellowship boards' activities are generally not policy oriented, and their operational focus comes at the expense of responding to emerging needs and opportunities, as well as making needed program changes.

What is necessary is a more strategic, deliberate, and systematic approach toward program governance to increase the number of fellows that can and will assume faculty positions in Illinois. To achieve this purpose, the Board's report proposes establishing a smaller, policy-oriented fellowship board. The new board of 15 members would be appointed by the Illinois Board of Higher Education and would include individuals such as presidents, provosts, deans, and affirmative action/diversity officers who have been successful in increasing faculty diversity on their own campuses and those who have contributed statewide leadership. Institutions that demonstrate a proven commitment to faculty diversity will be given special consideration for membership. Representation on the new board would be diverse and include representatives from each higher education sector, and representatives from the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education, the Illinois Latino Council for Higher Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the Illinois Community College Board.

As recommended, the new board would establish working subcommittees to address operational tasks. For example, in order to provide for continued close reviews of applications, the report proposes establishing discipline-based panels. These panels would be composed of faculty and academic leaders, such as presidents and provosts, from the two-year and four-year sectors who would review applications and make fellowship recommendations using criteria adopted by the new fellowship board. The board will convene other subcommittees as needed, for instance, to plan conferences and workshops, or to promote program awareness. The new board and committee structure offers multiple advantages and expands the capabilities of the current governance system by increasing networking and mentoring possibilities for fellows through faculty involvement, creating mechanisms and processes to improve placement, and expanding the potential for long-range planning and evaluation.

To improve the program's placement record, the Board recommends altering the application process itself to link the selection of program fellows with the program goal of increasing Illinois' faculty diversity. Under this approach, applicants' career plans would be weighted more heavily in the selection process and fellowship awards would be prioritized according to fields with low diversity and high market demands. Similarly, master's degree fellowships would be prioritized according to the demand for tenure-track positions at community colleges. A related recommendation would modify the selection process to consider institutions' record of placement and hiring of fellows and underrepresented faculty, as well as the level of support offered, especially the offering of teaching assistantships or internships to program fellows.

As indicated, the Board's report proposes combining the programs into a single program under one new fellowship board. Because IMGIP is administered and funded under the Higher Education Cooperation Act grant program, and ICEOP was created by state statute and funded under a separate appropriation, merging the programs into one will require some modifications. Combining the two programs, though, will not prevent the new board from establishing different award criteria and stipend levels for various disciplines, such as mathematics and science.

Fellowship amounts often vary according to students' field of study, and this flexibility is necessary to respond to the low levels of faculty diversity in some disciplines.

In the course of this study various issues have been identified that either are of secondary importance or related to program implementation. These matters will be addressed in the coming year under a review of the fellowship program by Illinois Board of Higher Education and ICEOP staff. Matters for review include: the application form, stipend levels, penalties for fellows who take positions outside of higher education and outside the state of Illinois; exit interviews; coordination with IBHE staff; and the development of annual placement reports for participating institutions. When completed, these program changes will be reported to the Board.

Other Changes

The Illinois Board of Higher Education has had a long-standing commitment to encourage and support diversity at Illinois colleges and universities. With this new report, the Board has more fully developed its policies on faculty diversity. Building on this commitment, a broad policy statement is needed to provide leadership and guidance in the wake of the recent Supreme Court ruling. By the adoption of this policy it is hoped that no doubt will exist about the determination of Illinois higher education to achieve its diversity goals. The proposed policy reads as follows:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education recognizes that student and faculty diversity enhances the education of all students and offers direct and indirect public benefits to our state and nation. Diverse learning environments positively affect students' critical thinking skills, their civic commitment, and preparation for work in a global economy, among other benefits. The Illinois Board of Higher Education and its public colleges and universities are committed to making the utmost efforts, and using all legal means, to advance diversity in higher education.

As discussed above, the number of underrepresented Illinois students graduating from Illinois universities and finding faculty positions at Illinois higher education institutions has been disappointingly low. In order to provide leadership on this issue, as well as to create a forum for the exchange of information and ideas about policy/program developments and opportunities, the Board proposes establishing a statewide, 12 member placement advisory committee that would meet annually with Board staff. This committee would include individuals whose leadership in advancing diversity at their own institutions has led to notable results. Committee membership would also include representatives from the new ICEOP/IMGIP board and from each higher education sector and underrepresented groups.

The preliminary report contained a proposal to create an incentive program to reward institutions that achieved the greatest progress in diversifying their faculty in response to the Board's initiative. As shown above, this proposal received criticism from a number of persons on the grounds that such an approach would not recognize those institutions that historically have made this issue a high priority. Also, it must be recognized that the likelihood of funding for new programs in the current fiscal environment is very poor. A more realistic and effective approach, especially in the short term, is for institutions of higher education to build incentives into their hiring and promotion practices for academic administrators. In this way, staff who achieve success in hiring diverse faculty will have these efforts recognized and rewarded. At the same time, it is particularly important that the Board of Higher Education do everything possible in a period of scarce resources to show that the issue of faculty diversity retains a high level of

support. Certainly, one way to achieve this recognition is through the cluster of initiatives and activities that the Board has put forward in this final report. As these identified activities are implemented in the coming year and years, the Board will issue progress reports on developments and highlights.

Board Resolution

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolution:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education accepts the report titled “Opportunities for Leadership: Strategies for Improving Faculty Diversity In Illinois Higher Education” and approves the recommendations put forward in that report.

The recommendations from the faculty diversity report are reproduced below.

General

The Illinois Board of Higher Education recognizes that student and faculty diversity enhances the education of all students and offers direct and indirect public benefits to our state and nation. Diverse learning environments positively affect students’ critical thinking skills, their civic commitment, and preparation for work in a global economy, among other benefits. The Illinois Board of Higher Education and its public colleges and universities are committed to making the utmost efforts, and using all legal means, to advance diversity in higher education.

Public community colleges and universities should incorporate into their education mission and/or strategic plan a statement(s) that recognizes the educational importance of achieving diversity among students and faculty.

The Preparation and Development of a Diverse Faculty in Illinois

Illinois colleges and universities should encourage and inform underrepresented students about a career as a faculty member and should encourage and inform underrepresented graduate students about faculty opportunities and openings at Illinois two-year and four-year institutions.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education will work with Illinois colleges and universities to facilitate and support efforts to encourage and inform underrepresented students about a career as a faculty member and to encourage and inform underrepresented graduate students about faculty opportunities and openings at Illinois two-year and four-year institutions. The Illinois Board of Higher Education will assist staff at Illinois colleges and universities to identify strategies and practices that are effective in achieving these objectives, as well as to identify underrepresented students eligible for faculty positions.

Illinois colleges and universities should identify and professionally develop interested and appropriately-trained, underrepresented nontenure-track faculty for tenure-track positions and faculty careers. The Illinois Board of Higher Education will establish a statewide initiative that supports these institutional efforts.

The Illinois Board of Higher Education will establish a council to provide advice on effective practices, policies, and programs for increasing the number of underrepresented faculty at Illinois colleges and universities.

The Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunities Program/Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program

The Illinois Board of Higher Education will seek statutory authority to combine the Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunities Program with the Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program. The Illinois Board of Higher Education will appoint the Board for the new combined program which will be composed of 15 members who have been successful in increasing faculty diversity on their own campuses and in Illinois higher education. Participating institutions that have demonstrated a proven commitment to faculty diversity will be given special consideration for board membership. Members and/or staff from the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education, the Illinois Latino Council for Higher Education, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and the Illinois Community College Board will have representation on the board which will also have representatives from each of the higher education sectors.

Other changes to be made in the new, combined program:

- Establishing subcommittees for review of fellowship applications and selection of awards, as well as for other purposes and needs determined by the Board.*
- Establishing new fellowship criteria that prioritize awards, giving preference to: doctoral and master's applicants entering fields with low diversity and high demand; applicants receiving strong support from their sponsoring higher education institutions, such as the offering of teaching fellowships and internships; and applicants from sponsoring institutions that have a good record in placing program fellows and hiring minority faculty.*
- Requiring graduating fellows to complete an exit interview that provides the names of in-state institutions from which they received interviews and job offers.*
- Requiring participating institutions to report annually on efforts to hire or secure in-state placement of program fellows and hire other minority faculty.*

In fiscal year 2003, Board staff will work with ICEOP/IMGIP administration on the consideration of administration and program changes identified for further review by this study. Matters for review will include: the application form; stipend levels; penalties for fellows who take positions outside of higher education and outside the state of Illinois; exit interviews; coordination with IBHE staff; and the development of annual placement reports for participating institutions. When completed, results of the review and intended program changes will be reported to the Board.

Search and Hiring Process

The Illinois Board of Higher Education will assist colleges and universities to reexamine and strengthen their search and hiring processes. The Board will facilitate college and university access to information and search professionals to help them develop strategies for diversifying their faculty.

Campus Climate

Public colleges and universities should develop means for measuring the climate for female, minority, and disabled faculty on their campus and report the results of these assessments, and subsequent actions taken, to the Illinois Board of Higher Education as part of

the Underrepresented Groups report. The Board will facilitate the coordination and development of these institutional assessments and reports.

Accountability

Public colleges and universities should ensure that there exists an effective procedure on their campus for responding to the needs of faculty with disabilities. Institutions should assign responsibility for addressing faculty requests to a campus administrator, not a department chair. The responsible official should have both the knowledge and resources to ensure a “reasonable accommodation” in a timely manner. Faculty should receive at the time of hiring information about what is meant by reasonable accommodation, as well as the procedure they should follow to make an accommodation request.

Colleges and universities should report information on underrepresented faculty to the Illinois Board of Higher Education each year, instead of every other year. The Annual Report to the Governor and General Assembly on Underrepresented Groups will publish information on faculty by institution, as well as by education sector, and will include information on new faculty hires and total faculty for each underrepresented group.