

News

from the Illinois Board of Higher Education

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NEW WEBSITE AIMS TO DIVERSIFY FACULTY RANKS

DFI program launches portal to increase number of minorities teaching in college

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SPRINGFIELD – A new website designed to help diversify the face of higher education faculty is now online.

The Diversifying Faculty in Illinois Higher Education (DFI) program information can be found at www.ibhe.org/DFI/default.htm. The DFI program is administered by the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) to provide opportunities for minorities to complete graduate education that will lead to faculty positions at Illinois colleges and universities.

The program addresses one of the key goals of the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success* by promoting expansion of educational attainment among underrepresented groups in Illinois. Faculty diversity is often identified as a key factor in strengthening college access and completion among minority students. While the number of African American and Hispanic faculty has increased steadily over the past decade, progress has been slow and faculty ranks still lag behind the proportion of minorities in the general population.

Among the key findings of the *Illinois Public Agenda* was the conclusion that there exists “a prosperity gap that is wide and growing, and the direct result of disparities in educational attainment by race, ethnicity, income and region.” DFI is one of the statutorily authorized programs that directly addresses the educational disparities. The program is targeted to those who can help fill the teacher gap for underrepresented populations in Illinois higher education.

“The DFI board is proud to partner with the IBHE in providing this program which is such a critical component to the state’s effort to address the disparities in representation in higher education as identified by the *Illinois Public Agenda*,” Jerry D. Blakemore, chairman of the DFI Board, said. “The pursuit of knowledge is important to this effort and the purpose of this website is to provide up-to-date, comprehensive information about a program that offers real opportunities to address the aims of the *Illinois Public Agenda*.”

DFI provides annual stipends – ranging from \$6,800 for new Fellows to \$14,000 for continuing Fellows – to students who are selected by the program’s Board of Directors, based on independent evaluations by outside reviewers.

For fiscal 2010, the program will assist 47 new Fellows and 89 returning Fellows.

The DFI website includes:

- Information for applicants;
- A listing of fellows;
- A directory of graduates;
- The Program Board;
- Institutional representatives;
- Employment resources;
- Guidelines and responsibilities, and
- A posting of Illinois higher education positions, thus helping with placement of graduates, and implementation of the *Illinois Public Agenda for College and Career Success*.

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