

FACULTY SENATE RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIVERSITY ACTION COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ON THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF DIVERSE FACULTY

WHEREAS the Faculty Senate passed a resolution on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at PSU on April 6, 2020; and

WHEREAS the Annual Report of the DAC Committee on the Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty makes many of the same recommendations as that Faculty Senate resolution;

The Faculty Senate, as the representative of the Faculty, RESOLVES to endorse the Annual Report of the DAC Committee on the Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty and supports implementation of the report's recommendations.

TO: President Steve Percy
FROM: DAC Committee on Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty
 Gina Greco, Chair; Jola Ajibade, Shelly Chabon, Jeff Conn, Deanna Cor, Chloe Hammond-Bradley, Isabel Jaén-Portillo, Debra Lindberg, Larry Martinez, Aria Ramus, Eva Thanheiser, Michael Walsh, Lisa Weasel, Jennifer Cie Williams
DATE: June, 2020
RE: Annual Report, Action Item, Recommendations

This year, the committee had a short period to meet, due to the late start for all DAC committees, the resignation of one of the committee's Co-Chairs before our first meeting, and then the disruption caused by Covid-19. But we did have robust conversations when we were able to meet, and our large committee reached consensus on one action and a number of recommendations. Our discussion included recurring conversations, triggered by the Co-Chair's resignation letter, about the committee's role and potential effectiveness. Members expressed collective impatience with the status quo, desire to see progress, and disinterest in serving an empty or symbolic role.

Action:

The committee has chosen to apply for an NSF ADVANCE Catalyst Grant to support the recruitment and retention of diverse STEM faculty. A small subcommittee will work with a grant writer to prepare the proposal, which will be submitted on behalf of the committee. Successful practices that are developed through grant funding will then be implemented across campus to advance the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty in all disciplines. We appreciate that Interim President Steve Percy has accepted to join the committee as a co-PI for the grant, and we also recognize the support offered by Provost Susan Jeffords and Interim Vice-President Julie Caron. We are especially grateful to Julie and the Office of Global Diversity and Inclusion for providing the funding needed to hire a grant writer.

Initial workplan:

- speak to PSU faculty and administrators who are involved in the PSU EXITO grant
- speak to Provost Jeffords about her experience with an ADVANCE grant on a different campus
- read successful ADVANCE proposals/reports
- refine our ideas for a PSU project and identify a grant writer

Recommendations:

We want to preface this section with the statement that, while we call these recommendations, we see them more as expectations. We believe strongly that all of these items should already

exist on campus, and recognize that, in some cases, these items do exist in name, or existed in the past. We realize that the problem in many instances is one of inadequate staffing. We therefore call for funding to be restored to units such as OGD I so that they can reactivate processes that have been discontinued. In some cases, the problem is one of compliance with existing mandates or programs. People are busy—we understand—so when there are competing demands on a person’s attention, we need to find ways of making our demands regarding diversity rise above other priorities. As explained below, we suggest the use of tracking, data, and a system of accountability.

It goes without saying, but we shall nonetheless point out, that a commitment to (1) improving faculty searches so that they attract a more diverse candidate pool and lead to greater diversity in hiring, and (2) creating a campus climate and support structures that allow diverse faculty to thrive on our campus so that we can retain a more diverse faculty, is both a legal obligation and a moral imperative. But the obligation extends beyond considerations of our commitments as an equal opportunity employer, and includes our responsibility to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student body. As ***The Portland State University Task Force on Asian-American, Asian and Pacific Islander Student Success Final Report, June 20, 2017*** points out:

“Studies have shown that cultural representation among faculty and staff on college campuses is needed to prevent and reduce the negative effects caused by the model minority myth and to increase sense of belonging among AAAP I students (Yeh, 2004; Poon et al., 2016). Meaningful relationship and interactions with faculty, for example, has been shown to be a predictor of academic success (Lundberg & Schreiner) and to be associated with a broad range of positive outcomes, including above average college GPA, social and civic ability, academic satisfaction, and political engagement (Kim, Chang & Park, 2009). When compared to students from other racial/ethnic groups, however, AAAP I students tend to have lower rates of interaction and were less likely to have high-quality relationships with faculty (Kim, Chang & Park, 2009). Language barriers and lack of cultural connection have been cited in the literature as reasons for low student-faculty interaction among AAAP I college students.” (p. 10)

1. Exit Interviews.

The committee understands that HR is interested in conducting exit interviews of faculty who leave the university, but that they are not yet able to reach all faculty. We feel strongly that exit interviews must be a priority for our institution. To that end, we recommend that Interim President Percy direct HR to implement a system for contacting faculty in a timely manner, and encouraging them to participate in an exit interview. The focus should be on reaching faculty who leave the university prior to retirement, so that we can compile data about why people leave. That data should inform our work on developing and implementing retention strategies.

We note that Initiative 2.1 of the Strategic Plan’s Goal “Expand Our Commitment to Equity,” reads: “Adopt best practices for recruitment, retention and advancement of diverse faculty, staff and administrators to better reflect the diversity of the student body.” One proposed strategy to achieve this goal is: “Hiring staff in the Office of Human Resources with specific expertise in the recruitment, transition, and retention of employees from diverse backgrounds.” We encourage HR to work with their staff who possess this expertise to design and conduct the exit interviews so that the data collection is done professionally and thoroughly. We also encourage a system of accountability to ensure that this practice, once established, continues moving forward.

We also note that the *PSU President’s African American, African, and Black Student Success Task Force Report, 2017* reaches the same conclusion:

“Finally, PSU needs to collect qualitative data on why people leave their positions. Given data showing that 28 Black identified employees left PSU from 2015 to 2016--over 20% of the Black employees at PSU--it is critical to understand why retention is not occurring. All of this data is critical to understanding how the university can be recruit, retain, and support Black faculty and staff.” (p. 38)

2. Search Committee : DEI Search Advocates.

The committee recognizes that PSU had begun to train campus members to serve as DEI search advocates, but that the effort stalled due to insufficient staffing in OGD I to administer the program and a lack of incentives for potential advocates. We understand the need to respect employees’ workload, and so call for a priority hire in OGD I so that the search advocate program can be implemented as designed. The ultimate goal should be that every search committee for fulltime faculty members and administrators will include a DEI search advocate who serves on the committee solely in that role. Ideally, the advocate should come from a different department or unit from the one conducting the search.

We note that Initiative 2.1 of the Strategic Plan’s Goal “Expand Our Commitment to Equity,” reads: “Adopt best practices for recruitment, retention and advancement of diverse faculty, staff and administrators to better reflect the diversity of the student body.” One proposed strategy to achieve this goal is: “Modernizing the university’s search and hiring practices to better reflect the unique strengths offered by faculty and staff from non-dominant backgrounds.” Campuses across the state, region, and nation have adopted the system of search advocates, and so should we modernize and align our procedures with best practices.

- A. The committee recommends that no search at the level of Associate Dean, Vice-Provost, Vice-President, or above be conducted without a designated DEI search

advocate. This recommendation should be implemented immediately and without exception.

- B. The committee recommends that OGD I draw up a 5-year plan so that, at the end of 5 years, every single search for a fulltime faculty member includes a DEI search advocate on the search committee.

Finally, we feel it is important to state that there is no reason to reinvent the wheel on this front. OSU has a search advocate program that is nationally recognized. One of the original developers of the OSU program is now in PSU's Office of Global Diversity and Inclusion. With a dedicated hire in OGD I, PSU could implement a successful program.

We note that the ***PSU President's African American, African, and Black Student Success Task Force Report, 2017*** reaches the same conclusion:

“Other institutions across the nation address these issues by providing an “equity representative” on the hiring committee who has no stakes in the position being filled and whose role it to make sure that the process and deliberations are equitable, consistent for each candidate, and in partnership with the committee Chair, discriminatory acts are called out and dealt with immediately.” (p. 39)

That same report also focuses on the same categories of searches that we highlight as needing particular attention:

“Two particular hiring procedures need to be called out for particular attention: hiring for tenure-track faculty by faculty search committees; and hires of high-level administrators that have search firm support.” (p.39)

3. Inclusive Hiring Workshop.

The committee notes that, despite stated requirements for all members of search committees to participate in an inclusive hiring workshop, this expectation is not monitored and is not consistently applied across campus. We recommend that participants receive a certificate at the end of the workshop, that HR, OAA, or OGD I track the names of persons awarded a certificate, and that OAA not approve a search unless all members of the search committee have been verified to have completed a mandatory inclusive hiring workshop.

We note that the ***PSU President's African American, African, and Black Student Success Task Force Report, 2017*** reaches the same conclusion about the importance of training, and goes further to argue that training should be extended to all members of a department hiring tenure-track faculty :

“Search committees may receive training, but other faculty also need to be reminded of equity and inclusion considerations as well as basic legalities around equal employment opportunity so that candidates are treated fairly and deliberations do not consider statuses that are illegal to include. All faculty who are involved in searches, not just committees, need this information.” (p.39)

4. DEI Candidate Statement.

- A. We recommend that a DEI statement be made mandatory for candidates in all academic searches.

We note that some PSU schools/colleges require candidates for faculty positions to submit a diversity statement, as do some PSU departments that are in schools/colleges that do not require such statements. We consider the requirement of candidate DEI statements as an example of modernizing the university’s search and hiring practices, a strategy cited above to help meet Initiative 2.1 of the Strategic Plan’s Goal “Expand Our Commitment to Equity.”

We note that the *PSU President’s African American, African, and Black Student Success Task Force Report, 2017* similarly emphasizes the importance of evaluating a candidate’s DEI skills:

“Currently, PSU job descriptions include boilerplate language on cultural competency and diversity skills, but they are not tailored to the position nor considered very seriously as linked to candidate evaluation and eventually to job performance evaluation. PSU HR partners should work with hiring managers/committees to develop seriously these concepts in job descriptions, and help to develop evaluation metrics for discerning DEI skills in a candidate’s resume, statements, and at the interview.” (p. 38)

And also:

“For faculty hiring, particularly faculty who will play a teaching role, the DEI skills related to teaching must be seriously included and evaluated in order to ensure that diverse candidates are fully considered and that all instructors will be able to teach Black and other POC students.” (p.39)

- B. We recommend that search committee members assess candidate DEI statements using a common rubric.

This is another example where implementation can be swift if we do not feel compelled to reinvent the wheel. UC Berkeley has developed a rubric for assessing

candidate contributions to DEI, and other campuses have adopted their rubric. We suggest that PSU do likewise. The rubric can be found here:

https://ofew.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/rubric_to_assess_candidate_contributions_to_diversity_equity_and_inclusion.pdf

5. DATA.

The committee requested data in a desire to track which units were successful in recruiting and retaining diverse faculty, and which units were falling behind. It became apparent that the way the university collects data, for a variety of reasons including federal requirements, did not allow for a clear picture of what was happening in faculty ranks.

Why are data so important to us? First, if there are units that are having success on our campus, we want to be able to share their strategies and encourage other units to adopt them. Second, if there are units with particularly weak records, we need to ask why, and see what could be done to improve the performance.

We had a good conversation with HR, and are developing a definition for faculty, and STEM faculty, so that analysis of the last 5 years of faculty data can be made available. We recommend that HR continue to track the numbers of faculty for future DAC Committees on Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty. Once the dataset has been defined, future tracking should be easy, and it will allow the committee to see where progress has been made, and where progress (and even, perhaps, intervention) is needed. It should be noted that we are emphasizing faculty who have meaningful contact with students, as our priority is for students to benefit from faculty diversity.

We note that the ***PSU President's African American, African, and Black Student Success Task Force Report, 2017*** shares our concerns about data collection and analysis:

“Currently the institution is unable to accurately and consistently track the numbers of Black identified staff that go through our employment application process. Better tracking is necessary from time of application, through the entire hiring process, including once candidates are offered or denied employment. For example, we need data to track the number of Black candidates that apply for positions, their percentage in that overall pool, the number invited for interviews, the number offered positions, and the number who accept PSU job offers. Taking this disaggregated job tracking further, we need to begin tracking how long Black employees stay in their positions and rates of promotion within the university. Lastly, PSU needs to collect qualitative data on why people leave their positions. Given data showing that 28 Black identified employees left PSU from 2015 to 2016--over 20% of the Black employees at PSU--it is critical to

understand why retention is not occurring. All of this data is critical to understanding how the university can be recruit, retain, and support Black faculty and staff.” (p.38)

6. Data-based Leadership and Assessment.

We recommend that the university President assess the Provost annually on the basis of these data, and that the provost assess the deans annually on their progress in recruiting and retaining diverse faculty. Our sense is that adequate progress will not be made across all units of campus if diversity remains “a nice thing to do” and an abstract goal. Unless deans are held accountable in some way for progress in the area of diversity, it will not rise to the top of what they expect from chairs and departments. If equity, diversity, and inclusion are indeed principle values of our institution, we must track our achievements and hold campus leaders accountable.

7. Institutional Support.

We recognize that it is not fair to hold people accountable for results when we do not provide them with adequate tools. The committee has noticed that some schools/colleges have a Diversity Coordinator of some kind, while others do not. We recommend that dedicated staff be available to all units and at the college level to support and monitor progress in diversity. We acknowledge that the campus will soon welcome a new VP of Diversity who will come with her own thoughts and strategies about organizing, and might have preferences for either college/school-specific appointments, or a more centralized approach. The committee’s concern is that there be appropriate levels of support and an expectation of progress.