



**ILLINOIS STATE
UNIVERSITY**
Illinois' first public university.

Office of the President

421 Hovey Hall
Campus Box 1000
Normal, IL 61790-1000
Phone: (309) 438-5677

**President's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council (DIAC)
Faculty Retention and Recruitment Subcommittee Report
Fall 2021**

President's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council (DIAC) Faculty and Staff Retention and Recruitment Subcommittee Report

Prepared by:

Archana Shekara, Chair, DIAC Faculty and Staff Retention and Recruitment Subcommittee,
Mayuko Nakamura, Vice Chair, DIAC Faculty and Staff Retention and Recruitment Subcommittee

Committee Members:

Shannon Epplett, Juliet Lynd, Lauren Harris, Quanisha Kumi-Darfour, Emily Newsome, Harriett Steinbach, Maura Toro-Morn, Touré Reed

Overview

During the spring semester of 2021, the DIAC faculty and staff retention and recruitment subcommittee led by Archana Shekara (subcommittee chair) and Mayuko Nakamura (subcommittee vice chair), arranged a series of dialogues with members of faculty and staff diversity affinity groups and interdisciplinary programs. Dialogues were conducted with the following groups: The Organization of Latino/a Employees (OLÉ), Queer Coalition, Association of Black Academic Employees (ABAE), AsiaConnect, and African American Studies.

.....

The purpose of the dialogues was to:

1) Provide a forum for faculty/staff colleagues from minoritized groups to candidly share their experiences and challenges pertaining to cultural understanding, acceptance, sense of belonging, and respect; and 2) To gain insight into the factors that participants perceived as contributing to *or* impeding retention and success among minority faculty and staff. In addition to dialogues with faculty and staff, DIAC subcommittee leaders met with Dr. Sam Catanzaro and Dr. Yojanna Cuenca-Carlino from office of the provost to become familiar with initiatives for faculty success and retention. For this abbreviated report, we are sharing only findings and recommendations that focus on *faculty success and retention*.

.....

Questions

- How can the university address underrepresented and minority faculty and staff recruitment and retention?

- Can you please share any faculty and staff concerns regarding your experiences (or those shared by your colleagues) with microaggressions and/or experience with bias in the classroom, with colleagues, or campus more broadly? Do you have any suggestions for improvements and accountability?
- Can you please share your thoughts on the structure of student feedback forms, and how these are currently used to determine faculty's tenure and promotion? How does the university's current practice affect members from your group? Has anyone from your group shared their thoughts or concerns?
- Do you have suggestions to consider for workshops as required or mandatory for all faculty and staff?
- What suggestions do you have for DIAC underrepresented faculty and staff?

.....

Summary of Findings

The findings below are organized by the most prevalent themes that emerged during our dialogues. Each area noted should be considered when exploring avenues to support faculty retention among underrepresented faculty:

- **Faculty Workload + Cultural Taxation¹**
Faculty from minoritized groups expressed concerns about workloads. Specifically, while faculty may feel passionate about some service work and opportunities for student mentoring, these services can affect their productivity as scholars. Further, faculty may be asked to provide these additional services to support minoritized students, but these additional duties are likely to be assigned and/or accepted voluntarily out of need—without proper recognition or compensation.
- **Prevalence of Microaggressions and Implicit Biases**
Faculty and staff members report who participated in these dialogues reported continued experiences with microaggressions and implicit biases. Concerns were expressed that some departments and schools have “toxic cultures” that negatively

¹ Cultural Taxation (Padilla, 1994) refers to the added labor burden experienced by many faculty of color who assume additional responsibilities to support their institution’s equity, inclusion, and anti-racism efforts at the expense of their professional and personal goals and aspirations. Padilla, A.M. (1994). Ethnic minority scholars, research, and mentoring: current and future issues. *Educational Researcher*, 23(4), 24-27.

affect faculty and staff of color. For minoritized faculty in particular, the ASPT process and narrowly focused guidelines related to teaching, scholarship, and service, can turn into a negative experience which directly affects retention.

**It should be noted that the ASPT document is currently being updated by the Office of the Provost to address various types of teaching, research, and service, and recognize and reward faculty engagement in diversity, inclusion, and civic engagement initiatives. It is this committee's desire to provide input and feedback into this process as the policies are developed.*

- **Human Resource Training**

Although HR provides training for hiring committees, faculty and staff who participated in these dialogues expressed concerns that reading the training PowerPoint is not sufficient to educate search committee members about the risk of potential implicit bias in the search process. A recommendation to standardize this process across departments and divisions with opportunities for recommendations from underrepresented voices were mentioned during the discussion.

**It should be noted that HR is currently revising the university's search training protocols and will begin training in the fall of 2021 based on the Oregon State "Search Advocate" model (see: <https://searchadvocate.oregonstate.edu/>). It is this committee's desire to provide input and feedback into future training policies and initiatives for search and hiring committees as the policies are developed.*

- **Student Feedback**

A huge concern about student rating of instruction was shared by all affinity groups interviewed. Research shows student feedback questions and responses can negatively affect faculty of color, especially women faculty of color². While a possible alternative such as peer review of instruction may be considered, this alternative can also be problematic especially in the departments and schools that do not have a positive trusting culture. Developmental approaches to teaching are recommended instead of those that may be perceived as punitive and/or those with potential for bias in evaluating teaching.

.....

² See for example: Gonzalez, Carmen & Harris, Angela (2012). Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia. Utah State University Press.

Recommendations Moving Forward

CHAIRS/DIRECTORS/DFSC/SFSC

- **Advanced Training on Micro-Aggression, Affirmative Action, and Anti-racism for Department Chairs, School Directors, DSFC/SFSC/CFSC**

Training should be offered on the topics of affirmative action compliance and anti-racism, as they have a major influence on the faculty experience and opportunities for promotion and retention. (These trainings are currently offered to the chairs and directors and must extend to DFSC/SFSC/CFSC since these committees evaluate faculty performance for promotion and tenure).

- **Broaden Understanding and Options for Interdisciplinary Research and Scholarship Within ASPT Guidelines**

Faculty research and scholarship guidelines need to be broadened to include innovative ways of thinking and without a requirement to fit a “pre-defined framework”. When faculty research, teaching, and service overlaps, new vocabulary and conceptual frameworks need to be introduced to frame the evaluation narrative in a way that acknowledges the contributions of non-traditional scholarship and creative works. Flexibility should be promoted across each department to encourage faculty to conduct interdisciplinary or transmedia research and scholarship in areas that are new and unexplored. (*This initiative is currently being discussed by the Office of the Provost as the ASPT document is being revised*).

- **Educate DFSC/SFSC on Impact of Racial/Gender Bias in Instruction**

1. When minoritized faculty include challenging topics like race, racism, power, ability, privilege, and implicit biases in their teaching, the SFSC/DFSC committee should be made aware that students might resist, and their feedback will reflect this resistance. The SFSC/DFSC committee should recognize faculty effort and taxation when they teach these complex topics.
2. A guideline for student ratings of instruction (a.k.a. student evaluation /feedback) should be given to the SFSC/DSFC and it should include literature review of racial, ethnic, and gender bias in the student rating of instruction. Alternatives to student ratings of instruction should be explored and implemented with intentionality and consistently across all schools and departments. Additionally, the negative impact on faculty of color should be considered during the selection of all alternatives used in the ASPT processes.

- **Ongoing Education and Dialogues Within Schools and Departments**
 1. Continue offering anti-racism workshops to avoid the onetime “checking the box” phenomena.
 2. The department chairs and school directors should be encouraged to dedicate one faculty meeting each year to discussions related to equity and diversity.
 3. Encourage and incentivize faculty and students to attend diversity conferences, symposiums, heritage, and history events hosted by the University community.

.....

PROVOST

- **Enhance Cluster Hiring Among Underrepresented Faculty**
Cluster hiring is an emerging and beneficial initiative used to promote faculty diversity and advance interdisciplinary collaborations. However, the current practice of hiring only a few people at the time is not really a “cluster”. The University should look for creative opportunities to hire a larger cluster of diverse faculty to allow for the development of a community of diverse faculty scholars.
- **Support for Diverse Affinity Groups**
The financial support from the Office of the Provost and other divisions since 2019 is a huge step in recognizing the need to build community. The SFSC/DFSC/CFSC should continue to acknowledge faculty for their service to these groups in their evaluation letters. These will bring new faculty to the organization to create a sense of belonging which helps in faculty retention. The university should also provide additional resources such as meeting and storage space for these affinity groups to promote a sense of belonging and institutional commitment.
- **New Faculty Financial Support During Hire**
The Provost’s office provides extra financial support to help tenure-track faculty with their research. This initiative needs to be made transparent so every department or school offers it to their new faculty from underrepresented and underserved groups. Additionally, although the extra financial support is a great initiative to recruit new faculty, data should be reviewed to determine if the current structure of the program is helping to retain minoritized faculty.

.....

HR/SEARCH COMMITTEES

- **Search and Hiring Input from Faculty/Staff Representing Diverse Constituents**
In order to advance diversity and inclusion, HR and hiring managers should expand the

search and hiring feedback and decision-making to include input from diverse faculty and staff. While minoritized faculty and staff may already take part in the search processes, without a critical mass, their voices may be ignored or minimized. Current initiatives for countering bias should also be enhanced. Additionally, a standardized process with documentation should be followed. * (HR's new initiative, the "search advocate" training is one of the strategies to address this issue, but hiring managers and committees should explore additional ways to reflect the voices of minority faculty and staff in the recruitment and hiring processes).

.....

CAMPUS-WIDE

- **Reading List to Advance Diverse Perspectives**

The University should maintain a list of recommended readings (article length) that advances *different* perspectives on diversity.

**(Milner Library unveiled an online resource that explores systemic racism.*

The [guide](#) includes links to news and magazine articles as well as books on topics such as [anti-Black racism](#), [racism against Indigenous people](#), [anti-Hispanic and anti-Latinx racism](#), and [anti-Arab and anti-Asian racism](#). The guide also includes links to films available to ISU patrons via the Kanopy archive. Resources are designed to encourage discussion, engagement, and learning. [Access the guide here](#)).

- **Universal Message and Awareness of EDI Mission/Values**

Since the entire campus is working toward including DEI initiatives, it is imperative that these messages are shared with prospective students and parents, and current campus community. These messages can be highlighted in all promotional materials as students consider coming to ISU, and during new student welcome week and continued engagement throughout their time at ISU.