

FACULTY RECRUITMENT, MENTORING & RETENTION

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BACKGROUND & CHARGE



Background: Observations and Assumptions

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical to create the rich environment necessary for academic excellence in teaching, research, and service.
- The faculty of a diverse campus is more productive and innovative than a homogeneous one.
- UB faculty diversity is below our peer institutions in the AAU.
- Diversity among the student population currently is not matched to diversity among the faculty.
- A campus with an inclusive culture enables the recruiting of diverse students and increases their success at all levels.
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion practices must be attained at all ranks, removing systemic impediments in ways that allow underrepresented faculty to excel. This starts with unbiased recruitment and hiring process and continues to a supportive system that leads to retention, promotion and tenure of diverse faculty that is representative of UB's student body and the broader community.
- Faculty diversity is augmented by having unambiguous policies, structures, and a reward system that ensure fair advancement and recognition.

Charge Summary

- The Faculty Recruitment, Mentoring, and Retention subcommittee was tasked to make recommendations on matters impacting underrepresented (UR) faculty at UB.
 - Review the hiring processes for faculty to create a system of accountability for ensuring diversity and following best practices for searches.
 - Review mentoring practices for faculty, assess their efficacy, and consider how they can be re-designed to support and promote diversity.
 - Review faculty retention strategies currently in place throughout UB and assess their efficacy.
 - Explore what additional supports and resources are needed to further promote diversity, equity and inclusion within UB's faculty recruitment, mentoring and retention efforts.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



Key Recommendations – Hiring

- Create a guidebook with specific pre-search, implementation, and post-search (including onboarding) guidelines and best practices for search committees.
- Search committee’s plan should describe the process, strategies, and goals that ensure a diverse candidate pool. Human Resources (HR) and the decanal Unit Diversity Officer (UDO) must approve plan.
- All members of search committees must undergo anti-bias education and learn best practices for search.
- Search committees are expected to:
 - Have knowledge of the diversity in the discipline and strive to have a pool of candidates that represents the discipline’s diversity.
 - Have a composition that is diverse in outlook and expertise and works closely with HR and a UDO to ensure best practices at all stages of the process.
 - Evaluate and report at different stages as to whether the hiring plan goals have been met (check points).
 - Stop and re-start searches that show no evidence of a concerted effort to meet the goals of the plan.
- Establish and prioritize opportunity “cluster hires” across related disciplines over a period of time (e.g., 3 years) to develop a cohort and community of scholars. Hires should be made at the department level with university-wide support and direction.

Key Recommendations - Mentoring

- Develop, expand, and/or improve current UB signature initiatives around underrepresented (UR) scholars with improved coordination and communication (e.g., VITAL, iSEED, DVS) across campus.
- Use these programs to enhance recruitment and establish networks with universities with UR scholar populations (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities).
- Develop and fund a program to hire and mentor UR postdoctoral fellows and research assistant professors in departments, as part of a cluster hire, providing a pathway to hire in tenure track lines.
- Assure resources to develop new and/or expand flexible mentorship initiatives
 - (e.g., a dynamic Mentoring & Networking Platform for a variety of faculty-driven mentoring relationships, under development in Faculty Affairs).
- Establish a program that provides opportunities for leadership development and career strengthening options for established faculty.

Key Recommendations - Retention

- Improve UB salary structure, relative to peer institutions, and accord greater importance to service as part of annual salary reviews. Continue to solve discrepancies of salary where UR faculty seems to be compensated lower than other faculty with similar performance/credentials.
- Recognize “invisible work” and efforts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion by faculty as part of scholarly activities that are considered for promotion and tenure.
- Examine processes/procedures for recognizing faculty (e.g., SUNY and UB Excellence Awards and Distinguished Professors), to identify biases and establish consistent practices across decanal units.
 - Guidelines should include bias and cultural competence education of different committees.
- Develop opportunities to highlight and celebrate UR faculty achievements more prominently, outside of current formats that celebrate faculty success in general.
- Create mechanisms that specifically address issues/gaps identified through periodic surveys (e.g., COACHE)

Key Recommendations - Retention

- Review the policies and resources for sabbatical and research leave and how they might be reframed to better support UR faculty scholarship.
- Create UB internal research funding opportunities and tailored support for external funding applications with focus on scholarship, research, and creative expression that is of broader interest to UR faculty.
- Develop a proactive faculty retention strategy including with a preemptive retention program, having a standing committee (Faculty Affairs Office) focused on the retention of UR faculty with a well-coordinated effort from Chairs and Deans.
- Provide support for identity-based affinity groups (e.g., Minority Faculty and Staff Association) that facilitate/enhance faculty experience and connection within UB.
- Create a system (at the Provost level) for rewarding entire units to recognize creative and impactful approaches in hiring, mentoring, and retaining faculty.

IMPLEMENTATION



Implementation

- Each decanal unit should form a task force to start implementation of most recommendations immediately.
- Representatives of HR, decanal Unit Diversity Officers, and VP for Inclusive Excellence Office, must coordinate the guidelines and best practices for search committees.
- Monitor and document mentoring practices by decanal units in coordination with VP Faculty Affairs.
- Institutional accountability must be achieved with intentionality, coordinated with the VP for Inclusive Excellence.
- The VP for Inclusive Excellence Office and Unit Diversity Officers should have sufficient resources to manage accountability across all units and guarantee that the procedures are adjusted accordingly.
- Establish oversight committee/office that can provide guidance and periodically report on the different practices and progress across campus (e.g., track faculty hiring, demographics, progress through ranks, success in leadership positions).
- Each organizational unit (school, college, department, centers/institutes, etc.) should report on the status of diversity and inclusion in their annual presentation/report or town hall and have it publicly available.
- Progress should be part of the President's address on the state of the university.