

Recruiting Diverse Faculty at WMU

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Why is it important to recruit a diverse faculty?

Recruitment of diverse faculty at WMU will enhance the quality and reputation of our institution to the benefit of faculty, staff, students and broader community. Diversification enriches academic and educational support programs and the learning environment by providing alternative and different perspectives, life experiences and teaching approaches. It promotes academic freedom and innovative, creative and scholarly accomplishments of faculty and prepares our students to successfully live and work in a global economy and pluralistic society. The creation of a diverse faculty presents a healthy role model for our students. This will continue to establish a path of excellence for our university.

Where are we today in regards to a diverse faculty?

In the fall of 2010, WMU had 785 tenure and tenure track faculty. Of this number 131 or 16.7% identified themselves as minorities. This compares to a statewide population minority percentage of 22.6 (U.S. Census Bureau 2009 estimate), and a student population that identifies itself as 16.25% minorities (which includes international students).

Beyond racial diversity we also recognize diversity in gender in some disciplines. WMU also recognizes and promotes diversity in regards to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, handicap, height, weight or marital status.

Importance of a welcoming environment:

An environment that is welcoming to all faculty candidates not only fosters retention but also encourages potential applicants to pursue faculty appointments and other career opportunities at WMU. In order to recruit and retain underrepresented faculty, WMU must create an environment that is inviting and supportive of all faculty.

Institutional markers likely to be perceived as welcoming by diverse and underrepresented faculty:

We have a number of markers that potential faculty will observe that indicate we as a university are welcoming to diversity and underrepresented faculty. Obviously we can and we should do more.

- WMU has a statement that clearly identifies the educational value of diversity
 - Diversity at WMU encompasses inclusion, acceptance, respect, and empowerment. This means understanding that each individual is unique and that our commonalities and differences make the contributions we have to offer all the more valuable. Diversity includes the dimensions of race, ethnicity, and national and regional origins; sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation; socioeconomic status, age, physical attributes, and abilities; as well as religious, political, cultural, and intellectual ideologies and practices. (Diversity and Multicultural Action Plan - Revised, 2006)

- Ethnic, Cultural, Global and Women’s Studies programs and an academic curriculum that allow students multiple opportunities to be introduced to diverse ideas and faculty.
- Research centers focusing on diversity and multicultural issues
- Diverse faculty, staff and student body
- Retention, tenure and promotion rates for underrepresented faculty that match majority faculty rates
- Underrepresented individuals in leadership positions
- University-wide events featuring speakers with diverse backgrounds
- Progress toward diversity initiatives
- Sense of acceptance and belonging to a “family”
- Equity in allocation of resources and funding

Myths that maintain the status quo in University departments:

Unfortunately myths often veil deeply held beliefs of gender or racial/ethnic inferiority. This negative mindset often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy in the search and selection process.

- Diverse and underrepresented candidates are unavailable for positions
- Diverse and underrepresented faculty are not as qualified as other faculty and will weaken the quality of the university; prestige of department declines with hiring of diverse faculty
- Quality of education for majority students is not improved by diverse faculty

Composition of Search Committee:

Critical to a successful search that results in increased faculty diversity is the composition of the search committee. The search committee should be comprised of diverse individuals with multiple viewpoints. Diverse committees tend to seek different perspectives and thus, discourage the tendency to only select and hire faculty “just like me”.

- Selection and formation of Search Committee
 - Ensure diversity of membership applying multiple perspectives
 - Ensure that the members have the appropriate interest and skills
 - Include representation of underrepresented administrators and highly respected faculty from diverse backgrounds
 - Permit participation of faculty and educators from other academic departments, colleges or other institutions with diverse backgrounds
 - Invite participation of doctoral students from diverse backgrounds
 - Include participation by representatives of OIE and HR as ex-officio members/consultants
 - Evaluate the processes, methods and outcomes used in other searches and selection
 - Utilize “best practices”

Goals of the Search Committee:

Search committees shall engage in a process that demonstrates appreciation, value and respect for differences among individual candidates and seek to hire individuals with diverse educational backgrounds, scholarly/research, teaching and service interests.

- Overcoming Hiring Biases
 - Be cognizant of any unintentional or hidden bias that may impact the interviewing process
 - “Not a good fit” and other non-job related evaluations can be forms of prohibited discrimination
 - Understand and prevent the “Halo Effect” or transferring professional talents/deficits in one aspect of performance inappropriately to other areas of the job. Racial, ethnic and other forms of prejudice can be manifestations of the halo effect
 - Understand and prevent stereotyping in the evaluation, hiring, selection and other processes
 - Understand and prevent the tendency to clone those already in the department, recognizing that individuals with different backgrounds and experiences can make positive contributions that expand and promote excellence in the department, college and University
 - Think broadly and positively about the skills and experiences each individual candidate can bring to campus
 - Constant reflection on the benefits of diversifying the faculty for the University, faculty and students

Role and activities of the Search Committee:

The actions of each and every member of the search committee can have an impact on whether or not a search is successful.

- Knowledge of position duties, departmental expectations and adopted faculty hiring procedures
- Conduct search in accordance with State/Federal laws and University Policy
- Understand Affirmative Action goals for this position (i.e. Utilization Analysis)
- Understand University’s diversity goals
- Understand what will attract diverse candidates to WMU
- Consult with College Diversity Council
- Develop position description
 - Carefully draft to align with commitment to diversity
 - Strongly express the University’s commitment to AA/EEO as required by federal law and regulations
 - Use broad descriptions of scholarship, background/experience and discipline
 - Where appropriate, use preferred versus required qualifications
 - Ask applicants to describe experiences addressing the needs of a diverse student population
 - Maintain minutes of search committee scheduled meetings
- Create a diverse pool of highly qualified applicants
 - Develop a Search Plan designed to generate a highly qualified diverse candidate pool of qualified candidates; search plans and the resulting applicant pools shall be subject to review and approval by the Provost and OIE
 - Be prudent in the determination of what qualifications and expectation the department envisions for the faculty position

- Use both the traditional and new avenues for ads, telephone calls, listservs and other modes of getting the attention of potential candidates
- Renew acquaintances with former classmates, institutions, professional organization member(s), friends in government, faculty in other disciplines
- Continue search until the committee is satisfied with the quality and diversity of the applicant pool
- Encourage applicants to apply until such time a person is recommended for hire
- Interviewing Candidates
 - Create an open and welcoming environment for all interviewees
 - Interview fairly and consistently in accordance with advertised qualifications
 - Ask each candidate the same questions and in the same manner
 - Interview for “proof” of diversity commitment
 - Explain the tenure/promotion process/expectations; in addition to contract requirements, be prepared to share the departmental policy and standards for tenure
 - Arrange meetings with diverse faculty and students; showcase campus, community culture and diversity efforts
 - Remember: the candidate also is evaluating the department
 - Suggestions: greet at airport upon arrival, wine/dine, reception at home with students, tour of city, etc.
- Identify and recommend the most appropriate candidate taking into account
 - Teaching, research and service needs and requirements of the department and college
 - University commitment to diversity
 - Applicant’s commitment to diversity
 - Needs of current and future students
 - Most qualified candidate is determined by department expectations
 - Preparation of students for global market and society
 - Prioritize 2-3 finalists on PAR, if appropriate, can offer in prioritized order if preferred candidates withdraw, adverse reference checks, impasse in negotiations, etc. The prioritized list allows additional offers without further reviews; unnecessary to start over with pool/short list
- Professional and timely follow-up
 - Acknowledge receipt of application
 - Call candidates to answer additional questions
 - Inform all candidates of status of application after interview
 - Anticipate potential candidate’s concerns in terms of housing, local school district, social and cultural life, etc.
 - Once hired, have an office and research space ready
 - Discuss the assignment of a mentor(s)
 - Remain available for continued contact regarding the need for transition assistance

Aggressive Recruitment Activities:

The University expects academic leadership and members of faculty search committees to proactively use networks, contacts and other resources to recruit faculty. It is important to

engage in a continuous process of identifying and attracting prospective faculty, not limited to recruitment to fill vacant positions.

- Establish networks/contacts
 - Faculty and colleagues at other institutions
 - Colleagues at professional conferences and meetings
 - Professionals in the local community
 - Minority interest groups
 - Educational Associations
 - National Associations
 - Colleges and universities that educate a greater number of underrepresented graduate students
 - Previous faculty, graduates and alumni of WMU
 - Access directories and registries of recent graduates
- Advertising/Outreach
 - Develop diversity marketing materials that include and attract underrepresented faculty (e.g. graphics that show at least three subcategories of diversity)
 - Create a brief (low cost) advertisement with a link to a full position description on the Human Resources website; include on the departmental website links to various University resources that will appeal to diverse populations
 - Invite individuals to apply based on knowledge from network contacts
 - Approach potential candidates at professional meetings
 - Consult with diverse faculty members on campus for suggestions and to learn the types of outreach activities they found most effective
 - Caution against recruitment strategies that prevent diverse applicant pools
 - List job announcements in publications that target diverse faculty or listservs accessed by diverse groups as well as traditional media

Opportunities to advertise to increase diversity:

- All faculty vacant positions advertised at The Academic Network (Minority Faculty Applicant Database – MFAD) \$800/year for unlimited academic university-wide employment postings www.theacademicnetwork.org (post job announcements)
- Recruit candidates through the Minority and Women Doctoral Directory www.mwdd.com (access list of potential candidates)
- Recruit candidates through the Compact for Faculty Diversity: Institute on Teaching and Mentoring Online Directory home.sreb.org/dsp/directory/Login.aspx
- Additional Recruitment Resources
 - InsideHigherEd.com
 - HigherEDJobs.com
 - Chronicle.com
 - AcademicCareers.com
 - UniversityJobs.com
 - AcademicKeys.com
 - DiverseEducation.com
 - AsiansInHigherEd.com
 - HispanicsInHigherEd.com
 - BlacksInHigherEd.com

- LationsInHigherEd.com
- IMDiversity.com
- DiverseJob.net
- Hispanicoutlook.com
- Actively use membership resources available through Michigan HERC – The Higher Education Recruitment Consortium www.HERCjobs.org

Thoughts on how to retain faculty:

Beyond hiring a diverse faculty, we want to retain the faculty as well. It is important to understand the university environment and identify the factors that promote and inhibit successful faculty retention. The following are some suggested considerations:

- Retention Issues
 - Underrepresented faculty are often called upon to perform additional service which should be recognized and rewarded:
 - University boards and committees needing diverse perspectives
 - Community groups may call upon underrepresented faculty for agency or governing boards
 - Lack of departmental community/family can give rise to a sense of isolation
 - Lack of “critical mass” of diverse faculty; departments cannot stop when they hire one underrepresented faculty member
 - Lack of mentoring by others familiar with departmental culture, politics and “unwritten rules” particularly where a clear understanding is required for tenure and promotion purposes
- Understanding the needs of individual faculty members
 - Target individual faculty needs for individual success
 - Do not rely only on initiatives from the administration
 - Stress the importance of focusing on the individual faculty member and to create supportive departments with clear expectations and strategies for success
- Develop a specific plan for faculty success
 - Commitment to faculty mentoring
 - Develop and sustain a mentoring program
- Providing financial support incentive
- Encourage junior faculty participation in Faculty Development Programs
- Attend to spousal, partner and family needs
- Conduct focus groups of new, untenured, and underrepresented faculty members
 - Learn about their feelings of support and lack of support
 - What could university do better to support their success and retention?
 - Why does faculty stay at university and why do they leave?
 - How does new faculty see the tenure and promotion systems?
 - Compare thoughts of different faculty on the same questions and topics; any patterns and, if so, what do they mean regarding retention?
- Conduct mentoring breakfasts/lunches for new and untenured faculty to discuss such matters as
 - Grant writing

- University's commitment to diversity and inclusion and its benefits
- Balancing life and work
- Developing a tenure and promotion dossier
- Negotiating the politics and culture of your department
- Mentoring and being mentored
- Meeting other new faculty from across campus
- University resources available to faculty
- Wider community initiatives
- Note: Be very aggressive in promoting attendance by faculty target groups
- Note: Lunches may be best due to personal family responsibilities
- Consider inviting the dean and provost to separate such meetings; discuss role of new faculty in future of department and college
- Faculty Dissatisfaction vs. Satisfaction
 - Decrease dissatisfaction by providing:
 - Responsive and stable administration
 - Competitive pay and benefits upon hiring
 - Clarity of WMU values
 - Increase satisfaction by enhancing:
 - Participation and engagement
 - Recognition
 - Achievement
- Assessment of faculty retention
 - Conduct exit interviews with departing faculty to assess reasons for leaving and pursuing other opportunities
 - Identify obstacles to retention
 - Interview tenured and longstanding senior faculty to understand factors associated with retention and successful careers at the University
 - Use assessment data to design and improve strategies and environment for retention
- Offer faculty retention workshops for faculty and administrators
 - Increase awareness about benefits of retaining diverse faculty
 - Teach effective retention strategies
 - Foster an environment invested in retention of all faculty
- Faculty Attrition
 - A normal rate of attrition and turnover of faculty is healthy for the University
 - Creates opportunity for recruiting faculty that will enhance the capacities and reputation of departments
 - Allows for diverse perspective in departments
 - Prevents cultural stagnation in departments

Search Committee resource materials:

To help the search committee in a success faculty search, some resources materials that are useful include:

- Dr. Caroline Turner (e.g., Turner, C.S.V. (2002) Diversifying the Faculty, A Guidebook for Search Committees. 56pp. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.)
- DiversityWorks, Inc. (2005) "New Paradigms for Diversifying Faculty and Staff in Higher Education, Video and Workbook" (Ph. (217) 378 - 5135) www.diversityworksinc.net
- Shattering the Silences (video) www.pbs.org/shattering/ or www.newsreel.org
- Smith, D.G., Turner, C.S.V., Osei-Kofi, N., & Richards, S. (2004). Interrupting the Usual: Successful Strategies for Hiring Diverse Faculty, *The Journal of Higher Education*, 75(2), 133-160.
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jhe/summary/v075/75.2smith.html>

Final Thoughts:

- Academic Affairs and the Office of Institutional Equity will be working together to offer an annual seminar on recruiting and retaining diverse and underrepresented faculty for academic leadership, chairs of search committees and tenured faculty
- Academic Affairs is committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty. We look to the entire academy to participate in making this a reality.
- To that end all deans, chairs and directors will actively participate in the search process and be accountable for outcomes of the search
- The Office of Institutional Equity stands ready to support and assist all searches and search committees in identifying, successfully recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty.