

POINT 3:

BUILDING CRITICAL MASS

NEED FOR CRITICAL MASS

The development of a critical mass of persons from underrepresented groups is critical to cultivate and maintain a campus environment that embraces diversity and to provide our students with the tools to become global citizens. Building diversity across our faculty, students, officers of administration, and staff will benefit our University in countless ways. Increasing the diversity of our faculty is important to provide our students with role models and to secure the scholarly and intellectual benefits that a diverse faculty will bring to the University. Equally important is the recruitment and retention of undergraduate and graduate students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Other sections of the Diversity Report use a broad definition of diversity, and the Diversity Plan embraces and supports all aspects of diversity among members of the University community, including cultivation of a fair, inclusive, and respectful environment for all. Point 2 focuses on the importance of recruiting and retaining faculty, students, officers of administration, and staff from groups that are underrepresented in a unit with respect to ethnic, racial, or gender diversity. Although all kinds of diversity benefit the University, and units should seek to recruit and retain persons of diverse backgrounds broadly defined, to the extent the University devotes resources to building a “critical mass,” the emphasis should be on racial and ethnic diversity and, in some departments, gender diversity.

FACULTY RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

1. Strategic Action Plans Developed by Schools and Colleges

This section discusses the strategic directions that affect faculty. The Strategic Action Plans developed by each school and college should consider ways to improve the recruitment and retention of faculty from underrepresented groups.

Hiring plan. Each school, college, and department should develop a long-range (three to five year) hiring plan that incorporates the University's interests in increasing diversity, both in hiring faculty with diverse backgrounds and experiences and in hiring faculty who will broaden and enrich the scholarly reach of the University in its teaching and research." Recognizing that we have limited resources, all such units should think creatively about ways to attract a diverse pool of high-quality applicants. Units should not merely seek to comply with the affirmative action rules but should go beyond those legal obligations to try to develop a diverse pool of high-quality applicants for each search. Units may also consider new strategies for hiring, including new ways to define positions.

For both recruiting and retention, schools, colleges, and departments may consider a number of strategies. Cluster hires, partner-hiring strategies, visiting scholar programs, and opportunity hires are all examples of strategies that units may want to include in their hiring plans.

- Studies have shown that partner-hiring strategies have had particular success in increasing the diversity of faculty. Bearing in mind the commitment to academic excellence, the University should strengthen the current partner-hiring program..
- Cluster hires are hires centered on a particular subject focus and coordinated by several academic departments, schools, and colleges. Potential benefits of cluster hires include creating a group of faculty with similar interests who can support each other's scholarly work, encouraging collaborative teaching and research, developing interdisciplinary depth in a particular subject, and attracting particularly accomplished senior faculty members. A theme likely to attract scholars from diverse backgrounds and experiences could increase diversity on campus.

Visiting scholar programs would bring to campus faculty who work in areas of study that are not adequately represented at the University. They can enrich intellectual life on campus, and provide opportunities for students and faculty to benefit from the ideas and information the visitor brings.

Units may also want to consider opportunity hires as a strategy to include in their hiring plan.

Job announcements. Job announcements should indicate that persons from diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply, with language framed as broadly as possible to indicate the University's interest in attracting candidates from underrepresented groups. The Office of Affirmative Action has developed specific language for use in job announcements, but in addition units should consider consulting with the Office of Affirmative Action or with OIED to write job announcements that express a commitment to diversity in a way that will attract persons from underrepresented groups. Job announcements should be circulated as widely as possible, using means likely to reach candidates from diverse backgrounds. Units should not merely seek to comply with the affirmative action rules but should attempt to develop as diverse a pool of applicants as possible for each search.

Retention plan. Units should develop plans for retaining all good faculty members and should pay particular attention to the problems that faculty from underrepresented groups face. Units should consider strategies to build collegiality, create a positive work environment, and mentor new faculty, both personally and professionally. Helping new faculty feel comfortable both on and off campus will be important for retention. Because adjusting to Eugene may present challenges for persons from groups underrepresented in Eugene, additional mentoring may be helpful. Some of the strategies discussed in connection with hiring, in particular the hiring of a faculty member's partner, will also aid in retention.

Advancement. To ensure the highest quality of faculty, the promotion and tenure process needs to be thoughtful and proactive in assuring that assessment of all faculty is fair and takes full account of developing knowledge and fields. Evaluators should always be alert to the value of the unfamiliar in scholarship, which can sometimes even provoke hostile reactions, and should bear in mind the complexity of assessing interdisciplinary approaches to research and teaching.

2. Issues to be Addressed at University Level

Minority Recruitment and Retention Fund. The University should provide more resources for faculty recruitment and retention. Some tools currently in use, for example the Minority Recruitment and Retention Fund (MRRF), have proven effective. The University should continue the use of the MRRF but may want to consider whether changes in implementation will improve the program.

Other Strategies. The University should identify new resources to assist units in implementing new hiring and retention strategies. For example, cluster hires will require cooperation among departments and deans. To encourage the development of cluster hires, the University could provide financial incentives such as providing bridging funds (three years of funding to cover the period before a retirement will free a line) or extra funds to hire a more senior faculty member than the department could otherwise afford. If new money can be raised to support a particular subject area focus, for example if a donor could be interested in helping to underwrite development in Latin American Studies, such new funds could be used to create new lines in multiple departments. University support will also be useful in making the University's partner-hiring program more effective, in creating visiting scholar positions, and in providing funding for opportunity hires.

Strengthening existing academic programs. A number of academic programs at the University may help the University build critical mass both because the scholarly work centered in those programs addresses issues of diversity and because faculty, students, and staff who work in those programs may be more likely to come from diverse backgrounds themselves. Programs such as Ethnic Studies and Women's and Gender Studies provide courses, opportunities for advanced study, and scholarly work of interest to students and faculty from underrepresented groups. Strengthening these and other programs that focus scholarship and teaching on issues of diversity will serve to strengthen diversity at the University.

GRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

1. Strategic Action Plans Developed by Schools, Colleges, and Administrative Units

The Strategic Action Plans developed by each school, college, and administrative unit should consider ways to improve the recruitment and retention of graduate students from underrepresented groups.

Academic units. Each academic unit's Strategic Action Plan should include a long-term (three to five year) plan to recruit high-quality graduate students from underrepresented groups. The Department of Philosophy's Minority Recruitment Initiative provides an example of such a program. Each Strategic Action Plan should also address the mentoring of graduate students, with a focus on particular concerns faced by students from underrepresented groups.

2. Issues to be Addressed at University Level

Creation of Graduate Fellowships. The University should create and fund graduate fellowships designed to attract high-quality graduate students from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences who will add to the diversity of the University.

Encourage curricular developments. Graduate education should be at the cutting edge of scholarship, and research which deals in various ways with the diversity characteristic of the United States and the world, is exciting and vibrant. Therefore, curricular and research initiatives in this area should be enhanced both as a means to advance scholarship and to recruit and develop excellent graduate students from diverse backgrounds.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

1. Strategic Action Plans Developed by Schools, Colleges, Administrative Units, and the ASUO Executive

The Strategic Action Plans developed by each school, college, and administrative unit and by the ASUO Executive should consider ways to improve the recruitment and retention of high-quality undergraduate students from underrepresented groups.

2. Issues to be Addressed at University Level

Undergraduate recruitment issues are also addressed under Point 4.

Increase scholarship money. The University should increase the financial resources available for scholarships that attract high-quality students from underrepresented groups to the University. These include Diversity Building Scholarships and need-based scholarships and may include the creation of other scholarships. Enrollment Services, working with the Offices of Admissions, Financial Aid, Multicultural Recruiting, Student Affairs, and OIED should determine how best to target financial aid dollars to reach students who will increase diversity at the University.

Increase programs to improve retention. Students from underrepresented groups often face challenges at the University that additional programs in counseling, advising, and mentoring could help to address. The University should evaluate existing programs and develop new ones to promote academic success, help students navigate the requirements for majors and graduation, and assist students in developing leadership skills. Innovation in retention programs is necessary. The Math and English classes sponsored by OMAS provide an example of a promising strategy. The University should also consider developing an Oregon Emerging Scholars Program to advise and mentor students from underrepresented groups throughout their tenure at the University. Because active, involved students are likely to persist and thrive at the University, and because the University is well-placed to train future civic and community leaders, the University should consider developing leadership institutes or other means to teach leadership skills and encourage students to take active roles in student organizations.

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Campus climate. Improvements in campus climate (*see* Point 2) will make recruiting and retaining high-quality students easier. A university that demonstrates its commitment to diversity is attractive to diverse students.

OFFICERS OF ADMINISTRATION AND CLASSIFIED STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

1. Strategic Action Plans Developed by Colleges, Schools, and Administrative Units

The Strategic Action Plans developed by each school, college, and administrative unit should address the hiring and retention of high-quality persons from underrepresented groups as officers of administration and classified staff.

Job announcements. Job announcements should indicate that persons from diverse backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply, with language framed as broadly as possible to indicate the University's interest in attracting candidates from underrepresented groups. The Office of Affirmative Action has developed specific language for use in job announcements, but in addition units should consider consulting with the Office of Affirmative Action or with OIED to write job announcements that express a commitment to diversity in a way that will attract persons from underrepresented groups. Job announcements should be circulated as widely as possible, using means likely to reach candidates from diverse backgrounds. Units should not merely seek to comply with the affirmative action rules but should attempt to develop as diverse a pool of applicants as possible for each search.

POINT 4:

EXPANDING AND FILLING THE PIPELINE

WHY FILLING THE PIPELINE IS IMPORTANT

We need to make the University a destination for the best and brightest students graduating from Oregon high schools. To ensure that these students reflect the diversity of our state and to encourage students with diverse backgrounds and experiences to attend the University, we need to provide support and encouragement to K-12 students. Our goals should be to prepare K-12 students to apply to and succeed in higher education, particularly at the University. Middle school students are often the most vulnerable to outside pressures and yet hold great promise of reaching higher academic achievement levels if actively encouraged.. In addition to targeting this important age group, our strategic directions seek to provide support throughout the high school years and to assist students in applying for admission and enrolling in classes at the University.

We believe that parents, school districts, administrators, and classroom teachers, as well as the University supporters, need to be involved to make any system of access to higher education work for students from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Thus, University pipeline programs will be more likely to be successful if the University partners with local and regional school districts, parents, community agencies, and the many nonprofit organizations that support education. A successful pipeline will link together well-prepared teachers, curricula that are rich in core content related to diversity issues, active administrators who genuinely care about maintaining the flow of the pipeline, programs offered outside the classroom by nonprofit organizations, and an increasing pool of well-prepared students who are ready for success in their academic work at the University.

In addition to work on the pipeline within Oregon, the University needs to continue to develop outreach programs to attract well-qualified international students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.⁵

The benefits of expanding and filling the pipeline go beyond the University as a destination for these students. As they graduate from the University in greater numbers, our increasingly diverse students will be

⁵ The broad definition of diversity set forth in Point 1 includes national origin or citizenship within its scope. Strategic directions throughout this document include international students, faculty, officers and administration, and staff.

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poised to take their place as community members and citizens of Oregon,
and in some cases to further enrich the diversity and excellence of the
University as graduate students and faculty.