Faculty of color continue to face challenges with recruitment, retention, and mentoring in academe.

Recruitment, Retention, and Mentoring Faculty of Color: The Chronicle Continues

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For several decades, universities have expressed commitments to changing the traditional faculty makeup of "faculty members dominated by white males," toward the inclusion of a "cohort of academic women and faculty of diverse ethnicity and nativity" (Schuster and Finkelstein, 2006, p. 70). The catalyst for such efforts derives from explorations of diversity initiatives, their implementation, and their effectiveness on university campuses nationwide. Stanley (2006) references a study by the American Council on Education and the American Association of University Professors that noted, "69 percent of faculty believe their universities value racial and ethnic diversity" (p. 3). Despite this purported belief and strategies designed to increase the number of faculty of color in academe, she notes that the current representation remains dismal and is not proportionate to the rate of growth for students of color or representative of the U.S. population, where minorities constitute 20 to 25 percent. According to Trower and Chait (2002), "African American, Hispanic, or Native American faculty constituted only 5 percent of the full professors in the United States, and only 2.3 percent of the faculty at predominantly white colleges and universities were African American" (cited in Stanley, 2006, p. 3).

One of the reasons for lack of progress, Turner and Myers (2000) suggest, is that many institutions place a larger emphasis on faculty recruitment

rather than retention efforts for minorities. Recruitment efforts are part of, but not inclusive of, success. Feelings of frustration, discrimination, and invisibility lead to a high attrition rate among faculty of color (Turner and Myers, 2000). Subtle and overt discrimination may arise from colleagues and in the classroom (Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006). Other experiences that cause high attrition rates stem from failure to gain tenure and disparities in movement in rank or promotion. Turner (2006) identifies several challenges for faculty of color. Most salient among these obstacles are issues of race, undervaluation of scholarship, reliance on minorities for committee participation without such contributions factoring into promotions, challenges to authority, and balancing academic life with familial and community responsibilities.

This chapter addresses issues that faculty of color in academe often face. It explores recruitment efforts and barriers and addresses issues associated with retention and obstructions to promotion and tenure. The chapter culminates with an examination of mentoring initiatives and cross-cultural mentoring opportunities.

Recruitment

Historically, American academics were primarily native-born Caucasian males, which in turn has created the current academic environment at most universities, especially in the arts and sciences (Schuster and Finkelstein, 2006). Historically, student populations at many institutions were not diverse either. Pipeline problems, a common phrase used to identify barriers to channels that might produce greater numbers of minority faculty and students, bear on the lack of students of color on campus (Stanley, 2006). These problems ultimately evolve into a lack of faculty of color on campus (Stanley, 2006). Faculty of color are less likely to want to work in a place where they might face obstacles and isolation (Turner, 2006). This approach is cyclical, as students of color may not matriculate to a certain university due to a lack of minority representation. Leonard, Horvat, and Tiley-Tillman, (2002) suggest a nexus exists between diversity in student and faculty populations.

In an effort to diversify the pool of applicants for faculty positions, universities have implemented several programs and taken active measures to attract the faculty members. These include grant writing and editorial assistance; funding for development, travel, and graduate assistants; and supportive family policies like longer maternity leave and other options that will advance progress toward tenure (Leonard, Horvat, and Tiley-Tillman, 2002). However, these initiatives require that administrators and frontline recruiting committees embrace them and take active measures to ensure they are being followed. In their review of failed minority recruitment and retention efforts, Turner and Myers (2000) identified one of the major causes attributed to the collapsed efforts as a lack of committed leadership from all levels.

In addition to historical barriers, faculty of color encounter and must discredit myths surrounding their credibility and status as faculty. One huge impediment to progress centers on perceptions of competence. Yoshinaga-Itano (2006) notes that many existing faculty and administrators "express the attitude that faculty of color are not as qualified as white faculty" (p. 349). Such a sentiment inhibits collegiality and creates a nonsupportive environment. This in turn leads to faculty of color changing institutions or leaving the higher education profession altogether (Turner and Myers, 2000).

Along with the issue of competence is the notion that some universities do not foster an environment conducive to embracing diverse cultures. Sadao (2003) discusses biculturalism: the idea that faculty of color, in particular, practice two different cultures—their community and family culture and a separate academic culture—in an attempt to fuse with traditional academe. Although academe is viewed as a liberal place where individuals are free to express their thoughts, those individuals are often from similar backgrounds or share similar experiences. Creating a multicultural climate entails broadening the expectations for what is seen as quality work, appropriate behavior, and effective working styles. "Developing a positive and supportive climate for all faculty, especially faculty of color, requires identifying those factors that support an individual's desire to remain at an institution" (Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006, p. 349). Conduct that creates a welcoming environment includes establishing networking, mentoring, and professional development opportunities (Turner, 2006). Other essential factors are placing value during the tenure process on the additional service contributions often made by faculty of color and actively supporting research that might vary from the norm of traditional academic endeavors (Turner, 2006).

Collectively, recruitment efforts, coupled with a sincere desire to embrace diversity and respect for faculty of color, will lead to better results. However, recruitment efforts alone are not sufficient to solve issues of disproportionately small numbers of minorities in academe. Although the diversification of the faculty population has increased slightly, Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) note that the numbers may not translate into increased retention if appointments are not renewed or if they do not lead to promotion and tenure for faculty of color. In sum, it is important to monitor efforts in recruiting and retaining faculty of color.

Retention

Retention is a critical component to ensuring longevity in the profession. Once a person of color has joined an institution as a faculty member, another set of potential issues arises relating to retention. Issues important to retention are tenure, promotion, and academic satisfaction. Furthermore, "Retention is affected by a hostile climate, lack of students of color, lack of

community, lack of mentorship for both scholarship and role models of success in the academy, and inequity in job description irrespective of what advocacy programs are established" (Yoshinaga-Itano, 2006, p. 351). Other impediments include marginalization of work, feelings of isolation, and the difficulties of balancing life in dual cultures. Support by colleagues and deans is also critical for successful retention. Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007) identify respect as the nucleus of successful faculty work experience; adverse experiences in feeling respected may greatly harm retention efforts. Negative treatment of candidates and new faculty of color adds to potential barriers to successful future recruitment efforts.

Tenure and Promotion Impediments

Another critical component to ensure that retention efforts increase among faculty of color is to devise methods that support tenure and promotion for them. Efforts should focus on the perceptions of scholarship, service, and collegiality. Aguirre (2000) identified several workplace stressors that serve as barriers to promotion and tenure for faculty. They include "time pressures, lack of personal time, teaching load, review/promotion process, research/ publication demands, child care, and subtle discrimination" (p. 59). Minority faculty experience higher sources of stress in the areas of review, promotion, and tenure and subtle discrimination. He notes that these stressors disrupt faculty from performing tasks satisfactorily and affect "professional socialization, such as promotion and tenure" (p. 59). Consequently, faculty of color find themselves overburdened with committee assignments and larger advisory loads, especially advising students of color (Stanley, 2006). In addition, "Service, teaching and creativity are risky priorities for faculty members seeking tenure or promotion at many institutions" (Stanley, 2006, p. 12). Each of these is an area of concern for faculty of color, but service commitments to students and campus governance disproportionately engage them and require substantial amounts of time. Faculty of color note that students of color often seek guidance from them, which results in more work, visits, and time directed toward those inquiries (Aguirre, 2000). They also frequently express mixed feelings toward excessive committee appointments, which may result in a lack of time to focus on scholarship (Turner, 2006). Those who feel a commitment to fostering the success of other minority scholars and ensuring inclusive policies are dedicated to the work, but they realize that they will not be rewarded for it. Stanley (2006) and Cooper (2006) caution that faculty of color are routinely snatched for numerous service obligations and must therefore guard their time for scholarship.

Another hindrance related to achieving tenure is the marginalization of scholastic efforts. Research drives the tenure process. The ideological ancestry of academic culture does not include the thinking of faculty of color automatically, as the prototype was that of a white male of European

ancestry (Schuster and Finkelstein, 2006). When senior faculty or peers marginalize research efforts or devalue the research topics that faculty, especially faculty of color, choose, the likelihood of retention is highly improbable. Dominant perceptions of ideal topics may not coincide with the experiences or research interests of faculty of color, which may lead to breakdowns in faculty collegiality and a misunderstanding or devaluation of the research interest.

Service is another area where expectations of faculty of color are higher but may not result in academic gains or rewards in the tenure or promotion process. Service requirements are greatly heightened among faculty of color at various universities. In fact, Aguirre (2000) notes, faculty of color often find themselves overburdened with expected and solicited service requirements, more so than their white counterparts. Stanley (2006) refers to this expectation placed on faculty of color as "cultural taxation"—the expectation that faculty of color will perform service initiatives through mentoring students of color and participating as diversity representatives on committees (p. 5). Aguirre (2000) writes, "Minority faculty spend more time in workplace activities such as teaching and service that do not necessarily promote their professional socialization in the academic workplace, especially the professional socialization that increases their chances of attaining tenure and promotion" (p. 70). In addition, he believes that the pattern of faculty of color participating in numerous service activities "weakens their fit in the academic workplace" (p. 83). Specifically, he notes, "Minority faculty are victimized in the academic workplace because White men faculty perceive them as peripheral participants. In this sense, the academic workplace enhances the weak organizational fit of women and minority faculty" (p. 83).

Perceptions and performance evaluations have a great impact on promotion efforts for faculty of color. Research and numerous personal accounts suggest that some white students have biased perceptions about minority faculty and their level of competence. A causal nexus exists between these perceptions and evaluations that directly affect tenure and promotion. "White students perceive minority faculty as the products of affirmative action, and, as a result, they are marginalized in the eyes and thinking of White students" (Aguirre, 2000, p. 82). Stanley (2006) underscores this notion in her report on challenges to authority in classroom environments. Turner (2006) emphasizes that one of the problems that faculty of color face at higher rates is being challenged by students. These shortsighted student attitudes arise when class members challenge their instructors' expertise in subject matter, and such challenges appear in student evaluations that may bear on tenure and promotion decisions (Stanley, 2006).

Collegiality is another aspect of the tenure and promotion process. Stanley (2006) defines collegiality as the "nature of the relationship that exists between colleagues in the college and university setting" (p. 367). Subtle discrimination plays a critical role in influencing a collegial

environment. Because there is often a difference in culture between faculty of color and the traditional white male in academe, "Some faculty of color have a difficult time trying to interpret the unwritten expectations about collegiality" (Stanley, 2006, p. 367). The resulting isolation "excludes [faculty of color] from information and support networks in the academic workplace that are important to obtaining resources and rewards" (Aguirre, 2000, p. 70). In discussing the administrator's perspective, Yoshingaga-Itano (2006) identifies "building community to prevent isolation" as one of the first "problems that must be addressed if progress to retain faculty of color is made" (p. 351). Stanley (2006) provides further support as collegiality is often an essential dynamic that prompts retention for faculty or encourages them to move elsewhere. Suggestions to promote collegiality include helping white male faculty to appreciate and embrace diverse cultures, being receptive of new faculty and faculty of color, and encouraging all faculty to participate in programs that will further the likelihood of promotion and tenure at the identified university (Stanley, 2006).

Overall, "the unwillingness of the academic workplace to reward and recognize the work of women and minority faculty ends up forcing them out of the academic workplace" (Aguirre, 2000 p. 85). Yoshinaga-Itano (2006) describes threats that must be addressed in an effort to increase promotion and tenure:

- Faculty of color in nontraditional, nonmainstream areas of scholarship
- Scholarly disciplines with nontraditional venues for publication
- Understanding that many faculty of color are in applied areas and that the time lines for completion of studies may be longer than in other fields . . .
- Scholarship uniqueness that may prevent adequate mentorship
- Lack of research mentors
- Lack of senior faculty with knowledge about scholarship challenges
- Lack of knowledge of the political systems in universities and of the steps necessary for successful promotion and tenure
- Lack of an equitable evaluation system [pp. 356–357].

Taken together, the set of issues described above presents formidable challenges to the tenuring, and hence retention, of faculty of color.

Mentoring

Mentoring is essential for the success of any faculty member, but numerous reports and testimonies emphasize the importance of mentoring for faculty of color. Mentoring is one way to combat social isolation (Stanley, 2006). However, Stanley (2006) points out, "An outsider in academia usually receives little or no mentoring, inside information, or introductions to valuable connections and networks" (p. 14). Moreover, one should note that there is an erroneous perception that "faculty who seek mentors or are

mentored have 'deficits'" (p. 365). Unfortunately, this stigma may arise and cause colleagues to refer to the mentee as a protégé, which may result in denigration of the mentee's work and merit among colleagues. Nevertheless, there is still essential merit to establishing a mentor-mentee relationship (Stanley, 2006). Aguirre (2000) comments on the reciprocal effect: "Mentoring activities can alter the academic culture's response to the inclusion of minorities in academe" (p. 80).

Because minority faculty are not in abundance yet and it is important to promote inclusion and diversity, involving nonminority faculty in the mentoring process is essential. Recruiting nonminority faculty to mentor faculty of color is a concept known as cross-mentoring (Aguirre, 2000). Additional support for the inclusion of cross-mentoring includes the possibility of creating an appreciation for mentoring faculty of color. With inclusive efforts, cross-mentoring is more likely to be accepted. Unfortunately, "Mentoring activities may penalize minority faculty because White faculty do not regard them as vital to professional socialization, especially tenure and promotion" (Aguirre, 2000, p. 81).

Individuals who serve as mentors should also be rewarded for their efforts: "Administrators should assign a department member to help guide untenured faculty of color through publication, and to develop strategies that make them feel part of the larger intellectual and social community" (Stanley, 2006, p. 366). Stanley further states that "faculty of color should be encouraged in faculty leadership training programs," and she proposes that senior faculty who serve as mentors should be rewarded (p. 366).

Conclusion

Faculty of color are equipped with the essential components to be successful; however, supporting their success requires a collective effort. Departments interested in implementing efforts to increase recruitment, promotion, tenure, and mentoring opportunities should look to the best practices of institutions whose efforts have been effective for guidance. They should also be active participants truly committed to improving efforts to recruit, retain, and mentor faculty of color. These efforts include incorporating policies and providing quantifiable measures to evaluate the implementation of such plans. Collective support from upper-level administrators and influential faculty will bolster the impact of faculty colleagues in adopting the initiatives implemented. Although efforts are in progress, there is a substantial amount of ground to cover.

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