

# Frequently Asked Questions

The University of Rochester is committed to being a more diverse, inclusive, and connected community. President Joel Seligman and the University's Board of Trustees have identified faculty diversity as an institutional priority, calling diversity a "fundamental value of this University." Our commitment to diversity and inclusiveness is consistent with – indeed, enhances – the University's commitment to the educational value of excellence and the role that a community of scholars with diverse backgrounds and experiences contributes to achieving that goal.

The rationale of focusing on faculty is that a diverse faculty has the greatest potential and power to transform the campus climate by providing a rich variety of perspectives that will enable students to be global thinkers and actors, to respect diverse values, and to attain a competitive edge as distinguished leaders in their fields. The University draws on the talents of a diverse faculty to build, sustain and enhance institutional excellence and capability through leading-edge research, innovative approaches to teaching and learning, and scholarship that reflects a rich plurality of perspectives.

The [Office of Faculty Development and Diversity](#) together with the University's Faculty Diversity Officers offer some frequently asked questions (FAQs) that describe, in part, the ongoing process for increasing faculty diversity and the role each member of the University community plays in this important endeavor. For more information on staff diversity efforts, please contact [Stan Byrd](#) or visit the [staff diversity website](#).

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**1. How does the University of Rochester define “diversity”?**

The best expression of the University’s definition of diversity can be found in the Statement of Educational philosophy, which reads in part:

The University of Rochester envisions itself as a community that welcomes, encourages, and supports individuals who desire to contribute to and benefit from the institution’s missions of teaching, research, patient care, performance, and community service. In a pluralistic culture, that community includes faculty, students, and staff who represent important differences. Members of the University’s community come from different geographical areas, represent differences in ethnicities, religious beliefs, values, and points of view; they may be physically different, have different intellectual interests, or have different abilities. The University not only welcomes such differences in the members of its community but, in fulfilling its own missions and in preparing the leaders of tomorrow’s world who will necessarily be operating in an equally wide-ranging environment, it actively seeks to recruit and include them in all aspects of the institution’s operations.

The full statement can be found [here](#).

Also, please see the [University’s Nondiscrimination Policy Statement](#).

We also are mindful of the perspective that the 2006 University of Rochester Task Force on Faculty Diversity and Inclusiveness brought to the Faculty Diversity Initiative. On page 15 of the [Task Force Report](#), the authors describe their work as having considered “the extent to which the faculty is diverse along gender, race, and ethnicity lines. We do not mean to suggest that these are the only important measures of faculty diversity; however, an examination of our faculty data makes clear that diversity by gender, race, and ethnicity is a serious issue facing the University today. We expect that many of our recommendations will lead to greater diversity and further study across other dimensions, such as disability and sexual orientation, as well.” Thus, our University is trying not to focus the conversation on demographic factors alone. Ultimately, we seek diversity of ideas and life experiences to create a prevailing climate of inclusion in which to work, study, and thrive.

Conversations about "diversity" often focus on differences. Although acknowledging intellectual, social, cultural and geographical differences is an important part of our engagement in such conversations, focusing exclusively on differences is harmful to the spirit that impels our work; thus, we focus on “diversity AND inclusiveness.” Ultimately, we hope to ensure that faculty, staff, and students have access to the knowledge and conceptual frameworks required to think critically about human diversity.

## **2. What are the current demographics at the University of Rochester?**

See [www.rochester.edu/diversity/statistics/index.html](http://www.rochester.edu/diversity/statistics/index.html).

## **3. What are the University of Rochester's diversity goals?**

Consistent with United States Supreme Court decisions, no numerical or percentage goals are specified in either our diversity goals or our diversity initiatives.

Diversifying the faculty is a complex endeavor in which outcomes are impacted by an array of forces outside our local control. For example, an abundant literature describes the pipeline and applicant pool problems, particularly for underrepresented minority doctoral degree holders. In addition, faculty members who choose either not to consider Rochester, or to leave Rochester, do so in the context of their entire lives and careers. Therefore, any of our goals that seek to improve representation must also acknowledge and affirm the singular importance of community and inclusiveness.

We believe that all members of the University community can contribute to the process of nurturing the talented members of our faculty, staff, and student bodies, and providing a warm and engaging community in which all can thrive. We are committed to work toward improved retention and to continually represent the University in both an honest and compelling light so that future faculty members will consider this a place to call home.

See also, The University of Rochester: [An Inclusive Community](#)

## **4. Is each school within the University committed to diversity and inclusion?**

Yes. The following documents affirm each school's diversity and inclusion initiatives.

[The College](#)

[Eastman School of Music](#)

[School of Nursing](#)

[Simon School of Business](#)

[Warner School](#)

**School of Medicine and Dentistry**

<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/smd/education/cached/>

<http://www.urmc.rochester.edu/education/faculty-development/>

**5. How are specific diversity-related policies developed at the University of Rochester? How can faculty best assist in the process of developing policies to improve our diversity and inclusiveness? How can students help? Are there expectations of and a mechanism for community discussion of new policy before it is implemented?**

Faculty and staff are invited to become familiar with the University's general personnel and specific diversity-related policies. The [Human Resources Policy Manual](#) is available online and policies related to faculty can be found in the [Faculty Handbook](#).

Specific diversity-related policies are generally developed at the University of Rochester in close consultation with the President, the Provost, the Office of Counsel, the President's Cabinet, and the Faculty Senate. In some circumstances, University administration may appoint a committee to study an issue and make recommendations to the President, the Provost, the Senior Vice President for Administration, and the Vice President of Human Resources.

Faculty, staff, and students can best assist in the process of developing policies to improve our diversity and inclusiveness by sharing their ideas and concerns with the Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity, deans, department chairs, and faculty diversity officers. In addition, members of the Eastman School of Music and the Warner School communities can offer input to their respective Diversity Committees. Faculty, staff, and students in the School of Nursing may wish to serve on the Dean's Council for Diversity and Inclusiveness. Faculty, staff, and students in the College community may wish to participate in and support the work of the College Diversity Roundtable. Faculty at the Medical Center may offer their input to their representative to the Medical Faculty Council or to Dr. Vivian Lewis, Associate Dean of Faculty Development at the Medical Center.

The Faculty Senate also provides the primary representative vehicle whereby faculty discussion and input can affect diversity-related policies and practices.

**6. Who is responsible for implementing diversity-related policies? What are the roles and responsibilities of the Faculty Diversity Officers?**

At the University of Rochester, we operate within a highly decentralized structure in which responsibility for many issues has been delegated to schools or programs. In this structure, the University President takes a leadership role on fundamental issues like faculty diversity. President Seligman serves as the Chief Diversity Officer of the University. As Chief Diversity Officer, President Seligman makes an annual report to the Board of Trustees, the faculty, and the University community on our progress concerning diversity and inclusiveness.

The Office of Faculty Development and Diversity, led by Lynne Davidson, Deputy to the President and Vice-Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity, is charged with implementing the 31 recommendations of the [Report of the Task Force on Diversity and](#)

Inclusiveness. In this capacity, Dr. Davidson reports directly to President Seligman and Provost Kuncel where she exercises primary operational responsibility for coordinating University faculty diversity initiatives. Dr. Davidson serves as a starting point for faculty seeking help on issues of multiculturalism, and jointly administers with the Provost the Special Opportunities Fund to assist the deans in the recruitment and retention of specific faculty candidates who contribute to the diversity of the faculty.

Every school has a Faculty Diversity Officer, and the group of diversity officers meets monthly as the primary vehicle for strategizing, sharing information, planning, and achieving visibility for faculty diversity and inclusiveness initiatives. Faculty Diversity Officers work together with the Deans (and/or senior leaders of each unit) and the Faculty Diversity Officer Committee to implement new policies, advocate for diversity initiatives within their own schools and units, contribute to strategic planning, and assist in monitoring and evaluating diversity initiatives within the unit. They may also serve as a resource for underrepresented minority faculty (and indeed all members of the faculty) to provide information and informal mentoring. The Faculty Diversity Officers at the Eastman School, Warner School, and School of Nursing are supported in their work by a faculty committee on diversity and inclusion. The Medical School supports such efforts through the Medical Faculty Council and through Dr. Vivian Lewis, who serves as Associate Dean for Faculty Development at the Medical Center. In the College, the Faculty Diversity Officer is the dean, who works with Beth Olivares, Assistant Dean for Diversity Initiatives and with members of the College Diversity Roundtable.

Faculty members address diversity when they serve as department chairs, as members of search committees, and as recruiters for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows. In these capacities, they have a direct hand in shaping a diverse leadership for the future.

Deans and senior leaders are expected to take leadership roles in implementing diversity-related policies and initiatives, such as training for search committees, gathering faculty applicant data about gender and underrepresented minority status, supporting family-friendly policies, providing opportunities for mentorship, overseeing a faculty exit interview process, and including other diversity initiatives in their strategic planning. Deans are supported in their diversity efforts by the offices of Provost Ralph Kuncel and Lynne Davidson, Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity, and by faculty diversity officers appointed within each school or unit.

## **7. Are we developing specific hiring and retention strategies for faculty that help to advance our diversity and inclusiveness initiative?**

We are developing procedures that will encourage faculty search committees to broaden and diversify the pool of candidates considered for each faculty position. The Office of Faculty Development and Diversity has provided information to search committees on new places to post job ads, the usage of more welcoming job ad language, creating networks to find diverse candidates, etc. Moreover, we are pointing out to search committees the essentiality of evaluating the candidates in an unbiased manner. The University has also created a [Special Opportunities Fund](#) to help schools and departments

make more competitive offers for quality candidates who are members of unrepresented groups in their fields.

In order to increase retention of faculty we are implementing changes that take into account the special needs of different groups of faculty members. Specifically, we have introduced a set of new family-friendly policies that include postponement of promotion and tenure reviews for new parents (broadly defined) and provide guidelines for reduced workloads for new parents. These policies can be found in the [Faculty Handbook](#). Moreover, help in identifying employment for spouses or partners and improved tuition benefits have recently been instituted. For a summary of these and other policies please visit our [family-friendly website](#).

In addition, the University offers [faculty development programs for new and early career faculty](#). The programs introduce new faculty to the benefits and resources available on campus and provide a venue in which to address career development issues for all faculty. These programs help connect the faculty to the University community and provide a forum for faculty from different colleges to interact.

### **8. What specific plans will we use to encourage members of the University of Rochester community in their development as faculty members, as potential academic leaders, and as administrators?**

The Vice Provost and Assistant Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity assist all of the schools by providing support and a vehicle for dissemination of information. There is now a University of Rochester faculty development e-newsletter [Faculty Development News](#) published three times a year, as well as a web site featuring campus-wide faculty development and a [diversity events calendar](#). This year, the University hosted a series of interactive events for all new faculty designed to familiarize them with some of the resources available on a campus-wide basis (e.g. support through the promotion process, safety and wellness, helping troubled students). The Senior Associate Provost, Carol Shuherk, holds a separate New Leaders Retreat for newly appointed departmental chairs and senior administrative faculty.

As recommended by the Task Force, most of the support for the development of faculty as potential academic leaders and as administrators occurs through the individual schools or departments. A variety of resources (seminars, workshops, fellowships) exist to support professional development for faculty, and these are showcased in *Faculty Development News*.

### **9. As a faculty member, will my promotion and tenure decisions be affected by the faculty diversity initiative?**

The University has no quotas for rank or tenure, and it strives to make all promotion and tenure decisions in a fair and equitable manner. Faculty related policies are detailed in the [Faculty Handbook](#). The criteria relate to excellence and impact related to research, teaching, and service, not majority or minority status.

## **10. What is the University of Rochester's financial commitment to faculty diversity?**

The Provost has administered a University faculty support fund for many years to assist deans and department chairs in creating competitive recruitment and retention packages for faculty who are members of groups that are underrepresented in their academic fields. As a result of Task Force recommendations, this fund was re-named the [Special Opportunities Fund](#) in 2007. Its size was doubled to \$400,000 in FY2008 and raised to \$500,000 in FY2009. Over the course of the five-year period beginning FY2008, a minimum of \$2.4 million will be available in the Special Opportunities Fund. This supplements resources available in departments and schools.

Each dean that utilizes the Special Opportunities Fund must submit an annual report summarizing progress toward achieving the school's (or department's) diversity goals.

## **11 a. What plans does the University have to help with childcare for faculty members?**

There are two efforts related to childcare currently underway. There is a very preliminary review of the demand for childcare in progress. We are aware that the current facility, Kindercare, is fully subscribed and we are trying to assess the need and capacity for growth in this area.

The University also has a child care referral service for employees. We maintain lists of day care centers, registered homes and UR students (who are child-care providers) and provide these to employees at their request, based on type of provider and location of care needed. For more information on this child care referral service, please contact [Doris Robinson](#), Senior Human Resources Representative

### About Kindercare

University of Rochester Medical Center KinderCare operates the University's on-site day care center. A national leader in managing employer-sponsored childcare centers, KinderCare emphasizes quality and curriculum as the cornerstones of its success in preschool education and childcare service.

KinderCare's curriculum is based on a philosophy of Whole Child Development, centered on the beliefs that children learn through play and that every child is unique and develops in four distinct areas: social, physical, intellectual and emotional. You may visit KinderCare's Web site at [www.kindercare.com](http://www.kindercare.com); to find the URMC KinderCare, enter the zip code location of 14642.

The University also recently implemented new family friendly policies for faculty in order to help promote the recruitment and retention of the best and the brightest faculty by providing the flexibility that will allow faculty to succeed as scholars and teachers despite the stresses of family life. See the [family-friendly web page](#).

**11 b. What plans does the University have to help with other family-care concerns for faculty members?**

Many benefits are available to help you and your family including: family care leave, family medical leave, personal leave, bereavement leave, etc. For more information on faculty leave benefits please refer to the [Faculty Handbook](#) or visit our [family-friendly web site](#).

**12. How will progress toward faculty diversity be assessed and reported to the UR community?**

Annual reports on the status, progress, and challenges of diversity and inclusion initiatives are given to the Board of Trustees, Faculty Senate, and the University community. In addition, progress is continuously reported on the diversity web page. Reporting includes data on current faculty demographics by school and rank, as well as on applicants, recruitment practices, promotions, and departures.

Qualitative studies may be considered in the future as a way to elicit information from faculty about the general climate at the UR, respondent's experience at UR, and their ratings of the efficacy of institutional diversity initiatives being made.

The data from these multiple methodologies will help provide a comprehensive, accurate, intellectually honest view of the quality and success of diversity initiatives at the University of Rochester.

**Have another question? Send your questions, comments and feedback to:**  
**[Office for Faculty Development and Diversity](#)**

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