

Memorandum

TO: Academic Deans and Director

FROM: Charles Phelps, Provost

SUBJECT: Diversity in Faculty Recruiting

DATE: November 16, 1999

Creating a diverse and inclusive university requires that we attend to the issue of diversity in all aspects of the University, ranging from undergraduate student recruiting through graduate student recruiting, faculty hiring and retention, and staff hiring and retention, both within central administrative units and within schools of the University. President Jackson has issued a statement to administrative leaders of the University regarding diversity and associated recruiting at Grade 57 and above. I attach a copy of this memo, and am here asking that you adopt policies within your own settings to ensure that parallel goals and processes (and evaluation of outcomes) are put in place for senior staff hiring within your units.

On the subject of graduate student recruiting, I have asked University Dean of Graduate Studies Bruce Jacobs to coordinate some university-wide efforts to increase the diversity of graduate student populations as well. He will be bringing forth a set of strategies, including increases in the Provost's Minority Fellowship, and in addition, some explicit recruiting approaches for use in individual departments. Nevertheless, there will remain school- and department-specific efforts to increase minority presence in the graduate programs of our schools that will necessarily fall within your purview both for review and (where necessary) funding.

Of central interest in this memo, however, is the issue of faculty recruiting. As we all know, faculty recruiting remains an extremely "local" event, under almost complete control of departments within our schools. This is as it should be: departments have by far the best knowledge of strengths and weaknesses of various candidates, as well as appropriate recruiting strategies to find the best faculty candidates that we might bring to the University.

This "localization" of recruiting also means that any successes we make in increasing the diversity of our faculties in the various schools will necessarily begin with individual departments. The strategies for finding candidates will vary hugely by field and discipline. The networks that may be useful to find promising graduate students whom we might later recruit as faculty members are similarly field-specific. Thus, there can be no single strategy for recruiting minority faculty members, but rather many strategies, possibly as many strategies as we have departments. However, to achieve our goals of

having an appropriately diverse and inclusive faculty, we assuredly must increase our attention to the building of a more diverse faculty.

I am therefore asking you to develop, well before the end of this academic year, a school-based strategy for recruiting that will ensure that we have actively and aggressively sought out potential members who will augment our diversity for every faculty search taking place, beginning now, and throughout the future. This will require in most cases that you ask your department chairs to develop plans within their own fields to accomplish the same thing. Your school's strategy should embrace and support the strategies of departments within your school, and augment them where feasible and desirable.

As we proceed to add to the diversity of our faculty, I wish to be clear that my goals here are to ensure a wide and comprehensive search for candidates, not to alter standards of teaching and scholarship that we would normally embrace. It does neither us nor the candidate any good if we recruit and hire a faculty member who, by lack of preparation and skills, cannot eventually succeed in our academic environment. Thus, I do not intend to set quotas or specific numeric goals for faculty diversity, but rather to ensure that processes are put in place to recruit a diverse pool of candidates vigorously, and to hire them when the search has included minority candidates who meet the quality goals of the department and have interests and skills that augment the department's strategic plans.

A successful faculty recruiting strategy must allow for variations in supply across fields. For example, we know with certainty that some science fields produce only a handful of new PhDs from minority populations in any given year, and that the competition for such persons will likely be quite intense. This does not excuse science fields from the obligation to look intensively for qualified minority faculty, but it also requires that we not put in place rigid quota-like rules that do not take potential supply into account.

I will be including in my performance reviews of each of you the successes you have in creating minority recruiting plans within your schools. In the future, this also implies that my reviews of your performance will include an evaluation of how well these plans have been implemented in future years. This will likely require that you similarly evaluate the performance of your department chairs on the basis of department-specific plans. I will hope to see both a concrete plan for recruiting and a process by which evaluation of success towards the plan's goals can be evaluated. I am asking you to include discussion of these issues in the annual self-appraisal letter I seek from each of you at performance review time.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation in this very important matter.