

RECRUITING AND RETAINING FACULTY OF COLOR AND WOMEN IN COMMUNICATION

SCIENCES AND DISORDERS

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The Problem

According to the 2005 membership data, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association has more than 123,000 members. Responses to the 2005 omnibus survey, the great majority of the ASHA members (81.1%) identify clinical service as their primary employment function. Only 2764 (2.8%) of the 98,728 respondents identified their primary service function as college or university teacher and only 592 (0.6%) identified themselves as a researcher. Only 296 (0.3%) of the respondents indicated that they are doctoral students.

Data from the 2001 survey of the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders, the six-year graduation rate for doctoral students is 41%. There are only 94 doctoral degrees in communication sciences and disorders awarded in a year. Given that across disciplines approximately 52% of doctoral recipients pursue careers in higher education, it was projected that only 48 of the doctoral students would seek careers in higher education in a year. The 2003 Academic needs Assessment of ASHA identified the difficulty recruiting faculty among the three most serious problems faced by academic members (ASHA, 2003).

According to the ASHA omnibus survey, nearly half of all members (50.1%) are aged 45 years and over with 18% being 55 or over. This indicates that within the next few years, over half of the ASHA members will reach retirement age. While it may be assumed that many of the retirees will be faculty, recent data shows that faculty retire later than persons in other service functions. Because of a federal ban on mandatory retirement, senior faculty members are remaining in their careers longer, not only skewing the traditional age, but are leaving fewer opportunities for younger faculty members to take academic positions and move through the

academic ranks.

Communication sciences and disorders is not the only profession facing difficulty in recruiting women and persons of color to academic careers. According to data collected by the American Council on Education (Harvey, 2003) there was a 77.4% increase in the number of women who earned doctoral degrees across disciplines as contrasted to a 31.0% increase for men. According to the same data, there was a 146.3% increase in minority women receiving doctoral degrees against 101.5% minority males, with the largest increases being among Asian American and Hispanics, and nonresident aliens. In the same period women and minority faculty members have both more than doubled their numbers in the past two decades across disciplines.

In spite of these advances, many professions are experiencing shortages of doctoral level faculty for academic positions. The situation in communication sciences and disorders is exacerbated by the large number of women in the profession who have work-life issues impacting on their career decisions. Among ASHA members 93.7% are women and only 6.3% are males. However, 38% of full time faculty are females and 41% are males. The picture is reversed among clinical supervisors where 90% are women and only 10% are men. Women who are completing their doctoral programs are often at a point in their personal lives where home and family conflict with professional issues. They may find it difficult to balance the demands of home with the demands of scholarship as they seek promotion and tenure. The path to tenure often is difficult for women who are balancing parenting with academic life.

Researchers at the University of California at Berkeley (2003) found that at nearly every stage of an academic career, from securing tenure-track positions for achieving associate and full professor status, married women (both with and without young children) leak out of the academic pipeline at a disproportionate rate compared to their male counterparts. After receiving their doctorates, married women with children under the age of six are 50% less likely to enter tenure-track positions than married men with children under the age of six. Women who

do enter the tenure-track positions are 20% less likely than their male counterparts to achieve tenure.

A reason for this difficulty is the academic traditional expectation is a linear career trajectory. Doctoral graduates hired into faculty positions are often expected to have at least the potential to publish research articles. As they progress toward renewal and tenure, the rate of productivity is expected to increase as a signal that the new doctoral faculty is developing a research career. Given that the average age for granting a Ph. D. is 33 years, the rate of scholarly productivity is expected to increase during the years when parenting potential and responsibilities are heaviest. Since American women, including underrepresented minority women continue to have the major responsibility for this work, this expectation has a disproportionate impact on women in the tenure track.

Many programs are seeking to provide increased diversity in the academic faculty. There has been an increase in the number of persons from underrepresented minority groups in CSD doctoral programs. In 2000-2001 12.2% of the students in doctoral programs were from minority groups with the majority being Asian where as only 7.1% of the faculty are from minority groups. Of the 1150 faculty who were included in the survey, only 7.2% or 81 were identified as members of minority groups with many of the faculty clustered in the southern and southwestern regions.

In spite of reports that faculty efforts to recruit and hire minority faculty have been unsuccessful, a recent national study on employment experiences of doctoral graduates of color who had completed their degrees from three prestigious fellowship programs, found that the students of color were not highly sought after and that the bidding wars were vastly overstated. While white candidates with good, but not sterling credentials were routinely considered for faculty positions, minority doctoral graduates with equal credentials were not pursued and were offered 54% fewer positions than their white counterparts (Smith et al, 1996; Olivas, 1994). The qualifications of underrepresented students of color alone are almost irrelevant in the hiring

process. Often personal prejudices, political preferences, prejudices and fears of majority faculty play a large part in final hiring decisions. (De la Luz Reyes & Halcon, 1991).

The Impact

It is becoming increasingly more difficult to identify, recruit, employ and retain faculty in higher education. In 2000-2001 76% of all programs in communication sciences and disorders had open positions and only 68% of the positions were filled by the end of the academic year. The 2000-2001 CAPCSD survey indicated that there is need of an additional 157 faculty in the various programs with a critical need in neurogenics and child language. In March 2006 there were approximately 100 available positions listed on the CAPCSD webpage. By May 15, this number had reduced to 37 indicating that there were at least 37 academic positions unfilled as programs begin to prepare for the coming academic year. In 2000-2001 the CAPCSD demographic survey projected that there would be a need for 130 new faculty by 2007. The gap between the current doctoral graduates seeking academic positions and the projected need continues to grow. It becomes increasingly more difficult to recruit faculty from underrepresented groups to careers in higher education.

The Solution

There are numerous reports that indicate that a significant positive commitment from the institutional leadership to recruit and retain faculty of color and women to academic careers. At Buffalo State College, like many other colleges, there is a commitment in the strategic plan to “recruit and retain a diverse faculty and staff.” The American Council for Education stated in its Agenda for Excellence (2005) that “creating an institutional environment that values the recruitment and retention of an excellent and diverse faculty requires strong leadership and commitment from the institution’s chief executive officer and its entire academic team.”

Lee C. Bollinger, president of Columbia University said at a ceremony marking his \$1.5 million investment in creating a diverse faculty said that “building a diverse university community requires sustained commitment, concerted effort and the attention of all of us” (Bollinger, 2005).

The project funds were used to add 15-20 female and minority scholars in the arts and sciences over the next 3-5 years, to recruit a cluster of new talent to the faculty, to confront work-life issues of a diverse faculty, and to address the recruitment of women and minority faculty in the sciences. A similar program was established at Brown University which will dedicate \$400 million to hire 100 new faculty including 30% from minority groups (Black Issues in Higher Education, 2004).

According to the American Council on Education (2005) report institutional factors that predict success in the recruitment of underrepresented faculty include a core of underrepresented faculty on the board of trustees, in the administration at the dean and vice president level, and in the department. These officers should be involved in aspects of the campus life that include minority faculty and students. Without involvement, the presence of underrepresented administrators may be viewed as for appearance sake only.

Strategies for the Recruitment of Faculty of Color and Women

In an article titled, Interrupting the Usual, Successful Strategies for Hiring and Retaining Diverse Faculty, Sandra Richards reminded us "If you did what you always did, you will get what you always got." Based on the results of hiring patterns for faculty of color at three large elite public research institutions (Richards, 2004), Richards recommends several strategies for the recruitment of faculty from diverse backgrounds.

- Cultivate potential candidates before the search begins.

It is very important to establish a reputation of caring and supporting students and faculty of color before the search begins. Since there will be more openings than available potential faculty, it is important to borrow principles from fund raising. You must build friends before you build funds.

Potential faculty will apply to positions and accept appointments at institutions and departments where they are assured that the environment will be supportive not only at the point of hire, but through the promotion and tenure process. Cultivation can begin by the faculty

showing an interest in working with minority students, attending conferences focused on minority issues such as NBASLH, including diversity in the curriculum, increasing the enrollment and program completion rate of minority students and showing commitment to diversity by using minority superiors in both internal and external clinical situations. It is important to develop a positive relationship with faculty who are able to refer and recommend potential faculty to your institution. Invite faculty from underrepresented groups to the campus for conferences, to provide seminars, to mentor underrepresented students. The more sincere the program appears in the recruitment and support of diverse faculty, the more successful the search will be.

- Post the available opening early.

Many potential applicants begin their search for faculty positions in the year preceding the start date of the position. Getting advertisements and announcements out early allows the position to be available for recruitment at fall conferences, especially the annual ASHA convention. Faculty who are required to relocate for the position prefer to have an offer in hand by early March. This allows them time to organize the household and family move. This timetable indicates that the search process must be aggressive in the fall so that interviews and other components of the process can be completed before March.

- Use diversity indicators in the position description.

Richards (2004) indicates that there can be greater success in hiring faculty from minority groups, if there are diversity indicators including diversity statements in the position description, diversity on the search committee, special initiatives and a record of successful minority hires. Statements such as “experience with a diverse student body or “ability to infuse cultural and linguistic diversity into the curriculum” will attract minority applicants. Institutional profiles that include statements about diversity in the student body, faculty, and/or the community are attractive to minority applicants. In the position descriptions listed on the CAPCSD employment opportunities website such statements included “in a culturally and ethnically diverse community,” “a strong commitment to the principles of diversity,” “we are

committed to excellence and cultural diversity,” “we invite individuals who can contribute to such diversity to apply.”

The availability of child care on campus and the quality of the schools are attractive to female applicants. In a study involving altering the hiring patterns of three research I universities, when one or more of the diversity indicators were used in a total of 689 searches 24% of the new hires were from minority groups.

While all position announcements include the statement that the institution is an affirmative action equal employment opportunity employer (AA/EEOC), such statements are not considered indications of commitments to diversity. Robert Weile, associate provost of Wheaton College said, recruiting is simply a matter of hard work and finally having enough money to make the hires (Wilson, 2000).

- Use special interventions.

Special interventions are sometimes necessary to increase the likelihood of a successful search. These include spousal hires, targeted hires, search waivers and incentive funds. It may be necessary to be able to offer a position or at minimum assistance in seeking employment in the area to attract a faculty member to the program. Inviting such assistance gives applicants assurance that the program is interested in helping make the transition. The availability of employment for a spouse may be the single item that makes a search successful.

Special efforts to identify a potential applicant through cultivation efforts may make it unnecessary to go through the normal recruitment process. Targeting a particular group of doctoral students with particular expertise may be used to identify a promising potential candidate. Once a candidate is identified, it may be possible to request a waiver of the affirmative action search process if the person can be demonstrated to help the campus and the department meet its diversity objectives.

- Structure the interview to meet the needs of the potential faculty.

Include culturally and linguistically diverse colleagues in the community or from other

departments in the search and/or interview process. This is to assure the applicant that there will be a community that will embrace and support the new faculty member. The candidate is interviewing the program as well as vice versa. Be sure to cast the impression that the program is supportive and nurturing while not being condescending.

Provide information on the campus policies for promotion and tenure, professional development, support for research and teaching, available travel support, summer salary opportunities and other benefits about the position. Invite the spouse and children to visit the community and make special efforts to assure them that the community will welcome and support them.

- Closing the Deal.

There are many factors to consider in closing the deal for a minority or woman hire. In addition to salary there are other factors that are important to consider in making a position attractive to a person from an underrepresented minority group or a woman. The salary must be competitive. Some departments believe that they will not be able to hire a minority faculty member because of the need to pay a premium salary which may be higher than other faculty in the program. Recent data shows that minority assistant professors earn less than other faculty.

Salary is not the only measure of compensation. Compensation packages may include benefits which at some institutions are at least 40% over the salary. Opportunities for travel, support for research activities, opportunities for summer salary supplements, sabbatical leaves, and are other means of compensation that may make the offer more attractive. At some institutions there are special funds to support the advancement of women and faculty of color toward tenure and promotion.

The teaching load must allow the faculty time to meet the expectations for teaching and scholarship as well as balance service in the years preceding promotion and tenure. The expectations for teaching load and research and scholarship vary with institutions. Structuring the faculty responsibility to allow time for the necessary productivity for promotion and tenure is

necessary to assure that the faculty once recruited, will stay. Doctoral students should be prepared to understand the differences between types of institutions as a part of their preparation for an academic career.

Strategies for Retention Faculty of Color and Women

Once the deal has been closed, the emphasis moves to retention, promotion and advancement. This must start at the very beginning in order to create an atmosphere where the faculty feel supported. A faculty member who is not made to feel welcome may not wish to continue employment at the institution. There are preventable causes of persons leaving the program or opting not to accept positions at the institution. The following strategies are recommended for retention and promotion of faculty of color and women.

- Create a hospitable environment that welcomes and supports the faculty in meeting the needs of relocating to a new area.

This may mean assistance with finding suitable housing, as well as creating an office space that is welcoming. It is also necessary to provide assistance in securing equipment and materials for the office, ordering textbooks and preparing the course syllabus according to the expectations of the campus, and other means to help with relocation adjustment to the campus. This must be an on-going, not just the first day, program. This may mean identifying other persons of color on campus to provide connections to the community. The persons who were involved in the interviews or consultants to the program may be of assistance with welcoming the new colleague.

- Develop an on-going orientation program, separate from any program conducted by the campus.

It is important to socialize new faculty, particularly women and faculty of color into the academic community. Introduce the new colleague to members of the professional community. Invite them to attend regional speech-language-hearing association meetings. Hold a reception to introduce the new faculty to primary internship supervisors and adjunct faculty. Accompany

the new colleague on visits to off-campus internship sites. Do not assume that these relationships will naturally develop. How new colleagues are welcomed in the first few months of the appointment may influence their decision to remain at the institution.

- Develop an on-going mentoring or career socialization program.

Discuss very early the expectations for yearly progress toward promotion and tenure and the schedule for review. Provide mentoring through the review cycle so that the new colleague is on track toward a successful review. This may mean helping the faculty member make choices about which levels of service would be appropriate for the first year of the appointment. Many faculty of color get involved in supporting students of color and being asked to serve on committees where diversity is needed. However, new faculty members may not know which appointments are in their best interest and which would be best left for another day. It may mean helping the new colleague stay focused on the scholarship productivity perhaps with a mentoring partner. The main purpose is to assist these colleagues toward tenure. If they do not make satisfactory yearly progress, they may not be able to reach this goal.

- Develop programs that help faculty balance work-life issues including child care, elder care, and medical leaves.

Women are often unable to fulfill evening and week end duties or attend professional conferences because of their responsibilities in child care and/or elder care. Assisting faculty in partnering with others for child care, joint research projects, writing projects, team teaching and other creative arrangements may help faculty balance work-life issues such that they are able to progress toward tenure and remain in the academic program.

Particularly for African American, American Indian and Hispanic faculty, the regular search and hiring patterns need to be examined to determine the preventable causes of lack of success. Modifications in search practices, recruitment, retention and advancement of underrepresented faculty of color need to be made if there is to be progress in providing diversity to faculty in communication sciences and disorders.

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