

UPDATE OF BOARD STUDY ON FACULTY DIVERSITY

Submitted for: Information.

Summary: This past summer, IBHE began a study of faculty diversity prompted by a Governor's Executive Order and a recommendation from the Board's own 2001 report *Gateway to Success: Rethinking Access and Success for a New Century*. The new diversity study concentrates on minority faculty, but also examines the representation of female faculty (particularly in male-dominated disciplines) and issues facing faculty with disabilities.

As explained in the August 2002 report, *Study on Faculty Diversity: Plans and Process*, the study of faculty diversity is concerned with three critical issues: 1) the "pipeline" of potential faculty and in-state placement of diverse graduate students; 2) the hiring process and the role of campus leadership in increasing faculty diversity; and 3) the retention of diverse faculty and campus climate. A variety of mechanisms are being used to gather information and opinion on these topics including public hearings, a "Web Hearing" on the Board's home page, focus groups, and meetings with higher education groups and interested persons. This Board item provides an update on activities and information collected.

Action Requested: None.

STATE OF ILLINOIS
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Public Hearings

On September 24, 2002 in Springfield and October 4, 2002 in Chicago, Executive Director Daniel La Vista presided over public hearings on the topic of faculty diversity. A total of eight persons at Springfield and twenty-one persons at Chicago presented oral testimony. Most presenters submitted written testimony, as did seven other persons who mailed remarks to the Board's office. A copy of all written testimony is available at the Board's Web site, www.ibhe.org. The testimony submitted for the public hearings came from majority and minority faculty, graduate students, campus leaders, and program administrators. While the information and opinion ranged over many subjects, certain themes and issues emerged.

First, a number of African-American and Latino faculty members and administrators testified that few minority faculty can be found at Illinois colleges and universities, and the lack of minority faculty has a negative impact upon the increasing number of minority students who attend these institutions. These minority faculty members believe that colleges and universities can increase faculty diversity by changing their recruiting and retention policies and practices, and giving this issue greater priority and urgency. The vast majority of presenters, whatever their race or ethnicity, agreed that institutions had the capability and the moral obligation to increase the diversity of their faculty.

Second, a number of campus and program administrators presented information about "best practices" at their institutions that have yielded results or have promise for increasing faculty diversity. Among the presenters were directors of human resources at Northern Illinois University, Elgin Community College, and Oakton Community College who offered general strategies and practical suggestions to improve recruiting and retention efforts. One unusual initiative sponsored by Oakton was a faculty job fair. This annual fair has increased the number

of hires from members of underrepresented groups and has generated awareness among master's and doctoral students about faculty opportunities at community colleges. At the Springfield hearing, the president, executive vice president, and a faculty member from Parkland College provided information about how innovative strategies and programs have increased faculty diversity at that campus. Taken together, their testimonies offered evidence of how fostering institutional change depends upon making full and coordinated use of personnel at all levels.

The Governor's Executive Order charges the Board to examine two state programs, the Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunity Program (ICEOP) and the Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program (IMGIP), that provide support for minority graduate students and seek to increase the number of minority faculty employed at Illinois institutions. At the hearings, a number of presenters with experience in the administration and operation of these programs provided relevant testimony. This group included staff and board members of IMGIP/ICEOP, academic affairs administrators who use these programs in their faculty recruitment, and one staff member at Carl Sandburg College who had administered an internship program for IMGIP/ICEOP at community colleges. Other persons also testified about campus-based programs for minority graduate students that aim to increase the pool of underrepresented faculty.

Web Hearing

In order to collect information and make use of the widespread availability of the Internet, the Board has instituted its first "Web Hearing." During the first week in November, members of the higher education community received an announcement about the hearing, which is accessible from the Board's home page at www.ibhe.org, and remains open to interested persons who want to present information and opinion. This type of hearing provides persons who cannot attend a scheduled public hearing the opportunity to participate in the Board's inquiry. The Board will end the Web Hearing on January 1, 2003. Twenty-seven persons submitted information via the Web Hearing during its first week. Subsequent Board updates on the faculty diversity study will provide a summary of the completed testimony.

The Web Hearing invited responses to a series of questions on the three main research topics discussed above, as well as a general question that asks for any other information, comments, or ideas that the presenter wishes to submit. A number of open-ended questions for respondents were listed under each topic. For example, under the heading "Hiring Process and Campus Leadership" testifiers are asked to provide information and ideas about best practices; search processes; statewide programs and policies; and the roles and activities of presidents, provosts, and deans.

Through the Web Hearing, the Board hopes to gather information and opinion on faculty diversity from Illinois higher education faculty and, especially, faculty who are members of underrepresented groups. Diverse faculty members from all types of groups (minority, female, and disabled) and institutions (community colleges, public universities, and private institutions) are encouraged to participate. The hearing directs questions under each issue and topic to members of underrepresented groups seeking to draw upon their rich personal experience. For instance, under the "pipeline" topic, members of underrepresented groups are asked, "At what point in your educational career did you decide to pursue a career as a faculty member? What factors influenced that decision?"

In order to better analyze the information submitted, the Web Hearing requests that each participant provide some background information about his or her professional role and experience, institutional affiliation, and identifying characteristics, such as gender and

race/ethnicity. This information will allow the Board to aggregate the information in various ways, for example, separating out information submitted by Latino or African-American faculty from information by White administrators, or faculty with disabilities. Since the information is collected via the World Wide Web, and not by email, all presenters are assured the information they submit is anonymous.

Focus Groups and Other Meetings

On October 10, 2002, Executive Director Daniel LaVista convened a focus group of about 25 leaders from Illinois public universities, community colleges, and private institutions on the topic of “Campus Leadership and Faculty Diversity.” Participants included presidents, provosts, deans, and other campus leaders, including Latino and African-American leaders, who have advanced faculty diversity on their own campus. Daniel LaVista asked the participants to consider the following issues:

- How should a campus leader work with the institution’s board of trustees on faculty diversity? What is the most appropriate and effective way for trustees to be involved?
- What is the most effective language to use in incorporating diversity goals into an institution’s campus mission and strategic plan?
- What are the most effective ways for campus leaders to communicate their expectations for faculty diversity to deans, department chairs, faculty, and staff?
- How can campus leaders best use planning, budgetary, and personnel evaluation mechanisms to support faculty diversity?

Discussion in the focus group centered on the kinds of decisions that top campus leadership should consider in order to enhance the recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty. The discussion is not easily summarized, in part, because of the wide variety of institutional experience and examples. Many participants emphasized the importance of communication both in working with an institution’s board of trustees and with faculty, staff, and students. Members of the group also stressed that a campus must establish faculty diversity as a goal in its mission statement and strategic plans. One public university provost offered that there were “three essentials” to follow: providing an “intellectual foundation” for the initiative through use of national, state, and campus studies; ensuring support of the institution’s board of trustees; and attending to the “campus climate” for underrepresented faculty. A community college administrator added that working to win acceptance and support for this effort from the outside community was also of great importance.

On December 5, 2002, the Illinois Board of Higher Education convened a focus group on the topic of the search process. This meeting had not yet taken place at the time these Board materials were prepared. Future updates on the faculty diversity study will provide information about this meeting. Those invited to participate included deans, department chairs, and affirmative action officers from Illinois public universities, community colleges, and private institutions. An academic hiring decision, at least for a tenure-track faculty member, emanates from the deliberations of a search committee. How search committees are organized and led, as well as how they recruit, identify, and select candidates, have critical importance for faculty diversity. Past changes to improve search performance centered on recruitment. More recently, some have advocated making structural changes in the search process itself, for instance, by broadening position descriptions, seeking candidates from less traditional academic backgrounds, and training members of search committees.

In addition to the above meetings, during the past few months Illinois Board of Higher Education staff have also met or scheduled meetings with various groups and interested persons. Groups include the Illinois Committee on Black Concerns in Higher Education (ICBCHE), the Illinois Latino Council on Higher Education (ILACHE), and staff and board members from ICEOP/IMGIP. In addition, Board staff, with the help of members of higher education constituency groups and other higher education administrators and faculty, held or scheduled small group discussions with students, African-American faculty, Latino faculty, faculty with disabilities, and female faculty working in science and technology disciplines. The ICBCHE and ILACHE groups offered valuable assistance in organizing and coordinating many of these activities and providing counsel to Board staff about its plans and processes. ICBCHE and ILACHE plan to issue statements on faculty diversity. These documents will be placed on that section of the Board's Web site devoted to testimony from the public hearings.