

Florida Gulf Coast University

Office of the Provost

Academic Affairs Diversity Recruitment and Retention Model

The Division of Academic Affairs made a more intentional commitment to diversity and inclusion in October of 2019. To effect this commitment, diversity and inclusion was added to Dr. Tony A. Barringer's responsibilities in the Office of the Provost. The primary focus of the new responsibility is to develop and foster initiatives that would assist the University with its goal of recruiting and retaining faculty of color; especially Black faculty. After assuming the new responsibility, several concept meetings were held with various stakeholders across the campus. The stakeholders included both offices and individuals who were viewed as critical in developing and initiating recruitment and retention initiatives. The concept meetings concluded in the Fall of 2019, and a strategy was developed to serve as a roadmap for creating effective and tangible results. One revelation that manifested from the discussions and meetings was that an effective plan would have to identify barriers that exist that have contributed to the lack of diversity in the faculty ranks as well as internal and external changes necessary to foster the desired result(s).

Statement of principle:

Although the common rhetoric in academia is that we want a diverse faculty and staff but, our actions and practices indicate otherwise. A commitment to attract and retain a more diverse faculty, staff and administration requires academic leaders at all levels to be courageous and intentional in developing new strategies to meet that commitment. Furthermore, governing bodies need to be vigilant and supportive of such initiatives.

Potential barriers to recruiting and retaining faculty of color:

- Limited access and success in higher education for underrepresented minorities
- Limited or lack of support network for existing minority faculty
- Slow turnover rate for faculty contributes to a strain of diversifying
- Constitution of search committees: Search committees must be diverse in their composition. If there are a limited number of minorities on campus, use community individuals for representation
- Lack of in-depth training for search committees; especially the chairs as they usually set the tone

- Job vacancy announcements. Implement modifications such as; “Best qualified” vs. “Person who best meets the needs of the institution.” All based on the expectations developed by the hiring area
- Minimum qualifications not relevant to the responsibilities of the job
- Lack of nurturing and support programs for minority faculty
- Lack of the department’s effort to socialize (embrace) the new minority faculty member
- Lack of a diversity pipeline in which to recruit. Efforts should be made to develop and/or discover such a pipeline

Strategies:

- Coordinate with human resources, academic units, and the OIEC to make sure that candidates from underrepresented groups are being fairly considered
- Create a support network for minority faculty.
- Create a mentoring program through BFSA
- Creation of a Center on Critical Race and Ethnic Studies
- Creating a visiting minority scholar’s program
- Enhance alliances with minority-focused organizations i.e., McKnight scholars, McNair, Florida Georgia Louis Stokes Graduate Program to build a more robust pipeline
- Encourage cluster hires of minority faculty
- Implement a talent acquisition protocol by utilizing waivers, etc.
- Institute an FGCU Minority Faculty Development Program to encourage, incentivize, and assist FGCU minority faculty and staff to pursue doctorate degrees and commit to return to FGCU upon completion of the degree.

Summary of activities since the initiative started

In collaboration with other Divisions on campus, numerous tangible outcomes have occurred since Academic Affairs’ diversity and inclusion initiative started. The following are notable results:

- The establishment of the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA)
- The creation of the Center for Critical Race and Ethnicity Studies
- Florida Education Fund (McKnight Scholars Program) agreeing to accept applications from FGCU’s Ed.D. program. This is a new arrangement as FEF has never supported the Ed.D. for funding.
- Faculty and Administrators have presented and chaired panels at the McKnight annual meeting(s) to recruit faculty of color
- Discussions with OIEC about using waivers for talent acquisition

The above activities/efforts have been very strategic with the intent to develop and strengthen potential faculty of color pipelines, provide support for current faculty and to appeal to potential candidates with support networks in place for faculty of color. There's much work to be done but the above strategies and actions speak to the commitment of Academic Affairs to faculty diversity and inclusion.