Best Practices in Retaining Faculty of Color
UD ADVANCE Faculty of Color Roundtable 12/10/2020

Panelists

Denise Sekaquaptewa, University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor of Psychology, and Faculty Associate at the Research Center for Group Dynamics in the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Regina Wright, Associate Professor, School of Nursing; Associate Dean for Diversity and Chief Diversity Advocate, College of Health Sciences; UD ADVANCE Fellow, University of Delaware

Jennifer Joe, Whitney Family Professor of Accounting, Cohen Family Lerner Director of Diversity and Chief Diversity Advocate at the University of Delaware

Aída Hurtado, Professor and Luis Leal Endowed Chair, Dept. Of Chicana and Chicano Studies, Associate Dean for Social Sciences, University of California, Santa Barbara

Best Practices in retaining faculty of color (FOC) follow the same general guidelines as for retention of all faculty (see UD ADVANCE Institute Retention Manual[†]). Since FOC are in the minority group of most departments, and since their backgrounds are often somewhat different from that of the majority, efforts at retention of this group must be done intentionally, and with a better understanding of some of the pressures that they may feel, and the issues that they have faced.

- Being a member of a very small group in the department, or worse, a solo faculty of color, carries with it added anxiety and stress. The FOC feel they are exemplars for their race/gender/ethnic group. This pressure is often unacknowledged in institutional culture and the silence around this added stress may negatively affect broader efforts to recruit and retain FOC.

- It is likely that FOC have already experienced race- and gender-based micro-aggressions throughout their educational trajectories. These experiences are further reinforced rather than obliterated when they enter the professional realm.

- FOC's commitment to helping other FOC and similarly situated students is rarely recognized or meritorious. This "invisible labor" should be recognized and valued.

[†]*UD ADVANCE Institute Retention Manual: https://sites.udel.edu/advance/faculty-retention/retention-manual/ (accessed Jan. 19, 2021).*

Best Practices for Retention - Chairs and Colleagues.

1. Be intentional about being welcoming. Look for commonalities even as we recognize our differences. This will help address feelings of isolation, not being a good fit, solo status, etc. of FOC. Departments should openly take the position that the FOC they hire are an asset that enhances the department at all levels—creativity, research productivity, effective training, outstanding teaching, and overall excellence.

2. Be intentional about mentoring – not just academic/research mentoring. Help FOC acclimate to the environment, understand university and departmental norms, etc. Be aware, too, that FOC have valuable experiences and knowledge that can improve departmental culture for everyone.

3. Sometimes superiors shy away from providing negative feedback and/or guidance to FOC as to how they can improve. Effective and clear evaluation is essential for the success of all faculty. This includes precise steps for the faculty member to follow to address any possible shortcomings.

4. Facilitate FOC's effectiveness in creating academic and informal networks. URMs have fewer offers for collaboration, are less likely to be invited to prestigious conferences, and are often excluded from social invitations of colleagues. Recognize that lack of access impacts careers and engage in addressing this area.

5. Publicly recognize work and successes of all colleagues. FOC may conduct research in non-traditional areas, so efforts should be made to ensure their research and accomplishments are brought into the main functioning of the department. Inclusion can be accomplished through public acknowledgement of publications, honors, and research grants.

6. Collegiality is central to inclusion, which can be accomplished through a departmental culture of acknowledging everyone's humanity. A department is a team where every member needs to be openly valued. Department Chairs can set a climate of collegiality by simple acts of courtesy. Check in with all colleagues and make sure they feel appreciated. A culture/climate of collegiality can be created through regular department lunches, social invitations to different groups of faculty, and by celebrating collective successes.

7. Institutional diversity efforts are often placed on FOC. Chairs can monitor and moderate the amount of service demands on FOC so as to protect their time. Assign and encourage them to accept service work that will promote their career progression and leadership opportunities. Stipends should be considered when extraordinary committee work is assigned. It merits repeating, that validating and publicly acknowledging service is a powerful tool to legitimizing such work. FOC, like other faculty, should be given credit for their ideas and service work. This can be done interpersonally in individual and department meetings as well as institutionally, in formal Chair's letters and personnel reviews.

8. Department Chairs have substantial influence in moderating and extinguishing undesirable norms and behaviors. There should be public acknowledgement that certain types of speech, jokes, or even nonverbal detrimental actions are not tolerated in a professional setting. Encourage positivity and micro-affirmations.