

Successful Strategies for Diversifying the Faculty

Good morning. Buenos Dias.

I am pleased to discuss with you the strategies I have either used or seen used on other university campuses in diversifying the faculty. But before I do that, let's review the data to determine the state of affairs of faculty of color at colleges and universities.

In fall 2013, there were 1.5 million faculty members in degree-granting postsecondary institutions. Fifty-one percent were full-time and 49% were part-time. Of the full-time faculty in 2013, 79% were White compared to 77% in 2007; 6% were Black compared to 7.5% in 2007; 5% were Latino compared to 2.9% in 2007; and 10% were Asian compared to 7.6% in 2007. Staying static from 2007 to 2013, American Indian/Alaska Natives represent less than 1%. So between 2007 and 2013 we have seen very little improvement.

I have served as an administrator and college president at institutions that are either HSIs and/or Minority Serving Institutions. But these definitions of our institutions are based on the students we serve and not on the actual environment these institutions provide. As a matter

of fact, while many institutions may be filled with students of color, they continue to operate with policies and procedures of predominantly white institutions. They are operating based on the historic foundation that our higher education students are 17-21 years of age, studying full-time with no outside responsibilities. While we know that this is not true today, many of those who work at our institutions continue to be anchored in this belief.

It is also important to highlight the fact that diversifying the faculty is an ongoing process. This is not something you say you will do in a year and then stop. If you are serious about this, it must be an institutional goal with a plan that is intentional, consistent, and measureable – and individuals need to be held accountable.

Thus any efforts to diversify the faculty must be anchored in first continuously educating the campus community as to why changing our institutions and diversifying the faculty is important to all students in the 21st century and beyond. We must be Chief Reminder Officers, underscoring why diverse communities and faculty are important. Yes it is true that a diverse faculty is important to students of color so they can

see individuals like themselves in positions of power and who serve as role models. However, it is just as important for all students to engage with a diverse faculty if they are to be truly prepared to enter an ever-changing global world and become global citizens. Further, let's not forget that when you bring together a diverse faculty to engage in their academic disciplines through their research, the research becomes richer, new discoveries are made, and solutions to global issues are enhanced.

One very recent example of this is when one of my practicing scholars at Fullerton did her research on uncovering the histories of Chicanas on the border who were entrepreneurs, songwriters, and community leaders. Their stories were absent and invisible in history, and her research highlighted not only their accomplishments, but also the lessons to be learned from their lives. Further, when scientists of color started to look at women and people of color, they were able to identify the difference of heart disease between women and men; the issues of diabetes and sickle cell anemia among Latinos and African Americans. Research conducted out of UCLA highlighted that faculty of color are the ones who are engaged with their students in service

learning, high-impact practices, and undergraduate research – all factors that enhance retention and graduation for all students.

Finally, through this education process, the campus community must understand the students they serve. At one of the institutions I served as president—and Cal State Fullerton is my third, so you won't know which one—the faculty and staff were not aware of their students' demographics, which communities they came from, and our graduation and retention rates. Consequently, they were surprised when, in my convocation address, I spoke about the need to increase graduation rates. My point here is that on our campuses, we can't just begin speaking about diversifying the faculty without discussing the importance of doing so and educating the campus community. Let's remember that there is resistance on our campuses; people tend to hire people who are like them; and yes, some individuals are afraid of the changing demographics and the majority becoming the minority. Thus, it is important that the first step is educating the campus community and engaging in informed data and dialogue.

The president must also use the bully pulpit to speak about the importance of a diverse faculty – this is not an issue just for academic affairs. I am proud to say that my senior team of vice presidents are the best in the business in their respective fields, and together represent one of the most diverse such teams in the nation. My Provost is Latino, my VP for Student Affairs is African American, my VP for University Advancement is Caucasian, my VP for Finance and Administration is Asian American, my VP for Information Technology is Middle Eastern, and I created a new Division VP for Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion, and she is African American. Finally, my chief-of-staff is Caucasian, grew up in Mexico City, and is fluent in Spanish. There are three men and four women on the team. I share all of this because you can't ask individuals to recruit, hire, and retain a high-quality and diverse group unless you are willing to walk the talk yourself. As president, I must role model the behavior and the actions.

Further, the importance of a diverse faculty must be underscored in your university documents. At Cal State Fullerton, we created the first ever Strategic Plan for the University. The plan consists of four goals—

the first two are centered on student success, and the fourth revolves around philanthropic endeavors—with the third goal aiming to “Recruit and retain a high-quality and diverse faculty and staff.” In regards to that goal, here is what we state in our Strategic Plan:

“Cal State Fullerton aims to become a model of faculty and staff inclusivity, diversity and engagement in order to better serve our diverse student population. To this end we will develop a Diversity Action Plan to cultivate an environment that honors differences in various forms – race, ethnicity, gender, age, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs and status within the University. We will also develop effective processes and procedures to support recruitment, hiring, and retention, and increase professional and leadership development opportunities available across career stages.”

Goal 3 Objectives:

- Assess the campus climate and utilize results to identify and implement retention and engagement strategies.
- Implement effective and systematic faculty and staff recruitment and retention programs.

- Align Cal State Fullerton faculty demographics with national pools of appropriately qualified applicants.
- Provide additional training programs and increase opportunities for professional development available to post-tenure faculty and staff to promote career advancement.

Goal 3 Strategies:

1. Create and implement a Diversity Action Plan to improve recruitment and retention and to foster an inclusive environment.
2. Enhance professional and leadership development opportunities to better support retention and engagement throughout all career stages.

Thus far I have provided the following strategies to diversify faculty: First, to continuously educate your campus as to the importance of a diverse faculty, and to engage in dialogue. Second, the president must use the bully pulpit to speak about hiring a diverse faculty and staff and walk the talk. And third, ensure that your important university documents highlight the goal of diversifying the faculty and staff and

that there are processes in place and review of the data.

Institutions across the county highlight the importance of providing a welcoming environment for all and having an individual spearheading the effort by using different models. Some have chief diversity officers; others have it housed in student affairs or academic affairs.

Traditionally, in the Cal State system, human resources for academic affairs is in the provost office while human resources for staff is housed in the administration and finance division. Nine times out of 10, these two individuals work in silos, are really transactional positions rather than strategic, and report to two different vice presidents.

Upon my arrival at Cal State Fullerton, I created a different model. I reshaped the associate vice president in administration and finance, whose portfolio included human resources among other responsibilities, to a vice president reporting to the president. The position's title is vice president for Human Resources, Diversity, and Inclusion, (VP HRDI). I wanted to ensure that this individual was at the table, working alongside all the vice presidents; someone who would see our most precious asset in educating our students—our

faculty and staff—through the eyes of diversity and equity; and I wanted to send the message that diversifying and retaining our faculty and staff is so important, the job is led by a vice president that sits at the cabinet with the president. I do have my scars, and it is a work in progress. However, this individual plays a very important role on our campus.

First, she has worked alongside our provost, academic deans, and Academic Senate to put into place a process on recruiting faculty. While the academics are expert in their disciplines, this VP is an expert in human resources and recruiting. The process includes setting up a proactive recruitment plan that is reviewed and approved by the dean and the provost before they go out to recruit. The VP HRDI also reviews it and discusses any issues with the Provost. The plan also includes the presentation of a workshop by HRDI in recruiting a diverse pool. It is important that the department understands what a proactive recruitment process is. They are assisted in understanding that it is not only placing the

position announcement online in *The Chronicle* or their disciplinary journals.

It is about HRDI providing information on that discipline. HRDI, for example, provides department chairs the number of graduates with doctorates in the field they are seeking to fill, describes what diversity is in that field, and provides a list of the institutions that are graduating these students. They assist the department chairs by reaching out and contacting those departments that graduate a diverse pool, and by having the chair explain why Cal State Fullerton would be an excellent place for their graduates.

For those of you who have worked with graduate faculty, you may know how protective they are of their graduates and that they work diligently to place them. It is also about visiting the ethnic chapters in the disciplinary conferences and reaching out to the Latino Caucus, the African American Caucus, and others at, for example, the American Psychological Association. Many disciplinary organizations have ethnic chapters.

It is also important to think outside of the box. Is it a discipline where we can go outside of traditional higher education? Are there individuals from the industry, may it be from business, engineering, computer science, or the arts, who have been fortunate to retire early or just want a career change? Are we working with organizations like the PhD Project whose mission is to increase the diversity of business schools? Are we identifying those students who have the potential to become faculty members and sponsoring them through doctoral programs? We have such a program in the Cal State System, and when I was in New Jersey, we identified, for example, an adjunct who taught in business and economics and sponsored a Latina student through the state doctoral program, allowed her to continue teaching as an adjunct, and promised her a tenure-track position upon graduation. Our process also includes the necessity of having a diverse hiring committee, the review of the position announcement, and the necessity to gain approval to bring candidates for on-site interviews.

I will pause here to also emphasize that we must stop buying into elitism. As we sit in search committees, we need to evaluate the academic strength of the individual; the talents this individual brings to the students, the department, and the institution; and the true qualifications needed to be a successful faculty member with the students the institution serves. We must remember that even today, over 50% of Latinos begin their educational journey at a community college, and if they pursue higher education, they transfer to a four-year institution. Many African Americans also attend community colleges in large numbers, HBCUs, and even HSIs.

If we are truly committed to hiring a diverse faculty, we must stop judging an individual by the institutions they attended while finally obtaining their PhD. We all have examples of brilliant and impactful professors who attended community colleges, state colleges, HSIs, or HBCUs that are the best in their fields. Yet I have seen search committees eliminate individuals because they didn't attend the so-called elite or high-ranking institutions. Sometimes

people become so impressed with the Stanfords and Yales of the world, we forget that there are strong academic doctoral programs at institutions that are not considered elite. I also find it amazing that the qualifications sometimes included as requirements for new faculty members cannot be attained by some of the individuals who are presently serving as faculty members and who wouldn't make the cut themselves. Deans and department chairs must have deep and honest discussions about what are the necessary qualifications for the position before the search starts, and stop the elitist standards.

Once the committee selects individuals to bring to campus for the interview, they must submit to the dean and provost the names and vitae of the candidates. They can send the committee back to the drawing board if the pool is not diverse. And at Cal State Fullerton, we are realistic about the discipline. If we know that there are very few candidates of color in a particular field, we don't ask for the impossible, but if it is in a discipline such as education, sociology

or even biology, we must stress the importance of a diverse pool.

Once the candidates are on campus, it is about having them see a diverse student body and faculty, and allowing them to ask these individuals questions. If the campus is not diverse, how do you ensure a welcoming environment for this faculty member and her family? We need to sell our institution as to why this is a place faculty of color want to be.

Are we perfect? Far from it. When I arrived at Cal State Fullerton in 2012, of our nearly 800 tenure/tenure track faculty members, 67% were Caucasian. This fall, it is 65%. We have increased our Latino faculty from 7% to 8.4%, our African American faculty sits at 3%, and our Asian American faculty is 21%. Our student body is almost 40% Latino, 2% African American, 21% Asian American and 35% Caucasian. While we know we must be consistent and intentional, we also know that we have a process in place that underscores our commitment. We are trying to constantly improve, we are continuing with a comprehensive, intentional plan

and we are holding people accountable.

In addition to all of this, at my annual evaluation of the provost, I discuss the number of faculty we have hired in the year and what has been accomplished. We discuss the reasons for the successes, challenges, and lost opportunities. I hold the Provost accountable for the diverse faculty. He, in turn, holds his academic deans accountable. Just like we hold people accountable for the budget and the operations of the division, we also must hold our administrators accountable for their efforts in diversifying and retaining the faculty and staff.

Further, I have included the academic deans; the chair of the planning, resource and budget committee; and the student government president along with my cabinet in a group I call the President's Advisory Board. In our meetings, which take place very six weeks, we talk about many things, including the recruitment, retention, and promotion of a diverse faculty and staff, providing data and allowing for discussion.

We understand that this is a process, and that we can learn from others. What I will tell you is that we must be consistent and intentional. It is about making this a priority. This is not rocket science. As I learned from my Chicana/o friends, it is about “teniendo ganas!” Do I have scars? You bet I do. There are comments on my campus about me being too student-centered or speaking too much about the diversity of our students, faculty and staff. There are rumors that I only hire Latinos – they haven’t looked at my administrative team. But when we as a team have the results we have had; that the individuals I have hired and many others who were there before I arrived are passionate about our students, our institution, our mission and yes our faculty and staff; that we increased six-year graduation rates from 51% to 61% in just three years; that we have decreased the achievement gap from 12% to 9% in three years; that we are number 1 in California in graduating Latinos with bachelor’s degrees and fifth in the nation; and number five in the nation in graduating underrepresented students with a

bachelor's degree; that we have hired 150 tenure and tenure track faculty in three years and that 20% of the faculty are new hires; and that we increased our fund-raising from \$7 million to over \$17 million in three years, there is no arguing about our results. I look forward to our discussion. Thank you