

Diversifying Eastern's Faculty for Student Success

Preamble: Why We Changed Our Proposal Topic

The committee initially started by increasing our understanding of HIPs, and their effectiveness. This led us to an article "Academic Engagement and Student Success: Do High-Impact Practices Mean Higher Graduation Rates?" which reported that though high-impact practices enjoy wide-spread use across different types of institutions, they have limited relationship with graduation rates. Furthermore, it was found that the effectiveness of HIPs was based on the context of the institution, and that public institutions benefit the least. We then researched the four listed high impact practices from the Provost's suggestions: study abroad, undergraduate research, community projects and internships. We found the following:

community projects: EIU engages its students in community projects through its office of Civic Engagement and Volunteerism. According to the [2018-2019 report](#), volunteers worked with 75 partner agencies, for 125,000 hours, and 400 volunteer opportunities. In addition, incoming freshmen are initiated through the JumpStart2Give event during opening weekend. Hence, it was the consensus of the committee, that this proposal was satisfied through current programming.

study abroad: Information obtained from the EIU's Study Abroad Office, revealed that during the 2018-19 academic year, 74 EIU students studied abroad. Of which, 31% were students of color, including 11% African American and 14% Asian/Pacific Islander. Nationwide, approximately 6% of all students who study abroad are African American and 8% are Asian/Pacific Islander. Hence, EIU's African American students studied abroad at nearly double the national rate during the last academic year. Additionally, 66% of the students who studied abroad last year identify as female & 12% are non-US citizens. For 2019-20 programs, the office has received a total of 67 student applications to date. Of these 31(46%) are from students of color, and 33% are from African American students, a good indication that the office may have an even higher rate of African American students who study abroad this year. About 50% of students who applied for study abroad last year, but later dropped their program, cited cost and lack of funding as their reason for dropping. Hence, cost remains a barrier to studying abroad.

undergraduate research: Tracking down undergraduate research at EIU was deemed challenging given that there is not a central office which tracks this.

internships: It was determined that moving internships earlier in the student's academic career will not be useful given the inherent need for students to have accumulated some content knowledge prior to engaging in internships. Furthermore, EIU has a high proportion of transfer students, who would effectively not benefit from an earlier sequencing.

Proposal summary for Quality Initiative Project

1. **Provide a title and brief description of the Quality Initiative. Explain whether the initiative will begin and be completed during the Quality Initiative period or if it is part of work already in progress or will achieve a key milestone in the work of a longer initiative.**

Title: *Diversifying Eastern Faculty for Student Success*. This initiative will begin during the quality initiative period and will continue, at least in part, indefinitely.

2. **Explain why the proposed initiative is relevant and significant for the institution.**

Rationale:

- a. According to the EIU 2018 Factbook, 36.82% of the EIU student body are students of color (“minority” students identifying other than white.) Among them, 14.84% identify as African American, and 10.52% as Latinx. These are the two populations of college students expected to grow in the coming decade. At the same time, we have a faculty that is 75.1% white, with only 4.7% identifying as Black or African American and 2.0% identifying as Latinx. The USC Race and Equity Center recently issued a [report card](#) of public universities in all 50 States, according to which EIU received an A for recruitment of African American students and a D for Black student to Black faculty ratio (57:1). The disparity is likely even more pronounced if one excludes adjunct faculty.
- b. The disparity between student and faculty representation presents a major stumbling block to the success of students from underrepresented groups. According to Michael Benitez, et al., “Students of color understand on the level of lived experience that the paucity of faculty of color diminishes their sense of belonging on predominantly white campuses, eroding their resilience and resolve over time.”¹ Our recent RISE Conference keynote speaker, Dr. Mary F. Howard-Hamilton of Indiana State University’s Department of Educational Leadership, argued in her address that students must see themselves reflected in their faculty in order to imagine their own academic success. Dr. Jeraldo Jackson of University of Wisconsin at Madison presented EIU faculty, administrators, and staff a similar message during the Diversity Dialogues of Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 2019, an event sponsored by President Glassman and his Diversity Advisory Committee.

¹ Benitez, Michael, Mary James, Kazi Joshua, Lisa Perfeti, and S. Brooke Vick. “‘Someone Who Looks Like Me’: Promoting the Success of Students of Color by Promoting the Success of Faculty of Color.” Text. Association of American Colleges & Universities, May 25, 2017. <https://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2017/spring/benitez>.

- c. EIU's difficulty in recruiting and retaining faculty of color cannot be reduced merely to location. As Dr. Jackson pointed out in his presentations, much also rests on institutional commitments (i.e., allocation of resources), institutional structures, and institutional culture. The composition and priorities of search committees, and the training of search committee members, constitute a major obstacle to even bringing faculty to campus. Darryl G. Smith, et al., for example, have identified the need to "interrupt the usual" in faculty hiring, but which they mean "examining and changing how regular search and hiring processes are conducted" as an essential strategy in hiring faculty from underrepresented groups.²

Enhancing programming for students of color, while important, will inevitably be limited in its success in recruiting and retaining diverse students unless we address the structural deficiencies in the composition of our faculty first or concurrently.

We therefore propose a group of activities aimed at diversifying the EIU faculty. Our proposal would include all or some of the following components, depending on support:

- i. **Establishment of an explicit procedure for creating diverse search committees** for faculty and staff searches. By normalizing the inclusion of at least one member outside a department on a search and the inclusion of students, we could at least ensure that search committees always include some racial diversity. These procedures can also include a formal training program to prepare faculty and administrators to serve as advocates for equity-mindedness in the hiring process.³
- ii. **A one- or two-year postdoc** modeled in part on the one at UIUC, which is explicitly aimed at "supporting individuals from under-represented groups who are promising candidates for campus faculty positions." Such a program would work like a rotating Unit B position. Departments would apply to the VPAA. Postdocs would have both teaching and research duties, would have an assigned mentor (or perhaps two), and would be encouraged to consider careers at regional comprehensives in general and EIU in particular. We would hope that some post-docs might end up on the tenure-track at EIU, but even if they don't, during their time here they would increase diversity in the faculty in the

² Daryl G Smith., Caroline S. Turner, Nana Osei-Kofi, and Sandra Richards. "Interrupting the Usual: Successful Strategies for Hiring Diverse Faculty." *The Journal of Higher Education* 75, no. 2 (March 1, 2004): 156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2004.11778900>.

³ One model for such a program might be North Dakota State University's Advocates and Allies program, developed as part of the FORWARD initiative aimed at improving the climate for women-identifying faculty in their STEM fields, for which they received an NSF grant. See https://www.ndsu.edu/forward/about_forward/

departments in which they teach and provide a visible sign of our commitment to an inclusive faculty.

iii. **A short-term Visiting Scholars program** (2-7 day visits), modeled on the one at WIU, which is explicitly aimed at increasing recruitment and retention of faculty from underrepresented groups. We see the potential of this program primarily in its value for students as an enhancement of their educational experience, and secondarily as playing a role in recruiting faculty. However, if combined with the final component of our proposal, it might play a greater role in recruiting diverse faculty. The Visiting Scholar program might bring doctoral candidates, early career scholars, or even established faculty to campus for a few days to give a public lecture and visit several classes. Like the postdoc, we anticipate this program rotating among departments.

iv. **Increased emphasis on EIU's participation in the [Diversifying Faculty in Illinois program](#).** DFI is a state-mandated program run through IBHE, the purpose of which is to increase the representation of minority faculty at Illinois's four and two-year institutions of higher learning. DFI involves a fellowship program to support students pursuing graduate work toward a career in higher education. The students are required to seek employment in Illinois upon graduation. While we have been successful in having students apply for and receive these fellowships in the past (see [here](#)), we propose asking the Provost to solicit applications each year to increase campus-wide awareness. We also suggest a web page added to some section of the web site profiling all our previous recipients of the fellowship, and possibly some kind of "applicant bank" where graduates of the DFI (not just from EIU, but across the state) can get targeted emails regarding openings at EIU for which they may be qualified. Graduates of the DFI program would make excellent candidates for #2 or #3 above, as well.

3. **Explain the intended impact of the initiative on the institution and its academic quality.** Research have shown that faculty of color tend to engage in scholarship and practices that support a diverse student population (Umbach, 2006). In addition, they tend to engage more with students in general, and on diversity issues more specifically and emphasize higher order cognitive experiences more than their White counterparts. Generally, structural diversity leads to positive student outcome. Given the increasing trend towards a more diverse student population, any long-term plan to recruit and retain these students must include a change to diversity of the faculty who interact, educate, and mentor them.

4. **Describe the purposes and goals for the initiative.**

- a. To increase the physical and visual presence of faculty of color in the classroom
- b. To increase the sense of empowerment among an increasingly diverse student population by seeing themselves reflected in people in position of power in the academy

- c. To enhance academic achievement, retention and graduation for students of color
 - d. To enhance the educational experience of majority students who will enter an increasingly diverse workforce
- 5. Select up to three main topics that will be addressed by the initiative.**
- a. Diversity
 - b. Underserved populations
 - c. Workforce
- 6. Describe how the institution will evaluate progress, make adjustments and determine what has been accomplished.**
- a. Tracking the diversity of final candidates from search committees (diverse/not diverse)
 - b. Campus climate survey with disaggregated data
 - c. Feedback from faculty participant on student engagement and scholarship
 - d. Annual tracking of DFI recipient
- 7. Describe the level of support for the initiative by internal or external stakeholders.**
- 8. Identify the groups and individuals that will lead or be directly involved in implementing the initiative**
- a. Provost Office, including Office of Civil Rights and Diversity
 - b. AVPAA
 - c. Deans
 - d. Department chairs
 - e. Graduate coordinators

Sources

<https://race.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Black-Students-at-Public-Colleges-and-Universities-A-50-State-Report-Card-Harper-and-Simmons-1-9-26.pdf>

Daryl G Smith., Caroline S. Turner, Nana Osei-Kofi, and Sandra Richards. "Interrupting the Usual: Successful Strategies for Hiring Diverse Faculty." *The Journal of Higher Education* 75, no. 2 (March 1, 2004): 156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2004.11778900>.

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Umbach, Paul D. "The Contribution of Faculty of Color to Undergraduate Education." *Research in Higher Education*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2006, pp. 317–345. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40197402.

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