

Executive Summary of iChange Subcommittee for Retaining Diverse Faculty

Nicole Buan and Mark Button, co-chairs; Marianna Burks; Joy Castro; Colleen Jones; Rebecca Lai; Pat Tetreault

The subcommittee identified the following key challenges/opportunities for retaining diverse faculty in STEM. Specific strategies for addressing these challenges are listed under each issue area.

- I. **Retention begins with recruitment.** If candidates do not feel welcomed, valued, and supported, they may accept the position but refrain from investing in relationships at UNL.

Strategies:

- Cohort and cluster hiring at all ranks in support of DEI
- Recruit diversity at senior academic ranks
- In recruitment, meet with non-university POC community members as part of interview visit
- Attend to equity in start-up packages and salary
- Provide funds for travel to support building professional networks
- Provide dual career assistance
- Faculty onboarding begins before a candidate is on campus: Update DEI resources and information about life in Lincoln; affinity groups, community centers, and POC-owned businesses (e.g., restaurants, daycare)
- Plan intentionally for new faculty onboarding at UNL, Colleges, and departments with focus on DEI

See also the Strategies from the UNL Commitment to Action

- Develop and regularly offer workshops on equitable and inclusive recruitment and hiring for faculty and staff members serving on search committees.
- Incorporate UNL's core responsibility to "create a positive culture and to safeguard equity, inclusion, dignity, and respect for all" in new employee and new faculty orientation sessions.
- Formalize an institutional land acknowledgement.
- Establish a History and Place Task Force to continuously review UNL's history, messaging and imagery, naming, and honorifics and identify opportunities to acknowledge the institution's and Nebraska cultural histories, to demonstrate the University's commitment to inclusive excellence, and to enhance representation of racially marginalized groups.

- II. **Retention is a continual process**

- Attend to course and service assignments and overall workload equity
- Transparent evaluation metrics for annual evaluations and RPT
- Support research and teaching that is grounded in DEI
- Incentivize DEI STEM proposals (ORED, College, academic units)
- Include contributions to DEI work as a metric for merit and RPT review for all faculty

- Make plans for faculty recognition and awards
- Provide regular opportunities for professional development
- Provide trainings on building collaborative research teams in STEM
- Mentoring and workshops focused on strategies for overcoming challenges
- Develop mentoring accountability and metrics for mentoring; reward mentoring excellence for all position types
- Affinity group summer/winter writing retreats (include invitees from minority-serving institutions and/or women and POC colleagues from other institutions)
- Have regular discussions about opportunities for advancement
- Provide leadership training and clear leadership pathways for women and POC – steps to becoming a chair/director or associate dean (promote from within UNL)
- Campus leadership must show sustained commitment to DEI (promotions and/or appointments to admin roles should require sustained, multi-year evidence of contributions to DEI)

See also the Strategies from the UNL Commitment to Action

- Reexamine promotion and tenure processes to include clear expectations on diversity and inclusion and ensure equitable representation in the review and decision process in the case of joint appointments
- Weave anti-racism and racial equity into N2025 and within department/college/unit strategic diversity plans or actions.
- Reevaluate university-wide committees, councils, and commissions to ensure representation and/or perspectives are heard from key academic—including cultural academic programs—and administrative units, leadership organizations, and stakeholder groups.
- Ensure guiding principles responding to COVID-19 by UNL recognized the need for and offered protections for faculty, staff, and students from racially minoritized backgrounds in their various roles (including but not limited to advancement and promotion).

III. Addressing hostility and micro-aggression

- Require interactive face-to-face DEI mentoring/workshops for all faculty and staff regardless of demographic affiliation
- Provide key resources: Inclusive Campus Support Network; UNL Report; Ombuds; EAP
- Increase diversity of EAP staff
- Encourage and provide support for informal peer mentor networks
- Unit/College/Campus leaders need to recognize increased psychological stress on women and POC with assaults, bias incidents, and hate crimes
- Encourage participation with climate surveys

- Ensure accountability for action based upon climate survey findings

See also the Strategies from the UNL Commitment to Action

- Develop a clear and more robust approach to addressing and supporting campus climate issues through creating a systematic process for responding to individuals who are targets of exclusion, harassment, discrimination, and stereotypes based on identity.
- Through the formation of a research Consortium on Anti-Racism, the development of education tools and learning modules for faculty, staff, and students that provide opportunities for critical conversations and skill building related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice.