ADVANCING FACULTY DIVERSITY AT VIRGINIA TECH

July 2021

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world. Consistent with InclusiveVT, the institutional and individual commitment to Ut Prosim (that I may serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence, Virginia Tech has the opportunity to realize the promise of its Principles of Community by building a microcosm of the society that students will enter as professionals. Virginia Tech recognizes the critical importance of diverse teams and seeks to diversify its faculty along multiple dimensions of identity.

As reflected by Advancing Beyond Boundaries strategic plan, Virginia Tech has set an aggressive goal of 25% (currently 19.4%) underrepresented minority undergraduate student representation and 20% underrepresented graduate student representation (currently 16.9%) by 2024. If the university is to ensure that graduates can capitalize on the creativity and complexity of the modern workforce, students should have the opportunity to learn from faculty who mirror the diversity of the student population. As such, the faculty diversity goal for underrepresented minority faculty is 15% by 2024 (currently 8.1%) and 50% for female faculty (currently at 37%). We should note that underrepresented racial minority females advance both the female and racial diversity goals. Learn more about our data and significant challenges reflected on this department and college diversity dashboard created by the Office for Inclusion and Diversity (OID) reflecting a seven-year trend (click here for the link). To meet these challenges, the university must chart an ambitious path for increasing the diversity of its tenured and tenure track faculty.

Guiding Principles

There are several guiding principles that undergird the faculty diversity strategy at Virginia Tech:
1. Diversifying the faculty is a strategic priority reflected in the strategic plan and in college budget models through faculty diversity goals.
2. Traditional as well as non-traditional and innovative methods must be used for attracting faculty talent.
3. Recruitment strategies must be innovative, creative, and accelerated, given the competitive marketplace for faculty talent.
4. Best practices for recruiting diverse talent should be followed for all faculty searches. The Office for Inclusion and Diversity has created a best practice guide to support the search process (attached below as an addendum).
5. Departments are responsible for identifying, recruiting, and hiring faculty members and providing a welcoming and inclusive environment that promotes retention.
6. Central funding to advance faculty diversity is limited and must be allocated through collaborative partnerships with colleges and departments, OID, and the Provost's Office.

7. OID acknowledges the discriminatory experiences of multiple populations in the United States. Particular populations have experienced historical marginalization and exclusion in the United States, often as a result of their enslavement, the forced removal from their native lands, and other forms of subjugation. These populations include American Indian/Alaska Native, African American, Latinx Americans, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. This population is considered the "strategic priority population" for purposes of programming and funding. Nevertheless, OID acknowledges the intersection of identities and recognizes that members of the LGBTQ community, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, Asian Americans, and international faculty have also faced discriminatory treatment in the United States.

Strategies

The four strategies and mechanisms below can be used to advance faculty diversity:

1. A strategic priority candidate is identified through a traditional search process where an existing line is available through an approved hiring plan. The department and college assume full financial responsibility for the hiring process. On rare occasions, OID may be able to provide supplemental support.
2. A strategic priority candidate is identified through a traditional search process and there is an opportunity to advance faculty diversity through hiring more than one candidate, though only one faculty line is available. In this case, a college may request Target of Talent funding through OID. This support would include a third of the salary for three years (OID maximum of $30k per year) or half of the salary for two years (OID maximum of $45k per year)
3. A strategic priority candidate is identified through a non-traditional process (campus lecture; conference networking; direct outreach; or other similar strategies). If an existing line is not available, a college may request Target of Talent funding which would provide a third of the salary for three years (OID maximum of $30k per year) or half of the salary for two years (OID maximum of $45k per year).
4. A strategic population candidate is identified through the Future Faculty Diversity Program. In this case, Future Faculty Diversity Program funding is available as supplemental funding for existing college lines, or bridge funding if a line is not available.

Future Faculty Diversity Program for Early Career Hires

The Future Faculty Diversity Program (FFDP) is a collaborative partnership between OID and every college to support faculty early-career recruitment. The Future Faculty Diversity Program is designed to assist departments at Virginia Tech with identifying and recruiting talent from historically underrepresented **domestic** minority populations such as African-Americans, Latinx Americans, American Indian/Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders. Current Ph.D. candidates or post-docs, within one year of pursuing a faculty position, and of a caliber to be competitive for a position are strongly encouraged to apply. OID covers travel, lodging, and all meals, except meals on the formal department/college interview day. Held over three days, the program includes a professional development day and a department/college recruitment interview day. Last year 12 offers were made, and 9 candidates accepted those offers.

FFDP Process and Timeline:
Program Recruitment:

Outreach and recruitment should begin immediately. OID will provide a flyer for social media advertising and outreach through professional and disciplinary organizations. OID will also be advertising the program widely on multiple social media platforms. Applications are due from potential participants by August 15, 2021.

Application Review:

OID will send all completed applications to departments/colleges. Departments must provide a justification/rationale for any candidate they would like to have participate in this year's FFDP. Colleges must approve FFDP candidates for participation and send the list of approved candidates to OID by September 3. This is a very short turnaround time to allow sufficient time to notify candidates, arrange travel, and to allow departments to develop a robust interview day. OID will invite candidates to participate in the program, arrange travel and lodging.

Program Details and Department Responsibilities:

The FY21 program (October 3-6, 2021) will be held in-person. Candidates will arrive on October 3 and begin a full day of professional development on October 4. Departments and college must coordinate a full interview day on Tuesday, October 5. The interview should include campus presentation/job talk, interviews with core faculty and students in the department, lunch, and dinner. Although Tuesday is the primary interview opportunity, there is flexibility during the course of the program for interviews and meetings on other days. Additionally, candidates can be invited back for a-subsequent visit. However, the objective is to thoroughly vet the candidates during their initial visit an determine viability for an offer.

Offers:

Once candidates ~~have~~ been interviewed and appropriately vetted, departments should seek approval from the dean to make an offer. Such approval may be based on departmental commitment and support for the hire, an assessment of the department's commitment to diversity and inclusion, the growth needs of a department, and anticipated future retirements.

Colleges have the opportunity to hire Future Faculty Fellows in several ways:

1. Through existing lines either held at the college and designated for FFDP candidate hires, or through an existing search process. Every college is encouraged to hold two to three lines as part of their commitment to advancing representational diversity. OID can provide some supplemental financial support for these hires.
2. In the absence of existing lines, candidates can be hired through a financial bridging program in which OID provides one-third of the salary for three years (maximum OID contribution up to $30k/year) or one half of the salary for 2 years (maximum OID contribution of $45k a year), after which the college/department are responsible for 100% of the salary.
3. OID encourages departments to be creative in structuring hiring packages that will benefit the professional development of selected FFDP candidates with a clear pathway to a tenure track position. For example, some may benefit from an initial appointment of a year or two as a postdoctoral scholar or research assistant professor before transition to an assistant professor position.
4. OID also encourages departments to invest early in FFDP candidates who would fill a future critical need, but who are not actively on the market. For example, for doctoral candidates early in the dissertation with completion dates during AY22, offering a dissertation finishing year with limited course instruction as a visiting assistant professor or instructor, followed by a tenure track appointment may position VT competitively and be particularly enticing for the FFDP participant.
5. OID encourages consideration of a two-year postdoc program. Colleges who have identified talented candidates who demonstrate excellent potential to be successful at Virginia Tech but who may need a year or two of professional development support should be considered for a

two-year postdoctoral program. All colleges who are interested in supporting a postdoc fellow must develop a mentoring program to demonstrate a long-term commitment to the candidate as a tenure-track faculty member at Virginia Tech. All participating Colleges will jointly share financial responsibilities with OID.

To be eligible for OID support, either bridging funds or a recurring line, the proposed hire must advance strategic hiring priorities. A request for support from OID should include the following:

1. Evidence of college and department commitment to inclusion and diversity (current diversity implementation plan)
2. The discussion related to the potential for cluster hires at the college and department level
3. A discussion of existing department diversity data
4. A demonstrated connection to advancing PIBB faculty diversity goals

Diversity and Innovation Think Tank Scholars Program

A new initiative for the 2021-2022 hiring cycle is the Diversity and Innovation Think Tank Scholars Program. The Think Tank Scholars Program is an incentive structure for advancing underrepresented hires that advance strategic institutional priorities as primarily reflected by Destination Areas and Frontier Areas through a cohort model.

In support of the cohort model, new hires will be eligible for additional one-time recruitment support provided by OID in the form of a housing allowance, summer salary, additional start-up funds, and targeted programming to support a sense of community and belonging. Scholars eligible for consideration include scholars whose scholarship significantly reflects Virginia Tech's motto, Ut Prosim (that I may serve); whose research advances issues of equity and social disparity in the human condition; whose research is interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary and focuses on addressing issues impacting humanity; and whose identity and background reflect a unique and diverse perspective.
Diversity and Innovation Think Tank Scholars should be hired through existing lines, with OID providing the supplemental funding associated with participation in the Think Tank Scholars program.

Target of Talent Program

The Target of Talent Program provides collaborative financial support for outstanding strategic priority early, mid-career, and senior scholars identified through target recruitment efforts, such as direct and personal outreach, outreach at disciplinary conferences, and invitations for college/department lecture series, when an existing line is not available. These candidates may be hired through a financial bridging program in which OID provides one-third of the salary for three years (maximum OID contribution up to $30k/year) or one half of the salary for 2 years (maximum OID contribution of $45k a year), after which the college/department is responsible for 100% of the salary.

Conclusion

Questions about the Future Faculty Diversity Program, the Diversity and Innovation Think Tank Scholars Program, and the Target of Talent program can be addressed to Dr. Erica Cooper, Assistant Provost for Faculty Diversity Recruitment.

Best Practices for Faculty Diversity Hiring at Virginia Tech

Created by Office for Inclusion and Diversity, July 2021

Recruitment Basics

1. Recruit continuously throughout the year, especially at conferences.
2. Join your disciplinary organizations diversity efforts/committees.
3. Take note of institutions that seem to be promoting diversity of graduate students and universities with significant underrepresented minority faculty representation.
4. Develop pipeline programs.

Assembling a Search Committee

1. Appoint a diverse (race and gender) search committee, and with those within the department who have demonstrated an interest and have been supportive of diversity and inclusion efforts.
2. While you want a diverse committee, be sensitive to not overly burden minority faculty or women faculty if you have limited gender and racial representation in your department.
3. Select committee members who engage in one or more of the following diversity-related activities:
    a. Serve (previously or currently) on a diversity committee
    b. Utilize inclusive pedagogy
    c. Lead diverse labs and research groups
    d. Participate in student diversity efforts
    e. Attend diversity programs

Protocols for the Search Process

1. The Department Head should appoint a chair of the search committee and a diversity advocate.
    a. The chair of the search committee should not be hiring official or the individual that will make the ultimate hiring decision. This separation of roles enhances the autonomy of the search committee.
    b. The search committee is advisory to the department head/hiring official.
    c. For tenure and tenure track faculty searches, the diversity advocate must be a tenured faculty member. The diversity advocate must be a voting member of the committee.
2. Search committee members should be culturally competent and aware of best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion.
    a. All search committee members must complete the required search committee training. Members should not be allowed to serve who have not completed the training.
    b. All search committee members should complete the Everfi Best Practices in the Workplace training through PageUp.
    c. All search committee members should complete the Search Committee training, including diversity advocate training offered by the Office of Equity and Accessibility.
3. The hiring official/department head should meet with the search committee chair and diversity advocate (and HR liaison, as available) to discuss the following:
    a. The job description (inclusive, broad)

b. Recruitment strategies, including social media, disciplinary organization listservs, and direct outreach to female and underrepresented minority candidates
c. Requirement of a diversity statement (discussion of any efforts to advance diversity in their careers, and what InclusiveVT/Principles of Community means to them, and how they would demonstrate their commitment as member of the department/college)
d. Requirement of research and teaching statement
e. Current gender and racial representation of the department
f. The Advancing Beyond Boundaries' representational goals for faculty diversity for female (50% total representation by 2024 and 50% new hires by 2022) and underrepresented minority candidates (15% total representation by 2024 and 25% new hires by 2022)
g. Existing college/department diversity plan/goals

4. The search chair and diversity advocate should be a cohesive team during search process.
   a. At the first search committee meeting, the search chair should introduce the diversity advocate;
   b. The search chair and diversity advocate should both support diversity and equity as part of the search process;
   c. The search chair and diversity advocate should discuss the diversity of the pool throughout the process; and determine whether all efforts have been exhausted to create a diverse pool.
   d. If the search pool is not diverse at any stage with female and underrepresented minority candidates, the search chair and diversity advocate should discuss the pool with the hiring official to determine how the search should continue to proceed.

Expectations of the Diversity Advocate

1. The diversity advocate should share a high-level description of the role with the search committee during the first meeting.
2. During each (initial, semi-final, finalist) stage, the diversity advocate should advocate for a diverse pool of all candidates.
3. Throughout the search process, the diversity advocate should:
   a. Support the use of an evaluation criteria.
   b. Be willing to interrupt biased comments and comments not relevant to evaluation criteria" "She may be overqualified." "He may not want to move to Blacksburg." "They may present a partner hire problem."
   e. Encourage the posting of position/link on social media groups; disciplinary organization websites, and other potential networks.
   f. Review interview questions and candidate schedule for inclusion.
   g. Ensure that the faculty liaison is available to discuss work-life policies and caucuses as part of each finalist interview schedule.

The Office for Inclusion and Diversity is a resource for any questions or concerns related to diversity efforts during the search process. Dr. Erica Cooper (efcooper@vt.edu), Assistant Provost for Faculty Diversity, oversees efforts to diversify the faculty community.