

GSE Plan for Diversity Excellence and Action

Introduction

The University of Pennsylvania's strategic plan, *Building on Excellence: The Next Agenda*, describes the university's responsibility to serve society and emphasizes the importance of access for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Access is also the first commitment in *The Penn Compact*, as outlined by President Amy Gutmann during her 2004 inaugural address. In this address she argued that, "in great universities, diversity and excellence go together." Research supports these goals, showing that exposure to diverse faculty, curricula, and teaching methods produces students who are better equipped to deal with cultural differences and thrive in our heterogeneous and changing world. These students are also more likely to work to overcome societal inequality (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen, 1998). Diversification of the faculty is thus important not only for individual students but also for the larger society.

This document describes GSE's plan to build on our successful efforts and become an even more diverse faculty. We plan to improve the school's definition of diversity, diversity search process, actively recruit and retain talented faculty with diverse experiences, and mentor minority faculty more effectively.

Framing Diversity at GSE:

Two particular challenges were noted in preparing this plan. The first was that although GSE has no consistent definition of diversity and future conversations must still take place, **the faculty diversity plan must propose a working definition**. It is assumed that this definition will require ongoing revision as the GSE community continues to dialogue about this issue. The second challenge was that **making credible decisions that yield sustainable outcomes regarding improving faculty diversity at GSE requires the collection of stable and easily accessible data** and currently no reliable infrastructure exists to access this information. Information about the various ways diversity is present or absent in our training and degree programs, admissions, faculty, administrator and student recruitment and retention across the school is disparate.

GSE Definition of Diversity. Diversity at GSE is defined as the appreciation and development of a climate of scholars, administrators and students who possess diverse knowledge, life experiences, and research directions that service and learn from diverse communities in Philadelphia, the nation, and the world with a unique concern for social justice. We situate our definition within the University of Pennsylvania's Action Plan for Faculty Diversity and Excellence that asserts diversity to be integral to learning:

In the vision of our founder Benjamin Franklin, the diversity of our university must reflect the diversity of the world around it – and the diversity of the world that we want our students to lead. Diversity thereby informs our mission to prepare the students who will be the guardians and innovators of the future.

The University expects to intensify its commitment to diversity by "building a more diverse faculty, whose composition reflects the pool of exceptional, qualified applicants nationally in all fields" and "creating a more inclusive campus community, where all feel welcomed, supported, and have equal access to networks for mentoring and research".

As such, The University Diversity Action Plan (DAP) focuses on two goals:

- ***Increasing faculty diversity*** and
- ***developing an inclusive community at GSE***

At GSE, we take as a given that these goals are interactive and synergistic. Growth in one supports the growth in the other. As these goals are essential to the mission of GSE, they will guide us in establishing faculty development priorities over the next five to ten years. Mostly, we believe that reaching these two goals will lead to the successful recruitment, retention, and productivity of diverse scholars at GSE.

Prioritizing Diversity at GSE. In discussing drafts of the DAP, the GSE faculty has agreed to include the recruitment of diverse non-standing faculty, administrators and students as well as standing faculty in this plan in order to meet the University's two-pronged mandate of *faculty diversity* and *inclusive community*. We agree with other Penn schools that have acknowledged how influential associated and non-standing faculty may be on the diversity climate, mentoring, and advising of students and faculty of color.

GSE's mission centrally involves the production and dissemination of knowledge about education and human flourishing, and the use of that knowledge to improve education for young people. Doing research, teaching and service on these topics requires the open exchange of ideas and the consideration of multiple alternatives — because context matters to education and relevant contexts are changing rapidly, such that we must be open to new ways of thinking and acting. One type of restriction on the open exchange of new ideas is a climate that limits freedom of expression. Restrictive climates can be created in many ways, but one central type of restriction has been beliefs and practices that limit certain types of people from participating, or consider them unlikely to have valuable ideas. In our American context, certain groups have been the focus of such treatment more than others, and we remain vulnerable to tacit use of limiting stereotypes based on race, religion, culture, gender identity, class, and sexual orientation. As a community that must remain open to new ideas, then, we must be vigilant about these entrenched means of limiting participation. At the same time, however, we must also be vigilant about other means of limiting discussion, including essentializing views that insist skin color, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics in and of themselves make someone "diverse."

While a stated mission of the Graduate School of Education is deeply organized around the development, improvement, and innovation of public and independent education in urban America, our faculty research interests span educational problem-solving across the continent and beyond. Still, we have shown growth over the last seven decades in increasing serve underrepresented minorities from the United States, specifically African Americans, Latinos, and Asians. When we focus on faculty diversity at GSE, the faculty has discussed the importance of continuing the attention to diverse constituencies of underrepresented US minorities as well as prioritizing international and immigrant populations in the future. This does not preclude any attention to other ways to define diversity that future conversations among our faculty will consider.

Over the last two decades, our outreach, training and research programs have not only increased our services to this group, but also underrepresented minorities, immigrant and international students and communities in Philadelphia and around the world. This growth in diversity of constituents has corresponded with the growth of faculty of color at GSE over the last 20 years. Prior to 1994, there was no tenured faculty of color in the Graduate School of Education. Since then, our numbers of tenured faculty of underrepresented American minorities and international backgrounds have grown.

Assessment of Faculty of Color

The tables below provide a snapshot of our current standing faculty¹ and of the results of our hiring and retention efforts over the past eight years.

Table 1
Status of GSE Standing Faculty 2005-2012

AY	Total	Black	Asian	Inter'l	Native American	Hispanic	Multi	Diversity %
July 2005	39	4 (10.3%)	2 (5.1%)	0	1 (2.6%)	0	0	18%
July 2006	35	4 (11.4%)	3 (8.6%)	0	0	0	0	20%
July 2007	39	6 (15.4%)	3 (7.7%)	0	0	0	0	23.1%
July 2008	41	6 (14.6%)	3 (7.3%)	0	0	0	0	21.9%
July 2009	37	5 (13.5%)	2 (5.4%)	0	0	0	0	18.9%
July 2010	36	4 (11.1%)	3 (8.3%)	0	0	0	1 (2.8%)	22.4%
July 2011	33	4 (12.1%)	3 (9.1%)	0	0	0	1 (3.0%)	24.2%
July 2012	35	5 (14.3%)	3 (8.6%)	0	0	1 (2.8%)	2 (5.7%)	31.4%
Sept 2012	34	4 (11.8%)	3 (8.8%)	0	0	1 (2.9%)	2 (5.9%)	29.4%

Table 2
Status of GSE Standing Faculty and Academic Support Staff as of July 2012

Rank (Total)	White	Black	Asian	Native American	Hispanic	Multi-racial
Standing Faculty (35)	24	5	3	0	1	2
Practice Professors (4)	3	1	0	0	0	0
Senior Lecturers (4)	3	0	1	0	0	0
Senior Administrators (?)	?	0	0	0	0	0
Program Managers (5)	4	1	0	0	0	0
Senior Fellows (4)	4	0	0	0	0	0
Research Assistant Professors (2)	2	0	0	0	0	0
Lecturer A (7)	4	1	1	0	1	0
TOTAL (61)	44 [72%]	8 [13%]	5 [8%]	0 [0%]	2 [3%]	2 [3%]

During the 2011/2012 Academic Year, GSE has hired 5 Assistant Professors: 2 white, 1 Hispanic, 1 Black, and one multi-racial. Thus, as of July 2012, 14% of our standing faculty will be Black, 8.5% Asian, 3% Hispanic, and 6% multi-racial. Of the 11 faculty of color listed, one will be ranked at the full professor level, 6 at the associate faculty level, and 4 at the assistant professor level. While the net effect of GSE recruitment efforts has been modest from July of 2005 to July of 2011 due to the retirement of two senior Black faculty members, the denial of tenure of one Asian faculty member, and the departure of a Native American Assistant Professor for employment elsewhere, the greatest increase and number of faculty of color in GSE's history will have occurred within the last year.

The departure of an African American faculty member by September of 2012 will reduce this gain and a review of the diversity percentages of non-standing and associated faculty (28.6%), program managers (20%) and administrators (0%) at GSE reveals a slightly varied picture (Table 2). The growth coupled with the rate and reasons for departure suggest cause for hope and concern that

we have more work to do in the recruitment of Hispanic faculty and retention of faculty and staff of color over the next 5 to 10 years. Future climate analyses should couple these data with student diversity rates, trends, and numbers. Perhaps our most pressing issue is retention and demonstrating maintenance of this progress over the next 5 years.

GSE Expectations in Fulfilling the Diversity Action Plan

The focus on *faculty increase* and *inclusiveness of climate* themes directed the committee to ponder the kinds of outcomes we might expect should the DAP prove to be successful. Given the roadblocks to tenure and retention for faculty from diverse backgrounds, our plan, if successful, should stipulate how GSE will help all faculty develop

- 1) *Relationships with Colleagues*; mentors; wider university community and talent, students, staff and administration;
- 2) *Access to Professional Capital* including grants competition skills, protection from overwork/burnout, national opportunities and professional exposure,
- 3) *Intellectual Engagement* through the support of unique ideas, relevance of research to GSE mission and programs, feedback on research progress; and
- 4) *Knowledge and Competence* about diversity climate and politics that students, administrators, and faculty face and resolve including the intellectual benefits of diversity.

Research Themes on Promoting Diversity in Faculty Recruitment and Retention

In addition to soliciting GSE faculty input on the DAP, the committee felt it important to identify themes from diversity in higher education research including that published by GSE faculty. Selected themes of relevant research directions are described below and frame our approach to this topic.

I. Apply Comprehensive Model of Enhancing Diversity Climate in Higher Education

In developing this Diversity Action Plan for GSE, we will use a comprehensive model of understanding and enhancing diversity climates within higher education (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1998). Simply stated, Hurtado et al (1998) suggest that diversity in higher education is enhanced when faculty and leadership engage in continuous assessment, dialogue, and action by using historical, psychological, structural, and behavioral lenses. Applying the historical, psychological, structural, and behavioral model of diversity climate enhancement broadens how GSE will progress in faculty diversity recruitment over the next decade.

Action: The use of the Hurtado model elements will be integrated in communication, data gathering, programming, and evaluation of diversity efforts at GSE.

II. Acknowledge Stressfulness and Protect Safety in Addressing Diversity Matters

It takes substantial work to recruit a diverse faculty, but that is only half of the challenge. We must also retain faculty and students of color. The extra service demands on faculty of color, including formal and informal advising, committee work and outreach initiatives where they are asked to serve in part because of their diverse perspectives, place a burden on these faculty members (Turner, 2002). While the climate at GSE is moving forward, more work is necessary to increase support of communication on diversity. As important to the promotion of diversity action steps are the awareness and planning for resistance to progress in this area.

Action: Survey students and faculty on the climate at GSE on matters of diversity every other year and use this information in future hiring and climate reform. Entertain ways to

create confidential spaces for students, staff, and faculty to discuss diversity concerns and dilemmas.

III. Communicate Intellectual Benefits of Diversity to Faculty, Staff and Students

Turner (2002) describes how important it is to communicate the rationale for faculty diversity to senior faculty members, and particularly to search committee members. Making a connection between faculty diversity and educational excellence encourages search committee members to commit to the “spirit of the goal” (p. 5). The Diversity Search Advisor, a member of the standing faculty appointed each year by the Dean, will also participate in every search process from beginning to end.

Action: The updating of current research literature on enhancing diversity in higher education is a priority at GSE. The GSE DAP is a document in process and will require ongoing discussion and revision from faculty members over several years. Future discussions of the DAP Plan and its revisions during faculty meetings will occur at least once per semester.

IV. Maintain Transparency in Candidate Selection

According to research by Mero and Motowidlo (1995), rater accountability can increase the accuracy and objectivity of ratings. GSE will make the hiring criteria for search candidates transparent by using a standard candidate evaluation form (see a draft sample in Appendix B). Such a form will be used to discuss candidates during search committee and faculty meetings.

Action: The candidate evaluation form will be shared with GSE’s standing faculty and will be used both to solicit feedback from faculty about search candidates and to guide faculty discussions about final selections.

V. Actively Pursue Targets of Opportunities

In an article in the *Journal of Higher Education* entitled “Interrupting the Usual: Successful Strategies for Hiring Diverse Faculty,” Smith (2004) presents results from an analysis of 689 faculty searches at three large public research universities. The data indicate that successful hires of underrepresented minority faculty are more likely to occur when institutional intervention enhances or bypasses the traditional search process.

Action: GSE will charge the Diversity Action Plan Committee to tackle the challenge of Target of Opportunity recruitment.

GSE will support a Post-Doctoral Fellow for Academic Diversity over the next three years. If successful, the school could retain the Fellow, to increase the diversity of GSE’s faculty. GSE will also seek to nominate a junior or senior level scholar for one of the new Presidential Term Professorships.

VI. Develop and Evaluate Creative Advertising Strategies

Historically, GSE’s search committees have sought to advertise in journals and periodicals that reach diverse graduate students and faculty. However, the Diversity Search Advisor and the Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs and Diversity will work with the LGBT Center and other centers at Penn to evaluate the use of additional venues and ways to reach diverse communities. We have also begun the process of innovative data gathering about which venues and journals attract diverse candidates with diverse backgrounds and knowledge, using what we call the IPODD -(I-PODD- Institutional Pursuit of Diversity Database) online system. Through creative modification of the current online application system that collects information about where all applicants learn of our searches, we can learn what how diverse groups of applicants find as the best ways to reach them.

Action: The DSA and the DAP committee will evaluate the benefit and utility of the IPODD results. The Diversity Search Advisor and the Assistant Dean for Faculty Affairs and Diversity will also work with the various centers at Penn to evaluate the use of additional

venues and ways to reach diverse communities.

VII. Increase the Quality of Faculty Mentoring, Monitoring, and Coaching

Among the senior faculty are journal editors-in-chief, members of executive boards, national research council committees, educational research organizations, and outstanding mentors on training grants. These individuals have the demonstrated capacity to foster the development and recognition of individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups, including African-American, Latino-Hispanic, Asian-American, and members of the LGBT community. Care and concern will be taken to match mentors with junior faculty according to skill sets, temperament, and research discipline.

Action: In order to help colleagues navigate these challenges, GSE will continue to assign senior faculty to serve as mentors for each junior faculty member. Standards and procedures for advancement of the junior faculty will be clearly stated.

We propose that annual faculty evaluations include a section for faculty members to describe activities to promote diversity within the graduate school of education or across Penn, so that these activities can be acknowledged and encouraged.

Review of Existing GSE Diversity Initiatives

GSE shares the President and Provost's commitment to diversity. We have long been committed to preparing our students to live, work, and become leaders in a "world marked by sweeping demographic change and interconnectedness" (Turner, 2002, p.5). Our students come from diverse backgrounds. For example, 33% of our incoming class is students of color, 75% are women, and 25% are international students. Currently, 24% of GSE's 32 faculty are people of color and 48% are women. This diversity is due in significant part to successful GSE policies and practices. For example, when search committees are appointed, we appoint a diverse group of faculty and discuss the importance of increasing the representation of people of color. The Dean and other senior faculty have worked to support minority faculty members, fostering "a collegial and intellectually stimulating environment" (Turner, 2002, p. 23).

The *Race in the Academy* lecture series, organized by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, provides opportunities for members of the GSE community to develop and enhance their understanding of the issues of race and ethnicity in the context of education. Similarly, each year, a number of scholars of color from all over the country are invited to GSE to give lectures and share their research with faculty and students, as part of the "Scholars of Color" series.

In order to retain junior faculty, GSE has appointed a junior faculty mentoring committee to explore ways that new junior faculty could be even more effectively supported by senior colleagues. In the 2008-09 academic year, Penn GSE launched the *Grad Prep Academy*, to help prepare promising Black male undergraduate scholars seek admission to – and achieve success in – Ph.D. programs in education. The Grad Prep Academy prepares students to take the GRE, and gives students a taste of graduate school life, exposing them to Penn classes, Penn faculty, and the work of scholarly research.

Since 2004, GSE has successfully implemented the *HBCU/HSI Recruitment Weekend*. The goals of the HBCU/HSI Recruitment Weekend are to expose juniors from minority serving undergraduate institutions to graduate school and to recruit master's and doctoral students of color to GSE. We work with 20 different HBCUs/HSIs to bring students to Penn, exposing them to our faculty, students, classes, and Philadelphia. The program has resulted in strong relationships with HBCUs/HSIs and recruitment of Black and Latino students across the school's programs.

Works Cited

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Appendix A – Criteria for Evaluating Quality of Candidates during Searches

CRITERIA	CANDIDATE#1	CANDIDATE #2	CANDIDATE #3
Year PhD			
PhD Institution			
Advisor/Letter Writers			
#Articles/#Other publications			
Grants/Fellowships			
International/Cross-cultural Work			
International Development/action Work			
Cross-ethnic Domestic Work			
Social Theory			
Scholarship			
Potential for Cross-school Collaboration			
Potential for Grant Funding			
Teaching Areas			
Production of scholarship and teaching on diverse experiences, perspectives, and people			
Brings diverse experiences and perspectives in background			
Ambitious			
