Beyond the Search: Enhancing Department Diversity & Expanding Networks

Building a more diverse department is a continuous process that does not begin and end with appointing women, underrepresented minorities, and individuals from other underrepresented groups to faculty positions. Columbia’s schools and departments must constantly make an effort to seek out these students and scholars for graduate programs, research positions, and teaching opportunities. Making connections with women and underrepresented minority scholars should be an ongoing process, and there are several ways to go about doing this.

Within the Department

Build a supportive environment. Efforts to attract persons of different gender and ethnic backgrounds begin with creating a more inclusive environment within the department. Clear policies will put in place supportive structures that enable women and underrepresented minorities to grow professionally, discourage discriminatory behaviors, and allow recourse when these policies are ignored. Departments should delineate guidelines and rules in the following areas:

1. Mentorship. Students and junior faculty should have opportunities to interact with and establish relationships with more senior faculty so that they may receive guidance for their professional development.
2. Evaluation and promotion. Performance expectations for promotion should be made explicit. Faculty should be evaluated not only for their research and teaching activities, but also for the mentoring that they provide to women and underrepresented minorities.
3. Workplace flexibility. Benefits such as maternity leave, modified duties, and extension of tenure-track timeline acknowledge faculty priorities outside the workplace and provide the support required to advance careers without compromising family life.
4. Sexual and racial harassment. Policies that prohibit sexual and racial harassment and education of all department members regarding what constitutes harassment will help create a safe environment for women and underrepresented minorities.

Affirmative action efforts. Departments should develop a plan to include more women, underrepresented minorities, and other underrepresented groups in their faculty. The plan can be published in newsletters and pamphlets that are circulated within the department and among alumni.

Raising awareness of affirmative action as a priority will allow the department to widen the conversation on how to make the department a more diverse and inclusive place. Public expression of this value will also make the department more attractive to women and underrepresented minorities. Below are components that departments may consider including in their plan.

5. Appointing a faculty member. In order to ensure that the provisions of the department plan are carried out, a department member can be assigned the responsibility of overseeing their implementation.
6. **Departmental curriculum reviews.** Reviews provide an opportunity for faculty to evaluate whether any of the different subject areas pursued by department members lack certain perspectives, especially those of women and underrepresented minorities. Steps can then be taken to seek out scholars who can fill these gaps.

7. **Database of underrepresented scholars.** When inviting scholars to speak and/or participate in workshops, seminars and symposia, filling part-time teaching/research opportunities, and seeking visiting lecturers or full-time faculty, the department can supplement search efforts by drawing from a database of promising women and underrepresented minority professionals. This database can include:
   a. Candidates from previous searches
   b. Alumni
   c. Individuals whose research you admire
   d. Scholars who have received professional recognition, special grants or fellowships
   e. Individuals who have made speeches at conferences
   f. Names provided by women, underrepresented minorities, other underrepresented groups, students, alumni, and others

8. **Joint appointments.** Women and underrepresented minority scholars may be considered for joint appointments to related departments.

9. **Postdoctoral programs.** Providing more opportunities for women and underrepresented minority scholars early in their career to join the department through postdoctoral positions. These appointments will yield a source of internal candidates for faculty positions that may become available in the future.

10. **PhD programs.** Increasing the number of women and underrepresented minority students recruited to graduate programs is another way of enriching the pipeline for faculty appointments with underrepresented groups.

11. **Manage committee appointments.** Women and underrepresented minority professionals are likely to face a higher number of such service commitments, which may diminish the time they have to focus on their scholarship. Be sensitive to research priorities when appointing faculty from underrepresented groups to committees.

**Outside the Department**

**Professional associations and conferences.** These organizations and gathering provide a great way to make connections with women and underrepresented minority professionals, who may be added to the department database.

1. **Recruiting efforts at conferences.** Faculty can make a practice of combining participation in conferences with searching out promising scholars, especially women and underrepresented minorities, for faculty positions that may become available in the future.

2. **Membership in professional associations.** Through department membership in women and underrepresented minority caucuses in professional organizations, faculty can have access to professionals from underrepresented groups. Departments can also actively advocate within
professional organizations for coordinated national efforts to draw more women and underrepresented minorities into the field of interest.

**Other Institutions.** Relationships with underrepresented minority scholars at other institutions can be established through sharing of facilities, collaborations on research and publications, student and faculty exchanges, and visiting professorships and lectures. Different departments can also coordinate recruiting visits to other institutions that are known to graduate and employ significant numbers of women and underrepresented minorities.

*Source: Office of the Provost, Johns Hopkins University, Resource Guide for Faculty Searches, 2011. (p. 36-37; Appendix E: Enhancing Race/Ethnic and Gender Diversity of the Departments Outside of an Active Search)