

# Avoid Yet Another Search: Programs that Support a Diverse Faculty

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Quality faculty members are the hallmark of a great university. When an institution recruits a new faculty member, the potential investment in salary alone can be well in excess of one million dollars over the course of a career. Likewise, faculty members' potential impact on student development and the research enterprise makes them one of the most valuable resources on campus. To sustain excellence and prevent a revolving door in one's department, it is imperative to provide ongoing and careful attention to the core of any university: the faculty.

Of particular concern is the retention of faculty from underrepresented groups. Diversity of viewpoints has always been a key contributor to the process by which new ideas are created and disseminated. A diverse learning environment enriches life and enhances learning in the academy. In an increasingly globalized world, learning to interact with people from many different backgrounds makes our students more marketable, and perhaps more importantly, better citizens. A diverse faculty contributes to this directly; the presence of a diverse faculty also makes it easier to attract and retain a diverse student body. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), only 21% of the nation's professoriate consists of persons of color.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the retention of women faculty, particularly in STEM disciplines, continues to be a challenge. Professors from underrepresented groups may decide to leave their positions for reasons over which a given university has little control. However, such faculty members sometimes also leave because they perceive hostile or unpleasant working environments, inequities in compensation or workload assignments, inadequate mentoring, and more.

A short video, *Faculty Like Me*, will kick off the session, highlighting the importance of faculty diversity from the student's perspective. This framework will create a sense of urgency for changing departmental practices around faculty retention. A brief overview of faculty retention trends across the nation will be presented. Using a case study approach, participants will uncover the challenges faced by underrepresented groups and identify strategies for creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all. Presenters will showcase exemplar programs that will be used as a jumping-off point for engaged dialogue. These exemplars include faculty-led affinity groups, an Advocates and Allies program, a robust early-career mentoring program, and an institutional membership in the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity. Through a turn-and-talk activity, participants will walk away from the session with a Top Ten List of activities that they will use in their departments to cultivate diversity, promote inclusion, and avoid yet another search.

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. Fast Facts. <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61>.