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Moving the faculty diversity needle: A view from the trenches

Amanda Bozack
abozack@radford.edu

Darryl L. Corey
Radford University, dcorey@radford.edu

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1) **Presentation Title:**
Moving the faculty diversity needle: A view from the trenches

2) **Presenter Information**-Primary presenter CV/resume or biographical sketch:

Amanda R. Bozack

Amanda R. Bozack is Associate Professor and Director of the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Radford University (RU) in Virginia. She has been a part of eleven searches in her four years at Radford, none of which have resulted in a minority hire. She recently served as a member of the University Hiring Procedures Committee and as a member of the Diversity and Equity Action Committee's faculty recruitment and retention work group. Prior to RU, she served as the Chair of the Education Department at the University of New Haven (UNH), where, as part of her equity work she served as an advisory board member for the Institute for Social Justice (UNH). She has written and presented on issues of gender equity in teacher education and is co-PI on a \$13.8 million US Department of Education grant that provides specialized education training to underserved teachers in rural Appalachia.

Darryl L. Corey

Darryl L. Corey is Associate Professor and Program Coordinator of the Online Masters and Certificate Programs in Mathematics Education at Radford University (RU) in Virginia. He currently serves as co-Chair of the university's Diversity Equity and Action Committee and Chair of the Equity, Accessibility, and Cultural Humility Subcommittee in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership. In his career he has served on eight faculty search committees resulting in only one minority hire. His research and educational interests include online/distance mathematics education, mathematics teachers' professional development, and culturally responsive mathematics teaching. Darryl has been awarded over \$1.1 in external funding, including state, national, and international grants and contracts.

3) **Disciplines:** Education; Higher Education Administration

4) **Presentation Theme:** Issues and Trends in Higher Education

5) **Presentation Type:** Best Practice Presentations

6) **Target Audience:** Department chairs, program coordinators, deans

7) **Abstract:** Presenters and participants will discuss a real case scenario that brought diversity weaknesses to light in one department and explore diversity-focused strategies that chairs and departments can use to shape departmental culture to yield a more inclusive, diverse candidate pool for faculty searches.

8) **Keywords:** Diversity, faculty, hiring, departmental culture, academic leadership

9) **Creative Commons License:** Creative Commons Attribution – Share Alike 4.0

10) **Presentation Documents:** Description of the Session (300-500 words)

Higher education lacks sufficient gender and ethnoracial diversity. In 2016, among full-time professors, 55 percent were White males and 27 percent were White females. Hispanic and Black faculty rates have stagnated at 3-6 percent for decades.ⁱ Such homogeneity restricts students' exposure to a variety of "perspectives, experiences, knowledge and methodology,"ⁱⁱ and limits scholarly cross-pollination. Yet, research has demonstrated that ethnoracial diversity is associated with positive outcomes for students.ⁱⁱⁱ

Heilig, et al. (2019)^{iv} identified several factors that support diversity in higher education, including removing institutional barriers to diversity. Smith, et al. (2004)^v and others have suggested that faculty diversification will only occur when institutions examine and alter their hiring practices to remove barriers and encourage diverse applicant pools.

Our institution faces many of the challenges described in the literature. Using Critical Race Theory's^{vi} (CRT) construct of Whiteness as property^{vii} and its identifying characteristic of the *absolute right to exclude* people, we posit that the belief in the right to exclusion is both deeply engrained and often unconsciously executed within the academy, starting with faculty search and hiring processes. Dodo Seriki, et al. (2015)^{viii} and others have provided examples of how exclusionary behaviors manifest in higher education. Though the *absolute right to exclude* originates in CRT, we extend the theory's construct to include a multitude of differences that threaten disruption to a department's hiring norms.

In this session, we will present a problematic narrative that reflects a 4-year period in which our department had 11 open positions that were filled by individuals who maintained departmental homogeneity. We will present the actions taken during the search process, our failures and hard lessons, as well as the steps we are taking to eradicate the *absolute right to exclude* through revised departmental hiring practices. Positive outcomes of these steps will also be discussed.

Presenters will encourage conversation about what "counts" as diversity in participants' departments, the consequences of hiring a "good fit" candidate, and identifying best-practice strategies that their departments could use to move toward a diversity-focused approach to faculty hiring.

ⁱ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2019). <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=61>

ⁱⁱ Turner, C. S. (2015). Lessons from the field: Cultivating nurturing environments in higher education. *The Review of Higher Education*, 38(3), 333-358.

ⁱⁱⁱ Park, J.J. & Denson, N. (2009). Attitudes and advocacy: Understanding faculty views on racial/ethnic diversity. *Journal of Higher Education*, 80(44), 415-438.

^{iv} Heilig, J.V., Flores, I.W., Souza, A.E.B., Barry, J.C., Monroy, S.B. (2019). Considering the ethnoracial and gender diversity of faculty in United States college and university intellectual communities. *The Hispanic Journal of Law and Policy*, 2019(1) 1-31.

^v Smith, D.G., Turner, C.S.V., & Osei-Kofi, N. (2004). Interrupting the usual: Successful strategies for hiring diverse faculty. *Journal of Higher Education*, 75, 133-156.

^{vi} Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W.F. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47-68.

^{vii} Harris, C. I. (1993). Whiteness as property. *Harvard Law Review* 106(8), 1707-1791.

^{viii} Dodo Seriki, V.D., Brown, C.T., Fasching-Varner, K.J. (2015). The permanence of racism in teacher education. *National Society for the Study of Education*, 114(2), 75-102.