

UWG Faculty Senate Resolution on Diversifying the Faculty from the Diversity and Internationalization Committee

Background:

Whereas UWG Senior Leadership has demonstrated a commitment to serving our diverse student population through multiple initiatives and strategies such as the Engage West! Initiative, the creation of a Chief Diversity Officer position, the formation of the President Commission on Campus Inclusion, the President Student Advisory Council on Diversity, The Diversity Champions Action Committee, The Faculty Senate Diversity and Internationalization Committee, and several other organizations and initiatives;

(https://www.westga.edu/administration/president/assets-president/docs/Working_Diversity_Statement_fall_2015.pdf,
<https://www.westga.edu/administration/president/vision-mission-and-values.php>);

UWG considers the opportunities afforded by an inclusive learning environment, and the authentic interaction among people from various backgrounds and persuasions to be essential elements in achieving excellence in academia, and cites inclusiveness as one of our core values (UWG Vision, Mission and Values, (<https://www.westga.edu/administration/president/vision-mission-and-values.php>); and

UWG Strategic Plan calls for the development of "specific initiatives aimed at enhanced recruitment, retention, compensation, and development of high-quality faculty from diverse backgrounds" (Strategic Imperative 2B) (https://www.westga.edu/administration/president/assets-president/docs/StrategicPlan_Brochure_pages.pdf).

Whereas UWG has a highly diverse and engaged student population with nearly half (50%) of the student body reporting a minority race/ethnicity (not White), and 37% reporting as African American;

UWG has maintained positive enrollment growth over the last decade due in large part to the growth in the Black/African-American student population, while other peer institutions in the USG suffered declining enrollments;

UWG is one of the few schools that can proudly boast that there is no equity gap for African-American students' 6yr graduation rates, which are 2.2% higher than that of White students (<http://www.info.usg.edu/>);

UWG's African American students' 4-year graduation rates continue to lag 4.4% behind that of White Students and 2.2. behind the institution rate ((<http://www.info.usg.edu/>); and

UWG seeks to continue to grow its student enrollment in an environment where greater proportions of Black, Hispanic, and Asian high school students will be graduating from the State of Georgia than Whites (<https://knocking.wiche.edu/state-profiles/>);

Whereas, UWG faculty population is 18% reporting a minority race/ethnicity (not White), and 7% reporting as African Americans (UWG 2017 Fact Book);

Diversity of faculty has been shown to create an environment that fosters the recruitment and retention of a more diverse student body, faculty, staff, and administration, as well as provide greater benefits for all students, including improving the institution's ability to train students to thrive in a culturally competent world ([Does Diversity Make a Difference? Three Research Studies on Diversity in College Classrooms](#));

Diversity of faculty is positively associated with departmental rankings in research universities <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12108-013-9183-8>;

A diverse and representative faculty is important for providing role models and mentors for the success of diverse students (<https://www.aaup.org/issues/diversity-affirmative-action/resources-diversity-and-affirmative-action/role-faculty-achieving-and-retaining-diverse-student-population>).

Whereas current research on faculty excellence and diversity suggests that gaps in equity, access and inclusion in hiring are linked to institutional practices and patterns of unconscious biases that can be productively addressed through interactive training that helps committees successfully hire more diverse and excellent faculty https://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure_3rdEd.pdf;

A vast body of research on implicit bias has shown that implicit bias is likely present in all aspects of the search process and perpetuates the systemic lack of progress in diversifying the faculty. (see, Smith, D., Turner, C., Osei-Kofi, N., & Richards, S. 2004. Interrupting the Usual: Successful Strategies for Hiring Diverse Faculty. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 75(2), 133-160, at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3838827>; and for a list of other studies, visit <https://facultyhiring.uoregon.edu/special-concerns/>);

The evidence both from extant research and from our own anecdotal data indicate that in addition to our inability to attract minority faculty, those who accept positions at UWG face additional burdens, such as a) being consistently called upon to serve as mentors to minority students due to the small number of minority faculty; b) being consistently called upon to serve on diversity committees regardless of their disciplines or expertise; and c) being questioned about their research foci, which often concentrates on the real-life, current, and pressing issues of minorities but is often not valued in traditional publications. (Aguirre Jr, A. 2000. Women and Minority Faculty in the Academic Workplace: Recruitment, Retention, and Academic Culture. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, Volume 27, Number 6. Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series; <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/06/26/essay-diversity-issues-and-midcareer-faculty-members>); and

Diversity recruitment advertising has been found to be an effective tool for branding the institution as one that values diversity, in addition to increasing and diversifying the applicant pool (see, *Searching for Excellence & Diversity: A Guide for Search Committee Chairs, a guide developed by the Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI) at the University of Wisconsin Madison*).

Recommendations

Therefore, the Faculty Senate, in support of UWG's culture of inclusion and collaboration, urges appropriate institutional actors to act in pursuit of the following objectives:

- 1) UWG's commitment to supporting its diverse student body shall be exemplified through the implementation of clearly-defined and legally-sound processes towards diversifying the faculty across all academic units (best practices' examples include but are not limited to):
 - a. support and accountability for deans and faculty search committees in instituting training that broadens perspectives and addresses unconscious biases;
 - b. job descriptions that reflect UWG's values, including the value of inclusiveness;
 - c. active recruitment of faculty that will diversify the applicant pool;
 - d. consistent processes and reviews of the faculty search process;
 - e. selection and hires of faculty with demonstrated commitment/experience to serving a diverse student population and in alignment with UWG values;
- 2) Beginning with the 2018-2019 Academic Year, faculty hiring processes (inclusive of search committee membership, applicant pool, and hires) shall be tracked and reported (to include gender and other historically underrepresented groups). This annual report shall include a report on any initiatives at UWG designed to improve faculty representation of underrepresented groups and benchmark trends in employment and promotion rates;
- 3) Implementation of and accountability for onboarding and mentoring programs to support junior faculty in timely progression towards promotion and tenure; and
- 4) All elected faculty senators serving on the Senate lead by example and participate in search training that helps minimize unconscious biases.

Approved by the Faculty Senate on March 30, 2018

Approved by President Kyle Marrero on May 14, 2018