

Priority Recommendations for 2014-2015

**A Response by the
Faculty Senate
Committee on the Status of People of Color**

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The UNT Faculty Senate Committee on the Status of People of Color has reviewed the reports entitled, "Use of the Equity Scorecard at U.S. Universities and its Relevance for Addressing the UNT's Faculty Equity Issues," (Dr. Saleha Suleman; May 14, 2014) as well as an "Executive Summary" provided by the Provost's office. Our committee was also asked by the Office of the Provost to review the recent publication, "Gender Equality in the Ivory Tower, and How Best to Achieve It" (Monroe, Choi, Howell, Lampros-Monroe, Trejo, & Perez, 2014) and prioritize the recommendations suggested within that article. Because the article speaks only to gender equality, our response here draws loosely from their recommendations to reflect the perspective of people of color at UNT.

The enclosed set of recommendations builds upon our previous "Response of the Committee on the Status of People of Color to 'The University of North Texas: A University of Equitable Opportunities for Faculty?'" (April, 2014). Within our initial report, we requested three points of action: (1) realignment to substantially increase racial/ethnic diversity in administrative appointments, (2) creation of a fund for corrective salary adjustments to Hispanic, Black, and American Indian faculty members, and (3) routine data capture going forward to monitor the impact of the above items.

These three action items remain our top priorities. However, we appreciate this opportunity to revisit and extend our initial recommendations as follows.

I. Realignment of Administration

IA: Hire and Appoint Qualified People of Color to Positions of Power

Rationale: While our student population continues to increase in diversity, the faculty is still predominantly composed of Caucasian males. Based on a counting of administrators in the Fall of 2012, the following ethnicities were represented:

Academic Dean Level: Asian = 2; Caucasian = 13

Dean Level: Black = 1; Caucasian = 11; International = 1

Chair: American Indian = 1, Asian = 4; Black = 2; Caucasian = 42; Hispanic = 3; International = 2

Sr. Assoc. Dean, Provost, VP Level: Caucasian = 7; Hispanic = 1

Other Administrative Roles: Caucasian = 5

According to the description provided by Monroe et al. (2014), the departmental structure at UNT is linear in nature. While Monroe et al. (2014) are referring to gender equity, it still remains true that it is important to offer role models of color to faculty as well as students of color. Moreover, it is helpful to signify that the university's climate is conducive to the career advancement of faculty members of color.

IB. Appoint a Cabinet-Level Position

Rationale: A need for dedicated focus on these issues while interacting with the provost and other vice presidents is essential to developing a responsive and accountable

culture of change with respect to the concerns expressed by the Status of People of Color at UNT in our previous (April 2014) response as well as this document.

II. Recruitment and Retention of Faculty of Color

IIA. Corrective Salary Adjustments

Rationale: Hispanic, Black, and American Indian faculty at UNT evidence longstanding salary disparities. While we appreciate the Provost's commitment to reviewing the offer letters for future faculty, we find this response to be underwhelming for several reasons.

- (1) The current structures have not been sufficient to prevent long-term, systematic salary disparities. Entrusting those same structures to foster change does not send a message of genuine investment in remedying the entrenched salary disparities.

Monroe et al. (2014, p. 421) writes, "Such equity increases involve complex bureaucratic procedures that vary from campus to campus but, on balance, prove a powerful mechanism to remedy salary inequities." As indicated in the article, developing an independent salary equity review policy to assist with addressing the disparities between salaries can be effective. The article further affirms that posting this data within the university is an effective practice. *New, transparent, vetting processes must be developed to foster public confidence in an authentic commitment to change.*

- (2) The response completely dismisses the significant financial loss incurred by existing Hispanic, Black, and American Indian faculty. Notably, these same individuals are underrepresented and therefore run substantial risk of identification via any self-advocacy efforts while they remain at UNT.

A failure to provide corrective salary adjustments to faculty of color is equivalent to making a decision to engage in planned, systematic discrimination into the foreseeable future.

- (3) The known high attrition rate among faculty of color at UNT makes encouraging faculty to seek competing job offers to obtain salary adjustments, at best, ill-advised.

As we noted in our previous response, the attrition rates of faculty members of color are: American Indian (40%), Black (51%), Caucasian (32%), and Hispanic (37%). Further, the results of the most recent climate survey signify that Black and Hispanic faculty consistently reported negative subjective appraisals of the UNT climate on key variables salient to hiring, retention, promotion, and tenure.

Notably, the Office of the Provost has been candid across multiple forums in advising

faculty to solicit competing offers as an individual means for attaining corrective salary adjustments. Although this practice does not reflect an actual UNT policy, these candid remarks indicate that this practice is being implemented *as if* it were policy. Any practice that is functioning *as if* policy indicates that there is an absence of a needed policy.

Our recommendation is to cease this practice and deal with salary disparities in a more effective and transparent manner that provides the needed salary corrections to all Hispanic, Black, and American Indian faculty.

Continuing to encourage faculty of color to go on the job market sends a message that UNT is not a culturally competent institution AND is completely counter to the need to increase both recruitment and retention of Hispanic, Black, and American Indian faculty.

- (4) Any response suggesting that, “funds are not available” is not strictly true. Funds *are* available to the University and UNT *does* have significant influence over budget allocations. *Funds are made available to priorities.* Are people of color a priority to UNT?

IIB. Additional Means of Improving Recruitment and Retention

Rationale: Monroe et al. (2014) provides numerous suggestions that may be beneficial and applicable to minority faculty. For example, the authors suggest that, “Having a pool of money to recruit especially qualified women—at both the senior and junior level—by providing them additional research funding, travel to conferences, onsite day care and day care at conferences, and so on, even if only for five years can aid greatly in recruitment and retention of productive female faculty.” (p. 425). The same may be true of recruiting minorities. In addition to implementing the strategies recommended by Monroe, the following may be beneficial for remedying disparities:

- An examination of practices within the university to determine why people of color leave at higher rates and how the issue may be remedied
- Endeavor to implement job searches that hire from diverse pools of applicants
- Diversity training for faculty and staff
- Consistent reporting of teaching and service loads
- Frequent forums to address diversity with speakers
- A team appointed specifically to address issues of diversity

IIC. Mentoring Programs

Rationale: The positive results of leadership development in the form of mentoring include career stabilization through encouragement (Kram, 1985), acclimation to organizational environments and responsibilities (Daresh, 2003), and a general sense

that one is in control of their career (Scandura & Williams, 2004).

Monroe et al. (2014) observed that professional organizations can help with mentoring by providing guidelines and best practices, adapting policies that promote equity, and offering mentoring programs. Recently there have been competitive mentoring grants provided by the university. However, mentoring is not consistent across departments. Providing a university-wide mentoring program would be extremely beneficial. Additionally, while there is a university-wide mentoring grant opportunity, this could be enhanced by having a “hard money” program administered under the Office of the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, yet to be named. We additionally suggest the following:

- The establishment of a formal university-wide mentoring program at UNT that helps with leadership development, acclimation, grant-writing and publications
- The voluntary monitoring the acclimation of faculty members of color and women through a formal university-wide mentoring program
- The provision of professional development funds that assist new faculty members with joining at least on professional development organization that provides mentoring
- Establishing measures that recognize the importance of service to professional organizations that allow new faculty members to experience leadership roles and develop policies within professional organizations

IID. Conduct a Climate Survey Specifically for People of Color

Rationale: The previously conducted climate survey suggests significant concerns specific to people of color at UNT that merit further inquiry. Given the expressed concerns about the current culture at UNT, participation rates may be maximized if such a survey is accomplished under the auspices of our committee (funded by the university).

III. Routine Data Capture

Rationale: We previously advised that future data collection should be careful to document race and ethnicity as separate constructs and suggested utilization of census categories to facilitate comparisons with other data sources. In reviewing the report prepared by Dr. Suleman, it appears that use of the Equity Scorecard could be extremely beneficial in this regard (See “issue 8” on p. 24 of Dr. Suleman’s report).

Additional References

Daresh, J. C. (2003). *Teachers mentoring teachers*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

Kram, K. E. (1985). *Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life*.

Organizational behavior and psychology series. Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman.

Scandura, T. A., & Williams, E. A. (2004). Mentoring and transformational leadership: The role of supervisory career mentoring. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 65 (3), 448-468.