

ADMINISTRATION

Different Strategies for Diverse Hiring

By *Beth McMurtrie* | SEPTEMBER 11, 2016

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Fernando R. Guzman III, of the U. of Rhode Island, works to expand his network of 3,000 minority scholars.

Some institutions find that **working with other colleges** helps leverage resources.

Universities of the Big Ten Academic Alliance train search committees about the problems of unconscious bias, which may put at a disadvantage candidates who are members of underrepresented minority groups. Supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation, the training has been developed along with a mentoring program for postdoctoral fellows in science, technology, engineering and math, the STEM fields, who are connected with faculty members on their own campuses and at other colleges.

Member institutions hired 67 faculty members from underrepresented minority groups for STEM positions in 2014-15, up from 52 the previous year. Charity Farber, assistant director of academic programs for the alliance, attributes the increase to a strong push from campus leaders to improve diversity in hiring, combined with the training and mentoring programs.

Liberal Arts Diversity Officers, a consortium formed in 2007 by administrators at private liberal-arts colleges, has been running workshops for doctoral students at major research universities, like the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Michigan, to recruit future faculty members with an emphasis on members of underrepresented groups.

The work, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, introduces students to careers at teaching-focused institutions, says Michael E. Reed, co-chair of the consortium and vice president for institutional initiatives at Dickinson College.

For the liberal-arts colleges, being part of the group gives them more leverage. "I could never get any of those R1s to pay

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attention to me if I said, 'I'm Mike Reed at Dickinson, and I have seven tenure-track positions open,'" Mr. Reed says. "But if I say I represent a group of liberal-arts colleges that have 120 to 180 openings, that gets their attention."

Some colleges have **hired faculty recruiters** to help search committees craft job ads to attract a more diverse pool of applicants, supply data on the pool of new minority Ph.D.s in their field, and build networks of potential applicants. The Rochester Institute of Technology has used this strategy for more than a decade, doubling the number of tenure-track faculty members from underrepresented groups in the process.

The University of Rhode Island hired Fernando R. Guzman III last year as director of diverse faculty and staff recruitment and retention, continuing work he began at the University of Denver. He meets with search committees as they develop their job

descriptions and begin recruiting. He attends professional conferences to expand his network of about 3,000 minority scholars. And he encourages committee members to scout up-and-coming scholars at professional conferences.

Some universities aim to increase faculty diversity through more aggressive **departmental interventions**. Richard M. Locke, provost at Brown University, says that in reviewing the university's diversity pledges, he was struck by how similar they all were, and how they lacked departmental accountability.

To remedy that, a new strategic plan requires each department to submit a diversity-and-inclusion plan before hiring requests are authorized. Brown has also hired two assistant deans to help identify potential hires in the sciences and in the humanities and social sciences. And pipeline programs are being developed to cultivate talented academics from underrepresented groups. All plans will be monitored, evaluated, and made public to the university community, including students.



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