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March 2010

Diversity at USU

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Recommended Citation
"Diversity at USU" (2010). *ADVANCE Library Collection.* Paper 574.
http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/advance/574

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TO: President George H. Emert
Provost G. Jay Gogue

FROM: Senior Women Faculty (Signatory page attached)
SUBJECT: Diversity at USU

Thank you for meeting with us on September 10th. We share your concerns about the disappointing statistics regarding women holding visible administrative positions. As senior women faculty, we feel that we have a responsibility to the university, our students, and state, to promote and support women in leadership roles, in brief, to be proactive on women's issues. We realize the delicate nature of this task, given that we also value the decentralized nature of USU and its tradition of strong faculty governance.

As such, we encourage the central administration to do everything possible to promote a more diverse leadership and build on those initiatives that you have already put into place. In coming together on September 28 and October 12 to discuss multiple strategies, we offer the following from our brainstorming session, acknowledging that while there is not unanimous agreement on all aspects, all of us do agree that we need a concerted effort in order to effect change on our campus.

Presidential Commission on the Status of Women

•Establish a Presidential Commission on the Status of Women at USU. A group composed of Full Professors Jan Anderson, Ann Austin, Deborah Byrnes, and Melody Graulich have agreed to work with you on this endeavor.

Administrative Positions

•Appoint a senior woman faculty member to a permanent position in the Provost's office to undertake work that will advance the academic mission.

•Select women for interim/acting positions at the department head and dean level, where such roles do not preclude their candidacy for the permanent positions.

Salaries

•We support using one-time merit pay monies to address gender disparities in salary.

Searches

•We encourage you as President and Provost to use your informal influence in administrative hirings.

•Emphasize to search committees, multiple times, the importance of diversity in the pool [although this has been done in the past during the instructions to the committee, the message needs to be stated several times]. Encourage committees to avoid "cloning," the tendency for search committees to select candidates like themselves. This message needs to come not just from AA/EEO but also from higher administration.

•Assess the candidate evaluation process for administrative searches. Often female candidates or candidates of color have obtained leadership skills through non-traditional pathways. Unless carefully crafted, weighted evaluation systems may reward only traditional routes.

•"Homegrown" female candidates may provide the best opportunity for diversity in some administrative searches. Thus, internal and external candidates for administrative positions should be given the same consideration.

•Share strategies of successful diversity recruitment-especially for faculty positions--among units, perhaps at the department heads' annual meeting.

•Conduct and report results from exit interviews with women and minority faculty who resigned.

•Set aside new faculty hire slots for diversity, either rewarding a unit with an additional slot if a hire is made or having a central pool in which the fields are open and then the best diversity applicants are hired. The University of New Hampshire has used a similar model.

•Utah State University Personnel Policy 385 needs to be implemented as a tool for diversity.

•Evaluate AA/EEO office reporting lines and effectiveness.

Administrative Training

•Send a clear message to departments and colleges that mentoring future female leaders is important; follow up by requesting plans from departments on how they are preparing future female leaders; develop opportunities for women to express interest in administrative positions.

•Line administrators should be evaluated, in part, on how well they succeed in increasing diversity, with real positive and negative consequences as a result of these evaluations.

•Provide support for women to attend off-campus administrative workshops (e.g., HERS, Wellesley, Harvard). Along these lines, we appreciate your support for women to

attend the forthcoming conference at Harvard on 'Women in Research Universities'.

•Establish a department head training program for future department heads, either on campus or as a state initiative, and include diversity and "anti-cloning" workshops conducted by individuals in departments who have been successful in diversity endeavors.

•Provide support for women who are potential future leaders, e.g., associate department heads, other women in leadership positions, to attend department heads' fall retreat.

•Appoint women as chairs of university-wide committees, and recognize such service as leadership experience. (However, we are concerned that such service appointments increase workload. Thus, the work must be counted in merit assessments as well).

•Appoint women to direct special projects that advance the institutional mission, projects that would require an appointment in the president's office.

Public Image

•Set up a system whereby Media Relations spotlights women's successes, academic honors, etc. in press releases; be especially aggressive in targeting AP items that can work to change the perception of Utah as a hostile climate for professional women.

•The president and provost should seek and implement increased opportunities to give further voice to the importance of women's issues and other issues of diversity; some options for future actions might include attending the WGRI Distinguished Scholar Award and finding ways to be physically present at women's events.

•Solicit ACE Fellows for USU, and continue to explore opportunities for USU women to become ACE Fellows elsewhere.

Educational Programs

•Significantly increase central administration's financial and moral support of Women's Studies, Women & Gender Research Institute, and the Women's Center.

•Assign a committee of women faculty working with the AA/EEO Director to determine future directions of the Women's Forum.

We appreciate your support of our conversation, and we pledge our support for your efforts to improve the climate for women at Utah State University.

Signature Page (email confirmation-actual confirmation documents available upon request)

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Ann M. B. Austin, Professor, Family and Human Development
Jan Anderson, Professor, Library
Caryn L. Beck-Dudley, Professor, Management and Human Resources
Anne M. Butler, Professor, History
Deborah A. Byrnes, Professor, Elementary Education
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