

## **HONORS COLLEGE DIVERSITY PLAN**

August 22, 2012

This plan is a revision of our previous Diversity Recruitment Plans. It incorporates suggestions in the “University of Vermont Diversity Recruitment and Retention Best Practices” documents.

### **Introduction**

Since the Honors College does not hire faculty (tenure track and non-tenure track) directly, but rather employs faculty who hold positions in other academic units, our workforce recruitment efforts are centered on classified staff. Moreover, we have a very small staff; turnover is limited as are the opportunity to hire and our recruitment experiences. Nonetheless, we are firmly committed to diversity as part of our mission and find it crucial to be aware of and implement diversity best practices for hiring and retention. We are aided in trying to achieve this goal by our diversity efforts in the recruitment of students and in the implementation of our curriculum, both active areas for us, which, though they are not directly tied to staff recruitment, help to create an atmosphere in which staff recruitment and retention are more likely to succeed.

The current Honors College staff consists of three exempt and one non-exempt full time staff members, two full time administrators, and a half time graduate student. Six of these seven staff members are female and one is Asian-American. In the recent past we have had one other Asian-American and one other African-American staff members. We are also a welcoming workplace for promoting other forms of diversity. As examples, we have and have had diversity with regard to sexual preference, socioeconomic background, religious orientation, and national and international origin. In other words, we acknowledge and instantiate in our practice the two-level approach to diversity outlined in the “Best Practices” document, viz., race and gender diversity as well as diversity along a ‘broader array of perspectives’ such as age, disability, sexual orientation, gender expression, socioeconomic status, religious and political status (p. 3).

### **Institutional Leadership**

In such a small office, the responsibility for diversity matters extends to all of our staff members and infuses our communications and operations; it ultimately rests with the Dean. We plan to *continue to*:

- Update and make prominent the “Message from the Dean on Diversity and Cultural Pluralism” on our webpage:  
[http://www.uvm.edu/~honcoll/?Page=diversity\\_new.html&SM=HCCommmenu.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~honcoll/?Page=diversity_new.html&SM=HCCommmenu.html)
- Keep diversity a priority in our Undergraduate Research efforts, e.g., through the Women in Science Program (WISP), support for the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS), collaboration with the McNair Scholars Program and TRIO on campus, and in other ways.

- Build on our efforts to expand fellowship opportunities to diverse populations in our national fellowships office.
- Have annual meetings with the ALANA Student Center staff on collaborative support for students and staff, focusing on retention issues, as well as to coordinate programming efforts.
- Keep up the practice of having a resident faculty member in University Heights North (UHN) offering special support for ALANA populations and another for first-generation populations.
- The practice of providing awards to outstanding ALANA students at the annual ALANA Awards Banquet and publicizing these outcomes.
- Return to the practice of using a Dean's Committee on Diversity as is needed.
- Work with our Residential Life partners to reach diversity goals and collaborate on programming and publicity.
- Participate in campus surveys and promote participation in them.
- Work to bring Racial Aikido and other training programs to our staff meetings and encourage diversity training generally.

### **Recruitment**

We anticipate no recruitment activity for the remainder of this fiscal year and can predict none for the immediate years following. When any staff vacancies occur we will focus efforts on bringing the position to the attention of a diverse population of viable candidates by using the UVM job website and appropriate national websites, conferences, networking, personal outreach and email lists. We will continue to do what we have done and adapt ideas recommended by the "Best Practice" document:

- Ensure that hiring committee members all have appropriate AA/EO training.
- Reflect on our diversity numbers, though, with such a small staff, the idea of setting targets does not seem immediately compelling.
- Develop recruiting and networking strategies in advance of hiring opportunities arising. E.g., we do anticipate the recruitment of a half-time graduate assistant in March 2011. We will be, as before, working with staff in Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA) on recruitment.
- Consider target opportunities regarding diversity objectives; select search committees to be as diverse as possible; include, for staff positions, language reading: "The University is especially interested in candidates who can contribute to the diversity and excellence of the academic community through their professional activity and service. Applicants are requested to include in their cover letter information about how they will further this goal."
- Develop a protocol for campus visits/post campus phone calls, partnering with the Associate Provost for Multicultural Affairs and Academic Initiatives to do so.
- Have a format for discussing the applicant pool that encourages broad participation, resulting in unranked recommendations of top candidates to the hiring official.
- Use University and surrounding community diversity resource information for prospective hires.

### **Retention**

Retention is clearly an important part of the diversity effort. In addition to pursuing the training opportunities and incentive structures mentioned in the "Best Practice" document, we will pursue

the activities listed under “Leadership” and “Recruitment” above to continue to create an environment in which diverse people feel welcome and can thrive.

**Accountability**

Annual and continuous evaluation of diversity recruitment and retention is important to measuring progress and refining our approaches. Formal targets against which to measure progress are not likely appropriate in a setting with just six staff members. Regarding exit interviews, we feel we do understand the reasons, in our limited history, why people have left our office and will continue to monitor those reasons to gauge whether we have been providing an inclusive climate in which diversity and excellence can thrive.