Report and Recommendations

Rutgers University Libraries

Diversity Task Force

May 2010

Introduction:

In his 2007 annual address to the university community, President Richard L. McCormick declared that "Rutgers has a call to diversity. New Jersey claims the widest array of nationalities, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds. So should its state university, both for reasons of social justice and for the educational value that diversity brings. ... We need to diversify our faculty, our senior leadership, and our curriculum across all three campuses. And we will hold the deans, provosts, and vice presidents accountable for real progress."

President McCormick created the Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity to help meet the challenge to maintain the wonderful diversity of Rutgers' student body and to increase that of its faculty and senior leadership. That office has shepherded the President’s Faculty Diversity Cluster Hiring Initiative and sponsored a university wide workshop on recruiting diverse faculty in late 2009.

In addition, the President’s Council on Institutional Diversity and Equity produced a comprehensive tool for diversity faculty recruitment called “Increasing Faculty Diversity: A Handbook for Deans, Department Chairs and Members of Faculty Search Committees”.

It is against this backdrop that Marianne Gaunt, the Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian, appointed a Libraries Diversity Task Force on February 9, 2010, with the following charge:

“The Task Force on Diversity Recruitment is charged with developing a five- year plan to increase the diversity of the faculty and staff of the University Libraries, and provide recommendations to insure that the Libraries attract a diverse pool of candidates for all positions. The plan should include:

- Methods for increasing the diversity of candidate pools (target programs/target groups), including successful practices elsewhere
- Changes needed in position profile descriptions, if necessary
- Placement of position postings if different from current practices
- Roles of and composition of search committees, especially in outreach, if different from current practices
- Recommendations for interview process changes, if necessary
The Task Force should consult existing documentation on library processes, diversity statistics of the university and nationally, the faculty handbook on diversity, and other materials and groups inside and external to the Libraries, as necessary.

Your report should be completed by April 30.

Members:

- Lila Fredenburg, Director for Administrative Services, Chair
- Judy Gardner, Interim Deputy Associate University Librarian for Research and Instructional Services
- Triveni Kuchi, Chair of the Diversity Committee
- Mark Winston, Assistant Chancellor and Director, Dana Library

Gaunt also directed the task force to address ways to strongly encourage library administrators and supervisors to actively foster recruitment related to diversity.

The Libraries have already engaged in diversity efforts through a Target of Opportunity hire in 2008, an ongoing diversity education programming effort entitled Blueprint for Diversity, continued activities of the Libraries Diversity Committee and the joint Diversity Intern/Residency Program with the School Of Communication and Information. Despite these good efforts our goal must be to enhance the diversity of the Libraries faculty and staff. In concert with our own and the University’s diversity goals, the Task Force has been asked to analyze its recruitment methods, to review best practices and to make recommendations and most of all to clarify the Libraries vision of its diversity.

The Task Force first met on February 17, 2010 to receive its charge from Marianne Gaunt and to organize its activities. At this meeting the Task Force gained an understanding of expectations from Gaunt and also heard an overview of existing recruiting procedures from Fredenburg. The Task Force met three more times after that. Prior to meeting members researched and reviewed resources from representative and exemplary peer institutions and individual members reported on their findings to the other members. These examples are summarized in Appendix A of this document. The Task Force also heard reports on the University’s diversity statistics and goals from Jayne Grandes, Director of University Equal Opportunity Affairs, on the Libraries recruitment procedures from Sandra Troy and impressions of the recruitment process from several recent faculty hires. On April 1, 2010, the Task Force met to summarize its findings and determine its major recommendations.

During the course of Task Force meetings and discussions, we found ourselves returning time and again to the same two topics in relation to diversity: training and accountability. The Task Force examined:
- diversity language
- position descriptions,
- placement of postings
- search committee policies and procedures
- methods for increasing diversity of candidate pools

And, with each topic it became clear that training in diversity recruitment was critical and that holding each and every person in the Libraries accountable by making diversity efforts a performance standard was necessary to make progress in building a diverse and diversity friendly workforce. In other words, a section of the performance review should be devoted to the staff or faculty member’s diversity efforts during the performance period. Such efforts could include referred diversity candidates for vacant positions, actively contributed to the successful recruitment of candidates who represent diversity by, for example, proactively identifying and encouraging applications from members of underrepresented groups, suggested additions to the diversity recruitment resources, attended diversity education events, or work done in conjunction with the Diversity Center.

**Diversity Language, Position Profile Descriptions and Placement of Postings:**

The Task Force examined research done by the Library Faculty’s Multicultural Lexicon Task Force in 2007 regarding uniform diversity language for position postings and job advertisements and determined that the language currently in use in the Libraries’ postings and advertisements is acceptable.

“Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer. The Libraries are strongly committed to diversity and seek candidates who will contribute creatively to the University’s multicultural environment.”

The Task Force studied current and past postings, examining in particular, articulation of required and preferred qualifications, which tended to be very specific and detailed and often required significant professional experience. We also reviewed current postings from other academic institutions (see Attachments A).

We also examined the current description of both the Rutgers University Libraries and the University in light of our diversity mission. Our review indicated that the diversity language contained in our position postings is appropriate, especially when compared to examples from peer institutions.

Our review also led us to the following recommendations:

- Whenever feasible, required qualifications for positions should be broadened and generalized to attract a larger pool. Translatable skills from other areas of expertise should be reviewed for applicability to the position posted.

- The current description of the University and the Libraries should be reworked to feature the diversity of the student body, the Diversity Research Center and the Libraries’ liaisons to
Women’s Studies, the Center for Social Justice, and other similar programs which support diversity.

**Methods for Increasing Diversity of Candidate Pools:**

The Task Force noted that the Libraries currently use some of the recommendations of RU President’s Council on Institutional Diversity and Equity as well as advertises widely through a variety of listservs and through targeted job listings. Typically search committee members and individual librarians who might have subject expertise broadly in the area of the particular position being advertised are contacted for potential advertising sources. According to Libraries Human Resources, all ALA and NJLA division, committee or section listservs, SCI, and a few paid advertising sources are targeted for job or position advertisements. We recommend that a comprehensive list be put together and updated on an ongoing basis through input from administration and library faculty. The current lists are attached as **Appendix B** of this document.

The Task Force also discussed a number of approaches which have been shown to be effective in increasing the diversity of candidate pools for library faculty positions. The goals, in this regard, include identifying and actively recruiting appropriate candidates. Approaches that the Task Force recommends include:

- Developing position descriptions that reflect the Libraries’ commitment to diversity as a high priority. [Discussed in greater detail below.]
- Members of the Search Committees or hiring managers (AUL’s or directors) making personal contact with individuals in the profession (library administrators, librarians and teaching faculty), who can provide candidate recommendations.
- Contacting individuals included in lists, such as alumni of leadership development programs.
- Making active use of the University’s Diversity Recruitment Handbook, to ensure a comprehensive candidate identification process.
- Posting of job ads in standard professional publications and sources, as well as minority professional listservs.
- General marketing of the library, even when individual positions are not vacant at the time. [In this regard, the goal is to market the Libraries and the University as a diversity friendly workplace.]
- Hosting scouting/recruitment events, such as the hosting of receptions for graduates of various leadership development and internship/residency programs during professional meetings.
- Provision of support from the Libraries’ Administration for dissemination of results of diversity research, programs, and efforts at RUL, in publications and presentations at professional and scholarly conferences, such as ACRL.
For all library faculty positions, the preferred rank and tenure for open positions should be considered carefully, with a system wide consideration of the range of options that are available.

**The Search Committee:**

The Task Force acknowledged that recruitment is a year-round, ongoing activity in which library faculty and staff develops networks and contacts for potential job candidates. The recruitment process for specific positions begins with the composition of a search committee and its charge.

The Task Force recommends the following changes to current Rutgers University Libraries search committee practices. To effectively implement these recommendations search committees will need to start their work early, receive better training, proactively make personal contacts with potential candidates, and hold more discussions and meetings. The Libraries faculty, staff, and administration will need to value and increase support for the work of search committees.

- **Charge.** Directors, AULs, supervisors, and the Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian form search committees. All search committees will receive a written charge explicitly stating that a diverse faculty and staff is a top RUL priority, articulating the role of the committee in making a recommendation and describing the diversity report required of the committee at the end of the process.

- **Composition.** Search committees should be diverse, representing diverse backgrounds, racial and ethnic identities, and perspectives. Members outside the department or unit should be recruited if necessary; library staff may be recruited for faculty searches and faculty for staff searches. The committee chair should ensure members have a broad perspective and commit to diversity throughout the search process.

- **Education and Training.** The Diversity Task Force recommends an ongoing diversity recruitment and interview training program that reaches all potential search committee members throughout the year. In addition, whenever a faculty or staff search committee is formed, the first hour of its first meeting will be devoted to a discussion with the Director of Administrative Services who will review diversity recruitment techniques, interviewing, and protocols to ensure fairness and consistency. Search committee members should receive relevant background information to read before the first meeting, such as “Increasing Faculty Diversity: a Handbook for Deans, Department Chairs, and Members of Faculty Search Committees.” Committees should also draw on the expertise of their campus Director of Employment Equity for information or advice on creating a diverse candidate pool.

- **Position Descriptions.** Faculty position descriptions are composed with input from the director, AUL, or Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian, unit
faculty, the search committee, and others. Staff position description CARFs (Classification and Recruitment Forms) are composed by the supervisor in consultation with others. Faculty search committee members should be involved in composing position descriptions before positions are posted and advertised. Search committees will review position descriptions and advertisements with a broad perspective on roles, responsibilities, skills, and competencies necessary for success, and may suggest diversity language be included, such as “the demonstrated ability to work with diverse students and colleagues” and “experience with a variety of teaching methods or curricular perspectives.”

To ensure all faculty job descriptions articulate the Libraries’ commitment to diversity as a high priority, the Director of Administrative Services should serve as the chief editor, working with the hiring director or AUL. If substantive changes are made they will be shared with various groups and individuals who provided input on the job description.

- **Screening Criteria.** As already noted in the section Position Profile Descriptions, broad and comprehensive minimum requirements should be developed that focus on demonstrated competence and excellence, collective achievement, core competencies, values, and fitness for the Libraries.

- **Outreach.** Search committee members should use personal contacts, making telephone calls and writing personalized notes to identify candidates and solicit applications. They will consult with colleagues on campus, at other institutions, and through professional associations to identify candidates.

- **Representing the Libraries.** An important role of search committees is to represent the Libraries and Rutgers University to candidates. Committees should present the University realistically, provide information that helps the candidate make an informed decision, identify professional networks and activities on campus of interest to candidates, and ensure that appropriate individuals are involved in candidate visits.

- **Diversity Reporting.** All faculty and staff search committees should submit a recruitment report to the University Librarian when their work is concluded. This report must include a section on efforts made to increase the diversity of the applicant pool, identification of diverse candidates who applied, and an explanation regarding why the most qualified female or minority candidate wasn’t hired. If efforts to produce a diverse candidate pool failed, the report will also include suggestions for modifying the process.

**The Interview Process:**

Much of what the Task Force proposes for the interview process relates to what we now recognize as an overarching theme of our study, namely, training, training and more training.
• We strongly recommend that everyone who may be involved in the search process be required to attend a comprehensive training session on selection and interviewing. We strongly recommend that attendance at such training be a requirement for serving on a search committee. There are many programs offered commercially but if funds are not available for such an enterprise, we are confident that the combined efforts of our training and human resources personnel within the Libraries and/or University wide can produce such a program which will be both practical and relevant. Naturally the training must focus on providing a welcoming environment, providing clear and comprehensive information about the Libraries and the University, the use of practices which ensure fairness, consistency and equality of treatment, and ensuring proactive recruitment, using the range of resources available.

Not only should search committees, librarians and staff be trained in the best way to advertise, select and screen, they should also be trained in best practices for interviewing. At the present time, search committees rely heavily on the Libraries Human Resources to arrange the interview day.

• Although we commend the excellent efforts and efficiency of the Libraries Human Resources team, we recommend that, as part of the greater commitment to the search process that we are recommending, the search committee itself become more involved in developing the interview day and interacting with the candidate. For example, each search committee should construct the interview day and should do so with the candidate in mind, considering all aspects of the logistics and escorting to and from all meetings, meals, and tours.

It is critically important for a member of the search committee to meet the candidate at the hotel and escort him or her to the interview. In fact, it is our general recommendation that the candidate should never be left on his/her own or to fend for him/herself from start to finish of the interview process.

We also recommend that every interview day include the following elements:

• A meeting with librarians/staff who perform work similar to what is required for the position
• An explanation of the tenure process by a peer or peers. (The Task Force understands that the University Librarian explains the tenure process but we also feel that a peer explanation would be more informal. We also think that repetition, based on varied perspectives on the process, would be helpful.
• An explanation of the organizational structure of the Libraries.
• Whenever possible, meetings with relevant teaching faculty
• Questions to the candidate on his/her commitment to diversity.
Each search committee should also consider adding materials to the standard candidate packet which may have relevance for the particular search.

Conclusion:

Task Force recommendations are contained throughout this report; however, the Task Force feels that it is important to restate the most critical recommendations:

1. A new philosophy should underlie the content of job postings which reflect openness to diverse candidates, i.e., postings which allow for translatable skills, a range of experiences and broader statements of required qualifications.
2. Search committees should be thoroughly trained in selection and interview techniques and understand the importance of representing the Libraries and the University well to all candidates.
3. Search committees should be held accountable for diversity efforts by inclusion of a section on diversity efforts in the final recruitment report.
4. All who work in the Libraries should be trained and held accountable for maintaining a diverse workforce through inclusion of diversity efforts as a required section of the performance review for faculty and staff members.

Respectfully submitted,
Rutgers University Libraries Diversity Task Force

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May 5, 2010