

Faculty in STEM Departments: Creating a Culture to Foster Diversity

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Promoting Diversity

The under-representation of women and certain minority groups in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) is well-documented and has implications for faculty and for campus culture and societal equity. Universities across the nation state goals of promoting diversity, yet numbers remain low. Using a holistic approach, we conducted a meta-analysis of available research findings and reports regarding efforts before, during, and after a new hire to uncover the strategies, practices, and supporting cultures that contribute to recruiting, retaining, and promoting faculty diversity in STEM departments.

Before the Search

Successful recruitment of diversity requires strong leadership and advocacy on campus long before the search to fill a vacant position begins.

- Enhance sensitivity to recruitment of diversity
- Develop a warm campus community
- Support diverse faculty, staff, and students
- Remain in a recruiting mode at all times

During the Search

Attracting and successfully hiring diverse faculty requires intentionality and creativity.

- Team-up and prioritize diversity
- Screen comprehensively and with an open-mind
- Illuminate mutual expectations/opportunities
- Be flexible in making the deal

After the Search

The creation of a culture of diversity is a long-term commitment.

- Maintain strong leadership for diversity
- Provide all new faculty with formal mentors
- Establish informal mentoring
- Provide programs for work family balance
- Maintain equity in awards and promotions



Specific Points of Action

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| ✓ plan strategically | ✓ direct specific and personal recruitment |
| ✓ be a strong advocate | ✓ mask gender and race |
| ✓ provide incentive plans | ✓ showcase resources for diverse faculty |
| ✓ foster warm community | ✓ provide campus and community information |
| ✓ commit to diversity | ✓ be flexible |
| ✓ cultivate networks that support diversity | ✓ give identical questions to all candidates |
| ✓ maintain contact with potential diverse faculty | ✓ allow candidates to show diverse strengths |
| ✓ develop faculty internally | ✓ accommodate work/family needs |
| ✓ educate, debunk myths | ✓ provide formal and informal mentoring |
| ✓ scout for quality diverse candidates | ✓ maintain equity in promotions/awards |
| ✓ form diverse search committees | ✓ provide leadership training |
| ✓ advertise broadly | |
| ✓ use proactive language in recruitment | |

Conclusions

Concern about the under-representation of women and minority groups in STEM is well founded, but change is unlikely to occur through isolated university policies. A culture that fosters diversity is needed to correct the disparity of representation. Strong leadership is needed to move from conversation about diversification of STEM faculty to actual realization of these goals through strategic processes that begin long before a position is vacant and continue throughout a faculty member's tenure.

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