

## MEMORANDUM

To: RIT faculty and staff  
From: Jeremy Haefner, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Subject: Changes to the Faculty Search and Selection Process  
Date: 15 December 2014  
Cc: Kevin McDonald, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion

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In responding to data and input from the faculty to consider streamlining the faculty recruitment process, Vice President Kevin McDonald and I charged an inclusive taskforce from across the campus to analyze the current recruitment process and recommend possible changes to the process in the spirit of enhancing our efforts to recruit the best possible faculty while maintaining our values around diversity. With the concurrence of Vice President McDonald, this memorandum captures the recommendations from the taskforce as well as the process moving forward.

**Diversity culture at RIT:** The taskforce indicated that there was a need to explicitly state the RIT definition of diversity and urged increased communication at all levels concerning our aspirations and goals for diversifying the faculty and staff.

A. Recommendation: A clear and unified definition of diversity is needed.

Response: With broad campus support following a thorough vetting process in 2010, RIT adopted the [Inclusive Excellence Framework](#). In this ground-breaking framework, the definitions of diversity and inclusion are clear:

“The term diversity is used to describe individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations) that can be engaged in the service of learning and working together.”

“The term inclusion is used to describe the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity – in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect – in ways that increase one’s awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and emphatic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.” (For more information on diversity and inclusion in higher education, please visit the Association of American Colleges & Universities [website](#).)

Although we desire these broad and well-defined terms to guide our faculty recruitment process, we are aware that many of our current and past efforts have had a tendency to focus on historically underrepresented populations (African American, Hispanic/Latino(a), and Native American). Although tremendous disparities still remain with the aforementioned groups and RIT must remain vigilant in its approach to proactively eradicating this disproportion, we must also continue to organizationally evolve so that our faculty embody the important differences that our students and our world reflect.

To accomplish this, the Office of the Provost and the Office for Diversity and Inclusion will collaboratively explore inclusive approaches aimed at increasing the compositional diversity of faculty, and will vet these approaches with campus constituency for feedback.

- B. Recommendation: All RIT faculty and staff should be required to participate in multicultural and implicit bias training.

*Response:* It is a fact of human nature that we all bring implicit or unconscious bias into our thinking but we can mitigate the complicating effects of this bias with critical awareness. Implicit bias training has been shown to be effective, particularly in search, tenure and review committees, in raising the participant's awareness of such bias. Universities across the country are moving to regularly requiring such training and RIT must follow suit.

Such training, however, cannot be the sole responsibility of a single unit such as the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Rather, all units must be involved if this training is to have the impact we seek. The Office of the Provost, in collaboration with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the RIT governance groups, shall develop an implementation plan for implicit bias training and vet this widely across the campus.

- C. Recommendation: Leadership at all levels must be recognized as supporters and advocates of diversity and inclusion, and should be accountable for communicating the importance and benefits to faculty and staff.

*Response:* Leadership is critical to ensuring that our values of diversity and inclusion are deeply embraced at RIT and so it is imperative that RIT leaders are indeed held accountable to support and advocate for these values. Such support manifests itself in a variety of ways but just as we aspire to have a diverse faculty and staff, so too do we aspire to have diversity reflected in our academic leadership – this includes vice presidents, deans, associate provosts and deans, directors and chairs.

- D. Recommendation: Each RIT college should have an established diversity and inclusion plan that includes quantifiable goals and deans and department/administrative chairs should be assessed on their progress towards meeting these goals as part of their annual performance evaluation.

*Response:* The establishment of college diversity and inclusion plans is an expectation of

the Inclusive Excellence Framework as well as the Office of the Provost; these expectations are reflected in annual guidance to deans and passed along to department chairs and directors. This expectation shall continue moving forward.

- E. Recommendation: The AALANA Faculty Advisory Council, the Women Faculty Advisory Council, the President's Commission on Women, and the NSF ADVANCE grant efforts should all be utilized as resources to help define diversity and inclusion and to assist in changing the culture.

*Response:* The Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Office of the Provost will work with these groups to assist the campus in continued growth of the RIT culture in support of our aspirations for inclusive excellence.

- F. Ensure that the progress that has been made at RIT in regards to diversifying the faculty, implicit bias education, hiring patterns, FFCEP successes, etc. are communicated across the university regularly.

*Response:* The Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the division of Academic Affairs will provide leadership in keeping the RIT community informed of our progress both in modifying our recruitment and retention efforts and in overarching goals of diversifying the faculty and staff. A key component of this communication will be the celebration of our successes in this area.

**Faculty Search and Hiring Process:** Concurrent to the taskforce and at the request of the provost, the Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention (OFRR) and the division of Human Resources have been collaborating to assess which unit is best suited to handle certain aspects of the hiring process. In addition, a sub-group of the taskforce, which consisted of representatives from the faculty (including college liaisons), human resources, budget and the Office of the Provost, was created to examine the search and hiring process and focus on eliminating process steps that did not add value to the process or were redundant and therefore deemed unnecessary. As a result of these activities, the following improvements that have been made:

- A. Movement of HR process work back to HR. This transition occurred in January 2014 and has yielded the following benefits:
- New hire paperwork is processed as soon as it is complete. There was an issue last year in the timely receipt of paperwork, which impeded the smooth entry of new faculty.
  - Kenexa training is provided at the start of the recruitment process.
  - Staff members from the Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention can now focus on sourcing candidates, rather than processing paperwork.
- B. Search committees have direct access to candidate diversity data. This change was very well received by search committees. Members are now able to directly understand the

diversity of the candidate pool for an open position and can take proactive steps to increase the pool (such as additional advertising) if they are not seeing a reasonable representation from their current efforts.

- C. A new Employee Action Form (EAF) was created. This change eliminated the need to create additional requisitions for internal movement of faculty (an example is the movement of a faculty from/to a chair position). This was also very well received by the academic community.
- D. The incremental requisition process was moved online. This change allows search committees to track the progress of their requisition immediately in terms of the approval process. This was a very labor-intensive, time consuming step prior to this change.
- E. Website updates were made. Both the HR and the OFRR websites have been updated to reflect the process changes noted above, providing search committees with online information regarding recent changes.

Both the provost and the vice president for diversity and inclusion support the continued work between HR and OFRR. Additional improvements that the team has identified include the following:

- A. Create an “evergreen” requisition. This action will allow the collection of resumes throughout the year for temporary lecturer positions to respond quickly to emergency requirements (e.g. a faculty member retires without notice, a failed search for a tenured faculty position). An expedited hiring process will also accompany this change.
- B. Continue to review the existing process. We will continue to look for opportunities to streamline the existing process and eliminate redundancies and ensure the value of each step to the overall goals of the hiring process.
- C. Continue to review existing form requirements. We will continue to evaluate existing requirements to ensure their value to the overall goals of the hiring process.
- D. Make better use of available tools such as Kenexa, which provides the opportunity to collect and analyze data regarding our hiring process. We should use this tool to its full capability.

These and future streamlining process changes are in support of our efforts to hire the best faculty possible for RIT and to continue our efforts to diversify the faculty. In addition to these changes, HR will ensure that there is oversight to the process that will ensure that our candidate pools reflect the diversity that is available.

**The Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention:** This office is the primary unit assisting our efforts to hire the best faculty and to ensure that our processes reflect our values and aspirations for a diverse faculty and staff workforce. The taskforce made a number of recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness of this unit.

- A. Recommendation: Refocus the work of OFRR to focus exclusively on faculty recruitment and alter the name of the office (e.g. Office of Faculty Recruitment) to reflect this change.

*Response:* Acknowledging the success the OFRR had with recruitment, we expanded its role to include assistance with retention. Since that time, there have been a number of changes such as the hiring of the vice president for diversity and inclusion, adding faculty associates for AALANA faculty and for women faculty, and making faculty mentoring a key component of the environment. Given these changes, we agree that the institution would best be served at this time by an office that solely focused on recruitment and so the office shall be renamed the Office of Faculty Recruitment (OFR).

- B. Recommendation: Retention should be the exclusive obligation of colleges and academic departments/units; retention should be embedded in the diversity goals recently established by each college.

*Response:* While the majority of accountability for retention should rest with colleges and departments, research shows that underrepresented faculty, particularly those with small numbers in departments, are best served with an additional layer of broader, university-wide community building, retention and mentoring. The faculty associates for AALANA faculty and for women faculty have proven to be useful to faculty and administration and so will continue in their roles. Consequently, retention should continue to be a collaboration between departments, colleges and the university as a whole.

- C. Recommendation: Establish a Faculty Advisory Committee for the Office of Faculty Recruitment, with representation from all of the colleges and degree-granting units; the advisory committee will provide guidance on enhancing recruitment efforts, as well as the periodic assessment of the relative effectiveness of current efforts, to assist the OFR and the colleges in their attempts to invest available recruitment resources wisely. Additionally, the Faculty Advisory Committee will serve as a liaison to the colleges for recruitment needs, recommendations and opportunities.

*Response:* Effective faculty advisory committees add tremendous value to any academic organization and the Office of Faculty Recruitment is no exception. The executive director will develop a charge for such an advisory committee and work closely with the deans to identify appropriate members.

- D. Charge the executive director of the Office of Faculty Recruitment, in consultation with the Faculty Advisory Committee, to develop and execute a Faculty Recruitment Action Plan that is both strategic (long-term) and tactical in its perspectives on how the Office of Faculty Recruitment can assist the faculty to enhance RIT's overall recruitment efforts for tenure track and non-tenure track faculty hiring.

*Response:* With these changes noted above (the greater involvement of HR and the focusing on recruitment), it is appropriate that the OFR develop a strategic plan, aligned with the RIT strategic plan, as well as an action plan as noted above.

- E. Charge OFR to actively maintain a current database of potential candidates. This database should leverage existing databases that are available from national organizations for some key subpopulations.

*Response:* The Office of Faculty Recruitment currently maintains a database of potential

candidates and, where appropriate and possible, the database will be refreshed and existing databases from relevant national organizations shall be leveraged.

- F. Increase the resources to the Office of Faculty Recruitment to ensure it can provide recruitment assistance and consultation.

*Response:* With compelling strategic, action and business plans, the institution will identify appropriate resources to enhance its mission.

- G. Review the successes of the Future Faculty Career Exploration Program, particularly with regard to how well the program meets its intended outcomes, including the number of AALANA faculty hires at RIT that have come through the program and their retention patterns. Charge the proposed Faculty Advisory Committee to review the program's intended outcomes, its internal evaluation and refinement process, its integration within the academic environment, etc. in order to assess future goals. Charge the colleges and executive director of the Office of Faculty Recruitment to work collaboratively to target recruitment for the program to be better aligned with specific hiring needs or hiring opportunities for the near-future.

*Response:* The Future Faculty Career Exploration Program (FFCEP) has been a national best practice model for engaging and recruiting promising young scholars, researchers and artists to RIT. However, every program benefits from a periodic assessment and this recommendation is an opportunity to do so. The executive director, in collaboration with the deans, shall utilize the proposed faculty advisory committee in such a way as to assess the FFCEP and to recommend constructive changes in the spirit of making the FFCEP an even greater success.

**Closing comment:** I am confident that the proposed changes are grounded in thoughtful deliberation in the RIT community with the spirit of enhancing our faculty ranks and advancing the institution in diversifying the faculty. These changes would not be possible without the hard work of the taskforce participants. Both Kevin McDonald and I are extremely grateful to the members of the taskforce who are listed below:

Faculty Search and Selection Process Review Task Force Members

Twyla Cummings, Co-Chair	CIAS/CL
Harvey Palmer, Co-Chair	KGCOE
Judy Bender	Human Resources
Margaret Bailey	ADVANCE/Female Faculty Associate
Maureen Valentine	ADVANCE/CAST/CL/Faculty Affairs Subcommittee
Marcos Esterman	AALANA Faculty Associate/AALANA Council
Kim Shearer	GCCIS/CL
Ann Howard	COLA/CL
Michael Vernarelli	COLA
Stephen Aldersley	NTID/former CL

John Tu	SCB
Mike Kotlarchyk	COS
Dan Ornt	CHST
Christine Monaco	Budget & Financial Planning Services
Jennifer Mastrangelo	Office of the Provost
Kristin Waterstram-Rich	Faculty Affairs Subcommittee
Sylvia Perez-Hardy	Academic Senate