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Transforming a Department, Transforming a Discipline

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> The Department of Political Science at Rutgers has a deep and sustained commitment to the principle of diversity. A diverse scholarly community is crucial to the development of cutting edge social science research, the recruitment and training of diverse graduate students, the quality of pedagogical experiences in our undergraduate classrooms and to the vibrancy and life of the University. (unanimously affirmed, May 2011)

In the fall of 2009, I became the first woman chair of the political science department at Rutgers University. I entered the position on the heels of a major gender discrimination case involving all of the women in the department, who claimed salary inequities and also put forward a series of informal complaints about hostile work environment. The case had taken two years to settle and, at its conclusion, the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences suggested that the department consider electing one of the women as chair. Needless to say, the challenges before the department were quite daunting.

Despite my reluctance to accept my nomination as chair, my personal and professional history motivated me take on the challenge. I had benefited from the mentoring of senior women faculty, both as a student and junior faculty member. I understood that the simple presence of a diverse faculty member could open doors for undergraduates, graduate students, and upcoming faculty. In addition, I also had organizational skills from previous years in applied politics, when I had built political coalitions between women's, labor, and health organizations. My long-standing commitments to gender and racial equity led me to accept the

chair's role, with the primary goal of instituting a major departmental equity plan.[1]

The sex discrimination complaint had exposed fractures in the department along a number of complex lines. For instance, while all women in the department were subject to salary inequities, some of the most egregious gaps were experienced by the women of color in the department, in terms of starting salaries, and two types of raises — out of cycle and merit. Yet with the backing of the Rutgers administration, particularly the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, who had a long-standing commitment to both gender and racial equity, the department instituted a major transformation of its practices during my three-year term as chair, including the official and unanimous affirmation of our departmental commitment to diversity and equity principles.

In the fall of 2009, the department had 25 faculty members, only seven of whom were women and only one of whom was a faculty member of color. White male faculty members were heavily concentrated (44%) at the most senior "Professor II" level, and no woman had ever served in a major administrative leadership position in the department (chair or vice chair). By the end of my term, the department had hired eight new faculty members, including two Latin American men, the first African-American woman, and the first Latina ever to be hired into tenure-track faculty positions.

In this paper, I outline a forward-looking plan for departmental transformation that might be useful in creating a template for equity and diversity in other departments. The long-term goal of such a plan is to create a departmental environment where equity along lines of gender, race, and ethnicity can be fostered and maintained and where pipelines into the profession can be built for increasing equity and diversity in the discipline as a whole by increasing the numbers of members from marginalized groups at the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as for new Ph.D.'s and junior and senior scholars.

Transforming a Department

Two of my primary (interrelated) goals as chair were to establish practices of gender, racial, and ethnic equity and to increase the gender, racial, and

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1. This plan expands upon one developed by me with our Departmental Diversity Committee. Thanks to those committee members: Professors Al Tillery, Eric Davis, Lisa Miller, and Manus Midlarsky.

ethnic diversity of the faculty.[2] Based on my work with a core group of faculty, both inside and outside of my department, we developed the following five-point plan aimed at achieving these ends: (1) Department Self-assessment — Creating a Common Purpose; (2) Undergraduate programming — Pipelines into the PhD; (3) Graduate Programming — Pipelines into the Profession; (4) Faculty Recruitment — Opening the Doors; (5) Faculty Retention — Creating a Sense of Intellectual Community.

(1) Department Self-assessment — Creating a Common Purpose

Goal: To conduct a self-assessment of the department's current status regarding equity and diversity and develop a well-informed plan for moving forward.

Establishing a process of gender, racial, and ethnic equity requires the participation of all members of a department's faculty and the affirmation of a commitment to principles of equity and fair treatment. This should begin with a departmental self-assessment. In the case of Rutgers, such an assessment was triggered by a formal discrimination complaint. More proactively, a departmental self-assessment can help a department understand its own history and culture and establish a commonality of values of equity and fairness.

(a) *Establish a Diversity Planning Committee*. This committee would review past practices, particularly in faculty hiring, and develop and monitor an annual plan for the department's diversity goals. It would annually review department equity and diversity goals and make recommendations to the department body.

(b) *Plan a "Diversity in the Profession" panel* to hear from other departments within the home college or university that have been successful at equity and/or diversity issues, or from other political science departments across the country about their most effective strategies for achieving equity and diversity in the profession. Assess how the department compares to similarly situated departments.

(c) *Affirm common principles of diversity and equity as a department.* In May 2011, the Rutgers political science department voted in favor of a Departmental Diversity Plan, including the affirmative statement above. Achieving this affirmation involved creating opportunities for department

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2. While other categories of exclusion were discussed as relevant, such as sexuality, the department decided to prioritize exclusions based on gender, race, and ethnicity.

members to reach across subfields and methodological divides to recognize the common purposes served by a commitment to diversity and equity. This statement was then used to guide programmatic plans for transformations at all other levels including undergraduate, graduate programming, and faculty hiring and promotion processes.

(2)Undergraduate Programming — Pipelines into the Ph.D.

Goal: To increase undergraduate students' admission to political science Ph.D. programs from marginalized populations.

While women now constitute nearly half of all of the new Ph.D.'s in the profession, most are white; racial and ethnic minorities have not moved into the professoriate at anywhere near the pace that they have entered America's colleges and universities as students (APSA 2011, 28–30 and 40–42). A number of studies have demonstrated that exposing talented undergraduates to research experiences and the professional standards of academic disciplines expands their interest in pursuing academic careers.[3] Building upon this research, the American Political Science Association (APSA) established the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute. The Institute is a competitive program that invites 20 college juniors to Duke University to give them a formal introduction to the rigors of graduate school and professional life in the discipline. Over the past decade, the Bunche Institute has been a major feeder of minority students into top graduate programs.[4]

(a) Establish strong connections with the Bunche Institute and identify leading undergraduate candidates for this institute.

(b) Build institutes similar to the Bunche, with support from the department, university, and professional associations, for white women and racial and ethnic minority undergraduates as a pathway for them to be introduced to graduate study in political science.

(3)Graduate Programming — Pipelines into the Profession

Goal: Increase the ability of white women and racial and ethnically underrepresented graduate students to compete for established prestigious fellowships and develop regular support for Pre-doctoral and Post-doctoral fellowships.

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3. For a classic text on the importance of research experiences for undergraduate students' success, see Boyer (1998).

4. For examples of the experiences of Bunche Institute alumni, see their testimonials at "APSA RBSI Alumni Experiences," http://www.apsanet.org/content_84816.cfm (accessed February 4, 2014).

Studies of white women and racial and ethnic minorities pursuing doctoral degrees have demonstrated that funding and early professional development activities are crucial determinants of entry into the nation's faculty ranks.[5] In recognition of this fact, both the Ford Foundation and National Science Foundation offer fellowships to support the research and professional development of outstanding graduate students from underrepresented minority groups. Additional departmental efforts should include the following:

(a) Pursue additional internal and external funding for white women and racial and ethnic minority Ph.D. candidates.

(b) Create pre-doctoral fellowships with internal funds for white women and ethnic and racial minority candidates finishing their degrees at other institutions. These funds can sometimes be raised internally through the use of discretionary funds, such as those used to hire non-tenure-track annual faculty. These fellows may then provide a possible track into candidacy for tenure-track positions.

(c) Create post-doctoral fellowships with internal or external funding. Commitments can be sought through the university or college administration for diversity fellowships to bring in newly minted Ph.D.'s. These fellows can teach one or two courses per year and can be committed for one or two years. Funding possibilities should be explored with a consortium of schools through Ford and other foundations or through private donations. Again, these fellows can be tracked into tenure-track positions as they become available.

(4)Faculty Recruitment — Opening the Doors

Goal: To increase the diversity of the faculty, including increasing the percentage of white women and faculty of color.

According to the APSA Task Force on Political Science in the 21st Century Report (2011),

> In 1980, 10.3 percent of full time faculty were women; in 2010 it was 28.6 percent. In 1980, 93.4 percent of full time faculty were Caucasian and in 2010 it was 86.6 percent. Absent direct, intentional efforts to further diversify faculty, we should expect that the pace of progress will continue to be slow and that the rate of inclusion will also be very slow (APSA 2011, 4).

5. For instance, see Alexander-Floyd (2008), Malcolm and Malcolm (2011), and Montforti and Michelson (2008).

Accelerating the diversification of faculty will require that *all* faculty searches be seen as opportunities for increasing a department's diversity. Too often, white women and people of color rise to the top of the candidate pool only in searches where the substantive focus of the job search is related to gender and/or racial inequities.

Diversity recruitment requires the ability to generate a substantial pool of diverse applicants in all faculty searches. Effective recruitment of candidates can be done by networking widely through organizations and list-serves that reach white women and scholars of color in the discipline and by posting job ads that include clear language regarding a department's commitment to inclusivity and diversity. Such networks can attract highly qualified candidates who can also diversify the faculty, adding substantial strength to one's research community, graduate student mentoring, and undergraduate course instruction.

Anecdotal research on diversity hiring across universities indicates that recruitment and retention of underrepresented scholars is most successful when it combines two approaches: *field-specific gender/race/ethnicity* searches and *open-field searches* that give weight to descriptive representation in areas not substantively related to gender/race/ethnicity scholarship.

(a) Field-specific gender/race/ethnicity searches would recruit faculty in the specific subfields of gender/race/ethnicity and politics. If the department already has a small but strong intellectual community of scholars interested in these issues, this core can help draw additional new faculty with the possibility of creating new subfields within a department. If no core exists, joint appointments with other departments that do have faculty substantively related to these fields can help a department build a community of scholars.

(b) Open searches can be carefully crafted to add diversity to a department's faculty outside of the substantive fields of gender, race, ethnicity, and politics. We found that this kind of search affirmed the important role that white female faculty and faculty of color play as role models and "descriptive representatives" for undergraduate and graduate students. A sample job ad could include the following language:

> *The Department of Political Science at Rutgers University invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professor position, open to subfield. We seek qualified candidates who can contribute through their research, teaching, and service to the diversity and excellence of our department, and, more specifically, broaden the intellectual range of our course offerings. The Political Science department is very strongly committed to increasing the*

diversity of our faculty and welcomes applications from women and historically underrepresented populations.

(c) Overall Search Principles: Searches that produce the best outcomes in terms of adding white women and faculty of color often require that departments and search committee members subject their assumptions about "market value" to some level of questioning. For instance, committee members need to look beyond the "top ten" to get the broadest pool of candidates (although certainly those programs are now producing outstanding candidates from underrepresented groups). In addition, publications in interdisciplinary journals need to be recognized as valuable contributions to the discipline.

Given the relative scarcity of new faculty of color on the job market in any given year, starting salaries should be higher than the norm for incoming faculty of color, most particularly, for women of color. We found that making very attractive starting package offers also puts a department on the map in terms of its concrete commitment to diversity hiring. Spousal hiring is also important for getting and retaining female faculty in particular, as both my experience and a Stanford study has shown (Schiebinger, Henderson, and Gilmartin 2008).

(5)Faculty Retention — Creating a Sense of Intellectual Community

Goal: To create a vibrant scholarly community for the study of gender, race, ethnicity, and politics in the department and across the interdisciplinary university community.

Nationally, those departments most successful at developing a diverse faculty and graduate student body are those that establish their departments as major intellectual centers for the study of gender, race, ethnicity, and politics.[6] We found that building an intellectual community requires action on many fronts: interdisciplinary working groups, external speaker series and conferences, participation in a leading race and ethnicity journal, and building connections to established centers on gender, race, ethnicity, and politics. The following activities can help achieve this goal:

(a) Support an interdisciplinary working group on gender, race, ethnicity, and politics that meets several times a semester to share works in progress. Our current group at Rutgers includes political scientists

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6. On the interrelationship between the promotion of women faculty in the political science profession and the substantive development of gender-related studies, see Tolleson-Rinehart and Carroll (2006).

from political theory, American politics, women's and gender studies, Africana studies, public law, American political development, comparative politics, and political economy.

(b) *Develop a gender, race, ethnicity, and politics speaker series.* This series would bring in approximately five to six scholars each year who are recognized as the leading scholars in their fields, across subfields in the discipline.

(c) *Develop a biannual conference of scholars working on gender, race, ethnicity, and politics* to establish the department and larger university as a major center for scholarly development in these fields.

(d) *Review standards for assigning "service work" for diverse faculty, particularly at the junior level.* Faculty of color, as well as white women, often face higher levels of demands for service on their time.[7] This is especially true for junior women of color, for whom advising of undergraduate and graduate students can be a high demand. Retention and promotion of a diverse faculty requires close monitoring of service work as well as rewarding such advising, especially in the context of a diverse student body. This should be the responsibility of key faculty mentors for junior faculty who can help upcoming faculty balance demands for service against research productivity.[8]

Conclusion

Over a three-year period at Rutgers, nearly all of the goals discussed here were initiated or fully met. It is important to note a number of factors crucial to success.

First, creative organizational leadership, both by the chair as well as upper level administrators, is pivotal to the implementation of diversity and equity efforts. Moving a department from "fractured" to "cohesive" requires a great deal of attention to historical department divisions. Restructuring a department requires creating opportunities to see commonalities across those divisions. In the Rutgers case, for instance, the department organized a series of faculty panels on thematic topics (such as "Global Democracy") that addressed scholarly questions of gender, ethnicity, and race across the subfields (such as political theory, comparative politics, and American politics). We also initiated faculty

7. On this, see Malcom and Malcom (2011) and Malcom, Hall, and Brown (1976). Also, for research specifically on women in the social sciences and service work, see Misra et al. (2011).
8. On the importance of mentoring of faculty of color, see Alex-Assensoh et al. (2005).

searches that crossed over departmental subfields (such as comparative and women and politics) so that it was clear what common benefits could result from a collective commitment to equity.

Second, strong support from the administration, particularly at the dean's level, is also critical to success. For those elements of the program that do come with a financial cost, success depends on leadership by key administrative players willing to reward departments for pursuing these goals and withholding resources from those not willing to prioritize diversity and inclusion. This kind of principled administrative oversight must not come as a top-down mandate, which most faculties will surely resist, but must be offered as proactive and positive inducements to engage in what should rightfully be university-wide efforts to bring education more fully into the 21st century. It requires that senior white women and faculty of color who share a commitment to these principles be represented at the upper-level administrative table as well. And it requires a chair who is able to use departmental resources to affirm faculty cooperation and commitment to equity principles.

Finally, it is important to note that many of these elements *require no funding at all.* The Rutgers plan was implemented in a time of fiscal downturn at a public university. Diversity hiring does not require the allocation of new or special faculty lines. "Diversity" principles can be implemented in *every* faculty search that the department pursues. Funds that are already being spent, for instance, on non-tenure-track teaching positions might be redirected to diversity fellowship programs. An established departmental speaker series can be redirected to substantively focus on gender, race, and/or ethnicity, or make a conscious effort to invite speakers from underrepresented groups on topics unrelated to race, ethnicity, and/or gender. Interdisciplinary working groups within a department can cost as little as lunch for a group of junior and senior faculty. Extant undergraduate career advising can redirect its focus on undergraduate white women and students of color. More than funds, these efforts require *a transformation of consciousness* about the value brought into a department by the principles of inclusion, equity, and representation. And it is the biggest challenge of the chair to spark and guide this transformative process.

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