

ROLE OF EQUITY ADVISORS

Introduction

In 2006, the UC President, all 10 Chancellors, and the systemwide Academic Senate affirmed the centrality of diversity to the University of California and its academic mission in the 21st century. The Berkeley Campus Academic Strategic Plan calls for the integration of diversity into the full range of academic planning, execution, and program review. Because the academic enterprise is primarily focused within individual departments/colleges/schools, the campus is taking various steps to provide resources, coordination, information, and assistance in the area of diversity to all departments, colleges, or schools (hereinafter referred to as the “academic unit”).

Background

For many years, each academic unit has designated a faculty “Graduate Affirmative Action Advisor” (GAAA) and for faculty searches, an “Affirmative Action Officer” (AAO). Graduate Division collects GAAA signatures for graduate diversity fellowship nominations. Also, some forms requested by the Office for Faculty Equity require signatures of the AAO.

The roles of the GAAA and of the AAO, however, have not been clearly defined. The GAAAs and the AAOs have had little guidance as to their duties, though there was a hope that they would somehow act to increase the diversity of the graduate students and faculty.

In fall 2006, a workshop was held with GAAAs and AAOs with the following goals:

- 1) to discuss the potential roles of the GAAAs and AAOs,
- 2) to share possibilities and strategies to enhance faculty and graduate student diversity,
- 3) to empower this group with information and,
- 4) to clarify issues with respect to the University’s diversity agenda.

The workshop equipped the GAAAs and AAOs with important and relevant information about the University and their possible roles in the equity and inclusion agenda, and recommended that the two roles be combined into the *Departmental Equity Advisor* role. Through further consultation with last year’s GAAAs and AAOs and collaboration with the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate Committee on the Status of Women and Ethnic Minorities (SWEM), the Graduate Division, and the Office for Faculty Equity (OFE), new guidelines have been developed which clarify this new role of the academic unit’s Departmental Equity Advisory (replacing the GAAAs and AAOs, who were sometimes the same person). The following proposed definitions and guidelines are the result of this consultation.

Service as an Equity Advisor

Equity Advisors may be a single individual or a committee of individuals in an academic unit. Equity Advisors are active Senate members, at least one of whom is at either the associate or full professor level, designated by the department chair and/or dean (exceptions can be approved by the Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion). Service as an Equity Advisor will count towards promotion and merit like any other service. This type of service is recognized explicitly in APM 210d for the Equity Advisor, and in APM 240 and 245 for the chairs and deans. Ideally, Equity Advisors will serve for several years to take advantage of their experience in these complex matters.

Annual workshops will continue to provide Equity Advisors with information about effective practices in recruitment and retention, legal issues, assistance the campus can provide with faculty searches, graduate fellowships, and other programs, and an opportunity to learn from each other. The Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion, the Office for Faculty Equity, the Senate Committee on the Status of Women and Ethnic Minorities, and the Graduate Division will provide information, advice, and assistance to the Equity Advisors.

Proposed Roles for the Equity Advisors: The role of an Equity Advisor is to ensure that diversity and equity are considered in all aspects of the academic unit's functions. The following list provides guidelines as to how the Equity Advisor can support the academic unit in achieving its diversity goals.

1. Strategic Planning:

- Participate in the strategic planning process for the academic unit, making sure that diversity is a meaningful and active part of the plan, with objectives and assessments of success.

2. Faculty Recruitment, Advancement and Retention:

- Provide advice as needed to the chair/dean and to the search committee to ensure that contributions to diversity are being considered and that proactive search practices are used for recruiting and selecting new faculty. The President's and Chancellor's Postdoctoral Programs have particularly attractive pools.
- Review the diversity of the availability pool, the applicant pool, the candidates selected for interviews, and the faculty in the academic unit. Present a report on the review to the faculty in the academic unit. When necessary, work with the academic unit and with support from the Office for Faculty Equity and the Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion toward improvement.
- Provide assistance to the chair/dean to ensure equity in advancement and retention. Work with the chair/dean to evaluate the progress of ladder faculty to identify those making less than normal progress. Work with these faculty on strategies for development.
- Assist faculty in presenting effectively diversity work they may have done in their merit/promotion cases (see APM 210d).

3. Graduate Student Admission and Advancement:

- Consult with the graduate admissions committee to: (1) confirm that applicants' contributions to diversity, such as background experience, intellectual interests, and service record are being considered and that proactive practices are used for recruiting new graduate students, (2) follow-up regarding specific student admission cases as necessary, and (3) request additional admissions allocations to enhance the diversity of the department.
- Provide assistance to the academic unit: (1) to make sure qualified students are nominated for diversity fellowships, (2) to encourage faculty participation in the fellowship committee, and (3) to bring to the attention of the chair/dean such opportunities as may arise to secure outside funding for graduate student support, from funding organizations, private foundations, etc.
- Review the diversity of the availability pool, the applicant pool, the admitted pool, and the graduate students in the academic unit. Present a report on the review to the faculty in the academic unit. When necessary, work with the academic unit and the Graduate Diversity Program toward improvement.
- Be a resource to the chair/dean to best ensure that all graduate students are making adequate progress and receiving the attention they need. When necessary, work with the academic unit and with support from the Graduate Diversity Program in resolving any issues.

4. Climate of Equity and Inclusion:

- Help to foster a hospitable environment for welcoming and socializing new staff, faculty, and graduate students to the academic unit.
- Work with staff, faculty, and students to ensure that intra-academic unit policies, practices, and procedures foster a friendly and professional environment.
- Serve as a resource for addressing equity and inclusion issues that affect the unit's cultural climate. Consult with the chair/dean or appropriate campus officers when necessary to deal with challenging problems.

- Review climate survey and other relevant data when available. Report on such data to the faculty in the department/school. Participate in plans for change, if necessary.