Statement on Faculty Diversity
Illinois Board of Education
October 4, 2002
1:00 p.m.
James R. Thompson Center
Chicago, Illinois

The University of Illinois at Chicago is enormously proud of the nationally recognized diversity of our students. We aspire to similar achievement in the diversity of our faculty and administrative staff.

Like our sister institutions, we face particular challenges with regard to faculty. Although the lack of a robust pipeline of Ph.D. holders is not an excuse for failure on the part of any particular institution to recruit faculty from under-represented groups, it is a reality that institutions collectively must grapple with.

For this reason, we support the continuation of graduate fellowship programs for minority students and for programs, such as the University of Illinois’ Summer Research Opportunities Program, that encourage minority students to pursue a doctoral degree.

The award of such fellowships to UIC graduate students does not directly assist UIC in recruiting minority faculty. Newly-minted Ph.D.’s are, with rare exceptions, better off going to another institution to start their professorial careers rather than staying with their doctoral institutions. Academic departments that “hire their own” eventually become intellectually in-bred. But the award of such fellowships to Ph.D. students at other Illinois universities—such as our sister campus in Urbana-Champaign—does contribute directly to the pool from which UIC may draw. For example, as an on-going practice we
encourage academic units and services to hire Illinois minority graduates by circulating the names of and information about potential candidates in related disciplines as found in the Illinois Minority Graduate Incentive Program’s Directory of Graduates and Potential Degree Recipients, published annually. These efforts have yielded some success. We have hired and will continue to hire, participants from the Program.

Universities, however, have long recognized that the efforts each campus makes to support and produce minority Ph.D.'s do not benefit that campus directly with regard to the available pool for assistant professors. But we have also understood that increasing this pool is a collective effort, and while we train a student we train for another campus, some other campus may be training one for us.

Let us recollect as well that today a large number of students graduate from their baccalaureate programs with significant debt. Students are naturally, and reasonably, reluctant to incur much more debt for their graduate training, particularly if they are going then to enter fields that are not highly paid relative to the extensive preparation required. Without fellowships that both cover tuition costs and offer a living stipend, minority students are much less likely to attempt doctoral education.

Delivered by
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