A Proposal to Increase Faculty Diversity  
Adopted unanimously by the Bowdoin Faculty on May 5, 2008

Introduced by the Ad Hoc Group on Increasing Faculty Diversity:  
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In 1992, the well-argued Report of the Subcommittee on Diversity stated that Bowdoin “has long been committed to the goal of increasing the range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds represented in the faculty as part of a larger goal of creating a community characterized by as much cultural and intellectual variety as possible. But we have not done well in this regard.” Sadly, the last statement remains true today, 16 years later. In recent years we have made much progress in enrolling a more diverse student body, for which our admissions office deserves praise, but have made less progress in increasing the diversity of the faculty.

We ask the faculty and administration to refocus their energies on achieving Bowdoin’s longstanding goal of increased diversity among the faculty. In Bowdoin’s mission statement, we pledge to offer students “a context of density and variety—of ideas, artistic expression, and exposure to other cultures and other races—so that personal identity will not become an illusion of centrality.” Further, we assert that our mission is “to assist a student to deepen and broaden intellectual capacities that are also attributes of maturity and wisdom: self-knowledge, intellectual honesty, clarity of thought, depth of knowledge, an independent capacity to learn, mental courage, self discipline, tolerance and interest in differences of culture and belief, and a willingness to serve the common good and subordinate self to higher goals.” We regard enhanced diversity among the faculty as an essential component of this mission.

Building a community with increased cultural and intellectual variety is no small task. Increased efforts to broaden applicant pools and bring more diverse candidates to campus in recent years are essential to an extended commitment to the College’s goal. We offer a recommendation for one further piece—increasing the diversity of the faculty through special opportunity hires—and hope that this creates more substantial base on which to build. While we recognize that many facets of diversity are desirable, our immediate concern is on recruiting from racial and ethnic groups that have been historically underrepresented at Bowdoin.

Motion:  
The faculty supports the administration in efforts to increase faculty diversity, and recommends that the administration fund several special opportunity positions to be filled under the direction of the Dean for Academic Affairs according to procedures outlined below. These positions would be in addition to currently planned faculty expansion positions. Such positions are intended to allow us to recruit exceptional faculty members who will bring to the college excellence in teaching and distinction in research.
Special Opportunity Positions

A special opportunity position is a tenure track faculty position at any level that can be filled without a national search by a person who fulfills certain criteria. The criteria establish that the hire will move the college towards its goal of greater diversity, enhance the curriculum, and that the candidate will be of commensurate quality to candidates hired in national searches. This process allows speed and flexibility in securing extraordinary candidates. It also creates a mechanism for soliciting individual scholars who might not apply for a position as well as effectively competing with other institutions for outstanding candidates.

Procedures for Appointment to a Special Opportunity Position

1. Nomination. Candidates will be nominated to the Dean for Academic Affairs. A candidate might come to the attention of college members in a variety of ways, for example through faculty searches, through pre- or post-doc fellowships, through visiting faculty positions, or through outside contacts by faculty or staff.

2. Evaluation by Department and/or Programs. The Dean will consult with programs and/or departments that might be potential homes for the appointment to determine, (a) the quality of the candidate per criteria 3 below, (b) procedures for campus visits or equivalent as appropriate, and (c) how the candidate will fit within the department and/or program or enhance departmental and/or program offerings.

3. Evaluation by CAPT. The Dean will refer nominations of sufficient merit based on departmental or program evaluation to the Committee on Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure who will advise the Dean on whether the nominations meet the three criteria below, and which candidates, if any, should be considered for appointments.

4. In consultation with the President, the Dean offers appointments. These appointments are specific to the candidate, not to the department or program. That is, they do not increase the number of permanent tenure track lines for a department or program.

Criteria for Special Opportunity Positions

1. The candidate will help the college fulfill its mission by increasing the diversity of the faculty, particularly with regard to historically underrepresented groups.

2. The candidate will enhance the curriculum of the college.

3. The candidate will be of quality commensurate with that of top candidates from national searches. That is, the candidate should have a record or promise of excellence in teaching and distinction in research that makes it likely that he or she would have emerged as the top candidate in a conventional search had one occurred in his or her specific area of expertise.

Monitoring and Reporting

The Dean will report annually to the President, the Trustee Committee on Multicultural Affairs and the Oversight Committee on Multicultural Affairs about the composition of the faculty in terms of race and ethnicity, as well as the pools of candidates in searches. The President in consultation with CAPT and the Oversight Committee on Multicultural Affairs will assess periodically whether the College has attained a level of diversity that would make the special efforts outlined here no longer necessary.