Governance and Faculty Affairs Committee

Motion: To Form a Committee on Faculty Diversity

October 26, 2010

The Governance and Faculty Affairs Committee proposes the formation of a Committee on Faculty Diversity, to remain in existence through AY 2014-2015.

PREFACE

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” (Report on the Subcommittee on Diversity, 1992). In May 2009 the faculty unanimously adopted a motion proposed by the Working Group on Faculty Diversity that reaffirmed this commitment and made a number of recommendations. As noted in the preamble to that motion, “As we have added diversity requirements to the curriculum, the demand for faculty who have expertise in nontraditional areas has increased. Research continues to show a correlation between faculty diversity and the introduction of new scholarship that engages issues of diversity for all students. As well, a diverse faculty connects campuses to new bodies of work and new communities. Perhaps most importantly, a more diverse faculty creates classroom environments which support the academic and social success of students from diverse backgrounds.”

During 2009/2010, a working group was formed to help implement these recommendations and this group continues today. As stated in the Report of the 2009-2010 Working Group on Faculty Diversity: “Until and unless vigorous diversity hiring practices are completely embedded in faculty culture, it seems important to have a group of faculty particularly charged with working towards this important goal, and fulfilling the faculty’s unanimous approval of the resolution urging enhanced activity in this direction.”

RECOMMENDATION

The Governance and Faculty Affairs Committee thus recommends the transformation of the currently-existing Working Group on Faculty Diversity into a Committee on Faculty Diversity, to remain in existence through AY 2014-2015. The purpose of this committee is to promote the hiring and retention of a diverse faculty at Bowdoin by serving as outside members on tenure-track searches, and by undertaking other activities to increase the diversity of the faculty. During the 2014-2015 AY, the GFA will evaluate the progress made toward the goals of the committee, and then make a recommendation to the faculty whether to extend the life of the committee beyond that point.

This committee would be comprised of five tenured faculty members appointed by GFA for two-year terms, with at least one member from each curricular division. The appointments would be staggered to provide some measure of continuity from year to year.
To promote the hiring and retention of a diverse faculty at Bowdoin, members of the Committee on Faculty Diversity shall:

1) Serve as outside members on tenure-track searches, with activities as described in the Dean for Academic Affairs hiring memos. The Dean for Academic Affairs will appoint Committee members to specific searches, with each member normally serving on no more than one search. In years when the number of tenure-track searches exceeds the Committee membership, the Dean for Academic Affairs, in consultation with GFA and the Committee on Faculty Diversity, will appoint outside members from the rest of the tenured faculty, usually from among those who have previously served on the Faculty Diversity Committee, taking into account workload issues. Outside search members support departments/programs in locating particular resources and developing strategies to broaden and strengthen candidate pools, and may clarify the shape and timeline of faculty searches at Bowdoin. In addition, outside search members offer some experience in framing questions and raising broad issues that may help a department/program think in new or different ways about approaching searches. Finally, the outside search member, in consultation with the Dean’s office, can advise on implementing college procedures.

2) Endeavor to educate departments/programs further about issues of faculty diversity and hiring. This may include individual meetings with search chairs and others, as well as group sessions for representatives of departments/programs who are planning to hire during the next academic year.

3) Continue to work on matters of policy and practice to support faculty diversity. This includes acting as an advisory body for the office of the Dean for Academic Affairs regarding evaluation of ongoing policies and procedures for faculty hiring, as well as programs to improve faculty retention and work-life satisfaction. The committee should communicate with appropriate faculty committees (e.g., Oversight Committees) on issues of common interest like efforts to create a positive professional and intellectual climate for all faculty members.

CHANGES TO THE FACULTY HANDBOOK
(Under “G. Oversight: College Life Committees”)

Committee on Faculty Diversity

Purpose: Promotes the hiring and retention of a diverse faculty at Bowdoin by serving as outside members on tenure-track searches, and by undertaking other activities to increase the diversity of the faculty.

Chair: Appointed tenured faculty member
Members:
  Faculty: five tenured, appointed for two-year terms, at least one from each of the three curricular divisions.
  Students: none
  Ex officio: none