

Office of Research

Diversity Report

Preliminary Summary

The Office of Research is pleased to contribute this report to the university-wide appraisal of diversity efforts described in Vice President Rusty Barceló's memo of December 3, 2003. In that letter, academic and administrative units were asked to submit a preliminary summary report highlighting current diversity efforts or initiatives. Some elements of Dr. Barceló's charge letter are more appropriate for academic units than for administrative units. Nonetheless, we can comment on how diversity is made a visible and active part of our unit, on the specific ways that a concern for diversity is integrated into our mission, and on the ways we are structured so as to make diversity enhancement part of our criteria for success.

The Office of Research is charged with central administrative oversight of the University's research mission. It supports the research mission by providing leadership and services to researchers. The leadership component is directed through a small central office that organizes interdisciplinary research initiatives, manages several types of research "venture capital" including matching funds and the Royalty Research Fund, and generally seeks to facilitate research through collaborations with schools, colleges, and departments. The service components include the Office of Grant and Contract Services, including the Human Subjects Division, and several organized research units, the largest of which is Friday Harbor Laboratories. Together, these units have approximately 143 classified and professional staff as well as a number of hourly personnel and a small number of academic faculty.

The diversity appraisal in this preliminary report is organized around three topics. Given our mission, diversity is first considered in terms of our role in supporting research. Second, I discuss examples of how a concern for diversity is woven into our unit's activities and culture. Finally, I address diversity in staffing.

Supporting Diversity Through Research

The primary way in which the Office of Research supports diversity efforts is through its support of the research mission of the University. Although we do not usually think of the research enterprise as an engine of diversity, both the quality and content of our research activity contribute to diversity.

Quality research is crucial for attracting diverse faculty to come to the UW in the first place. In May 2000 the Office of Research, working with the Research Advisory Board, conducted a survey of UW-Seattle faculty who had been hired in the previous four years. Just over 50% of the 551 faculty contacted responded by rating and ranking a series of factors that might have influenced their choice to come to the UW. The top four factors why these faculty members had selected the UW were:

1. Quality of research opportunities for me personally;
2. Research reputation of the UW generally;
3. Quality of research facilities available through the UW; and
4. Distinctive opportunities to work with graduate students.

These factors ranked ahead of concerns with salary, a desire to live in the Pacific Northwest, the desire to live in a diverse cultural environment, and the quality of faculty colleagues as teachers as factors deciding the choice to come to here. Thus, the quality of UW research is one of our primary tools for recruiting and thereby enhancing *faculty diversity* at the University of Washington. By supporting the overall research enterprise, the Office of Research promotes that overall quality.

Diversity, of course, is both theme and consequence in many of the research projects completed each year at the University of Washington. With over 5,200 sponsored research awards in FY2003 (not to mention the many untracked, unsponsored studies), it would be impossible to provide a comprehensive summary of those that focus on diversity and diversity-related issues. A few examples will suffice to make the point. These examples would include the health survey of American Indian and Alaskan Native lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and two-spirited individuals currently under way in the School of Social Work, studies of international health and health services capacity in third-world countries conducted in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, clinical trials involving the elderly with Alzheimer's disease, and studies focusing on the development of cancer vaccines for prevention of breast and ovarian cancers. I mention these particular examples because they represent cases in which the central Office of Research was directly involved in some way. More generally, the research conducted at the University in areas as varied as genome science, American ethnic studies, nursing, and engineering attracts a diverse faculty and student body. These projects not only have a huge impact by raising the consciousness about the values of diversity, but also act as magnets for minority students and faculty. Thus research contributes to several of the diversity targets identified in Dr. Barceló's charge letter. These include: *student access and opportunities, student development and retention, engagement with the external community, staff and faculty diversity, and climate.*

Let me note two specific initiatives within the Office that are intended to support our diversity efforts. We are currently in the process of adding training staff in Grant and Contract Services and the Human Subjects Division. Trainers will reach particularly to underserved and minority faculty so that they may feel better connected to processes that are often somewhat daunting in their administrative complexity. In addition, we have been experimenting with ways to assist community groups in partnering with UW researchers. These groups often represent minorities in community-based organizations. Grant and Contract Services has been exploring ways to partner with their leadership and with researchers to facilitate subcontracting and to minimize misunderstandings.

Weaving a Concern for Diversity into Core Activities

Access is a fundamental value in science as well as in many other forms of scholarship. We are best served when the pathways to participation are open and when

there are specific efforts made to include those who are not already at the table. I note two examples of how a concern for diversity is woven into the fundamental values and activities of the Office of Research.

The first of these is in the operations of the Human Subjects Division. This is the office that reviews all formal studies at the University involving human participants. There are over 4,800 such studies currently underway at the University. Each of these is reviewed for compliance with the core values of human subjects research. One of these values is the principle of justice. It requires that the benefits and burdens of research be distributed fairly. This value is written into federal regulations governing research and is used to address issues of diversity in research every day and in every case by the Human Subjects Division. The specific ways that diversity is integrated into our mission include: requesting information from researchers on how they will achieve equitability in selecting research subjects and evaluating their answers; educating researchers on the importance of selecting subjects equitably; assisting researchers in achieving equitability. In addition, we are constantly striving to achieve diversity in the membership of the Human Subjects Review Committees so as to provide review that is sensitive to issues of race, ethnicity, age, gender, and disability.

Almost all the academic effort directly administered by the Office of Research lies at Friday Harbor Laboratories (FHL). Prominent attention to diversity can be seen in the priorities given to specific educational, and research training initiatives, and the substantial private funding directed to making them happen. The Laboratories have taken the initiative to establish and secure external funding for research training programs directed specifically to students and faculty from diverse backgrounds. FHL solicits applications from graduate and undergraduate students who bring diversity to FHL and to participate in formal classes and research apprenticeship training and also to work one-on-one with faculty mentors. (see <http://depts.washington.edu/fhl/blinkschol.html>).

We have assembled an unusual mix of resources at FHL in order to support efforts to enhance diversity. Over the past eight years, with generous contributions from alumni, friends, and the Mellon Foundation, an endowment of over \$600,000 has been established to promote diversity. The income generated by this endowment is directed to pay student and faculty stipends, as well as travel and research costs of their participation. It is further matched by annual grants of about \$10,000 from a number of scientific societies. Finally, FHL attracts world-class mentors to work with these students, and makes it easier for such mentors to offer such time/effort by providing laboratory space and facilities to mentors at no cost.

The program has been effective, transforming the "face" of FHL, and its diversity. Less than a decade ago, FHL had few (about 2 per year) visiting students, and even fewer faculty from culturally diverse backgrounds. Now there are between 10 and 20 such students and faculty involved intensely annually. FHL has propelled the research careers for African American and Native American graduate students who have gone on to earn graduate degrees, and has become a 'home' for eminent researchers from diverse backgrounds. (For examples, see <http://depts.washington.edu/fhl/teachapprMellon.html>).

It might also be noted that Friday Harbor Laboratories has also started outreach programs for high school students in Island County, Washington. Although Island County is usually thought of as a vacation destination for the wealthy, the personal income of its residents actually ranks below the median for the state. Together, these efforts address a number of the diversity targets identified in Dr. Barceló's charge letter: *student access and opportunities, student development and retention, engagement with the external community, staff and faculty diversity, and climate.*

Staff and Administrative Diversity

The demographics of personnel associated with the Office of Research are included in the annual Diversity Assessments published by the Equal Opportunity Office (see, http://www.washington.edu/admin/eoo/Index_AA_Reports.html) and will only be summarized here.

Of the 143 professional and classified staff (both CSA and WPRB) associated with the Office of Research, 53% are male and 47% are female. The majority of staff members are non-minority (88%). All the minority categories tracked by the EOO are represented except American Indian Female. Asian female (5.5%) and Hispanic male (2.1%) are the most commonly represented minorities in what is admittedly a very small pool.

The leadership positions in the Office of Research and the units reporting to it are generally filled by faculty and high-level professional staff. These positions include the Vice Provost, three Associate Vice Provosts, an Assistant Vice Provost, the Director of the Human Subjects Division, the Associate Director of Grant and Contract Services, the Director of Industry Agreements, the Director and Associate Director of Friday Harbor Laboratories, and three Director level positions in the Joint Institute for the Study of the Atmosphere and Ocean (JISAO). Of these thirteen positions, nine are presently occupied by males and four by females. One position is held by an African-American male, one by an Asian female, and the rest are held by non-minorities.

We are currently searching for a new Director of the Friday Harbor Laboratories and for an Associate Director of the Human Subjects Division (new position). Women are chairing the search committees in both cases and we are actively looking for qualified female and minority candidates to bring greater diversity into our leadership in the future.

Craig J. Hogan
Vice Provost for Research
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