

**Improving the Proportionality of Underrepresented Groups in the  
Undergraduate Teacher Education Program:  
Recommendations of the Committee on Diversity**

**Indiana University Bloomington – School of Education  
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Last year, the Committee on Diversity issued a report (“*What Color is Your Teaching Force? The Status of Diversity in the IUB Undergraduate Teacher Education Program*”) providing clear evidence of serious under-representation among African American, Latino, and Native American students in applications, admission, and graduation from the IUB Teacher Education Program. In response to that report, the committee was asked by the Dean’s Office and Policy Council to develop practical and comprehensive recommendations and submit them this year. The discussion of the Committee on Diversity over the last year has focused on preparing those recommendations.

Those discussions led us to two classes of recommendations: a set of specific recommendations for programs that could be implemented within the next two years by the School, and longer term recommendations for structural changes in recruiting practices, advocacy efforts, and internal reform. Those recommendations are presented below and two sample budgets for implementing these recommendations are attached. It is important to note that in any recommendations calling for additional staff or programs, those staff or programs are intended to *supplement, not to supplant*, existing initiatives in the School of Education, including those offered through the School’s Office of Recruitment and Retention. Indeed, the Committee would argue that simply expanding the proportion of the School’s personnel and fiscal resources that are devoted to ensuring a diverse student body and teaching force may be as important as the precise form of new initiatives.

We believe that these recommendations are highly consistent with President Adam W. Herbert and Vice President for Institutional Development and Student Affairs Charlie Nelms’ commitment to double the representation of under-represented students by the year 2014, and if implemented could put the School of Education in the forefront of such efforts, even while addressing the severe shortage of teachers of color in the state of Indiana.

### **Immediate Recommendations**

**1. Make Underrepresented Undergraduate and Graduate Student Recruitment a Research Agenda:** The IUB School of Education is a Research I institution and, as such, identifying the best methods for improving proportionality in recruitment and graduation of students of color should be considered a researchable question. The evidence for the success of previous initiatives should be a strong consideration in the choice of new recruitment strategies, and the effectiveness of any strategies that are implemented can and should be empirically evaluated.

*Recommendation:* Provide a one-to-two course a year release for at least three years for one faculty member to make the improvement of recruitment of students of color a

research agenda. That faculty member should have at her or his disposal a graduate assistant and possibly a staff position to assist in the work. The goals of this initiative would be a.) to identify the most effective strategies in the published literature and in other teacher training for improving recruitment outcomes for students of color, b.) to identify and assist in the institutionalization (in collaboration with the Office of Teacher Education and ETS) of a set of measures to monitor improvement, and c) to develop those measures into a strategy capable of ongoing evaluation of programs or strategies for improving the recruitment and retention of students from under-represented groups. This effort should be conducted in collaboration with other current efforts in the School of Education, most importantly the Office of Recruitment and Retention and the P-16 Center initiatives. Indeed, the resulting measurement strategies could be used to monitor the impact of current or future attempts to increase the representation of under-represented students. The work would be expected to result in publications and national presentations for the faculty working on the project. The proposed budget for this initiative includes travel money for the faculty member and the director of the Office of Recruitment and Retention to visit schools with a good track record of enrolling and graduating students of color in teacher education programs to look at promising practices. The Dean's Office should explore with the Office of Institutional Development and Student Affairs and the Provost's office collaborative funding that would help defray some of the costs associated with this initiative.

**2. Address the high failure rate of underrepresented students taking the PRAXIS I examination:** Discussions of underrepresented admissions into the IUB Teacher Education Program return again and again to the central roadblock represented by PRAXIS I. Indeed, those difficulties have been documented in an excellent article by Dr. Christine Bennett and her colleagues only recently in the *American Educational Research Journal*. Too many students of color wait until they are ready to apply to the School of Education to take PRAXIS I, only to fail after completing two years of college. Although the tutoring programs that have been put in place hold some promise, it is also imperative that we help prospective students pay serious attention to PRAXIS I earlier in their college career. The following recommendations are intended to more directly address the high failure rates on PRAXIS I for students from under-represented groups:

*Recommendations:*

- The School should expand its program of reimbursement for PRAXIS I for students from under-represented groups to covering the costs of the exam up front for all under-represented students who agree to the following conditions:
  - The student must take the exam some time between August preceding their freshman year and August preceding their sophomore year, and
  - The student must take part in a School-sponsored PRAXIS I training seminar prior to taking the examination.
- In order to emphasize the seriousness of the institution with respect to PRAXIS I and to promote a welcoming environment, institute an administration of the PRAXIS I in the School of Education. The Dean's Office should follow up on discussions that

have been initiated between the Committee on Diversity and BEST (see attached memo from John Bean of BEST) suggesting that such an administration would be possible, and free of cost for the School of Education.

### **Long-Term Recommendations**

In addition to these two strategies, we would suggest a number of long-term strategies focusing on recruitment, advocacy, and internal structural reform:

1. *Employ strategic recruitment outreach efforts (in conjunction with Recommendation #1 above)*

We recommend consideration of a strategic approach to improving outreach and recruitment efforts. Some of these suggestions involve institutionalizing and expanding strategies that the Office of Recruitment and Retention has found to be successful, but has lacked resources (i.e., financial and personnel) to implement on a broad scale. The effectiveness of these and other recruitment strategies could be evaluated as part of the initiative described above:

- Employ class valedictorians and salutatorians from high poverty/high underrepresented prospective student areas who have chosen to attend IUB as “ambassadors” for recruiting visits to their high schools. Provide travel monies and an honorarium for each visit. Recruit the highest quality students from those schools, attempting to increase their consideration of teaching as a high priority profession.
- Employ teachers and administrators of color who are committed to a more statewide teaching force as ambassadors for the Teacher Education Program. Provide travel monies and an honorarium for each visit.
- Provide release time or enhanced service credit for faculty who are engaged in research or service efforts to improve the diversity of the School of Education student population or the climate in the School.
- Develop long-term partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) and Teacher Cadet Programs.

2. *Develop a statewide advocacy agenda for promoting a diverse and culturally competent teaching force in Indiana.*

As a recognized stakeholder in P-16 education in the state of Indiana, the School of Education can move beyond internal reform to provide leadership in advocating for initiatives that can increase both the diversity and the cultural competence of Indiana’s teaching force. Such initiatives, if implemented, would in turn provide further support for positive changes in the SOE. Towards that end, we recommend that the School begin the following steps:

- *Develop an advocacy agenda:* In collaboration with interested faculty, identify critical policy issues (e.g., teacher preparation, outreach to schools in disadvantaged areas, PRAXIS I) to be addressed, and a range of actions that could be taken to address those issues.

- *Partner with other stakeholders:* Meet with other important stakeholders with an interest in education policy (e.g., other Deans of schools of education, ISSA, ISPA, ISTA, ICASE) to develop a collaborative agenda for promoting a diverse and culturally competent teaching force.
- *Translate research into information supporting a policy agenda:* Support research in the School that could support the identified action agenda, and encourage those engaging in that research to translate their findings into an action-oriented policy agenda.
- *Share information with policy-makers:* In conjunction with education partners, meet with legislators to share information on the importance of the issues, and in particular make connections with other legislative agendas, such as high quality teaching or cultural competence in PL 221, to gain traction for the agenda.

3. *Make equity in application, admission, and graduation a school-wide institutional responsibility.*

- Restart and continue institutional support for Project TEAM as an exemplar of a highly successful program in this area with regard to recruiting, retaining and graduating the next generation of teachers of color.
- Have ETS routinely analyze and disseminate data on application, admission, and graduation rates, disaggregated by race.
- Departments should use such data to examine their own practices and develop and submit a plan in order to improve their rate of application, admission, and graduation for traditionally under-represented student populations.
- Hold an interdepartmental forum with one representative from each department to discuss methods for improving recruitment and retention of under-represented students, faculty, and staff.
- Include efforts to increase the diversity and equity of the unit as one of the areas to be addressed in the evaluations of department chairs and SOE administrators (e.g., “List any efforts your department/area has made in the last year to recruit or retain students, faculty, and staff from under-represented groups.”)

We are fully cognizant of the potential resistance in response to recommendations such as the last. These recommendations are, however, consistent with proposals currently being considered at the campus level. Moreover, the central status of recruitment, retention and climate in Goal 5 of the School’s *Long-Range Strategic Plan (2002)* suggests that ensuring the diversity and cultural competence of our teaching force represents a core value of the School of Education. If so, the personnel and fiscal resources we are willing to devote, and the extent to which we are willing to hold ourselves accountable for achievement of our objectives, stands as positive or negative evidence of the extent to which we truly intend to operationalize the values we espouse.

Committee on Diversity

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