



**THE RECRUITMENT & RETENTION  
OF FACULTY OF COLOR**

*FOR*  
AZUSA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

# CATALYST

GENERATING CHANGE THROUGH IDEAS



To Ed Barron and the SCRD:

Thank you for the gift of this project. Our lives have been changed by the research we have encountered and conversations that have been afforded us in the collaborative creation of this presentation. As students of Azusa Pacific University who stand to benefit from a diverse learning environment, we are grateful for your dedication to improving the recruitment and retention of faculty of color and making APU a place of inclusion and diversity for those who teach, work and study here. We speak for both groups presenting today in saying, we are eager to play our part in advocating the need for a diverse learning environment and fostering an environment that welcomes and supports minority culture experiences in the classroom and work place. Finally, we hope that our findings in this project can in some way aid you in this journey as it has for us.

Sincerely,  
Team Catalyst

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## INTRODUCTION

Creating a diversified campus not only responds to our God given call to include people from all nations, but enhances the educational environment and experience. We at Catalyst want to equip Ed Barron and his staff at the Student Center for Reconciliation and Diversity, with a better understanding of the problems and issues surrounding the discussion about diversity, specifically pertaining to the recruitment and retention of faculty of color. With this understanding the SCRD can better serve as the institutional voice for the issues and problems that administration might not necessarily be aware of, and help provide a connection between what is actually happening and the decision makers.

This issue of diversity is certainly not unique to APU and so we want to take a look at the bigger picture and stay as global as we can in addressing this question about recruiting and retaining faculty of color. We have attempted to keep our perspective broad and open, informed by the research and our inquiries, to give the best opportunity for creating positive, sustainable change. We want to get as high above the problem as we can so as not to miss discovering new solutions and ideas, that maybe haven't been considered, that could truly create change. Our process and findings in this presentation will fall into the following four sections: Recognizing the Problem, Best Practices, Identifying the Gaps, and Solutions for Implementation.

## RECOGNIZING THE PROBLEM

Based upon our conversations with Ed Barron, the experiences and insights of our interviewees, and the information gathered in our research, this section briefly discusses the current state of affairs as it relates to recruiting and retaining faculty of color at APU, as well as the identified challenges other universities and institutions have discussed in related publications.

**Need for more diversity:** Our research is focused on the idea that a high level of diversity for an academic institution is essential for creating an effective learning environment. This factor is most directly tied to the recruitment and retention of diverse staff and faculty.

**Strategic Recruiting:** It is no secret that one of the first steps toward greater diversity for APU is to increase the multicultural presence of faculty on campus by strategically recruiting more faculty from diverse backgrounds. However, problems exist preventing this from being a singular solution to the problem.

- **The Revolving Door<sup>1</sup>**

Research tells us that, in general, faculty of color have higher attrition rates on campuses that are monocultural and in greater need of faculty with diverse background. Simply put, the schools that need diversity within their hired faculty the most, lose it the quickest, even if they successfully recruit faculty of color. This constant coming and going of diverse faculty is referred to by some as the “revolving door.”

**Retention:** The challenges with recruiting bring light to the value of retention. Thus we must have a good understanding of the factors inhibiting retention:

- **Culture and Climate of University**

As referenced above, the culture and tendencies of a monocultural university environment can be a hostile and uncomfortable place for faculty of color without any intention. The lack of understanding and support that exists for minority faculty on these campuses greatly inhibit retention. Even if there is no intentional resistance to a movement towards a diversified academic culture, the temptation to continue doing what you always do because it is comfortable can prevent intentional change from occurring.

- **Greater Responsibility**

Faculty of color are often times asked to be representatives of diversity and champions of the need to educate others on matters of diversity. Minority representatives are often asked to be on many committees and focus groups with the added pressure of being the only one that is able to provide a different perspective. This often-times unspoken added responsibility hurts retention for faculty and staff of color.

## BEST PRACTICES

From our research, and from the input of experts in the field, the following practices have been identified as best practices, utilized at other universities and institutions to effectively recruit and retain faculty of color.

### Recruitment

**Department Ownership:** According to our research, each sub-unit and department in any given university should have their own mission statement that emphasizes the importance of diversity and cultural focus. The commitment to diversity needs to go beyond a university-wide statement, and be highly prioritized at the departmental level as well.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, literature suggests that recruiting faculty of color should be on the agenda at every faculty meeting as an ongoing conversation thus making sure that our department chairs/leaders consider this a priority when hiring. We must always be in a constant state of revisiting, re-clarifying and recommitting to the goals that we have set regarding diversity.

**Diverse Recruitment Teams:** The same studies from Gasman and Nguyen have offered that, recruitment teams should include faculty/staff from diverse backgrounds that can offer different perspectives and different analogies from different cultural lenses. An interviewee should be able to step into an interview and see someone that they can identify with.<sup>3</sup>

**Identifying Potential Candidates:** Our research has shown that it's important to network and collaborate with other institutions to help identify potential candidates. Host a "Scholars of Color" conference/lecture series to attract a pool of candidates.<sup>4</sup>

**Cluster Hiring:** When looking at Western Washington Universities approach to hiring diverse faculty, the hiring of more than one diverse faculty member at one time is a common practice called cluster hiring. This can help in environments where there is not a strong representation of minorities so that new hires don't feel alienated and have someone to face inevitable new challenges with.<sup>6</sup>

**Grow Your Own:** Again, through our research, we see that it is very important to hire from the outside in order to get different perspectives but equally important to build on what we already have on the inside. With the increase of students of color pursuing their doctoral degrees, it is important that we develop diverse leadership opportunities for future faculty of color that already understand the ethos and vision of APU.<sup>7</sup>

### Retention

**Leadership Involvement:** Throughout the literature on this topic, we consistently found that other universities emphasize the importance of leadership needing to be a consistently active advocate in the college campus to make diversity part of its culture. This attitude from the top, particularly if leadership is well respected, makes this topic more likely to be received with open arms throughout the rest of the university.<sup>8</sup>

**Climate Assessment:** The university cannot assume that changing words in a mission statement or knowing statistics of on-campus culturally diverse populations will have any effect on the interactions of individuals on its campus without some attention to its climate.<sup>9</sup> Healthy climate and culture on a college campus is what allows for free expression and free learning for all parties. However, it is not easily attained. Research has proven the development of a supportive, collegial community is important. Underrepresented faculty members need to feel both *appreciated* and *engaged*. A Climate Assessment would assess the current level of inclusiveness towards diverse faculty/staff members, identifying both strengths and weaknesses. Once the university is knowledgeable of the current state of affairs they can build off of their strengths and fill gaps where weaknesses exist. Diversity needs to be a part of the evaluation process for all staff and faculty as well as supervisors and students in the classroom.<sup>10</sup>

**Mentoring:** Research has shown that mentoring allows for professional development and can influence the retention rate for minority faculty members when used well. This encompasses not just faculty to student mentoring but also faculty-to-faculty mentoring. One innovative group mentoring program, for example, involved Black women supporting one another and sharing survival strategies in an university environment that many experienced as alienating.<sup>11</sup>

Faculty retention strategies are not well documented in the literature. Some universities recognize the importance of mentoring faculty, with special consideration given to the stresses faced by minority faculty such as being overcommitted as the minority representative for committees and other programs. However, there is little research to support that many institutions of higher education regularly implement formal mentoring strategies as a part of faculty retention.<sup>12</sup>

**Strategic Plan:** Having a strategic plan to increase the diversity level on campus can help the university to be intentional about its efforts. These plans sometimes include a visiting scholar or faculty exchange program to help in the initial steps of increasing diversity. Diversity training is an example of a successful strategic plan for universities with an unwelcoming climate towards faculty members of color or where a gap exists in the community being well informed on topics related to diversity.<sup>13</sup>

## IDENTIFYING THE GAPS

Gaps are the areas in which APU is currently falling short of the previously established best practices found in our research. In addition, gaps may be areas in which faculty of APU recognize that there is room for improvement. Through our research and interviews, we established the below gaps that need attention at APU. To start, we can see that APU has a desire to see diversity within the educational experience, but our findings suggest the environment is not quite as diverse as APU may desire it to be.

**APU's Statement on Diversity:** "APU is committed to recruit, support, and retain faculty who integrate intercultural perspectives and other diversity issues into their curriculum and research."

**Gap:** Diverse faculty recognize a significant drop in support after the *honeymoon phase* of recruiting and hiring.

**Gap:** A *culture of diversity* does exist at APU, but it is not nearly strong enough to retain faculty of color.

**Gap:** Diversity programs exist, however, they are not perceived as *fully integrated* into the campus culture so that while there may be inclusion within the group, the group remains isolated from the rest of the institution or university.

In many places throughout our research, the shortcomings of other universities and institutions resonated with the current conditions at APU. "Milton Bennett's Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity" identifies several gaps typical to many institutions:

- There tends to be *unspoken and or unintentional biases*
- Leadership backs diversity with words, but they are not *fully immersed* in creating a culture of diversity
- Diversity programs that appear to simply be *byproducts or an accessory* for the institution.

As we will explain in the final segment of our presentation, identifying gaps helps an institution be intentional about what it needs to improve upon the most. However, the more specific an institution is able to be with their respective short comings, the more helpful prescribed solutions can be. Therefore, as a precursor to the recommendations to come, we are recommending both an Internal and External Assessment to identify APU's gaps with more specificity.

**Internal Assessment:** These are questions that an institution must ask itself because these are the questions that faculty of color might ask in order to be convinced to accept and to remain at an institution.

- Are the research, scholarship, and teaching interests of the minority faculty member considered important, relevant, and valuable by his/her colleagues?
- Is expertise in African American studies, Latino studies, etc. seen as the "main stuff" or as marginal to the discipline?

In the area of community connections, diverse faculty and staff might ask:

- Is this a community where I would feel included and connected?
- Are there others living here from my cultural group; do identity networks exist to support my life outside the college or university?
- Does the institution address concerns and issues relevant to my cultural community?



And in the area of institutional transformation, these issues would be central:

- What role do minority faculty and staff play in governance, strategic planning, faculty/staff organizations, etc.? Are they treated as central or token?
- Is the institution's rhetoric on diversity actualized in systems, structures, and policies?
- Is the institution open to the kind of vision and change that diverse faculty and staff offer?

Before an institution can begin recruiting faculty of color effectively the environment needs to be created and sustained as the norm.<sup>14</sup> APU may be focused on increasing the number of diverse faculty and staff on campus but if the campus culture does not help faculty thrive professionally and in community, APU will not be able to keep these faculty from leaving, and the long term influence of their presence will be nullified.

**External Assessment:** It is our recommendation that APU invest in an outside agency to do their own assessment and interviews from an unbiased perspective, including gap identification, recommendations, and accountability steps. This would truly be an exceptional and courageous step towards full integration of diversity at APU. An exterior assessment may look at the following items and more:

- Programs
- People
- Attitudes
- Intentions
- Accomplishments
- Assessments
- Funding
- Leadership involvement
- Training

## SOLUTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Based upon what has been established thus far with regards to our understanding of the problem, the best practices found in research, and the gaps identified between those practices and APU, Team Catalyst makes the following recommendations for APU to continue to grow in their ability to recruit and retain faculty of color.

**Funding:** First and foremost, money talks. In order for APU to truly prioritize the fostering of a diverse educational climate, one that effectively recruits and retains faculty with a wide range of diverse backgrounds, the dedication of significant funds towards this cause is essential. However, for the time being, it has been made clear that funds are in short supply for APU. Thus, we have done our best to creatively establish recommendations that may be implemented with little or no money. In many cases, it is assumed that money may need to be reallocated, and it is worth noting that APU must prioritize funding initiatives for the future if it is going to continue to grow in this area.

### Retention

As the key to effective recruitment also lies within quality retention, we offer that the most effective strategy for increased retention can be implemented by the following steps: Welcome, Listen, Support, and Educate.

**Welcome:** A key solution for the retention of faculty of color on campus is through making them feel welcome. This begins with the hiring and orientation process but must carry on much longer than that. Through an interview conducted with a faculty member of color from APU, it was revealed that many faculty of color feel isolated and belittled on campus. This has been seen in the attitude and tone that they have been spoken to or addressed. The following goals should be highly prioritized for APU.

- **Campus Climate Assessment:** It is critical that APU conduct a campus climate assessment that focuses in on the experience and perception of faculty members with regards to diversity, racial, and cultural issues. This will identify gaps and help the university to prioritize the implementation of strategies to make faculty of color feel more welcome on campus.
- **Make Resources Well Known:** If a number of resources that could be helpful for faculty members of color are identified a directory should be created to make them easily accessible.
- **Incentive Based Connections:** The University must develop support strategies such as a broad definition of diversity and activities that support social connection, develop partnerships between mainstream culture and marginal groups, and recognize faculty who demonstrate inclusivity in their teachings.
- **Consistent Departmental Development:** Individual faculty member focus programs can be implemented in each department at APU to make sure that departments have communicated clear expectations and strategies for growth to faculty of color.

- **Incentives to Stay:** Factors that consistently affect the level of enjoyment of a faculty member at any university include:
  - Missional connection and Intrinsic value
  - Being connected within the community
  - Empowerment to make a difference

**Listen:** A key solution for the retention of faculty of color on campus is through listening and allowing for them to feel heard.

- Find out what is working well with current faculty on campus at APU. Make sure you are aware of factors for retention of all faculty and faculty of cultural diversity.
- There should be a safe place for faculty to ask questions and share concerns where they will not be penalized for their honesty. This could be a faculty of color hotline, a “safe” person who listens in person, or a comment and concern box and/or email.<sup>15</sup>
- Underrepresented faculty should be able to get the ear of senior faculty, department heads, the dean, and others in senior administration.
- All comments and concerns within this system must be addressed and followed up on regardless of the action or lack of action may be.
- Additionally research has shown that a directory helps new hires to be aware of resources available to them.<sup>16</sup>
- Participation in program planning involves underrepresented faculty in creating and shaping support programs, and they are then more committed to these programs, and the programs are better as a result.<sup>17</sup>
- Community is built through leaders, utilizing faculty members of color who are interested in leading this change will be critical in changing the culture of our campus.<sup>18</sup>

**Support:** One of the most well documented suggestions for retention of faculty is mentoring. Our team would like to suggest that this is particularly true for faculty of color.

**Mentoring:** According to our research, faculty retention strategies are not well documented in the literature. Some universities recognize the importance of mentoring faculty, with special consideration given to the stresses faced by minority faculty such as being overcommitted as the minority representative for committees and other programs. However, there is little research to support that many institutions of higher education regularly implement formal mentoring strategies as a part of faculty retention. Doing so at APU would be an innovative step for APU to take.

- APU should develop a mentoring program that would allow faculty of color to network with both colleagues and administration so their voices are heard.
- In our research, we found that an intentional mentoring program would allow established faculty members of color who have been with APU for some time to connect with and support faculty members of color who are new to campus. This connection is very helpful in helping new faculty adapt and understand campus environment and culture.<sup>19</sup>
- Current faculty of color must be committed to a sustained mentorship program for new faculty of color in order for it to be successful.
- Successful mentoring relationships are long term and based on a variety of variables, including trust and a willingness to help others succeed. Cross-race mentoring relationships can be helpful in enhancing awareness about diversity and social justice and

offer faculty of color opportunities to break the silence. One should not hesitate to terminate a mentor-protégé relationship if it is not working well.

- It is not helpful to rely on initiatives from overburdened and slow administrative structures or unorganized mentoring programs.

**Outside Consulting/Accountability:** Hiring an individual or group such as the California Diversity Council to regularly assess and challenge the university could be extremely beneficial. This helps counter the tendencies of comfort that were addressed earlier.

**Education:** In order to continually create a climate and culture that sustains inclusion, equity and embraces diversity, education of all faculty, staff and students is essential. People cannot know to change unless they know what they need to change.

- **Imago Dei Training:** The existing staff and faculty training on diversity must continue to be emphasized. While it has been expressed that APU hesitates making this a mandatory training because of the negative connotations that may come with such a requirement, it is the belief of our group that with the right endorsement from the administration of APU and specific allotted time for the completion of such a training, it could and should be a mandated training.
- **Utilization of Graduate Students:** Opening up avenues for students to continue to study in these areas is a way for APU to naturally benefit from more people concerned with this topic. Without expending any money, the university would be able to utilize the course work of masters and doctoral level students to be dedicated to addressing the issue of campus climate with regards to diversity. Specifically scholarships can be given to doctoral students who would be interested in studying the subject and providing feedback in their dissertations.

## Recruitment

In coming full circle on this topic, we again come back to the desire to become a university that effectively recruits faculty of color. **While we continue to hold that the most effective** Similar to the question of “Which came first: the chicken or the egg?” we argue that the priority needs to be placed on retention first.

*However*, if this is done well, recruitment strategies can then be effectively implemented without being wasteful. That being said, there are some clear areas for improvement in recruiting:

**Department Ownership:** Recruiting faculty of color should be on the agenda at every faculty meeting thus keeping it a fresh topic during seasons of hiring.<sup>20</sup> Making sure that department chairs/leaders consider this a priority for their department or school will help increase opportunities for faculty of color.<sup>21</sup> It cannot be just the university as a whole that espouses the commitment to diversity. Each sub-unit, such as the individual college, school, and department, should also develop mission statements that reflect/emphasize a cultural focus.

**Grow Your Own:** Seeking out students of color for graduate programs provides additional avenues for faculty applicants who are familiar with APU culture and climate. These students are automatically aware and most often eager to move into faculty or adjunct roles.<sup>22</sup>

**Diverse Recruitment Teams:** Recruitment teams should include faculty/staff from diverse backgrounds. A wide array of perspectives and ideas will help provide the broadest candidate pool and greater opportunity for diversity there within.<sup>23</sup>

**Identifying Potential Candidates:** It's important to network/collaborate with other institutions to help identify potential candidates. Host a "Scholars of Color" conference/lecture series to attract a pool of candidates.<sup>24</sup>

**Cluster Hiring:** The hiring of more than one faculty of color (or any faculty for that matter) at one time can help in environments where there is not a strong representation of minorities.<sup>25</sup> New faculty members have increased opportunity to develop collegiality with those they are intentionally paired with early in the hiring process. Having someone going through the same process can be beneficial for additional support that is needed for all faculty.

## CONCLUSION

Diversity is a lot like communication. You can say you are a good communicator, but the true merit of your communication is acknowledged by the listener, not the speaker. APU can attest that they have done a lot to move towards diversity, but the true merit of diversity on campus is acknowledged by the minority, not the majority. If the minority population on campus says we are not diverse, then we are not diverse! We need to recognize the existing layers of diversity while also acknowledging our current status and opportunities for improvement. Increasing diversity is not easy. The research clearly shows that many institutions are struggling to increase diversity on campus.

In short, we believe a campus wide assessment is a strong recommendation to help everyone see a *clear and accurate reflection of the culture*, not just current assumptions shaped by missional statements on diversity. Our interviews with current or former minority faculty and students indicate that there are still many opportunities to increase or improve layers of diversity for success. In our assessment, this is the crux of the problem here at APU, and it is the key to beginning the process towards a more diverse learning environment through increased recruitment and retention of faculty of color.

In 2013 James A. Joseph, former U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, posted some thoughts about Nelson Mandela on a blog. One of his comments was this:

“He (Nelson Mandela), was the product of a cultural tradition best described by the African proverb, “People are people through other people.” And so what sustained him was not the Western notion of “I think, therefore I am,” [René Descartes] but the tribal notion of “I am because you are; to diminish your humanity is to diminish my own; to deny your dignity is to deny my own.” We remember him (Nelson Mandela), then as one who sought to demonstrate that diversity need not divide, that pluralism rightly understood and rightly practiced is a benefit and not a burden, and that the fear of difference is a fear of the future.”<sup>26</sup>

To have greater diversity on campus requires that there are *many layers integrated* together creating a climate where not only *all* people feel welcome and thrive, but where *all* people, the minority and the majority, add to the rich growth of our faith, our education and our careers. On behalf of *all* APU students, Faculty and Staff, we humbly submit these recommendations for consideration to Ed Barron, the SCRDR, and the Staff, Faculty and Leadership of Azusa Pacific University.

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