



Priorities Regarding Faculty Diversity

Caroline Siegel Singh, UCSA President

October 11, 2018

Faculty Diversity Creates Pipelines for Diverse Student Bodies

Race-blind admission practices since Prop 209 have decreased the UC's ability to educate a racially diverse population of California students. The undergraduate Black population has been in steady decline since Prop 209; many Black grad students are the only Black students in their departments and programs. Alternately, low student diversity discourages the retention of diverse faculty. Faculty and students share the need to feel like they belong and to have counterparts in their programs who can relate to their backgrounds and help them succeed. Seeing diversity reflected back to them results in the retention of both groups.

A Diverse Advisor Pool Supports Graduate Student Success

According to UC's Graduate Wellbeing study, over one-third of graduate and professional students at the UC report symptoms of mild to moderate depression, significantly owing to drawbacks stemming from academic preparation, career prospects, and social support. A UC Berkeley study in 2014 found that one of the top ten predictors of graduate student depression at UC Berkeley is Advisor Relationships. Graduate students, who have more robust relationships with faculty than undergraduate students, report feeling like their advisors do not understand or reflect their identities, leading to an unsatisfactory advisor-advisee relationship.

Faculty Diversity Breeds Diverse Ideas and Solutions

In recent years, college campuses have become places for vandalism, graffiti, hate crimes, and vitriolic exchanges in the name of free exchange of ideas. Many of these instances reference individual racial and other identity groups. The UC's new National Center on Free Speech and Civic Engagement is working to study free speech, hate speech, and the effects of political speech on campus climate. In the meantime, UC should be a place that recruits diverse thought leadership and allows faculty researching these issues to thrive, so that the best ideas about how to protect vulnerable communities rise to the top.

Advancements Must Include Tenure-Track Opportunities

Although faculty diversity is the first step, increasing faculty without increasing access to stable, tenured positions does not solve equity disparities. As [reported](#) by Inside Higher Ed in 2016, underrepresented minority groups held approximately 13 percent of faculty jobs in 2013, up from 9 percent in 1993. Yet they still only hold 10 percent of tenured jobs, according to the study. Women now hold 49 percent of total faculty positions but just 38 percent of tenured jobs. UC should invest in making opportunities less precarious for faculty representing diverse identities.