Occupation Type and Age

Male by Ethnic Group

6% Native Hawaiian
20% Hispanic/Latino
12% Asian
6% Black
4% American Indian
3% Two or More Races
13% Unknown
36% White

Female by Ethnic Group

7% Native Hawaiian
19% Hispanic/Latino
12% Asian
6% Black
3% American Indian
2% Two or More Races
13% Unknown
32% White

As of April 2014
Employee Demographic Data

Northridge California State University
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Faculty

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How a Top Business School Added More Women to Its Faculty

By Audrey Williams June

Last month, during a meeting at the White House, the deans of some of the nation’s top business schools committed to making their programs more accessible and appealing to women. They also noted a related challenge: hiring female faculty members. Data from a salary survey by AACSB International, an association of business schools, underscores the gender gap in what has long been a largely male-dominated workplace. In 2014-15, at the 497 American schools that responded, women made up 37.5 percent of assistant professors, roughly 32 percent of associate professors, and slightly more than 20 percent of full professors.

THE PROBLEM

More men than women on the faculty

In 2011, when Alison Davis-Blake was hired to lead the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business, a look at the faculty revealed room for improvement when it came to gender diversity. Including lecturers and visiting professors, women were only a quarter of the faculty. In addition, the pipeline of female assistant professors eligible for promotion and tenure "looked pretty thin," Ms. Davis-Blake says. Senior female professors told her they were concerned about what the makeup of the school’s faculty would be like after they retired.

"This wasn’t so much about replacing them," says Ms. Davis-Blake. "They felt the faculty is stronger when it isn’t homogenous."

Part of the problem for business schools, including Michigan, is that in some disciplines — such as finance and economics — few Ph.D.s are awarded to women. And without faculty role models,
female business students may be less likely to consider careers in academe.

THE APPROACH

Lengthen the "short list" and hire No. 1 and No. 2

Ms. Davis-Blake, the business school’s first female dean, didn’t lay down mandates to hire more women — state law in Michigan bans public institutions from setting quotas or providing preferential treatment tied to demographic characteristics. Instead she took a fresh look at the recruiting-and-hiring process.

It usually involves sorting through CVs, recommendation letters, and the like to arrive at a short list of three candidates to invite for campus interviews. But Ms. Davis-Blake noticed that "it wasn’t uncommon" for female candidates to surface as fourth and fifth on the lists.

So she turned to the "nudge theory," which calls for making small changes, rather than direct instruction, to influence decision making and behavior. In a move to broaden the pool of potential candidates for a given job, she says, she asked search committees to expand the shortlist to include the top five applicants and bring them all to campus.

"We’re in no way overturning the role of the faculty, and we’re in no way offering preferential treatment," Ms. Davis-Blake says. "Our goal was just to make sure that a variety of people were considered for positions and had the opportunity to be hired."

She also introduced another crucial tweak to the hiring process: the option to hire more than one professor from a single job search. Second-ranked candidates are almost always neck and neck with the top contender, she says. In one search, a woman was the next candidate in line, and the dean gave permission to hire both of them.

"If you’ve got two people that you’re really excited about, let’s just hire them both now," Ms. Davis-Blake says.
Susan J. Ashford, a professor of management and organizations at Michigan, called that option "one of the best ideas I've heard in a long time when it comes to how to tackle this issue. It plays to what faculty want to do, which is hire more people."

THE RESULTS

More female faculty

The change in the faculty at Ross, fueled by annual hiring, points to progress on the gender-equity front. Women make up 33 percent of tenure-track faculty, up from 25 percent in 2011. In the tenured ranks, the share of women is 20 percent, up from 17 percent. Over all, the faculty, which numbers about 200, is 30 percent female.

For the cluster of female assistant professors now at the business school, the next step is to clear the tenure hurdle. An informal mentoring group of female professors, along with policies that make balancing work-life issues easier — a critical issue for women on the tenure track — is among the tools available to help faculty.

Retention is also key. After tenure, top female business faculty can get recruited by other institutions.

"It's a problem of our success," Ms. Ashford says.

Ms. Davis-Blake, who is leaving her position at the end of the current academic year, says even with no set goal of how many women to recruit, there's always more work to be done.

"This is not an issue of achieving some kind of magical number," she says. "We'd like to have a diverse staff by many dimensions, and this is just one of them."

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Standard Operating Procedure for Target of Opportunity Hires

1. Introduction

A “target of opportunity hire” results from an opportunity to hire someone who meets a desired need without a planned search or as a result of a planned search that produces more than one candidate meeting a desired need. Target of opportunity hiring allows departments speed and flexibility in securing outstanding candidates who can help improve the quality and diversity of (University Name Here) faculty and professional staff.

Reasons for engaging in the target of opportunity process may include:

- hiring nationally renowned scholars in targeted curricular growth areas
- attracting outstanding senior scholars
- adding senior leadership to a program
- diversifying the faculty
- accommodating spousal or partner hires.

In the regular faculty recruitment process, after the position and search have been approved, the search and evaluation process can take up to an academic year. Target of opportunity typically shortens the hiring process by bypassing a general search. Target of opportunity accelerates the hiring process by allowing departments to take advantage of the availability of a specific scholar instead of requesting a new position and then searching for candidates who fit the description. With approval from the dean of the college and provost, the candidate goes through the standard evaluation process.

Target of opportunity hiring agreements between departments and the administration (Dean and/or Provost) vary on a case-by-case basis. Funding for target of opportunity hiring can come from department, college or Provost’s funds. The Provost may fully or partially fund the position; Provost’s funding may be provided permanently or for a fixed period after which the department will be expected to assume responsibility for the position. Although target of opportunity is most often used in hiring candidates for faculty positions, the target of opportunity hiring practice may also be used to fill professional staff positions.

2. Process

Department heads wishing to pursue a target of opportunity hire should work through their deans. The dean should contact the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs to discuss resource requests to be submitted to the Provost to hire a faculty or professional staff member using the target of opportunity process. Faculty hired as a target of opportunity should be qualified for the position; i.e., meet the same qualifications as if the position were advertised during a regular faculty recruitment.