

Diversity Plan
Feinstein School of Education and Human Development
2007-2009

In order to assure a School in which diverse faculty, staff, and students encounter a supportive climate for learning and working; in which student access and opportunity are equitable; and in which diverse faculty and staff are represented; the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development (FSEHD) has established the following Diversity Plan to be implemented over a three year period. It is divided into three main sections; Faculty Diversity, Student Diversity and the Curricula of the Undergraduate and Graduate Professional Preparation Programs.

Area One: Faculty Diversity

Objective: To expand the number of faculty members of diverse backgrounds in each Department and Program of the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Action Step I. Intensify recruitment efforts and ensure procedural consistency in faculty searches:

Build upon past efforts to diversify the faculty with **College** initiatives to:

- Begin searches earlier so that the FSEHD can compete more effectively with other colleges and universities who also actively seek to diversify their faculty.

Build upon past efforts to diversify the faculty with **FSEHD** initiatives to:

- Continue the practice of the Dean sending a personal letter to all of the Deans of Historically Black Colleges and Universities inquiring about applicants who might be interested in our announced positions.
- Consider non-traditional hiring mechanisms such as the establishment of a 2-year FSEHD Diversity Fellowship to be offered to ABD candidates of diverse backgrounds. Those awarded the fellowship will teach one class per semester, while they complete their dissertation and receive faculty mentoring and support. The intent is to cultivate a commitment to the FSEHD that will lead to permanent hiring, contingent upon course evaluations.
- Require that the procedures established for the 2005 faculty searches be made policy for the FSEHD. This would make it policy of the FSEHD that all search committee chairs:
 - 1) Review the *Minority and Women Doctoral Directory* for the fields of education and human services to locate possible applicants and to send them a letter inviting them to apply.
 - 2) Publicize the opening on relevant listservs (e.g. *DDEL (Division of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Children of the Council*

for Exceptional Children), OELA Newsletter (Office of English Language Acquisition), Higher Education Jobs website (www.higheredjobs.com), through professional associations, calling and emailing colleagues at other institutions, and/or actively recruiting potential applicants directly.

- 3) Publicize openings at national professional conferences.
- 4) Publicize positions in publications that are more widely read by diverse candidates (e.g. *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education (Diverse Online)*, etc.)

Action Step II. Expand current hiring practices to successfully attract and “seal the deal” for prospective faculty and staff hires of diverse backgrounds:

Build upon past efforts to diversify the faculty with **College** initiatives to:

- Use the New Faculty Orientation to alert new faculty to diversity initiatives on and off campus dedicated to fostering an institutional culture of equity and diversity at the college; one that values and promotes diversity of experiences, ideas and perspectives. Building upon last year’s efforts, infuse diversity in all aspects of faculty orientation and create specific components within New Faculty Orientation that address diversity on campus. Continue to provide new faculty with detailed information about the school-aged population in RI.

Build upon past efforts to diversify the faculty with **FSEHD** initiatives to:

- Provide careful follow up with personal contact from search committee chair, Department Chair and the Dean to encourage applicants to consider RIC and FSEHD. If possible, provide incentives (reassigned time) to demonstrate FSEHD’s commitment to further the careers and professional interests of qualified candidates.
- Take potential candidates out into the community; specifically to schools that represent the demographics of Rhode Island public schools. Provide prospective faculty with a clear portrayal of the school-aged population in RI and engage in an up-front discussion of the challenges faced by the FSEHD in attracting and supporting a more diverse teacher candidate and practitioner population. Discuss the challenge of preparing all FSEHD teacher candidates to be ready to serve an increasingly diverse student population in the schools and communities (i.e. socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, language, religious diversity, etc.).

Build upon past efforts to diversify the faculty with **program** initiatives to:

- Extend our efforts in diversifying our faculty to include adjunct instructors, supervisors and cooperating teachers/internship supervisors. Employ “grow your own” methods such as recruiting former participants of PEP and Upward Bound for adjunct faculty roles on campus. Provide mentorship and directly follow up with graduates of these programs to encourage them to come back to

the college, serve in these important functions and pursue higher education to become full-time faculty of the future.

- Seek to engage diverse cooperating teachers and school- and community-based professionals to support our program candidates in their practica and internships. Identify diverse professionals in the field to serve as cooperating teachers and internship supervisors by strengthening our connections to our graduates and alumni. Start early to prepare them for this important role.

Action Step III. Integrate retention policies that support personal and professional reasons for the continued employ of faculty and staff of diverse backgrounds:

Build upon past efforts to diversify the faculty with **College** initiatives to:

- Continue the practice of offering an ongoing New Faculty orientation and support groups.

Build upon past efforts to diversify the faculty with **FSEHD** initiatives to:

- Continue to personalize and individualize the orientation process to the needs of each new faculty member through the *New Faces Luncheons* hosted by the Dean.
- Continue to provide the Tenure and Promotion meetings through the Dean's Office so that diverse faculty learn early on about this process and receive the support they need to navigate the process.
- Orient new faculty to the Scholarly Conversations held in the FSEHD.

Build upon past efforts to diversify the faculty with **program** initiatives to:

- Provide informal meeting opportunities, such as the "Brown bag lunches" and open-ended conversations in Counseling and Physical Education Departments.
- Orient new faculty to the online journal *Issues in Teaching and Learning*, and ways they may use this to foster their scholarship and network with potential colleagues on campus around issues of mutual concern. Continually invite entries on diversity topics for every issue.
- Formalize and implement Departmental and FSEHD mentoring systems that address new faculty issues of personal and professional adjustment.
- Provide reassigned time for research and assist new faculty to connect with the Office of Research and Grants Administration so they can learn of grants and other funding sources that may support their initiatives.
- Encourage new faculty to assume leadership roles by serving on school and college committees and as advisors to student organizations.
- Conduct exit interviews with all faculty who take positions elsewhere as to what led to their decision to take another position, and, if it applies, how FSEHD could improve its efforts with respect to fostering an institutional culture that values diversity and promotes equity.

Action Step IV. Deliver continuing professional development opportunities to maintain employment satisfaction of faculty and staff

Build upon past efforts to diversify the faculty with **College** initiatives to:

- Continue to host special events and post them on the RIC calendar to contribute to a campus climate that values diversity.

Build upon past efforts to diversify the faculty with **FSEHD** initiatives to:

- Alert all new faculty to the many events on campus that contribute to FSEHD's mission of fostering an institutional culture of equity and diversity. This might include packets such as the one distributed in 2005 and 2006 to all prospective faculty through the Dean's Office that mentions specific student organizations/clubs, musical and artistic events, and activities that take place on campus (e.g. during Diversity Week, etc.)
- Increase awareness of on-campus professional development opportunities that enhance faculty expertise in all aspects of diversity. This should include programs offered by the Unity Center, FSEHD Diversity Committee, the Dialogue on Diversity Committee (Promising Practices Conference and Spring Lecture), College Lecture Series, Rhode Island Teacher Education Renewal (RITER) Grant - sponsored faculty events on diversity, etc. Ensure that events on campus are designed for all FSEHD practitioners so that the mission of the FSEHD is fully realized.

Area Two: Student Diversity

Objective: To attract more diverse candidates to the undergraduate and graduate programs of the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Action Step I. Build upon past undergraduate student recruitment efforts with college initiatives to:

- Continue to provide alternate admissions pathways and to use admissions criteria that do not discriminate against any underrepresented group
- Meet with Admissions Office Staff to develop policies that will encourage students of diverse backgrounds from the Met School (and other non-traditional High Schools) to be encouraged to apply and to be successfully admitted to Rhode Island College using alternative admissions pathways
- Strengthen the implementation of the transfer agreement with the Community College of Rhode Island (e.g. through advisement)
- Continue efforts to work with high schools to target students to participate in the *Upward Bound* and *Preparatory Enrollment Program (PEP)* programs.

Establish stronger connections between OASIS counselors and the counseling provided in *Upward Bound* and *PEP*

- Use conferences such as “Youth Voices” at the Promising Practices Conference to recruit students of color

Build upon past undergraduate student recruitment efforts with FSEHD initiatives to:

- Encourage PEP students to stay at Rhode Island College and to consider teaching as a career
- Increase faculty participation in Opportunity Awaits and other efforts to reach out to specific communities and support their entry into Rhode Island College
- Continue to identify future teachers of diverse backgrounds early in their undergraduate program at RIC and support them in gaining entry into teaching programs of the Feinstein School of Education (through the Unity Center efforts such as the Diversity Lunch, the Advanced Learning and Leadership Initiative for Educational Diversity [A.L.L.I.E.D] program, etc.)
- Provide funding for projects (e.g. the A.L.L.I.E.D Program) that encourage members of underrepresented groups to enter teaching
- Institute a campaign to advertise FSEHD programs in the dorms, in the Student Union and Donovan Dining Centers and in the HM and HBS hallways (e.g. “Top 10 reasons...” poster)
- Provide test taking support to pass the Praxis, including monetary support through scholarships for candidates who must take the Teacher Examinations many times in order to pass them; encourage potential candidates to get time extensions if English is their Second Language
- Conduct focus groups with individuals who do not pass the Praxis and therefore abandon the idea of becoming a teacher or who come out of FNED 346 and do not choose careers in teaching to find out how we could better respond to their concerns and needs.
- Assist undergraduate students interested in careers in education to apply to the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development. Simplify the process and make readily accessible (on-line application process). Use FNED 346 to assist those interested in careers in education to negotiate the admissions process, complete the paperwork, locate sources of financial support and prepare for the required examinations.
- Provide funding in the form of scholarships to members of underrepresented groups (\$10,000 in Scholarships as done in past years using Feinstein monies)
- Create an on-line FSEHD Directory of Funding Opportunities specific to underrepresented groups, work with the RI College Foundation and Financial Aid Offices to hold special events on funding opportunities
- Provide outreach to minority communities through partnership efforts, the FSEHD Advisory Board and through events held at community centers.
- Produce PSA with local talent around the theme of “Why I Chose Teaching”. Highlight the changing student demography and the need for a diverse teaching force. This might be done through a partnership with the teachers’ union.

*Build upon past undergraduate student recruitment efforts with **program** initiatives to:*

- Have each program define the particular candidate diversity characteristic(s) that are most underrepresented and to establish plans for achieving greater representation of underrepresented groups

*Action Step II. Build upon past undergraduate student retention efforts with **College** initiatives to:*

- Continue to make use of use of the “Ask RIC” website to provide systematic follow-up for students interested in FSEHD programs.
- Offer mentoring by faculty and by students. Continue and expand the ALLIED Program.
- Insure that undergraduates find their way to clubs and special events of interest on campus that will give them a sense of connection and support.
- Improve services offered through the Office of Student Life. Continue the “Changing the Culture” workshops on campus and assist faculty in providing reasonable accommodations to all candidates with disabilities.
- Coordinate with the Sherlock Center through biannual meetings between DLC and Sherlock Center staff on how to improve services to undergraduate students with disabilities.

*Build upon past undergraduate student retention efforts with **FSEHD** initiatives to:*

- Have the Dean continue to send a welcome letter to all candidates who are admitted to programs of the FSEHD.
- Enhance candidate identification with FSEHD through identity products (mugs, t-shirts, car decals, portfolios, canvas bags, etc.). Currently students identify with RIC more than they identify with FSEHD; this should be addressed to increase retention and program completion.
- Continue to host events at the Spring Party for those admitted to the college about careers in teaching
- Conduct focus groups and get community feedback on campus climate, why students of color are not participating in Kappa Delta Pi, etc. and follow up on suggestions from current students.
- Educate faculty about Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and incorporate UDL principles in FSEHD courses through supported workshops and professional development events.
- Encourage students to assume leadership roles by serving on school and college committees and as leaders of student organizations.
- Highlight role models in “What’s News--undergraduate students who have overcome obstacles to complete teacher education programs and become teachers in area schools

*Build upon past undergraduate student retention efforts with **program** initiatives to:*

- Encourage individual programs to host events for students on a regular basis where they can network with other students and faculty.

*Action Step III. Build upon past graduate student recruitment efforts with **College** initiatives to:*

- Encourage RIC undergraduate students to consider graduate programs at RIC (“Come Back to RIC” campaigns, using alumni and faculty groups)
- Target “non-matriculated students” taking graduate courses for recruitment efforts and urge them to in matriculate. Show the benefits of our programs to individuals’ career paths; the financial rewards of getting a graduate degree; how it can improve pay scale; career opportunities.
- Fund graduate program recruitment efforts (publicity, high quality and high impact brochures).
- Reinstitute graduate funding opportunities (assistantships, fellowships)
- Work with partner districts to identify outstanding candidates for programs (Career Ladder Concept). Use Alumni groups for the same purpose (e.g. Rhode Island College Education Alumni [RICEA]).
- Highlight role models in “What’s News”

*Build upon past graduate student recruitment efforts with **FSEHD** initiatives to:*

- Create program-specific graduate admissions requirements; provide for different FSEHD admissions criteria than may be appropriate for other graduate programs on campus (School of Business, Liberal Arts graduate programs); especially as it regards entry assessments (e.g. PRAXIS).
- Provide monetary support in the form of tuition reduction, textbook discounts for qualified applicants (with endowment support)

*Build upon past graduate student recruitment efforts with **program** initiatives to:*

- Have graduates of our programs come back and talk to potential graduate students as to why it is worth it to spend the money to return and get a degree.
- Solicit advice from current graduate students about how to make programs more desirable, campus more welcoming (especially the FSEHD); how to better accommodate working students.
- Offer flexibly scheduled graduate programs through a combination of summer institutes, in-district offerings, on-line offerings.

*Action Step IV. Build upon past graduate student retention efforts with **College** initiatives to:*

- Create a cohort structure whenever possible to provide peer support
- Highlight graduate students who have overcome obstacles in completing their graduate degrees in “What’s News”

*Build upon past graduate student retention efforts with **FSEHD** initiatives to:*

- Host regular social events for each program with funding support from the FSEHD

- Provide a welcome packet with “identity” materials upon entry to a FSEHD Graduate program (bumper sticker, pen, portfolio, mug) funded by endowment monies
- Encourage graduate students to assume leadership roles by serving on school and college committees and in leadership positions in graduate student groups (i.e. Reading).

*Build upon past graduate student retention efforts with **program** initiatives to:*

- Provide mentoring by program alumni to current students
- Provide excellent advisement support (e.g. formative assessment); stay in touch with graduate students on a regular basis
- Follow up on students who take semesters off; encourage them to come back the following semester to continue with their coursework
- Place phone numbers and e-mail addresses of former students on program brochures and on program websites so prospective students can contact graduates of each program for an impartial view of the program’s strengths and weaknesses

Area Three: Integration of Diversity into the Curricula of the Undergraduate and Graduate Professional Preparation Programs of the FSEHD

***Objective:** To enhance the ability of future teachers and other school-based professionals to understand and respond to the needs of diverse learners and their families; to have the dispositions, knowledge and skills to be effective school-based practitioners in increasingly diverse school contexts*

*Action Step I: Build a strong learning climate on campus that honors and promotes diversity. Build upon cross-campus educational efforts with **College** initiatives to:*

- Continue to support the special events offered by the Dialogue on Diversity Committee (Promising Practices; Spring Speaker) that enrich the educational opportunities on campus, expand faculty knowledge and skills, and provide insight about the needs of diverse communities
- Create opportunities for faculty, staff and students to participate in initiatives of the Poverty Institute and the Sherlock Center which focus on the needs of diverse communities
- Encourage participation in the on-campus diversity-focused educational programs offered by the Unity Center.
- Continue to sponsor performing and visual arts programs on campus focused on all forms of artistic expression of diverse communities as a way of understanding that community

Action Step II. Enhance faculty competence through FSEHD initiatives to:

- Encourage faculty involvement in RITER-sponsored events focused on improving our curriculum, assessments and field placements with respect to diversity
- Support faculty in attending conferences that focus on diversity in order to enhance their skills. Encourage program faculty to attend as teams with program-identified teacher leaders and to use the conferences as a catalyst for curricular change.
- Identify and access on-campus experts for faculty development initiatives around particular aspects of diversity for which on-campus personnel have expertise
- Continue to inform faculty of professional development opportunities pertaining to all aspects of diversity

Action Step III. Build upon school-wide curriculum development efforts through FSEHD initiatives to:

- Systematically enhance the in-class and field experiences of candidates with respect to all aspects of diversity: ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation and geographical area. Using program maps, identify where in each program initial concepts are first developed, where they are expanded upon and when and how candidates are assessed to insure that they leave our programs prepared with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to serve an increasingly diverse population of students and families.
- Create comprehensive assessment systems that monitor candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions for all aspects of diversity so that we can evaluate the success of our programs and provide support to students who are not developing expected competencies.
- Engage faculty in curriculum revision efforts using RITER funds, where gaps are identified.
- Sponsor faculty sharing-sessions regarding curricular change initiatives. Insure that all faculty members who teach the same course are aware of improvements introduced by other faculty to the same course.
- Continue to strengthen the curriculum of key courses such as the gateway to teaching course: FNED 346/546. Insure that all sections of the course are effectively addressing all aspects of diversity. Insure that all faculty members teaching the course are making use of the specialized course resources developed through RITER funded project.
- Insure that the field placements are well selected and supported so that candidates are seeing best practices. Establish procedures to identify quality placements and to make good use of such placements for the maximum number of candidates.
- Ensure that candidates enrolled in all FSEHD programs take SPED 433/531.

- Encourage graduate and undergraduate students to take TESL 480/580 *ESL for the Classroom Teacher*. Develop the one-credit course based on candidate feedback and evaluate the viability of making this a required course for all teacher candidates.
- Explore the development of an undergraduate concentration in ESL.
- Consider the development of an urban/multicultural concentration for appropriate graduate programs (e.g. school psychology, school counseling, school administration, etc.).

*Build upon curriculum development efforts through **program** initiatives to:*

- Ensure that diversity related experiences are infused in all courses in a program as opposed to concentrated into a single course (as reflected in course syllabi)
- Encourage faculty to focus on specific aspects of diversity in multiple courses, so that by the time the practicum experience occurs, candidates are comfortable with all aspects of diversity and have the depth of knowledge, breadth of skills and desired dispositions to create responsive learning environments for all learners (e.g. safety zone seminar on LGBT & Q issues, etc.).

*Action Step III. Build upon field placement efforts through **FSEHD** initiatives to:*

- Work with our partner districts to identify “teacher leaders” teachers who can model best practices for our candidates and support their professional development as teacher leaders. Insure that all of our candidates interact with effective teachers of diverse learners through their coursework and field placements.
- Film interviews with master teachers and model lessons to incorporate into the teacher preparation program curricula.
- Work with the FSEHD Advisory Committee and community groups to develop community-based field placements for our teacher candidates.
- Use RITER funding to work more closely with cooperating teachers in our partner districts to insure that we are working together to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to work effectively with diverse learners and systematically evaluating our candidates using uniform criteria.
- Continue to sponsor International Studies Opportunities for our candidates in Egypt, Australia, England, Puerto Rico, etc. Create a clearinghouse of such opportunities on campus and actively publicize this to students. Locate funding to increase candidate participation in such initiatives.

*Action Step IV. Build upon program evaluation efforts through **FSEHD** initiatives to:*

- Include a section in the annual department reports on diversity efforts as they pertain to program curricula and faculty development
- Improve our efforts to evaluate the success of our graduates in their initial years of practice, as it pertains to specific aspects of diversity (ethnicity, race,

socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation and geographical area).

- Solicit advice for program improvement from community-based organizations