UIC Advancing Racial Equity Task Force

Staff Recruitment and Retention Working Group
Recommendations to the Chancellor
November 2020

Introduction

The Advancing Racial Equity (ARE) *Staff Working Group* has been charged with identifying issues and challenges that have impacted and/or inhibited recruitment, retention, and support of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) staff members at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The *Staff Working Group* first met on October 15, 2020 and worked expediently through its final meeting on November 19. Compromised of members representing East and West campuses, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Human Resources (HR), Office for Access and Equity (OAE), Athletics, Administration, and Business Operations, it's charge was to create a set of action items to improve our staff working environments for University Leadership to consider and implement.

To ensure that experiences of various staff members were represented, two feedback sessions were held to solicit comments from staff members outside of the ARE working group: one for BIPOC Academic Professionals (AP) and one for BIPOC Civil Service (CS) employees. The AP and CS groups participated in separate feedback sessions, allowing both groups to openly discuss employment experiences at UIC related to the recruitment, retention, and support of BIPOC staff specifically. Though each group has some unique challenges, both the AP and CS feedback groups shared similar concerns regarding employment experiences for BIPOC staff at UIC.

Feedback from these two groups was combined with the discussions and observations of the *Staff Working Group*. The result is a list of recommendations to be addressed by campus leadership. In addition to the recommended actions, the *Staff Working Group* has identified campus units that have the authority and resources to implement or assist in implementation of these recommendations. The *Recruitment* guidance below outlines practices that will help establish a diverse pool of candidates and ensure an inclusive and equitable hiring process with the ultimate aim of hiring more BIPOC staff across all levels and particularly in mid-to-upper level administrative positions. Included in the *Retention* section are proposals for improving retention of BIPOC staff that are centered on making existing employee benefits more accessible and equitable.

Recommendations

Recruitment

The guidance provided below outlines recruitment practices that will help establish a diverse pool of candidates and ensure an inclusive and equitable hiring process with the ultimate aim of hiring more BIPOC staff across all levels and particularly in mid-to-upper level administrative positions.

Recommendation	Primary Unit Responsible	Resources Needed

1). Build robust recruiting strategies that consider diversity and accessibility.
a). Develop a strategy to advertise in diverse sources, professional organizations, social media, and publications as a minimum requirement for all positions. (All position types)
b). Consider pros and cons of Employee Referral Program from current employees to increase diverse candidates. (All position types)
c). Recruiting and hiring for UIC students
    i). Use Alumni Association and Career Services to advertise and promote opportunities to current students.
    ii). Create Graduate Student Pipeline for increased Diversity recruitment/hires
d). Require that Job ads be screened via Gender-Decoder app (free). (All position types)
e). Require job ads include a diversity statement focusing on our diverse community and the desire and willingness to work with diverse backgrounds. (All position types)
f). Consider blind screenings/resume review (AP positions). These methods will help
	OAE, UIC HR, Hiring Units	This area would need several resources.
		
		1) Pooled funds maintained centrally to advertise and target diverse posting sites.
		
		2) Development of diversity statement-task force or committee to work on development
		
		3) Evaluation of Employee referral program-would need a committee/task force assistance to conduct evaluation.

mitigate bias in the search process which can lead to an increase in diversity hires
 	
    i). Require Blind Resume Review (remove names and addresses)
    ii). Require use of rubrics to assess candidates for all staff openings
    iii).No camera during 1st interview to focus on candidate response vs how the candidates looks		

2). Evaluate the internal demographic makeup of current staff positions and levels. Evaluate recruitment diversity strategies (internal and external) for all position types. For entry level positions that do not require a degree or much experience, many BIPOC are hired. However, there are not as many BIPOC in higher-level positions. There is a disparity here. More data would need to be collected and analyzed to confirm. a). What positions are BIPOC represented the least/most? Is it a variety or are they majority in entry-level (with or without growth opportunities)? b).How do we better recruit BIPOC into higher-level positions (mid- to senior-level management)?	OAE & UIC HR	OAE and UIC HR can provide the data about new hires, existing employees, etc. Ideally a committee could assist with the analysis.

3). Require inclusivity training (including bias, microaggressions, etc.) for all participants in the search/recruitment/interview process, new employees, and leadership. Currently, such training exists for Faculty Search Committees. This should be extended to all search types.	OAE & UIC HR	OAE has collaborated with Faculty Affairs and the Office of Diversity to provide faculty search committee training. UIC HR could assist with training but ideally an additional resource would be made available to make this training available to all those involved in a search.
4).Develop a robust onboarding process for all employees to ensure a welcoming and inclusive experience. a). Create a centralized site for new hires to access information they need prior to their first day through their first year. b). Develop a similar resource site for current employees with a comprehensive list of resources for employees	UIC HR	UIC HR is currently working on this. Would need the assistance of a task force/committee to fully develop the program.
5). Improve UIC branding and streamline the application process for applicants. Simplify the UIC Jobs website for potential candidates and applicants. The job board needs to be easier to use, incorporate videos, employee value propositions, benefits, etc. in order to "sell" UIC for all applicants regardless of role.	UIC HR	UIC HR is currently working on branding job advertisements differently and creating templates. Marketing, technology, and staff resources are needed to update the HR website.

6). Evaluate the Civil Service Testing process and its effects on hiring BIPOC staff. Standardized testing has been criticized for adding to structural racism. Standardized testing specifically refers to uniform measures of knowledge, learning, or intellect. Because standardized tests generally measure information and skills that people acquire through schooling, they will often reflect differences caused by educational differences. In other words, people who do not receive good quality education do not generally perform as well on standardized tests. As a consequence they can help prevent people of color, especially those with fewer economic resources, from gaining access to jobs.	UIC HR	UIC HR has already started this process. UIC HR has partnered with NRHR Consultants to move forward with proposals with SUCSS.

Retention

Included in the section below are proposals for improving retention of BIPOC staff that are centered on making existing employee benefits more accessible and equitable.

Recommendation	Primary Unit Responsible	Resources Needed
1). Complete a campus wide salary study evaluating equity by demographic groups. The study should compare UIC salaries by race and by job titles to examine pay equity across campus. The study could also compare UIC salaries with benchmark institutions and regional neighboring institutions. To ensure objectivity, it is recommended that the study be conducted by an external consultant. Pending results of the study, further implementation would be needed to resolve any age gaps that exist between demographic groups.	UIC HR, Chancellor and Provost Offices	UIC HR, Chancellor's and Provost's Offices will be resources, with a selected consulting firm. Funding source for the study should be determined by the Chancellor.
2). Increase funding for professional development through UIC Academic Professionals Advisory Committee, Staff Advisory Committee, Chancellor's Status Committees, and UIC HR. Beyond the benefits of supplemental training for one's job, professional development enhances an employee's value and ensures they remain relevant in their career field. Increasing professional development among BIPOC staff would positively and directly affect staff satisfaction, retention, and advancement.	Office of the Chancellor, the Chancellor's Committees, and UIC HR	Increased funding would be necessary. Chancellor's Committees and UIC HR would need to assign staff and technology resources to intake and process funding requests.

Given the large number of Civil Service staff (as compared to Academic Professionals) and that 70% of Civil Service staff are BIPOC, it is recommended that SAC receive more funds proportional to the number of staff.		
3). Increase availability of evening and online courses so that BIPOC employees can utilize and maximize their UIC tuition benefits and advance their careers. Many BIPOC staff are hired into entry-level positions that do not require a degree. While UIC provides a tuition benefit for staff, many programs do not offer evening or online classes effectively invalidating the benefit as staff are not able to attend classes outside of the work day. This may disproportionately affect BIPOC staff as they could be more likely to need and use the tuition benefit in order to progress professionally.	Office of the Provost and Academic Affairs	Several resources will be needed to facilitate the addition of course offerings including faculty, technology, and administrative staff.
4). Create a Promotion Policy for AP's that clearly identifies job paths and grants interviews to all internal candidates that apply to current openings. Considering that 46% of AP staff are BIPOC, this Promotion Policy could increase BIPOC staff retention and career advancement.	UIC HR and OAE	Efforts to create such a policy have begun with a taskforce under guidance of the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Affairs.

5). Create a centralized web portal for employee benefits and resources. Information on employee benefits and resources is dispersed between UIC HR, U of I System web pages, and individual college/unit pages. There needs to be more standardization of policies and clarified communication of what assets are available to staff. All staff should have equal access to this information. Currently, there is confusion about many different types of benefits from things such as the tuition benefit and professional development opportunities to employee parking and transportation services. These need to be better understood by staff, supervisors, managers, and leaders for the advancement of BIPOC's.	UIC HR, OAE, Chancellor and Provost Offices	Establish single point of contact to collect and promote content and make it accessible to BIPOC staff

Conclusion

The charge of the ARE Staff Recruitment and Retention working group was to identify action areas which could be implemented at UIC to improve the work experiences and environment for BIPOC staff. The ARE Staff Working group followed the process of reviewing issues and challenges experienced not only members of the ARE Staff Working Group, but also executed listening sessions with BIPOC Academic Professionals (AP) and Civil Service (CS) staff. After completing the process, the ARE Staff Working Group prioritized these action items:

- Build robust recruiting strategies that establish a diverse pool of candidates for both Academic Professionals and Civil Service staff.
- Implement a Campus-Wide study by race, job categories and levels, as well as a comparison by region and institution to evaluate competitive pay and pay equity across the UIC campus.
- Create a centralized employee web portal to enhance communication of benefits, educational waivers, professional development opportunities, wellness and mental health support for BIPOC staff.

One main challenge of the *Working Group* was a lack of data related to staff. While there is ample data on UIC students, more collection and analysis is needed to truly identify and understand any racial disparities between UIC employees. The *ARE Staff Working Group* would like to continue its process into January 2021, to continue this data work and review the implementation of the recommendations stated in this report. We recognize the Chancellor has established several committees like the APAC, SAC, CCSB, CCSW, etc. to serve and communicate specific issues related to these groups, however through the *Staff Working Group* we have seen the need for an approach that addresses overlapping issues. Additionally, while the focus of this group was the recruitment and retention of BIPOC staff, it should be noted that some of the action items in this report would also positively impact the experiences of all UIC employees across the campus (not just BIPOC staff), such as the centralized benefits web portal. The ARE Staff Working Group feels an obligation to report back to the BIPOC staff members that participated in our process as a service to the Chancellor and our colleagues early in the Spring 2021 semester.

Making UIC a Better Place to Work,

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