This Actually Works: Promising Practices from UC Campuses that Build and Sustain a Culture of Inclusion

Name of Practice: ADVANCE Equity Advisors Program, UC Irvine  
Weblink: http://advance.uci.edu/equityadvisors.html  
Department/Campus: UC Irvine  
Workplace Issues Addressed: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Search Processes  
Category: Faculty Leadership Development, Equity, Mentoring, Institutional Change Program  
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Description of the practice: The school-based Faculty Equity Advisors (FEAs) in the 12 schools are the centerpiece of UCI’s relentless commitment to inclusive excellence. Grounded in peer-to-peer engagement, equity advisors are tasked with oversight of faculty recruitment, coordinating career advising, and serving as a resource for workload and salary equity for their schools. Funded initially by an ADVANCE grant, this program has been operating for over 12 years.

Benefits of adopting the practice: In carrying out these duties, FEA’s broaden participation in the professoriate, promote equity and advancement in the personnel review process, and advance equity for all faculty. Specifically, the benefits include:

- Developing a cadre of faculty to lead inclusive excellence efforts;
- Promoting transparency in the search and advancement of faculty;
- Serving as a resource to chairs and deans on equity matters;
- Serving as a confidential resource to faculty;
- Having a pulse on the departmental/school climate and trends;
- Being a contributing factor in increasing the diversity of the faculty;
- Serving as a resource for addressing faculty welfare in the units;
- Assisting in institutional transformation efforts.

How this practice works: An Equity Advisor is a senior faculty member, appointed as Faculty Assistant to the Dean in their respective schools, who participates in faculty recruiting by approving search strategies and raising awareness of Best Practices. Additionally, they organize faculty development programs, with both formal and informal mentoring, as well as address individual issues raised by women and underrepresented minority faculty. S/he serves a 3-year term with a stipend.

Chairied by ADVANCE Program Director and Vice Provost for Academic Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, FEAs meet monthly as a group to discuss issues, analyze trends, conduct in-services, and share strategies and resources with one another. Each Dean conducts recruitment for their FEA position, and the appointment is made in consultation with the Program Director. FEAs have clear authority in the search process. For example, their involvement is required for searches to start, e.g., the first search committee meeting must include an FEA. Departments submit a short list for FEA approval before inviting candidates to the campus. If criteria are not met or there are discrepancies, FEAs can pause the search process, which provides an early warning system for Deans.

The Faculty Equity Advisor Model implemented in all 12 Schools has the following elements:

- Named Faculty Assistant to the Dean
- Serves a 3-year term w/ stipend equivalent to a department chair
- Is a tenured (preferably full professor) faculty member who is research-active and committed to inclusive excellence
- Responsibilities include: participate in recruitments and search committees, coordinate mentoring programs, proactively investigate inequities, etc. See full listing of responsibilities:
  http://advance.uci.edu/ADVANCE%20PDFs/EA%20Responsibilities%20Fall%202013.pdf

What you need in place to replicate this practice: The campus needs to provide: 1) an office with staff support; 2) a dedicated FEA for each division or school reporting to the Dean; 3) stipends for FEAs; 4) authority and accountability in search committee processes which are written into FEA job descriptions; 5) coordination and development by a high level faculty administrator, e.g., Vice Provost for Academic Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, and includes monthly meetings and faculty development.

Why this practice is successful and is worth replicating: Faculty Equity Advisors are tenured and research active faculty who value shared governance and committed to inclusive excellence. This program is an important piece of the University’s commitment to inclusive excellence, therefore is structurally integrated into academic planning and School activities. The program is supported centrally and has dedicated funding through the Provost’s Office; Dean-level accountability is by the Provost. What makes this program effective is that FEAs have clear accountabilities in the search process and they are integrated into all aspects of the academic life-cycle: academic planning, search and recruitment, career advising, and mentoring. They serve as a powerful group to evaluate equity processes, policies and procedures; simplify approvals for extending the tenure clock; and review dependent travel care applications for awards. Collectively, they play an important role in advising the Provost about resource allocations, being an early warning system to potential problems, promoting work-life balance, and supporting advancement of faculty. The program’s accomplishments include a steady increase in women and URM faculty, increased transparency in faculty search processes and academic reviews, and an increased pool of future academic leaders, e.g., three of the Vice Provosts are former equity advisors.