TO: SUNY Presidents
FR: Kristina M. Johnson, Chancellor, Teresa Miller, Senior Vice-Chancellor Strategic Initiatives
RE: PRODI-G (Promoting Recruitment Opportunity Diversity Inclusion and Growth)
DA: January 30, 2019

A diverse faculty is fundamental to SUNY’s founding mission to achieve academic excellence, create opportunity and broaden access to quality higher education. SUNY jeopardizes its mission when its faculty does not reflect the diversity of its student population or match the diversity of its peer institutions. PRODI-G provides a framework for SUNY colleges & universities to renew the faculty, support student success, and promote excellence through diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences. Recognizing that complex problems require comprehensive solutions, PRODI-G will employ research-informed and data-driven best practices to expand the pipeline of talent, improve hiring practices, and strengthen retention policies.

I. OBJECTIVE

PRODI-G is designed to renew the faculty, support student success, and promote excellence through diversity of perspectives, backgrounds and experiences. SUNY will invest salary support to enable campuses to diversify their faculty ranks. Through this initiative, SUNY aims to facilitate the hiring of 1000 faculty members in a decade who are underrepresented minorities (URM) or women in STEM disciplines (WIS).

Within public higher education nationally, SUNY is not competitive in URM faculty diversity (Figure 1). This is particularly striking given the diversity of New York State. Among its public higher education system peers, SUNY ranks next to last in URM faculty diversity (Figure 2). We can do better. Indeed, we must, if SUNY is to rise to the great intellectual challenges of our time and provide a high-quality education to the next generation of New Yorkers. While we are still evaluating data on the representation of female faculty in STEM fields, there is no evidence that SUNY’s diversity is any more robust in this regard.

![URM Faculty at SUNY Institutions vs. National Publics by State, Fall 2017](image-url)
As Figure 3 demonstrates, currently there is a pronounced gap between the racial/ethnic diversity of SUNY faculty and our students (19.9% in Fall 2018). If we continue to hire URM faculty at the current rate, within the next decade that gap will only increase. This is why maintaining the status quo is not an option.

Recognizing that complex problems require comprehensive solutions, PRODI-G is designed to leverage the size and comprehensive scope of SUNY’s 64-campus system to foster more diversity in the doctoral pipeline and within the faculty ranks. First, PRODI-G will expand and diversify pipelines that position WIS and URMs for hiring into faculty positions by facilitating the early identification, mentoring and development of promising, talented, high-achieving undergraduate and graduate students from these groups. Second, PRODI-G will reduce the gap between the diversity of URM and WIS students and the diversity of our faculty by improving the faculty search process, and enhancing efforts to support and
retain faculty. Both pipeline-building efforts and faculty search processes will reflect research-informed, data-driven best practices. By working at both ends of the PhD pipeline, PRODI-G will increase the number of talented WIS and URM graduate students in SUNY pursuing academic careers, and increase the representation of WIS and URM faculty on SUNY campuses.

PRODI-G will provide faculty salary grants and program support to campuses that commit to:

- building bridges, pathways and pipelines to academic careers for members of groups underrepresented in higher education -- women in STEM disciplines, Hispanic/Latin, African Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders;
- employing best practices and the most effective, innovative strategies to reduce barriers to diversity in the faculty hiring process; and
- supporting and retaining underrepresented faculty, as well as supporting excellence in diversity and inclusion research, and inclusive pedagogies.

II. BACKGROUND

PRODI-G aims to increase the representation of URM faculty and women faculty of all races in STEM fields consistent with SUNY’s role in creating pathways to social and economic opportunity in the United States, as well as personal and intellectual fulfilment. Each of these underrepresented groups face persistent barriers to social and economic mobility both as students\(^1\) and after graduation. Increasing the representation of faculty members who understand, and have overcome, race- and gender-based barriers and biases is important to the success and well-being of these students.

Moreover, faculty diversity benefits the broader academy. A diverse faculty is critical to academic excellence because as research demonstrates, diverse teams are more innovative, productive, and solve complex problems faster and better.\(^2\) Furthermore, faculty diversity is key to preparing all students to live and work in an increasingly global, diverse and interconnected world by exposing students to a wide array of ideas, experiences, cultures, and individuals.

III. PROGRAM ELEMENTS

A. Faculty Hiring

Through PRODI-G, SUNY System will provide three-years of salary support grants to campuses for up to a total of 1000 entry-level and early/mid-career WIS and URM faculty candidates. In Year 1, SUNY will pay up to $90K of the new faculty member’s salary. In Year 2, SUNY will pay up to $45K and in Year 3, SUNY will pay up to $27K. In Year 4 and beyond, the campus will be fully responsible for the faculty member’s salary.

- Search Committee Education and a Search Committee Certification Pilot

To be eligible for salary grants through PRODI-G, campuses must demonstrate that they are consistently using (or have a plan to consistently use) best practices for reducing barriers to diversity in faculty hiring.

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\(^1\) A pronounced gap exists between the college enrollment and degree attainment rates of certain racial and ethnic groups (Hispanic/Latin, African American, Native American, Pacific Islander) and their white and Asian counterparts due to several disparities, including the quality of elementary and secondary education, family income, college counseling, racial isolation and other factors. Janie Buchman and Ronald Brownstein, “The Concentration of Poverty in American Schools,” The Atlantic, February 29, 2016.

Priority for salary support will go to campuses that adopt rigorous search committee education as a requirement for all individuals serving on faculty search committees. SUNY will provide guidelines and system-wide training to Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs), human resources leaders, and others charged with overseeing the faculty search process, and pilot a search committee certification initiative with willing campus partners.

- Higher Education Recruitment Consortium
  SUNY will support existing campus efforts to establish a SUNY Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (or “HERC”) which enables SUNY campuses to share faculty openings with other SUNY campuses (and fellow consortium members), allowing prospective faculty members -- especially dual-career couples -- to pursue regionally-based strategies to accommodate their academic interests and career aspirations.

- Cluster Hires
  SUNY will pilot multi-disciplinary cluster hires at select campuses that identify a need, and agree to follow best practices for successful cluster hiring.3

- Start Up Packages
  SUNY will provide support for startup packages on a case-by-case basis.

B. Bridges, Pathways and Pipelines to Academic Careers

- Student Mentoring and Career Development Conferences
  To support the talent identification and pipeline-building activities of campuses, SUNY will sponsor two annual conferences to support early talent identification, mentoring and professional development -- one that focuses on women in STEM disciplines, and another that focuses on underrepresented minorities.

- Graduate Stipends
  Approximately thirty (30) one-time graduate research stipends of $5,000 each will be awarded to campuses annually for 5 years to support incoming PhD students. These stipends must align with campus pipeline initiatives and plans to support the early identification, mentoring and career development of WIS and URM graduate students.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION

SUNY System Administration will publish a Request for Proposals (RFP) that will be disseminated to all SUNY campuses on or before February 15, 2019. This RFP will ask campuses to:

- Identify the number of PRODI-G hires they will make in the upcoming 2019-20 academic year, based on their best estimate of the number of offers to WIS and URM faculty candidates their recruitment and hiring process is expected to yield;
- Describe and assess barriers to faculty diversity on their campus, supporting conclusions with demographic and other data;
- Describe how the campus will leverage the salary support, stipends, HERC, annual conferences, and other programs described in this memo to accelerate and broaden efforts to recruit and retain a more diverse professoriate, expand pipelines to academic careers for URM and WIS students, and support excellence in diversity and inclusion research, and inclusive pedagogies; and
- Submit a plan, consistent with their campus Strategic and Diversity Plan, that outlines campus (1) strategies to substantially diversify the faculty within a decade, and (2) strategies for building bridges and expanding pathways and pipelines to academic careers for underrepresented minorities and women in STEM disciplines, including demographic and other data.

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Dr. Tod Laursen and Dr. Teresa Miller will chair a committee to review proposals on a rolling basis, beginning Spring 2019. The committee will consider diversity leadership, innovation, sustainability, and infrastructure to support proposed new faculty hires, and pipelines to academic careers. Campuses will be encouraged to “play to their strengths”, in other words, to identify and build upon factors that uniquely position them to attract and retain candidates who diversify the faculty, including new curricular concentrations, new majors, leadership opportunities, post-doc fellowships, mentoring opportunities, and cohort-focused efforts. Subsequent proposals from campuses seeking additional PRODI-G hires in subsequent years, will be evaluated for achievement of the goals articulated in their PRODI-G implementation plan.

V. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

In the next decade, SUNY campuses will --
- Hire a total of 1000 entry-level or mid-career faculty members who are women in STEM fields, and/or underrepresented minorities;
- Cultivate a pipeline of WIS and URM students (undergraduate and graduate) annually through early talent identification, mentoring and career development;
- Attract significantly more faculty candidates who are URM or WIS through enhanced recruitment efforts (i.e., diversify the candidate pools for faculty positions); and
- Significantly improve the 5-year retention rates of WIS and URM faculty over the next decade.

Diversity makes SUNY stronger and smarter. Yet over the decades, particularly in times of resource constraint, SUNY has fallen behind our peers in faculty diversity, even as the diversity of our student population steadily increases. In the next decade, PRODI-G will reverse this trend, and our campuses will recruit, support and retain an excellent faculty that brings diversity of thought, perspectives and experiences to their academic departments, campuses, research, teaching and mentoring. I look forward to supporting your leadership as you drive change on your campuses to achieve this important goal.