



UNIVERSITY *of* PENNSYLVANIA  
SCHOOL *of* NURSING

**School of Nursing  
Plan for Faculty Eminence  
through Diversity:  
Overview and Goals**

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Public Version**

# General Statement

The University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing has a long-standing commitment to a climate of inclusion and to being a community supportive of diversity. The importance of diversity to nursing science is incalculable. In a society faced with ever-increasing national and global health disparities and lack of access to quality health care, it is crucial to have diverse faculty conducting research, educating future nurse leaders, and shaping practice to improve the health of the nation and the world. The commitment to diversity at Penn Nursing is evidenced by the long-standing commitment to an Office of Diversity and Cultural Affairs; by the inclusion of diversity in the strategic goals of the school approved by the Faculty senate; by a long history of outreach programs and curricular initiatives on cultural competence; and by the large number of stellar faculty conducting community-based participatory research aimed at improving health status of marginalized and underserved persons.

The definition of diversity within the School of Nursing is broadly interpreted to encompass at a minimum: racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage; gender, gender identity and sexual orientation; socioeconomic status; nation of origin; veteran status; disabilities; religious affiliation, beliefs and observance; and scholarly discipline. In accordance with the University of Pennsylvania's current initiative focusing on increasing faculty diversity, this document focuses on School of Nursing goals and strategies aiming to increase faculty diversity through long-term (pipeline) and short-term means. Careful review of the past and present faculty composition indicated the following strengths and challenges:

## Strengths:

1. The composition of the standing faculty, tenured and tenure track, has increased in diversity since 2005, with the addition of several faculty who brought ethnic, racial, and gender diversity.
2. Diverse faculty are moving through the ranks to Associate Professor and full Professor and are achieving tenure. Many of these individuals participated in the School of Nursing mentoring program.

## Challenges:

1. School of Nursing full-time and part-time faculty continue to be predominantly white and female.
2. The composition of other full-time and part-time tracks (Standing Faculty Clinician Educator, Associated faculty, Academic Support Staff) is not as diverse as that of tenured and tenure-track faculty.
3. There are no Hispanic/Latina members of the full time standing faculty or academic support staff.
4. There is a need for faculty role models who actively support LGBTQ and gender variant students and their academic interests.
5. The perceptions of an inclusive climate supportive of all of the above-mentioned dimensions of diversity need to be assessed among faculty, staff, and students. Actions designed to lead to improvement of climate need to be designed and implemented.

The action plan for the School of Nursing was developed in consultation with faculty members of the Advisory Taskforce for Diversity and Cultural Competence, members of the Dean's Advisory Group, and discussions with engaged individuals among the nursing faculty and from the Schools of Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, and the Perelman School of Medicine. Opportunities to review and discuss the plan were given to all members of the School of Nursing faculty, staff, and students. This report identifies specific diversity goals with strategies based on existing and newly proposed programs to achieve those goals. The overall aims of this action plan are to:

- 1) Sustain and increase the substantial commitment the school has made to change the face of academic nursing to reflect the diversity of a global society
- 2) Assure a climate that will attract, retain, and promote a diverse standing and associated faculty, including a critical mass of faculty from groups traditionally underrepresented in academic nursing
- 3) Advance the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing to a preeminent model of diversity among top tier schools of nursing by developing, evaluating and enhancing best practices for recruitment, retention, and promotion of underrepresented groups
- 4) Continue to support the advancement, development, translation, and integration of inclusiveness, social justice and culturally and gender sensitive knowledge into nursing science, education, and practice.

## **Growing the Faculty Pipeline**

Overview: One mechanism to increase diversity in academic nursing is through recruitment and support of students from traditionally underrepresented groups. School of Nursing pipeline efforts target students from high schools through postdoctoral training programs. Financial support mechanisms vary by program and academic level and include federal funding (Health Resources Services Administration); foundation funding (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation); and corporate (Johnson & Johnson).

**Diversity Plan Goal 1: To increase the diversity of undergraduate nursing students**

**Diversity Plan Goal 2: To increase the recruitment, retention, and development of diverse predoctoral students and postdoctoral fellows**

## **Recruitment of Diverse Faculty**

Overview: Current processes for faculty recruitment involve the following sequence:

- a. Annual identification of needs for new faculty based on evolving curricula, desire to strengthen current signature areas of scholarship, or development of capacity for strategic new directions of scholarship within the school.
- b. Open positions are posted on the School's website, in addition to print advertisements in nursing scholarly journals and journals directed to underrepresented minorities in nursing.

c. Individual initiatives such as web searches and personal outreach by members of the standing faculty and the search committee are employed to identify particular targets of opportunity.

The School of Nursing piloted the role of the Diversity Search Advisor by having the faculty Affirmative Action officer serve on the Faculty Search Committee for the past several years. The School has successfully used Target of Opportunity and the Faculty Opportunity Fund to increase faculty diversity. We have also hosted diverse international and national visiting scholars who have enriched the School's discussion of diversity. We continue to actively search for candidates for Presidential Term Professorships. We have creatively partnered with other Schools, using joint appointments and spousal hires to permit competitive offers. We expect to continue to use these mechanisms as well as new programs initiated by the University.

**Diversity Plan Goal 3: Continue to develop the role of the Diversity Search Advisor in assuring broad faculty searches and consideration of diverse candidates**

**Diversity Plan Goal 4: Increase outreach, recruitment, and retention of diverse members of the associated faculty and academic support staff**

## **Faculty Retention and Promotion**

Overview: Recruiting the best and the brightest scholars to Penn Nursing has always been the highest priority guiding the search process. This step, however, is necessary but not sufficient for growth of an eminent and diverse faculty. It is crucial to dedicate resources to careful support and mentorship of all of our young scholars to guide them to achieving tenure and promotion through the ranks. The Penn Nursing faculty mentorship program, begun in 2005, focuses on guiding junior faculty, without consideration of diversity status, to promotion and tenure. The success of the mentorship program is monitored by the Dean and by Department Chairs, as well as by the mentorship program facilitator. The program facilitator is a highly respected emeritus faculty member who continues to attend meetings of mentoring teams and Department Chairs to assess the progress of the mentoring program. A national consultant, Dr. Angela Barron McBride, visits the School of Nursing annually to assess the progress of the mentoring program.

**Diversity Plan Goal 5: Increase opportunities for external mentorship, leadership, and development activities and assure equal access to those opportunities across diverse groups and faculty ranks.**

## **Creating a Robust Climate of Inclusion**

Overview: A significant barrier to recruitment and retention, as well as satisfaction, of diverse faculty, is the presence of a hostile or unwelcoming environment. For several years, a joint faculty and staff taskforce was in place called the Taskforce on Enhancing Professionalism and Civility in the Workplace which sought to establish guidelines for a healthy work environment and models for maintaining communication during difficult times.

**Diversity Plan Goal 6: To assess and enhance the climate for diversity in Penn School of Nursing**

## **SUMMARY**

The University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing enthusiastically joins with the other schools of the University in affirming and expanding our efforts to promote diversity and inclusion on campus. We expect that implementation of the strategies outlined here will move us forward in strengthening academic nursing through increasing diversity. With our renewed efforts, Penn Nursing will contribute to increasing the number of diverse persons entering the nursing profession at all levels. We will continue to grow the diversity of our standing and associated faculty to strengthen our research mission, to improve the educational experience for all students, and to sustain our thriving local and global outreach. Most importantly, we will continue to envision, and to work towards embodying, an environment that celebrates differences and embraces the benefit that all types of diversity bring to the robust academic institution.