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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES
DAILY BRUIN

Homogenous faculty a pressing problem
Lackluster changes in representation of minorities on staff disappointing

January 19, 2005 9:00 pm More stories in [Opinion](#)

The vote taken by the faculty of the UCLA College last month concerning the diversity requirement should have come as no surprise. Although discussions on diversity have concentrated on the lack of a diversity requirement and the continued decline of students of color attending the University of California's two flagship campuses, one major component of a diverse campus climate has gone unnoticed, or rather ignored: the lack of faculty diversity.

Diversity is not only about its study or the statement that our residence in Los Angeles allows us to learn about diversity. Diversity is about experiencing it in order to learn and understand the realities of the world in which we live.

And faculty are part of the core of this university and should also be diverse. Realistically, the number of faculty of color has remained low, without any significant increases over the past 30 years. Some departments still have the same faculty members of color they hired over 30 years ago when they struggled in taking the first concrete step toward diversity.

While UCLA touts itself as one of the most diverse staffs in the entire UC system, statistics demonstrate the complete opposite.

In a report presented to the chancellor's Advisory Group on Diversity prepared by the Staff Affirmative Action Office of the Campus Human Resources Office, statistics showed that from 1984 to 2004, 75.8 percent of all faculty appointments made at UCLA went to whites, while Asian American faculty appointments came in second, at 15.4 percent. Clearly, the number of faculty appointed over the past 20 years has been racially disproportionate to California's needs.

In a report prepared for Sen. Richard Alarcon and Assemblywoman Wilma Chan on diversity within the UC system, data show the number of tenured white faculty members increased by 853 to 972 from 1996

to 2002, while Chicano/Latino faculty members increased only from 58 to 61, and blacks increased from 37 to 38 during that same period.

Additionally, the number of female faculty members remain significantly lower than their male counterparts. From 1984 to 2004, 72 percent of all faculty appointments at UCLA went to male professors. Currently, UCLA ranks sixth out of the eight undergraduate UC campuses in terms of female tenured and tenure-track appointments.

Not only is UCLA one of the worst in terms of faculty diversity, but it does little to retain its few faculty that are representative of its diverse constituency.

UCLA failed to retain faculty members such as Pauline Agbayani-Siewert, the only tenured Pilipina professor on campus. The UCLA School of Public Affairs refused to make a matching offer to the one she received from California State University Los Angeles.

UCLA has done little to increase faculty diversity at UCLA and to address the Faculty Diversity Initiative, a proposal created by the four ethnic studies research centers at UCLA. To this day the proposal has sat on Chancellor Albert Carnesale's desk without any action since it was drafted in February 2003.

Retaining our current female faculty and faculty of color should be a primary goal, but we must also expand our level of recruiting for able faculty in departmental searches.

As members of the UCLA campus, we should be worried about the decline of wide-ranging opinions, experiences and presentations by students and faculty. The "unwelcome mat" for faculty of color can be removed, but it takes student involvement to ensure that it happens.

The need for diversity goes far beyond the classroom. It extends to having a diverse student body and a diverse faculty. UCLA finds itself at a crossroads in the present time. It can either make institutional efforts to diversify the faculty or continue with business as usual.

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