

6.00 CONCLUSION

6.01 RETAINING WOMEN AND MINORITY FACULTY AND ACADEMIC STAFF

Little is gained from a vigorous effort to recruit women and minorities if that effort is followed by a failure to do what is necessary to retain them. Furthermore, there is an ethical responsibility on the part of the institution to recognize and help solve the unique problems faced by members of under represented groups in the university community.

Since women and minorities in some departments and colleges may not share in informal professional networks, special attention may be needed to make sure they are informed about issues they will confront at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and in the development of their professional careers.

The requirements and time frame, for instance, for tenure and promotion, the types of evidence and records that should be collected and retained, the need to document teaching effectiveness, the importance of research, the requirements for merit pay increases, the role of the annual review--to name only a very few--are among the topics that should be explained to all new faculty and staff early in their appointment.

Given the fact that community service demands are frequently heavy for women and minorities, it is essential that recently hired individuals be informed, both verbally and in writing, whether this type of activity will be rewarded through merit pay increases and recognized as a significant element in tenure and promotion review.

Counseling sessions of this nature are too important to be confined to an orientation meeting. Chairs or administrators may wish to consider meeting regularly with new colleagues, on an ongoing basis, to discuss issues of timely importance--e.g., satisfaction with one's teaching assignments, progress of research, publications, and grant submissions, plans for released time, outreach activities, performance evaluation, etc.

Experienced members of the faculty and staff, especially women or minorities already in the unit, can be valuable mentors for newly hired women and minorities. They will understand and can discuss with new faculty and staff the unique demands on their time which they will confront in their area and in the Madison community and how to balance those demands with their teaching, research, and job responsibilities. While such help and counsel is desirable for all new faculty and staff, it may be especially helpful to women and minorities.

In addition to drawing women and minorities into the professional life of a unit, senior members should find other ways to reduce the sense of social isolation often experienced by new employees. Inviting new colleagues to lunch or to social functions will help them feel more fully involved in the life of the academic community.

Time is a precious commodity in short supply for almost everyone, and women and minorities in a university often face special demands. They frequently find themselves with above-average numbers of undergraduate and graduate student advisees, with numerous

requests for service from the community, and with myriad invitations to serve on departmental, college, and university committees.

For women and minorities it often is difficult to resist these demands. They are likely to feel a special obligation for university or community service. They find it hard to close the door on a student needing advice or counsel, especially when that student may be facing the same obstacles or experiencing the same frustrations that they remember from an earlier stage in their own careers. While the role of a position and the standards by which it is evaluated must be the same for everyone, attention should be given to seeing that women and minorities with heavy advising and service commitments have enough time for their own professional activities.

A department chair or administrator can be of great assistance in alleviating this problem by consulting regularly with new staff members to assess the demands on them and to take those pressures into account in determining departmental teaching loads, advisory responsibilities, and committee assignments.