

Colored Minds, Inc.

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Provost Walker,

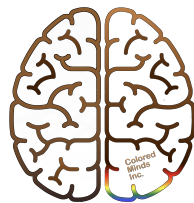
In July 2020, the [Office of the Provost Newsletter](#) included efforts towards [Advancing Faculty Diversity](#). These efforts included increasing outreach and postings, expanding training of recruitment committees, supporting designated Equity & Diversity representatives, and updating the Faculty Search and Screen manual. The communication concludes with, “*Additional information will be forthcoming.*” Unfortunately, a month has passed, and the CSUN community has not received additional information. Therefore, as servants of the CSUN student community, we must ask questions and provide constructive criticism regarding these efforts.

During our [May 5th meeting](#), the Faculty Equity Advocates told Colored Minds, Inc. (CMI) that each department would be charged with position announcements that emphasize the diversity of the applicant themselves and how they bring that to the classroom and research. Is this a part of increased outreach and postings efforts? Moreover, we were told that search committee members would undergo anti-racism training. Is this part of the expanded training of recruitment committees?

CMI was also informed that the Equity and Diversity Representatives would be converted from department representatives to college representatives. Is this still the case? Finally, it was also communicated to us that CSUN would use a new Human Resource system to aid transparency in the form of disaggregated data. Is this how the university plans to use the new HR system that is going into place across the CSU?

In February 2021, Governor Newsom’s Senior Policy Advisor for Higher Education, Dr. Lande Ajose, published the [Recovery with Equity Report](#). The report states that one problem in higher education is that institutional cultures and classrooms are not shaped around the experiences of students of color, which affects student success. Further, the report states, “*An equitable and inclusive culture cannot exist if campus personnel do not reflect the rich diversity of California.*” The recommendation to this problem is, “*Improve Faculty, Staff, and Administrator Diversity.*”

This recommendation requires committed, deliberate efforts strengthened by robust data monitoring and accountability. That is why the report advises practice changes at the institutional level such as, “*Hold institutional leaders responsible for developing plans outlining specific diversity goals and strategies to reach each goal, practicing data transparency, conducting*



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diversity reviews/audits to identify problems, identifying staff to address problems as they arise, and incorporating progress on diversity goals into performance reviews.”

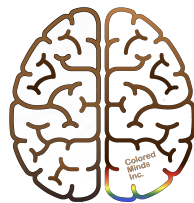
Although additional information is forthcoming, we must emphasize that the lack of goals in the current efforts towards Advancing Faculty Diversity is problematic. CMI and affiliated groups expect *specific* diversity goals when additional information is released. Ideally, this diversity goal would be as detailed as XX% increase in faculty of color from minoritized backgrounds by 202X, and targeting disciplines where diversity is most lacking (e.g., engineering).

The Taskforce also advises innovative hiring practices to increase faculty, staff, and administrator diversity, including cluster hiring and equity-centered outreach statements. If you and President Beck are “*fully committed*” to advancing faculty diversity, why were these approaches not implemented? Substantial research demonstrates that these approaches are significantly effective at increasing faculty diversity.

For instance, within just three years, the College of Arts and Sciences at Emory University more than tripled their proportion of faculty hires from underrepresented minoritized groups using cluster hiring. Between 2014 and 2015, Emory’s tenure-track faculty hires only included 15% from underrepresented groups. However, between 2017 and 2019, that number shot up to 51%. [Senior associate dean of faculty at Emory University’s College of Arts and Science, Carla Freeman, said the key strategy was cluster hiring.](#)

[Another report found](#) that from 2009 to 2014, our peer campus Fresno State implemented 5 cluster hires. As a result, the campus saw a 2 percent increase in Hispanic/Latino faculty, a 3 percent increase in female faculty, and a 20 percent increase in Hispanic/Latino senior administrative leaders. Further, from 2011 to 2014, the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa implemented 4 cluster hires. To this end, of the seven individuals hired into the Sustainability Cluster at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa, five were women (three of whom were Native Hawaiian). In addition, one was the first female Native Hawaiian scholar to be hired into the College of Engineering in the university’s 150-year history.

[The University of California, Davis \(UCD\) 2018-19 Pilot Study to prioritize academic excellence in research and contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) demonstrated that a structured and deliberative approach to using contributions to diversity statements together with conventional selection criteria leads to a pool of candidates, and ultimately faculty hires, that will



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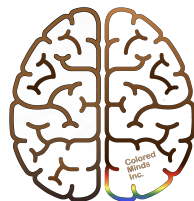
have the most significant impact on equity and inclusion for the campus's diverse student body. Dr. Kimberlee Shauman, professor of Sociology at UCD, underscored the importance of these statements at the [Achieving Equity and Diversity in Faculty Recruitment: Research & Practice Conference](#) (UCD, April 26, 2019). Dr. Shauman noted that contribution to diversity statements are *“formal statements submitted by applicants describing their past experiences with, and/or potential contributions to, diversity through teaching, research, service, and other professional activities.”* Dr. Shauman concluded that requiring contribution to diversity statements is the most equitable and appropriate approach to faculty hiring.

Therefore, at the very minimum, CSUN must require candidates to write a statement about their experience with, and vision for, mentoring students from historically excluded (i.e., underrepresented) backgrounds. It is imperative that CSUN recruit scholars that have demonstrated a commitment to working with minoritized students and evidence of commitment to diversity. Reviewing a candidate's scholarly dossier must be conditional upon the strength of these statements. Only candidates with compelling mentoring and equity-centered statements should advance to the next stage of review. Finally, as critical scholarly documents, diversity statements will foster productive conversations about the faculty's role in shaping and improving CSUN's culture.

A contribution to diversity statement will not be the end-all fix for diversity concerns at CSUN, and it will not guarantee perfect cultural competence among all faculty members. However, these statements compel the next generation of faculty members to consider diversity in their professionalism and ensure that faculty know this is a value statement that CSUN takes seriously. Both to candidates and CSUN's current faculty, the practice signals that the university is unequivocally committed to diversity and inclusion. As CMI told everyone during our May 5th meeting, it is nonsensical how the university claims to value diversity but refuses to get it down on paper.

Finally, recruiting to hire more diverse professors should not be limited to the most recent efforts towards Advancing Faculty Diversity. CSUN must think creatively about and invest funds in hiring and retaining full-time faculty (i.e., professors). CSUN must ask itself: Have we developed a faculty pipeline to recruit, hire, retain, and tenure full-time faculty of color from minoritized backgrounds?

The most recent efforts towards Advancing Faculty Diversity did not end the conversation to [Diversify CSUN Professors with individuals of color minoritized backgrounds](#).



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As a matter of fact, these efforts only served to reinvigorate it. **Therefore, we demand a written response to the following questions.**

Is each department currently charged with position announcements that emphasize the diversity of the applicant themselves and how they bring that to the classroom and research? Are search committee members currently expected to undergo anti-racism training? Have the Equity and Diversity Representatives been converted from department representatives to college representatives? How does CSUN plan to use the new HR system that is going into place across the CSU? Does CSUN plan to implement cluster hiring and diversity statements as part of its full commitment to advancing faculty diversity?

In the meantime, we cannot, in good faith, uphold these novel efforts as evidence of significant progress and commitment to equity and inclusion.

Respectfully,
Colored Minds, Inc.

Colored Minds, Inc. (CMI) is a nonprofit community-based organization in the San Fernando Valley (SFV), CA. Our mission is to build solidarity and power amongst minoritized people and underserved communities in the SFV. We are a coalition of CSUN students from all academic levels (i.e., undergraduate, credential, graduate) and alumni from minoritized backgrounds.