

**University of Pennsylvania School of Design
Faculty Diversity Plan Update, August 2017**

I. Introduction

With the arrival of Fritz Steiner as the new dean of the School of Design in academic year 2016-2017, PennDesign reaffirmed its commitment to increasing the diversity of the School's students, faculty, and staff, and introduced new strategies to help encourage greater inclusiveness. As stated in the School's new mission statement, we are a "diverse community of scholars and practitioners... committed to advancing the public good both locally and globally – through art, design, planning, and preservation." We recognize that design is a global enterprise, requiring faculty, students, scholars, and practitioners to engage in learning and sharing experiences with cultures, societies, clients, and communities around the world. In the past year, we have broadened the scope of our commitment to diversity to include curriculum, programming, and research. This *Faculty Diversity Plan Update* highlights our efforts in the past year to create and promote a more inclusive community that welcomes and celebrates difference.

II. Recruiting a More Diverse Faculty

Six new members of the standing faculty joined PennDesign in AY 2016-2017. These new faculty are from diverse countries of origin (including Iran and Australia) and include women and members of underrepresented minority groups. Their presence among the standing faculty has brought new perspectives and contributed to the discourse about diversity and identity politics throughout the School.

During the search process, we reached out to professional, academic, and alumni networks that are inclusive of underrepresented minorities (URMs), including the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), and Women in Architecture. We posted position descriptions in various faculty search resources recommended by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty.

PennDesign continues to value the important role played by our Diversity Search Advisors (DSAs), and we plan to increase the involvement of the DSAs in upcoming faculty searches. This year, PennDesign is conducting three searches to fill standing faculty positions. We have added the following statement into the posted advertisements for positions: "...all candidates are encouraged to describe how issues of diversity have been or will be brought into courses, or describe previous activities mentoring minorities, women, or members of other underrepresented groups." In the coming year, we will also develop new protocols to ensure a

more assertive outreach process to attract more women and minority candidates. In addition, the Dean and the DSAs will become more involved in efforts to increase diversity amongst the School's part-time and associated faculty.

Supplemental to the AY17 standing faculty searches, PennDesign, in cooperation with the School of Arts & Sciences and the Provost's Office, actively pursued an African-American candidate for a Penn Integrates Knowledge (PIK) Professorship. We invited Dr. Steward Pickett to campus to be considered for this prestigious appointment. He met with our faculty and presented a lecture regarding his research on urban ecosystems, integrating the fields of biology and landscape architecture. Even though this PIK recruitment effort did not lead to an appointment, we are committed to continuing the pursuit of an outstanding interdisciplinary scholar from an underrepresented minority group.

III. Increased Outreach to Underrepresented Minority Students

Last fall, we continued to work with our Faculty Ambassador for Minority Recruitment, Studio Instructor Shawn Rickenbacker, to help increase the number of underrepresented minority (URM) applicants to PennDesign. Professor Rickenbacker worked closely with colleagues at colleges and universities across the US – including several Historically Black Colleges and Universities – to identify promising minority applicants, many of whom he contacted directly. He also accompanied the Director of Admissions and a select group of current PennDesign students to Morgan State University, one of PennDesign's most important feeder schools, and visited Ohio State University, Georgia Tech, and Morehouse and Spelman Colleges. In addition, we partnered with the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) to include an announcement in their bi-weekly newsletter about PennDesign's various programs and scholarship opportunities, and we participated in the NOMA Graduate School Fair.

The PennDesign Admissions Office sent personal e-mails to prospective minority applicants whose names we received from the GRE Search Service inviting them to our annual fall Open House. The School increased its financial commitment to diversity scholarships by nearly 22% this year; growing from \$1.38 million in FY 16 to \$1.68 million in FY 17. This represents 26% of our total master's aid budget – our largest diversity scholarship commitment ever.

IV. Fostering a Culture of Inclusion

This year, Dean Steiner convened the first-ever *PennDesign Diversity Work Group (DWG)* to help develop and nurture a more diverse and inclusive community. The goal of the Diversity Work Group, chaired by Diversity Search Advisor, Professor Sharon Hayes, was to advise the Dean

on strategies and initiatives to help increase the diversity of the school's faculty, staff and students and foster a learning environment that encourages and celebrates difference. The DWG began with faculty members and quickly expanded to include both staff and student representatives. The group met six times throughout the academic year, developed a new *Commitment to Diversity Statement* for PennDesign (see attached), fostered engaged conversations across the school, and presented a comprehensive report of recommendations to the Dean. In March 2017, PennDesign and the DWG sponsored an interactive discussion for all faculty on *Inclusive Teaching Practices*, facilitated by the Executive Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, Bruce Lenthall. This dialogue focused on helping faculty to: 1) communicate high expectations while providing students with support to meet them; 2) facilitate students' sense of belonging; and 3) explore their own implicit bias.

PennDesign, the DWG, and some student groups hosted or facilitated a number of student-focused events addressing issues of diversity and inclusion, including:

- In November 2016, two representatives from *DiverseDesign*, a student-led group dedicated to fostering a community that celebrates and promotes diversity, provided a workshop on what it means to be a good 'ally.' Attended by over 30 students and faculty, this interactive training fostered meaningful dialogue about how students and faculty from various backgrounds can better understand and support each other.
- In March 2017, the School hosted its first Diversity Town Hall Meeting to gather input from students on how to increase diversity and promote inclusion and opportunities for improvement.
- In April 2017, the student group *Women in Architecture* hosted a successful design symposium on the evolving role of women in the profession.
- With the support of Student Affairs, a newly created group, *QueerDesign*, was formed by students interested in creating a place for LBGTQI students to share experiences and advocate for inclusion.

Additional initiatives identified by the Diversity Work Group include:

- Establishing a standing Diversity Committee
- Offering unconscious bias training for faculty and staff
- Improving the promotion and communication of diversity initiatives throughout the school
- Hosting a 'Diversity in the Curriculum' event, highlighting elective courses and seminars with inclusive content.
- Developing a PennDesign summer program for first-time URM college students

- Establishing a school Diversity Coordinator
- Issuing small grants for courses or programming focusing on diversity

A copy of the Diversity Work Group's full report of recommendations to the Dean is attached.

V. Future Plans

In the next three years, PennDesign plans to work with the Diversity Committee and School community to:

- Increase outreach to institutions serving URM students to grow the number of minority applicants
- Increase and promote the number of full diversity fellowships
- Increase efforts to recruit more URM standing faculty
- Increase the diversity of lecturers, guest speakers, and part-time faculty
- Recruit another post-doctoral student through the Provost's Postdoctoral Diversity Program
- Expand curricular content to reflect the diversity of scholarship in the design fields, including the inclusion of more diverse scholars
- Develop ongoing support for students, faculty and staff of color, including public forums, designated staff, trainings, and a clear means to redress experiences of exclusion, bias or disrespect
- Commit to regular school-wide discussions about diversity and the School's progress toward achieving these goals

We look forward to keeping you apprised of our progress on these projects and on our ongoing efforts to promote a more inclusive community within our School.