



OVERVIEW OF FACULTY DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

May 2012 – Revised 9-28-14

I. Background and Purpose

PennDesign provides graduate education to a diverse group of over 600 master's students in architecture, city and regional planning, fine arts, historic preservation, and landscape architecture; and to 38 PhD students in architecture and city and regional planning. We have a strong international presence of 189 students represented largely by countries in Asia, especially China. Through the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS), PennDesign provides instruction in fine arts and architecture to approximately 1,900 undergraduates annually. At the graduate level, interdisciplinary studios and seminars provide students opportunities for intellectual engagement with ideas, faculty and peers from across the design spectrum. Students engage with design challenges and professionals around the globe through participating in travel studios. And they play a leading role in extracurricular activities through the PennDesign Student Council and a broad range of student groups, including Diverse Design, Out Design, Penn Urban Transportation, and the Real Estate Club.

At PennDesign, our primary objective is to give our students – of all ages and across all the design disciplines – the perspectives, skills, and experiences that will help them meet the opportunities and demands of a changing and challenged, urbanizing world. As an academic community, it is also our responsibility to offer leadership to our fields of inquiry and application, through ideas, experimentation and innovation, critical discourse, research, and value creation.

In recognition of the importance of diversity, the University of Pennsylvania's School of Design is issuing and implementing a Faculty Diversity Action Plan, in order to:

- establish objectives relating to the diversity of our faculty,
- identify both challenges and opportunities relating to the achievement of those objectives, and
- articulate policies and procedures intended to overcome those challenges and take advantage of those opportunities.

This document outlines key points of PennDesign's Faculty Action Diversity Plan.

II. Planning Process

In support of the diversity commitment of the University of Pennsylvania, the School of Design formed a task force to engage with the faculty, students and staff of PennDesign in the preparation and publication of this Diversity Plan. The task force included Marilyn Jordan Taylor, Dean; Janet Kroll, Associate Dean for Administration; Professor David Leatherbarrow, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; and Professor Dana Tomlin (Landscape Architecture), Diversity Search Advisor.

The input of the Faculty of the School of Design has been central to the development of this plan and will continue as the plan is implemented and refined in subsequent years. Opportunities for faculty, and student, input occurred at each of the following;

- September 2011: School-wide faculty meeting to discuss the purpose and process for

developing PennDesign's diversity plan within the context of the broader University effort.

- November 2011: Discussion with PennDesign Personnel Committee, composed of five senior faculty representing the school's departments and programs.
- January 2012: Discussion with PennDesign Executive Committee, composed of department chairmen.
- February 2012: Focus group with PennDesign junior faculty.
- February 2012: Focus group with PennDesign underrepresented minority (URM) master's students.
- April 2012: Invitation to faculty to provide additional feedback to inform the plan.

III. Objectives

Design is a global enterprise. It requires faculty and students, scholars and practitioners to engage in learning and sharing experiences with cultures, societies, clients and communities around the world. PennDesign seeks to prepare its students to become leading design practitioners and scholars in a global society. These are roles that demand not only conceptual understanding but also direct experience in working with diverse disciplines, sectors, geographies, populations, cultures, and perspectives. Strengthening the diversity of our academic community is therefore essential to our educational mission in general and our focus on urban environments in particular.

IV. PennDesign – A Diverse Community

The community of the School of Design includes our students, staff, and visitors as well as our faculty. We seek diversity among all of those groups in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, socioeconomic status, veteran status, disability status, and scholarly discipline. PennDesign prides itself on our open and accepting environment for members of all communities. Both PennDesign and Penn are widely recognized as leaders in inclusion, including inclusion of members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community. By creating an environment that promotes and celebrates diversity, we expect not only to better prepare our students, but also to enhance the school's capacity for innovation, excellence and influence in design.

V. Opportunities and Challenges

This plan is focused on PennDesign's faculty and students, who will benefit from increased diversity in our community.

4.1 Students

Student recruitment and admission processes at PennDesign encompass masters and post-professional degree and certificate offerings associated with four departments (Architecture [ARCH], City and Regional Planning [CPLN], Fine Arts [FNAR] and Landscape Architecture [LARP]), one program (Historic Preservation [HSPV]), and two doctoral programs (Architecture and City and Regional Planning).

PennDesign currently utilizes seven-year trend data to track changes in student demographics. Although we have made progress in recruiting greater numbers of underrepresented minority (URM) students, the proportion of URM students to the overall student body has not changed. URM students constituted 18% of our masters enrollment in 2005 (100 of 570) and the same proportion in 2011 (115 of 649). In contrast, we are recruiting greater numbers of international students at the master's level. This

year's international students represent 24 countries, with the largest groups coming from China and South Korea.

PennDesign's doctoral programs are small, each admitting three to four students annually. The total number of URM doctoral students has remained constant at six, but due to a decrease in the total number of doctoral students, we see a proportional increase from 13% in 2005 (6 of 46) to 15% in 2011 (6 of 40). The decrease has occurred as we have put in place policies and support systems that encourage all of our PhD students to complete their studies within five years.

For AY 2000-01, we received 60 applications to the two PhD programs; one URM student applied for admission and was not accepted. For AY 2012-13, we received 125 applications to both PhD programs. One African American student was admitted into the doctoral program in CPLN. We are delighted that this student will be attending PennDesign as our first Fontaine Fellow in many years.

4.2 Faculty

Over the past 10 years, PennDesign has made progress in diversifying our faculty with regard to gender. In 2000, 32% (nine of 28) of the standing faculty was female. By 2011 that proportion had risen to 40% (14 of 35). Gains in diversifying our standing faculty with regard to underrepresented minorities, however, have been uneven. Over the past decade, we moved from one to four Asians in our standing faculty, and from zero to one African American. Among the academic support staff (e.g., lecturer and senior lecturer) we see greater progress. Of the total of 79 in 2000, 1% (one) was African-American, and 5% (four) were Asian. Of the total of 131 in 2011, 3% (four) were African-American, and 7% (nine) were Asian.

Practices focused on recruiting more diverse faculty have included the appointment and utilization of an Affirmative Action Officer as outlined in School of Design policy:

The Dean will appoint a member of the standing faculty to serve as the school's affirmative action officer each year. Before appointments are proposed to the Dean, the affirmative action officer must be satisfied that searches or other processes have been conducted in a way that identified, interviewed and gave full consideration to the most qualified women and members of underrepresented minority groups. The affirmative action officer also advises search committees on strategies that are likely to be effective in building a diverse faculty.

During AY 2011-12 we are implementing a strategic plan to increase the size of the standing faculty in response to the growth of the student body and to support the school's research initiatives. We conducted seven searches for standing faculty positions and one recruitment for a visiting term professor. Due to robust outreach on the part of the search committees, a diverse group of finalists was identified for these positions, including female and international candidates.

The School of Design has faculty development policies and retention practices that have not specifically focused on URM faculty, but they include mentoring, feedback provided to assistant professors at their reappointment, and course reduction for non-tenured faculty during one or more semesters leading to tenure review. While not specifically focused on URM faculty, these policies and practices seek to support each faculty member individually as he or she proceeds to the tenure process.

The major challenge we face in our efforts to attract and retain a diverse faculty is the lack of diversity among the design professions in general and the candidates from among whom we draw faculty in particular. The American Planning Association (APA), for example, notes that less than 10% of its members are minorities, compared with over 30% in the general population.ⁱ And according to a

February 2010 article in *The American Prospect*, "...architecture, let's face it, has a serious diversity problem. Statistics are hard to come by, but estimates indicate that 10 percent to 15 percent of the 110,000 registered architects in the United States are women, and about 1 percent to 2 percent are people of color."ⁱⁱⁱ According to information provided to us by the American Society for Landscape Architects, approximately 35% of registered landscape architects are female, and 7% are minority. And in a 2011 speech, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Stephanie K. Meeks noted that, according to a recently commissioned study, the leadership sector of the field was 93% white, 2% African American, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% Hispanic/Latino/a. To date, we have been unable to locate reliable diversity statistics for visual artists.

PennDesign's constrained budget also limits our ability to offer the competitive salaries that are often necessary to attract and retain URM faculty. In particular, faculty of color are highly sought after by our peer institutions and practicing firms that also seek to strengthen their diversity. In addition, our lengthy review and appointment process makes us less competitive in attracting candidates considering other offers. Furthermore, our outdated facilities – poorly suited to support cutting edge pedagogical practices – may negatively impact recruitment efforts.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the School of Design also sees opportunity to increase the diversity of its faculty. Particularly promising in this regard are a tradition of interdisciplinary dialogue in the design fields, the School's much-improved fundraising capacity, the urban context in which we reside, and the University's support.

VI. Overview of Strategies to Support Greater Diversity

Our success in diversifying our faculty must be a collective effort, embraced by all members of our community and particularly our standing faculty. We will seek to promote a culture of recognition among all PennDesign faculty members – and especially among our distinguished senior faculty – of their power to create change through attention to diversity issues while serving on faculty search committees, inviting colleagues to serve on editorial boards, authoring or coauthoring invited reviews or articles, participating in panels and colloquia at national meetings, and nominating colleagues for recognition and awards. In order to strengthen the diversity of our faculty, we seek to build on policies and procedures already in place by

1. tracking progress through the collection of process and outcome measures,
2. seeking candidates who are more diverse by revising our search processes,
3. fostering growth in faculty diversity through enhanced retention and development strategies,
4. preparing the next generation by seeking to strengthen the diversity of our students and to increase opportunities for exchanges on diversity-related issues, and
5. offering support by identifying school-level resources and leveraging University resources.

Below, we provide an outline of action steps discussed in the Faculty Action Diversity Plan.

5.1 Tracking Progress

In measuring and assessing our progress with regard to faculty and student diversity, we must be sensitive to different professional contexts and degrees of diversity across the design fields in which we teach, conduct research, and practice. For instance, we have had greater success in recruiting URM students in our CPLN department, and less success in our other degree programs. We will track quantitative data on faculty and student demographics and numbers of diversity-related events, as well as qualitative data, such as faculty feedback on implementation of the mentoring policy and broader faculty climate perceptions. During AY 2012-13, we will undertake the following three action steps:

1. We will enlarge our tracking to encompass ten years of student data so we can understand historical trends, and investigate how we might track diversity statistics for our visitors.
2. We will identify sources for valid diversity data across all of our departments, including Fine Arts.
3. We will develop a faculty data base to enable accurate tracking of data, including diversity-related statistics on standing and associated faculty as well as academic support staff.

5.2 Seeking Diversity Candidates

During AY 2012-13, we will focus our efforts in four areas:

1. Designation of Diversity Search Advisor and inclusion of diverse faculty and students in our search committees
2. Provision of diversity training for search committees.
3. Robust outreach to potential diversity and URM candidates via networks, media outlets, and recruitment of academic support staff (where appropriate) as candidates.
4. Improved information dissemination for search committees by way of a faculty affairs website.

5.3 Fostering Growth

We will review and bolster faculty retention and development strategies with particular attention paid to reducing barriers or challenges confronted by URM faculty. Analysis of faculty trend data, particularly with regard to URM faculty, will provide a context for an overall review of our policies and procedures and may highlight particular challenges or issues on which to focus. During AY 2012-13, we will focus our efforts in four areas:

1. Improved information dissemination for current faculty via faculty affairs website.
2. Review of the standing faculty reappointment processes.
3. Enhanced mentoring of junior faculty.
4. Strengthened community building.

5.4 Preparing the Next Generation of Diversity Candidates

One of the central challenges to building a more diverse faculty is having an adequate pipeline of exceptionally qualified candidates from which to recruit. We will seek to implement more aggressive recruitment of URM students at the master's and doctoral levels as a long-term strategy to diversify the pool of faculty candidates.

To date, efforts to strengthen student diversity include opportunistic attendance at graduate student fairs attracting large proportions of URM students, dissemination of information about PennDesign to select minority-serving institutions, and dissemination of information to admissions committees of School and University resources available to URM students. PennDesign also provides support to our Diversity Design student group to convene an annual conference entitled "Unspoken Borders." This event is designed to foster dialogue about issues at the intersection of design, equity, and social and environmental justice.

Building the pipeline for faculty begins with the recruitment of more diverse students, particularly doctoral students, but also master's level students who can help to diversity professional design practice. Our efforts in AY 2012-13 will focus on the following four areas:

- 1) More intentional participation in graduate student fairs and networks focused on URM students.
- 2) Enhanced information dissemination to URM students, including those attending minority-serving institutions.
- 3) Strengthening of students' interdisciplinary opportunities.
- 4) Engagement of our current students' energy and insights to foster dialogue about diversity in design education and the design professions.

5.5 Offering Enhanced Support

Our effectiveness in strengthening the diversity of our faculty will require the identification of new resources to improve our ability to recruit and retain excellent and diverse faculty members. Going forward, we will explore the following avenues to leverage School and University resources to facilitate diversity-related efforts. These resources will be made available at the discretion of the Dean and with input from the department chairmen. They include:

1. Strategic use of available resources (e.g., start-up funds, housing support, and teaching release) to attract, develop, and retain new URM faculty. The amount and kind of these funds will depend on the outcomes of our current faculty searches.
2. Additional financial resources necessary to effectively implement the proposals outlined above.
3. Additional financial support for the annual “Unspoken Borders” conference organized and convened by PennDesign’s Diverse Design student group.
4. More aggressively disseminate information about existing University resources to enhance our efforts, including: Presidential Term Professorships; Faculty Opportunity Fund; Eminence and Innovation Fund; Dual Career Program; Senate Committee on Faculty Development, Diversity and Equity; Predoctoral and Dissertation Fellowships; local recruitment pools; partnerships with URM-serving colleges and universities; and family-friendly policies.

VII. Conclusion

PennDesign seeks to promote excellence in design across our programs in Architecture, City Planning, Landscape Architecture, Fine Arts, and Historic Preservation. Increasing the diversity of our community is essential if we are to truly prepare our students to assume leadership roles as designers, planners, and artists in a global society. The objectives and action steps outlined in this document are designed to provide a path to enable us to achieve these goals and to signal our commitment to this critical issue.

ⁱ Diversity Subcommittee Report. American Planning Association. April 15, 2007. Available at <http://www.planning.org/diversity/taskforce.htm>.

ⁱⁱ Martin, Courtney, “Architecture’s Diversity Problem, *The American Prospect*. February 22, 2010. Available at <http://prospect.org/article/architectures-diversity-problem-0>.