

## **Parkland College Faculty Diversity Program Position Statement**

Parkland College reaffirms its commitment to access, equity, and diversity of its faculty, staff, and students. Our mission is to enable students to become active, responsible, ethical, and self-disciplined citizens in our democratic society within a changing world, and our purposes include the development and enrichment of our students' general, technical, vocational, and career education with a recognition and appreciation of the cultural value of diversity. This goal is accomplished primarily via our ever-changing curriculum, delivered through classroom instruction. Diversity among our faculty, who present the material and who must relate the curriculum to the increasingly diverse student body, is an essential educational component. Inherent to transmitting knowledge--teaching, the role of diversity takes on new significance. Parkland has recognized that students will receive the most meaningful education that prepares them to participate in an increasingly diverse society if the student body and the faculty are diverse.

Parkland's programmatic commitment is deeply rooted in the educational benefits for students and linked to the following institutional documents: (a) the Parkland College Mission and Purposes, (b) Statement of Values, and (c) Cultural Diversity statements as printed in the catalog. (d) February 1997 and October 2002 Parkland College Board of Trustees resolutions affirms the value of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity among our faculty and confirms Parkland's commitment to employing a faculty whose composition reflects the diverse students and community population being served and to a multicultural education for all students. (e) Full-time faculty ads require a demonstrated commitment to multicultural education and to education and service for a culturally diverse student population. (f) Goal A of the 2003-2008 Parkland College Strategic Plan for Excellence is, "Parkland College will focus on quality student-centered learning to meet the needs of its increasingly diverse population." The College

and departments operational plans include diversity-related action plans and goals that are aligned with the key institutional documents noted above.

In 1991, Parkland President Zelema Harris chaired the North Central Association Commission's Policy and Planning committee that recommended the policy on Access, Equity, and Diversity. The goal was to ensure equity of treatment and to create diverse educational communities.

To meet North Central's accreditation mandate and to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse faculty, staff, and student body, the president instituted a series of events that moved the college from policy to action. In 1992, she created a Committee on Access, Equity, and Cultural Diversity. The committee was charged with developing an institutional response to North Central's statement on Access, Equity, and Diversity.

In April 1993, the Parkland Board of Trustees, along with the Parkland College Association (the college's Faculty and Staff governance organization) and the Student Government, passed a cultural diversity resolution that has helped to guide the college in its equity efforts. The college mission statement was revised to state that we strive to "engage students actively in the process of developing a perspective on and an appreciation for cultural diversity." In addition, Parkland's Strategic Plan includes specific goals and strategies that address cultural diversity and global perspectives.

In 1997, the Parkland College Board of Trustees adopted a resolution that reaffirms the institution's commitment to diversity and charged the administration and faculty with creating an action plan for diversifying the faculty.

In April 1997, a faculty committee submitted a report to the Board outlining ten recommendations to increase diversity of faculty at Parkland. The most successful strategy, thus far, is the Parkland Faculty Diversity Program.

The Parkland College Faculty Diversity Program consists of two components: (1) Diversity Faculty positions for those with at least a master's degree; and (2) Professors Of the Future (PROF) for those who do not yet have a master's degree.

The Diversity Faculty positions are designed to recruit candidates with diverse backgrounds and limited teaching experience in specific areas where future tenure-track teaching positions are anticipated. These positions provide individuals with the opportunity to gain full-time teaching experience with regular full-time faculty pay and fringe benefits for a period of up to two academic years.

During these two years the Diversity Faculty member receives special training and mentoring to prepare them for upcoming tenure-track openings, which have been identified during the college's planning process. For example, the planning process identified diversity opportunities in speech and chemistry, areas that consisted mainly of male full-time faculty. Two female Diversity Faculty candidates now hold full-time tenure track positions in each of those areas. Similar successes occurred with the hiring of racial minorities for faculty positions in English, history, and political science.

The PROF component of Parkland's Faculty Diversity Program identifies outstanding Parkland College students and others who would provide good faculty diversity models and are interested in teaching at a community college but do not yet have a master's degree. The Parkland College Foundation provides scholarships for these students to continue their studies and return to Parkland to teach after they complete their master's degree. PROF candidates teach full-time at Parkland in non-tenure-track positions for up to five semesters under the same provisions as the Diversity Faculty. They are then eligible to apply for full-time, tenure-track positions.

Each academic department has the latitude to define its own diversity needs during the department-level planning process. For example, Nursing determined that a male faculty was needed to diversify its staff and subsequently hired a male, although he was hired as part of the usual faculty search process and not part of the Diversity Faculty program. Other academic disciplines determined that their areas needed more female faculty and subsequently, white females were hired. In academic areas that saw a need for minority faculty to meet their diversity needs, minority faculty were hired.

Each department's needs are different; each department defines "diversity" in different ways; e.g., Nursing needing a male faculty. The common strand that runs through each department and throughout the college is the planning process.

A strategic planning approach to diversifying faculty is the critical factor in Parkland's successful efforts. As the phrase goes, "timing is everything." Our planning process allows us to pinpoint and forecast academic areas that will experience faculty retirements, demographic changes, and other pertinent changes. This gives us the opportunity – and the time -- to "grow our own" diverse faculty.

To elaborate, Diversity Faculty positions are intentionally planned to end when a full-time, tenure-track position in that discipline becomes available. By that time, the candidate will have been mentored and will have had the teaching experience to make him/her a very competitive candidate in the faculty applicant pool.

Recruitment of PROF candidates requires a longer planning time since they need to complete their bachelor's and master's degrees. Parkland's planning process is capable of these longer-term projections and PROF candidates are mentored similarly to Diversity Faculty candidates.

Parkland's Faculty Diversity Program has proven to be the college's most effective initiative for increasing the number of diverse full-time, tenured-track faculty. Planning, mentoring, and providing actual teaching experience are essential ingredients.