

Recruitment and Retention of Non-Caucasian Faculty at Small Midwestern Private Institutions: A Phenomenological Study

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Increasing the diversity of faculty in small institutions is critical for accreditation and the cultural environment of the institutions. A phenomenological approach using interviews identified factors that lead to successful recruitment and retention. An important finding regarding recruiting is that the majority of the participants were recruited in a non-traditional manner by a personal contact from the institution. An important finding regarding retention is that the participants described the Midwest to be welcoming and accepting of minorities. To increase diversity, institutions should consider non-traditional recruiting techniques and promoting the Midwest as a comfortable place for non-Caucasians to live and work.

INTRODUCTION

Following the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, the percentage of non-Caucasian students in American colleges and universities has steadily increased (Antonio, 2002; Snyder, Dillow & National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), 2010). Non-Caucasian faculty, however, has not kept pace with the increases in student population. In 1983, non-Caucasian faculty represented just 9% of faculty nationwide, increasing to 12% in 1993 when the population of non-Caucasian students was nearly 27% (Antonio, 2002). Further, 2008 statistics include 16% full-time non-Caucasian faculty, with only 5.3% in full professor positions (Snyder et al., 2010). In 2011, non-Caucasian faculty nationwide had risen to 20.7% while non-Caucasian student population was 38.8% (Snyder, Dillow and NCES, 2013). Clearly, non-Caucasians are underrepresented in faculty positions nationwide, and the disparity between faculty and students is increasing (Snyder, et al., 2013). The underrepresentation is even more pronounced among small private colleges and universities in the Midwest United States, where non-Caucasians make up just 9.3% of full-time faculty (Chronicle, n.d.). The underrepresentation of non-Caucasian faculty is an issue for small private institutions in the Midwest because the accrediting body for the majority of these institutions, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools' Higher Learning Commission, has established diversity criteria for accreditation (Higher Learning Commission, n.d.).

Aside from accreditation requirements, colleges and universities strive to increase non-Caucasian faculty because they provide benefits to their students and to their institutions:

- Serve as role models and support for an increasingly diverse student population (Cole & Barber, 2003; Daufin, 2001; Schwartz & Walden, 2011)
- Bring differing perspectives and teaching methods that are beneficial to undergraduate students (Umbach, 2006)
- Represent an institution's commitment to campus-wide diversity initiatives (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen & Allen, 1999)
- Broadening the concept of scholarship (Antonio, 2002)
- Help prepare students to live and work in an increasingly diverse world (Cole & Barber, 2003; Mohamed, 2010)

Several studies have explored the negative experiences of non-Caucasian faculty that have contributed to their decisions to leave predominantly White institutions (Chambers, 2011; Elabor-Idemudia, 2001; Heggins, 2005; Phelps, 1995; Stanley, 2006). Others have suggested ways to avoid negative experiences in an attempt to improve retention (Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), 2007; Dumas-Hines, Cochran, & Williams, 2001; Hu-DeHart, 2000; Moody, 2004; Smith, 2000; Stanley, 2006). Fewer studies have focused on factors that increase the successful recruitment and retention of non-Caucasian faculty (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010; Fleetwood & Aebersold, 2010; Thompson, 2008).

Much of the past data that is available regarding the increases in diversity for both students and faculty has been quantitative, or statistical in nature (Chronicle, n.d.; Snyder et al., 2013). It has been suggested that more qualitative data is needed to study the phenomena of increasing faculty diversity (Xu, 2012). This study examined the phenomena of the experiences of non-Caucasian faculty who were currently teaching for small private colleges and universities in the Midwest, identifying experiential factors contributing to successful recruitment and retention. The outcome of the research is available to assist administration in identifying and developing strategies to improve recruitment and retention rates of non-Caucasian faculty.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Organization culture, organization change and critical race theory make up the conceptual framework for this study. The intersection of these concepts represents the organizational changes that may be necessary to affect the organizations' culture in a positive way, to improve successful recruitment and retention of non-Caucasian faculty.

Organization Culture

Every college and university has its own culture and the culture is perpetuated through new faculty, staff and administration learning from the current faculty, staff, and administration. In addition, organizations tend to hire individuals who "fit" into their culture, which translates into hiring individuals who have traits and values similar to current employees. With the exception of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and some Native American institutions, virtually all colleges and universities in the United States were founded by the White majority. Therefore, most institutions of higher learning in the United States have a predominantly White culture that has been intact since their inception.

The culture of an organization usually reflects the founder's values and assumptions about how the organization will succeed (Schein, 1983). Organization culture is not static, but is a gradual learning process, which becomes embedded in the day to day operations of the organization. In addition, organization culture goes through a maturation process as the organization grows and changes. While some cultural changes occur as a result of the growth and success of an organization, cultural change can be intentional and guided by the leaders of the organization (Schein, 2004).

Organization Change

Change within organizations is inevitable and necessary for organizations to survive, especially in today's fiercely competitive global environment (Kotter, 1996). Organization change can be viewed as

evolutionary or revolutionary (Burke, 2002). Evolutionary change occurs naturally as an organization grows and matures, while revolutionary change is intentional change in response to some kind of threat to the organization (Burke, 2002). Revolutionary change can be difficult given human nature's basic resistance to change (McMurry, 1947). Change is often viewed as threatening by individuals and resistance can be subtle or it can take the form of outright rebellion (Kotter, Schlesinger, & Sathe, 1979). Therefore, intentional change within organizations must be well planned.

Critical Race Theory

During the 1970s, several legal scholars and activists realized that the advances of the civil rights movement had stalled and that a subtler form of racism had emerged (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). This subtle form of discrimination is the basis of critical race theory, which maintains that racism and its resulting discrimination is rooted in the power that is held by the majority population, which is White (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Bell (1995) defines critical race theory as an orientation around race that seeks to attack a legal system that disempowers people of color, or perpetuates the status quo of the White powerful majority. In relation to the underrepresented groups among college faculty, critical race theory holds that the dominant White majority has little incentive to change the racist status quo because racism benefits large portions of the White population (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Therefore, racism is ingrained in the culture of the United States. To change the current situation of White dominance among faculty members, a shift in culture is necessary. Colleges and universities seeking to diversify their faculty need information regarding factors that will improve their recruitment and retention efforts of underrepresented groups.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection occurred through a narrative inquiry approach as described by Chase (2005) using one-on-one interviews between participants and the researcher that on average took a little less than one hour. The interviews were semi-structured posing questions regarding the participant's experiences with recruitment by their current institution as well as the participant's experiences while employed with the institution. All interviews were audio recorded on a digital recorder. Pseudonyms were assigned and used by the researcher and the transcriptionist to identify each participant and will be used throughout this report to protect the identity of the participants. Pseudonyms assigned were: Anna, Bob, Carl, Dave, Ellen, Fran, and Gail.

Participant Demographics

All participants self-identifies as non-Caucasian faculty who currently teach at small private colleges or universities in the Midwest. This population is such a minority in the geographic area that individual participants may be identifiable by any combination of their race/ethnicity, discipline, age group, and institution. To protect their privacy, individual profiles will not be reported. Instead, demographic information will be given in aggregate. In addition, when quoting individual participants, some words or phrases will be omitted and replaced with parenthetical descriptions to protect the identity of the participants.

Participants included two African American females, one Asian American female, one Asian female, one African male and two Asian males, one Indian, one Chinese. The Asian female, African male and two Asian males all came to the U.S. as adults. The ages of the participants also varied, including two under 40, one between 40 and 55, and four over 55. The number of years of teaching experience ranged from under two years to 44 years, with two in their first teaching job and one who is retiring at the end of this academic year. The number of years teaching at the current institution ranged from under two years to 22 years. Disciplines taught by participants include accounting, economics, statistics, teacher education, engineering, and occupational therapy.

Phenomenological Analysis

Qualitative data collected through the interviews was analyzed using the phenomenological method, which consists of deliberate steps in analyzing qualitative data related by individuals who have all experienced the same phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The first step in this process is epoche which “requires a new way of looking at things” (Moustakas, 1994, p.33). Epoche is often called bracketing, meaning that the researcher sets aside his or her own experiences and predispositions regarding the subject matter of the study, which is vital to data analysis in a phenomenological study. The next step in the process of analysis was Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction (Moustakas, 1994). In this step, the textural essence of each experience is examined in its totality through the participant’s own descriptions of their thoughts, feelings and perceptions. The third step in phenomenological analysis is Imaginative Variation, which is a way of grasping the structural essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The structural essence refers to the conditions that existed which precipitated the incident that has been related. In this phase of the analysis, the researcher listened to the recordings of the interviews again and noted the context in which individual experiences were described by participants. The last step in the phenomenological analysis process is the Synthesis of Meanings and Essences, which integrates the textual essence of Reduction with the structural essence of Imaginative Variation (Moustakas, 1994). This provides the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of the experience being investigated.

Thematic Analysis

The transcripts were scrutinized using thematic analysis as described by Reissman (2008), which involves examining each of the “stories” that emerge from the interviews, focusing on “what” is said rather than “how” or “why” it is communicated. Thematic analysis works well with unstructured or semi-structured interviews because the themes come from the participants’ relating of their own experiences, not from the conversational exchanges between the participants and the interviewer (Reissman, 2008). Thematic analysis is based on “pattern theory” that helps to explain the interconnectedness of the parts of the whole in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Pattern theory replaces the deductive reasoning of quantitative research with a system of ideas that emerge in qualitative data that “makes sense” of the themes or patterns that are identified (Newman, 2000). The common themes that emerged were also studied in relation to the demographic data collected from the participants, to identify any possible differences among demographic groups.

Narrative Knowing Analysis

After thematic analysis, the data was analyzed using a descriptive narrative knowing approach to the data (Polkinghorne, 1988). The narrative knowing method of data analysis works especially well with the narrative inquiry research method utilizing different lenses to analyze the experiences of the people who have lived them. This method of analysis considers the participants’ own descriptions to understand how each organizes and makes sense of his or her experiences as the participants tell their stories in unstructured or semi-structured interviews (Chase, 2005; Polkinghorne, 1988). In this method, the participant becomes the narrator of his or her own stories, expressing not only what happened, but includes their emotions and interpretations of the experience (Chase, 2005). Interviews that are unstructured or semi-structured elicit the stories that reveal the circumstances around the experiences, which Czarniawska (1997) points out, in qualitative interviews the story *is* the point. The researcher must evaluate the interview as a whole to identify pieces of each participant’s sequencing and organization of experiences.

FINDINGS

Recruitment Factors

Recruitment experiences of the participants varied, though all of the participants decided to accept their current position based on specific things that occurred during the recruitment process. Five of the seven participants were recruited through a personal contact. Each was contacted by someone connected

with the institution with whom they were already acquainted. This has been suggested as a preferable recruitment method in attracting non-Caucasian faculty (Gordon, 2004). Three of the participants were not looking for a job when they were contacted about their current position. Four of the participants had previously taught at the institution under an adjunct or temporary arrangement prior to accepting the full-time position. One participant had previously attended the institution as an undergraduate student. One participant previously turned down a position at the current institution to accept another, but accepted a position there three years later. With the exception of only one, the participants had knowledge of their current institution through some personal experience prior to applying for their current full-time position.

Opportunity to Work Directly with Students

The opportunity to work directly and make connections with students was a common theme among the reasons that participants chose to accept a position at a small private college or university. The participant who had no prior knowledge of the institution was impressed that the on-campus visit during the recruiting process involved meeting students:

Interviewer: When you went to visit, who did you meet with?

Bob: I met with all of the committee members. I met with the students. In fact I went to lunch with I think four or five students. I met with the dean, I met the President, I met all of the faculty members. It was a student who gave me the tour. So it was a lot different from other schools...one of the committee members show you around.

Another participant had previously taught at a large research institution and was recruited to take over a specific program at a much smaller school. Again, this participant was impressed by the students during the campus visit:

Interviewer: Did you have any kind of change in your opinion about the institution during the interview process?

Anna: also extremely impressed with the students because they were much more professional than I had anticipated. The students that I had taught (at the previous institution) appeared more entitled, had less understanding about professional behaviors.

One participant had previously turned down an offer from the current institution to accept one at an historically Black institution where the expectation was teaching and grooming students for graduate school as well as supervising a research lab. This participant left the historically Black research institution in the South three years later in favor of the predominantly White institution in the Midwest:

Interviewer: What interested you about this institution?

Ellen: I originally selected it because it was a teaching institution and I knew that I had gotten my PhD because I was interested in a teaching school in particular because I wanted to change the image of what [her field] looked like to students in general. I felt at (the research institution) I wouldn't be able to do that as much because I wanted to be able to connect to students.

Desire to Work in a Collegial Atmosphere

Another theme that emerged as a factor contributing to the decision to accept a position at a small private institution in the Midwest was the desire to work in a collegial atmosphere. One participant who had taught at a large research institution for 20 years:

Interviewer: What interested you about this institution?

Anna: It was smaller than the institution that I had been working at. I was tired, just getting into kind of a rut, so I was looking for a challenge. The other reason was that we had a new crop of very young faculty that was carnivorous. It was a different atmosphere of teaching, very competitive, not very collegial.

Interviewer: Did you have any kind of change in your opinion of the institution during the interview process?

Anna: It was a lot more collegial than I had anticipated. It was a lot more – the only way I can describe it is kind of a small town. You know, I had come from a big institution where I never talked to people in [other departments]...you stay in your little silos. I was very pleasantly surprised at how

very friendly people were and how interested people were about me, about what I had to say. And they were not [in the same field]. That really intrigued me.

The participant who knew very little about the current institution prior to applying was also impressed by the collegiality during the recruitment process:

Interviewer: Why were you interested in [this institution]?

Bob: Well first it is liberal arts college, because I wanted to teach in a liberal arts college. Second...I really needed a job, but...when I came here and I spoke with them I saw the collegial relationship they had with everybody that is in the department.

Interviewer: When you came to campus, did your impression of the school change?

Bob: Yeah, it changed a little bit because you want to go to an environment where you are welcomed. And everything they did was just that. Also, the main thing was the people that I was going to call my colleagues, how the faculty members were getting along.

The participant who had previously attended the institution as an undergraduate also cited collegiality as a factor in the decision to accept the position:

Interviewer: What did you know about the institution before you came to campus?

Carl: I had the experience of going to the institution as a student. And so, I knew that it was a good place to teach, that the professors were committed to their craft. And I had enjoyed my educational experience there. And the people I worked with were my former professors so there was already a relationship there. And you know a good sense of rapport with some of my fellow colleagues.

Another participant who came to the U. S. for graduate school, but did a lot of technical research and had no intention of teaching, accepted a visiting position with the institution. After the visiting position ended, he then left the country for a research position, but returned from overseas to fill a permanent position at the same institution. The decision to return was partially due to the relationships that were formed with colleagues during the visiting position:

Interviewer: After you visited, what was it that really interested you and why you took the visiting position?

Dave: I think it is because I like the people here. It's a small school and then everybody is very nice to each other. And it's like a very small community and it's different, really different from the [large University where he was a PhD student]. I really like these people, very nice to me and that was my first job in the U. S. So I was basically scared, I really did not want to work in America because you didn't learn much about the society [at the large University]. I spent most of the time in the lab, so I didn't really know America that much. I actually intend to return to [home country].

Desire to Be a Role Model

Several of the participants chose to teach and specifically to teach in predominantly White institutions because they wanted to be a role model. One participant who had previously taught at the high school level specifically wanted to be a role model for non-Caucasian students:

Gail: Because they have this huge increase in the number of students of color in the schools, but . . . they're having a problem of recruiting minority teachers and all.

This participant had recently announced that she will be retiring at the end of the current academic year and she has had a strong response from current students:

Gail: the students are very upset about me leaving. Because for so many of them, I'm the only person of color that they've ever had (as a teacher) in their entire schooling. And they think I'm crazy and I'm different, but they always thank me.

One participant originally turned down a job at her current institution, only to accept one three years later. She had this to say about being a role model:

Ellen: There's about you know 20% female students in [her field], but probably with respect to faculty it probably not 20. And people of color is even less. So when I was a student I had decided I wanted not only to change the image of the fact that it's mostly White males. One, because I wanted to see more women, but two, I just really wanted to change the image of [someone in her field] from being someone who is a scientist, not very social or not a good communicator, not overly friendly or

approachable. So I wanted to change that whole vision, you know. [Someone in her field] is not a cookie cutter, you know, type person. It's a lot of different people, a lot of diverse backgrounds.

On why she originally turned down the job:

Ellen: It was actually my first choice and I got the job...But my one concern with the school, and it's still a concern, is there is a sincere lack of diversity among the faculty, the staff, and the student body. And then my husband...he was pretty adamant he just didn't want to move to a city that had really no diversity. So I eventually did turn down the job, which is why I didn't work here the first three years of my career.

After turning down the job at the predominantly White Midwestern school, she accepted a position at an historically Black institution in the South. On why she left the predominantly Black institution:

Ellen: that school also had a lack of diversity because it was Black pretty much. But the difference is and the reason I left that first school is I felt the administration did not support that vision. You know, they have a mission – historically Black universities have a mission of grooming, teaching, being student centered, but they also have that research on Holy Grail that they are pursuing. And so they were warring against each other and I just couldn't do that, which is why I actually ended up coming to the school that I am at now.

Positive Retention Factors

Retention of non-Caucasian faculty is an issue separate from recruiting for small private colleges and universities in the Midwest. Non-Caucasian faculty members often leave small private institutions relatively quickly for a variety of reasons, including lack of community, lack of mentors, feelings of isolation, etc. Faculty retention is dependent on how satisfied the faculty member is with all aspects of the job including the institutional culture, the departmental culture, the students, and the location of the institution. Each participant was asked to describe what gives them the most satisfaction as a faculty member. Participants cited many factors that provide them satisfaction in their current positions, but working directly with students and working with supportive and accepting colleagues were cited most often.

Satisfaction of Working Directly with Students

Working with students was cited the most when participants were asked what gives them the most satisfaction as a faculty member:

Anna: From my personal standpoint, professional satisfaction comes through teaching students. I like to see their eyes light up when they make connections with different concepts that are clearly [within their discipline].

Bob: I think it is from the students. When I get the most satisfaction is like after midterm exams or even before midterm exams like my students come to the office to ask questions or drop by to have a chat. It doesn't have to be school related, probably something they heard over the news or something and they just want to get some clarification or just talk about it. So those are the kinds that I get more, I mean, a lot of satisfaction because I mean like I said the other day, we are here because of the students. And getting those feedbacks, if I am able to reach them out of the classroom that even it is not related to classroom materials, it says a lot.

Carl: Oh I think when I get the opportunity to do a bit of everything. And so I love the teaching and I get to do that regularly, I get to do more consulting and I get to do some research. I think the balance among them is important to me. The most important is working with the students. And so I think I could use those secondary activities really to be a better teacher. I don't want to be regurgitating what's in a textbook. The more life experience and the more things that I can share with my students in addition to what's in the textbook, makes me a better teacher. I see that doing the research and doing the consulting is a part of becoming a better teacher, a better versed individual in a particular subject matter.

Dave: the students, when they get a good job, when they get into a good graduate school or when I hear they achieved some of their career goals. And you know, I pay a lot of attention to our alumni. You know, I am very happy to see, you know, that we can produce students that can be effective, you know, they can contribute to society. Yeah, that's why I like to teach here, because of the students.

Fran: Teaching. I like teaching, I like advising very much. I have always seen myself as a teacher so if the teaching was taken out I think I would miss it enormously. And once in a while I'll have a term where I don't teach and I am envious when I am walking by people's classrooms. But I like the one on one with my advisees. So if somebody takes that away I can't say that, because I haven't actually been through a phase when I haven't advised. So I don't know the intensity of how much I would miss that. But I do know that when I haven't taught I miss that tremendously. I like that relationship because the advisees you get...when they start declaring the major which is at the end of their first year. And you see them through the whole process...as a teacher you get them in the room and it is an exchange of different kinds of ideas and things like that, but they are gone at the end of that. I like that I get to do both, teaching and advising.

Working with students was also cited often by participants when asked: What do you like the most about teaching here? What keeps you here?

Ellen: Because it's student centered and that's what I like. I get to connect with my students. I know their names, you know, when they come back for homecoming or when they are at graduation they hug you, they say thank you, they develop a close relationship with you.

Collegial atmosphere

Working in a collegial atmosphere was also cited often in response to the questions: When are you most satisfied as a faculty member? As well as: What do you like most about teaching here? What keeps you here?

Anna: To add to the former question about what I do like here. There are two health professions [on this campus]. The faculty between [the two professions] are extremely close. And I have not been in such a collegial situation between another profession before, even though I come from a university where two professions were fairly close. But this is a whole other level. I mean, they're willing to guest lecture, they're willing to help us if we need anything; like do we need a role model for practicums. It is just a very, very nice working with another profession.

Bob: Let me see, because we have senior faculty members that have been here for a long time. Every time that I have questions of something that I didn't understand or very general clarifications I can go talk to them and they don't mind telling me or giving me advice. It makes your work a lot easier than being in an environment where people are hostile and every time you are just frustrated.

Carl: I say often times you spend more time at the office than at home and especially during the week. So I think the people you work with is so important. I think the collegial aspect is most crucial. I mean, I don't think I'd be happy if I didn't have the friendships and colleagues that I do in the office.

Fran: Supportive department. There's no question about that and it is a very egalitarian department so we all have opinions and we can all voice them without any real repercussions of, you know, disagreement. I mean not that everybody agrees with everybody, but we can all voice it, we tend to work it out.

Gail: And the average – I think I've worked with my colleagues – the average time that we've been together is about fourteen years. So we really have close relationships in our department. There's a lot of collaboration and camaraderie.

Other Positive Retention Factors

All Participants were asked: What do you like most about teaching here? What keeps you here? Besides working with students and a collegial atmosphere, there were a few more significant responses. First, three of the seven participants described the culture of their institution as being "like a family." For minority faculty members in predominantly White institutions, this speaks volumes for the leadership of the organizations. Second, several also noted that the expectations level in regard to workload, research,

publications, etc. is lower in a smaller institution. One participant who left a large institution to accept a position at a much smaller institution had this to say:

At the college I am at now, I do not find it to be a burden at all. At the institution I was at previously, there was an expectation for all associate professors who are tenured to be on university level committees, school level committees, and department level committees. So...to give you an example, the year before I left...I was on nine committees. I said...my other full-time job was being on committees. And because it was either up [or] out, it was an implicit rule that if you were going from associate professor to professor you either had to have national or international service.

Negative Retention Factors

All participants responded to the following: What is less than ideal for you at your current institution?

Anna: I find the most disturbing thing is [that] there is some micromanagement going on from someone who is [in Administration] and is not a health care professional. So both the [director of the other health care program] and myself have spent copious amounts of time explaining things because we say we're doing this not necessarily because we have this great idea, it's our accreditation, you know. We have to do this. And educating is very tedious because [this administrator] thinks very black and white. And health care is not black and white.

Bob: Probably the number of students and also the number of international students that they have been getting that will probably be one of the things I would maybe try and change. But at least it is something they recognize that they need to do. So, like I said, they started addressing it so hopefully in the next one or two years they will achieve that objective.

Carl: I am concerned with the future of private institutions in this country and where they're headed [and] who's at the helm of these organizations. I think we have come to a place and time where the higher education system is extremely competitive and differentiation is so critical. And so whether you want to take more of a business approach or not, the reality is you are in an industry that stays where it is going to be consumer driven and the ability to adapt to your consumer is critical. I think that's something that a lot of private schools, especially the private schools that are religious based, are struggling with. That they sometimes don't understand the business side of the competitiveness and how to work that. And when they do realize it, how to do that without giving up the values of what started the institution in the first place.

Dave: Maybe we can move it to a bigger city? In order to do some consulting work with companies, the companies are so far away from here. It's good for us to be involved in company projects, but we're so far away from any company here.

Ellen: I want to see more diversity. I was on the diversity steering committee and several other things and one thing we talked about is until you get a critical mass it's really hard for people who are not likeminded to understand, appreciate how much you could change the climate and change the atmosphere of the place. So people who are thinking "Like why do we have so much diversity? We don't need diversity." Really what they're saying is "There's nothing wrong with the way we are. Why are we trying to change it?" And I don't think they understand the vision for how much better we could be just by having that. But we have to, because one of the other problems that we have is students of color, they do get some, they leave after their freshman year. And really it is not that academically they weren't prepared and couldn't do the work, they didn't feel a sense of belonging. They didn't feel a sense of community. They didn't feel that warmth. We have to get at least a critical number on campus [faculty]. What? There's only seven faculty of color out of 170 or so faculty members? So because of that I think we lose faculty of color as well.

Gail: But one of the problems that I feel exists with retention is a lot of your minorities come from public education. And we know that there's an inverse relationship in the public schools right now. You have more minority students than you have minority teachers because you aren't getting minorities into education as you once were. So that means that you have fewer people to select from at the university level. So, you know the numbers are down for minorities in public education, it makes it that much harder, I think, to recruit.

Some of the factors that were cited, like moving the institution to a larger city, are obviously not things that the institutions can really address. The fact that many small private schools in the Midwest are located in small towns that are not in close proximity to a metropolitan area is a negative factor in recruiting non-Caucasian faculty. One participant felt that it was important for her family to live in a more diverse metropolitan area, so she negotiated her teaching schedule to four days a week and she commutes one hour each way on those four days from the nearest larger city.

Two of the participants cited concerns about administration of small colleges. These participants teach at two different colleges each with enrollment of less than 1500 students. One cited micromanagement of programs the administrator was not knowledgeable about, causing a lot of work and time wasted by the program directors. The other is concerned about administration addressing the conflicting ideas that face a faith-based institution's future: can the institution adopt a business-like model for financial stability without sacrificing the values the institution was founded on? These are both legitimate concerns for very small institutions. The problems cited can cause a ripple effect with low salaries, faculty turnover and declining enrollment. This pattern is well documented with many small private institutions that closed during the 1970s, due to declining enrollment (Bonvillain & Murphy, 1996).

The remainder of the participants who responded to this question cited the desire for more diversity among both students and faculty. Students of color need more faculty of color as role models, but faculty of color are reluctant to accept positions at schools with low diversity.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Recruitment Finding – Recruited Through a Personal Contact

The first recruitment factor that was common is that the participants had some prior connection with the institution. Five of the seven participants were recruited through a personal contact, someone they already knew at the institution. In addition, one more participant had previously been offered a job by the same institution, but had turned it down. Of those who were personally recruited, three of the participants were not actively seeking a teaching position when they were contacted about their current position. Also, four of the participants had previously taught for their current institution under a visiting or adjunct arrangement.

Recruitment Finding – Desire to Work with Students

The second common recruitment factor that was common among participants is that they had a desire to work directly with students. Since most of the participants had prior knowledge of the institution, they were aware that their primary responsibility would be teaching, which appealed to them. The one participant who knew nothing of the school prior to the campus visit was impressed that a student was included on the search committee and that a student conducted the campus tour. It was different from other campus visits the participant had and it was something that helped in the choice to accept the position.

Recruitment Finding – Desire for Collegial Atmosphere

The third common factor for recruitment was a desire to work in a collegial atmosphere. All of the participants had taught at other institutions prior to accepting their current position and they all had a desire to work with colleagues that they felt comfortable with. Because so many of the participants already knew someone at the institution, they felt more comfortable with their colleagues even though they were in the minority.

Recruitment Finding – Desire to Be a Role Model

The fourth common recruitment factor was a desire to be a role model. Two of the participants made a conscious decision to teach rather than do research or corporate work because they wanted to be a role model for minority students.

Retention Finding – Desire to Work with Students

The first retention factor that was common among the participants was the satisfaction of working directly with students. Working with students had drawn them to a small institution and it was the leading reason that the participants cited for remaining in their current positions. Several of the participants stated that they were most satisfied as a faculty member when they were working with students.

Retention Finding – Working in Collegial Atmosphere

The second retention factor that was cited by participants was the satisfaction of working with their colleagues. Participants described a collegial atmosphere of cooperation with their co-workers, both in their department and throughout the college or university. As in working with students, the collegial atmosphere was one of the factors that had affected their decision to accept the position and it was one of the reasons that kept them in their current institutions.

Retention Finding – Midwest is Welcoming

The third retention factor that came through the participants' stories is that Midwesterners are accepting of others and that they feel comfortable in the Midwest, despite the fact that they are in the minority. The participants all had lived in other parts of the U. S. or in other countries and found that in general, they felt more accepted in the Midwest than other places they had lived. There were some exceptions of subtle racism and one notable case of overt racism, but overall, participants were content living and working in the Midwest.

Summary of Findings

Regarding recruitment, the most significant finding is that nearly all participants were recruited by a personal contact at the institution rather than through traditional faculty recruiting techniques. For retention, the most significant finding is that despite the lack of diversity in the Midwest, participants find the Midwestern people to be accepting and welcoming to non-Caucasians. These findings can be helpful to small private institutions in the Midwest that are working to increase non-Caucasian faculty as a way to improve campus diversity. Changing recruiting techniques to include utilizing personal contacts could improve recruiting results for these institutions. Also, if more non-Caucasian candidates perceived Midwesterners to be accepting and welcoming to everyone, it may help with recruiting in addition to improving retention. Institutions could be doing more to promote the Midwest as a comfortable place for non-Caucasians to live and work.

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