

Recruiting for Diversity in the Art Department: Summary and Strategies

Department Status

The chair of the art department was away from campus during Fall term. The acting chair concentrated on an internal curricular discussion during our regular fall meetings. When the chair returned for the spring term, our focus turned to assessment. We did not actively pursue this question in regular department meetings as we have in past years, though we did take it up at two post-semester meetings.

Networking

During the 2009-2010 school year the art department was not as visible at conferences and symposia as in previous years. We continued our annual representation at the Biola conference in March. Lisa attended on behalf of the department. We re-connected with a young Chinese-American artist, a Biola grad, who we met through a previous search. We did not attend CAA or CIVA.

Visiting Artists

We did not have any visiting artists during the 2009-2010 school year.

Curriculum and Program

Art 128—Modern and Contemporary incorporated a heavy emphasis on contemporary art from around the world. Students responded very positively to this.

Reynolds Gallery exhibitions introduced the campus to international artists from South Africa, Japan, and to under-represented artists from the African American community.

The entire department participated in a SWOT analysis on May 27. In the course of our discussion, we identified the lack of diversity in our department (diversity of media, as well as faculty) as a “weakness” and a potential “threat.”

Looking Ahead

Should the department be granted permission to replace faculty who are retiring, we anticipate one to two searches in the next two to seven years. We’ve begun preliminary thinking about how to define those positions. At our last two post-semester meetings we began generating the content of a letter to go out to colleagues across the country. We also began to generate the list of colleagues to whom we want to send the letter. We’ve built a network over the last several years—and now it’s time to start using it more actively. Our current list of contacts includes several artists of color, several faculty at large Ph.D./MFA granting institutions, and several CIVA colleagues. We hope that these colleagues will put us in touch with promising potential candidates, some of whom we might invite as lecturers or visiting artists. The Department Chair will be sending that letter out during the summer months of 2010, and following up on all responses.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa DeBoer
Chair, Art Department