

BUILDING A CADRE OF FACULTY “CHAMPIONS” FOR CAMPUS DIVERSITY

Interactive session led by JoAnn Moody, PhD, JD, National Diversity Consultant and Director, Northeast Consortium for Faculty Diversity Details about Dr. Moody’s book, *Faculty Diversity: Problems and Solutions* (Routledge, 2004) can be found at: www.DiversityOnCampus.com

Text below by Dr. Moody.

“This session will focus on **why** and **how** majority faculty can be coached to become confident, comfortable, pro-active supporters of campus diversity. You can call these supporters by various names: for instance, “Champions” (Daryl Smith’s word) or “White Allies” (the term used by Peggy McIntosh, Tim Wise, and other anti-racism leaders) or “Equity Advisors” (U.CA-Irvine) or “STRIDE” leaders (U. Michigan) or “Faculty Allies” (Julie Sherbinin’s term, see *Chronicle of Higher Education*, “White Professors Can Help Uproot Racism,” 5/7/2004).

Why is it important to identify a cadre of potential and actual faculty supporters? to coach and practice them? to constantly help them reach out to enlarge their numbers? There are three main reasons. First, advancement programs for women and minorities as well as programs devoted to greater equity and diversity on campus *come and go*. So, too, do campus presidents, provosts, deans, department chairs, and other administrators who may, for a short time, promote equity and diversity on their campuses: their tenure can be very short and on some campuses, in fact, some of these leadership roles are deliberately filled with new people every 3-5 years. By contrast, senior faculty members endure and endure. And such faculty—talking and acting quietly behind the scenes or boldly stepping out front—can have enormously constructive influence on their colleagues and students.

(This session will not devote time to how you can identify prospective or actualized champions for your campus cadre. That is relatively easy and could be the subject of another session. Nor will I do more than quickly list skills and intellectual tools that I think cadre members should possess. Discussion of these skills and tools could be the subject of another session, as well.)

How can you or other senior leaders on campus (such as the provost) develop prospective and actual allies for the cadre? For one, you should use active-learning approaches as you or others coach and practice the allies. Lectures and presentations are counter-productive to use with faculty (who pride themselves on being independent thinkers) and will certainly not enable them to hone the skills they need. Instead, interactive theatre (see the U.Michigan website) is an excellent experiential and active-learning approach. Further, there are a number of Discussion Scenarios in the last chapter of my book, *Faculty Diversity: Problems and Solutions* that could be used as practice exercises. In my consulting workshops on a variety of campuses, I use Discussion Scenarios in order to tap the wisdom of the faculty and administrators I am working with. Once the bad practices in each scenario have been identified and discussed, I lead participants to

visualize and outline good practices to replace the dysfunctional ones. Then we brainstorm about how these good practices could be implemented in their departments and workplaces.”

[Note: For the rest of this AACU session, Dr. Moody led attendees through an exercise she had used two weeks ago with a group of senior faculty leaders and search committee chairs in the Midwest. Session attendees read Dr. Moody’s 3-page Discussion Scenario, “Search for a New Campus Director of Finance.” They identified several bad practices as well as **10 cognitive errors and shortcuts** that the search committee members in the scenario were unwittingly making. Dr. Moody then discussed with attendees a number of steps that could be taken to avoid or overcome these bad practices and cognitive errors, referring to current research by a number of cognitive scientists and to lessons learned from her consulting with dozens of search committees.

Dr. Moody explained that these errors and shortcuts mar most cognitive processes (which can be defined as the mental processes we use to gather and sort through information, interpret it, and then come to decisions about, for example, job candidates, faculty cases for tenure and promotion, and a variety of students’ academic performances).

Dr. Moody further maintained that one of the most important skills that should be mastered by faculty champions in the cadre is this: identifying and rising above cognitive errors and shortcuts as well as having several effective strategies for helping colleagues and students do the same. Why? These errors lead to the unwitting undervaluing of women, minorities, and other negatively stereotyped groups during times of evaluation. These errors retard faculty and student diversity.]