

Diversity and Inclusion – Steady Progress by Degrees

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There is nothing easy about changing a culture. The faculty and student body in Ogden College of Science and Engineering at Western Kentucky University located in South-Central Kentucky is, not surprisingly, predominantly white and male. Our ability to establish a more diverse and a more inclusive faculty has been slow, deliberate, and methodical. Yet, over a five year period, we have made significant progress. This talk strives to illustrate that constant effort and cumulative small victories can make a meaningful difference in successful hiring and long term retention of faculty from under-represented groups. Impactful hiring strategies included defining diversity and inclusion as a core value for the college, providing networking and social opportunities for faculty in under-represented groups, and incentivizing search committees to include diverse candidates in the interview pool. Some successful retention strategies for under-represented groups included targeted mentoring, providing networking and social opportunities, and flexible application of policies and procedures. These and other strategies will be discussed.