RECRUITING AND RETAINING FACULTY OF COLOR: An Imperative for Future Sustainability

Part of Buckley living up to its mission, which includes a commitment to equity and inclusion in the first sentence, means recruiting and retaining faculty of color. This became a clear imperative over the past year, and one that Ron Kim, the interim assistant head of school, took very seriously.

In the independent school world, getting candidates of color for teaching positions doesn’t happen by accident. Along with Director of Equity and Inclusion Ralinda Watts, Kim put in place several steps to attract a more diverse applicant pool.

These steps for recruitment and retention are ways that Buckley can aspire to live its “commitment to equity and inclusion,” as stated in the mission.

- Make it clear in the application process that Buckley is looking for candidates with some experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Candidates may then self-select out based on that necessary qualification.
- Look for active engagement and previous experience in DEI represented in their cover letter. Read a candidate’s statement on their engagement of DEI and how it has enhanced their own learning and that of their students.
- All resumes are vetted by the assistant head to ensure they meet Buckley’s institutional needs of a commitment to DEI. This matters to our community across all divisions, disciplines, and touch points within the school community.
- Attend regional and national hiring fairs with an emphasis on candidates of color, such as the Carney Sandoe Diversity Fair and the Southern California Diversity Recruiting Fair.
- Include DEI as part of the conversation and communicate its importance in the interview.
- Create a Diversity Committee open to faculty and staff. This committee would create ideas for recruiting and retaining faculty of color and implement change and progress.
- Provide professional development funds to support growth and retention.
- Support opportunities for affinity networking, leadership advancement, and conference participation in POCC, Equity Institute, and the LA Diversity Director Consortium, among others.

FACULTY AND STAFF ENGAGE IN GENDER IDENTITY CONVERSATION

As part of faculty and staff professional development, the Office of Equity and Inclusion invited Dr. Donald Grant, psychologist and mental wellness expert and coach, to an afterschool meeting to discuss the ways educators can support students in the classroom and conversation as they navigate a barrage of messages about gender norms. How can we provide safe spaces for positive self-esteem, healthy identity development, and the acceptance of differences? In his workshop, Dr. Grant explored the themes of gender, transgender identity, and microaggressions, along with strategies for how we can actively contribute to creating a gender inclusive school community.

Some highlights from Dr. Donald Grant’s presentation included:

- “Trans includes gender identity and expression. Many would prefer not to be included in the LGBTQ spectrum, which addresses sexual preference.”
- “Some key terms: Sex (what you are assigned at birth); Gender Identity (the gender you identify as); Sexual Orientation (who you are attracted to); Gender Expression (how you express your gender).”
- “Being transgender does not mean that you are assigned a label or category or that you wish to conform to the gender binary. Many people, especially younger urban transgender people, are embracing identity terms like genderqueer, gender fluid, bi-gender, tri-gender, etc. A trans individual may not want to pass, be trying to pass, or can pass.”
- “‘Intersex’ refers to those who are born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn’t seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male. For example, a person might be born appearing to be female on the outside, but having mostly male-typical anatomy on the inside.”
- “It’s important to remember that just because someone is trans, that doesn’t mean it is okay to ask them questions about their bodies.”
- “Respectfully ask someone how they would like to be addressed if you are not sure: ‘Which pronoun do you prefer?’ or ‘How would you like to be referred to, in terms of gender?’”