

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 5232

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 5, 2021

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 5232.

This bill requires each public institution of higher education to develop a faculty and student diversity plan. The diversity plan will establish clear and specific goals for increasing the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and students for each academic program at the institution. The institution is directed to update the diversity strategic plan every three years, and as needed.

The bill also requires a public institution of higher education to annually develop and submit to the Secretary of Higher Education a student diversity report. The student diversity report must include demographic analyses of students and recent graduates, for each academic degree program at the institution, as well as a description of any targeted programs, services, or supports offered by the institution to support the successful education of students who represent diverse backgrounds. The bill directs the Secretary of Higher Education to prepare, and submit to the Governor and the Legislature, an annual report containing a compilation of the collected data.

The bill also directs the governing board of a public institution of higher education to assign a new or existing employee to serve as a faculty diversity ambassador for each school of the institution. The faculty diversity ambassador will ensure the implementation of the diversity strategic plan.

Under the bill, a public institution of higher education must provide annual diversity training to all faculty, staff, and students who may serve on a faculty search committee. The training must set forth a list of specific interventions for addressing unconscious bias in the context of faculty recruitment. Under the bill, institutions are required to increase the number of candidates considered for faculty positions who are members of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups by such measures as are established by that institution's governing board. The institution must report annually to the Governor and to the Legislature on its efforts.

The bill requires the Secretary of Higher Education to develop guidance for public institutions of higher education concerning the faculty search and selection process. The purpose of the guidance will be to assist institutions in identifying, recruiting, and retaining diverse faculty.