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Students back affirmative action for law faculty

by Tiba Altoma
ids Staff Writer

2/27/79

An affirmative action policy to encourage the selection of more women and minority faculty members in the I.U.-Bloomington School of Law was suggested by law students Monday.

In an open meeting of the Faculty Appointments Committee, law students expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that only five of the 36 law faculty are women. Two of the faculty members, including one of the women, are minorities.

Law School Dean Sheldon Plager told students in an open meeting earlier this month that "there has been a failure on the part of the school to hire women and minorities."

"In the people we have looked at so far, we have been disappointed with what we've seen," Plager said.

The two student members of the appointments committee agreed that they have been disappointed in the women and minority candidates. Susan Macey, second-year law student, said, "The women and minority candidates that have come here for visits have not impressed me."

Mary Doheny, second-year law student and member of the Women's Law Caucus, asked the committee if the faculty selection process could be changed to encourage more women and minority faculty members to join.

But Douglass Boshkoff, law professor and chairman of the committee, said the

number of active women and minority candidates this year in the school's selection process was higher than the national listing of candidates.

Twenty-two percent of the candidates were women and 13 percent were minorities. In the national listing of available candidates, only 13.3 percent were women and 5.7 percent were minorities.

"The reason our pool of women and minority candidates was higher than the national pool was because we made extraordinary efforts to check out all the possibilities of such candidates," Boshkoff said.

During the selection process, the committee reviewed lists of black law teachers and wrote every chapter of the

National Bar Association to inquire about women and minority candidates. The committee also spoke with women graduates of the campus' law school.

The seven-member appointments committee selects faculty candidates on the basis of academic record, recommendations, the prominence of institution they graduate from and what they have published. Boshkoff and the committee want people "who are effective in classroom teaching and show scholarly promise."

After a screening process by the committee, the top candidates are brought to Bloomington for a variety of activities with the faculty and students, who evaluate them for the committee. Once a candidate is approved by the committee,

the final decision is made by the law school dean.

The selection process is a tough and hectic process, Boshkoff said. "We're dealing with only a finite amount of time to hire and (the number of) people we can see is sharply limited. Good people come on the market and quickly disappear," he said.

In this year's selection process, Boshkoff told students that the committee will investigate every woman law teacher from various institutions listed in the latest edition of the Association of American Law Schools directory.

He said fewer faculty positions need to be filled this year, and the committee has time to "survey the candidates more broadly."