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Fostering Equity & Diversity in Faculty Recruitment

Janet Fleetwood

Nancy Aebersold

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Academic Leadership Journal

Fostering Equity & Diversity in Faculty Recruitment

Faculty Searches and Best Practices

Participating in a search for a new faculty member, whether as a search committee member, search committee chairperson, department chairperson, or dean, poses unique challenges for those in academics. Though we may be an expert in conducting rigorous research, a prolific writer, or a gifted “sage on the stage” in the classroom, few of us are also experts in academic recruiting. All too frequently we bumble through the search process, hoping fervently that the person we ultimately hire – the person who will likely be our colleague for decades – is someone who will turn out to be a serious scholar, productive researcher, collegial colleague, and an engaging educator.

In the last few decades, those in academics have recognized that the task of faculty recruiting is additionally complicated by the need to consider diversity and equity. Most universities strive to provide faculty role models for their increasingly diverse student population. Moreover, the need for diverse perspectives and experiences to create a multicultural learning environment spurs us to widen our recruitment net to attract a wide range of candidates. Similarly, we share serious concerns about equity for women faculty who are underrepresented in tenure track positions and at senior faculty ranks and we want to ensure that talented women candidates aren’t overlooked.

Faculty recruiting could certainly be improved. Compare the search for a new faculty member with the search for a new player on the college basketball team. The basketball coach, accustomed to vigorous competition in recruitment, heads out to the high school games and finds hot recruits. The coach then goes after the most desirable athletes, wooing them to campus. Yet in faculty recruiting, most often search committee just post an ad and wait. And wait. Then, when a sufficient pile of applications accumulates, they plow through the collection. What passes for a “Faculty Search” is really just a “Faculty Sort,” most closely characterized by committee members passively sorting through applications hoping to ferret out the candidate that demonstrates the desired qualities. Then the committee must hope that the candidate and the institution can come to an agreement, and that nothing – such as the needs of a dual-career couple – stands in the way of closing the deal. Surely there must be a better way.

The Higher Education Recruitment Consortium: History and Mission

The Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) was founded in the spring of 2000 by colleges and universities in Northern California to address faculty and staff recruitment issues, including concerns about diversity in academe and the challenge of dual-career recruitments. Since then, eleven regional consortiums – whose mission is to help recruit and retain outstanding and diverse faculty and staff and to assist dual-career couples – have developed across the country. In the spring of 2007, the HERC established a national organization to help support the mission and objectives of the regional HERCs and to promote HERC-wide visibility.

More than 500 campuses across the country are now collaborating to recruit and retain the most diverse and innovative faculty, staff, and executive job candidates and to assist dual-career couples. HERC's membership includes public and private colleges and universities, community colleges, faith based colleges, teaching hospitals, and governmental agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. Members are from urban campuses, rural campuses, and everything in between, including those designated as Hispanic Serving and Historically Black Institutions. Membership in a HERC is now considered by many as a "best practice," demonstrating an institution's commitment to equitable and diverse recruitment and to creating a supportive "family friendly" workplace.

The major function of each regional HERC is to maintain local, web-based search engines that include listings for all job openings, for both faculty and staff, at all member institutions. The services at the websites are available at no charge to anyone seeking employment in higher education. The centrality of job postings and regional relocation resources, as well as the website's ability to accommodate dual-career searches, distinguishes HERC from other employment websites. A key attribute of the website is that candidates and their accompanying partners can search for jobs within a commutable distance, post CVs and resumes, and set up email job alerts based on geographic and discipline preferences. In that way, partners can search for positions in the same geographic region together – a necessity in academe when one partner is often recruited to an institution in a distant city and an accompanying partner also needs a job. Institutional members can post an unlimited number of faculty, staff and executive job listings on the website, and all HERC jobs are cross-posted on the National HERC website and two leading job boards; Indeed.com and Simplyhired.com.

In addition to the web-based search engine, regional HERCs hold regular meetings for human resources and faculty affairs administrators to encourage the sharing of information, resources, and best practices that support member institutions in attracting and retaining outstanding and diverse faculty, administrators, and staff. Meetings also address dual-career policies and practices.

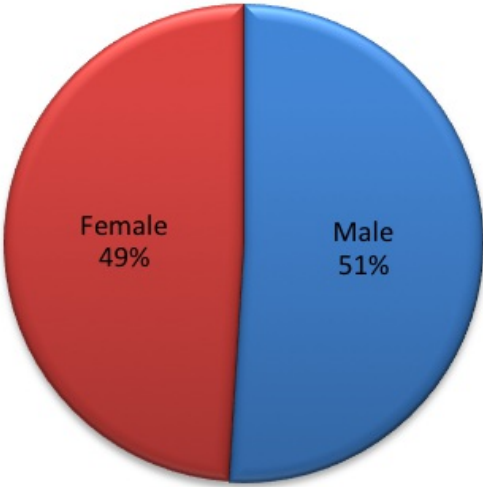
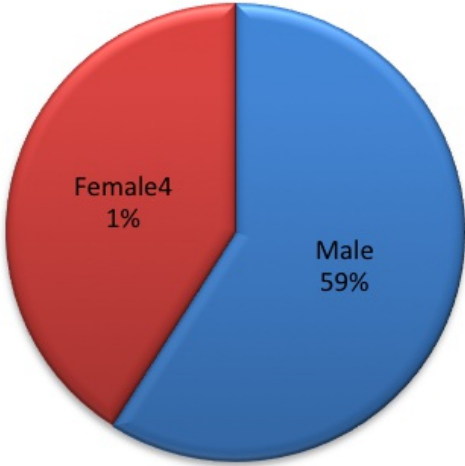
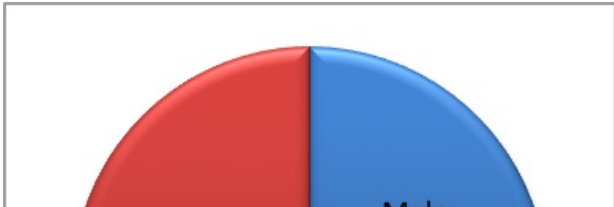
The National HERC has many functions including collecting program assessment data; developing national advertising, marketing, and partnerships; initiating cost savings for regional HERCs; and providing a singular point of contact for new HERCs, vendors, and partners. In addition, in 2009-2010 the National HERC launched a webinar series for HERC member representatives and their colleagues. Fourteen webinars addressed issues including diversity, technology, social networking, faculty research, and dual-career programming and had 560 participants. The National HERC has also established partnerships with organizations, associations, and publications that represent and serve women and minority faculty and future faculty in order to increase awareness of the HERC jobs website and member institution job opportunities. Targeted advertising for the HERC appears in *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, *Insight Into Diversity*, *Women in Higher Ed*, *Hispanic Outlook Magazine*, and *Latinos in Higher Ed*.

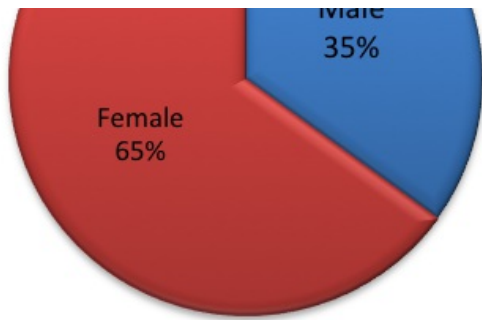
As HERC has expanded across the country so have the programs and impact. The National HERC Website, www.hercjobs.org, allows jobseekers to search more than 14,000 faculty, staff and executive jobs – the highest number of job listings of any higher education jobs website. Jobseekers can also post a résumé or CV so that search committee members or recruitment professionals can contact them directly about job openings. HERC currently has 110,000 registered jobseekers and the combined HERC websites average 1,150,000 monthly visitors. Moreover, the user demographics for

race and gender consistently outpace national averages, making the HERC websites a good place to attract a diverse applicant pool.

HERC Gender Distribution Data

The percentage of female HERC-wide registered users is significantly higher than the national averages as well as within the Academy.

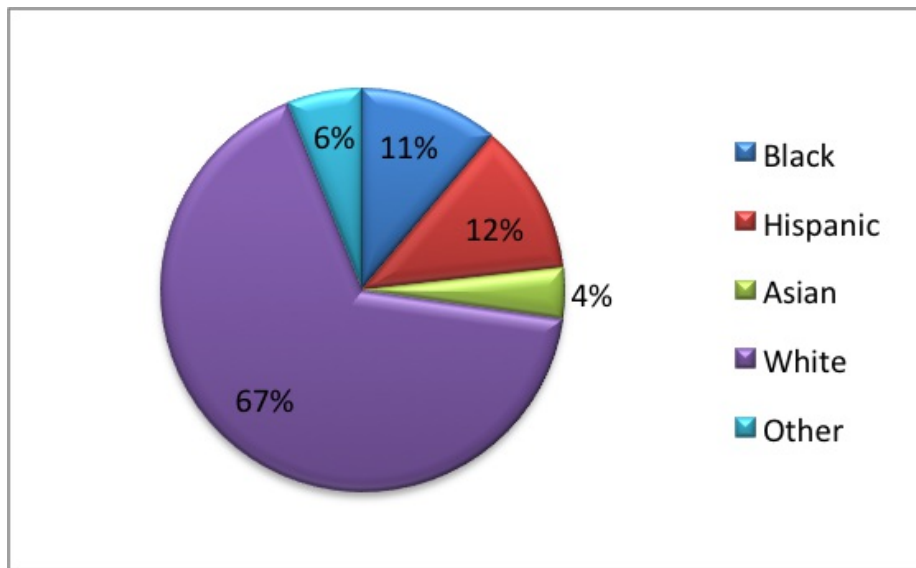
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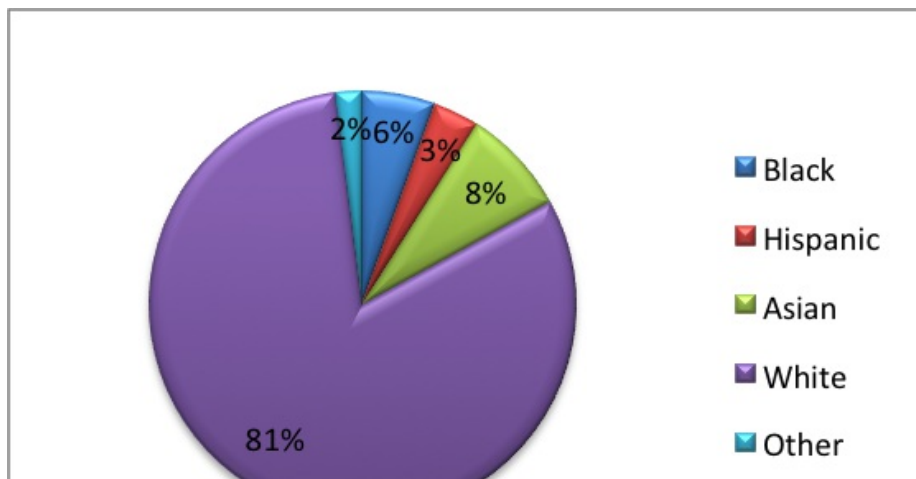
As of September 17, 2010.

HERC Race & Ethnicity Distribution Data

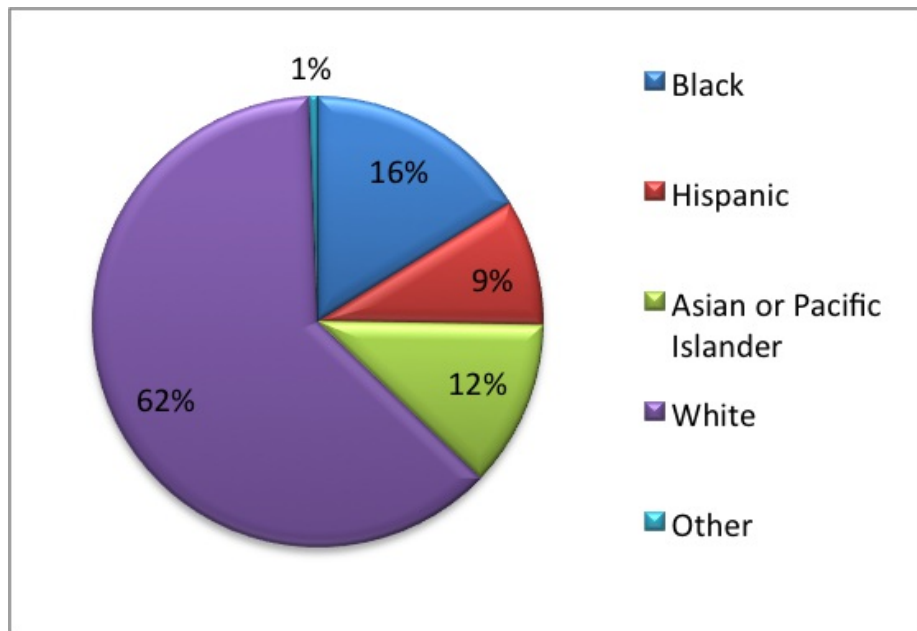
The percentage of minority HERC-wide registered users is significantly higher than the national averages as well as within the Academy.



**US 2005
American
Community
Survey**



**Faculty in US
2005 Chronicle
of Higher
Education**



**HERC
Registered
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**(80,000
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users)**

As of September 17, 2010.

Dual-Career Concerns

In academics, where over 70% of faculty members are in dual-career relationships and more than a third are partnered with another academic, the decision to accept a position frequently becomes contingent upon an offer of job search assistance and opportunities for the accompanying partner. For women in science and technology fields, the pressure is especially intense. 83% of women scientists in academic couples are partnered with another scientist compared with 54% of male scientists. Institutions that recognize this need and take steps to facilitate partner relocation and career continuation have an advantage. By offering job search assistance to accompanying partners, academic institutions increase the likelihood of hiring their first-choice candidates.

In August 2008, the Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University published [Dual-career Academic Couples: What Universities Need to Know](#). Based on the partnering status of full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty in thirteen top U.S. research universities, the study investigated the impact of dual-career partnering on hiring, retention, professional attitudes, and work culture in the U.S. university sector. It also made strategic recommendations for improving the way universities work with dual-career candidates. Key findings of the study include:

- Faculty members' career decisions are strongly influenced by partner employment status.
- As a strategy to enhance competitive excellence, dual couple hiring is on the rise in U.S. universities.

- Dual couple hiring can help build a more diverse, equitable, and competitive workforce, especially with regard to gender. For example, women are more likely than men to have academic partners (40% of female faculty in the study sample versus 34% of male faculty). Rates of dual hiring are higher among women respondents than among men respondents (13% versus 7%). This means that couple hiring becomes a particularly relevant strategy for the recruitment and retention of female faculty.
- Women in academic couples report that their partners' employment statuses and opportunities are important to their own career decisions. Not only do women more often than men perceive a loss in professional mobility as a result of their academic partnerships (54% for women versus 41% for men), but they actively refuse job offers if their partner cannot find a satisfactory position.
- Universities are in danger of losing prized candidates if suitable employment cannot be found for a partner. When couples have choices, they prefer to live together and take jobs where each partner can flourish professionally. A full 88% of faculty who successfully negotiated a dual hire at their current institution indicated that the original hire would have refused the position had her or his partner not found appropriate employment.

In addition, a HERC can help retain current faculty. A regional HERC can enable a partner of a faculty or staff member who wishes to re-enter the workforce after time out, or those who want to change positions, to find positions within their current geographic region. This helps retention, as the current faculty member in the dual-career relationship whose partner is looking for career opportunities is less likely to be dragged off to another geographic region due to the partner's need to relocate for career advancement.

In September 2010, the American Association of University Professors' (AAUP) Committee on Women in the Academic Profession released a report about the importance of dual-career accommodations. Women, especially those in STEM disciplines, typically seek opportunities at research universities although research universities have historically appointed women as faculty members at considerably lower rates than in other sectors of higher education. In view of this, the report recommends that campuses may wish to consider dual-career accommodation as a key strategy to retain qualified women faculty. The report states, "HERCs provide a variety of services for listing and sharing open positions that can be invaluable in assisting academic partners. HERC membership costs vary by the size of the institution, making this option, where available, particularly useful for smaller institutions without the resources to establish a partner-accommodation program. Institutions may also establish less formal networks for information sharing about openings at nearby colleges and universities or in local businesses and non-profit organizations. Such arrangements represent the least controversial option for offering accommodation to academic partners, and may be particularly useful for those colleges and universities that are unable to offer extensive assistance because of limited resources."

Both the Clayman Institute study and the AAUP Committee on Women report cite the work of the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) in making a significant contribution to addressing dual-career concerns. Among the Stanford study's top ten recommendations is that campuses collaborate with neighboring institutions. The study notes that the many Higher Education Recruitment Consortia (HERCs) springing up around the country provide new opportunities for institutions to

coordinate job opportunities. Additionally, the study reports, “One of HERC’s strengths is facilitating collaboration between diverse institutions, which gives faculty partners a broad array of choices in searching for institutions that fit their preparation and background.” (L. Schiebinger, A. Henderson, S. Gilmartin, 2008, p. 68).”

In addition to the Clayman Institute study and the AAUP Committee on Women, several leaders in academics have commented about the HERC:

“Dual academic career issues continue to be an increasing challenge in faculty hiring. The Northern California HERC web site and network is an important resource for us – jobs found through HERC have been key in our ability to recruit several faculty.”

Pat Jones, Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity and the Dr. Nancy Chang Professor of Biological Sciences, Stanford University

“The HERC is one of the most exciting experiments I know in building partnerships among regional institutions. It has been a wonderful tool for us to use in addressing our dual-career needs, but also for encouraging other kinds of collaboration around diversity initiatives and pipeline-building activities.”

Jean E. Howard, George Delacorte Professor in the Humanities and Chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature, Vice Provost for Diversity Initiatives (2004 – 2007)

Columbia University

“HERC has helped Harvard in our efforts to assist faculty partners. It gives them another helpful and valuable tool to use in looking for a job, and it also shows that Harvard is at the forefront of the commitment to help dual-career couples and to enhance diversity.”

*Elizabeth Ancarana, Assistant Dean for Faculty Development
Harvard University*

“A major consideration for two-career couples, where one partner is being recruited for employment in a new location, is the availability of appropriate career opportunities for one’s spouse or partner. HERC provides two-career couples with the kind of information and assistance on employment opportunities in area universities and government agencies needed to keep both careers on track.”

David J. Ramsay, DM, D. Phil.

Former President, University of Maryland, Baltimore

Return on Investment

The National HERC and all regional HERCs are non-profit organizations and membership dues are set to cover operating costs only. Dues range from \$750 per year to \$13,000 per year, depending on the region and institutional size. Each region has membership tiers so institutions with smaller budgets pay less and institutions with larger budgets pay more. These costs cover all HERC job listing and participation expenses, and provide access to discounted rates with HERC affiliates in web and print advertising, employee background screening, and some family-friendly campus resources.

To estimate the return on investment, it is important to review both financial and non-financial returns. From the perspective of an academic administrator, HERC's return on investment is excellent. HERC has built metrics into its job board technology that measures website traffic, referral sources, total jobs posted, number of job views, and detailed information about jobseekers. Data is available 24/7 to HERC institutional members, and is customized for each institution to show daily "hits" for each job posted.

Moreover, HERC membership demonstrates an institution's commitment to diverse recruiting, as HERC users are statistically diverse by race and gender. It also shows that the institution is committed to supporting employees' work-life balance by helping partners and family members who may need jobs in the geographic region. Participating in the HERC also supports the local academic community by helping to recruit new talent and retain employees with dual-career needs. It provides regional networking and educational opportunities for those engaged in recruitment. Most important, HERC provides an additional venue for publicizing all open positions in an institution and helps to ensure that all funded open positions undergo a thorough and open search process.

HERC's main weakness is in data tracking for dual-career placements, and the organization is developing strategies to address this. Currently the HERC tracks job seekers' inquiries, but not actual hires, so HERC can't currently provide hiring outcome data. For applicants to one's own institution, one simply needs to ask the applicant how they heard about the job and track how many list the HERC. However, for dual-career partner placements outside one's own institution, tracking the HERC's impact is more complex. Institutions must do their own follow up on dual-career job searches to determine if the partner actually found a position in the region and, if so, whether or not it was through the HERC.

So while membership in the HERC helps demonstrate an institution's commitment to diverse recruiting, provides important publicity for open positions within the institution, offers regional networking and educational meetings and workshops on faculty recruiting, and shows a concern for the family of potential and current employees whose partners are seeking a job, the HERC can't yet tell us exactly how many partners actually find jobs via the regional HERC and get hired. To keep this in perspective, however, institutions don't generally have that data currently, as most schools generally only collect data on their own hires. In sum, despite the present inability to track successful partner placements, the HERC is a terrific value and an excellent way to help foster equity and diversity in academe.

What You Can Do to Foster Faculty Equity & Diversity at Your Institution:

There is a significant body of literature about fostering faculty equity and diversity in recruitment and retention. Simple strategies, like diversifying the search committee itself, becoming aware of implicit bias and taking steps to overcome it, and designing equitable recruitment practices, can lead to better searches. Work-life balance initiatives, such as automatic tenure clock stops for family leaves, can also make the workplace more equitable. Clearly, however, participation in a HERC is a valuable tool. Here are some tips for engaging with your regional HERC.

If you are an academic leader, such as a College President, Provost, Vice Provost, or Dean:

v Determine if your campus is a member of a regional HERC by going online to the National Office at <http://www.hercjobs.org>

v If not, contact your school's faculty equity officer – often in the Provost's Office or President's Office or in Human Resources – to explore affiliating through the National Office

v If so -

Ø Commit your support by attending the next regional meeting that is held near or on your campus or by supporting a HERC activity

Ø Be sure that all open faculty and staff positions across the institution are listed electronically so that the regional HERC is populated with all your institution's open positions (not just those that happen to be submitted by search committees that are aware of the HERC)

Ø Be sure to make the connection between the search committees, which are often sequestered in departments, and your institution's HERC representative who can ensure that all jobs get listed, that search committees know how to search the CV database, and that dual-career resources are distributed to candidates

Ø Publicize your institution's HERC membership on your institution's website and be sure faculty know about it

Ø If you hear about a faculty member whose partner is re-entering the workforce or considering a job change, encourage the faculty member to use the regional HERC. The HERC is an effective tool for faculty retention as well as recruitment, as finding the partner a local position may avoid the undesired departure of your own faculty member.

If you are a member or chairperson of a faculty search committee:

v Determine if your campus is a member of a regional HERC by going online to the National Office at <http://www.hercjobs.org>

v If not, contact your school's faculty equity officer – often in the Provost's Office or President's Office or in Human Resources – to explore affiliating through the National Office

v If so -

Ø Be sure that all open faculty and staff positions are posted to your regional HERC website

Ø Search the CV database for qualified candidates

Ø Contact your regional HERC Director for HERC dual-career postcards to include in your recruitment materials

Ø Contact your institution's equity officer – often in the Provost's Office or President's Office or in Human Resources - to see what kind of support for dual-career couples your institution offers

If you are a faculty advisor to graduate students:

v Make sure your advisees are aware of the HERC websites as a job search resource and that they post their CV and register to receive email job alerts in their discipline at <http://www.hercjobs.org>

v Help your advisees become comfortable raising dual-career needs during their hiring process by providing them advice about researching campus dual-career programs and policies and practical negotiation tips (studies have shown that the earlier in the process dual-career needs are identified, the more time the hiring campus has to work on a suitable accommodation)

And finally, whatever your role in academics, spread the word about HERC. The more institutional members and website users, the more jobs online and the more diverse the applicant pools. The more jobs and the bigger the applicant pools, the better the HERC functions. And the better the HERC functions, the more faculty equity for all.

Contact Information:

If there is not a HERC in your region and you would like to learn about establishing a HERC, contact the National HERC Director, Nancy Aebersold at nancy@nationalherc.org.

National HERC Website: www.hercjobs.org

Regional HERCs

Greater Chicago Midwest HERC

Website: <http://www.gcherc.org>

Metro New York & Southern Connecticut HERC

Website: <http://www.mnyscherc.org>

Michigan HERC

Website: <http://www.michiganherc.org>

Mid-Atlantic HERC

Website: <http://www.midatlanticherc.org>

New England HERC

Website: <http://www.newenglandherc.org/>

NJ – Eastern PA – DE HERC

Website: <http://www.njepadeherc.org>

Northern California HERC

Website: <http://www.norcalherc.org>

Southern California HERC

Website: <http://www.socalherc.org>

St. Louis Regional HERC

Website: <http://www.stlrherc.org>

Upper Midwest HERC

Website: <http://www.uppermidwestherc.org>

Upstate New York HERC

Website: <http://www.upstatenyherc.org/>

Janet Fleetwood, Ph.D. is a non-compensated member of the National HERC Advisory Board.

Endnotes:

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