



Best Practices Equity & Inclusion in Faculty Recruitment¹

GOAL

The purpose of best practices in faculty recruitment and hiring is to recruit exceptional faculty. We also wish to ensure that faculty searches serve the university's mission of diversity, equity and inclusion by removing bias and guaranteeing all candidates fair and equitable treatment.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Crafting the Position

- a. Define the search broadly when possible; open rank and open specialty positions enable you to cast the widest net in terms of recruiting applicants.
- b. Consider including criteria on the job description that signals an inclusive climate such as a “diversity statement” that outlines candidates’ ability to attract, teach and mentor diverse students and/or the ability to contribute to the university’s diversity and inclusion mission.
- c. Avoid gender-coded language in the job description that may discourage women applicants.
- d. Discuss potential sources of bias in letters of recommendation and student evaluations and consider the role those will play in the evaluation of candidates; if they will play a minimal role consider not requiring them or only requiring them of candidates on the short list.

2. Forming a Committee

- a. Prioritize diversity (e.g., in terms of gender, rank, race/ethnicity) in the selection of committee members but avoid burdening any member of your unit with excessive committee service.
- b. Discuss research on bias openly with committee members (e.g., gender bias in recommendation letters, racial bias in grant success and student evaluations) and develop an open commitment to limiting bias in the search process.
- c. Discuss and define the criteria for evaluation; create an evaluation rubric limited to “required” and “preferred” qualifications in the job description that clearly indicates how each qualification will be measured, evaluated and weighted.

3. Recruiting Applicants

- a. Engage your faculty and peer networks; share data on national and peer institutions; generate networks of potential candidates.

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- b. Post the position broadly including in targeted organizations, professional associations or publications that are likely to reach high-potential women and minority candidates.
- c. Contact graduate directors and graduate students on the market in programs that graduate large numbers of women and minority students (list available from USU's AA/EE Office).
- d. Send personal invitations to distinguished women and minority scholars, including those who have recently won awards from their professional associations. Personal invitations to qualified candidates increase the likelihood of a diversity pool.
- e. Engage faculty, graduate students and recent graduates and peers at other institutions in disseminating the position.
- f. Before reviewing applications, compare the applicant pool to national availability; if your pool does not reflect national availability consider extending the application deadline and increasing targeted recruitment.

4. Reviewing Applications

- a. Factors that increase bias in the review process include stress, time pressure and ambiguity in selection criteria. To minimize bias, address each of these sources of bias in the process and timeline for review; encourage committee members to spend adequate time (e.g., 15-20 minutes) per application and to evaluate applications in multiple sittings.
- b. Ensure each candidate is only evaluated on the criteria listed in the job ad and identified as meaningful to the search; limit discussion and evaluation of applicants to the criteria on the rubric; avoid summary rankings; avoid elitism; discourage/disallow committee members to consider prestige of graduate institution or status of graduate mentor independent from individual candidate's qualifications.
- c. Each candidate should be evaluated by multiple committee members to ensure a fair evaluation; all materials should be considered in the evaluation; do not rely only one element (e.g., letters of recommendation or student evaluations) as the basis of an evaluation.
- d. Discourage/disallow committee members to evaluate materials other than those required by the job description and/or not submitted by the candidate (e.g., social media, informal discussions with colleagues/peers).
- e. Discourage committee members from globally ranking candidates; instead evaluate each candidate on their strengths; create multiple rankings of candidates (e.g., teaching, research, service) and reduce pool to candidates who score highly in all areas; if short list does not reflect national availability, return to leading women and minority candidates in the pool to see if evaluation bias excluded them from the shortlist.

5. Creating a Short List

- a. Compare your medium and short list to national availability. Have underrepresented candidates been weeded out? If so, consider revisiting the evaluation criteria.



6. Campus Visits

- a. Develop a protocol for the committee interview that relates only to criteria in the job ad and do not subject candidates to different expectations or evaluation criteria (See 4b above.)
- b. Discuss with committee members and other stakeholders (faculty, graduate students) potential sources of bias and discrimination in job interviews; circulate “Strategies of Questioning” to all those who will come into contact with candidates (available from USU’s AA/EO Office).
- c. Immediately after a candidate visit, gather input from faculty and students promptly; provide rubric of clear criteria for evaluation and feedback; discourage rankings by non-committee members.

7. Final Candidate Evaluation

- a. Using the rubric, revisit the full application of all candidates including the feedback from faculty and students.
- b. Avoid global rankings prior to discussion; discourage committee members to consider information or material not relevant to the evaluation criteria.
- c. Create multiple rankings and narrow candidates based on strengths in each area of evaluation.

8. Next Steps

- a. Consider implementing a Search Advocate training program at USU similar to Oregon State. Search Advocates are trained faculty and staff who serve on search committees to ensure best practices.
- b. Consider a financial incentive for units that implement best practices in recruitment and hiring, including a portion of the new faculty’s salary.
- c. Consider implementing an accountability and monitoring process modeled on Johns Hopkins University that includes data tracking, public reporting, data metrics that compare the applicant pool and short list of candidates to national arability in that field or discipline.
- d. Consider implementing Brown University’s policy that requires a diversity and inclusion plan at the department level for each search prior to approval that specifies specific steps that will be taken to ensure best practices in the search.
- e. Consider implementing a Diversity Postdoc Fellowship program and/or a Diversity Visiting Scholars Program with a pipeline to a full time faculty position.



Evidence of Impact

Sociology Faculty Searches

Applicant Pool	2015	2017#
% WOMEN	38%	48%
National availability women PhDs in sociology*	65-70%	65-70%
% POC	12%	43%
National availability minority PhDs in sociology*	35-40%	35-40%

using STRIDE best practices

*Based on 2012 ASA/NSF Survey of Earned Doctorates with estimates based on previous 5 years (2007-2012) annual growth.

Additional Resources:

American Association of University Professors (AAUP)’s 2018 report, “Student Evaluations of Teaching are Not Valid.” Available at: <https://www.aaup.org/article/student-evaluations-teaching-are-not-valid>

University of Arizona’s Commission on the Status of Women, “Avoiding Gender Bias in Reference Writing.” Available at: https://csw.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/avoiding_gender_bias_in_letter_of_reference_writing.pdf

Brown University’s 2016 “Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion: An Action Plan”: <https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/institutional-diversity/pathways>

University of California-Berkeley, “Searching for a Diverse Faculty: Data-Driven Recommendations”: https://ofew.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/searching_for_a_diverse_faculty_data-driven_recommendations.pdf

Chronicle of Higher Education (9/11/6) “How to Do a Better Job of Searching for Diversity”: <http://www.chronicle.com/article/How-to-Do-a-Better-Job-of/237750>

Columbia University’s “Best Practices in Faculty Search and Hiring”: <http://facultydiversity.columbia.edu/best-practices-faculty-search-and-hiring>

Gaucher, Friesen and Kay (2011). “Evidence that Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality.” Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 101(1), 109-128. Available at: <http://gap.hks.harvard.edu/evidence-gendered-wording-job-advertisements-exists-and-sustains-gender-inequality>

Utah State University



Johns Hopkins “Faculty Diversity Initiative”: <http://facultyaffairs.jhu.edu/provosts-office-faculty-initiatives/faculty-diversity-initiative/>

University of Michigan’s Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence (STRIDE) Program: <http://advance.umich.edu/strideResources.php>

Oregon State’s “Tenured Faculty Diversity Initiative”:
<http://academicaffairs.oregonstate.edu/tenured-faculty-diversity-initiative>

University of Utah’s Office of Equity & Diversity “Accelerated Recruitment of Racially/Ethnically Diverse Faculty Initiative, 2014-2017”: <http://diversity.utah.edu/faculty-hiring-initiative/>

Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute, “Reviewing Applicants: Research on Bias and Assumptions”: https://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure_3rdEd.pdf