

## "Diversifying" the Search Process

### Strategies for Recruiting Faculty & Staff from Historically Under-Represented Groups\*

**Step 1: Pre-Search Strategy & Planning** as early in the search process as possible, meet to discuss carrying out a search that will be as accessible and transparent as possible. Search process and outcomes will be more effective if time is spent on the front-end of the search, as a clear foundation. The committee can gather before the process begins to discuss the following:

- The search process itself. What are the procedures, criteria and expectations for reaching decisions? Are all members of the search full participants? Has the job announcement already been crafted? Do all members have access to files, meetings, candidate visits? Is the dept/ cmtte willing to add diversity considerations to the list of file review criteria and/or to interview questions?
- Determine what resources the department has for recruiting a diverse candidate pool.
- Opportunities and obstacles to recruiting a diverse candidate pool. What are the challenges in the field? What "usual" practices of searches at your university and/or in your dept may become an obstacle for recruiting a diverse pool of applicants? What existing professional groups, university or program departments should be contacted?
- Discuss what alterations to the search committee membership can be made to increase its effectiveness at recruiting a diverse applicant pool (new strategies & avoiding tokenism).

**Step 2: Job Announcements.** The goal is to attract a diverse applicant pool. Generally, the more narrowly crafted the position description, the harder it is to reach that goal. Expand your criteria to include diversity goals (expanded curriculum and pedagogy; experience teaching and mentoring culturally diverse groups; evidence of cultural competency). Suggestions for language:

- Make subfields and (where appropriate) qualifications *preferred* instead of required.
- Require materials beyond cover letter, cv and recommendations. Ask for copies of articles, sample syllabi, and pedagogy statements (or diversity statements).
- Request that the applicant include a specific statement that highlights how s/he plans to contribute to "diversity" in teaching, curriculum, research and service. This can be included in the cover letter, or an additional statement (like those for pedagogy and research agenda). This is one method of assessing the applicant's seriousness about making such a contribution, as well as makes a statement about the value your university places on inclusive excellence. (link to specific language of university's/college's mission)
- For variations on this theme, see "Diversifying the Faculty" by Turner, (AAC&U 2002, p.

17).

**Step 3: Recruitment Strategy.** Develop a recruitment strategy to create a large and diverse candidate pool. Formal advertising is not enough if you want to reach candidates who we do not usually attract.

- Tap into existing professional associations and listserves (within and outside of your discipline) that organize diverse communities. [e.g, the Latino Caucus of the APSA and the Section on Race, Ethnicity & Politics host listserves allowing members to post job announcements.]
- Utilize "cold calls" if no one on your committee (or in the department) has such contacts already established. (These contacts should be cultivated over time.)
- Utilize contacts in graduate departments.
- Invite women and minority graduate students to apply. See the Minority and Women Doctorate Directory and the Consortium for Faculty Diversity program scholars:

[http:// www.depauw.edu/ac1min/acadamlirs/CFD/2007.asp](http://www.depauw.edu/ac1min/acadamlirs/CFD/2007.asp).

**Step 4: Reading Files.** During the application vetting process, including attention to the following "diversity" issues will help to develop a stronger pool. In assessing applications, look for evidence of:

- The ability or willingness to engage diverse and historically marginalized perspectives in the classroom;
- Research or teaching interests that expand the existing curriculum or understanding of the traditional discipline in ways that incorporate the voices of HURM groups;
- Experience teaching, working with and perhaps mentoring HURM students; equally compelling is experience with engaging the issues of equity and social justice with students from privileged (over-represented) backgrounds;
- Diverse perspectives, background or experiences.

**Step 5: Evaluating Qualifications & Application Materials.** Criteria should be applied consistently across all the applications. The criteria should be relevant. If a screening form is used, encourage that one criteria of evaluation be related to "diversity" contributions.

- Discuss bias or systematic patterns in seemingly "objective" measures
  - ★ Attendance at elite graduate programs (lack of equity in the pipeline)
  - ★ Letters of Recommendations
  - ★ Rates of matriculation, opportunities for mentorship

- ★ Teaching Evaluations
- ★ Liberal arts background
- Raise issues of diversity in curricular offerings, pedagogy, research and service
- Intentionally work to interrupt biases and assumptions made about applicants
  - ★ Examine doubts that diverse candidates are qualified. Verify assertions that diverse candidates (individually) are unqualified .
  - ★ Discrimination is most pronounced when candidates have ambiguous qualifications; white candidates get the "benefit of the doubt" (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000)

**Step 6: Interviewing the Candidates.** Questions about the candidate contributions to diversity should get asked of everyone. Ask at least one diversity question at the initial screening interviews (at conference or on the phone with "long list").

- Avoid conjecture about someone's interest in or lack of interest in diversity concerns.
- Avoid assumptions about who candidates are interested in meeting with, what neighborhoods to tour and what restaurants are selected. Develop an interview plan that already considers diversity and apply it consistently with all candidates.
- Communicate the value placed upon the candidate's contributions to diversity on campus, as well as the challenges of engaging diversity and equity issues on the campus. Searches are not only looking for the narrow disciplinary contributions within the field, but also looking for people who will contribute more broadly to living out these institutional values.

**Step 7: Candidate Selection & Hiring.** Having intentionally designed a search process that considers the value of "making excellence inclusive", determine which candidate to offer.

- The value placed on "comfort" and "fit" are conventions of academic culture that keep the system reproducing itself. Consider how candidates whose pedagogy and scholarship is non-traditional or "boundary pushing" can enhance your department, curriculum, and campus.
- After the candidate has been offered the position, the search chair and/ or "connected" committee member should call and email an invite further conversation and questions
- The compensation package should be carefully negotiated, so as to not undermine the diversity goals of the search process.

\*Developed by Dr. Emily Drew and Dr. Victor M. Rodriguez for "The Recruitment, Hiring and

Retention of Under-Represented Faculty” workshop, Rollins College, September 2008.

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