

Excellence and Diversity in Faculty Recruitment

When it comes to actually recruiting diverse faculty members, many search committees report that they cannot find qualified women or people of color to apply for their open positions. Research, however, has shown that committees succeed in hiring women and people of color when they transform the search process, are committed to diversity and are proactive about building a diverse applicant pool. University of Washington's Faculty Recruitment Toolkit has excellent ideas on how to implement these recommendations.

Expanding Your Applicant Pool:

- ★ **Always be recruiting.** Faculty can be recruiting as they see students and other faculty presenting at conferences and as they visit other institutions. This strategy provides a constant, steady flow of potential future colleagues. Departments could also establish a standing departmental committee charged with thinking about the unit's strategic plans and directions and identifying potential faculty who address these plans. Thus, when a faculty position does become available, the unit already has a sense of what areas to target and potential candidates to contact.
- ★ **Mine various resources for potential candidates** or for people who can help identify potential candidates. → See [Section 4](#) of the sample Faculty Recruitment Toolkit for resources.
- ★ **Grow your Own:** Consider hiring your own graduates.

Best Practices for Search Committees:

- ★ Include **proactive language** in the job announcement encouraging candidates to highlight their efforts to address diversity. → See [Section 5](#) of sample toolkit for examples.
- ★ **Ask your Dean to meet** with the committee at the beginning of the search process to reiterate the importance of diversity.
- ★ Decide how search committees will **actively recruit women and members of underrepresented groups** and document these processes.
- ★ **Reach committee consensus** on how qualifications will be weighted (e.g., the weight to be given to research versus teaching experience).
- ★ **Consider interviewing more than member of an underrepresented group.** Research shows that the likelihood of hiring a woman or another under-represented faculty member increases when more than one is interviewed.
- ★ **Avoid narrowing the search to one specific narrow research area.** Casting a broader net increases the diversity in the candidate pool.
- ★ **Maintain personal contact with prospective candidates**, even if they decide not to come to UW. They may be interested in the UW in the future.
- ★ **Customize the interview process for each candidate.** Ask candidates whom they would like to meet during their interview visit. Provide opportunities for candidates to meet people who might become part of their network across campus. Identifying a community is important for all faculty, particular faculty from underrepresented groups.

Keep in Mind - Biases and Assumptions Can Influence Candidate Searches

- ★ “Minority professors in majority academic settings often must struggle against the presumption that they are incompetent.” (Moody: 2004)
- ★ Psychological research demonstrates that women and other underrepresented candidates may be subject to different expectations than majority candidates (Trix & Psenka: 2003).
- ★ Candidates from institutions other than the major research universities may be undervalued
- ★ Assumptions about whether female or minority candidates will “fit in” to the existing environment can harbor bias and negatively impact the fairness of searches (Turner: 2002).

Best Fit for the Department is not Necessarily ‘Best in Field’

For future hiring seasons, we encourage you to work through an exercise with your faculty on ranking faculty candidates according to different criteria. This exercise is intended to encourage search committee members to be explicit about the criteria they are using to hire a new colleague. For example, faculty can create multiple ranking lists according to each criterion. These criteria can include:

- ★ Productivity/fundability
- ★ Teaching needs (if appropriate)
- ★ Possible collaborations
- ★ Record on diversity
- ★ Evidence of good citizenship

This exercise can create a process that helps search committees think more broadly about the strengths each candidate offers. It will also allow search committee members to discuss the multiple dimensions of a faculty’s role.

Other Resources

[University of Wisconsin's *Reviewing Applicants: Research on Bias and Assumptions* brochure](#)

[*Rising above Cognitive Errors: Guidelines for Search, Tenure Review, and Other Evaluation Committees*- by JoAnn Moody](#)