

Inclusive Search Practices



Bard College
2019

Introduction:

“The action of making excellence inclusive requires that we uncover inequities in student success, identify effective educational practices, and build such practices organically for sustained institutional change. We must aim at developing “equity-minded practitioners” who are willing to engage in the necessary, and sometimes difficult, conversations and decision-making that can lead to transformational change for student learning and achievement.”

Outline for Today

1. Program assessment
2. Writing Ads
3. Recruitment
4. Establishing review criteria
5. Application Review/Screening
6. Interviewing
7. Unconscious/Implicit Bias

1: Program Assessment

- Articulating programmatic/divisional vision
- Defining diversity, equity and inclusion aims within programs and divisions
- Fostering heterogeneity
- Evaluating program/division demographics (students and faculty)

2: Writing Ads

In order to attract a wide range of applicants, write the position description as broadly as possible and consider the following:

- Advertising broadly
- Position rank
- Cluster hiring (requires coordination across programs)
- Description appeal
- Signaling deep commitment to DEI

Refer to the ad template on the DOC website.

Sample Approaches to Inclusive Ads

- Commitment to DEI in position description
- Program/division description of DEI values and work
- College-wide commitment to DEI
- Description of supports
- Incorporating DEI into requested materials

3: Sourcing: Recruitment/Advertising/Networking

“Three primary techniques are used to cultivate a rich, diverse pool of applicants. The quality of the hire is dependent upon the quality of the pool...recruiting, networking and advertising are three parts of a whole and the second most important part of the process after defining the position...” -Search Committees

Stumbling blocks in sourcing:

- Narrow or biased view of PhD producing institutions
- Using “traditional” recruitment techniques (society conferences)
- Moving too quickly
- Connections to institutions producing highest numbers of underrepresented PhD.
- Shallow pools

4: Screening and Evaluating: written materials

- Establish review/screening criteria:
 - What do we mean by “most qualified” in this search?
 - Do our review criteria check against stumbling blocks and bias?
 - Will we use a single ranking system?
- Develop screening checklist
- Screening methods:
 - written materials,
 - conference/Skype interviews
 - etc.

5: Application Review/Screening: Proceed with Caution!

- Ranking prematurely
- Rushing to judgment
- Spend sufficient time reviewing applications.
- Create multiple rankings/ratings based on different criteria.

What's in a name? The Case of Jennifer vs. John

“Despite having the exact same qualifications and experience as John, Jennifer was perceived as significantly less competent. As a result, Jennifer experienced a number of disadvantages that would have hindered her career advancement if she were a real applicant. Because they perceived the female candidate as less competent, the scientists in the study were less willing to mentor Jennifer or to hire her as a lab manager. They also recommended paying her a lower salary. Jennifer was offered, on average, \$4,000 per year (13%) less than John.”

- Corinne Moss-Racusin

6: Interviewing; Establishing Interview Questions

Develop a set of key questions that will be posed to each candidate, and decide how/when/by whom these questions will be asked. Follow-up questions are of course fine and will depend on the candidates' responses.

- Develop “good” interview questions
- Create interview evaluation rubric/score sheet
- Commit to an equity-minded approach (consistency and fairness).
- Legal and Illegal questions

6: Interviewing; Visit Day: Preparation

- Each candidate's schedule should be roughly the same, and include a public presentation, a meeting with the appropriate administrator(s), lunch with students, meetings with faculty (from program, from search committee, and with shared scholarly interests), dinner with the search committee.
- Make sure the dean reviews the itinerary before it is shared with the candidate.
- Candidates may be provided with a menu of potential people they would like to talk to outside their program/division.
- Identify a day and time you will reconvene to evaluate the visit day.

Interviewing: Visit day

- Make sure everyone meeting with the candidate has a copy of the CV.
- Have a designated “point person” for the visit - the point person should know where the candidate is and whether there have been any adjustments to the schedule. Everyone should know who the point person is.
- Make sure everyone interviewing the candidate has the questions and interview evaluation sheet.
- The dean’s office will provide the admin assistant with a welcome packet; over the summer we can extend it to include information about area demographics.

Final candidates:

- Following the campus visits, the search committee should meet to develop its recommendation and send this in writing to the dean; also include any written comments received from others.
- The dean will meet with the search committee for a thorough discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate with respect to the institution's needs.
- The dean will consult with the president, extend an offer if one is to be made, and conduct negotiations.

7: Unconscious/Implicit Bias

Unconscious bias can play a powerful role in hiring. Acknowledging this and taking steps to develop awareness and equitable practices, can result in transformative institutional change.

- The perils of cultural fit biases
 - A “cultural fit” perspective or argument disadvantages first-generation, low-income and other groups underrepresented in the professoriate. This is particularly true in high prestige environments.
 - The distinguished “pedigree”
- Emphasizing values