

UT HSC INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND DIVERSITY

DIVERSITY MATTERS

Strategies for Diversifying Faculty Hiring

Creating the Position Description and Posting

1. **Re-think your required and preferred qualifications:** When preparing job descriptions for posting, departments often copy and paste the required and preferred qualifications from the previous time they posted the position. It is important to take time to review them and determine whether they are still applicable to the position, especially when it comes to preferred qualifications. Limiting the preferred qualifications can help broaden your pool of candidates, including potential under-represented candidates.
2. **Educate your search committee:** discuss the definition of unconscious bias with all members of the search committee. They should understand that we all have unconscious biases and that we always will. Therefore, it is important to stay aware of your biases so you can 'check' them when they occur. Some common unconscious biases when reviewing candidates include:
 - **Similarity Attraction Bias:** liking or showing preference towards a candidate that has similar traits or characteristics of ourselves. This can lead recruiters to assume they will be good at the job even when those traits and characteristics have little or nothing to do with the job.
 - **Conformity Bias:** when one's decision or judgement about a candidate is strongly influenced by another search committee member's judgement or the recruiting team collectively.
 - **Beauty Bias:** the tendency of recruiters to assume that 'attractive' people are more successful and will therefore be better than less 'attractive' people at the job. This also includes the bias of favoring someone who looks similar to the person who previously was in the position.
3. **Widen your candidate search:**
 - Reach out personally to minority co-workers and friends.
 - Utilize Minority Professional Organizations
 - Reach out to minority advocacy groups in your community
 - Check minority centered job boards such as the Professional Diversity Network
 - Attend conferences that center around minority professionals.

Pre-Evaluations and Initial Interviews

1. **Pre-Evaluation:** Before evaluating the candidates, the search committee members should develop a rubric based on the expectations laid out in the position description, including any required and preferred qualifications. Based on the metrics provided in the rubric, the committee should also create a

list of interview questions. It is advised that search committees wait until all candidates have been initially interviewed to evaluate them collectively to determine who advances to the final interviews. Evaluating candidates immediately after each interview creates a potential for unconscious bias as candidates are often compared only the candidates that have already been interviewed.

- 2. Initial Interview (Skype, Zoom, Conference Call):** Determine which method of interviewing the committee would like to offer the candidates. All candidates should be offered the same methods; however, it is okay if some candidates prefer one method over another. All candidates who meet the required qualifications should be considered in initial interviews (unless the candidate pool is unusually large, and it would be burdensome to do so). All candidates should have the opportunity to answer the same set of questions. Follow-up questions regarding experience and education that are specific to an individual candidate are permitted. Try to ensure that follow-up questions remain relevant to the position description.
- 3. What can we ask/not ask:** Search committees should refrain from asking certain questions related to protected classes that could be perceived by the candidate or other recruiters as potentially discriminatory.
 - a. Do Not Ask About**
 - Age: Only permissible to confirm a candidate is old enough to work
 - Address: only mailing and willingness to relocate (do not ask if they rent or own)
 - Family or Marital status: only can you meet the needs of the work schedule
 - Health/Disability: Any relevant disability or accommodation needs should only be discussed once a candidate is an official employee
 - Race, Color, National Origin: do not ask 'what's your background' or 'where are you from'
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Pregnancy
 - b. What if the candidate brings it up?** It is okay if the candidate voluntarily brings up these topics, but the search committee should redirect any responses back to the prepared interview questions and position description. In addition, during the post-interview evaluations of the candidate, the volunteered information should not be discussed or considered.
 - c. You can ask**
 - Basic information, aka – ice breaker questions
 - Behavioral questions
 - Knowledge questions
 - Scenario questions
 - Learning outcomes question (faculty positions)
 - Include at least one question regarding diversity. Diversity questions should relate directly to the position whenever possible.