

Checklist of Best Practices* for Search and Screen Committees

Before the Search

GOOD:

- Clearly articulate campus rationale for support of faculty racial and ethnic diversity.
- Create a search committee that is enthusiastic and genuinely committed to faculty diversity.
- Develop and distribute a presidential statement outlining meaningful steps to be taken to achieve greater diversity among the student body and faculty.
- Incorporate the university's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness into campus and community addresses and publications.

BETTER:

In addition to the above,

- Create a diverse search committee – comprised of faculty, administrators, and students from both minority and non-minority backgrounds – that brings multiple perspectives and fresh ideas;
- Make sure that the search process is also viewed as a critical retention tool;
- Require diversity training for all administrators, chairpersons, and staff supervisors;
- Include and align commitment to diversity efforts in the institutional and departmental strategic plans as well as the mission statement;
- Create open lines of communication with potential faculty already in your department or school – adjunct or part-time professors, graduate students, and research associates.

BEST:

In addition to all of the above,

- Secure all resources needed to conduct a comprehensive search;
- Make sure that your campus has developed and continually audits a comprehensive plan to address and show a commitment to diversity in every area of campus life – faculty hiring, curricular reform, student enrollment, campus activities, and general campus climate;
- Establish and cultivate ongoing and routine relationships with local and national minority organizations and special interest groups as well as with students and faculty at colleges and universities that educate graduate students of color;
- Incorporate new research findings and data about faculty of color into the everyday practices of an institution. For example, convene information forums, roundtables, retreats, presenting emerging research and successful practices.

During the Search

GOOD:

- Explain to the committee its charge from the outset – commitment to the racial and ethnic diversity of the faculty must be a clearly stated goal.
- Critically analyze the job description and advertisement, making sure they are geared toward inclusiveness.
- Mail position announcements to minority groups and organizations, such as those included in this guidebook; university and local organizations, such as minority alumni; and local minority churches and organizations.
- Cover the cost of the candidate's expenses related to the interview – hotel, food, and travel.
- During the campus visit, make sure that all interactions with the candidate are honest and genuine.
- Offer to make available a person of similar background, interests, ethnicity, or gender to give their perspective on the campus and local community climate.

BETTER:

In addition to the above,

- Write a position description that attracts an diverse group of applicants;
- Contact by letter and phone previous faculty of color, visiting scholars and/or individuals who have made diversity-related presentations on campus;
- Establish a vita bank;
- Use listservs, bulletin board, and other forms of technology to announce positions and recruit potential candidates;
- Create an institution-wide funding pool to cover departmental expenses for costs associated with the on-campus interview of potential candidates, the cost of advertisements in minority publications, and travel costs for off-campus recruiting efforts.

BEST:

In addition to all of the above,

- Educate the search committee, and provide opportunities for discussion, on diversity and equity issues, including affirmative action rules and regulations, hiring myths, stereotypes, and biases;
- Utilize personal and professional networks to seek leads to potential minority candidates;
- Initiate recruitment trips to universities which prepare a significant number of minority Ph.D. graduates;
- Establish a pool of potential minority candidates through a Visiting Scholars, Faculty Fellows, and/or ABD Fellowship programs;
- Advise the candidate of any incentives that might be negotiable in the salary package (reduced workloads, grant-funded opportunities, etc.);
- Cover the cost of an additional campus/area visitation to explore housing.

After the Search

GOOD:

- Honor all start-up conditions mentioned in the final letter of agreement.
- Do not overload the new hire with excessive service demands – committee memberships, advising, etc.

BETTER:

In addition to the above,

- Follow-up with the new hire regularly to help with transitions and to answer any concerns that might develop in the first few days/weeks/months;
- Provide mentoring and professional development opportunities.

BEST:

In addition to all of the above,

- Continue efforts to diversify the faculty and other campus diversity initiatives;
- Provide the new hire with clearly stated standards and procedures regarding evaluation and performance;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the search process in order to avoid future missteps; acknowledge the successes and failures and share that information with other search committees;
- Provide successful departments with recognition and additional dollars to support their operating budget;
- Sponsor campus and community-wide gatherings to highlight the research, teaching, and service contributions of hired faculty of color.

*Sotello, C., & Viernes, T. (2002). *Diversifying the Faculty, A Guidebook for Search Committees*, Association of American Colleges and Universities, Washington, DC.