Faculty Recruitment Workshop for Diversity and Excellence

ADVANCE Program at the University of Michigan
Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence

Information About Today’s Workshop

- Interactive workshop
- Q&A at end
- Workshop resources available on Canvas site
  - Marked by
  - Access as we move through presentation, or later
  - Available to you all year
- Additional resources available at advance.umich.edu
  - Includes links to recommended literature

Why Do We Want to Talk About Faculty Recruiting?

- Recruiting colleagues is one of the most important things we do.
- Having a diverse and excellent faculty is central to our success as an institution.
- We should approach recruiting in a scholarly way.

Poll: What is your role in your department’s hiring process?
STRIDE’s Approach to Faculty Recruitment

- The U-M ADVANCE Program began in 2002 to address faculty diversity and excellence.
- The STRIDE Committee, launched in 2002, has involved dozens of senior faculty members from across campus. Their mission:
  - To examine the research literature, and to think about how it applies to faculty searches;
  - To identify Michigan-specific strategies for effective searches;
  - To communicate these strategies to colleagues on search committees.

Changing Faculty Composition

- We are recruiting an increasingly diverse faculty -- but we have more work to do.
  - We’ve made more progress on gender diversity than on racial/ethnic diversity.
  - We are an historically white university, and many of our fields are still dominated by one gender. Where do we want to be in 10 years? What strategies can we use to get there?

Overview of Today’s Presentation

Why diversity and excellence go hand-in-hand

What research can tell us about improving the search process

How to apply evidence-based strategies to the four stages of the search process

Wrap-up and Q&A

Why Do We Need to Recruit a Diverse Faculty in Order to Attain Excellence?

- A diverse faculty can provide positive role models and mentors for our diverse student body.
- Pursuing underrepresented diversity provides access to talent we currently lack.
- Socially and intellectually diverse teams make better decisions.
- Excellent institutions are committed to taking steps to create a diverse faculty (and staff, and student body!).

STRIDE Recommended Literature can be accessed via https://advance.umich.edu/stride-readings/

Three Key Issues That Get In The Way

#1: Schemas

1. Schemas (race, gender, sexuality, etc.)
   - assumptions or expectations about groups that influence our judgments of them; also known as stereotypes
   - cognitive short-cuts; allow rapid processing of information but susceptible to errors (e.g., narrative fallacy)
   - ubiquitous; We all — regardless of the social group we belong to — perceive and treat people differently based on the social groups to which they belong. We invoke different schemas.

What Increases the Use of Schemas?

- Stress from competing tasks
- Time pressure
- Ambiguity/incomplete information
- Lack of critical mass (solo status)

Three Key Issues That Get In The Way

#2: Unconscious Evaluation Bias

2. Unconscious evaluation bias
   - unintentionally favoring or disfavoring others based on schemas held about their group
   - Example from a "resume study":

   - Male post-doc candidates rated as more competent and hireable than female candidates.
   - White and Asian candidates rated as more competent and hireable than Black and Latinx candidates.

Based on your experience, what groups are negatively affected by evaluation bias? (please use the chat box for your response)
Bias Negatively Affects Evaluations of Individuals From Many Groups

Resume Studies handout

- Racial minorities
- Women
- Women parents
- LGBTQ people
- People with a disability
- Immigrants
- From less prestigious institutions
- Working outside the “center” of their discipline


Bias Can Be Based On Institution

- Institutional Bias: We privilege candidates from particular institutions
  - Hiring individuals from just a select few institutions is common
  - 42% of U-M College of Engineering Faculty earned their Ph.D.s at just 5 institutions
- Yet the productivity of early-career faculty is most closely linked to where they work, not where they trained

Clauset et al. (2015) - Way et al. (2019)

Bias Can Be Based On Area of Study

Subfield Bias handout

- Subfield Bias: We privilege candidates working in the “center” of the field
  - Center may be determined by method, focus, sources, etc.
  - Often more diversity outside of the center
  - What are the up-and-coming, exciting new areas?


Bias Can Be Based On Area of Study

- Scholars working outside the center:
  - May publish in specialized journals
  - May have few who can evaluate their work (for hire, for tenure/promotion)
  - May not see themselves in narrow job ads

John and Yamila: Both Assistant Professors at the University of Professorial Dreams

| Teaching I | Assigned to small courses in his specialty. | Assigned to introductory level and required core courses. |
| Teaching II | Commands automatic respect of students; teaching evaluations are great. | Contends with disrespectful students & special requests from students; teaching evaluations are mixed. |
| Service | Appointed to departmental executive committee. | Appointed to many committees |
| Work-life balance | Partner is having a baby! | Having a baby! |

Three Key Issues That Get In The Way #3: Accumulated (Dis)Advantage

3. Accumulation of (dis)advantage

Small disadvantages (or advantages!) pile up, resulting in significant differences later in careers

Full professors with equal rank but not equal standing


How Can We Break These “Habits”?

- We can break the bias habit if we:
  - Are aware of when it can happen
  - Understand the consequences of bias
  - Use effective strategies to reduce its impact
- We will share some of these strategies next
- We must make a **sustained effort** over time to reduce the bias “habit”

Stages of the Search Process

- Stage 1. Getting Great Applications from the Best Applicants
- Stage 2. Achieving Excellence and Diversity on the Short List
- Stage 3. Managing the Visit
- Stage 4. Making the Decision
Take Continuous Steps to Develop the Applicant Pool

- Leverage social media
- Widen your pool to a broad set of institutions
- Recruit round at meetings and conferences
- Establish relations with promising junior faculty elsewhere

Search is a verb: make your search active!

Poll: How actively does your unit search for faculty candidates?

Define Searches Using Language Known to Draw Diverse and Excellent Applicants

- Avoid narrow specification of areas of expertise
  - Broad and open descriptions more effectively attract under-represented candidates.
  - Example: in one U-M department, broad and open searches led to a more diverse applicant pool, and hires from under-represented groups. And the ranking of the department improved.
- Recruit from subfields with diversity
  - Under-represented candidates often work at the margins of disciplines, or at the intersection between disciplines.
  - Consider areas that are expanding, attracting junior and under-represented colleagues.

Solicit Information About DEI Commitment

- Ask candidates to speak to their commitment to DEI:
  - opportunity for all applicants to discuss their record of, or potential for, contributing to DEI through scholarship, teaching, and/or service
- Could be a separate statement or integrated into existing components
- Feedback from some U-M units:
  - Helped identify diverse candidates with significant and broad commitments
  - Raised awareness among search committee and department of the impact of applicant’s work, and the importance of this issue
How might an applicant show their commitment to DEI in your field? 

*(please use the chat box for your response)*

**Stages of the Search Process**

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<thead>
<tr>
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**Develop Processes for Person-Specific Hiring**

- Person-specific hiring: Consideration of a candidate who did not apply to a posted position. (Examples: some senior hires, dual career partners, special post-doc programs.)
- In recent years at U-M, the percentages of women and URM faculty hired have increased at the assistant professor level but **decreased** at the senior level.
- Recommendations
  - Employ a transparent procedure developed **in advance**.
  - Be sure to discuss vetting, visits, and standard to be met.
  - Do not allow time pressure to compromise the quality of your evaluation and deliberation.

**Strive to Mitigate Evaluation Biases Throughout the Search Process**

Every committee member should be aware of potential evaluation biases and work to counteract them

- Discuss and define evaluation categories and criteria in advance.
- Read candidate dossiers carefully.
- Make **evidence of job-relevant qualifications** central to the candidate deliberations.
- Delay **global evaluations** and summary rankings:
  - acknowledge uncertainty.

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Use Specific Job-Relevant Criteria that Value Diversity and Excellence at All Stages

Applicant Evaluation Tool, Diversity Statement Rubric handouts

Consider Carefully How Letters of Recommendation Influence Your Decisions

Pros of letters of recommendation:
• can point out strengths of candidate
• can identify candidate’s role in shaping the direction of the project, identifying and working with collaborators, etc.
• can identify candidate accomplishments that do not fit on a CV

Cons of letters of recommendation:
• letter writer’s biases color what is (or is not) written
• may spend time on information that is irrelevant to the job and potentially harmful to the candidate
• sometimes are partly written by the candidates themselves

Poll: Which word or phrase would you find most compelling and important in a letter of recommendation?

Schemas and Letters

Race
White candidates:
• Repetition of standout adjectives (outstanding, excellent, etc.)
• “Competence” used in a positive way
Black candidates:
• “Competence” used more frequently and used in a negative way (“mere competence”)

Gender
Men:
• Longer letters
• More standout adjectives
Women:
• More use of “grindstone” adjectives (conscientious, meticulous, hard-working)
• More references to personal life for women
• More “doubt raisers” (hedges, faint praise, and irrelevancies) for women

“She is close to my wife”

Schemas and Teaching Evaluations

• Instructors who are member of minority groups may be perceived as less credible.
  o In identical lectures, when the instructor referred to his partner as “Jennifer” or “Jason”, the “gay” instructor received five times as many critical comments as the “straight” instructor.

• U-M ADVANCE study (2015) found URM faculty (especially URM women) reported more instances of students: expressing anger, showing disrespect, and challenging their expertise in and outside of the classroom.


Assessing the Teaching Record

American Sociological Association Statement (2019):
• …using student evaluations of teaching as the primary measure of teaching effectiveness in faculty review processes can systematically disadvantage faculty from marginalized groups.
• If used … should be considered as part of a holistic assessment of teaching effectiveness.

Instead:
• Track trajectories, evidence of reflection about pedagogy, curricular innovation, and commitment to engage students of diverse backgrounds and a variety of levels.
• Ask: how can this candidate broaden and reinforce your unit’s teaching mission?

Stages of the Search Process

Stage 1. Getting Great Applications from the Best Applicants
Stage 2. Achieving Excellence and Diversity on the Short List
Stage 3. Managing the Visit
Stage 4. Making the Decision

We Want to See Job Candidates Show Us Their Very Best…

We should create an environment that elicits the best performance from all candidates.
Managing the In-Person and Virtual Visit

- Provide helpful information
  - Visit schedule
  - Family friendly policies
- Be thoughtful about environmental cues
  - Seminar attendance
  - Virtual tours
- Consider accessibility and other needs
  - Closed captioning
  - Physical needs
- Facilitate positive interactions
  - Pick a good host
  - Provide welcoming seminar introduction

Show off Your Department as It Is or How You Would Like It to Be

Who belongs here?

Environmental Cues in Remote Visits

- In one study, job candidates whose video connection quality was poor or inconsistent were rated as less hireable. Telling evaluators in advance to disregard this factor had no mitigating impact.
- Video interviews may provide a window onto candidates’ personal selves:
  - a shared space that doesn’t offer privacy
  - family, culture, interests – as revealed by backgrounds, furnishings, clutter, children, pets, etc.
- Video interviews and recruiting will present a variety of logistical issues necessitating new processes; be prepared to consider if/how each of these could introduce bias.

Fiechter et al. (2018)
What has your department done to create a welcoming virtual or physical environment for job candidates?

*(please use the chat box for your response)*

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**Respect Candidate Privacy, and Consider Only Job-Relevant Criteria**

*Handbook for Faculty Searches and Hiring p. 8: Questions to Avoid*

- Interviews should aim to evaluate qualifications that are relevant to a faculty position – questions about matters that are not job-relevant (e.g., family status, sexual orientation) must not be asked by the search committee;

- Such questions are also often illegal: a chart of appropriate and inappropriate questions is available in your Handbook for Faculty Searches and Hiring;

- Exploring non-job-relevant criteria will confound your evaluation, and is also likely to drive away the candidate.

ADVANCE interview study of faculty who turned down offers. Rivera (2017) - Sue et al. (2007)

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**The Unintended Consequences of Personal Questions**

I want her to know that we are accepting in our department and we’ve made a strong commitment to diversity.

faculty member

Job candidate

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Your analysis of race and immigration in higher education was very interesting. It made me wonder, where are you from?

faculty member

Job candidate
What the Candidate Thinks…

Why is he asking me where I am from?
OR
Does he think I am not American?
OR
I feel like I am being told I don’t belong here.

What the Candidate Says…

I currently live in Los Angeles.

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Gather Input Promptly

- Promptly use the candidate evaluation tool after each visit.
- Postpone global rankings. Aim **first** for an unranked list of candidates you would be most happy to hire.
  - Ranking cements positions before discussion takes place ("anchoring" or "focusing" effect).
- Don’t focus on “fit”, but rather on fitting the criteria you identified at the start of the search.
Are These Your Criteria?

I never heard of that journal

Is that research? Or ME-search?

She didn’t seem very sure of herself

Is her husband moveable?

Do we really want that PhD institution listed on our website?

Manage Full Faculty Discussions

- Use a transparent process.
- Consider opening with brief presentation from search committee on all candidates.
- Summarize and contextualize evaluation materials for the faculty.
- Find ways to represent junior faculty views in the discussion.
- Decision-making processes vary. Reflect on how yours worked this year and consider revising to improve.

After an Offer is Made…

After a candidate is chosen, aggressive recruiting can begin.

Now, all factors relevant to attracting the candidate to U-M, Ann Arbor and southeast Michigan should be discussed.

Bottom Line: Unless We Take Action, the Cycle Reproduces Itself

Differential Success Rates

Accumulation of Advantage or Disadvantage

Performance is Mis-estimated

Evaluation Bias

Representation and Status

Schemas and Stereotypes
A Successful Search is Just the Beginning!

- Build a culture of search excellence. Reflect on your search and provide a report suggesting improved approaches for the future.

- Work with colleagues to create a culture in which new faculty will thrive, succeed, and choose to stay at U-M.

- The ADVANCE Program can help: advanceprogram@umich.edu

What is one thing you plan to do differently in the search process?

(please use the chat box for your response)