Diversity and Excellence in Faculty Recruiting

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

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 in thinking about recruiting a diverse and excellent faculty. 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.

STRIDE Recommended Literature can be accessed via https://advance.umich.edu/stride-readings/
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, and providing equitable opportunities is simply the right thing to do.
- Critically examining our hiring practices is hard work but is our chance to change the status-quo.
- We should approach recruiting in a scholarly way.

Changing Faculty Composition

- We are recruiting an increasingly diverse faculty, especially at the junior faculty level -- 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 remain so (U-M is 72% White).
  - Many of our fields are still dominated by one gender (U-M is 66% male).
- Where do we want to be in 5 years? In 10 years? What strategies can we use to get there?

Overview of Today’s Presentation

- What factors interfere with equitable searches?
- What can research 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

How Bias Might Creep in: Individual and Structural Factors

- Individual-level factors
  - Schemas, stereotypes, prejudices
  - Conscious or unconscious

- Structural-level factors
  - Policies, practices, reward systems
  - Formal and informal

CREATE

REINFORCE
Structural Factors

- **Formal policies**: rules about how things are done
- **Informal practices**: widely shared ideas about the “proper” way of doing things – often believed to be commonly known but can be opaque to “outsiders”
- **Reward systems** that determine what is valued in academia (e.g., grants, publications, awards)

  - Created through individual actions
  - Maintain the status quo
  - Changed through individual or group resistance

Structural Factors in Action in the Search Process

Formal policies and informal practices determine...

- who is asked to be on a search committee
- which/whose networks do you tap to find candidates
- how much you can spend on a search
- what are the “right” areas of research

Individual Factors in Action in the Search Process

Schemas (about race, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.)

- **assumptions or expectations about groups** that influence our judgments of them; stereotypes are one type of schema
- **cognitive short-cuts**, allow rapid processing of information but susceptible to errors
- **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.

How have you seen structural factors, such as policies and practices, affect searches?

*(please use the chat box for your response)*
Individual-Level Assumptions in Action in the Search Process

My evaluation of candidates may be influenced by…
- identity-based stereotypes about competence and intellectualism
- ideas about how a faculty member should look and sound
- whether we have common interests (would I like to have a beer with them?)
- where they got their graduate degree


How Schemas and Structures Thwart Fair Evaluations

Evaluation Bias:
- Favoring or disfavoring others based on job-irrelevant information (e.g., gender)
- Empirical support for evaluation bias based on different dimensions, e.g.
  - social identity group
  - area of study
  - academic institution
- Often assessed with resume studies

Example: Bias Based on Parent Status and Gender

When evaluating equally qualified same-gender job applicants…

Mothers…
- were rated as less competent and less committed to paid work than non-mothers.
- were less likely to be recommended for hire, promotion, and management, and were offered lower starting salaries than non-mothers.

Fathers…
- were rated as more committed to paid work than non-fathers.
- were offered higher starting salaries than non-fathers.

Eaton et al. (2019)

Example: Bias Based on Race and Gender

- White and Asian candidates rated as more competent and hireable than Black and Latinx candidates.
- Male post-doc candidates rated as more competent and hireable than female candidates.
- In physics, Black women, Latinx women, and Latinx men rated as less hireable than all other groups.

Corral et al. (2007)
Bias Negatively Affects Evaluations of Individuals from Many Groups

- 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 Graduate Institution

- **Institutional Bias**: We privilege candidates from particular graduate institutions
  - Hiring individuals from just a select few institutions is common
  - Example: 42% of U-M College of Engineering faculty earned their Ph.D.s at just 5 institutions

Bias Can Be Based on Area of Study

- **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?
  - We discount some scholarship as “me-search” when it appears personally relevant (e.g., Native American scholar researching health care for underserved communities)

Resume Studies handout

Bias Can Be Based on Graduate Institution

- Assumption: Just a few “top” institutions produce the best scholars
- Fact: The number of papers published by early-career faculty is most closely linked to where they work, not where they trained

Bias Can Be Based on Area of Study

- Action: Prioritize the quality of the scholarship rather than the prestige of their Ph.D. institution

Clauset et al. (2015) - Way et al. (2019)
Bias Can Be Based on Area of Study

• Black scientists funded at lower rates at NIH
  – 50% of applications from Black PIs were on 17 topics (11%)
  – These topics were reviewed at Institutes and Centers with lower award rates
• NIH and other funding agencies are doing a system-wide analysis to uncover structural biases.

Image credit: Stevens et al., 2021

Ginther et al., 2011 – Hoppe et al., 2019 – Lauer, 2020 – Stevens et al., 2021

Bias Can Be Based On Area of Study

• Scholars working outside the center of the discipline:
  – 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
• Actions:
  – Be open-minded to the value of work in new areas
  – Prioritize the quality of the scholarship, seeking outside feedback if needed

John and Yamila:
How Bias May Show Up in Conventional Search Practices

Committee notices that John is at prestigious R1 and they are friendly with most of his recommenders.
Committee is impressed by the “center” journals he has placed his 5 publications in. Notes the small grant he has received for his work.
Committee is not worried about his lack of service. Committee admires John’s confident job talk presentation style and assumes he will be a good teacher.

Committee notices that Yamila is at a good R2 but questions whether she can make it here. They know her recommenders only by reputation.
Committee is unfamiliar with the interdisciplinary journals she has placed her 5 publications in. Notes the small grant she has received for her work.
Committee minimizes her DEI efforts as a graduate student as self-interested.
Committee worries that Yamila’s accent will be hard for students to understand, even though they liked the content of her talk.

Change is Possible

• Awareness and understanding
• Resistance to status quo
• Effective strategies
• Sustained effort
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

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

Conventional Way of Faculty Searching

Better Way of Faculty Searching: Active Search Strategies

Strategies for Continuous Searching:
- Post job ad in disciplinary publication
- Leverage social media
- Establish relations with promising junior faculty elsewhere
- SEARCH IS A VERB: MAKE YOUR SEARCH ACTIVE!
- Recruit year-round at meetings and conferences
- Widen your pool to a broad set of institutions
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 candidates with significant and broad commitments to DEI
  - Raised awareness among search committee and department of the impact of applicant’s work, and the importance of this issue

Stages of the Search Process

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

How might an applicant show their commitment to DEI in your field?

*(please use the chat box for your response)*
### Conditions That Can Hinder Equitable Evaluations

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

...and schemas can influence decision making.


### 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
  - Consider developing a longer short-list


### Establish Evaluation Criteria Early On

Rate each candidate on the dimensions below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Evidence Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>Evidence of scholarly productivity commensurate with career stage and norms for subfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>Evidence of (potential for) teaching effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Evidence of (potential for) effective collaboration with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEI Commitment</td>
<td>Evidence of (interest in and commitment to) teaching/mentoring/training students of diverse backgrounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>Evidence of DEI activities in professional roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>Potential for positive contributions to unit climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Evidence of service activities that contribute to unit/institution/profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Evidence of effectively mentoring undergraduate or graduate students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teaching Evaluations: Issues to Consider

- Instructors who are member of minority groups may be perceived as less credible.
  - 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.

Other Ways to Assess 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?

Letters of Recommendation: Pros and Cons

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

Consider Carefully How Letters of Recommendation Influence Your Decisions

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

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
• More “doubt raisers” (hedges, faint praise, and irrelevancies)
• “She is close to my wife”
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.

Univ. Michigan Tenure Track Faculty 2016 Indicator Report

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.

Siblings and former Ann Arbor residents Maia and Alex Shibutani, Olympic and World Medalists in Ice Dancing

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 As You Would Like It to Be

Who belongs here?

Environmental Cues in Remote Visits

What about Video Interviews?

- 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 present a variety of logistical issues necessitating new processes; consider if/how each of these could introduce bias.

What has your department done to create a welcoming virtual or physical environment for job candidates?

(please use the chat box for your response)
Respect Candidate Privacy, and Consider Only Job-Relevant Criteria

- 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 on page 8 of 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.

John and Yamila
University of Professorial Dreams finalists!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serene Applications for 15 positions, gets 2 interviews. Has time to submit another paper!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excited to receive an interview. Parents loan him travel money until reimbursed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most faculty look like him. They chat about their shared interest in football.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is impressed with stately seminar room. Is confident he will fit in here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<th>Submits applications for 40 positions, gets 2 interviews.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excited to receive an interview. Has to put travel money on credit card and worries about accrual of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doesn’t see any faculty of color. Wonders if she is a “token” candidate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praised for being articulate. Many faculty ask where she is from and whether she has kids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar room has photos of former chairs – all White men. Wonders if she will fit in here.</td>
</tr>
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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.

Handbook for Faculty Searches and Hiring p. 8: Questions to Avoid, Unintended Consequences of Personal Questions handout
Are These Your Criteria?

Are These Your Criteria?

- I never heard of that journal.
- Is her husband moveable?
- Is that research? Or ME-search?
- Do we really want that PhD institution listed on our website?
- She didn’t seem very sure of herself.

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.

Create: 
- Awareness and understanding
- Resistance to status quo
- Effective strategies
- Sustained effort

Reinforce: 
- Individuals create the structures and individuals change the structures
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

PLEASE COMPLETE THE WORKSHOP EVALUATION, SENT VIA EMAIL

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

(please use the chat box for your response)