Faculty Recruitment - Best Practices: Searching for Excellence

UD ADVANCE

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National Science Foundation ADVANCE-IT HRD 1409472.
Faculty hiring: opportunity for UD to shine!

Faculty hiring is one of the most important things faculty do, but it’s not easy to do well.

- NSF knows it (e.g., ADVANCE).
- Our peer universities know it (e.g., UW, UMich).
- Major companies know it (e.g., Google).
- We know it.
NSF ADVANCE: Recruiting For Excellence

NSF ADVANCE institutions have researched and developed best practices for recruiting faculty.

Through our ADVANCE PAID grant we adapted workshops from the University of Wisconsin – Madison and the University of Michigan to present by faculty, for faculty at UD.
Workshop Audience (2009-2014)

- UD College of Engineering and CAS Natural Sciences faculty and administrators
- CEOE faculty and administrators
- UD Chairs’ Caucus
- Delaware State University faculty and administrators
- Delaware County Community College faculty and administrators
- Cleveland State University engineering faculty and administrators
Typical Workshop ~2 hours
Presentations and discussions

I. Search Committee Operating Procedures
   Building a Candidate Pool

   break
   
II. Impact of cognitive shortcuts
   The situation at UD and nationally

   break

III. Evaluating Candidates
   The interview process

IV. Closing the deal
I. Search Committee & Building a Candidate Pool
Search Committee Best Practices

• Include women and members of underrepresented groups on search committees; plan meetings when all can attend.

• Make sure everyone gets a say – have an agenda for each meeting, keep strict time limits.

• Take careful minutes – keep a record of decisions.

• Committee members should bring their opinions on candidates in writing to meetings.
Active Recruitment: Deepening the Pool

**Recruitment is a long-term, active process:**

- **Invite** qualified women and people of color to apply.
- Consider hiring opportunities in areas beyond those defined by the search.

**Contact potential candidates even before they are actively seeking positions:**

- Contact faculty and industry colleagues at a broad range of institutions to identify potential candidates. Ask specifically about URMs and women.
- Attend conferences with the goal of identifying and meeting potential candidates – follow up by inviting suitable candidates to apply.
- Use seminar visits to other institutions to ask about, and possibly meet, potential candidates, and report back to your department.
II. The Impact of Cognitive Shortcuts
How Doctors Think
by Jerome Groopman, MD

A forest ranger in his 40s arrives at the ER with chest pain. The doctor diagnoses a strained muscle and sends the patient home. The next day the ranger appears in the ER again, this time with a full-blown heart attack.

Why did the doctor misdiagnose? The patient was neither old nor overweight, two risk factors for heart disease.

Doctors base their diagnoses on implicit assumptions regularly – it is a way to sort among multiple possibilities especially when under TIME pressure.
Did you know your chance of getting an award increases **2.5 times** if you know someone on the selection committee?

Swedish Medical Research Council Postdoc:
Authors noticed:
- 46% of applicants were women (114 total).
- 20% of awardees were female.

Took the case to court, acquired access to applications. Assigned applicants “Impact Score” based upon publication record.

**Results**
**Males:** linear relationship (suggests original review panel used objective criteria).
**Females:** nonlinear relationship, and lower original score.

**Summary**
Women had to be 2.5 times as productive as men to be ranked the same.

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AND, for men or women,

Affiliation with a member of the review panel gave a comparable advantage.

Deeply ingrained in the culture of academic science is the assumption that merit, as revealed by the purportedly objective process of peer review, determines the distribution of status, rewards, and opportunities.

. . . Research, however, has shown that gender colors evaluation of scientific and engineering accomplishment and thus affects the opportunities and rewards that women receive. In the intense competition for academic standing, even small differences in advantage can accumulate . . . and create large differences . . .

How to Minimize the Influence of Cognitive Shortcuts

• *Learn* about research on cognitive shortcuts, and promote awareness among your colleagues.  

  *How and when are shortcuts likely to influence evaluations?*

• Take steps to *reduce time pressure* and cognitive *distraction* during evaluation.  

  *Be especially vigilant with online application processing!*

• Develop explicit evaluation criteria a priori and apply the criteria consistently.

• Increase the number of women and underrepresented groups in the applicant pool.
III. Candidate Evaluation & The Interview Process
Evaluation Criteria

Discuss and develop criteria early. Develop a simple rubric for search committee members to use to quantify candidates’ qualifications.

Perform the evaluation in stages:

1. Develop a “long shortlist.” Be inclusive -- if in doubt, include.

2. Develop a “short shortlist” to be brought in for interviews

3. Make sure your short list represents diversity. Research shows inclusion of two women in a finalist pool increases the probability that one may be chosen – not just in simple probability (say 2/5), but because they are no longer seen as a “separate” group (V. Valian, Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women, 1999, and references therein).
The interview: important to long-term recruitment. How you impress candidates influences UD’s reputation!

Evidence shows that successful recruiting requires demonstrating an environment that is welcoming. Be organized and thoughtful.

- Be a good host. Have a faculty member serve as point person during the interview process, including the planning.
- Schedule candidates to meet faculty from other departments who may have related research or resettlement interests.
- Identify key faculty/representatives to meet with candidates to provide information about the university and community.
- Make available information about local key industries, recreational activities, fine arts, area schools and childcare options.
The Department Meeting
finalization of the list

Be prepared – all members of the search committee should be present and well informed.

“I can’t tell you how many times I have reviewed searches in which the people – predominantly women and minority-group members – were not hired, because they didn’t “fit.”

A. Stacy, Prof. Chemistry, Assoc. Vice Provost for Faculty Equity, UC Berkeley
IV. Closing the Deal

• *Don’t lose the thread.* You are not finished when you turn over the recommendation to the chair or dean. Keep updated on the progress of the offer. Keep in touch with the candidate. *Follow up.*

• **Support your candidate in negotiating for success!**

• *If the search fails* - keep records and follow up on interesting candidates. If they were competitive today they may well be interested and competitive tomorrow. Things change.
If the search succeeds, you’re still not done!

When completing your short list, think about how the candidate can be mentored to success!

Do not make a decision, then drop out and move on to other things.

Choosing your own colleagues -- choosing the faculty to represent your department -- is a major time commitment. It is also a privilege and an important responsibility. Good luck with your searches!
Why do these workshops work?

- Workshops are for faculty, by faculty. Presenters are respected colleagues.
- Multiple presenters per workshop engage a diversity of participants.
- Deans introduce workshops, establish buy-in.
- Workshop material is all based on social-science research results.
- Participants have ownership over parts of the workshop. Faculty engage in group discussions. They (and we) learn from colleagues in different departments or colleges.
What are metrics of success?

1. Diversity of applicant pool
   - Diversity of interviewees
   - Hiring success -- excellence and diversity

2. **Requests for workshops.** NSF funding ended in 2012, PDI grant extended efforts through 2013. Subsequent workshops have been paid for by the requesting deans.
The future

How can our prior work and expertise inform the Provost’s Office process to improve faculty recruitment?