

## ACTIVE RECRUITING

### Best Practices

- Have search committee chair and members reach out to colleagues at institutions that have diverse faculty and students to identify high-potential female and underrepresented minority candidates and encourage them to apply to the position.
- Advertise broadly, including to interest groups with diverse faculty audiences.

Finding the top candidate for a position, and recruiting a diverse applicant pool, often requires personal outreach. It's not enough to place an advertisement for the position in a few places and only consider the applications in response to that advertisement. Exceptional candidates often do not respond to ads and must be contacted directly by the University. The example below from Columbia illustrates the value of reaching out to underrepresented scholars during the recruiting process.

*"We were running a high-level search and knew we wanted to prioritize diversity, yet none of the finalists submitted by the search committee were women. We went back to the search firm and asked for names of qualified female candidates. The firm gave us three names, but when we looked at our candidate files, we saw that none of these women had applied. We called each of these candidates to ask the reason for their disinterest and once again invite them to apply. While two of the women declined again, the third woman said she had not applied earlier because the University had not personally contacted her. On our invitation, she interviewed for the position, and we unanimously agreed that she was by far the best candidate. I am glad we made the extra effort to diversify our list of finalists."*

### Strategies

Active recruiting entails soliciting applications from potential candidates by making information about the available position widely known, both through advertising broadly and seeking out qualified individuals through professional networks. It involves finding sources of qualified candidates rather than assuming that all such candidates will find and apply to available positions, of their own volition. To enrich

the applicant pool, consider employing a range of strategies that engage a variety of people:

1. **Department faculty and staff.** Faculty can reach out to qualified candidates through their membership of relevant groups or organizations.
2. **Graduates.** Individuals that recently graduated from your department or related divisions are often good sources of candidates.
3. **Personal outreach.** Exceptional candidates will often not apply to positions and will need to be invited to apply by a member of the search committee.
4. **Individuals who decline nominations.** These individuals may be able to refer other outstanding candidates for the position.



- After the advertisement has been posted on the RAPS website, proceed to advertise in the designated venue(s) and begin to conduct the search.
- If there are concerns about the diversity of the applicant pool, consult with the associate provost for equal opportunity and affirmative action or the senior associate provost for faculty diversity and inclusion for suggestions on resources and strategies for attracting applications from qualified women, minorities, people with disabilities, and covered veterans.

It is important to advertise and raise awareness of opportunities through channels that will reach women, underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, and members of other underrepresented groups. There are a variety of ways to do so:

1. **Target publications.** Advertisements can be posted in publications that specifically target women and underrepresented groups.
2. **Professional associations.** Mailing lists for women and underrepresented minority caucuses within these groups can be another way of disseminating information of the position. There are also databases of CVs of African-American faculty who wish to be considered for positions at other universities. One example of this is available through the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education.

3. **Professional conferences.** Faculty can connect with women and underrepresented minority candidates attending conferences who may be good candidates for an available position.
4. **Women's colleges and colleges serving large numbers of underrepresented minorities.** Alumni publications and affirmative action offices of women's colleges, historically black colleges and universities, and other institutions that have a strong track record of serving Hispanic and Native American students are good places to advertise the faculty position.
5. **University departments that graduate large numbers of women and underrepresented minorities.** Information about universities that have a high graduation rate for women and underrepresented minorities is available at <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvydoctorates/>. Departments at these universities are good sources of women and underrepresented minority candidates, and contacting them will help enrich the pool of applicants.
6. **Distinguished women and underrepresented scholars.** Women and underrepresented minority faculty whose work you, your colleagues, or students admire may be able to recommend colleagues or students.
7. **Visiting professors/lecturers and temporary hires.** Women and underrepresented minorities who have held such positions in your department may be good candidates or may know of colleagues that they can recommend for the faculty opening. Studies have shown that candidates with a previous relationship to Columbia have a higher acceptance rate than those who are coming into contact with the University for the first time through the recruitment process.

More information on the resources described above can be found in the **Appendix**.

## Communicating with Candidates

Making the position known, whether through advertising or professional networks, marks the beginning of communications with potential candidates. Ensuring that all department faculty and staff are courteous in exchanges with applicants is an important way to demonstrate the values of collegiality and respect and creates a positive impression of the University.

Courteous communication includes promptly responding to all correspondence and keeping applicants apprised of the recruiting process and its timeline. Convey appreciation of candidates' interest in the position and consideration of their efforts by acknowledging receipt of applications, informing applicants once they are no longer being considered for the position (or of next steps in the process if consideration is continuing), and providing details of interviews and campus visits in a timely manner. These exchanges can be simplified by developing templates for different types of communications, especially if there are many applicants to keep informed.

## DISPELLING MYTHS ABOUT DIVERSITY AND FACULTY RECRUITMENT

Some people believe the following to be true. We want to help dispel these myths.

**Myth #1: "Factoring in diversity considerations will distract from the goal of finding an exceptional candidate."**

A focus on diversity enhances the likelihood of finding an exceptional candidate. Diversifying the candidate pool by inviting women, underrepresented minorities, and other underrepresented groups to apply ensures that all promising applicants are considered. Guarding against bias in the evaluation process promotes a fair assessment of all candidates and leads to the selection of the top individual for the position.

**Myth #2: "Women and underrepresented minorities in academia are few and difficult to recruit and retain. Since these underrepresented scholars are in high demand, their recruitment requires a disproportionate share of resources."**

Though the number of women and underrepresented minorities may be low in many fields, their representation in academia is not reflective of their numbers in the pool of available candidates. Institutions are not engaged in bidding wars to recruit and retain underrepresented minority scholars. The most common reasons that faculty relocate are dual career considerations, questions of fit, and points of contention with their previous place of employment, rather than the promise of a richer offer from another institution.<sup>16-17</sup>

Like all other candidates, underrepresented scholars are drawn by factors such as location and a supportive and inclusive climate.

**Myth #3: “Faculty search practices are not to blame for the scarcity of women and underrepresented minority scholars in academia, and therefore do not need to change. The number of women and underrepresented minority faculty will naturally grow as the increasing number of people from these underrepresented groups receiving advanced degrees move through the pipeline.”**

This is false. Women and underrepresented minorities are not advancing into faculty positions at the same rate that they are receiving advanced degrees and entering academia. <sup>18-19</sup>

## EVALUATING APPLICANTS

### Best Practices

- To ensure that each candidate is asked about his or her demonstrated commitment to diversity, and experience working in diverse environments, designate one person to lead asking these questions; this person should (preferably) not be the only female or underrepresented minority committee member.
- Discuss, prior to interviewing candidates, how dimensions listed in job ad will be weighted and valued.
- Ensure that each candidate is evaluated on all criteria listed in job ad and identified as meaningful in the search (e.g., use the Sample Candidate Evaluation Form in the **Appendix** for the review process).

When evaluating candidates, it is important to make sure that the process is fair and gives due consideration to each candidate. It may necessary to correct for unconscious tendencies by instituting certain protocols around reviewing applications.

- **Establish evaluation criteria.** The dimensions for judging applicants, as well as their relative importance, should be determined prior to reviewing applications. Choose criteria that can help predict the future success of the applicant.

- **Adhere to evaluation criteria.** When assessing applications, it is important to adhere to these evaluation criteria. Using a standard evaluation form will help committees to rate criteria consistently across a pool of candidates.
- **Look for strengths.** In the initial assessment of applicants, it will be helpful to search for reasons to continue considering individuals for the position. Such an approach will ensure that strengths are not overlooked and that all promising candidates are included.
- **Rely on evidence.** When determining whether or not a candidate meets certain criteria, refer to materials in candidate’s application. Ensure that similar information is collected on all applicants. For example, if one candidate receives an unsolicited reference from a colleague, then the search committee should reach out to colleagues of other candidates to obtain references.
- **Spend adequate time reviewing each application.** Allow 15–30 minutes to review each application to ensure that each candidate receives a thorough assessment.
- **Secure reviews by more than one search committee member.** Each application should be assessed by more than one search committee member to ensure a fair evaluation.
- **Consider candidate’s record of working with diverse students and diversity-related research.** As Columbia is committed to building a diverse and challenging environment, attention should be given to candidates who have such a track record.
- **Avoid subjecting different candidates to different expectations.** Women and underrepresented minorities may tend to be held to higher expectations regarding their number of publications and name recognition.<sup>20</sup> An awareness of this potential bias will allow these candidates to receive proper consideration.
- **Avoid elitism.** Be careful of rating a candidate highly solely because of the reputation of their institution or advisor.
- **Avoid premature ranking.** Ensure that each application has been fully considered with respect to the different criteria that were agreed upon prior to expressing preferences for particular candidates.
- **Create multiple ranking lists of candidates.** Ranking candidates on each criterion and then choosing individuals who placed highly in all categories will allow for a fair construction of the candidate shortlist.

## REVIEWING CANDIDATE SHORTLIST

### Best Practice

- Dean or leadership responsible for hiring reviews all slates of candidates before any offers are made. If the committee is unable to find any competitive candidates from underrepresented groups, the chair will provide an explanation in writing, to the dean or leadership, of what steps were taken to identify such candidates and why the committee was unsuccessful.

Prior to inviting individuals for interviews, the dean, or other leadership responsible for hiring, should review the candidate shortlist to ascertain that all possible efforts were made to conduct a fair recruiting and evaluation process. There are a few ways to enhance the diversity of the candidate pool.



- Enter the disposition of each application in RAPS.
- Select reasons for non-selection from a drop-down menu for all of the applicants who were not selected for the appointment.
- Provide an explanation for why each selectee was chosen.

1. **Create a “medium” list.** Before choosing a shortlist of candidates, consider creating an intermediate, or “medium,” list of candidates. If this list lacks women and/or underrepresented minorities, consider more aggressive recruitment efforts before moving to the next phase in the search.
2. **Revisit top women and underrepresented minority candidates in pool.** It may be worth revisiting leading women and underrepresented minority candidates to see if evaluation bias played a part in their exclusion from the shortlist.

3. **Contact women/underrepresented minorities who refused nominations.** If there were any women and underrepresented minority candidates who turned down nominations, it may be helpful for the department chair, dean, or provost to contact them, ask for their reason(s) for declining and possibly encourage them to apply.

It is strongly recommended that more than one woman and/or underrepresented minority be included on the shortlist and invited to interviews. This practice has been shown to reduce the likelihood of group identity influencing assessment, resulting in a more objective evaluation of candidates.