

FORMING SEARCH COMMITTEE

Planning For An Inclusive Environment

The best practice is for each department or unit to think about hiring as an ongoing process. This allows units and departments to think about the long-term goals, needs and research fields which are on the horizon. It also gives the departments and units the ability to think about its goals in terms of adding certain perspectives and experiences to address those fields and needs.

This contextual framework allows the department or unit to develop and update long-range hiring plans which reflect Iowa State University's Affirmative Action Plan. All members of the unit can then view professional conferences as opportunities to assess prospective faculty and staff. Consider conducting a symposium or speaking engagement as a way of introducing prospective faculty members to campus. However, the unit must keep in mind that these are merely efforts to build diverse pools and should not build unrealistic expectations that they are soft offers for a prospective vacancy.

Forming A Search Committee Committed To Diversity And Inclusion

To form an effective search committee, it is essential to ensure that the search committee members are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. The committee should be diverse reflecting different race, sexual orientation, sex, military service, age, religious affiliation or secularism, disability, socioeconomic status, language, and gender identity perspectives. If the department is having difficulty finding members from various groups, then it should look to other departments to fill in these committee positions.

The department chair or hiring decision-maker should align their production metrics and promotion considerations to reward service obligations to ensure diverse participation and to

avoid imposing a diversity tax on its members. If the committee only comprises one or two diverse faculty, then the other members of the committee are still responsible for considering issues related to equity, inclusion, and diversity in making the hiring decision.

Training The Hiring Committee On Inclusive Hiring

The search committee should prepare for the hiring process in several different ways. Each member of the search committee should reflect on their own preconceived notions of underrepresented populations before beginning the candidate selection process. Ensuring the search committee itself is diverse will not alone ensure that bias does not infect the decision-making process. That is something that can only be mitigated by the search committee member's internal reflection about their own history with underrepresentation populations. This reflection about their own biases has a two-fold purpose, it mitigates the committee acting on its own bias and it also hones their ability to pick a candidate that is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion.

While the committee is determining whether an applicant is open and committed to issues related to equity, inclusion and diversity, they should use several template interview questions to elicit those responses. The committee can use the following factors to assess which candidate most demonstrates this commitment as part of its hiring criteria:

- Draws on experiences with underrepresented communities and lessons they took away from those experiences.
- Demonstrates the ability to talk about uncomfortable issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion, such as their own privilege.

- Expresses a willingness to engage in campus outreach and diversity projects in the future such as ISCORE.
- Demonstrates the ability to use inclusive language in the workplace (e.g., avoiding ableist and gendered language.)
- Demonstrates an awareness of effective ways to respond to students and colleagues in crisis.
- Demonstrates a willingness to challenge and change institutional practices that disparately impact underrepresented or marginalized groups.
- Expresses awareness of their own culture, identity biases, prejudices, power, privilege and stereotypes and is taking proactive steps to address them.
- Articulates the concepts of diversity, inclusion, and equity as broader than race, sex and ethnicity concepts.
- Demonstrates an ability to navigate of different work styles present in a workforce comprising people from several generations.

If a supervisory role:

- Articulates that equal opportunity and diversity are integral to an effective team.
- Is aware of how to promptly and appropriately respond to allegations of discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment.

Acknowledgements:

Taing, E. (2013). A Toolkit for Recruiting and Hiring a More Diverse Workforce, University Health Services, University of California, Berkeley, https://diversity.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/recruiting_a_more_diverse_workforce_uhs.pdf.