



Committee on Minorities in Physics
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TIPS FOR HIRING AND RECRUITING MINORITIES AND WOMEN FOR FACULTY POSITIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

A **faculty** vacancy presents an opportunity for the university to carefully define the position and the type of person needed now and in the future. Traditional institutions such as Universities will not change spontaneously. Strong leadership and diversity measures are required to achieve change.

These tips intend to assist chairs in recruiting, mentoring and retaining minority faculty

II. PREPARATION

1. Do not fill positions until you have had an opportunity to analyze the needs of the University and to develop an up-to-date job description. This planning ensures that long-range goals are in everyone's mind. It counters the tendency of some current department members to prefer candidates similar to them.
2. Maintain quality, but check for bias. Racially sensitive admissions policies at major American universities have not compromised quality (Bowen and Box 1998)
3. Educate selection committees to ensure that standards are the same for all candidates.
4. Attach a \$\$\$ value to diversity recruitment by providing resources and rewards: a budget and a plan for diversity recruitment, teaching remission for active recruitment activities, recognition for recruitment activities in promotion cases
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of diversity recruitment efforts by monitoring diversity indicators in applications and enrollments
- 6.
7. Create a roundtable to discuss and brainstorm on methods of attracting minority faculty applicants.

III. THE COMMITTEE¹

1. Include individuals with different perspectives, expertise and a demonstrated commitment to diversity.
2. When possible, make sure the committee itself is diverse.

3. Identify two or three key members who will serve as advocates for minorities.
4. Meet with the committee at the beginning of the process to reiterate the importance of inclusion, the advisory role of the committee and the need for confidentiality.
5. Determine how committee members will communicate with each other, the campus community and with candidates.
6. Contact professional organizations with minority committees that can provide information and resources for recruiting purposes.

IV PRE-HIRE CONNECTIONS/ RECRUITING

1. Be pro-active in recruiting high-quality candidates. Start thinking more like an athletic coach. Coaches go out and find the talent they need. They do not just put ads in the paper and then sit back and wait.
2. Make contact with the professional organizations – APS, NSBP, NSHP and possibly NSBE (Black Engineers), SACNAS, MAES, depending upon what fields are of interest for the new hire.
3. Browse through the APS Minorities Speakers List for senior persons in the field of hire. Invite them to speak to the department and have a discussion about potential minority candidates while they are visiting.
4. Actively recruit minority PhD candidates among the HBCU's that have PhD programs in physics - Howard, Hampton, Alabama A&M, and Florida A&M. NSF publishes a list of those universities that graduate the largest number of minority PhD's in physics. AIP also has these statistics (see <http://aip.org/statistics/>). Make these contacts 12 - 18 months prior to the actual search.
5. Always be in a recruitment mode – do not wait for searches to announce vacancies. This mode means keeping an eye out, inside and outside of the University, for potential staff members of color and women. Establish friendly relationships with them so that if you call and ask them to be a candidate for an open position they'll be likely to agree. Seize the opportunity to recruit and network at national meetings.
6. Treat every vacancy as if it is the only shot you will ever get to find and hire a candidate who will increase your department's diversity. This means that if you do not get good candidates of color in the initial pool, repost and consider outside advertising.
7. Diversity needs to be framed as an essential component of excellence without which the University cannot hope to achieve greatness. That message should be clearly understood and each committee member should be comfortable articulating the University's commitment to diversity.

V. SCREENING CANDIDATES²

1. Practicing affirmative action means practicing inclusion. Race and ethnicity should be considered as positive qualities which enhance a candidate's opportunity to be considered for a position. It may broaden the concept of the "best" candidate.
2. Search committee chairs should resist strongly the impulse to label one or more candidates the "most promising" because this may make it difficult for other candidates to be fully considered.
3. Do not make assumptions about candidates. Assumptions that a member of a particular racial group would not feel welcome in the community, or would not be able to relate well to others of different groups are damaging to candidates of color and will work against your diversity efforts. Also, do not make assumptions about a

- person's willingness to move; their spouse's willingness, etc. Let candidates decide these issues for themselves.
4. Committee members need to examine continually whether their judgments on a person's character, types of experience, or accomplishments are being affected by subjective factors, stereotypes, or other assumptions.
 5. Candidate "fit" – into the campus and in the community – generally means finding a person who will blend in easily with the existing structures, someone who will not alter dramatically the status quo. People of color, and most particularly people of color who come from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, may be presumed not to "fit" as well as white candidates. Beware of these sorts of presumptions; make every effort to show candidates that they will fit, and then let them decide for themselves. This may also occur with women in cases where a faculty may be primarily male.
 6. Be aware of the trap of measuring everything against one standard. Candidates who received their degrees later in life or from historically Black institutions, who worked part time when their children were young, or whose experience is off the beaten path may bring rich experience and a diverse background to the campus.
 7. Screen to include candidates. Screening with the primary purpose of narrowing the pool may cause you to miss very attractive candidates.
 8. Do your homework. Read the files of candidates thoroughly before offering opinions.
 9. Select someone on the committee to take minutes when the committee meets. Documenting your process will serve you in many ways as the selection process goes on. First, meeting minutes will serve as reminders regarding time lines, votes and discussions. Secondly, if another party outside your committee asks your committee to document or discuss efforts that have taken place to ensure affirmative action is a priority to the committee, it will be in the meeting minutes.
 10. Think about the new dimensions that diverse candidates will bring to the department.
 11. Other than professional reasons, a candidate's motivation for applying for a position is simply not the business of the search committee, screening committee, or interviewing committee. Unless a candidate offers other reasons in a letter of interest, the committees should operate with an understanding that professional interests motivate the application. To go further invites assumptions and those assumptions frequently lead to negative judgments.
 12. All candidates should have adequate advance notice that you expect them to do a group interview, provide work or writing samples, make a presentation, etc.
 13. Subtle messages from an interview committee to a candidate can have devastating effects. Consequently, judgments about a candidate's performance may be biased as much by the effect the committee had on the candidate's performance in and of itself. A search committee that is viewed by a candidate as "going through the motions" being hostile to candidates of color, or being generally cold and uncaring is very likely to create the self-fulfilling prophecy of not being able to find any good candidates of color. Conversely, a search committee that exhibits warmth, flexibility, supportiveness, and genuine interest is likely to bring out the best in all of its candidates.

VI. LANGUAGE FOR ADS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Language beyond the law required statement found in position announcements -- "The University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer" -- conveys a

- higher level of commitment. It tells potential applicants that the University values diversity.
2. Proactive language can be included as a specific job qualification or as a summary statement at the end of job announcements. Examples of specific job qualifications and summary statements include the following:
 - a. Candidates should describe previous activities mentoring minorities, women, or members of other underrepresented groups.
 - b. Women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and veterans are encouraged to apply.
 - c. Successful candidates must be committed to working with diverse student and community populations.
 - d. The University is responsive to the needs of dual career couples.
 - e. The University is committed to building a culturally diverse educational environment. Applicants are requested to include in their cover letter information about how they will further this goal.
 - f. The campus is especially interested in candidates who can contribute to the diversity and excellence of the academic community through their research, teaching and/or service.
 3. Determining where an ad is placed is as important as what language is used in the advertisement. Departments should be cautious about spending large sums of money to advertise in special diversity newsletters or publications. Reputable publications such as the Chronicle of Higher Education or those distributed by national discipline-based organizations can be counted on to actually reach intended audiences. The growth of the Internet has introduced a large number of additional venues for placing ads. Many online services offer an institutional subscription rate for placing ads.

VII. DURING THE HIRING PROCESS

1. Chairs should be prepared to provide candidates with information on their university such as:
 - a. (MOST IMPORTANT) Success rate of minority faculty (in obtaining tenure) within their college and university-wide
 - b. Number of minority faculty
 - c. Number/percentage of minority students in the department, college, and university.
2. Arrange for candidate to meet with minority faculty at the university - preferably in the same college. There are a number of "intangible" items that make a place inviting – for example: barber shops / hair salons, a local church or a type of neighborhood. This is something that only another minority faculty member could realistically address without a lot of awkwardness.
3. Make it clear to the candidate what are the conditions to successfully obtain tenure. While it might seem obvious to some, this discussion makes sure there is no misunderstandings up front.
4. Make a list of the resources available at the university for incoming faculty: teaching (training, filming, etc), research (university grant management, Undergraduate Research Experiences)

VIII. RETAINING

1. No minority faculty wants to get a job because they are minorities. Make it clear to the candidates and to the current faculty members the importance of diversity to the institution. Quality is not compromised to achieve diversity
2. For every new faculty member, assign a mentor within the department. The mentor should, as a minimum:
 - a. provide clear guidelines on criteria and timelines for promotion and tenure, and provide examples of successful cases;
 - b. check career expectations regularly (decreasing expectations are a negative sign);
 - c. check progress regularly, and provide early intervention where apparent progress is below standards;
 - d. offer assistance with preparation of grant proposals, and provide examples of successful cases.
3. Encourage minority members of the faculty to share experiences
4. Check for diversity in all discretionary career-influencing decisions: nominations for awards, nominations for university level committees (NOT the space committee) acting and associate leadership positions.
5. Perform exit interviews to monitor for possible problem areas.
6. Provide diversity workshops as part of faculty development. They focus on the benefits of the different and rich perspectives that people can contribute, for example the diversity factor in creativity and ingenuity.
7. Strong and visible leadership by the chair is the most critical element in establishing a culture of diversity. The 'champion effect' is influential. This leadership can be provided by:
 - a. clear statements of standards and objectives
 - b. personal participation in discussions and events
 - c. personal interest in gender- and minority-based issues

IX. PITFALLS

1. Do not allow the successful candidate to suffer the "poster child for physics" syndrome. That is, because the person is a minority candidate, he/she will be drafted to contribute to lots of diversity/outreach type activities.
2. Keep the person focused on those activities that will allow them to obtain tenure

NOTE: These tips are only useful if the President, Dean, and Department Chair see the importance of making an all inclusive department and are wholeheartedly behind the implementation of change. In addition, it is very difficult to attract new minorities when those minorities already do not feel accepted and respected (within the community/department). A morale check should be done before any recruiting efforts. If not, the result is quite predictable.