The Search Process
Overview for Search Committee Members and Affirmative Action Officers

Office of Equal Opportunity and Access
July 2010
Mission of the University

Prepare students for leadership roles in a diverse society at the local, state, national, and global levels
University’s Commitment to Diversity in Hiring

- The *Strategic Plan* emphasizes responsibility of each unit for greater faculty and staff diversity

- College/Unit diversity plans include specific unit objectives related to diversity

- *Project 2012--Transforming Illinois: Re-envisioning Diversity and Inclusion* is the report of the Diversity Initiatives Committee

- Inclusive Illinois, one campus, many voices, is the University's commitment to cultivating a community at Illinois where everyone is welcomed, celebrated and respected. Through education, engagement, and excellence, each voice creates the Illinois Experience.
Guidance Documents

- University Policy

- Equal Employment Opportunity Laws prohibit discrimination

- Affirmative Action Regulations require additional steps

- **Internet Applicant Recordkeeping Rule**
  - Must ask applicants to identify race, gender, and ethnicity

- **EEOC Uniform Employee Selection Guidelines**
  - Provide guidance on qualifications and requirements for employment as listed in position announcements.
Illinois’ Non-Discrimination Statement

prohibits discrimination based on:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Sex
- National Origin
- Ancestry
- Age
- Order of protection status
- Marital Status
- Disability
- Sexual orientation (including gender identity)
- Unfavorable discharge from the military
- Status as a protected veteran
- Genetic identity
**EEO versus AA**

**Equal Employment Opportunity:**
prohibits discrimination based on any prohibited characteristic.

**Affirmative Action:**
requires *additional* proactive measures to *ensure* equal employment opportunity; includes women, minorities, veterans, and persons with disability.
Compliance and Diversity

Illinois’ Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) accomplishes two objectives:

– demonstrates the University’s compliance with its Affirmative Action requirements, AND

– meets the University’s objectives for increasing diversity and inclusivity.
Academic Search Process

Academic Search Process is integral to Illinois’ commitment to:

*Equal Employment Opportunity*

*Affirmative Action*

*Diversity*
Diversity at Illinois

- Minorities and Women are significantly underrepresented in Faculty and Academic professional positions on campus
- Addressing underrepresentation requires aggressive department and college efforts involving deans, department heads, AAO, EEOO and EEO Committees
- Knowing who is playing what role is important in the search process.
Search Process Team

- OEOA
- AHR (Academic Human Resources: HRF/PAPE)
- Unit Executive Officer
- Hiring Official
- Equal Employment Opportunity Officer (EEOO)
- Equal Employment Opportunity Committee
- Affirmative Action Officer (AAO)
- Search Chair
- Search Committee Members
- Administrative Support
A word about Conflict of Interest

- Being asked to provide references for a candidate
- Deciding to become a candidate for a position while serving as a search committee member, the AAO, or EEOO
- Having overlapping roles in a search (i.e., Search Chair and AAO)
- Serving as Search Chair AND Hiring Officer or Director Report
  - *Search process is advisory and the appearance of a conflict can arise with shared responsibilities*
- Disclose conflict to OEOA so that a management plan can be created
OEOA Role

- Partner with Campus
  - Protection
  - Prevention
  - Diversity Goals
  - Compliance
  - Data and System Support
Equal Employment Opportunity Officer Role

- College/Unit oversight for
  - Affirmative Action
  - Equal Employment Opportunity
  - Fair and consistent processes, procedures and practices across all departments
Affirmative Action Officer Role

- Department Oversight:
  - Be an advocate for Affirmative Action
  - Be a voice, visible presence, and resource
  - Creative and innovative outreach
  - Assist with retention and climate in unit
  - Know affirmative action data and diversity statistics for the unit
Search Chair
(in consultation with or at direction of Hiring Manager)

- Select and prepare the search committee
- Coordinate job description development, recruitment plan, advertising. Consult with other as necessary.
- Oversee preparation of evaluation criteria, interview questions, guide committee résumé review.
- Establish schedule for screening and reviewing résumés, interviewing candidates.
- Recruitment: Consult Affirmative Action Officer suggest advertising.
- New Hire: Consult with Inclusive Illinois Representative to assist with on-boarding and Illinois transition to increase retention.
Search Committees in the Academic Search Process

Search committees serve in an advisory capacity for the identification and selection of candidates, since the ultimate responsibility for hiring rests with the unit executive or other designated official.
Search Committee Member Responsibilities

- Commit to allocate the time and effort required to ensure fairness of the process.
- Evaluate all candidates based on evaluation criteria.
- Treat all candidates with fairness and respect.
- Determine how candidate references will be obtained.
- Be open minded and willing to consider different perspectives and values; and
- If possible, participate in the crafting the position announcement and candidate evaluation criteria.
Search Committee Member Responsibilities

- Be committed to the principles of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity;

- Actively participate in seeking out, soliciting, and recruiting qualified, diverse candidates;

- Engage in Special Recruitment
  - Peer/colleague solicitations
  - Professional and academic association listservs
  - CIC Directory of Minority PhD candidates
  - Search Firms
Administrative Support

- Initiate and process forms
- Coordinate and schedule committee meetings
- Assist applicants during the submission process
- Coordinate candidate interview arrangements and schedule
- Process HR transactions
- Complete search documentation and close the search
For a Successfully Inclusive Search…
First Search Committee Meeting

- Sets the tone
- No review of candidate submissions prior to first committee meeting
- Review of OEOA Search Training Summary PowerPoint
At the First Meeting…

- Diversity data and affirmative action data related to the vacancy and unit should be presented (available from OEOA).
- Either the AAO or EEO should be present to explain their role.
- The charge to committee should be issued by Department Executive.
- The Search timeline should be established.
- The Evaluation Criteria should be discussed.
- Discuss reference process: listed vs. unlisted.
  - (Consider carefully the use of unlisted references – it may affect the individual’s current job).
Diversity of Academic Professionals Data
2009 Goal Monitor Reports

- 39% of 412 faculty/other academic job groups have placement goals
  - January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009
    - 223 placements (hires and promotions) into job groups with goals, 93 affirmative action placements (42%)

- 66% of 47 academic professional job groups have placement goals
  - January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009
    - 360 placements (hires and promotions) into job groups with goals, 73 affirmative action placements (20%)
Review of Applications

- Committees should only review candidate material that was properly submitted.
- Applicants must meet minimum qualifications.
- For INTERNAL searches, no submissions external to Illinois (Urbana-Champaign campus) should be reviewed or considered.
Evaluating Resumes

- Use Evaluation Criteria
- Read each resume and cover letter;
- Grouping of candidates is acceptable:
  - Best qualified; qualified; not qualified
- Compare groupings at committee meeting
- Identify and evaluate top candidates
  - Be mindful of unconscious bias as you review candidates' names, experiences, educational institutions, etc.
Possible Ranking System

- Category 1: Very qualified, meeting the criteria of the job description, definitely merits further consideration

- Category 2: Qualified, meeting some or most of the criteria of the job description but may lack some experience in one of two aspects. May merit further consideration

- Category 3: Not qualified/Probably not qualified, does not meet some or a significant portion of the criteria of the job description. Lacks experience in significant aspects or is perceived to have a general lack of experience or training in all areas
Assumptions or unconscious biases that can influence the evaluation of applications

- Resumes of applicants with “white-sounding” and “male” names were more often likely to be interviewed for open positions than were equally qualified applicants with “African-American-sounding” or “female” names (American Economic Review, 2004; Sex Roles, 1999)

- A study of over 300 letters of recommendation for medical faculty found that letters for female applicants differed systematically from those for males. Letters written for women were shorter, provided “minimal assurance” rather than solid recommendation, raised more doubts, portrayed women as students and teachers while portraying men as researchers and professionals, and more frequently mentioned women’s personal lives. (Discourse and Society, 2003)
Assumptions or unconscious biases that can influence the evaluation of applications

- A study of postdoctoral fellowships awarded by the Medical Research Council of Sweden found that women candidates needed substantially more publications to achieve the same rating as men, unless they personally knew someone on the panel. (Nature, 1997)

- Be careful about “prestigious peer” institution assumptions for faculty candidates (females from top 5 vs. males from top 20)
Minimizing the potential influence of assumptions or unconscious bias

- Evaluate each candidate’s entire application; don’t depend too heavily on only one element such as letters of recommendation, or the “prestige” of the degree-granting institution or post-doctoral program.

- Don’t automatically eliminate candidates without preferred qualifications.

- Be able to defend every decision for eliminating or advancing a candidate.

- Spend sufficient time (at least 20 minutes) evaluating each applicant.
Unconscious Bias’ Impact on “Adverse Impact”

- Affirmative action responsibilities include monitoring personnel activity and conducting statistical analysis on hires, promotions, and terminations.

- Adverse Impact means that an underrepresented group suffers in employment decisions at a rate that is significantly worse than the rate for those outside that group. This can lead to increased scrutiny of employment decisions for discrimination.

- In the resume evaluation and interview portion of the search process, unconscious bias must be addressed to minimize potential for adverse impact.
Selection Process

- Consider creating a semi-finalist pool for preliminary screening and phone interviews

- Candidates selected for on-campus interviews are referred to as “Finalists.”

- Justification for selecting finalist must be documented.

- Defaulting to “not a good fit” without clear, objective justification

- Diversity of Finalist Pool can be discussed with AAO.
Interview Procedures

- Review Prohibited Interview questions ([www.oeea.illinois.edu](http://www.oeea.illinois.edu))
  - Age
  - Citizenship
  - Marital/Family Status/Pregnancy
  - Religion
  - Arrests

- Carefully prepare interview questions
- Hiring unit has discretion to determine if and/or how search committee participates in the interview process.
- Finalists should be asked similar questions and treated similarly
- Justification for hire must be based on qualifications, experience, references, interview
A FINAL WORD ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY

- Search process is confidential
- Candidate information should not be shared
- Finalist information should not be shared
- Search committee composition/membership should not be shared
- Reference checks must be done with guidance from Search Chair/Department Head
OEOA Resources

- On-Line:
- Recruiting Resources
  - Article: “How to Diversify the Faculty”
  - Reviewing Applicants; Research on Bias
  - Case Study on Search Committee Meeting
- Website www.oeea.illinois.edu
- Office contact information
  - 333-0885
  - 244-9136 (fax)