Diversity and Faculty Searches: Principles and Practices

The following principles and practices are aimed at cultivating broad and inclusive applicant pools for faculty searches in order to increase the diversity of our faculty. These recommendations are premised on:

- Our commitment in the School of Education to the twin imperatives of diversity and equity as articulated in our strategic assessment (December 2010).
- The university’s commitment to diversity, as well as its obligation to comply with Federal Executive Order 11246 even in the shadow of Proposition 2.

I. Institutional Equity Advisor

The School of Education Diversity Advisory Committee serves a special role of equity advisor to the dean. The Education Diversity Advisory Committee, composed of faculty, staff, and students, is chaired by an associate dean and is broadly responsible for establishing practices and coordinating initiatives aimed at developing an SOE climate that supports equity and diversity, as well as for advising the dean on a range of issues that interact with and bear on our ability to promote diversity and equity.

The equity advisor:

a. ensures that each search committee is diverse and/or has members who will be proactive in seeking a diverse applicant pool;
b. evaluates position announcements to ensure that the content is likely to attract a diverse pool of applicants;
c. evaluates the active search and recruitment plan forwarded by each search committee to ensure that the plan is consistent with best practices for growing a broad and inclusive applicant pool;
d. monitors the applicant pool to ensure it is reasonably diverse and compares favorably with the national pool of available candidates (see IIIb and IIIc below);
e. certifies that the search committee has engaged in an assertive good faith effort to achieve a diverse candidate pool;
f. recommends proactive measures to enhance the diversity of the applicant pool if the applicant pool does not reasonably reflect the diversity of the national pool;
g. recommends to the SOE Executive Committee (EC) that a search be extended if such an extension promises to increase the diversity of the applicant pool;

1The text and substance captured in these recommendations have been adopted and adapted from a variety of sources (i.e., ADVANCE Handbook for Faculty Searches; http://oeoa.illinois.edu/NewSearchManual/Search_Manual_Training_PPT.pdf; https://faculty.diversity.ucla.edu/resources-for/search-committees/search-toolkit; http://web.jhu.edu/administration/provost/docs/Resource%20Guide%20for%20Faculty%20Searches%202011.pdf; http://facultyequity.chance.berkeley.edu/resources/senate_search.shtml; http://web.mit.edu/faculty/reports/FacultySearch.pdf). These recommendations draw most heavily from documents and/or websites developed by ADVANCE, Berkeley, and UCLA. In turn, each of these sources relied on each other in generating of its own text, logic, and substance).

2 While Proposition 2 prohibits preferential treatment during the hiring process based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin and relates primarily to the selection phase of the search and appointment process, Executive Order 11246 calls for Nondiscrimination Government Employment and requires Affirmative Action efforts on the part of the university. Affirmative Action relates to the recruitment phase of the search and appointment process. The University of Michigan is in the process of developing a faculty hiring manual that will articulate this position in full. In developing this manual, the university will draw from the ongoing work and practices at the university (e.g., STRIDE/ADVANCE; departmental and school initiatives) as well as the text and logic provided in the faculty hiring manuals of peer institutions (e.g., Berkeley, Johns Hopkins, University of Illinois, UCLA, MIT).
h. reviews the short list of candidates in light of the search committee’s application of the
search criteria; and
i. meets with each short-list candidate during his/her campus visit and also evaluates and
documents how each candidate is likely to contribute to the diversity and equity agenda
of the school.

II. The SOE Executive Committee
a. Once each of the following stages—the composition of the search committee, the
position announcement, and the short list—is deemed satisfactory by the equity advisor,
these will be forwarded to the Executive Committee for approval.
b. Upon receipt of EC approval for each, the search committee will (a) post position
announcements in accordance with the approved active search plan; and (b) invite short
list candidates to campus to conduct job talks/interviews.
c. The EC may choose to extend a search if such an extension promises to yield a more
diverse applicant pool.

III. Search Committee Composition
a. Appoint a diverse committee (e.g., representing diversity in perspectives, specializations,
methodological or epistemological orientations, rank/status);
b. Include faculty members who are committed to diversity and excellence;
c. Ensure that women and minorities have equal opportunity to serve on search committees
and actively seek their participation on search committees whenever possible.

IV. The Role and Expectations of the Search Committee
a. Search Committee members must participate in STRIDE training (either via a specially
tuned training provided to the committee as a whole or via members having participated
in STRIDE workshops within three years of their service on the search committee).
b. Develop a position advertisement and an active search and recruitment plan.
c. The active search and recruitment plan must reflect best practices for reaching a broad
and inclusive applicant pool (see Appendix A: Effective Strategies and Practices for
Creating a Broad and Inclusive Pool of Applicants; and ADVANCE Handbook: “Defining
the Position” and “Recruiting Activities During the Search”).
d. In addition to pursuing the practices outlined in the aforementioned documents, the
search committee will:
   i. reach out to colleagues throughout the SOE in the interest of leveraging in full
the professional networks extant in the SOE;
   ii. determine the national pool for a search\(^3\) using benchmark availability data;
   iii. implement an online survey to facilitate the search committee’s capacity to
evaluate how the applicant pool compares with the national pool (both the Ross
School of Business and the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts rely on
these optional online surveys in conducting their searches). As the SOE does not
yet have the technological infrastructure for fielding these online surveys in
compliance with federal regulations, the Office of Institutional Equity will assist
the SOE in fielding the hard copy version of the survey and will also generate the
statistics necessary for the SOE to compare the demographics of the applicant
pool with that of the national pool)\(^4\);

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3 Prior to beginning a search, the search committee must, with the assistance of ADVANCE, determine the pool of
U.S. degree recipients by race/ethnicity and gender that is specific to the specialty area targeted by the search. The
demographic profile of the applicant pool will be compared to this availability pool to ensure that the applicant pool is
sufficiently diverse.

4 This practice would also save the School of Education time on the back end if the university were ever under federal
audit as per the university’s obligation to comply with E011246.
iv. regularly reference the benchmark availability data during the candidate application period to gauge progress in growing a diverse applicant pool and to redouble efforts as warranted;

v. establish clear evaluation and selection criteria and ensure that the criteria are applied equitably in the selection process; candidates’ capacity to contribute to the SOE’s commitment to diversity and inclusion must be included among the selection criteria;

vi. develop and implement a candidate evaluation sheet that is in accord with the selection criteria and will facilitate the search committee’s reasoned evaluation of candidates as per this criteria (this same evaluation sheet should be implemented during the campus visits/interview stage of search, as it would allow various parties and constituencies within the SOE to comment on short list candidates in accord with the evaluation criteria); and

vii. comply with ADVANCE recommendations concerning best practices for whittling down the applicant pool to a short list of applicants (see ADVANCE Handbook for Faculty Searches: “Creating the Short List”).

e. Obtain the dean’s and the equity advisor’s evaluation that the short list is satisfactory. In seeking this evaluation the search committee must provide justification for the selection of finalists. Towards that end, the committee must discuss each finalist’s qualifications, experience, and skills based on the evaluation criteria and describe in detail the committee’s good faith efforts to achieve a diverse candidate pool.

V. The Job Description/Position Announcement
a. When feasible, broaden the job description to attract the widest range of qualified candidates:

b. Include language that signals the SOE’s commitment to diversity (e.g., family friendly and diversity language—see Appendix B);

c. Advertise in venues that reach women and underrepresented minorities, such as special subgroups of professional organizations or focused conferences (see Appendix A and ADVANCE Handbook).

VI. Proactive Recruitment of a Diverse Pool
In order to develop the SOE’s long-term capacity to grow the diversity of the faculty and also cultivate a culture and climate that make salient the SOE’s commitment to diversity (increasing, in turn, the SOE’s capacity to attract a more diverse student body), the SOE should:

a. establish a visiting scholars program, distinguished lecturer series, or other programs featuring scholars with a commitment to diversity and equal opportunity in higher education;

b. instantiate the commitment to diversity and equity in visible and durable organizational features (e.g., designate the cultivation and promotion of diversity as part of an associate dean’s portfolio; establish a diversity committee);

c. support SOE designees to participate in meetings and conferences with an eye toward identifying talent for future searches (e.g., national and regional meetings; conferences or meetings likely to attract underrepresented minorities or likely to feature scholars

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5 Past experience has shown that defining the proposed search in overly narrow terms may limit the applicant pool and undermine efforts to attract and review the best candidates. Whenever possible, the search committee should consider the widest scope of potential needs so that there is an opportunity to choose the most excellent candidate from an expanded pool. Alternatively, another successful strategy can be to prioritize sub-disciplines (established or new) where women and/or minorities are more likely to be included in the available pool of candidates (http://facultyequity.chance.berkeley.edu/resources/senate_search.shtml).
specializing in areas of study, methodologies, or epistemologies that are underrepresented in the SOE).

d. make decisions about person-specific hires with caution because such hires can work against our efforts to develop a diverse faculty and to cultivate a climate that supports diversity and inclusiveness.