Search Committee Briefing

WORKING TO ENSURE EQUITABLE RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PRACTICES
Objectives

Understand and share insight around the various opportunities to address strategic D&I goals during the search process

Identify mechanisms that might be useful in overcoming barriers to diversifying the search process

Uncover and respond to the impact of implicit bias and how it might be influencing the selection of candidates.
Connecting Equity and Inclusion with the Search Process

Position Creation

Recruiting a Diverse Pool

Selecting Candidates

Interviews

Reference Checking

AT EVERY STAGE, WORK TO INTENTIONALLY ADDRESS AND IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES FOCUSED ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION GOALS
Excellence or Diversity

“How do we recruit the best **and** hire for diversity?”

The two are **not** mutually exclusive

This question often underlies the unaddressed implicit bias that exists and is prevalent during the recruitment and hiring stages

It presumes that diverse candidates are inherently **NOT** the best

Arguably, the best candidates are the ones bringing diverse perspectives and experiences to the unit.
Recruiting a Diverse Pool
Before you Begin

The Charge to the Search Committee

Each member of the committee is responsible for conducting a fair and equitable search.

Challenge each member of the committee to acknowledge and recognize the influence of implicit bias and work actively to mitigate it.

Establish screening criteria to ensure an equitable review process.
Beyond “Post and Pray”

- What partnerships can you leverage?

- What conferences or professional organizations have higher representations of minoritized individuals or members from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds

- Challenges and limitations exist within formerly established networks

- Partner with other units to advertise multiple openings in a variety of publications or networks
Writing the Job Post

- Research has shown that organizations who move beyond the required EEO Statement (Penn State is committed to the diversity of its workforce...) and include a statement on their overall Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion vision/goals/mission have a greater likelihood of increasing the diversity of their applicant pool.

- Generationally, Millennial and Generation Z members also look for alignment with personal and professional values. Can they be a part of an organization where they can make a difference in the areas that matter to them

- Penn State’s Statement on Inclusive Excellence
equity.psu.edu/diversity-statement
Including D&I as a required competency

- Beyond sharing the institution and college/department’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, we want to make sure our workforce brings a level of cultural competency as well.

- Including D&I competencies in the job description, also increases not only the likelihood of a more diverse pool, but the likelihood of hiring a candidate, regardless of demographic identities, who is also committed and adept at demonstrating these skills.

Example statements:

- Relevant ability working with underserved and/or underrepresented populations

- A demonstrated commitment to, and relevant ability successfully advocating for diversity and values of diversity

- Successful record of recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty, staff, and students, including individuals from diverse and minoritized backgrounds.

- Demonstrated knowledge, skills, relevant abilities and/or interest in teaching/pursuing research with respect to the following or related topics or issues: (list diversity-related topics, courses, and/or specific diversity populations)
Selecting Candidates

SCREENING PHASE – BUILDING THE CANDIDATE POOL
Screening Process

Research has shown the extent to which you can remove demographically identifying information from applicant materials greatly increases your chance of diversifying the applicant pool. Recognizing the cues for potential bias can also help mitigate it’s impact.

Notions of “fitness” can often be influenced by affiliations of gender, age, race, ethnicity, ability status, etc.
Uncovering Unconscious or Implicit Bias

Unconscious bias is the result of the brain’s lightning speed in taking in, tagging, and sorting information.

It is more likely to occur in moments when we are rushed or under pressure.

To counter Unconscious bias is the hiring process we have to

- Acknowledge the potential for bias to exist
  - What types of bias might exist within the field or towards minoritized individuals
- Slow down
- Create structure
- Carefully consider standardized processes (ranking, interviewing, etc.)
Types of Bias

**Affinity bias**: The tendency to warm up to people like ourselves.

**Halo effect**: The tendency to think everything about a person is good because you like that person.

**Perception bias**: The tendency to form stereotypes and assumptions about certain groups that make it impossible to make an objective judgement about members of those groups.

**Confirmation bias**: The tendency for people to seek information that confirms preexisting beliefs or assumptions.

**Group think**: This bias occurs when people try too hard to fit into a particular group by mimicking others or holding back thoughts and opinions. This causes them to lose part of their identities and causes organizations to lose out on creativity and innovation.
Countering Implicit Bias

- Slow down

- Consider implementing a process that makes managing the number of applicants across search committee members to allow for a more thorough review

- Acknowledge and recognize the potential for bias to influence decision making at various stages

- Diversify the search committee and allow for equitable participation of each member
Interview Process

While you may be able to implement some controls during the screening process, it may be harder to do so during the interview stage.

It is crucial to be aware of personal biases at this stage as well. Physical representation, verbal and non-verbal communication styles, and other presentations will trigger cultural notions of “fitness” and can impact the rating of candidate performance during the interview.

Maintain levels of standardization throughout the interview process—asking similar questions (allowing for follow-up as necessary), and similar routines
Behavioral Based Interviewing

Communicate your Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion while assessing the candidates contributions and commitment to these values

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<th>Affect</th>
<th>Cognition</th>
<th>Skill</th>
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<td>• What are the candidates beliefs around DE&amp;I as a part of their job skill set</td>
<td>• How does the candidate convey their understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion and the place of these values in their work</td>
<td>• How does the candidate demonstrate cultural agility and competency?</td>
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Presentations/Guest Lectures

- Ask questions across the various/appropriate domains
- Ask the candidate how might they adapt the presentation to reach a specific audience
- What would we expect the culturally competent candidate to know?
- What would we expect the culturally competent candidate to be able to do?

Ex: Please discuss two different examples of times when you taught (or how you might teach – for those with limited teaching experience) a group of students from diverse backgrounds who differed in their approaches to the subject matter. How did you incorporate these differences into the learning environment? How did what you did affect student’s learning? How did you evaluate this?
Maintain Equity through the Reference Checking Process

At the stage of reference checking, we are once again looking to confirm a number of factors.

It is important to be attentive not only to our own biases, but the potential hidden biases of the person providing the reference.

Are we looking for specific traits, characteristics, or key words. Are these phrases likely to be used regardless of the candidate’s identity?

Research indicates that the language used to describe female candidates often focuses more largely on soft skills and service related functions as opposed to skill competency related functions that get used when talking about male employees.
Preventing the References from Undoing Your Work

Ask the candidate to provide a range of references: supervising faculty, peers, former or current student, etc.

Keep questions aligned to the same competencies used to evaluate the candidate for the position

Ask the reference about the candidate’s demonstrated commitment to creating inclusive work and learning environments
Summary
Position Creation
Include D&I as a required job skill

Recruiting a Diverse Pool
Extend beyond the typical recruitment strategy

Screening Candidates
Challenge the PLU or “Fit” standard

Interviews
Develop questions specific to various domains of knowledge and skill

Reference Checking
Aim to diversify the reference pool provided as well to get multiple perspectives
Questions?

What questions remain?
What other resources might be helpful?
What would you like to know more about?