

# Search Process Overview

*Search Committee Chair*

Office for Access and Equity  
Affirmative Action Planning and Analytics Division



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# Objectives

- Become familiar with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action laws and regulations
- Learn about confidentiality and conflicts of interest
- Understand why diversity matters
- Learn about bias and discover strategies to reduce bias
- Review search process key roles
- Know how to conduct a successfully inclusive search

# Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action



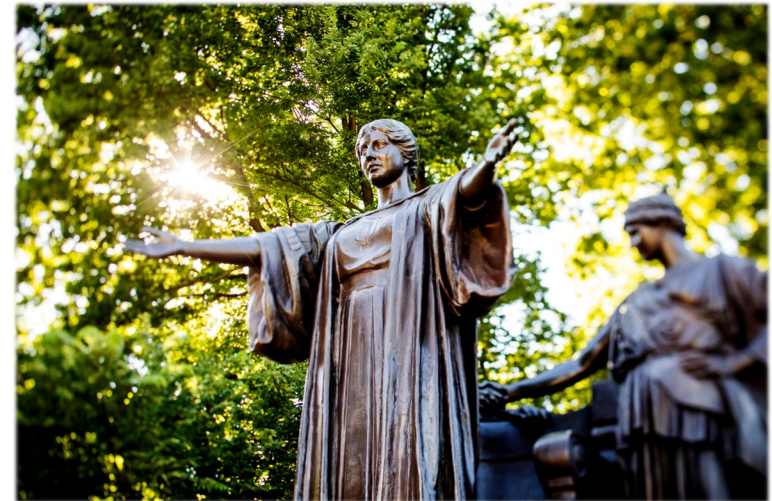
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# Search Process

The university's search process is integral to Illinois' commitment to:

- Equal employment opportunity
- Affirmative action
- Diversity



# Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Part 1

## Equal employment opportunity (EEO)

- A legal framework that makes it unlawful to discriminate in employment decisions based on a protected class

## Affirmative action

- A regulatory obligation for certain federal contractors that requires us to identify underrepresentation and take positive steps to address that underrepresentation

# Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, Part 2

Covered employment practices:

- Recruitment
- Hiring
- Reclassification/Promotion
- Demotions
- Transfers
- Layoff
- Termination
- Compensation
- Training opportunities
- Accessibility



# Equal Employment Opportunity

Protected classes:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- National origin
- Age
- Disability
- Genetic information



# Affirmative Action Plan, Part 1

- A written, results-oriented program in which a federal contractor details the steps it will take to ensure equal employment opportunity
  - It includes goal-oriented management policies and procedures designed to identify and eliminate barriers to employment opportunities for minorities, women, protected veterans and individuals with disabilities that are not based on specific job requirements
  - It is intended to foster equal opportunity, so everyone has a fair chance to succeed in the workplace
  - The affirmative action plan is updated annually to provide a report on the progress (or lack thereof) regarding the use of good faith efforts to ensure equal employment opportunity



# Affirmative Action Plan, Part 2

- An affirmative action plan is like any other business plan, it's just related to diversity and equal employment opportunity
  - Start by establishing a baseline
  - Measure your organization against that baseline
  - Create a plan to address areas of need
  - Implement the plan
  - Come back later to see if the plan worked
  - Make changes if/when necessary, to get better results

# Affirmative Action Placement Goals and Hiring Benchmarks, Part 1

- Affirmative action placement goals are set when the percentage of minorities or women currently employed, is less than reasonably expected given their percentage of availability in the workforce
  - Separate goals are assigned for each job group
- There is a 7% workforce utilization goal for individuals with disabilities and a 5.5% hiring benchmark for protected veterans
  - Same goals for all job groups

# Affirmative Action Placement Goals and Hiring Benchmarks, Part 2

## **Affirmative action is NOT:**

- A quota system
- Reverse discrimination

## **Placement goals and hiring benchmarks ARE:**

- Target rates for hire
- Used to guide our good faith efforts



## **The expectation:**

As goals are met, the gender, racial and ethnic profiles, as well as the veteran and disability status of our employees, will mirror the population from which we recruit

# Diversity at Illinois

- Minorities, women, veterans and individuals with disabilities are underrepresented in positions on campus. To review the underrepresentation for the different areas of employment groups, visit: [OAE Campus Reports](#)
- Addressing underrepresentation requires active and consistent efforts involving deans, department heads, equal employment opportunity officers, hiring managers, diversity advocates, search chairs and search committee members

# Responsibilities

You are responsible for:

- Promoting equal employment opportunity and applying affirmative action principles
- Ensuring the company's policy of equal employment opportunity is understood, supported and followed
- Preventing all types of unlawful workplace harassment
- Understanding affirmative action placement goals and know what goal is set for the position you are filling

# Guidance Documents

- [Recruitment and Hiring Guidelines](#)
- [Affirmative Action Regulations](#)
- [Equal Employment Opportunity](#)
- [EEOC Uniform Employee Selection Guidelines](#)
- [Internet Applicant Recordkeeping Rule](#)

# Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest



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# Confidentiality

- **Confidentiality is critical**
- Maintain confidentiality of all candidate information and deliberations **before, during, and after** search
- Access to application materials and other information about screening is limited to search committee members, hiring officials, and individuals supporting the search
- Extra caution with internal candidates
  - Even if no longer under consideration, cannot be involved in any aspect of search
  - Consider making calendar invites private

# Types of Confidential Information

Examples of information that should **only be shared on a need-to-know basis** include:

- Identifying applicant information
- Applicant documents (cover letter, resume, CV, etc.)
- Candidate references and letters of reference
- Deliberation documents (interview questions, evaluation forms, committee member notes, etc.)

# Who Might “Need-to-Know”

- Hiring manager and search committee members
  - For use in assessing application materials
- Support staff
  - For scheduling interview, travel arrangements, etc.
- Stakeholder groups or other parties involved in interviewing finalists
  - For use in assessing application materials

# Consequences of Confidentiality Breach

- Negative repercussions for candidates whose current employer is not aware that they are entertaining job offers
  - Well qualified candidates may be reluctant to apply for fear that we cannot keep their information confidential
- Strained relationships for current staff
  - Internal candidates are often concerned with the confidentiality of the search process
- Investigations from University Ethics or Office for Access and Equity

# Freedom of Information Act

- The Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides public access to government documents and records
- FOIA requests are processed by the Office for University Relations
- University Relations may request documents to be provided directly from the unit or from OAE
- University Counsel can provide guidance on FOIA

# Conflict of Interest Example, Part 1

Committee member has an undisclosed current or past relationship with an applicant (i.e., relative, spouse, friend, advisee, etc.)

- Potential steps to be taken:
  - Notify chair of issue immediately
  - Chair may consult with HR staff, who may consult with OAE
- Potential remedies (depending on the nature of the relationship):
  - Recusal of committee member
  - Committee member abstains from evaluation of the specific candidate and does not take part in hiring decision of the candidate
  - Others, depending on specifics of situation – consult OAE

# Conflict of Interest Example, Part 2

Unsolicited information provided to committee regarding a candidate (i.e. phone calls, emails, rumors, etc.)

- Potential steps to be taken:
  - Notify chair of issue immediately – do NOT share with whole committee
  - Chair may consult with HR staff, who may consult with OAE
- HR staff should determine if information is true, verifiable and relevant to the position
- We want to minimize the use of unsolicited information – if it is not pertinent to the position, it should never be included as part of the review of the candidate



# Conflict of Interest Example, Part 3

Current colleague of committee or hiring official in applicant pool

- This is not a conflict by itself, but can become one if not handled carefully
  - Current employees must be treated as any other applicant
  - Confidentiality rules apply – may need to take extra steps to ensure that current employees who are applicants do not have access to privileged information
  - Current employees who are applicants, even if they are no longer in consideration (screened out or deemed not-hirable) must never participate in the review or evaluation process of other candidates

# Summary

- Confidentiality and conflicts of interest often go hand-in hand
- Confidentiality breaches can lead to conflicts and perceived conflicts
- Many complaints received by our office start as confidentiality breaches, but the allegations are most often conflicts of interest or discrimination of some type
- The University strives to not only avoid conflicts of interest and breaches of confidentiality, but also to avoid the appearance of a conflict

# Perceived Conflict Caution

- Perceived conflicts can turn into complaints
- Complaints can turn into:
  - Unofficial investigations
  - Official internal investigations
    - Interviewing all committee members
    - Collecting additional information
  - Inquiries from University Ethics
  - Investigations from external agencies

# Why Diversity Matters



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# Campus Commitment to Diversity

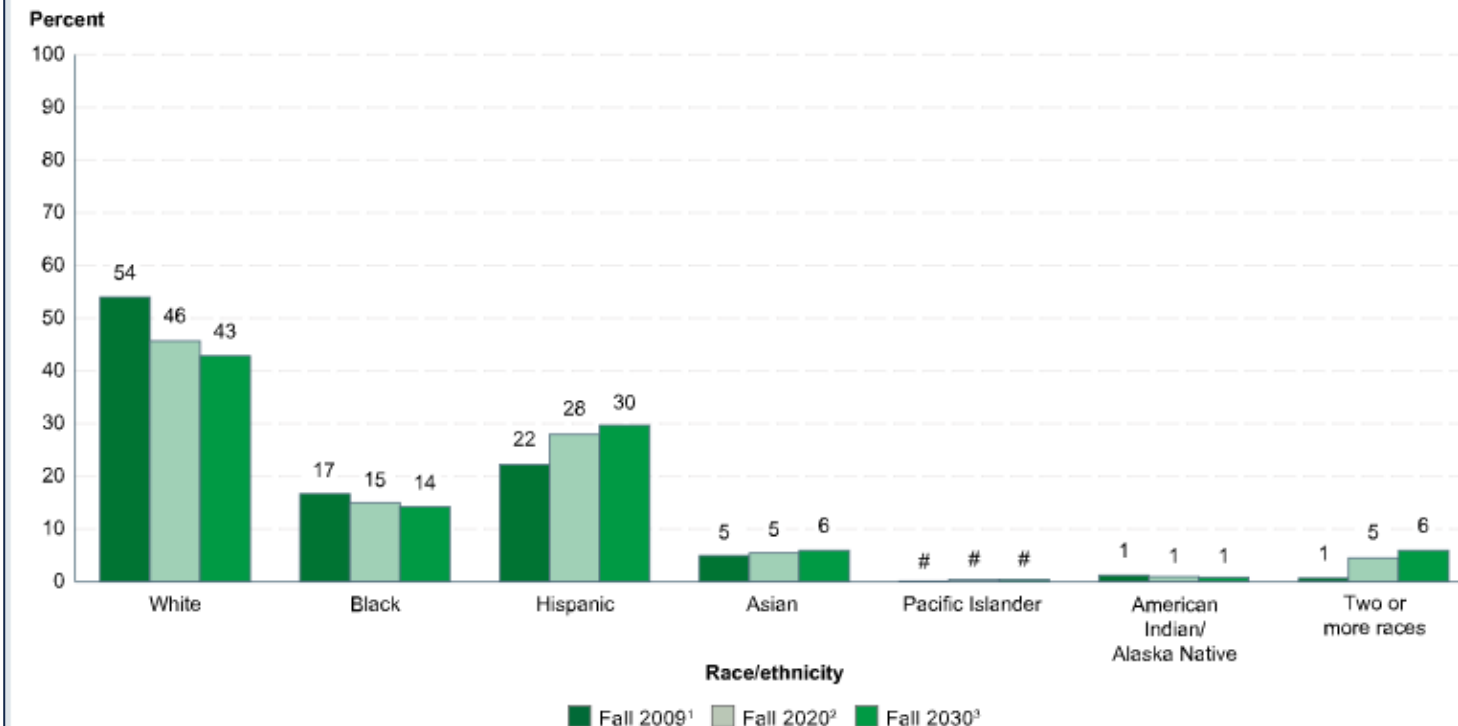
- **University of Illinois System** – Guiding values include “Be inclusive, treat each other with dignity and respect, and promote citizenship”
- **University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign Strategic Plan** – “We will be leaders in advancing diversity and equity that will contribute to creating an institution committed to excellence in discovery, teaching, and research, and a climate where all can achieve their highest aspirations in a safe and welcoming environment”
- **Academic and campus life programs for students** – Housing multicultural advocates, Office of Minority Student Affairs, Diversity and Social Justice programs, African American, Asian American Cultural Centers, La Casa Cultural Latina, LGBT resource center, Native American House, and many others

<https://www.uillinois.edu/about/mission/> ; <https://strategicplan.illinois.edu/>



# Changing Demographics

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of student enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, by race/ethnicity: Fall 2009, fall 2020, and fall 2030



2013-2014 was the last year in which a majority of America's K-12 students were white

Although our society is becoming increasingly diverse, U.S. institutions of higher education currently do not reflect this trend

It is our mission to create an increasingly diverse and inclusive campus community that is open, just and welcoming for all

Note. From the National Center for Education Statistics (May 2022). # Rounds to zero.

# Benefits Our Mission

Diversity  
benefits our  
teaching  
and  
research  
mission

## Diverse teams:

- Are more productive, creative, and innovative (e.g., Henderson & Herring, 2013; Hofstra et al., 2020)
- Make higher-quality decisions with more careful consideration of the available information (e.g., Gaither et al., 2018)
- Author papers that are published in higher-impact journals and cited more (e.g., Campbell et al., 2013; Freeman & Huang, 2015)
- Create grant proposals that are more likely to receive funding (e.g., Lungeanu et al., 2014)

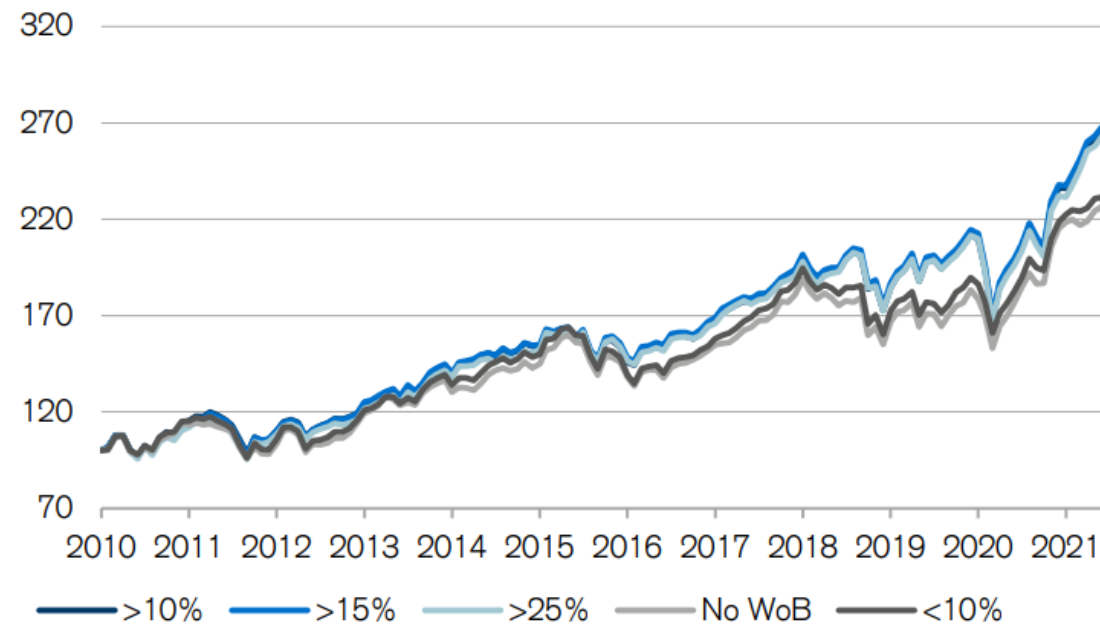


# Diverse Groups Are More Productive, Part 1

## The Credit Suisse Gender 3000 Report

**Figure 10: Share-price performance of differing percentages of female board representation**

(indexed to 100; average = 15% since 2010)



Data collected from 3,000 companies in 46 countries, comprising 33,000 executive positions

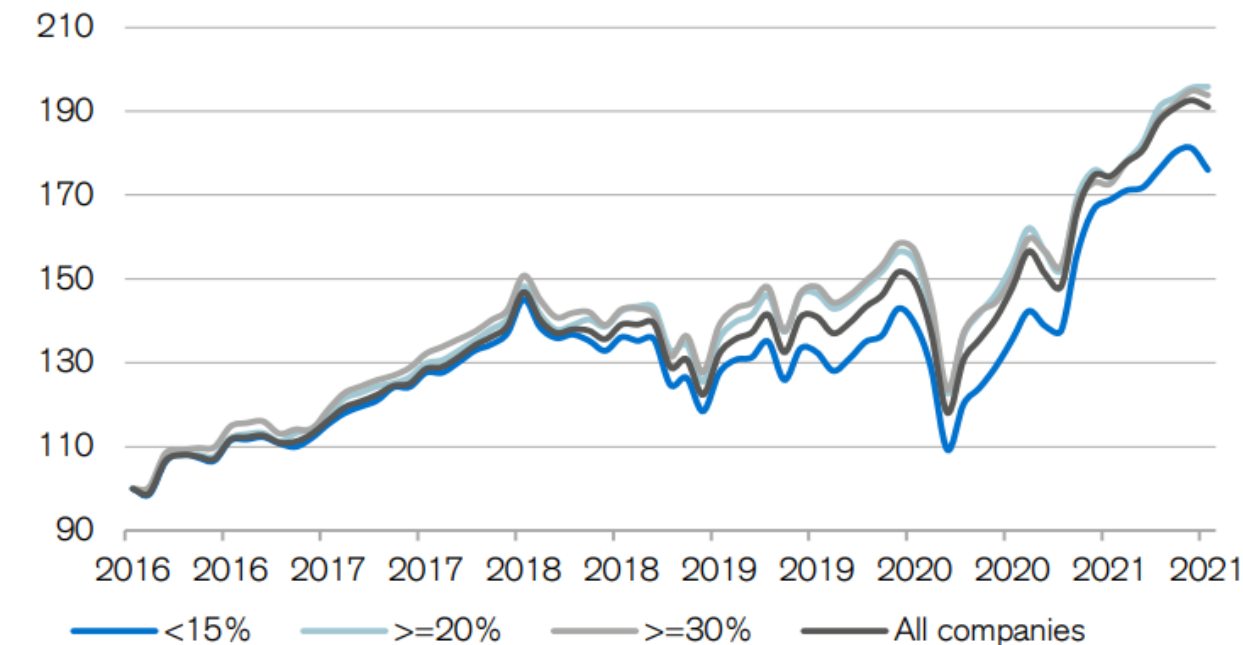
Companies with a greater percentage of women on their board of directors have consistently outperformed those with few (<10%) to no women (No WoB) on their boards

# Diverse Groups Are More Productive, Part 2

## The Credit Suisse Gender 3000 Report

**Figure 9: Share price performance by percentage of women in management (rebalanced universe)**

(indexed to 100)



Companies with a greater percentage of women ( $\geq 20\%$  and  $\geq 30\%$ ) in management have consistently outperformed those with fewer women in management ( $< 15\%$ )

# Understanding Bias

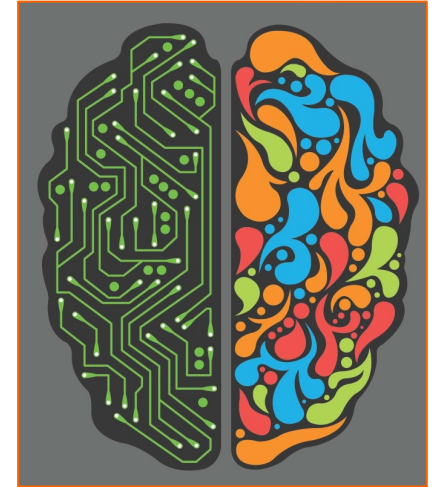


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# Implicit Bias Explained, Part 1

- Bias we are unaware of and is outside of our control
- The ability to quickly categorize is a fundamental quality of the human mind and **happens to everyone**
- It occurs automatically and is triggered by our minds noticing patterns and making quick generalizations of people and situations



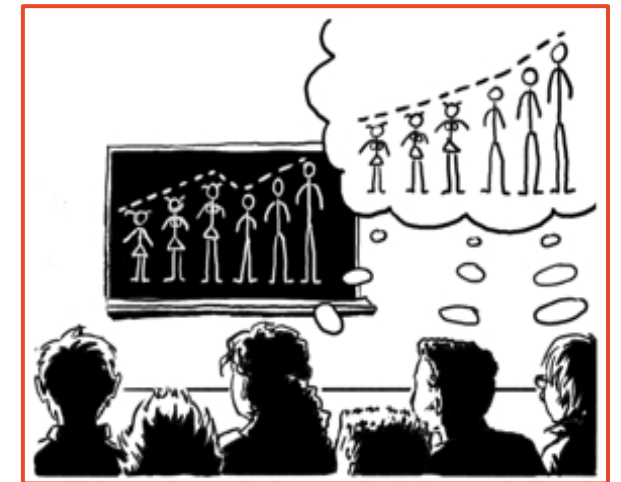
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-to-think-about-implicit-bias/>

# Implicit Bias Explained, Part 2

- Even if we have strong egalitarian values and believe we are not biased we may still behave in discriminatory ways
- Despite efforts to be objective, these judgments are shaped by a lifetime of experience and cultural history, and lead to implicit bias or implicit stereotyping
- Applies to a variety of physical and social characteristics associated with race, gender, age, ethnicity--even height

# Bias Example – Height

- When shown photographs of people of the same height, evaluators overestimated men's heights and underestimated women's heights, even though a reference point, such as a doorway, was provided
- Decisions were based on assumptions about average height of men vs women, despite evidence that the individual in question did not fit the stereotype
- Another study found that tall candidates are perceived as more competent, employable and healthy
  - 58% of male CEOs are over six feet tall, even though they only account for 14.5% of the population



[https://www.monmouth.edu/equity-and-diversity/documents/biasbrochure\\_3rded.pdf/](https://www.monmouth.edu/equity-and-diversity/documents/biasbrochure_3rded.pdf/)  
<https://builtin.com/diversity-inclusion/unconscious-bias-examples>

# Bias Example – Names

- Resumes of applicants with white-sounding and male-sounding names were more likely to be interviewed for open positions than were equally qualified applicants with African-American-sounding or female-sounding names
- When rating the quality of verbal skills as indicated by vocabulary definitions, evaluators rated skills lower if told that an African American provided the definitions than if a white person provided them



[https://www.monmouth.edu/equity-and-diversity/documents/biasbrochure\\_3rded.pdf](https://www.monmouth.edu/equity-and-diversity/documents/biasbrochure_3rded.pdf)

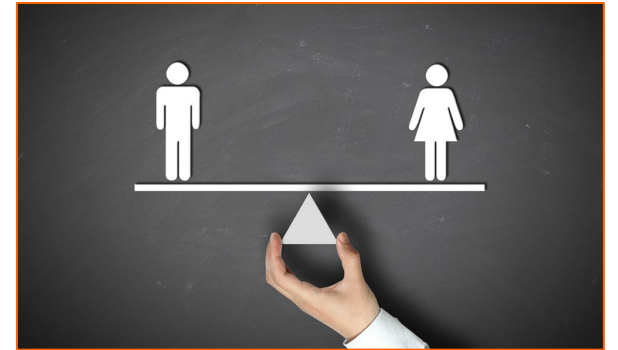


# Strategies to Avoid Bias, Part 1

- **Before reviewing anyone, be very clear and in agreement about what is required/preferred for each job and what that looks like**
- Evaluate each candidate's entire application
  - Avoid depending too heavily on only one element such as letters of recommendation
  - Be able to defend every decision for eliminating or advancing a candidate by documenting the process
  - Reasons for selection/non-selection should be specific
  - Avoid vague statements such as “not a good fit”

# Strategies to Avoid Bias, Part 2

- Spend **sufficient time** reviewing each person
- Ensure consistent and fair treatment of all applicants at **every stage** of the selection process
  - Application review
  - Screening & finalist interviews
  - Discussion of finalists
- Consider including a diversity interview question
- Applicants who need an accommodation should be treated equally to applicants who do not need an accommodation



# Strategies to Avoid Bias, Part 3

- Question your judgments and decisions; Consider whether unintentional bias may have played a role
  - Are women or minority applicants subject to higher expectations in areas such as number/quality of publications?
  - Are applicants who received degrees from institutions other than major research universities being considered?
  - Question if all the final candidates are similar
- Discuss, monitor, and *point out biases* if they emerge in the search process

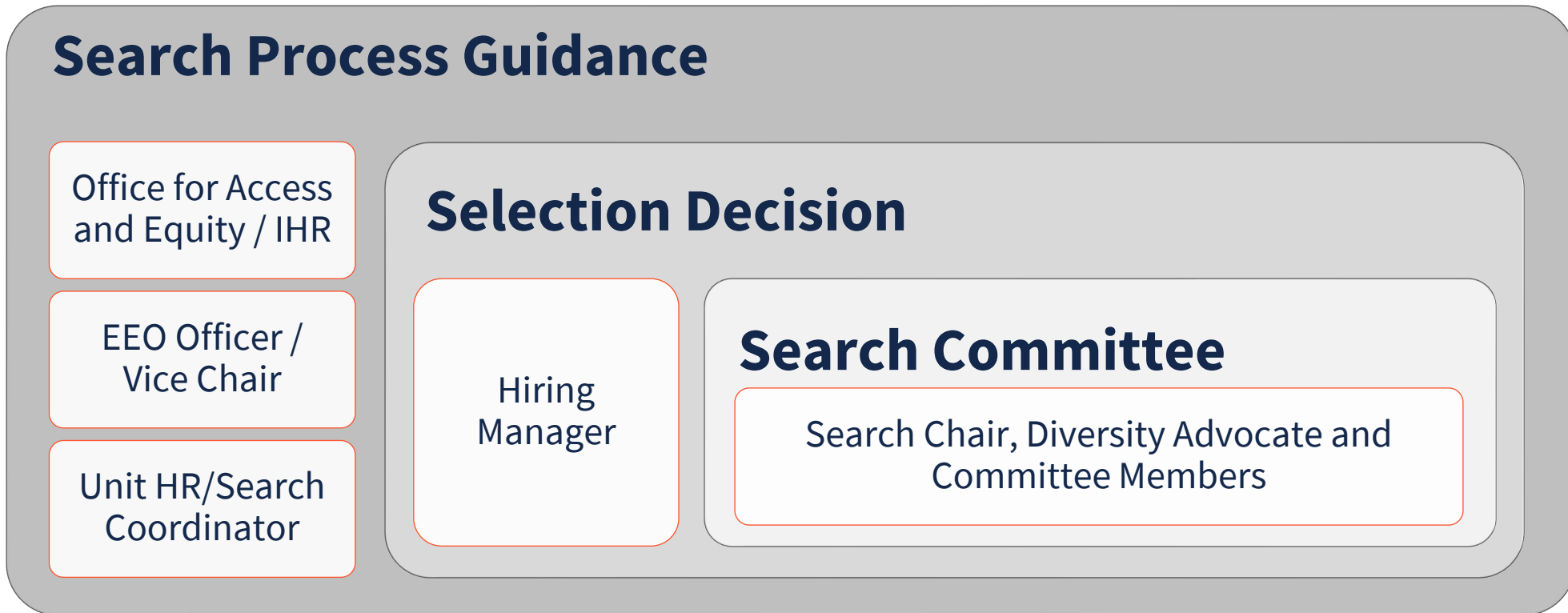
# Key Role Overview



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# Search Process Key Roles



For information about roles review the Select the Search Team section of the [search process toolkit](#)

# Key Role Overview, Part 1

- **Office for Access and Equity**

- Affirmative Action Planning and Analytics Division: oversight of search process aspects that pertain to diversity and affirmative action compliance
- Equal Employment Opportunity Division: investigate complaints of discrimination and harassment
- Accessibility and Accommodations Division: facilitate reasonable accommodations and support campus accessibility in facilities, instruction and technology
- All divisions: training and education

# Key Role Overview, Part 2

- **Equal Employment Opportunity Officer/Vice Chair**
  - Serves as a resource at the college level on search matters
  - Monitors the search process across departments to ensure fairness and consistent implementation of policies, procedures, and practices
- **Unit HR/Search Coordinator**
  - Monitors the search process at the department level
  - Manages the administrative functions of the search
- Both remain independent in the selection process (i.e., not on committee)

# Key Role Overview, Part 3

- **Hiring manager** - makes final hiring decision
  - Is not on the search committee
  - Provides committee charge at first committee meeting
- **Search committee** - serves in advisory capacity to hiring manager
  - **Chair** - responsible for overall conduct of the search
  - **Diversity advocate** - advocate for diversity as a core component of excellence in the search
  - **Committee members** - performs a variety of search related tasks under the direction of the chair



# Search Committee Chair Role Overview

- The search committee chair serves as the leader of the search committee, coordinating the committee and facilitating the relationship between the committee and the hiring manager
- Has an important responsibility and must ensure that everything that must happen throughout the search process, does happen, whether they perform the function or delegate to others
- Should hold a position at the same level as or a higher level than the vacant position
- Must complete the [DiversityEdu](#) online educational program prior to reviewing any application materials (required every three years)

# Conducting a Successfully Inclusive Search Process



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# Forming a Search Committee

The composition of the search committee is critical to its success

- Build a diverse committee
- Include individuals who have broad perspectives and a commitment to diversity
- Confirm appropriateness of the participation of all committee members
  - Ensure that no committee member intends to apply to the position
  - Ensure there are no obvious conflicts of interest
  - Make sure they have enough time to devote for the expected timeframe

# First Committee Meeting

- Charge from hiring manager
  - Defining the position and qualifications
  - Expectations of the search committee
- Search committee chair
  - Confidentiality and conflict of interest
  - Evaluation criteria for screening applicants
  - Decision making for interviews
- Diversity advocate
  - Affirmative action placement goal discussion and recruiting strategies
  - Guarding against bias

# Inclusive Job Descriptions and Postings, Part 1

- Use gender neutral titles and check pronouns
- Avoid your use of gender-charged words and superlatives
  - [Use the Gender Decoder Tool](#)
- Limit the number of requirements
- Reconsider your minimum requirements
- Express your commitment to equality and diversity
- State benefits

# Inclusive Job Descriptions and Postings, Part 2

- Mention your values
  - [Campus Commitment to Diversity and Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity](#)
  - [Diversity Values Statement \(Academic Senate\)](#)
- Hybrid/Remote Options
  - Opens new and diverse talent pools
  - Help close the gender gap - people with primary family care responsibilities
  - Assist individuals with disabilities
  - Increased efficiency and productivity

# Advertising and Recruitment

- Automatic postings
  - [University of Illinois Job Board](#) (Free)
  - [Higher Ed Jobs](#) (Free)
  - Higher Ed Jobs, Diversity & Inclusion Email (may carry a fee that will be charged to the department; contact Illinois HR for additional information)
  - Broadbean Sources (Free)
- Faculty only recruitment resources
  - [Big Ten Academic Alliance Doctoral Directory](#) (Free)
  - [Southern Regional Education Board DSP Scholar Directory](#) (Free)

<https://oae.illinois.edu/our-services/hiring-processes/recruitment-sources/>

# Good Faith Efforts

- Efforts to broaden the pool of qualified candidates to include minorities, women, individuals with disabilities and protected veterans
- Recruitment and outreach efforts are critical in ensuring a large and diverse pool of candidates
- **Committees must do more than simply issue a position announcement and wait to receive applications - All committee members should be actively involved in these efforts!**
- Remind committee to save notes regarding their efforts
- Diversity advocate will work with search coordinator to document and monitor effectiveness of efforts



# Strategies to Increase Diversity of the Pool

- Diversify the search committee
- Ensure an inclusive office environment
- Utilize a wide variety of recruiting methods
- Do not rely on the same sources repeatedly – each search is unique
- Assess efforts and adjust when needed
- Provide equal access to the selection process
- Revisit your pipeline – our networks tend to look just like us
- Video - [Blind Spots: Broaden Perspectives](#)

# Go Beyond Main Recruiting Channels, Part 1

- Work with HR staff to email job postings to professional journals, associations, web recruitment boards or electronic newsletters for diverse applicants in a particular field
- Connect with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic, American Indian, and Asian serving institutions
- Ask members of the department to reach out to their professional networks, to see if they know of underrepresented individuals who may be qualified for/interested in position
- Reach out to cultural centers, career centers and alumni groups

# Go Beyond Main Recruiting Channels, Part 2

- Utilize social media groups
- Make connections at junior colleges
- Engage local and regional networks of people in related fields to see if they know of potential candidates
- Encourage colleagues who will be attending professional conferences to recruit for the position
- Share announcements with various community organizations that work with diverse audiences

# Go Beyond Main Recruiting Channels, Part 3

- Invite individuals on campus for a lecturer series
- Contact women and minorities who have received significant grants or professional recognition and ask for the names of promising women and minority scholars
- Maintain close contact with graduates of the U of I and encourage them to apply or to contact their students/colleagues
- Email position announcements to graduate departments that are relevant to fields of study for position
- Review databases for listings of diverse scholars and contact any that might fit the position description

# Go Beyond Main Recruiting Channels, Part 4

- Engage with Regional Veterans' Employment Coordinators (RVEC)
- Post at [Rally Point](#) (social network site for veterans)
- Build relationships with [Disabled American Veterans](#) and [Hiring Our Heroes](#)
- Contact community organizations that support individuals with disabilities - [Directory of Centers for Independent Living and Associations](#)
- Post with [Ability Jobs](#)

# Go Beyond Main Recruiting Channels, Part 5

- Make connections with religious organizations, spiritual centers and places of worship
- Post with [Pink Jobs](#) which features LGBTQ+ friendly positions from pro-equality employers
- Makes connections on [Out Büro](#), the largest LGBTQ+ professional networking group on LinkedIn

# Continued Recruitment

- Always be recruiting
- More successful when ongoing
- The best candidates often do not check job boards



# Diversity of Applicant and Finalist Pool

- For searches with three or more applicants, the department HR contact will send an email to [accessandequity@illinois.edu](mailto:accessandequity@illinois.edu) to request a diversity of the applicant pool report prior to the posting close date and will share it with the search chair and diversity advocate
- In addition, a diversity of the finalist pool report can be run if three or more finalists are selected
- The EEO officer or vice chair is available as a resource to the diversity advocate and search chair to discuss the report
- If the pool is insufficient, the search may be extended



# Reviewing Applications and Selecting Finalists

- Prior to the review of any application materials, determine a plan to screen and evaluate candidates in a fair and equitable manner, as well as how screening decisions will be documented
  - Agree on ground rules, including how you will vote
  - Agree on job-related criteria and develop a written outline to be used by all committee members (i.e., checklist, rating form, spreadsheet, etc.)
  - Agree on rules of discussion and how to handle disagreement
  - Avoid comments (either orally or written) that are not job-related
  - If bias is noticed, speak out and redirect the conversation
  - Be aware of the possibility of your own implicit bias
  - Agree on method for selecting finalists

# Planning for an Effective Interview Process, Part 1

- Determine who will conduct/participate in each interview (committee interview, hiring manager, stakeholders, etc.)
- Develop a timeline – includes breaks and meals, if needed
- Schedule times and locations well in advance of selecting finalists
- Consider how you will meet the needs of applicants with disabilities
  - Recognize that some applicants with visual, hearing, or other disabilities may not be able to participate effectively in a video conference

# Planning for an Effective Interview Process, Part 2

- Carefully prepare interview questions
- Finalists should be asked similar questions and treated similarly
- Review information about pre-employment inquiries – topics to avoid
- Create an interview rating sheet, to be provided to each interviewer before the interview and explain the importance of completing it based on job-related criteria

# Planning for an Effective Interview Process, Part 3

- Be prepared to handle complications caused by travel delays
- Phone/Video
  - Maximize audio and video quality by using appropriate equipment or software
  - Recognize that not all applicants have access to the technology needed to participate in a videoconference
  - Be prepared to handle technical difficulties

# Planning for an Effective Interview Process, Part 4

- Make candidates feel comfortable and welcome – treat all candidates as potential colleagues and remember they are interviewing you as well
- Share useful information for candidates
  - Employee benefits
  - Cultural events and resources
  - Childcare
  - Schools
  - Spousal/partner hiring and benefits
- Conclude the interview by letting the candidate know what to expect next
- Remind interviewers to provide feedback

# Evaluating the Finalists

After all interviews are complete

- Meet with the search committee to discuss and compare finalists, and then provide feedback to the hiring manager for final selection
- Check references when the hiring manager asks to do so
- Decide how to proceed if top candidate declines
- Justification for selection/non-selection must be based on specific qualifications, experience, references, and interview

# Checking References

- Flexibility with reference process
  - References for proposed appointee, to verify the decision before offer is extended
  - References for multiple finalists, to narrow down who will be selected for position
  - Reference letters for all candidates, as part of application process (not common)
- Should have a structured set of questions
- Document a summary of all phone reference checks
- Save copies of written references / recommendation letters
- Hiring manager should be prepared to document in case check doesn't go well

Reference Checking Resources

# Completing the Search

- Work with search coordinator to complete search paperwork and obtain required approvals before an offer is made
- Ensure offer letter is prepared for finalist (in coordination with hiring manager)
- Keep all non-selected applicants informed on the progress of the search.



# All Stages Can Make a Difference

- Pre-posting recruitment at conferences and on-going networking
- Position description development
- Position posting
- Outreach and recruitment efforts
- Evaluation of applications
- Critical review for gender/race bias
- Interview of finalists/[TOP Program](#)
- Offer/negotiation/[Dual Career Program](#)
- Transition support
- Retention

# Contact Information & Resources

- **Office for Access and Equity**

- Phone: 217-333-0885
- Email: [accessandequity@Illinois.edu](mailto:accessandequity@Illinois.edu)
- Website: <https://oae.Illinois.edu>



# Office for Access & Equity

Thank you!



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