

Phase I: Postdoctoral Recruiting and Mentorship

Sources listed on references page

- **Reimagine** hiring by regularly “scouting” for applicants¹. Ensure that scouting is guided by a long-range hiring plan, does not equate to guaranteed positions, and that approaches are openly discussed
- Many highly qualified candidates have to be **invited** to apply². Know that “individual attention and persistence pay off—there are many examples from other searches of ‘reluctant’ candidates who needed to be coaxed into the pool and turned out to be stellar finalists”⁷
- According to an MIT study, two thirds of underrepresented faculty applied to MIT **only because they were actively recruited** ² Also, look for applicants who may not be ideal for the specific position, but are attractive as **potential faculty members**²
- **Active recruitment strategies**¹:
 - ⇒ Send announcements to and request nominations from departments at **institutions that serve large numbers of historically underrepresented populations** and to **diversity-related sections** of regional, national, or international **organizations** within the discipline
 - ⇒ Utilize **social media**: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.
 - ⇒ Ask current faculty, graduate students, post-docs, and alumni to **help market open positions** at conferences, meetings, other institutions where they give lectures and seminars
 - ⇒ Request members of the unit to inquire with colleagues at other institutions about **promising graduate students, post-docs, or early career faculty** from underrepresented backgrounds; **personally contact** qualified nominated applicants from underrepresented backgrounds
- Consider **cluster hires** to attract historically underrepresented applicants and fields. Hiring as a cluster can facilitate relationships and build community^{1,4}
- Numerous studies have shown mentoring to be an effective way to recruit, retain and promote the advancement of faculty; **the absence of, or inadequate, formal mentoring has disproportionately negative effects on women and faculty of color**⁵
- Develop an **Initial Mentoring Plan**² and write the proposed mentoring plan into the search report; proactive design of a customized mentoring plan can signal departmental commitment to prospective faculty
- Consider the following aspects of mentoring relationships¹:
 - ⇒ Rather than focusing exclusively on research and teaching, many faculty want help with **professional development planning, time management, and work-life balance**
 - ⇒ Faculty benefit from a “**team**” of mentors and **different kinds of mentors** at different stages of their careers, as well as both formal and informal mentoring
 - ⇒ Mentors should help faculty **articulate their own definitions of success** in the academy, rather than only provide them with what has worked for others in the past
 - ⇒ Consider using or developing tools like the Mentoring Competency Assessment³
- **Be aware of assumptions, myths, barriers and cognitive errors and biases** during the search and interviewing stages that can cause unfair evaluations. Examples include⁶:
 - ⇒ Stereotyping and the perception of “fit;” tendency to rely on first impressions and make inferences based on personal values and preferences
 - ⇒ Beliefs about child-rearing or family responsibilities affecting research or professional activities
 - ⇒ Assuming candidates will only be interested in research or professional activities tied to their identities; assuming only candidates from highly ranked graduate programs are worthy of consideration

Phase I References

1. Best Practices for Faculty Searches, Office for Faculty Advancement, University of Washington, revised 2021.
2. Best Practices for Conducting Faculty Searches, Office of the Senior Vice Provost, Harvard University, 2018.
3. Fleming, M., House, S., Hanson, V. S., Yu, L., Garbutt, J., McGee, R., Kroenke, K., Abedin, Z., & Rubio, D. M. (2013). The Mentoring Competency Assessment: Validation of a New Instrument to Evaluate Skills of Research Mentors. *Academic Medicine*, 88(7), 1002–1008. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0b013e318295e298>
4. Bañuelos, S., & Flores, C. (2019). Cluster Hiring Is Working for Us: Two Early Career Latinas in Math. *Notices of the American Mathematical Society*, 66(08), 1. <https://doi.org/10.1090/noti1937>
5. Whittaker, J. A., Montgomery, B. L., & Martinez Acosta, V. G. (2015). Retention of Underrepresented Minority Faculty: Strategic Initiatives for Institutional Value Proposition Based on Perspectives from a Range of Academic Institutions. *Journal of Undergraduate Neuroscience Education*, 13(3), A136–A145.
6. Inclusive Search and Recruitment Toolkit for Faculty, Graduate Students, and Postdoctoral Fellows, Office for Inclusion and Equity, University of Texas at Austin, 2015.
7. Recruiting Excellent Faculty: A Practical Guide, Office of Institutional Equity, Purdue University, 2023.