

Proactive Strategies for an Inclusive Faculty Search Process

Nguyen, Thomas, Liu, Corbett; Communications Biology, 2022

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1. Employ a Broad Search Strategy

- Clearly state that you are seeking candidates in **any area of the discipline**.
- Some applicants do not apply if they do not meet all specific criteria. This broad strategy would encourage those applicants to apply.
 - This can increase underrepresented researchers' interest in the position.

2. Write Inclusivity into Job Ads

- Include departmental diversity statements in job ads.
- Signal long-term goals with a statement such as: *"This search is part of a multi-year [University] initiative to foster equity and to promote the success of our diverse student population."*
 - Encourage early-career scholars to apply even if they are not yet published.
 - Post the ad on many platforms, including social media.
 - Share the job interpersonally among existing networks.

3. Diversify the Search Committee

- Search committee members should represent diverse research areas and career stages. Include trainees and a member from outside the department.
- Require members to take implicit bias training. Supplement with discussion.
 - Ensure all members meet with University's Chief Diversity Officer.

4. Evaluate Holistically and Equitably

- Equally value research, teaching, and actions toward diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Ensure multiple reviewers evaluate the same file and follow the same reading order for documents.
 - Consider using numerical scoring and ranking.
- Engage the department in implicit bias discussions, survey recent hires, and review best practices and ground rules for interviews.
- Ask common sets of questions, send standardized logistical emails, work to accommodate individual needs while ensuring an equitable process.
 - See following figures from text.

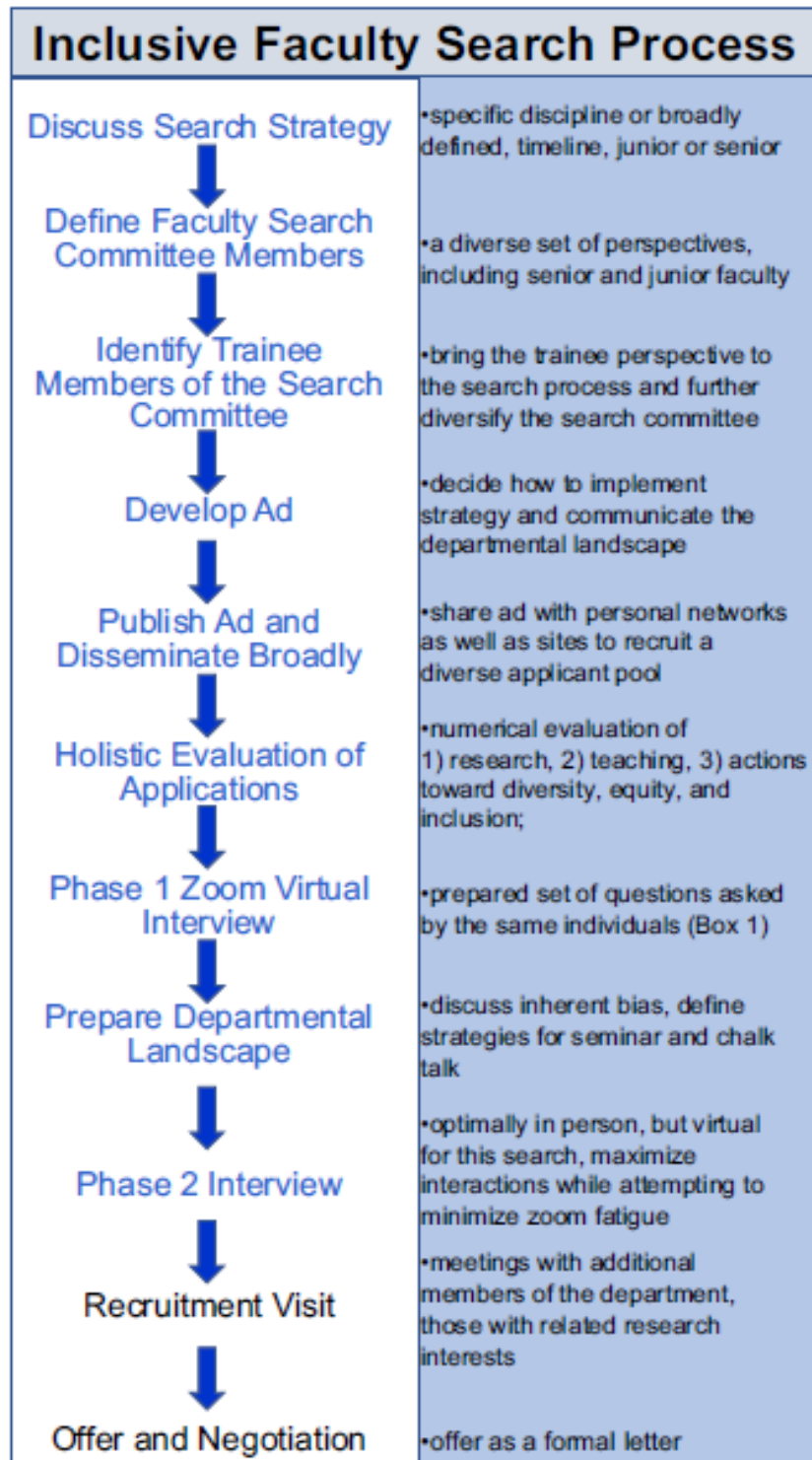


Fig. 1 An overview of the faculty search process. All steps depicted in blue were modified to some extent to achieve the goal of having an inclusive faculty search process. Each of the steps modified in this search is addressed in detail in the text.

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Box 1 | Phase 1 Zoom Questions. For the first phase of the interview, all candidates were asked the same set of questions, allowing us to directly compare how candidates respond to a common set of questions

Zoom interview process (Phase 1)

Introduction of everyone in the virtual room (quick). (2 min total)

Person #1: Our goal here is to let you tell us what you are excited about and we are going to start with your research. As Biology faculty, we have the opportunity to advise a few first-year students each year. Imagine that you have a brand-new student in your office. They may be excited about biology or they may not know much. If you had a minute or two to explain your research to this student- how would you describe the work in your lab (idea is to get the elevator speech for this student)? (3 min)

Person #2: We've read your research statement, and we have a few questions about how to position your research within the broader field. What are you most proud of in terms of the research you have done, what do you see as the most exciting or innovative aspect of your future research? Why? Why are you the right person to do this work—what sets you apart from others? (5 min)

Person #3: Why Emory and why the undergraduate Biology Department? What have you heard about Emory and/or our department that would make it attractive to you? (3 min)

Person #4 (Trainee): How do you envision engaging trainees, including graduate students and undergraduate trainees in your research program? How scalable is your work for engaging trainees at different levels?

How have you/would you tailor your mentorship approach to support trainees with different career goals, including those who don't intend to stay in academia? (5 min)

Person #5: What undergraduate courses would you be excited to teach? What new classes, at the graduate or undergraduate level, would you be excited to develop? (3 min)

Person #6: Describe something you did that you are proud of to change a process or how you functioned as part of a program to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion at your current institution? How do you plan on engaging in DEI efforts at Emory? (3-5 min)

Person #7: Thanks for answering our questions—now we'd love to answer yours. (5 min)

Box 2 | Schedule for the Phase 2 virtual interview

Zoom interview process (Phase 2)

The night before

- The Chair of the Search and the host of each candidate would hold a brief meeting to go over the schedule and answer any questions

Day 1 (a full day)

- Job talk seminar held as first event in the morning to allow the candidate to share their research prior to individual meetings
- Individual meetings that often included two faculty with consideration given to the composition of the group
- Meeting with trainee members of the search committee
- Breaks throughout the day, including for lunch
- Afternoon coffee break with trainees (not members of the search committee)
- Meeting with the Dean of the Faculty
- Break prior to the chalk talk to allow the candidate to prepare
- Chalk talk held at 4 p.m.-5 p.m. with a host who oversees the questions and monitors the chat

Day 2 (limited to -1/2 day)

- Day 2 starts with an informal coffee hour with junior faculty
- Final meeting with Department Chair to address any final questions

Box 3 | Factors to consider for final ranking of the candidates

• **Factors TO consider in individually ranking candidates:**

- Evidence and/or potential for impact in their field (primarily) and within Biological Sciences more broadly (secondarily) with their research questions and trajectory
- Will they have colleagues here that they can connect to as they build their research program, in Biology (primarily) and beyond (secondarily)
- Evidence for and/or likelihood of being able to effectively teach and mentor students in relevant undergraduate majors and graduate programs that Biology faculty participate in
- Potential for mentoring trainees, including undergraduate and graduate students as well as post-doctoral fellows
- Evidence of and potential for impact with what a candidate brings to the table for diversity, inclusion and equity in our department, for their future trainees, and for Biology students.
- Furthermore, you can consider that some candidates fall below a bar for further consideration, and this is important information.

• **Factors NOT TO consider in individually ranking candidates:**

- Balancing the research fields of candidates being ranked
- Personal/career factors that the candidate's situation poses (e.g., significant others, current position, etc.)
- Whether a candidate is a good fit for other departments at Emory

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