Diversity Advocate Guidelines

The diversity advocate promotes diversity as a core component of excellence in the search process. They provide leadership in supporting an equitable and inclusive search process by being a voice, visible presence, and resource. For tenure-track faculty searches, the diversity advocate must be a tenured faculty member. For other positions, they should be at the same level or higher than the position being searched for. The diversity advocate must be a member of the search committee or commit to attending all committee meetings. While they may act as the search chair, they cannot be the hiring manager. This ensures the hiring manager upholds the advisory role of the search committee which includes the diversity advocate, preserves the integrity of the search process, and mitigates any perception of undue influence.

The diversity advocate should be open-minded, have a strong commitment to an inclusive and equitable search process, able to negotiate conflict to achieve group results, and knowledgeable in the area/field/responsibilities of the position. It is also encouraged to involve individuals from outside a hiring department or the University to serve on a search committee to share insights, challenge assumptions, and bring lessons of experience from other perspectives, disciplines, and organizations. All committee members should have the ability to commit time and effort to ensure fairness in the process, treat all candidates with fairness and respect, be committed to the principles of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity, and maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

The list provided below includes some of the typical responsibilities of a diversity advocate.

- Complete the [DiversityEdu](#) training at least once every three years. It is recommended to complete the course as soon as feasible when you are assigned the role. For anyone who has not completed it by the time the announcement is posted, OAE will send an email and will temporarily remove access to view applications until the program is complete.
- Complete the [Diversity Advocate](#) training.
- Attend all search committee meetings.
- Before the job announcement is finalized, be available to review the use of broad required and preferred qualifications within the position announcement and make recommendations to the search chair and/or hiring manager, if requested.
- Review the affirmative action goals/hiring benchmarks for the position. To find this information prior to the posting, you can refer to the dashboard or send an email to OAE. After the job announcement is posted, OAE will send an email to all search committee members with information about goals/benchmarks.
- Initiate a conversation about affirmative action goals/hiring benchmarks and the importance of diversity at the first search committee meeting.
- Lead a discussion about developing a plan for all committee members to conduct good faith efforts (GFEs) which include outreach sources to attract underrepresented groups (women, minorities, veterans, individuals with disabilities).
  - Identify publications, websites, listservs, institutions, personal/direct contacts, professional social media groups, etc.
  - Identify professional organizations in the discipline that serve diverse populations and ensure that the search committee provides these organizations with the position announcement.
- Identify department heads/chairs at institutions whose graduates represent diverse populations and ensure that these individuals receive a copy of the position announcement.

- Actively participate in networking, seeking out and recruiting qualified, diverse candidates.

- When conducting outreach and recruitment efforts personally, save a copy of posting/email or notes regarding direct outreach and provide information to the search coordinator.

- Work with the search coordinator to maintain a GFE spreadsheet that lists outreach efforts conducted by the committee and assist with evaluating whether these efforts were effective.

- Custom applicant source codes can be used to know where applicants found out about the position. It is recommended to use these whenever feasible, as it will allow for a more robust evaluation of good faith efforts. For more information, please refer to the Custom Applicant Source Code job aid.

- Use available reports to evaluate recruitment efforts.
  - Automated diversity of the pool reports are sent to select college HR staff once a week and can be shared with the diversity advocate (if there are at least three applicants).
  - College HR staff can run additional diversity of the pool reports and can also include source code data, if applicable.
  - OAE can provide a diversity of the finalist pool report (if there are at least three finalists).

- Prior to the review of any application material, work with the search chair to determine a plan to screen and evaluate candidates in a fair and equitable manner and how the screening decisions will be documented.
  - Agree on job-related evaluation criteria and develop a written outline that will be used by search committee members (i.e., checklist, rating form, spreadsheet, etc.)
  - Agree on rules of discussion and voting, and how to handle disagreement.
  - Avoid comments (either orally or in notes) 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.

- Work with search chair to develop specific job-related questions to ask during interviews. All candidates should be asked the same core set of questions, allowing for individualized follow-up questions as needed.
  - For topics to avoid please review: pre-employment inquiries – topics to avoid.
  - Consider including a diversity related interview question.

- Support the committee in utilizing best practices for evaluating diverse applicant pools.
  - Determine selection criteria in advance of the initial review of applications so all candidates are evaluated fairly and consistently.
  - Ensure the rationale to remove a candidate from consideration is valid and free of bias.
  - Include a campus visit that provides similar opportunities for each finalist and follow interview procedures which treat all applicants consistently.

- Participate in the interviews and provide your professional opinion of interviewees based upon objective, job-related evaluation criteria.

- Maintain confidentiality before, during and after the search of all search process discussions, candidate information and deliberations.
Resources

Affirmative Action
- Review affirmative action laws, regulations, required posters, and the University’s commitment statement.

Search Process Toolkit
- Recruiting and hiring individuals to work at the University of Illinois is one of our most important cooperative responsibilities. The Search Process Toolkit is designed to provide resources to guide you through the various stages of the search process, to ensure the university is recruiting talent and making hiring decisions, in a fair and equitable way.

Recruitment Sources
- The recruitment resources section provides a broad range of recruitment ideas to help you optimize your hiring process and achieve your affirmative action goals.

Applicant Tracking System (ATS)
- The ATS is the web-based tool that job applicants use to browse and apply for open faculty and staff positions at the university, and which search committees and HR professionals use internally to manage recruitment workflows. Review job aids here.