Diversity & Equity in Recruitment & Retention for Students, Faculty/IAS, and Staff

CLS Recruitment and Retention Committee

2018-19

This handout offers departments best practices and resources for improving diversity and inclusivity in recruitment and retention of students, faculty, IAS, and staff, as well as supporting inclusive excellence and strategic planning. These recommendations and best practices are sourced from equity reports and research conducted by the committee in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Broad Action Steps

- Build and sustain an inclusive community
- Engage in proactive mentoring and relationship building
- Value diversity and inclusion in all areas of job duties such as teaching, research, and service
- Support workload equity, particularly in service and "invisible" labor
- Engage in active, intentional recruitment and hiring practices
- Make retention/tenure/promotion/career progression requirements transparent and provide regular and sustained support for faculty and staff throughout their career
- Identify norms and prohibitive practices at play and actively address structural inequalities
- Demystify institutional processes and expectations for students

Recommendations for Faculty, IAS, & Non-Academic Staff Recruitment

Reframe Recruitment within the Department

- Think of diversity in recruitment as more than attending to Affirmative Action and EEOC
- Engage in departmental conversations regarding the value of diversity, diversity-related needs, and preparation for diverse faculty
- Frame the search and screen committee's work within the larger context of diversity and inclusion
- Require everyone in the department to become familiar with implicit bias in recruitment and to be aware of the HR Search and Screen Committee materials to ensure consistency, clarity, and legality in the search and screen process

Construct a Diversity-Informed Search and Screen Committee

- All members and the committee chair should have a demonstrated commitment to diversity, transparent hiring practices, and increasing the inclusion of people from underrepresented groups at UWL
- Use the "Interrupting Bias" video to facilitate discussion about strategies needed to reduce bias
- Invite an outside member, student member, and/or diversity advocate member with a strong commitment to diversity
- Avoid "group think" and create a constructive environment for committee deliberations where varying points of view are welcomed and expected
- Build awareness and expertise among department members to fight explicit and implicit bias toward faculty, IAS, and non-academic staff of color, including microaggressions. Take an implicit bias test to help foster reflective hiring practices (e.g. Harvard Implicit Bias Tests)
- Create a diverse search and screen committee
    - Consider including a diversity advocate on the committee
    - The advocate may serve in a voting or non-voting capacity and may be from an external department

Create an Advertisement that Includes Diversity and Inclusion

- Define the position to fill a specific role but to also allow for a broad pool of applicants
- Limit use of the terms "must" and "required" to essential characteristics
- Include diversity-related interests, skills, and experiences
- Be flexible with numerical measures (e.g., years of teaching vs. demonstrated experience)
- Require reference contact information for phone calls instead of letters of recommendation

Cultivate a Diverse Applicant Pool and Engage in Active Recruitment

- Aim for active recruitment, not passive recruitment through the known channels for posting job announcements. Active recruitment aims at "generating a pool [of applicants] rather than merely tapping it (UM Faculty Hiring Manual 2018)".
- Use a range of networks and directly encourage diverse candidates to apply

- Research PhD programs that have a diverse student body in relevant fields (such as the WISELI listings at http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/recruitingresources.php or the statistics on doctorate recipients from the NSF at https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/doctorates/)
- Engage in continuous recruitment (such as invitations for guest lectures, visiting appointments, and establishing relationships at conferences)
- Avoid thinking of a potential new hire as "filling Professor X's line"
- Explore diversity advertising sources such as *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*

Best Practices for Screening Applicants

- Counteract predisposition of the committee to favor candidates similar to themselves; committee members should be aware of stereotypes and implicit bias
- Establish minimum qualifications and screening criteria that can be applied to every applicant equally
- Screening criteria should include:
    - ability to add intellectual diversity
    - ability to work successfully with diverse students and colleagues
    - ability to mentor diverse students
- Ensure adequate time for the application review process to minimize snap judgments
- Use standardized questions for reference calls and preliminary interviews (HR requires that all questions be the same for every candidate)
- Document reasons for elimination after minimum qualifications are met (to assist with clear labeling in People Admin)
- Make sure everyone in the department and committee understands what materials are subject to an open records request
- Blind review candidate files using a unique identifier instead of full names
- Forgo conference interviews, considering the expense for candidates relating to attending academic conferences for the job search
- Use HR/AAO-approved questions for first round and on-campus interviews; ask every candidate the same questions under identical conditions
- Consider conducting phone interviews instead of video conferences

Campus visits

- Ensure that individuals who meets candidates are aware of what types of questions are permissible to ask. If prohibited topics come up, refer candidate to institutional members who can address concerns.
- Communicate to the candidate how the department, college, and institution engage in diversity and inclusion work
- Communicate available resources in the community for self and family if requested by the applicant
- Avoid illegal questions, and notify department of this information. If prohibited topics come up, refer candidate to institutional members who can address concerns.
- Structure/schedule each campus visit as similarly as possible (including timing of teaching demo, research talk, interviews, length of visit, and so on)
- Request accessibility needs prior to campus visit

Strengths/Weaknesses of candidates for hiring authority (usually the dean)

- Follow appropriate applicant screening suggestions above
- Follow the same HR procedures for every candidate
- If a candidate/s is not hirable, make that clear and provide reasons

Contacting/following-up with applicants/candidates

- Discuss with HR representative for appropriate language
- Use similar language to follow-up with candidates/applicants
- Follow-up with candidates within a reasonable amount of time

Recommendations for Faculty, IAS, & Non-Academic Staff Retention

- Build and sustain structured mentoring and include this as part of the service load for merit, retention, tenure, promotion, contract renewal, and career progression
- Refocus mentoring as a mutually-beneficial, relationship-building process rather than as a top-down hierarchy
- Officially recognize and encourage diversity & equity work in teaching, research, and service for annual merit review, retention, tenure, promotion, contract renewal, and career progression
- Build awareness and expertise among department members to fight explicit and implicit bias toward faculty and IAS from underrepresented groups
- Avoid and address micro-aggressions, tokenism, and diversity fatigue
- Make implicit, opaque processes explicit and transparent: Organize regular workshops for promotion/tenure/career progression/merit review/annual review and other institutional topics.
- Promote awareness of campus resources and groups
- Prioritize succession planning and actively seek and create opportunities for faculty and IAS to develop leadership skills
- Offer and encourage leadership training and professional development
- Regularly and publicly recognize faculty, IAS, and staff for excellent work, especially work related to diversity and equity
- Make workload transparent and equitable, particularly in service and in other forms of "invisible" labor
- Chairs should maintain regular contact with new faculty, IAS, and staff; actively communicate on-campus resources, institutional information, and institutional procedures

Recommendations for Student Recruitment

Concrete Actions

- Consider including students from underrepresented groups on department committees (such as a recruitment committee)
- In general education courses, reach out to students who show interest in the major/minor/program (e.g. have department chair send a personalized letter or email to students identified by faculty)
- Encourage department recruitment committees to actively connect with prospective students in underrepresented locations
- Ensure that prospective students are aware of resources, events, and the diversity of student groups available on campus
- Edit or change departmental website and other promotional materials to reflect active commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

Further Reading/ Future Action

- Connect with UWL Admissions to develop recruitment materials and new strategies (e.g. letters, emails, text messages, and so on) and to reach out to students who have been admitted but have not yet accepted admission (but may have indicated either exploratory/undeclared or an interest in the department):
    - UWL Admissions: Multi-cultural students
- Create programs that connect prospective students with students from underrepresented groups:
    - List of fly in/out diversity connection programs
        - Discovering UVM program At the University of Vermont

Recommendations for Student Retention

Create and Sustain a Supportive Community

- Build and sustain a sense of belonging and community with students, in and out of the classroom (CATL, "Students' Sense of Belonging", "UW-La Crosse Belonging Fall 2017" video)
- Work with student groups, OMSS, and departments to establish peer mentoring for incoming freshmen and first-year UWL students
- Collaborate with groups on campus and/or for department events
- Departmental website and advising materials should reflect active commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity
- Normalize help-seeking (may be particularly useful for first-generation students)
- Support students by attending student-led events

Educate Community about Inequalities

- Build awareness of and reflection on implicit and explicit bias (CATL, "Stereotypes and Implicit Assumptions") Start by watching the Inclusive Negligence film by UWL students
- Counter imposter syndrome (CATL, "Stereotype Threat")
- Regularly invite speakers from underrepresented groups
- Host events that connect department to social justice, equity, and diversity initiatives
- Explain to students how a diverse, inclusive curriculum prepares them for a 21st-century workforce

Foster Growth in the Community's Commitment

- Avoid deficit thinking (CATL, "Challenging the Deficit Model") and use a growth mindset (CATL "Instructor's Mindset")
- Support student learning in active contexts such as collaborative projects. Make group work processes explicit and teach strategies for succeeding in a team setting (CATL, "Initial Strategies").
- Introduce high-impact learning practices early in a student's career (CATL, "High-Impact Practices")
- Develop first-year seminars focused on equity, diversity, and/or social justice topics in your field
- "Decolonize" syllabi and curriculum, because representation matters ("Toward a Decolonizing Pedagogy: Social Justice Reconsidered")
- Reframe advising as *mentoring,* where advising is an extension of teaching instead of "just scheduling". Support students through their education beyond choosing courses; use advising to communicate institutional processes and demystify the college experience early on.

References and Resources

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