

The Search is On

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in University Searches: A Quick Guide for Search Committees

Intentionally practicing equity, diversity and inclusion will –

- Help your search committee find and hire qualified candidates, and
- Help the University, your college, and your department reap the educational and community benefits of having a diverse faculty and staff.

It's not only the law and the "right thing to do" – it's the smart thing to do. Different backgrounds and perspectives lead to a variety of ideas, knowledge, and ways of doing things. By ensuring that your department includes faculty and staff from various cultural and social backgrounds, you will widen the range of perspectives, knowledge, and approaches from which decisions are made.¹

Review UMaine's Faculty Recruitment Handbook: A research-based guide for recruiting excellent faculty, which includes many helpful strategies and tips for conducting inclusive searches. Although focused toward faculty searches, the Handbook is also applicable to searches for other positions. It's available online at <http://umaine.edu/advancerisingtide/files/2015/11/UMaine-Faculty-Recruitment-Handbook-2015.pdf>. The Quick Guide you are reading now introduces some of the main themes and strategies in the Handbook.

Register to attend a Search Committee Briefing conducted by the UMaine Office of Equal Opportunity to learn more about conducting equitable, inclusive searches. Contact OEO at 581-1226 or equal.opportunity@maine.edu.

Write the job description for inclusivity

A job description that is narrowly written can discourage talented people, including many who are women and/or from diverse backgrounds, from applying. It will also force you to eliminate candidates who don't meet all of the requirements of the position if they do apply. Job descriptions should be as broad as possible in describing the competencies and experience needed for the position.

- Requiring a degree in specific disciplines or sub-disciplines excludes people with a degree in a related field who are otherwise qualified. Example: Instead of requiring a doctorate in chemistry, consider requiring a degree in chemistry, chemistry education, or a related field.
- Having too many required qualifications can eliminate many potential candidates who don't meet all of them. Consider limiting required qualifications to a small number of "must haves" and making others qualifications preferred qualifications. Reminder – candidates must meet all of the required qualifications listed in the job description and job posting to be interviewed or

¹ *Recruiting for Diversity*, Harvard University, http://hr.fas.harvard.edu/.../recruiting_for_diversity_9.17.13_0.pdf.

hired. An unrealistically large number of requirements can force a department to declare a failed search and have to re-start the entire search process with a revised job description.

- Articulate the connection between diversity and a quality educational experience for students.
- Include explicit diversity qualifications, such as “Experience supporting women in pursuing STEM majors and careers,” or “Experience working with students from diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds and first-generation college students.”

Use inclusive language in the job posting

All job postings must state that UMaine is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution. Additional statements like the following send a strong message that diversity and inclusivity are UMaine values.

- Women, minorities, individuals with disabilities and veterans are encouraged to apply.
- The University is committed to fostering a culturally diverse educational environment and provides reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities.
- We are interested in candidates who can contribute diverse experiences and perspectives to the department and campus.

Advertise positions widely, recruit actively

Post position announcements in publications and online job boards that reach diverse audiences. Make sure advertising budgets are used to post positions where they will reach a diverse pool, not exclusively in traditional venues (e.g., Chronicle of Higher Education). For diversity recruiting resources, consult:

- <http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/recruitingresources.php#directories> (general diversity resources and STEM disciplines)
- https://www.hercjobs.org/career_advice/diversity_resources/index.html (general diversity resources and some discipline-specific resources)
- <http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/recruitingresources.php> (general diversity resources and more discipline-specific resources)

Effective recruiting requires active steps, not just posting positions and waiting to see who applies. Use your professional networks.

- Seek out colleagues at conferences, give them the job posting, and ask them to use their networks to spread the word.
- Send job postings to universities that graduate significant numbers of women and diverse students.
- Contact colleagues in your professional network, inviting them to apply and asking them to circulate the job posting to their colleagues and former students.

When using these strategies, specifically indicate that UMaine is seeking the most qualified and diverse pool possible, and ask your contacts to be sure to forward the posting to women and people from diverse backgrounds.

Be aware of and overcome implicit bias

Research has demonstrated that all people have some implicit bias – unconscious assumptions and stereotypes about others that we’ve developed from a lifetime of interacting with our environments. Implicit biases affect how we conduct searches and how we assess candidates. Being conscious of implicit bias and taking steps in your search committee to reduce it leads to more equitable, inclusive searches and increases the opportunity to hire well qualified women and diverse candidates.

Many good resources on implicit bias are available.

- Attend a UMaine Search Committee Briefing offered by the Office of Equal Opportunity (go to top of this document for more information).
- Consult the UMaine Faculty Recruitment Handbook (go to top of this document for more information).
- Listen to *Micro-Messages & Your Search Committees – Subtle Signals That Can Help or Hinder the Recruitment of Women and Minorities* (audio presentation) Dr. Robbin Chapman, Associate Provost and Academic Director of Diversity & Inclusion, Wellesley College, Higher Education Recruitment Consortium, <https://vimeo.com/152608704>.
- Do a Google search for “implicit bias” and peruse many additional resources.