

# Transforming Search and Recruitment Behavior To Achieve Faculty Diversity

**Linda B. Cottler, PhD, MPH, Victoria Fraser, MD, FACP, Consuelo Wilkins, MD, Diana Gray, MD**  
 Search and Hiring Process Improvement Team at Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, MO

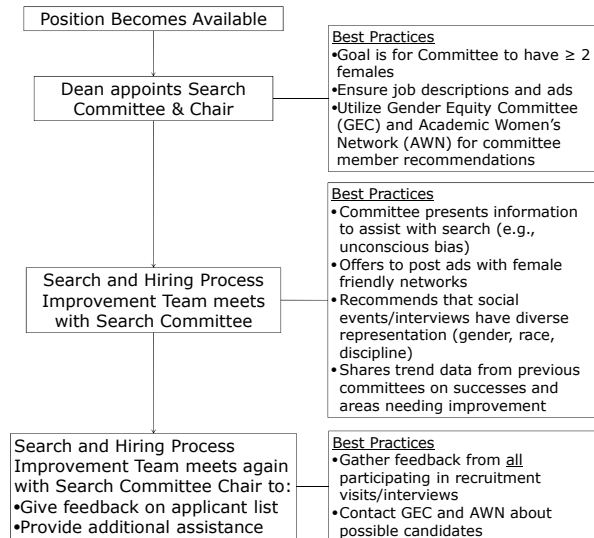
## Background

**Purpose of program/study/research:** The AAMC, and individual medical schools, have developed institutional practices for search committees; however, incorporating these ideas is difficult. At our institution, there are no permanently appointed female department heads, and search committees have been unbalanced, ranging from 0% to 29% female. Thus, a major goal has been to transform institutional practices by altering search and recruitment behaviors to significantly increase faculty diversity.

**Methods of design and evaluation:** To begin this transformation, the University contracted with the Women in the Science and Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI) at the University of WI to introduce more effective strategies for the faculty search and hiring process. The training also raised awareness of unconscious assumptions. A Search and Hiring Process Improvement Team, composed of senior female faculty, was formed by the Dean's office. The mission of the Team is to facilitate a better search process that results in more diverse search committees and applicant pools. The Team accomplishes this through training on unconscious biases that influence candidate evaluations and intervening at various phases of the search process as described below. The Team addresses each ongoing search committee and presents Best Practices.

## Flowchart

### Search Committee Protocol



## Goals

- 1) Ensure all search committees have 2 or more women.
- 2) Establish Guidelines/Best Practices for all search committees.
- 3) Establish tracking methods for all search committees, including long and short lists.
- 4) Evaluate success of Search and Hiring Process Improvement Team efforts.
- 5) Increase diversity of search committees, long lists, short lists and, eventually, new hires.

## Data

		Search Committee 1			Search Committee 2											
		#F	#M	%F	#F	#M	%F									
Prior to Intervention	# On Search Committee	4	10	29%	0	9	0%									
	# On Short List of Candidates	3	10	23%	1	8	11%									
	# of Ads Placed and Where	None			None											
				Search Committee 2			Search Committee 3			Search Committee 4			Search Committee 5			
				#F	#M	%F	#F	#M	%F	#F	#M	%F	#F	#M	%F	
1 <sup>st</sup> 6 Months of Intervention	# On Search Committee				2	9	18%	5	14	26%	1	5	17%	3	8	27%
	# On Short List of Candidates				1	8	11%	10	7	59%	2	3	40%	Has not met yet		
	# of Ads Placed and Where				ELAM			None			New England Journal of Medicine Science Nature AAMC Job Board			Has not met yet		

## Acknowledgements

Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI) group for best practices materials.

## Contact

For more information, contact:  
cottler@epi.wustl.edu

## Lessons Learned

The following feedback has been received:

- Presentations should be shorter and should focus on the highest level issues, such as the need for:

- Job descriptions
- Recruitment letter
- Advertising
- Having women on search committees
- Making visits and interviews female friendly

- Search Committees do not always encourage input from all members.
- Committees are not always aware of gender communication differences.
- More women and minorities need to be on the long list to make it to the short list.
- Process of generating long lists needs to be more formalized.
- Job descriptions and advertisements can be used effectively to recruit diverse faculty.

## Challenges

- More training in best practices is needed for ALL faculty members.
- Deeply held beliefs are hard to change.
- Search process is still "who you know".
- Finding practical ways to expand the list are needed.

## Conclusions

- More women are being included in the short list than prior to the Team's intervention.
- Committee structure still needs improvements, but Administration is committed to increasing diversity.
- Data will be available to share with search committees and Administration.
- Culture is changing regarding advertisements and job descriptions. More ads and job descriptions are being developed and disseminated.
- Current efforts are targeted towards increasing gender diversity, and once this is refined, our Guidelines/Best Practices will target racial/ethnic diversity.
- The Team is making an impact.