Transforming Search and Recruitment Behavior To Achieve Faculty Diversity

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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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Committee 1</th>
<th>Search Committee 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># On Search Committee</td>
<td>4 10 29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># On Short List of Candidates</td>
<td>3 10 23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Ads Placed and Where</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Search Committee Protocol**

Position Becomes Available

Dean appoints Search Committee & Chair

Search and Hiring Process Improvement Team meets with Search Committee

Search and Hiring Process Improvement Team meets again with Search Committee Chair to:
- Give feedback on applicant list
- Provide additional assistance

Best Practices
- Goal is for Committee to have ≥ 2 females
- Ensure job descriptions and ads
- Utilize Gender Equity Committee (GEC) and Academic Women's Network (AWN) for committee member recommendations

Best Practices
- Committee presents information to assist with search (e.g., unconscious bias)
- Offers to post ads with female friendly networks
- Recommends that social events/interviews have diverse representation (gender, race, discipline)
- Shares trend data from previous committees on successes and areas needing improvement

Best Practices
- Gather feedback from all participating in recruitment visits/interviews
- Contact GEC and AWN about possible candidates

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.

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.