Best Practices for Hiring a Diverse Faculty

Hiring Committee Composition

- A *diverse hiring committee* is a critical factor in identifying and attracting a wide range of talented applicants.
- Strategic efforts should be made to *recruit people of color to serve on hiring committees* at different stages in their identity development and racial consciousness, and reflective of the student population.
- It is essential that hiring committees engage in *professional development and training together* in order to be ready to undertake a search. Training should include reducing unconscious bias (and other mind sciences such as racial anxiety and stereotype threat), reducing stereotypes, reducing micro and macro aggressions, and increasing racial awareness.

Advertising

- *Define a hiring search* as *broadly* as possible to increase the chances of greater diversity in the applicant pool.
- Use *Diverse Networks*.
- Add *language* signaling a special interest in applicants who contribute to the college's diversity priorities (and mission statement). For example, one might say: "The hiring committee is especially interested in applicants who through their *leadership, community service, lived experience and/or research* will contribute to the diversity mission of the college."

Pool Development

- *Expanded recruitment efforts* produce diverse applicant pools. Hiring committees, for example, might directly contact graduate programs with high numbers of diverse candidates and utilize databases, fellowship directories, professional organizations that identify outstanding and diverse applicants.
- *Small Numbers:* Research has shown that women and people of color are judged more fairly when they are at least 30% of the applicant pool. It's critical to work on creating a large pool of diverse candidates.
- When asking colleagues at other organizations about potential applicants, always specifically ask: "Do you know outstanding applicants *reflective of the population we serve* at John Jay?"
- Be alert for potential future graduates from schools where students are exposed to advanced diversity content and analysis as part of the curriculum as "*people to watch."*
- Create a *database* of potential applicants reflective of the population we serve.

The Interview Process

- Use a standardized set of *interview questions*
- Have the *whole committee* participate in creating those questions
- Include questions that reveal a *candidate's capacity* for and *interest in* enhancing the college's diversity mission.

The Hiring Process

- Use a standardized applicant *evaluation form*. Make sure the form includes an assessment of the candidate's ability to support the college's diversity mission.
- *Discuss* these forms in hiring committee meetings. Rater accountability has been shown to increase the accuracy and objectivity of ratings—but we must make sure these items are a part of what gets rated.
- Encourage a discussion format that requires *contributions from all members.* Asking each member of the committee to comment on an applicant ensures that a vocal minority does not dominate the discussion. Open the meeting to all voices. This format also provides an incentive for everyone to "do their homework."
- Do not eliminate a name from the list for personal reasons. Often, qualified potential applicants are struck from the list based on assumptions about their personal life. Work with the college to *remove both formal and informal obstacles* that would eliminate important applicants.

Beware of Bias

- *Letters of Recommendation*: A study of over 300 recommendation letters for successful applicants for a healthcare organization found that letters for females were shorter, contained more "grindstone adjectives" such as "hardworking" and "diligent," contained twice as many "doubt raisers," and were less likely to include "stand-out" adjectives such as "brilliant" and "superb".
- Be on the lookout for similarly disparaging ways of framing the qualifications of applicants of color.
- *Performance Evaluation*: Social psychology research found that both men and women are more likely to hire a male applicant than a female applicant with an identical record; found that success is more frequently attributed to "skill" for males and "luck" for females, even when the evaluators are presented with evidence of equal success for both genders.
- Be alert to similar biases in evaluating candidates of color.
- Beginning in the 1970s symphony orchestras started requiring musicians to *audition behind screens*; since that time, the number of women hired has increased fivefold and the probability that a woman will advance from preliminary rounds has increased by 50%.
- For positions that require publications: A study of postdoctoral fellowships awarded by the Medical Research Council in Sweden found that women candidates needed *substantially more publications* to achieve the same rating as men, unless they personally knew someone on the panel.