

# Better Practices in Recruitment

The information provided throughout this section should be used in conjunction with the *Policy and Procedures on Academic Appointments*. The better practices detailed below are developed from research on faculty recruitment and practices at peer universities across North America. They have been developed for use by search committees in recruiting new faculty members. It is our goal to continue to elaborate these as we monitor the practices of other comparable institutions and accumulate our own experience and better practices.

## 1 The Search Committee

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Striking a search committee as soon as positions are approved, that is, in time to consider the overall search process, is the best practice. At this stage, a search committee should seek to inform itself of issues of diversity and excellence by:

- Examining the distribution of the existing faculty, the profile of recent new hires and the representation of women and members of visible minorities in the pools of potential applicants.
- Agreeing on ways that the search process will reflect commitments to inclusion, diversity and excellence.
- Articulating the purpose of the position (e.g., replacement in an area of scholarship that has become vacant due to the departure of a faculty member or development of a new area of scholarship or teaching).
- Informing itself of new scholarship that may increase faculty diversity.
- Establishing the criteria for developing the short list of candidates.
- Establishing the range of material to be solicited through the advertisement.

Some committees have found it useful to designate different people to take responsibility for specific areas, e.g., developing the outreach plan, identifying developing areas of scholarship, assessing teaching excellence, etc. One recent committee conducted an international canvass of key department chairs in order to solicit comments on the “state of the field.”

## 2 Advertising

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The following are some ways to ensure that ads are relevant to the broadest group of potential applicants:

- Use inclusive language.
- Advertise for excellent scholarship in broad disciplines and specify areas that might be of particular interest to diverse faculty.
- Identify a range of disciplines that may be relevant to an interdisciplinary or problem- focused area.
- Ensure that people whose work is at the edge of their fields or who are working in emerging fields can see a fit with their work.
- Refer to the resources available to accommodate and assist dual career couples, e.g., by stating that, “The University is responsive to the needs of dual career couples.”

Candidates who can broaden and deepen the applicant pools will work in all fields. They may also be attracted by references to opportunities to:

- Live and work in one of the most diverse regions in the world.
- Work with groups and institutions that reflect the diversity of the Toronto region, e.g., hospitals, schools, agencies, organizations, and community groups as applicable.
- Teach and conduct research with a diverse student population.
- Work in collaborative or interdisciplinary programs such as Indigenous/Aboriginal, ethno-cultural, sexual diversities, gender or women's studies specializations or programs.

Recently, ads have included reference to:

- Diversity of the student population.
- Opportunities for interdisciplinary study and programs.
- Opportunities to work with a diverse and complex population.
- Areas like gender history, critical race theory, ethno-specific studies along with either broad discipline areas or interdisciplinary areas.

Specific examples include statements such as:

- “The University of Toronto offers opportunities for collaborative and interdisciplinary research and teaching, the excitement of working with a diverse student population and actively encourages innovative scholarship.”
- “As the economic and intellectual hub of Canada, the Toronto region provides access to policy and decision makers at all levels. Opportunities are available to work with a wide range of public and private organizations, groups, and institutions that reflect the region’s diversity. Seen as one of the most multicultural places in the world, Toronto is also the safest city of its size in North America.”

### 3 Creating a Proactive Recruitment Strategy

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The goal of proactive outreach is to ensure that every potential candidate sees our faculty advertisements and feels welcome to apply. Achieving this goal broadens and deepens our pools and provides a basis for hiring decisions that are both excellent and diverse. (See the checklist for best practices in proactive recruitment at the end of this document.) Search committee members and all faculty should use their networks to identify potential candidates, organizations, and email lists that will reach the broadest possible pool of applicants. Networking and recruiting through personal and professional contacts is effective and appropriate when it is practised openly and limited to inviting people to apply.

When advertising your search, it is important to identify and make contacts with organizations and groups that may represent diversity to your Faculty or program. It is good practice to:

- Review databases of grant and award holders where there are likely to be pools of applicants.
- Advertise in electronic resources that are likely to reach diverse applicants by virtue of their organizational focus, affiliation, or readership.
- Contact professional associations to find out if there are committees or groups within academic associations representing interests that are specific to diverse groups.

- Contact a broad range of professional associations (public interest organizations, consultants working in relevant areas, research organizations in the private and public sectors) that extends beyond academic associations.

Other important departmental activities to support a proactive outreach plan are to:

- Encourage all members of the department to make recruitment part of their activities at professional meetings.
- Contact prominent members of diverse communities in your field and ask them to identify candidates.
- Keep a list of individuals or organizations that might stock your department's "pipeline" of diverse future candidates.

Importantly, do not close the search process until you have attained a candidate pool of sufficient diversity.

For assistance in using the outreach links and planning your advertising and recruiting process, please contact [jane.harrison@utoronto.ca](mailto:jane.harrison@utoronto.ca), 416.978.1855.

## 4 Selection of the Shortlist

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Shortlisting practices like the following support both diversity and excellence:

- Systematically looking for excellent candidates who have flourished in less prestigious institutions or who have earned less recognition in other prestigious institutions despite their excellence.
- Recognizing that interdisciplinary inquiry has produced some of the most significant new work; evaluating it may pose challenges to discipline-based scholars, e.g., a leading health economist may have published in non-economic journals.
- Recognizing that diverse scholars, researchers, and students are directly affected by knowledge that is produced in research institutions and by that which is left out; their inclusion helps to transform our knowledge base, e.g., critical legal theory, women's studies, Indigenous/Aboriginal Studies, etc.
- Recognizing that knowledge and academic excellence is built by a range of scholarship that includes discovery, integration, application, and teaching; scholarship may be developed in a variety of settings and organizations, e.g., the

scholarship of those who have worked in NGOs or community agencies can inform the entire range of knowledge in education, medicine, the social sciences, etc.

- Recalling that research continues to show that gender can influence the perceptions of quality of a curriculum vitae.
- Recognizing that there is a range of ways to describe valuable contributions to a discipline and that cultural differences reflected in a curriculum vitae or letters of reference may influence evaluators; e.g., letters may reflect cultural values that emphasize different aspects of scholarship like affiliation with excellent scholars rather than individual achievement.
- Recognizing that scholars with non-standard career paths may have similar productivity and commitments and make similarly excellent contributions as those whose career paths have been less complex, e.g., a scholar with a complex medical or immigration history or family responsibilities, or a tie to a specific geographic and historic community.

## 5 The Candidate Visit

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A summary of a number of practices at the University is provided in the information outlined above. Further details and points to consider are provided here.

The campus visit by potential candidates (and their families/partners) can be a crucial aspect in their decision to join the faculty at the University of Toronto. Clearly the actual format for the candidates' visit will vary depending on the needs of both the candidate and the department/search committee. Some recommendations of good practice from across North America might be useful in designing your candidate's visit:

- Appoint an administrative staff member to coordinate the visit and make all travel and accommodation arrangements. Have the staff member communicate directly with the candidate once the initial invitation has been made and ensure that all special needs or accommodations are respected.
- Itineraries providing full details of travel, accommodation, scheduled meetings, presentations, and organized entertainment should be provided to candidates well in advance of their arrival at the University.
- If the candidate is being recruited on the St. George or UTM campuses, set up a time for the candidate (and family/partner) to visit the Faculty Relocation Service by contacting [faculty.support@utoronto.ca](mailto:faculty.support@utoronto.ca). For UTSC, contact the UTSC HR divisional office, and speak to Fefe Wong ([wong@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:wong@utsc.utoronto.ca)).

- If you have not already done so, send a copy of the Faculty Relocation Service’s Welcome Booklet. These are available by emailing [faculty.support@utoronto.ca](mailto:faculty.support@utoronto.ca).
- Candidates should be encouraged to explore the websites for new faculty listed at [www.faculty.utoronto.ca](http://www.faculty.utoronto.ca). Links are available here to the Family Care Office, Faculty Relocation Service, Faculty Housing, Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, and many other services and resources designed for (potential) faculty members.
- The University of Washington appoints an “ambassador” who acts as the host for the candidates throughout their campus visit. This “ambassador” should meet the candidate at the airport and introduce them to the city. They may also consider entertaining the candidate and other colleagues at their home. The “ambassador” or host may also be able to determine some of the issues that might be involved for individual candidates and suggest possible excursions that would answer questions (e.g., about the safety of the area, the region’s diversity, the resources available at the University library, the recreation/athletic facilities).
- If the candidate you have invited represents gender, sexual, racial, or cultural diversity you may want to match them with an “ambassador” or “host” with a similar background. It is important that they have the opportunity to speak to someone who has encountered similar experiences without necessarily needing to discuss this with the Search Committee.
- The University has a number of very attractive provisions within its benefit plans that are an important resource when trying to recruit candidates. Be sure that **all candidates** (regardless of sex, sexual orientation, race, or culture) are aware that the University provides coverage for same sex partners under its benefits plans (this also highlights the University’s proactive stance regarding equity and diversity), offers generous maternity, paternal, and adoption leave and excellent health insurance coverage.

When scheduling the candidate’s visit, you may wish to tailor it to their interests as well as making what can be a challenging and intense day for the candidate a little easier.

You may consider:

- Putting the candidates’ seminar or presentation early in the day so that this can be a topic of conversation during other meetings.
- Scheduling in breaks so that the candidate has time for seeing the campus, preparing themselves for their meetings or presentations, and getting a sense of the local community.

Providing an opportunity for the candidate to meet a range of people helps to give them a sense of the social milieu in the department. Suggested meetings include:

- Dean/Unit Head.
- Vice/Associate Deans.
- Individual faculty members.
- Graduate students.
- Relevant research groups.
- Faculty/departmental HR specialist.
- Family Care Office/Faculty Relocation Service.
- Library resource person.

Suggested events include:

- Campus tour.
- Tour of Hart House, Athletic Centre and Faculty Club on the St. George Campus.
- Tour of the Blackwood Gallery, the Hazel McCallion Academic Learning Centre & Library, or the Wellness, Recreation and Athletic Centre at UTM.
- Tour of the Dorothy McCarthy Gallery, the Athletic Centre or one of the new buildings at UTSC.
- Meal at the Faculty Club, one of the onsite or local restaurants.

If a candidate is travelling with their family or partner, you may also want to consider arranging the following events or meetings for them:

- If the partner is an academic, you may want to have them meet with another academic partner of a faculty member who has been involved in spousal employment.
- Non-academic partners may want to meet with the Dual Career Connection representative.
- Non-academic partners may also want to meet with a partner of a faculty member.
- Meeting with the Faculty Relocation Service regarding the area's amenities, cultural opportunities, schools, housing, job opportunities, and more.
- Provide tickets or passes to an event on campus.

Assistance in setting up these meetings can be provided by the Family Care Office and Faculty Relocation Service ([faculty.support@utoronto.ca](mailto:faculty.support@utoronto.ca), 416.978.0951) or by contacting [jane.harrison@utoronto.ca](mailto:jane.harrison@utoronto.ca), 416.978.1855).

Promptly process and pay all expenses incurred by the candidate!

## Checklist for Best Practices in Proactive Recruitment<sup>1</sup>

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### Before the Search

#### Good:

- Clearly articulate department/faculty rationale for support of faculty diversity by making explicit the connections between faculty diversity and educational quality.
- Create a search committee that is enthusiastic and genuinely committed to faculty diversity.
- Develop and distribute a departmental statement outlining meaningful steps to be taken to achieve greater diversity among the student body and faculty, drawing on your department's response to *Stepping Up*.

#### Better:

In addition to the above:

- Create a diverse search committee, consisting of faculty, administrative staff, and students from both minority and non-minority backgrounds, that brings multiple perspectives and fresh ideas to bear.
- In and align commitment to diversity efforts in the institutional and departmental strategic plans and/or mission statements.
- Create open lines of communication with potential faculty already in your department or school, such as adjunct or part-time professors, graduate students, and research associates.

#### Best:

In addition to all of the above:

- Secure all resources needed to conduct a comprehensive search — for example, to place job announcements in publications serving a diverse audience.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Turner (2002).

- Review the commitment to equity and diversity as outlined in *Stepping Up* and the response by your Faculty/department.
- Develop long-term recruitment strategies that establish and cultivate an ongoing relationship with local and national organizations representing diversity groups, as well as with students and faculty at colleges and universities that educate diverse graduate students.
- Incorporate new research findings and data about minority groups into the everyday practices of your department or faculty and use this as a basis to convene information forums, roundtables, retreats, and opportunities to present new and emerging research and successful practices.

## During the Search

### Good:

- Make sure that the search committee understands its charge from the onset, clearly emphasizing that faculty diversity is a goal.
- Critically analyze the job description and advertisement, making sure that they are geared towards inclusiveness
- Mail/email position announcements to diverse groups and organizations, using the many resources provided on this website.
- Quickly reimburse any of the candidate's expenses related to the interview, including hotel, food, and travel expenses.
- During the campus visit, make sure that all interactions with the candidate are honest, genuine, and gracious.
- Offer to make available a person of similar background, interests, ethnicity, or gender to give their perspectives on the campus and local community climate.

### Better:

In addition to the above:

- Wrote a position description that attracts a diverse group of applicants, making sure that it includes the equity statement.

- Make personal contact by letter or phone to faculty of colour, visiting scholars, and/or individuals who have made diversity-related presentations on campus.
- Establish a bank of CVs and contacts for promising graduate students.
- Use listservs, online bulletin boards, and other forms of technology to announce positions and recruit potential candidates.

## **Best:**

In addition to the above:

- Educate the search committee and provide opportunities for discussion on diversity and equity issues, hiring myths, stereotypes and biases (particularly those outlined in *Faculty Recruitment – The Search Committee*)
- Use personal and professional networks, contacts, and recommendations to seek leads to potential minority candidates.
- Initiate recruitment trips to universities which prepare a significant number of minority PhD graduates.
- Incorporate recruitment networking into professional conference attendance by all departmental faculty.
- Establish a pool of potential candidates through the Visiting Scholars program.
- Advise the candidate of any incentives that might be negotiable (e.g., salary package, startup funding, reduced workloads, grant opportunities, partner/spousal employment, tuition waivers).
- Cover the cost of an additional campus/area visit to explore housing.

## **After the Search**

### **Good:**

- Honour all start-up conditions mentioned in the final letter of agreement.
- Do not overload the new hire with excessive service demands, such as committee memberships, advising, etc.

### **Better:**

In addition to the above:

- Follow up with the new hire regularly to help with transitions and to answer any concerns that might develop in the first few days/weeks/months.
- Provide mentoring and professional development opportunities.

### **Best:**

In addition to all of the above:

- Continue efforts to diversify the faculty and other departmental diversity initiatives.
- Provide the new hire with clearly stated standards and procedures regarding evaluation and performance.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the search process in order to avoid future missteps; acknowledge the successes and failures and share that information with future search committees.
- Sponsor campus and community-wide gatherings to highlight the research, teaching, and service contributions of diverse faculty members.