



Effective Faculty Hiring Practices

UAMS[®]

Division for Diversity,
Equity and Inclusion

*With the publication of the **UAMS Vision 2029 Report**, UAMS renewed its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion of UAMS leadership, faculty, staff and learners in order to enhance the education of our learners, reduce health disparities in our state, and honor the unique contributions provided by a diversity of values, beliefs, and cultures.*

Why Is It Important?

Diversity and excellence go hand in hand. Diversity of life experience, expertise, intellectual outlook, personality and cognitive style of individual faculty, staff and students enrich the collective intellectual environment in which learning and discovery occur. Often diversity is associated more narrowly with the race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, ability/disability, or other demographic characteristics. While it is true that diversity is much more than any of these specific categories, they are essential aspects of the excellence that any academic institution should seek.

These concepts underlie the development of this guide:

- A. **Diversity:** Individual differences (e.g., personality, abilities, and life experiences) and group differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, age, culture, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, language, and country of origin as well as political, religious, or other affiliation).
- B. **Inclusion:** A sense of belonging, feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so that you can do your best work. (*Miller and Katz, 2002*)
- C. **Equity:** Equality, impartiality, justice, and fairness as it applies to opportunity, access, and resources, including institutional, professional and employment equity (e.g., salary, support staff, opportunities for hire and advancement).
- D. **Cultural Competency:** A set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enables them to work effectively in cross-cultural situations, including cultural humility, awareness and sensitivity. (*adapted from the National Center for Cultural Competence definition for cultural competency in the health professions, 1989*)
- E. **Underrepresented Minority:** racial, ethnic and other populations that are underrepresented in a profession, at an institution or department or division of a university, relative to their numbers in the general population. (*adapted from the Association of Medical Colleges definition for "Underrepresented in Medicine," 2004*)

This guide offers a set of recommended practices that may be adapted to the unique needs of a college or department. It aims provide guidance to

- Assist in diversifying the applicant pool.
- Ensure that fairness and objectivity prevail in each step of the process.
- Enable selection of the best candidate and increase diversity of the UAMS faculty.
- Increase the likelihood that an offer is accepted.
- Ensure that searches adhere to federal and state law and UAMS policy.
- Assure that all candidates emerge from the process holding UAMS in higher regard.

The Faculty Search Process

Understanding Factors that can Affect Success

- To launch an equitable and effective search, the search committee needs to understand the factors that have affected outcomes in past searches that may affect the current search. Thus, the committee needs to review past searches by its department or college to answer the following:
- Were all the qualified candidates interviewed?
- Were applications received that were not considered because they arrived later in the process?
- Are there candidates from previous searches who should be considered and contacted regarding the current opening?
- How many qualified women and underrepresented minority persons applied and how many were brought in for an interview?
- If offers were made to either female or minority candidates and they declined, is the reason for their decision known?
- What can we learn from the past?

The Search Committee

A search committee should be comprised of individuals with different perspectives and expertise, as well as a demonstrated commitment to diversity. Generally, a dean or other appointing authority (e.g., department chair) appoints a search committee. The chairperson should hold a senior position and be no less than a peer position to the vacant position. The appointing authority may serve as committee chair or as a member of the committee.

Recommendations for the search committee composition:

- Include potential peers and supervisors of the position and other stakeholders within the department and college and across the university.

- Diversify. Racial, ethnic and gender diversity of the committee will enhance the search process. Including both senior and junior faculty will also provide diverse perspectives. A committee should include women and underrepresented minorities whenever possible. (Note: women and minorities are often asked to serve significantly more in this capacity than majority males, so it is important to monitor their service load and/or, free them from less significant tasks.)
- Include a non-voting *ex officio* member (e.g., OHR representative or a diversity advocate) who could serve as an advisor to the committee, monitor the search process, and provide guidance on legal and equal opportunity-related issues.

Search Committee Orientation

It is recommended that the chair, at the committee's initial meeting, affirm the department's commitment to conducting an equitable search and recruiting a diverse candidate pool. In addition, the initial meeting is an opportunity to review:

- Recommendations of this guide on the steps of an effective search.
- Required time commitment and attendance expectations for committee members.
- Forms and tools to be used in the search process.

Applicable policies, procedures and laws, available on the UAMS HR website and updated regularly.

- UAMS HR Hiring Toolkits: hr.uams.edu/managers-toolkit/attract/
- Faculty hiring resources: faculty.uams.edu/resources/

Minimizing Implicit Bias in the Hiring Process ¹

1. Whenever possible evaluate job applications after masking candidates' race, gender, or other group membership (Goldin & Rouse, 2000)
2. Ask evaluators to commit to specific merit criteria and rank order their importance before reviewing applications (Uhlmann & Cohen, 2005).
3. Reduce time pressure and distraction while making personnel decisions (Bertrand et al., 2005; Martell, 1991; Sczesny & Kuhnen, 2004).
4. Use structured interviews with standardized questions for hiring instead of unstructured conversation (Bragger et al., 2002)
5. Use gender-neutral job titles not masculine titles (e.g., chair not chairman). Masculine job titles activate masculine stereotypes (McConnell & Fazio, 1996)
6. Finally, use same criteria in all recommendation letters. Emphasize applicant's competence in research, teaching, service. Compare your letters.

¹From Mind bugs: How Implicit Bias Affects Faculty Evaluations in Academia. Nilanjana Dasgupta, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

The Recruitment Plan

A strong recruitment plan delineates the essential steps of the search, identifies who is responsible for each (i.e., department chair, search committee chair or committee member, or other department personnel), and sets target dates for completion. It may also include dates for search committee meetings. The most efficient approach may be for the chair to draft the plan for review and approval by the full committee. A comprehensive plan would address and clarify processes for:

- Reaching agreement on selection criteria for the position and any weighting of them. Consider not only important criteria that pertain to a candidate's contribution to the intellectual diversity of the department, but also his or her ability to work with diverse colleagues, students, and other stakeholders.
- Drafting of the position description and agreement by the committee.
- Establishing each cut point in the selection process
- Tracking the search and documenting outcomes. These records may be critically important in the event of a lawsuit. The UAMS Executive Search Group can provide guidance on this aspect of the search.
- Screening applications and CVs to determine which candidates meet minimum and preferred qualifications.
- Contacting references for selected applicants.
- Selecting candidates for an initial interview.
- Initial interviews (may be on the phone, by video-conferencing or in person). This includes the question to be used in the interview.
- Candidate evaluation after the initial interview.
- Selection for short list and campus visits.
- Campus visit.
- Comparative evaluation of candidates on the short list.
- Final recommendation.
- Conclusion of the search and debriefing.

Effective Recruitment Practices

Finding qualified candidates includes reaching out to colleagues through established, familiar networks. In addition, the following approaches help broaden the pool. Some require time to nurture, but in the long run can be fruitful. Allowing 30 days for responses is recommended.

- Advertising in scientific journals.
- Advertising in journals, other publications and on websites aimed at female and minority scientists.
- Announcements on jobs lists including UAMS'.
- Announcements to professional organizations and listservs.
- Contacting colleagues at other institutions who may know of qualified candidates
- Contacting, and sending the job announcement, to faculty at other institutions who might be potential candidates
- Announcements to departments at institutions that graduate or employ (as faculty, fellows or post-docs) high percentages of minorities and women
- Announcements through funding and advocacy agencies, particularly those that seek to advance and support minorities and women in the field
- Networking via listservs
- Networking at professional meetings. Always utilize meetings as an opportunity to identify and connect with potential candidates, even when no vacancy exists
- Inviting promising candidates to campus to present on their work as a way to cultivate relationships for future searches
- Soliciting help from minority colleagues (at UAMS and elsewhere) with cultivating relationships at minority-serving institutions that may led to the identification of candidates
- Asking fellow faculty and graduate students to help identify candidates
- Not ruling out “hiring our own” – i.e., new doctoral graduates, post-docs and those completing residencies and fellowships
- Social media

Monitoring the Demographics of the Applicant Pool

Faculty hiring committees are required to use the UAMS HR talent acquisition system and / or the **UAMS JFR hiring system** (College of Medicine only). The HR talent acquisition system automatically tracks applicants demographics as required by Title VII and Executive Order 11246. For more information on applicant tracking processes and requirements, contact the Office of Human Resources.

After the application deadline closes, the *ex-officio* diversity advocate of the search committee should review the demographics of applicants to determine if underrepresented groups are sufficiently represented. This determination is based on national U.S. Census demographics data for various professions. If not, the *ex-officio* diversity advocate may recommend that the committee considers revising its recruitment approach; for example, if targeted marketing was **not** used, it may decide to extend the closing date to try that approach.

Standardized processes for evaluating candidates and documenting each evaluation will help reduce bias, identify all who are qualified, and protect UAMS in the event of litigation. This applies to the initial screening of all applicants, initial interviews, short list candidate interviews and the final selection.

Screening Applications for Initial Interviews

In this initial round, it is important for the Search Committee to keep in mind:

- Prioritization of criteria often yields varying perspectives. Try ranking candidates by different criteria (e.g., research potential, teaching experience, mentoring capacity) to generate candidate lists.
- The effect of evaluation bias on the rating of women and minority candidates. Double-check their qualifications and how they have been rated for signs of bias.

- Be aware of biases that could inadvertently or unfairly exclude qualified applicants
 - With non-traditional career paths.
 - With non-traditional research interests, publications, or work or life experience.
 - From historically black colleges and universities or other minority-serving institutions.
 - With a disability
 - With veteran status.

Consider having the search committee and the HR representative for your area independently screen the applications for minimum qualifications.

Best Practices for Interviewing and Evaluating Candidates

Preparation for the interview

- To ensure consistent treatment of all candidates, including internal candidates, schedule interviews so that as many of the search committee members can participate.
- A standardized set of interview questions should be developed before the interview and distributed to all search committee members. *See Developing Interview Questions, below.*
- Use the same questions in all interviews to ensure fair comparison of all candidates.
- All search committee members should have had ample time before the interview to review the candidate's CV. Offer the members an opportunity, preferably at the beginning of the meeting or call, to ask questions about the candidate's CV.

- Prior to the interview, send the candidate the following, allowing ample time for review:
 - A description of the department’s programs and faculty needs.
 - Policies and procedures for evaluation, promotion, and tenure.

Developing interview questions

- Focus on the candidate’s scholarship and skills, rather than his or her demographic characteristics. It is generally not helpful to make a point with candidates that the department is eager to hire women and minorities.
- Be sure to include questions that will elicit information about the candidate’s qualifications as they relate to crucial aspects of the position.
- Include questions that will elicit information about the candidate’s promise and potential for contributing to the long-term objectives of the department.
- Ask the candidate about his/her qualifications for teaching, scholarship and service.
- Ask about work in diversity (e.g., efforts to recruit, retain, or promote women and minorities; involvement in diversity-related programs, committees or initiatives).
 - If the candidate is applying for a leadership role (division chief, department chair, etc.), ask about the candidate’s commitment to goals of diversity and equity, as well as the candidate’s history of mentoring women and underrepresented minority faculty.
 - Include questions designed to evaluate “emotional IQ”/ability to work with others.
 - Only include questions that are appropriate and lawful. This is essential to UAMS’ compliance with its equal opportunity obligations. Have all search committee members review the guide about inappropriate or unlawful questions.

Initial Interviews

To save travel time for candidates and expense for UAMS, search committees are increasingly using phone or video interviews as the first step in the interview process. In many cases, a 30-minute phone interview can enable the committee, and the candidate, to determine whether the candidate and the position are likely to be a good match and whether the recruitment process should proceed to an on-campus interview. The phone or video interview should be taken as seriously as any face-to-face interview. It is important that as many members of the search committee as possible are on the call.

Three messages to communicate during any interview, whether on video, telephone, or on-campus, are as follows:

- UAMS is seriously interested in the candidate's scholarly credentials and work.
- UAMS is a good place to develop an academic career and thrive in a lively academic atmosphere.
- UAMS has a variety of supportive, family-friendly policies in place and cultivates a diverse educational environment.

How these messages are communicated can make a critical difference in whether the top candidate joins the UAMS faculty or not.

Creating the Short List

At this stage in the process, the objective is to identify up to three highly qualified candidates to be invited for a campus visit. To ensure that the most qualified candidates are selected, it is recommended that the committee review the selection process up to this point, including:

- Evaluation of each candidate against all selection criteria.
- The way criteria are prioritized. Different approaches can yield varying perspectives. Try ranking candidates by different criteria (e.g., research potential, teaching experience, mentoring capacity) to generate candidate lists.
- The effect of evaluation bias on the rating women and minority candidates. Double-check their qualifications and how they have

been rated for signs of bias.

- Awareness of biases that could inadvertently or unfairly exclude qualified applicants
 - With non-traditional career paths.
 - Non-traditional research interests, publications, or work or life experience.
 - From historically black colleges and universities or other minority-serving institutions.
 - With a disability.
 - With veteran status.

In-Person Visit

Here are recommended practices to consider:

- Focus on the candidate's ability to perform the essential functions of the job. Try to avoid making assumptions based on perceived race, ethnic background, religion, marital or familial status, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender expression, or veteran status.
- Give the candidate a chance to interact with the department's faculty (and key staff) in multiple venues. Formal talks may not reveal every candidate's strengths. Consider including Q+A sessions, "chalk talks," and other less formal interactions.
- Introduce women and minority faculty and staff to all candidates, not just women and minority candidates.
- Create opportunities for all candidates to meet with faculty, staff or community members who potentially represent opportunities for interdisciplinary or community collaboration.
- Ensure that all questions asked are appropriate and lawful. This is essential to UAMS' compliance with its equal opportunity obligations.

After the interview

To reduce risk of unconscious bias influencing judgments as recollections of the candidate fade:

- As soon as possible, each member of the Search Committee who participated in a candidate interview should independently rate the candidate using the same evaluation template.
- The search committee should meet as soon as possible after an interview to evaluate the candidate.
- Describe the position for which the candidate is being considered, so that the reference can give a more accurate evaluation of the candidate's suitability.
- Let the reference talk freely for as long as he/she wishes without interruption. An interruption may mean you might miss getting important information.
- Ask follow-up questions, when you feel the contact is reluctant to discuss certain factors. It may help to explain why you are persisting on a line of questioning.
- Do not end the call until you are sure you know the opinion of the person you have called. If the reference was ambiguous or reticent, try summarizing what he/she has said by saying "I take it that you don't recommend the candidate very highly for this position" or "It sounds like you highly recommend the candidate for this position." This may encourage the reference to clarify his/her opinion.
- Conclude the call by thanking the reference.
- Check more than one reference. Doing so will help ensure that you are not getting a one-dimensional perspective on the candidate.
- It is important to remember that all questions asked during reference checks must be job-related. It is illegal to ask questions of references that cannot be legally asked of the applicant.

Final Selection

Evaluation of a candidate should occur as soon as possible after all meetings and interviews are over. Search committee members and others solicited for input should complete the candidate evaluation form. The search committee should then meet to discuss the results and formulate recommendations.

Making the Offer

The way in which contract negotiations are conducted can have a huge impact not only on the immediate hiring outcome, but also on a new hire's future success at UAMS. The actual negotiation is often between the candidate and the dean or chair and may not involve the search committee. However, to ensure equity, the search committee and dean should consider providing all candidates with a complete list of topics for discussion in the course of negotiations. Women and underrepresented minority faculty candidates may have received less mentoring about hiring negotiations during their careers than their majority counterparts, and may therefore be at a disadvantage in knowing what they can legitimately request in negotiations. These might include

- Salary
- Course release time / teaching load
- Release time for research
- Service expectations
- Tenure clock stoppage
- Lab equipment / space / renovation
- Research assistants / teaching assistants
- Clerical / administrative support
- Discretionary funds – books, journals, memberships, etc.
- Travel fund
- Secure parking
- Summer salary
- Moving expenses
- Assistance with partner / spouse career options
- Child / elder care
- Tuition exchange or remission for dependents

Be sure to provide clear, detailed information about mentoring practices as well as all review criteria and milestones such as annual reviews, third-year reviews, tenure reviews, and post-tenure promotion reviews.

Concluding the Search

The search concludes with the following by the search committee chair, committee members and/or department personnel:

- Debriefing and thanking the search committee
- Notifying unsuccessful interviewees
- Announcing the new hire to the department, and in some cases, the campus
- Gathering / retaining documentation
- Evaluating the search
- Evaluation of the search should be throughout the search and after it concludes. If at any point, it becomes apparent that the applicant pool is not diverse enough, or sufficiently well-qualified, reassess the advertising and recruitment process. Analyze whether the hiring net was cast broadly enough and, if not, what can be done. Sometimes the pipeline constrains the outcome, but often a committee can do more to attract outstanding candidates.
- If the department hires a woman and/or underrepresented minority candidate, consider the factors that may have enabled it to do so and keep a record of good practices and successful searches for future reference. If the applicant pool was not as large, qualified, or diverse as was anticipated, consider:
 - Could the job description have been constructed in a way that would have brought in a broader pool of candidates?
 - Could the department have recruited more actively?
 - Were there criteria for this position that were consistently not met by women or candidates of color?
 - If a woman and/or underrepresented minority candidate was offered a position that they chose not to accept, what reasons did they give? Are there things that the department could do to make it more attractive to such candidates in the future? Be sure that any analysis and insight is shared with departmental decision-makers and OHR is part of the process for initiating future searches.

For more information or assistance:

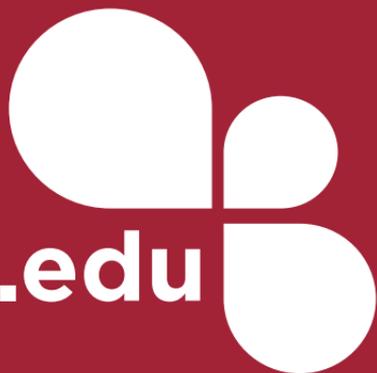
Contact UAMS Office of Human Resources, at (501) 686-5650 or AskHR@uams.edu

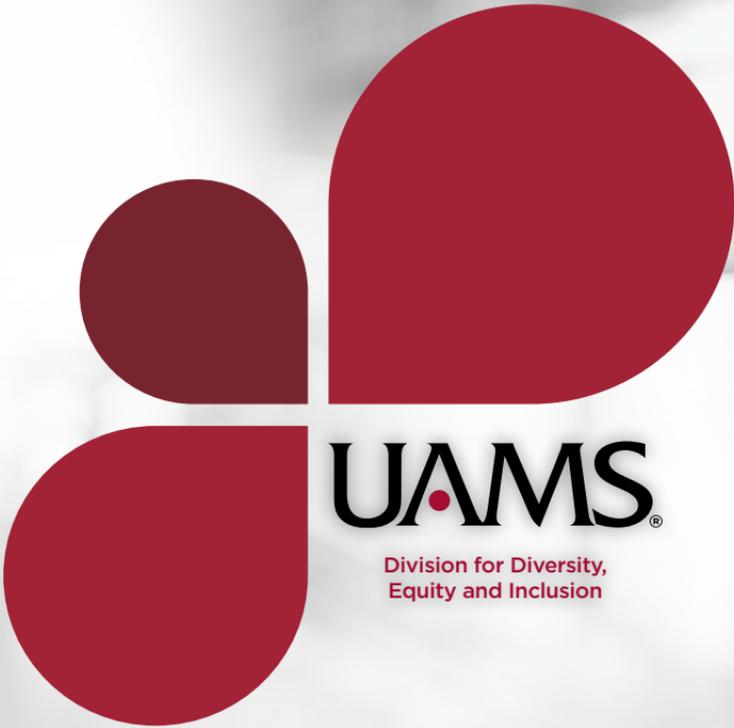
Acknowledgements:

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