

Affirmative Action in Search Committee Processes

- ◆ **University mission.** Equity and diversity are central to the University's accomplishment of its educational, research and outreach mission. This is recognized in Board of Regents Policies, in statements by the President and in the University's Strategic Positioning Process. Search committees are an important mechanism for achieving equity and diversity.

- ◆ **Legal requirements.** While diversity includes the full range of human differences, the University has certain legal responsibilities for affirmative action for certain underrepresented groups:
 - For women and people of color the University is required to have affirmative action plans and to set goals according to availability of such applicants in the relevant market. We also assess goal attainment.
 - For individuals with disabilities and veterans, the University is required to have an affirmative action plan but is not required to set numerical goals.

- ◆ **The job posting.** The hiring authority should convene the search and meet with the EOAA Liaison to carefully consider:
 - The scope and level of the position. A narrow scope and more senior status both make it more challenging to attract a diverse pool.
 - The minimum and preferred qualifications. Make sure the qualifications accurately reflect what is required by the job. The more inflexible and detailed the minimum qualifications are, the more challenging it is to attract a diverse pool. The search committee has more discretion when evaluating qualifications that are listed as 'preferred'.
 - The qualifications related to diversity: for example, successful experience working with diverse teams, ability to relate to people from different cultures, past experience in community outreach work, particularly with historically underrepresented or marginalized communities. For many jobs these will be qualifications to be included in the job posting.

◆ **A diverse search committee.**

- The hiring authority should consult with the EOAA liaison in connection with appointing a diverse search committee.

◆ **Staff to the search committee.**

- The search committee needs staff support. Staff needs to have access the on-line applicant system for the requisition. Using the on-line system, staff provides the committee with information about the diversity of the applicant pool and records the progress of each applicant through the process.

◆ **EOAA liaison Presentation to the Search Committee.**

- The EOAA liaison should meet with the search committee to provide information to the committee about the availability of applicants from underrepresented groups for the position, the goals and the current workforce distribution.
- The EOAA liaison should give the committee guidelines for the search process.
- Related issues that the committee should consider:
 - The private nature of personnel information and committee discussions.
 - Deliverables to the hiring authority.
 - Pre-screening procedures.
 - Reference-checking procedures.
 - A consistent interview process for all applicants.
 - Any accommodations that may be needed to assure access for the application and interview process.
 - A committee climate that fosters expression of points of view.
 - How conflicts of interest, or potential conflicts, will be handled.

◆ **Best efforts by the search committee throughout the search:**

- The hiring authority should engage the search committee in developing and implementing an effective **outreach/recruiting strategy** that is designed to generate applicants with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- From the on-line applicant system, data should be presented to the search committee on the **representational diversity of the applicant pool**. (Data on the race, gender, disability or veteran status of individual applicants should not be provided.) If the diversity of the pool is insufficient in comparison to availability, additional recruiting should be undertaken.

- The search committee should develop **interview questions** that inquire about all applicant's skills and experiences working with different perspectives and diverse peoples.
- ◆ At the conclusion of the process, if equity and diversity are attended to throughout the process, the search committee and the hiring authority can feel confident that the finalists are individuals who are committed to, and skilled at, achieving greater equity and diversity at the University.