

A&A Faculty Search Plan

Responses to Provost Questions and Topics

Last updated 09.18.23

Q1

How will you establish a diverse search committee?

A1

The Penn State strategic plan, *Our Commitment to Impact*, defines diversity as follows: "Diversity refers to the numerical representation of faculty, staff, and students who hold different social identities, backgrounds, and experiences" (p. 5). These different identities are informed by, yet not limited to, race, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, ability, and physical ability, and are intersectional.

Search committees will be comprised of members from the department/school in which the search will be administered, including a student member. An additional member from one of the other departments/schools in the college and/or one department/school in another college or campus may be included. Before charging the committee, the Dean will verify the composition of the committee is diverse in its representation.

Q2

What expectations related to recruiting and advancing diverse candidate pools will be conveyed to your unit? Who will communicate those expectations? Recruitment is the responsibility of all faculty within the unit, not simply for those on search committees!

A2

The Dean will communicate expectations for recruiting and advancing a diverse pool of candidates to the College through three vehicles: (1) posting the search plan on the College intranet along with the college and university policies and guidelines for conducting searches, and on the website for the associate dean for access and equity; (2) referencing these documents in the new faculty orientation and the new faculty handbook; and (3) reviewing once a year with the college academic leadership committee (CALC) and the faculty council. These expectations will also be included in the new strategic plan for the college.

Further, these expectations will be reiterated in every search committee charge meeting. Included in the message are the following ideas:

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- The responsibility of a search committee is to search. The recruitment of candidates for faculty positions is the responsibility of all faculty members in the unit.
- The search committee is also responsible for screening applications in the first and second round of interviews, and ultimately making recommendations to the dean.
- Imagine the faculty member you believe the school/department needs to advance its strategic goals and future success, and use that lens to inform your participation on this committee.
- Top of mind must be the cultivation of a diverse pool of candidates (think: diversity, equity, and inclusion) to diversify our faculty and to expand our breadth of disciplinary scholarship, teaching, engagement, creative practice, and research.

In essence, we will write calls and position announcements to be expansive and inclusive of multiple peoples with various skillsets, perspectives, and orientations, so that we can broaden our applicant pool beyond conventional assumptions and expectations, about pedigree, institution., or career path. Depending on the number of searches in each department/school, the Dean and the HRSP will attend all search committees charge meetings in a department/school, or at the same time in one charge meeting. The dean will charge the committee to identify peer programs at URM-serving institutions with the expectation that the search committee chair or department head/school director will reach out to potential candidates, graduate program directors, or department chairs from these institutions to recommend graduate students as potential candidates.

Q3

What expectations related to recruiting and advancing a diverse candidate pool will be conveyed to the search committee and who will communicate those expectations?

A3

The Dean will communicate expectations for recruiting and advancing a diverse pool of candidates to each search committee in the charge meeting.

The search committee and the department head/school director will develop a recruitment plan with the assistance of Associate Dean for Access and Equity (ADAE) and in consultation with the Human Resources Strategic Partner (HRSP) as needed. All members of the search committee actively recruit candidates. Ads must be placed in at least one national publication. Faculty members in the respective department/school will post on social media and recommend candidates to the search chair. Each member of the search committee submits a list of potential candidates (names, email, URL) whose candidacy will assist in creating a diverse pool to the search chair. Setting a uniform or specific goal for the number of potential candidate recommendations is not possible across all disciplines due to the size of the field and as some positions might be niche, with fewer than 50 possible candidates. Further, student members of a committee might be less familiar with potential candidates in

their field. After verifying there are no duplicates on the list, each member sends an invitation to candidates on their list to apply for or discuss the position with the chair of the committee. The search committee chair checks weekly on progress of committee members search activity. Department head/school director and HRSP review recruitment pool; consult national data from affirmative action on viable pool of candidates from underrepresented and marginalized groups; committee adjusts recruitment plan to improve the diversity of the recruitment pool, if necessary. The Dean may review or request an update from the committee at any time during the process.

Q4

How will you ensure that the search chair engages with either the HRSP or the Talent Acquisition recruiter assigned to the search to provide the most recent Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) Availability and Underutilization data for the unit and how will you ensure that the search committee also has that information?

A4

The Dean will charge the search committee chair to engage with the HRSP and the Talent Acquisition recruiter to access the most recent Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) Availability and Underutilization data for the unit. Before the position can be posted the search chair must assure the Dean they have engaged with the HRSP and Talent Acquisition recruiter, have received this data, have shared the data with the department head/school director and the search committee. The position will not be posted until the search chair has confirmed these steps with the Dean.

Q5

What specific steps will be implemented to build a diverse pool of candidates? Who will be responsible for each step?

A5

Search committees will consult with ADAE to engage in active pursuit of qualified candidates who will diversify the pool. Among the actions include contacting professional associations for potential names; contacting accomplished scholars from underrepresented groups in the profession who have earned significant professional recognition; sharing the call for applications and invitation to provide names to alumni, fraternities, and sororities from underrepresented groups; sending the call to HBCUs and women's colleges; sharing the call with colleagues at Penn State commonwealth campuses for recommendations.

At each step, department head/school director will be point of contact.

Q6

How will you ensure diverse candidate pools at each stage of the search process?

A6

It is difficult to ensure a diverse candidate pool at every stage as the composition of the initial pool is dependent upon who actually applies. At each stage, committees will check in with department head/school director and ADAE. Lists of candidates for Zoom interviews and on campus interviews will not be advanced unless the pool of candidates is determined by ADAE and/or Dean to be diverse.

In addition to the ongoing review of the candidate pool as noted above, the process will also include three points of assessment to review the diversity of the pool of applicants:

1. Published date for review of applications: if the pool does not reflect national parameters, ask committee to shortlist to that; also present committee with diversity breakdown of pool of applicants
2. Semifinalist list for Zoom interviews: SD/DH and HRSP review semifinalist list to reflect demographic data or/and diversity of the overall pool.
3. Finalist list for on-campus interviews: SD/DH and HRSP review proposed finalist list to reflect demographic data or/and the diversity of the overall pool; justifications for other types of selection need to be contextualized.

The series of steps and points of assessment are intended to generate and maintain a diverse pool of prospective/nominated/invited candidates as well as applicants under review, and candidates under consideration at the semifinalist and finalist stages. Every effort will be made to diversifying the pool at each step.

Q7

How will you hold your direct reports and others in your units accountable for meeting these expectations?

A7

Searches run the risk of not hiring a candidate if they are unable to progress appropriately through the series of steps to ensure a diverse pool of candidates at each stage.

Q8

What other innovations are you considering to achieve more diverse hiring?

A8

All lecture series committees will be encouraged to invite speakers who reflect the characteristics of the five-year hiring plan for their department/school. As such, lecture series committees will be familiar with hiring plans for their department/school.

Departments/Schools will assist each other to share search information among their networks and refer potential candidates for consideration.

The College has developed a webpage (<https://arts.psu.edu/careers/>) on which it lists all faculty and staff searches each year.

Q9

How will you eliminate traditional and/or specific unit-based obstacles to more diverse hiring that you have experienced in the past (e.g., lack of recruitment efforts from those not on the search committee, implicit bias impacts, etc.)?

A9

Department Heads/ School Directors develop five-year hiring plans as a result of analyzing data from:

- current demographic data in their department/school and profession
- disciplinary expertise goals in their department/school
- department/school program goals and college strategic goals
- discussions in department/school meetings
- the most recent Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) Availability and Underutilization data for the unit

Department Heads/School Directors come together in retreat to present their preliminary plans for feedback, discuss any overlaps, and develop a big picture view of where everyone else wants to go. The big picture will provide the Dean with a framework for setting strategic priorities for searches other than replacements due to attrition or retirements. Overlaps could support sharing of resources between departments/schools and increase budgetary efficiencies. Departments/Schools will review hiring plans in this way once each year. Departments/Schools revise their hiring plans and work with the Dean to confirm and approve.

Q10

What rubric will be used to assess candidates and to help your committees move away from solely "by the numbers" or "my impression" candidate assessments that do not consider differences in likely experiences nor other important factors?

A10

With the assistance of the ADAE and the department head/school director, rubrics will be created based on the criteria in the position description and best practices intended to decrease bias in candidate assessment, with attention to criteria that will enable what is the department/school/college to move forward in pursuit of strategic goals and priorities.

Q11

How can the Provost's Office and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access provide support during the search process?

A11

The Office of the Provost and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access can provide support during the search process in several ways, as consultants. In some instances, searches in the College of Arts & Architecture might benefit from a representative from the Office of the Provost or the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access to attend a search committee charge meeting or a scheduled search committee meeting during the review of applicants to respond to questions and to ensure the objectivity of the search.

The process in Arts & Architecture will include attention to the elements below.

Once the committee is ready to begin reviewing the applicant pool, the chair is to ask the HRSP or the Talent Acquisition recruiter to provide the demographic data for the pool. If these percentages are not similar to the AAP Availability data, committees should continue with their recruitment efforts. (The source of this demographic data—HRSP or Talent Acquisition—has yet to be determined.)

Once the candidates for first-round interviews have been identified, the committee should ask for the demographic data on that pool of candidates prior to contacting them to determine whether more recruitment efforts are needed to further diversify the first-round pool of candidates. This data is typically supplied by the HRSP.

The search committee chair is responsible for documenting and maintaining this data at all stages of the search so that units can quantify progress and identify areas of difficulty.