Writing an Inclusive Job Description

A well-constructed job description contains not only the qualifications and criterion for the role, but also serves as the outline for selection and future job performance evaluation. Research and best practices indicate the following strategies can be used to create job descriptions that will attract a diverse candidate pool in faculty searches.

BROADLY DEFINE THE POSITION QUALIFICATIONS.

- Many female job seekers only apply for positions when they meet 100 percent of the qualifications listed in the job description.[i]
- **Indicate the position is open to a broad range of specializations and encourage candidates from non-traditional career paths.** For example, instead of "Degree in biology required," state "Candidates with degrees in biology or related fields encouraged."
- List qualifications as preferred rather than required unless they are absolutely essential for the position.

ENCOURAGE CANDIDATES TO NOTE DIVERSITY-RELATED SKILLS OR EXPERIENCES.

- Women and faculty from underrepresented groups are more likely to be hired if the position description encourages applicants with qualifications and experiences in enhancing diversity and inclusion.[ii] **Ask candidates to demonstrate their ability to work across diverse groups and contribute to inclusivity in the campus community. Examples include:**
  - Candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to working with women and underrepresented minority students through teaching, mentoring, or administration are especially encouraged to apply.
  - Candidates with experience teaching/conducting research on issues applicable to diverse populations are preferred.
  - Candidates who have experience working with a diverse range of faculty, staff, and students, and who can contribute to the climate of inclusivity are encouraged to identify their experiences in these areas.

DESCRIBE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH.

- Women and underrepresented faculty are frequently more involved in interdisciplinary, publicly engaged scholarship.[iii] **Include information about cross-departmental or cross-college collaborations and describe interdisciplinary work currently being conducted within the department. Examples include:**
  - Our department has multiple collaborations with departments and units across campus, including our interdisciplinary centers, the Center for Excellence and the Center for Applied Research.
  - Our department works closely with local, regional, and state partners, including Montgomery County Schools and the Maryland School Board Association. Our unique location in the Washington, D.C. area gives us unparalleled access to national and international agencies and organizations, including the National Science Foundation, Libraries of Congress, and the Department of Education.

USE GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE THROUGHOUT THE DESCRIPTION.

- Linguistic analysis shows that word choice in job descriptions impacts the gender of who is interested in applying for a role.[iv]
- Carefully evaluate the gendered meaning of adjectives when describing the position. Rather than using words such as strong, competitive, or other descriptors that emphasize an individual's performance, **job descriptions that incorporate gender-neutral phrases such as accomplished, committed, or successful will appeal to more candidates. Examples include:**
  - Successful applicants will have a demonstrated ability to work collaboratively across departments. (rather than "Competitive candidates will have a strong track record of directing graduate students.")
- Avoid using gender binary assumptive language. Instead of using pronouns such as he or she, use the terms "applicant" or "candidate." Use the singular "they" when referring to the same term in the sentence. For example, "The candidate will advise and mentor students and they will also be expected to perform service within the department and college."

DESCRIBE TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES AND OTHER DUTIES OUTSIDE OF RESEARCH.

- Women faculty are more likely to report using student-centered teaching methods and spend more time advising students, and faculty of color are more likely to report a commitment to students' moral and civic development.[v] **Note the University's goals of working towards inclusive learning and mentoring environments. Examples include:**
  - Candidates are expected to have a demonstrated commitment to teaching and mentorship at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, including working with students and groups from underrepresented backgrounds.
  - Candidates with a demonstrated ability to incorporate diverse perspectives into teaching and scholarship are preferred.

INCLUDE A DEPARTMENTAL COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY.

- Women, underrepresented minorities, and LGBTQ faculty may be particularly attuned to the climate of diversity at the institution or within the department.[vi] Yet, research shows that colorblind messages ("We encourage faculty to embrace their similarities") or messages that imply that diversity has already been achieved ("We do not discriminate on the basis of race or gender") can be a deterrent to promoting inclusion. **Note the department's efforts in building towards inclusive excellence. Examples include:**
  - The Department of _____ is committed to increasing the diversity of the campus community.
  - The Department of _____ believes increasing diversity will enhance our unit.
  - We aim to increase diversity in multiple forms, including but not limited to, identity, culture, background, ability, and opinions.

Sample Job Description 1

The University of Maryland, College Park is the flagship campus of the University System of Maryland. With an enrollment of over 30,000 students, Maryland is the largest university in the state and the largest in the Washington Metropolitan area. The University is committed to achieving excellence as the State's primary center of research and graduate education. The campus benefits from the close proximity and network connections with the broader Washington and Baltimore metropolitan communities.

Housed within the College of Gryffindor, the Department offers graduate and undergraduate programs, including two certificate programs, three masters programs, and two doctoral programs. The Department is known for its focus on interdisciplinary scholarship and many faculty members in the department are affiliated with cross-disciplinary research centers, including the Center for Excellence and the Diversity Colloquium. Our faculty work with and make connections between communities and local governments, state and federal government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academic institutions, including those within Prince George's County Public Schools and the Department of Education.

The Department has a strong commitment to increasing the diversity of the campus community and contributing to the climate of inclusivity in the College and at the University. Faculty in our department participate on multiple college and campus-wide working groups aimed at improving inclusivity on our campus and our department runs several outreach programs that target the recruitment of women and underrepresented minorities into our undergraduate and graduate programs.

Job Description
The Department of Education will hire an assistant professor to begin in August 2020. Qualifications include a Ph.D. in Education or a related discipline, including but not limited to Sociology, Anthropology, or American Studies. Candidates must demonstrate a promising research agenda with the potential for external funding. We are particularly interested in candidates whose research focuses on populations traditionally underrepresented or underserved in education.

Candidates are also expected to be excellent teachers, with a demonstrated commitment to teaching and mentorship at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, including working with students and groups from underrepresented backgrounds. The candidate will be expected to teach traditional and online courses at the undergraduate to graduate levels, including required courses and courses in their specialty.

Sample Job Description 2

The Department is searching for a tenure-track assistant, associate, or full professor in education policy. Located in the Washington, DC-Baltimore corridor, the University of Maryland, College Park, is the flagship research university and a land grant institution committed to rigorous research, quality teaching, and informed public service.

The Department is known for its focus on applied and community-engaged scholarship. Our department houses the Center for Innovative Program Evaluation, and several of our faculty partner with local county public schools and school districts. Our proximity to multiple agencies, including the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Department of Education, and Department of State, as well as several education associations (NEA, ACE, AASCU, APLU) offers faculty unique access to forming partnerships and networks at the national and international level.

The Department is committed to increasing diversity of our departmental community as well the greater campus community. We embrace diversity in multiple forms, including identity, background, theoretical and methodological orientations, and opinions.

Minimum Qualifications

The Department seeks applicants who have a doctorate in education policy or a related field, with an emphasis on quantitative methods.

Candidate will have the demonstrated potential to publish in leading refereed journals and respected professional outlets, as well as the capacity to secure external funding. Candidates are also expected to be excellent teachers and advisors. Candidates who have experience with incorporating diverse perspectives into teaching or scholarship are preferred, and candidates who have experience with mentoring and advising students from underrepresented groups are encouraged to their experiences in this area.

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