Creating 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 can be used to create job descriptions that will attract a diverse candidate pool in faculty searches.

In order to provide search-specific feedback on job descriptions, please submit a Word version of the draft job description to your college's Equity Administrator and Dawn Culpepper (dkculpep@umd.edu), Coordinator and Research Assistant for the Inclusive Faculty Hiring Pilot Program, prior to the posting date.

1) 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.[1]
- 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.

2) Encourage candidates to note diversity related skills or experiences that contribute to the department, college, and university mission.
- 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.[2]
- Ask candidates to demonstrate their ability to work across diverse groups and contribute to inclusivity in the campus community. For example, "Candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to working with women and underrepresented minority students through teaching, mentoring, or administration are especially encouraged to apply" or "Candidates with experience teaching/conducting research on issues applicable to diverse populations are preferred."

3) Indicate opportunities for interdisciplinary scholarship and research, including collaborative work in research centers or building new programs.
- Women and underrepresented faculty are frequently more involved in interdisciplinary, publically engaged scholarship.[3]
- Include information about cross-departmental or cross-college collaborations and describe interdisciplinary work currently being conducted within the department.

4) 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.[4]
- 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. For example, "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."

5) 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.[5]
- Note the University's inclusive campus community and commitment to mentorship for diverse groups, for example, "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."
- Ask applicants to note experience with using different teaching methods, for example, "Candidates with a demonstrated ability to incorporate diverse perspectives into teaching and scholarship preferred."

6) 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.[6]
- Note the department's efforts in building inclusive excellence, for example, "The Department of _____ is committed to increasing the diversity of the campus community. 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."

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[6] Bilimoria, D., & Stewart, A. J. (2009). "Don't Ask, Don't Tell": The Academic Climate for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Faculty in Science and Engineering. *NWSA Journal*, *21*(2), 85-103.
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