

Best Practices and Engagements: Starting a Fair & Equitable Faculty Search Process

Though we are reaching the end of the faculty search cycle for many units, this is the best time to begin thinking about the procedures and practices for implementing successful and equitable searches in years to come. For many faculty search committees, it may feel as if the process starts when the job description is posted and applications begin to roll in. However, much of the critical work of a search process should occur prior to finalizing the job description. There are three stages prior to posting that will aid in creating a fair, equitable, and consistent search process.

- 1) **Search Committee Construction:** There are at least two important reasons that the search committee should be constructed prior finalizing the job description. First, the committee should be constructed with considerable thought with regard to the open position, but also with regard to the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion. We should ask, not only, who is part of the search committee, but who access to becoming part of the search committee? Are there barriers within our units that keep people from being available to engage in faculty searches? Search committee construction should itself embed the value of diversity and inclusion in the search process.
- 2) **Search Committee Preparation:** The two most common hiccups in search committee preparation at DU occur when search committees misplace two important steps in the process. First, implicit bias and search committee training offered by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion should take place early in the process, rather than when applications are ready for review. The sooner the better when it comes to training. Second, early on, the committee should discuss and make decisions with regard to how the process will unfold and final decisions will be made. This time is critical for considering how implicit bias, unquestioned processes, and hierarchical power structures (e.g., tenured faculty vs. junior faculty voice) have and might continue to play out, sustaining inequitable practices and processes.
- 3) **Search Committee Planning:** During this time, the job positing is being drafted in partnership with the search committee and the needs of the department. Decisions are made with regard to research and teaching priorities within the job description, creation of rubrics for candidate application and interview measurement, and outreach and recruitment plans are being made in tandem with exploring available diversity data with regard to faculty pipelines. At the end of this stage, the job description and posting language should be sent to the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for review.

Engaging in these three steps prior to the launch of your search process will aid in setting you and your unit up for success in future searches. The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is here to help you and your search committees as you navigate this process.