

**Guidelines for**

**Recruiting**

**a Diverse Workforce**

Penn State's highest priority is excellence in our missions of teaching, research, and service.

The University's quality is dependent on our ability to identify, recruit and retain outstanding faculty and staff, including women, members of ethnic minority groups, and individuals who have been disadvantaged historically from opportunities in higher education. In keeping with our goals, Penn State is committed to an effective program of affirmative action.

This commitment reflects the values that sustain our university community as a center of opportunity for society. It is of special importance to the education Penn State provides to students. Our ability to promote multicultural understanding is greatly enhanced by faculty and staff who not only teach and lead in these areas but who themselves are representative of the diverse population of our nation.

Careful searches, following the guidelines in this brochure, are essential to fostering diversity in the University community. I encourage you to review this publication and make it available to members of search committees, human resource representatives, and others who have responsibilities for recruitment and selection of new faculty and staff.

Graham B. Spanier

Although many people contribute to making Penn State a world-class university, it is our faculty that most profoundly shapes the reputation of the institution. There is, then, no activity more critical to fulfilling our central mission and demonstrating our core values than a faculty search. In the course of identifying and attracting outstanding scholars and teachers, each search committee touches dozens of candidates whose impression of Penn State will be rooted in the courtesy, competence and candor of our faculty. If there is a tension between our practice and our professed values, it will be evident.

As a world-class university, Penn State recognizes the value diversity adds to our central mission. The University's public commitment to diversity among our faculty, staff and students is reflected in our Mission Statement, our strategic planning, including The Framework to Foster Diversity, and our federally mandated Affirmative Action Plan. The implementation of this commitment and the demonstration of how deeply we value diversity rests heavily on the leadership role of faculty who serve on search committees.

Search committees are often unaware of how to effectively promote diversity within a rapidly changing legal climate. This pamphlet is designed to provide search committees with a consistent, equitable framework for making good faith efforts to develop inclusive applicant pools that may enhance the diversity of our faculty.

I ask that you read this pamphlet carefully and utilize its recommendations regarding best practices for promoting Penn State's commitment to diversity. While excellence in teaching, research, and service are our top priorities, "excellence" must be understood in the context of an array of core values that define Penn State. Diversity is among those core values and should be a consideration in the search for new faculty that will maintain our reputation as a truly great university.

Kenneth F. Lehrman, III  
Director, Affirmative Action Office

## Introduction

Penn State's Affirmative Action Office has developed the following guidelines to assist deans, department heads and search committee members in conducting affirmative searches consistent with the University's commitment to Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity and with applicable laws and regulations. The guidelines are also available on-line at:

<http://www.affirmativeaction.psu.edu>

## Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity

*Affirmative Action* refers to efforts made to expand employment opportunity for women and members of racial and ethnic groups previously excluded from employment opportunities. These efforts are made consistent with applicable law and regulations.

*Equal Employment Opportunity* is the right of all persons to be judged on their ability and potential to perform the requirements of the job. Because equal employment opportunity does not typically change existing conditions, further action is necessary. That is where affirmative action complements equal opportunity.

## Recruitment Efforts

Affirmative outreach efforts are proactive and may vary depending on such variables as identified underutilization and statistical availability, as well as the position and recruitment resources. Aggressive recruitment efforts are required for all positions in which women and minorities are underutilized. When the job group (school or college) is underutilized or the department is underrepresented, search committees are

required to take extra measures to identify, recruit and hire women and/or racial/ethnic minority faculty.

## Before the Search

The Dean's office informs the Affirmative Action Office about the faculty search by completing the [Faculty Search Information Form A](#).

## Briefing

Before holding the first search committee meeting, the chair of the search committee participates in a search committee "briefing" conducted by the Affirmative Action Office.

## Charge to the Committee

In addition to defining the authority of the search committee, the dean/department head should review job group goals to correct underutilization, as well as departmental underrepresentation of women and racial/ethnic minorities and charge the committee to explore all opportunities to create a diverse pool of applicants.

## The Search Committee

Should:

- Reflect the diversity of the college/unit to the extent possible.
- Include individuals who have broad perspectives and a commitment to diversity.
- Ensure that all applicants are considered equitably throughout the process.
- Maintain confidentiality throughout the process and refer all inquiries (external to the committee) to the chairperson.

## Plan the Search

### DEPARTMENT HEAD:

- Develop the position announcement, keeping in mind that it can be a tool to widen the pool of candidates by eliminating unnecessary qualifications, or broadening the range of teaching and research areas.
- Determine if the department is underrepresented for women, minorities, or both when measured against department availability estimates included in the University's Affirmative Action Plan. Consult the Affirmative Action Office (AAO).
- Review the recruitment plan developed by the search committee to ensure a diverse and competitive pool.
- Complete the Faculty Search Information Form B for the Affirmative Action Office.

### SEARCH COMMITTEE:

- Review the position announcement, ensuring it is not so restrictive as to unnecessarily limit the pool of applicants.
- Review whether the department is underrepresented for women, minorities, or both.
- Develop a recruitment plan and strategies to address department's underrepresentation by ensuring a diverse and competitive pool.
- Reach a common understanding of the selection criteria and procedures for screening and interviewing candidates before material from applicants begins to arrive.
- Ensure that criteria are carefully defined, directly related to the position as advertised, and clearly understood and accepted by members of the committee.
- Include among the selection criteria, the ability of the candidate to add intellectual diversity and cultural richness to the department.

- Determine the process by which references will be checked and letters of recommendation reviewed.
- Ensure that all portions of the application and interview process are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Keep documentation of:
  - Major criteria used to select applicants beyond "initial screening."
  - Specific reasons for rejection of candidates interviewed but not selected.

## Advertise Appropriately and Search Aggressively

(National advertisement is required for all standing appointments for executives, administrators and faculty.) Send Faculty Search Information Form B to the Affirmative Action Office prior to posting advertisement.

- All advertisements **must** include the following statement:

*Penn State is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity and the diversity of its workforce.*

- Use the recruitment plan for advertising and outreach to produce the desired results.
  - Advertise widely and go beyond the traditional methods of identifying applicants.
  - Allow ample time for search and recruitment activities. Advertise the position at least 30 days before application deadline.
  - Use rolling deadlines when possible.
- Use electronic job-posting services targeted at diverse groups such as minority caucuses in specific disciplines. Many professional organizations maintain directories of minority professionals. The Affirmative Action Office maintains a listing of recruitment resources in its web site with links to some of the following resources:

— CIC Directory of Minority Ph.D.

Recipients:

<http://www.cic.uiuc.edu/programs/DirectoryOfMinorityCandidates/>

— CIC Directory of Women in Science and Engineering:

<http://www.cic.uiuc.edu/programs/DirectoryOfWomenInScienceAndEngineering/>

— Minority and Women Doctoral Directory  
The Affirmative Action Office maintains a subscription.

- Contact the Affirmative Action Office or visit our website at <http://www.affirmativeaction.psu.edu> for additional recruitment resources.
- **Make personal contacts** with minorities and women at professional conferences and invite them to apply.
- Contact colleagues at other institutions to seek nominations of students nearing graduation, recipients of fellowships and awards or others interested in moving laterally, making sure to encourage inclusion of qualified women and minorities.
- Identify women and/or minority junior or mid-level faculty at other institutions and send job announcements. Telephone calls and letters to nominees and applicants can send a strong message of openness and a welcoming environment.
- Consider placing announcements in newspapers, journals, and publications aimed specifically at women and minorities.
- Send announcements and request nominations from departments in historically Black colleges and universities and institutions serving large numbers of Hispanic, American Indian and Asian populations. For a list of institutions see the AAO website listed above.
- Request names of prospective applicants from the directories of Ph.D. recipients at the

Affirmative Action Office.

- Consult with faculty/staff of color and women already on campus on outreach strategies.

## Receive Applications

The department acknowledges receipt of each application and vitae and sends Affirmative Action Data Cards (including search numbers) with letters of acknowledgement to all applicants.

## Evaluate the Applicant Pool

### DEPARTMENT HEAD/SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR

Review the composition of the applicant pool to determine if additional recruiting efforts are needed. The composition of the pool can be determined by consulting the AAO website at <http://www.affirmativeaction.psu.edu>. Searches are arranged according to search number.

## Screen Application Material

### SEARCH COMMITTEE

- Screen vitae based on advertised minimum and preferred qualifications.
- Identify the candidates who will be considered for the position based on the position announcement and candidates' qualifications, including ability or promise to contribute to an environment that values diversity.
- Think carefully about your definition of "merit," taking care to fully evaluate the *achievements and promise* of each applicant, rather than relying on traditional assumptions.
- Make sure the process allows each member

of the search committee to contribute to the evaluation of all applicants.

- Be mindful of biases in the screening process that could inadvertently screen out well-qualified applicants:
  - with non-traditional career paths
  - with non-traditional research interests
  - with non-traditional research interests or publications
  - from historically Black colleges and universities or other minority-serving institutions.
- Recognize that diverse paths and experiences can make positive contributions to a candidate's qualifications. Acknowledge the value of candidates who are "less like us" and consider their contribution to our students who are increasingly more diverse.
- Select a "short list" of candidates to be considered for interview. If the department is underrepresented for women or minorities, complete the [Short List Approval Form](#) and forward to the AAO prior to interviews.
- Forward list of finalists recommended for interview to dean/department head.
- When checking references, remember:
  - All questions asked and information used must be job related.
  - Some inquiries are inappropriate because they request or allow use of information that may lead to an illegally biased decision.

#### **DEPARTMENT HEAD/DEAN**

- Review the candidates recommended for interview making sure that diversity objectives could be met by interviewing only those candidates. Consult with AAO if these objectives are not being met.
- Request an explanation or review of others in the pool if diversity objectives are not met.

## **Interview Finalist(s)**

- Schedule interviews and events to ensure consistent treatment of all candidates, including internal candidates.
- Develop a group of relevant "core questions" by which the candidates are to be evaluated.
- Use "core questions" with all candidates to allow comparative judgment and ensure that crucial position-related information is obtained.
- Include questions aimed at discovering the promise and potential the candidates can bring to the long-term objectives of the department.
- Ask questions aimed specifically at assessing the candidate's qualifications for teaching, scholarship and service within a diverse environment.
- Ensure that questions are asked by various members of the search committee so that diversity issues will be raised regardless of the gender and racial make-up of the group.
- Solicit information about the candidate's work in the areas of diversity. (For example, experience or opportunity to recruit, retain and promote women and minorities in a previous position and success at these efforts; information about programs, committee memberships and diversity initiatives in previous position.)
- Avoid making assumptions based on perceived race, ethnic background, religion, marital or familial status, age, disability, sexual orientation or veteran status.
- Create opportunities for candidates to meet with other Penn State faculty, staff or community members who share similar backgrounds. The Affirmative Action Office can assist with these efforts.
- Provide an opportunity for the candidate to discuss any special requirements or

circumstances such as the need to find a position for a partner or the need for an accommodation for a disability. (Do not ask candidates if they have a partner, children, or a disability. Rather, ask only if they wish to discuss dual career opportunities, schools, accommodation issues, etc. with the human resources person not involved in the selection process).

## **Assess Candidate Qualifications for Working in a Diverse Environment**

Along with exploring other substantive qualifications regarding excellence in teaching, research, and service, incorporate diversity related questions throughout the interview process and raise them in varied contexts, including the “core” interview questions.

The following are examples of an opening statement and appropriate open-ended interview questions.

Opening remarks might include something like:

“Penn State and our college value diversity among faculty, staff and students and we have made a commitment to promoting and enhancing diversity. We believe that a shared commitment to teaching, research and service within a diverse environment fosters collegiality and advances our central mission. We would like you to discuss your experience with and views regarding diversity”

— What do you see as the most challenging aspects of an increasingly diverse academic community?

— What have you done, formally or informally, to meet such challenges?

— How would you incorporate diversity into your course offerings?

— How have you worked with students and others to foster the creation of climates receptive to diversity in the classroom, in the curriculum, in the department?

— How have you mentored, supported or encouraged students on your campus? What about minority, women, or international students?

— In what ways have you integrated multicultural issues as part of your professional development?

### **ASSESSING WHAT YOU HEARD.**

#### **WHAT TO LOOK FOR:**

— Is the candidate at ease discussing diversity-related issues and their significance to the educational enterprise? Or is the candidate reluctant to discuss diversity issues?

— Does the candidate use gender-neutral language or are “males” used for examples and answers?

— Does the candidate address all the members of the interview committee?

— How does the candidate show experience, concern, commitment or willingness to advance the University’s diversity efforts?

## **Identify the “Best Qualified” Candidate**

Does the candidate:

- Satisfy requirements for the position as advertised?
- Demonstrate the potential to be successful in the promotion and tenure review?
- Have teaching experience with diverse populations?
- Have scholarly expertise related to diversity in the discipline?
- Add intellectual diversity to the University community?

- Bring life experiences that will benefit an increasingly diverse student body?
- Demonstrate special talents and knowledge needed to serve as a mentor and role model for students in underrepresented groups?
- Alleviate underutilization within the college/school?
- Alleviate underrepresentation within the department?
- Enhance the central mission and core values of Penn State?

## Recommend the Candidate(s)

### SEARCH COMMITTEE

- Recommend the best qualified candidate(s) to the department head based on advertised position requirements and substantive qualifications, including diversity objectives.
- When two or more candidates possess ostensibly equivalent qualifications, recommend the candidate who will contribute most to the diversity objectives of the department, college/school.

### DEPARTMENT HEAD

- Review the search committee recommendation.
- Forward the files of all candidates interviewed and the department's recommendation to the dean for review.

## Make the Offer

- The dean or department head makes the offer to the candidate.
- Make sure that the proposed pay level, rank, and academic/administrative support for a woman or minority are no less than they would be for a comparable majority appointment.
- Notify unsuccessful candidates only after offer has been accepted, but prior to public announcements of appointment. Official timely notification to internal candidates is especially important!

- [Complete Faculty Search Information Form C](#) and send to [AAO](#).

## After the Search: Retention Strategies

- Be deliberate in welcoming new hires, providing assistance to secure a smooth transition and enhance the probability of success in the new position.
- Be willing to serve as mentor and participate in other professional development activities.
- Value and support networking along gender and ethnic lines as a particularly effective way to deal with problems of isolation.
- Avoid placing additional "diversity" demands or expectations on minorities or women, such as extra advising or committee work.

## Exceptions to Standard Search Procedures

- Penn State's hiring procedures are specifically tailored to meet federal standards governing equal employment opportunity and affirmative action. Exceptions to these procedures are therefore strongly discouraged.
- When extraordinary circumstances appear to call for an exception to Penn State hiring procedures, a request for waiver should be sent in writing to the Provost and to the Affirmative Action Director. Approval shall be made by the Provost in consultation with the Affirmative Action Director. (HR-13).

## Further Assistance

Staff of the Affirmative Action Office are available to assist you at any point in the search process. Contact 814-863-0471 V/TTY, or email <[searches@psu.edu](mailto:searches@psu.edu)>

## Interview and Selection Inquiry Guide

The best way to guard against disparate treatment, ensure sound selection procedures, and avoid unlawful discrimination is to be fair, objective, and consistent in the hiring process. Interview questions should be aimed at discovering what the candidate can bring to the position and the University, and must be limited to issues that directly relate to the job to be performed. There are inquiries that are not permitted because they request or allow use of information that may lead to an unfair (or illegal) decision.

The following are topics about which search committees should not ask questions whether conducting interviews, reference checks, or in casual conversation. If a candidate raises these topics you should politely change the topic, or if necessary, refer the candidate to your Human Resources Office or the Affirmative Action Office.

- Age
- Arrest Record
- Conviction Record
- Disability
- Gender
- Health
- Marital or Family Status
- Military Record
- National Origin/Citizenship
- Organizational Affiliations (beyond professional discipline)
- Race or Color/Ethnicity
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation

**Do** afford the candidate the opportunity to meet with human resource professionals regarding personal questions they may have about employment opportunities or benefits for domestic partners and spouses, dependents, local schools, housing, etc.

Information related to answers to unacceptable topics, but obtained outside the formal review process, cannot be used to disqualify a candidate.

## Race/Ethnic Categories

The racial and ethnic categories, as currently defined in federal regulations, are the following:

### AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE

A person with origins in any of the original peoples of North America who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or has community recognition as an American Indian or Alaskan Native.

### ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER

A person with origins in any of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. This area includes, for example, China, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Republic, and Samoa; and, on the Indian Subcontinent, includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan.

### BLACK

An individual, not of Hispanic origin, with origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

### HISPANIC

A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.

### WHITE

An individual, not of Hispanic origin, with origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

**Note:** Individuals who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents of this country are not considered American minorities. (They may, however, still be protected by laws prohibiting discrimination based on national origin.)

## Other Definitions

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION:** a set of specific and result-oriented procedures, including goals and timetables, to which the contractor's good faith efforts must be directed to correct deficiencies in the utilization of minorities and women, at all levels of its workforce where deficiencies exist. 41 CFR § 60-2.10

**UNDERUTILIZATION:** having fewer minorities or women in a particular job group than would reasonably be expected by their availability.

**UNDERREPRESENTATION:** having fewer minorities or women in a particular department than would reasonably be expected by their availability.

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**This publication is available in alternative media on request.**

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. The Pennsylvania State University does not discriminate against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-2801; tel. (814) 865-4700/V; (814) 863-1150/TTY.