

DEVELOPING A RECRUITING AND ADVERTISING PLAN

Creating a broad, diverse pool of highly qualified applicants is absolutely essential if the university is to have a faculty and administration that will help us achieve our goals and serve students and/or the institution well for decades to come. This is the search committee's most important responsibility, and the committee must be aggressive in identifying attractive candidates, at least some of whom may not have been considering a job change or may not have previously considered Virginia Tech. We know from experience and the literature on faculty hiring that advertisement in a single disciplinary publication, by itself, generally does not create the strong pool of candidates from diverse backgrounds that we are seeking for faculty or administrative positions. Here are some strategies to enlarge the pool of candidates:

- Advertisement in the main journal or publication for the relevant discipline may be necessary, but it is not sufficient. The committee should identify and advertise in publications and on listservs targeted to specific populations. Seeing the position announcement in more than one place, especially when it appears in a targeted publication or listserv, reinforces the message of inclusion.
- People contacts are much more effective in generating candidates than paper contacts. Call colleagues and other professionals to inform them of the vacancy and to request nominations. Follow up with a letter and a position announcement or send an e-mail that they can share with others.
- Forward the announcement, with cover letter, to the relevant professional associations serving specific populations (such as Women in Engineering or the Association of Black Psychologists). Also, consider recruiting in person at national meetings of these organizations. Many national associations also have caucuses for specific populations. Contact them as well, ask them to share the information, and ask for nominations of possible candidates. Whenever possible, use targeted listservs.
- Where applicable, send announcements with a cover letter seeking assistance to minority-serving institutions and women's colleges. Send them to colleagues in specific departments, rather than to a president's or vice president's office. Again, ask for nominations. Follow up with a phone call.
- Use annual directories of recent Ph.D. recipients. Contact potential candidates by phone to inform them of the position and follow up with an announcement and cover letter. If the persons contacted are not available or interested, ask for nominations of other potential candidates. Some of these resources are available on the web site for the Office of Equal Opportunity or in hard copy in that office.

- Use the web. Particularly if you are looking for a candidate with some experience, you may find individuals of interest by perusing web sites of departments or programs at other institutions, organizations, or agencies. Many faculty members or researchers maintain information about their research and teaching interests and accomplishments on publicly available web sites. Follow up these leads to determine if the individual is interested and available, or knows of others who are. This is particularly effective in locating women or minority candidates who may not be actively searching for a position.
- Whenever you ask for nominations, be sure to follow up. The degree and timeliness of follow-up are perceived as indications of how serious you are about recruiting diverse applicants.
- Where appropriate, use campus-based networks, such as the Black Caucus, Hispanic Caucus, Women Leaders listserv and your college's diversity committee(s).

Remember that effective searches utilize creative and aggressive strategies to identify qualified applicants. Make technology work for you – contact new people, hunt for graduate students in departments, use listservs, reach out to alumni, browse likely web sites from the relevant associations or other institutions, etc.

Monitoring the response to various ad sources is also important. Paid advertisements may not be nearly as effective as distributions to relevant listservs or posting on electronic bulletin boards. There is no requirement that the department spends substantial sums on paid advertising in any particular journal or publication. What is important is the scope of planned recruitment activities and the likelihood that these will reach and attract a strong pool of candidates from diverse backgrounds. Analysis of the effectiveness of various recruitment strategies is important information to use in the next search, so that committees build on the work and learning of previous efforts.

While the strategies above may serve for particular searches, successful recruitment is really a long-term, continual effort for a department or unit. Faculty members should be systematically observing new members in the field at their professional meetings so they can identify emerging scholars (or administrators) who can add to the department at some point. Making and maintaining contact in such a situation can ultimately result in a successful recruitment two or three years down the road. When traveling to or presenting at another university, faculty members should take the opportunity to ask about and meet Ph.D. students in the pipeline, particularly women and minorities. Promising leads can be followed up by an invitation to campus to give a talk and to develop contacts and shared interests with others in the department so that the recruitment, when it occurs, is the culmination of a longer-term relationship. Whether the particular individual joins the Virginia Tech faculty or not, these efforts very often have a beneficial secondary effect when positive impressions are shared with others and their colleagues are then encouraged to apply.

