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ADVANCE at Texas A&M

Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence:

Handbook for Faculty Search Committee Members

(Revised November 2020)

STRIDE: Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence

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Introduction

This handbook is designed to assist faculty search committees with successfully recruiting new faculty and administrators. However, nothing in this handbook can match the knowledge and hard work many dedicated individuals bring to the effort of creatively and persistently striving to hire at Texas A&M University. We recognize this and endorse the fact that in each discipline, or sub-discipline, a thorough understanding of the culture and expectations of individuals in the potential prospect pool must be utilized for successful searches and hires to occur. This handbook offers resources so that the search and hire process align with university requirements and goals. It also offers ideas to aid committees in their efforts to enrich existing search practices.

The handbook is organized in sections that represent key elements of the search process:
- Laying the Groundwork for an Effective Search
- Initiating the Search Process and Recruiting Applicants
- Evaluating Candidates
- Interviewing Candidates
- Recruiting (and Retaining) the Finalist

Objectives

The objective of this handbook is to provide evidence-based practices to increase the diversity of applicant pools, to ensure the fair and equitable review of all candidates, and to demonstrate that Texas A&M University is committed to creating an inclusive, welcoming, and supportive environment for all faculty, staff, and students. (*Note: The list of recommendations are compiled from a variety of sources identified in Appendix H.*) While conducting searches for new faculty members, the search committee should keep in mind not only the unit's needs, but also Texas A&M University's commitment to increase the diversity of the faculty. At Texas A&M, diversity encompasses the various characteristics of persons in our community, including but not limited to age, background, citizenship, disability, education, ethnicity, family status, gender, gender identity/expression, geographical location, language, military experience, political views, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and work experience.

How Diversity Aligns with Excellence

This handbook is based on research that demonstrates that excellence and diversity are closely aligned. Simply put, there is no need to sacrifice excellence in order to increase diversity.

Diversity comes in many forms. Every individual person brings a diversity of experience, age, background, education, gender, gender identity/expression, race, ethnicity, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, religion, citizenship status, family status, political views, geographical location, work experience, and military experience. Diversity can be viewed as "the mosaic of people who bring a variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the group or organization with which they interact" (Academic Impressions 2019). These diverse experiences add a breadth of perspectives for addressing problems. For this reason, diverse organizations are known to perform better, be more innovative, and make better choices (Mayer, Warr & Zhao 2018; Pichler et al. 2018).

Within academia, faculty who represent diverse perspectives and experiences (broadly defined) are well-positioned to serve as role models for an increasingly diverse student body. Currently, the student body is noticeably more diverse in terms of gender and race/ethnicity than the faculty. In addition to serving as mentors and role models for students from underrepresented groups, research shows that faculty from underrepresented groups are more innovative in their pedagogical approaches. Faculty who bring new perspectives to the institution are also more likely to value the inclusion of issues related to race, class and sexual orientation in course materials and classroom discussions (Smith and Schoenfeld 2000). All of these factors are positively correlated with undergraduate and graduate student retention.

The term "underrepresented" is used throughout this handbook to describe situations when a particular group's proportionate representation in a unit (whether the unit is defined as the department, college, or university) is smaller than its representation in the general population. Members of racial and ethnic minority groups are underrepresented in most academic disciplines. While women are underrepresented in many -- but not all -- academic disciplines, they are particularly underrepresented in STEM fields.

The Concept of Implicit Bias

Many of the strategies and techniques in this handbook are designed to reduce the influence of implicit bias. We all have subconscious or implicit biases about other social groups (including but not limited to groups based on age, gender, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity). These perceptions are shaped by past experiences and stereotypes, and may inadvertently influence our behaviors and decisions (such as our decisions on how to evaluate job candidates).

There is an extensive amount of literature on the impact of implicit bias on the evaluation of job application materials (such as CV, reference letters, student evaluations, etc.) (See handout, "Key Research Findings. Unintentional Bias – Gender, Race, Sexual Orientation & Religion.") Taken together, this research suggests that there are many steps that can be taken to reduce the influence of implicit bias in the search process. That is one of the central objectives of this handbook. Reducing implicit bias = the key to ensuring that the search process is fair and equitable to all candidates.

Foundations for an Effective Search

CONTINUOUS PREPARATION FOR HIRING

✓ **Build diverse networks, and always be on the lookout for applicants for future open positions.** Recruiting can and should begin before you have a position. Faculty members in the unit should regularly scout for potential job applicants who would enhance the diversity and excellence of the department. Faculty should be encouraged to start building relationships with promising scholars at conferences. The department might also consider inviting promising scholars from underrepresented groups to give a lecture on campus *before a search is underway*. Faculty members can also ask colleagues at other institutions for names of promising candidates. These tactics will help widen the pool from which you recruit.

✓ **Always take steps to improve the climate for members of underrepresented groups.** A department's ability to attract candidates from underrepresented groups is going to be higher if there is a welcoming and supportive department climate. Therefore, it is crucial that departments continuously take steps to improve the climate. This

Foundations for an Effective Search *(continued)*

way, all faculty feel included and welcome whether or not the department is actively hiring.

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS TO INITIATE A SEARCH

✓ **Refer to college and university guidelines for the administrative aspects of hiring**. All new hires have to be approved by your college, the Dean of Faculties Office (and in some cases, the Provost's Office) at the beginning and end of the search process.

The Dean of Faculties Office has prepared guidelines for deans, department heads and department staff to use for faculty searches. See "Hiring" on the Dean of Faculties website (dof.tamu.edu) for more information. Your college is also likely to have its own set of guidelines for offer letters and startup packages.

Initiating the Search and Recruiting Applicants

FORMING A SEARCH COMMITTEE

✓ **Build a diverse search committee**. It is highly recommended that the search committee includes women and members of underrepresented minority groups, as well as individuals who have contributed to diversity, equity and inclusion in their scholarship, teaching, advising or service.

The search committee should also include faculty from different ranks, and faculty who represent different research areas within the department. Departments may want to consider adding staff and student representatives to the committee.

All members of the committee should be advocates for diversity not just women and minorities. All of these factors will bring a diversity of perspective to the search, and this can lead to conversations that expand the definition of what constitutes a "strong candidate."

> **In the early stages of the search, the department should lay the groundwork for a fair and equitable search process <u>and</u> take steps to encourage candidates from underrepresented groups to apply for the position.**

Initiating the Search and Recruiting Applicants

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✓ **Consider service equity when forming the committee**. Be mindful of the fact that many women and minority faculty members tend to have larger service commitments than other faculty at the same rank. Thus, when women and minorities are asked to serve on search committees, departments should consider other service obligations and make adjustments so they are not overburdened with service commitments that hinder their research productivity.

LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR A FAIR AND EQUITABLE SEARCH

✓ **Incorporate discussions of diversity and excellence early into the search process**. Search committee members may want to set aside some time to talk about the importance of recruiting a diverse pool of applicants. These conversations should be framed around the link between diversity and excellence. If the department has had challenges in recruiting women or minority candidates in the past, the committee may want to discuss why this might be the case, and be prepared to come up with strategies for confronting any biased views within the department. For suggestions on how to respond to various beliefs about diversity in hiring, see p. 27-28 & p. 32 of the University of Wisconsin's guide for search committees: https://wiseli.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/662/2018/11/SearchBook_Wisc.pdf.

✓ **Develop clear expectations with committee members.** Search committee members should understand from the onset that service on a search committee is an important and time-consuming task. It is important that all search committee members attend all meetings, participate actively in the process, treat all applicants fairly, maintain confidentiality, etc. Typically, committee members should help define the job position, publicize the search, recruit applications, develop evaluation criteria, evaluate applicants, develop interview questions, help host candidate visits on campus, and ensure that the process is fair and equitable. The search committee chair will have additional duties with scheduling meetings and interviews, and serving as a liaison with the department head and any department staff who are responsible for hiring and scheduling logistics. Questions to consider: Do members need to attend all meetings in person? What work needs to be completed before

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each meeting? Do some committee members have special roles and responsibilities (e.g. a graduate student representative)?

✓ **Establish a search timeline**. The search committee should decide the following: When will the ad be posted? Will the deadline be a hard deadline or a preferred deadline? When will the committee start to review candidates and come up with the first short list? When will the committee ask for references? Will the committee use preliminary interviews (e.g. Zoom, phone, etc.)? If so, what are the proposed dates for preliminary interviews? What are the proposed dates for on-campus interviews?

✓ **Develop an Advertising and Recruitment Plan**. Where will ads be posted? What steps will the committee take to ensure that the job ad is distributed widely (e.g. contacting colleagues at other institutions for nominations; making personal contacts with women and minority candidates; placing announcements in places aimed specifically at underrepresented minorities and women, etc.)

✓ **Establish Ground Rules for Committee Meetings**. The committee should discuss the following issues: What information is confidential? What information is shared with other faculty (and at what stage of the search)? What information is shared with undergraduate and graduate students and staff (and at what stage of the search)? If there are internal candidates, how will the committee (and the department) ensure that there is a fair and equal review process for all applicants? How will the department proceed if one of the candidates has a personal tie to a candidate that could be considered a conflict of interest? What ground rules can be established to ensure that all committee members feel comfortable sharing their opinion, and no one dominates the discussions?

✓ **Clarify the Decision-Making Process for the Committee**. Some departments have established rules and procedures for decision-making. Some committees try to reach consensus, while others vote. Some committees may incorporate a point system into the evaluation rubric. For the short list, a committee may allow members to vote in favor of interviewing multiple candidates. Different methods for making decisions

have advantages and disadvantages. The decision-making process should but it has the potential for greater conflict. It can take longer to reach a be decided ahead of time. Generally speaking, voting doesn't take as long, consensus, but it has the potential to develop more support for the outcome. Committees that use a point system should be careful not to share a ranked list of shortlisted candidates based on points, as this can bias the outcome of a search.

If a department does not have established rules and procedures, committee members should discuss whether the committee (or department) will conclude the search with a ranked list of acceptable candidates, or merely submit a list of acceptable candidates to the Department head (or Dean in some types of search) that identifies strengths and weaknesses. (If departments do have established procedures, the committee may want to revisit the procedures to ensure that they allow for a fair and equitable search.)

Questions to Consider: Is the committee expected to make decisions on the shortlisted candidates? If a point system is used to shortlist applicants, will all committee members know the scores for each of the shortlisted candidates, or will this information only be known to the search committee chair? Is the committee expected to make a final recommendation for the hire?

✓ **As part of the groundwork, consider having search committee members sign a confidentiality agreement.** See the Sample Confidentiality Agreement developed by the Texas A&M University Libraries (Appendix C).

DEFINING THE POSITION

✓ **Write the position description in a way that will attract a broad and diverse pool of applicants**. Define the position as broadly as possible in terms of desired research area, experience, and disciplinary background. Ensure that each stated qualification is directly related to identified needs in the department. Consider why each stated qualification is needed. As appropriate, use "desired" rather than "required" to describe qualifications that might be ideal from the department's perspective, but

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are not absolutely required in order to fulfill the role. Keep in mind that candidates who do not meet all of the "required" qualifications cannot be considered further.

Narrowly defined ads may inadvertently exclude female or minority candidates by focusing on subfields in which few specialize. For example, some candidates may be very qualified for the position yet they are working in an interdisciplinary area of study and don't meet a narrowly defined requirement for a degree from a specific discipline. Narrowly defined ads might also rule out applicants who have less traditional backgrounds.

Simply put, broadly defined position descriptions are more likely to result in a large (*and more diverse*) pool of applicants. Further, faculty reviewing candidates are less likely to focus on demographic aspects of an individual candidate when there are multiple candidates from underrepresented groups.

- ✓ **Be sure to include all relevant information in the job ad.** The position description should include information that a potential applicant would need or want to know about a position opening. Typically, position descriptions include the following things:
  - o Position Title;
  - o Required Qualifications;
  - o Desired Qualifications;
  - o Responsibilities;
  - o Application Procedures;
  - o Affirmative Action and Confidentiality Statements; and
  - o Descriptions of the Department and University.

- ✓ **In your job ad, give careful consideration to the information you convey about your unit, the university, and the community**. Consider ways that the description of your department can be used to generate interest in the position. For example, a description of department initiatives and vision is more exciting and attractive than a description of faculty numbers and degree programs. Descriptions of the department and the university can include initiatives related to diversity, inclusion,

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and equity, including reference to the university's Diversity Plan, and the university's designation by INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine as a 2019 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award (HEED) recipient and a 2019 Diversity Champion.

✓ **Craft your description of the benefits of living in the community in a way that is as inclusive as possible.** In describing the institution and the broader community, be mindful of why some individuals may or may not see themselves as included in the description. Well-intended language such as "family-friendly community" or "the comfort and convenience of a small town" might be more attractive to candidates who are married, who have children, and/or who enjoy the outdoors. Such language, however, may cause applicants from other groups (e.g. those who are single without children, those who identify as GLBT, etc.) to question whether or not they would want to live in Bryan-College Station. (This general line of thinking can be applied to other TAMU campus locations.) The solution is to broaden the description of the local community in a way that would be attractive to a wider range of applicants. One example comes from TAMU's College of Medicine:

"*Bryan-College Station is a vibrant, dynamic community that offers cultural diversity, arts and entertainment, job opportunities and overall quality of life. The community's low cost of living is advantageous to the student and general populations, making it an ideal place to live.*"

✓ **Consider requiring applicants to write about how their personal commitment to diversity and inclusion informs their past and future professional contributions.** The job ad can ALSO encourage or require candidates to write about their experiences and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This signals a higher commitment to diversity and inclusion than ads that tack on a statement about diversity at the end of an ad. For example, candidates may be asked to comment on their demonstrated ability to mentor and support students from diverse backgrounds, their experience with different teaching strategies and learning styles, methodological or pedagogical approaches that demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusivity, their experiences mentoring and recruiting students from underrepresented groups, a

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(continued)

research agenda that addresses issues that involve or affect diverse groups, and/or their experiences working with underrepresented communities. Adding something like this to your job ad sends a signal that diversity and inclusion is a core value for your department and college.

Search committees should decide in advance how much weight to assign to a candidate's statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Candidates do not need to be a member of an underrepresented group to write a strong statement. A strong statement will include specific and detailed examples. For example, an applicant could write about how they routinely add scholarship from members of underrepresented groups in their courses.

✓ **Be sure to include the required Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Statement in your ad**. All ads must include the following statement in its entirety:

> *"Texas A&M University is committed to enriching the learning and working environment for all visitors, students, faculty, and staff by promoting a culture that embraces inclusion, diversity, equity, and accountability. Diverse perspectives, talents, and identities are vital to accomplishing our mission and living our core values.*
>
> *Texas A&M is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Veterans/ Disability Employer committed to building a culturally diverse educational environment. Applications from women, minorities, and members of other underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged and will be actively sought. The University is aware that attracting and retaining exceptional faculty often depends on meeting the needs of two careers and therefore implements policies that contribute to work-life balance."*

✓ **Make sure your job ad is approved by the Office of the Dean of Faculties before you post the job**. All position descriptions must be approved by your college dean and the Dean of Faculties Office through Interfolio before they can be posted.

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RECRUITING APPLICANTS

✓ **Develop an aggressive recruitment plan**. Post your advertisement in the usual places, but also be sure to post the ad in places that target members of underrepresented groups. This might include websites and/or journals that are targeted to women and underrepresented minority scholars in your discipline. (See Appendix E.) Send your ad to committees and organizations that work to advance the representation of underrepresented groups in your field. Popular conceptions that there are very few women or minorities for a particular search should not be used as an excuse for not using these techniques.

✓ **Identify and contact individuals with strong records that match your position description**. Have members of the search committee help identify applicants with exceptional records. Contact potential applicants directly (via email or phone) to encourage them to apply for the position (without promising an interview or position). This method tends to be more effective than sending a generic letter to department chairs at institutions with PhD programs. This method is especially effective for candidates who may already be employed (but may be willing to consider other opportunities).

✓ **Advertise for longer than 30 days**. (Adjustments may need to be made in cases of late in the year searches for Academic Professional Track (APT) faculty who need to be hired as soon as possible.)

✓ **Use your networks to promote the position**. Have members of the search committee use their own professional networks to contact colleagues at other institutions for nominations, and make personal contacts with women and minority candidates.

✓ **Place an expanded job description on your department website**. This can include links to additional information about the community, and links to information about your department's culture, values, and commitment to diversity.

Evaluating Candidates

ESTABLISHING CRITERIA

✓ **Keep the job description on hand throughout the search.** To ensure a fair and equitable search, refer regularly to the job criteria stated in the position description.

✓ **Develop a rubric for evaluating candidates at the beginning of the search.** The committee should develop a rubric that corresponds closely with "required" and "desired" criteria listed in the job ad. Criteria can be given different weights, as necessary. Using a rubric ensures that the same criteria and standards are used to review all applications, and the relative strengths and weaknesses of each applicant should emerge.

> **During the evaluation of candidates, it is essential that members of the search committee (and all members of the department) take steps to minimize the influence of implicit bias to ensure that all candidates are reviewed fairly and equitably.**

To get an idea of what to include in a rubric, see these sample rubrics: https://advance.uncc.edu/programming/programs/faculty-recruitment/resources-search-committees-including-evaluation-rubrics The consistent use of a rubric should prevent informal practices that give advantages to certain candidates. For example, consider a search where white male candidates are evaluated on "promise" while all others, of comparable education and accomplishments, are evaluated on "achievement."

✓ **The rubric should be used to evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of each applicant**. Candidates who do not meet the "required" criteria should be removed from consideration during the first review of applications.

✓ **Avoid ranking candidates in the early stage of the search**. The first review of applications is based on incomplete information about each candidate. Therefore, it is important to avoid the tendency to rank candidates at the beginning of the search, or to select early "favorites." The ranking of candidates (prior to final selection) can inadvertently influence interactions with candidates during interviews and thus impact

Evaluating Candidates *(continued)*

the final outcome of the search and/or candidate perceptions of working at Texas A&M.

MINIMIZE IMPLICIT BIAS IN THE REVIEW OF APPLICANTS

✓ **Make sure search committee members review implicit bias training materials before reviewing applications**. Research finds that implicit bias can influence how reviewers evaluate CVs, reference letters, and other job application materials. Something as simple as a candidate's name can trigger implicit biases associated with gender, race, and ethnicity. The prestige of the candidate's PhD institution and/or current institution can also influence the review of other materials. For more information, see the handout, "Key Research Findings. Unintentional Bias – Gender, Race, Sexual Orientation & Religion."

✓ **Avoid asking for reference letters too early**. It is recommended that the committee wait to ask for reference letters. For arguments against asking for letters up front, see "No One is Reading Those Reference Letters" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (https://chroniclevitae.com/news/1693-no-one-is-reading-those-reference-letters). When letters are used, readers should be sensitive for signs of implicit bias in the letters. Studies find the content of reference letters can favor members of advantaged groups in subtle ways.

✓ **Allow sufficient time to do the review.** Keep in mind that implicit bias is most likely to operate when people work quickly or under time pressure. Be sure to take time to review each application carefully. This might mean spending 15-20 minutes on each application. Avoid practices that might seem like a good idea because they will save time, such as creating "yes"/"no" piles based on a quick review of applications (from qualified applicants) or having a single search committee member make the first cut. (If it is clear that a candidate does not meet the minimum required qualifications, the application can go into the equivalent of a "no" pile.) Instead, have multiple faculty members review the application and use an evaluation rubric.

✓ **Stick to relevant criteria.** Remember that implicit bias is also likely to creep in when search committee members consider information that isn't

Evaluating Candidates *(continued)*

relevant to the position. The final decision should be made based on a "fit" with the job requirements, not a "fit" with individual personalities or an elusive "department culture." The use of unstated criteria are much more likely to benefit members of advantaged groups.

✓ **Avoid making assumptions about whether a candidate is interested in the position**. Implicit bias plays a role when search committees make assumptions about job candidates. Search committees may assume that candidates from non-traditional trajectories are not really interested in an academic position, whether it is a lecturer position or a tenure-track assistant professor position. If somebody applies for the job, it should be assumed they are interested in the position.

Faculty members (including search committee members) should also work hard to avoid discussions about whether or not a candidate is likely to accept an offer. Although faculty may be eager to have a successful outcome to the search, such factors are not relevant to the final decision.

✓ **Avoid making judgments based on a candidate's interest in the local community**. It is hard to imagine a faculty position at Texas A&M-College Station that requires a faculty member to live in Bryan-College Station. Therefore, it should be considered irrelevant and inappropriate to discuss whether or not a candidate (for the TAMU-College Station campus) has talked about the possibility of living in Houston or Austin. For some candidates, there may be perfectly valid (and personal) reasons for living outside of the BCS area. If a department lets this discussion bias the final decision, they may lose out on an opportunity to hire a woman or minority candidate, or a candidate who does not have a spouse/partner. For an individual perspective on why some minority candidates, in particular, may want to live in a larger metropolitan area, read this article by Rachel Harris in *Inside Higher Education* on "The Overlooked Diversity Issue": https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2019/08/01/small-college-towns-can-be-unsuited-some-faculty-members-diverse-backgrounds

✓ **Give candidates a chance to explain their interests and demonstrate their potential to succeed**. Search committees may also assume that applicants who graduated from and/or teach at lower-ranked

universities are not as talented or as productive as faculty from higher-ranked universities. This may inadvertently disadvantage faculty from underrepresented groups who were excluded from higher-ranked graduate programs due to implicit bias in their admissions review. Search committees might also make assumptions about the research productivity and potential of an applicant (for a tenure-track position) if the applicant's first post-PhD job is at an institution with a high teaching load and fewer resources than Texas A&M. Instead, imagine what that person might be able to accomplish with more resources! Conversely, for teaching-intensive positions, search committee members might assume that an individual with multiple research publications might not be interested in a position that is solely focused on teaching. Instead of assuming that a candidate is not a good match, give them a chance to explain why they are interested in the position as advertised.

✓ **Beware of other forms of bias**. For example, the committee should wait until the deadline to review applicants in order to avoid "early bird" bias. Similarly, they should be careful to discuss the challenges of evaluating "internal" candidates. They should also beware of biases that might arise when reviewing applicants with similar research areas.

SELECTING SEMI-FINALISTS AND FINALISTS

✓ **Take steps that are likely to increase the number of semi-finalists and finalists from groups that are underrepresented in your department.** Search committee members are more likely to focus on relevant criteria (and therefore less likely to focus on the candidates' demographic attributes) when there are multiple candidates from underrepresented groups. For tenure-track/tenured faculty hires, search committees may want to schedule a preliminary round of interviews with 10-12 candidates.

For searches that involve campus interviews, the committee may want to increase the number of finalists that are invited for campus interviews. Although your department is likely to have budgetary constraints for the search, keep in mind that a job search is a long-term investment, and the funds (and the time) required to bring an additional finalist (or two) to campus is small compared to long-term costs of making a hire. Studies have found that departments are much more likely to select a finalist

Evaluating Candidates *(continued)*

from an underrepresented group when more than one individual from underrepresented groups are invited for campus interviews. So, consider adding one or two more finalists than your department typically invites.

✓ **Recognize that interviews scheduled at conference sites (at a candidate's expense) can be inequitable.** In some disciplines, it is customary for the first round of interviews to be held during annual conferences. In recent years, that practice has gone out of favor with the realization that not all job applicants can afford to attend the annual conference, and thus the practice gave an unequal advantage to some candidates (i.e. those from elite schools that had more resources, those who could afford to pay out-of-pocket for a conference, those who didn't have to worry about the added cost of childcare expenses while attending a conference, etc.) It is therefore recommended that preliminary interviews be conducted using conference phone calls and/or videoconferencing technology (e.g. Zoom, Skype, etc.)

✓ **Schedule the final evaluation meeting as soon as possible after the completion of interviews.** There are two reasons for this. First, this helps ensure that information is fresh in people's minds. Some sources recommend that the search committee should meet at the end of each candidate's visit for this reason. (In the case of APT searches, this might be at the end of each phone or Zoom interview). An alternative practice is for search committee members to take notes after each interview. In either case, the evaluation should focus on that particular candidate. It is important to avoid making comparisons between candidates until all interviews have been completed. Second, it prevents delays in the search process that could frustrate candidates, including candidates who may be receiving offers from other institutions.

✓ **In final discussions, ensure that all faculty remain focused on relevant criteria.** In the final discussions, it is crucial that discussions of "good fit" continue to be consistently focused on the original selection criteria for the position. Members of the search committee should interrupt any discussions that bring in implicit bias (such as discussions about whether a candidate is likely to accept an offer due to a personal characteristic.)

Evaluating Candidates *(continued)*

✓ **Consider sending an unranked recommendation to the head or dean.** As discussed above, each unit should follow any agreed-upon process for making the final decision. This may or may not involve a faculty or search committee vote. The final recommendation should list the strengths and concerns for all finalists. One option is to send an unranked list of "acceptable" candidates that signals departmental preferences without reducing the appeal of an outstanding candidate who might have been "ranked" second. (This is commonly practiced for department head and dean searches.)

Interviewing Candidates

SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHONE AND VIDEO INTERVIEWS

✓ **The search committee should develop a list of key questions that will be asked of each candidate.** Some searches use phone/video interviews to conduct preliminary interviews after an initial screening of applicants. In some searches (e.g. a search for a temporary lecturer), phone/video interviews may be used instead of campus interviews before making the final selection. (In some cases, such interviews might alternatively be conducted in person during a conference.)

Prior to the phone/video interview, the search committee should use a consistent set of core questions that relate to the evaluation criteria developed for the position. The questions should provide a means to supplement information obtained from the CV and cover letter. It is okay for search committee members to follow up with additional questions based on responses.

> **While interviewing candidates, it is essential that individuals who interact with candidates consistently demonstrate that Texas A&M University is strongly committed to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all faculty, staff, and students.**

As a general practice, interviews should end by asking the candidate if they have any questions. This allows candidates the opportunity to assess whether the position fits their needs.

Interviewing Candidates *(continued)*

✓ **The search committee chair should provide each candidate with information about the process before the interview.** Let each candidate know how much time is allocated for the interview, who will be participating in the interview, and directions for participating in the interview (whether it's an in-person interview at a conference or a Zoom video conferencing interview). The committee might also want to provide candidates with a heads up on the types of questions that will be asked.

The committee should not assume that all candidates can participate in preliminary interviews in the method attended. For example, the committee should not assume that all candidates are equally able to participate in a videoconference for one reason or another. Similarly, the committee should not assume that all candidates will be available for preliminary interviews at annual conferences. In either case, the search committee chair should provide applicants with an alternative method for the preliminary interview, such as a conference call phone interview.

✓ **See Appendix G for special guidance on using Zoom to conduct interviews (in lieu of campus interviews) during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAMPUS INTERVIEWS

✓ **Ensure that all candidates have a similar interview experience.** Prior to campus visits, the search committee chair should work with others (including the candidate) to develop a detailed itinerary for each candidate. Certain aspects of the itinerary should be the same for each candidate (e.g. the length of the visit). Moreover, all candidates should have opportunities to present their research and/or give a teaching demonstration, meet with a group of selected students, meet with search committee members, meet with department faculty, and meet with college administrators (based on standard procedure for your college for your particular type of search).

✓ **Interview itineraries, however, can be tailored to each candidate.** Some aspects of the itinerary should be customized for each candidate. Candidates should have the opportunity to add meetings with any individuals or groups on campus, including potential or existing collaborators in other departments. Candidates should also have the

Interviewing Candidates *(continued)*

opportunity to meet with representatives of various Texas A&M faculty organizations and/or the Coordinator of the Dual Career Program. Candidates may also want to schedule a tour with a realtor.

✓ **Provide candidates with options for customizing their campus visit.** One method for adding these meetings is to send the candidates a list of options, and ask them if they would like for the department to arrange any particular meetings. Another method is to add some free blocks of time to their itinerary, provide them information on options, and allow candidates to schedule their own meetings. The latter may be appealing to candidates who want to keep preferences for some meetings confidential. For example, some candidates may not want the department to know that they have a partner who will need to find a job in the community.

✓ **Choose realtors carefully (if you include real estate tours in the itinerary)**. If you choose to add a meeting with a realtor to the interview schedule (which isn't a bad idea), be mindful of the person you select for this job, and the information they may convey to prospective applicants. The criteria for an "ideal neighborhood" might vary quite a bit from one person to the next depending on personal circumstances. Realtors should also be provided with a copy of permissible and inappropriate questions, as these questions apply equally to realtors. Departments should not request or expect any feedback from realtors about personal information that a candidate might share during the realtor tour.

✓ **Consider the comfort and convenience of your candidates when developing the itinerary**. The following things help signal that the department is a good place to work:
   o Staff scheduling visits may want to politely ask if there are any special accommodations that the department should know about prior to the candidate's arrival. This would include dietary issues, mobility issues, etc.
   o Some candidates may need extra time between meetings. Sufficient time should be allocated in the schedule to get from one meeting to the next, and to allow for occasional bathroom breaks. A longer break should be scheduled before the job presentation. Escorts should be arranged to ensure that meetings start on time.

Interviewing Candidates *(continued)*

- o Candidates should be asked ahead of time if they prefer to drive or walk between events and meetings (when the option is possible).
- o Candidates should be offered water and other refreshments throughout the day.
- o Information about dietary needs should be obtained and taken into account when scheduling meals.
- o Faculty accompanying faculty to dinner meals should include at least one person who does not drink alcohol (so candidates do not feel obligated to drink.)

✓ **Communicate clearly with candidates about the interview process.** Make sure each finalist receives the same information about the allotted time for a job talk, department norms for the presentation (e.g. use of Powerpoint or not), and likely audience.

✓ **Take steps to mitigate any potential issues that are likely to bring discomfort to candidates from underrepresented groups**. For example, avoid scheduling one-on-one meetings with faculty who have a prior history of saying inappropriate things and/or being hostile to hiring women and/or minorities. There is no policy on campus that every faculty member has to have an individual meeting with every job candidate in their department.

If a candidate is confronted with <u>any</u> discriminatory comments during the interview (e.g. racist, sexist, homophobic remarks, etc.), be sure to take positive and assertive steps to defuse the situation. Remaining silent in such situations signals that the behavior is acceptable and a normal part of the department or university culture.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL INTERVIEWS

✓ **When interviewing members of underrepresented groups, make it clear that you are interested in their scholarship, experiences and skills**. Be mindful of statements that might suggest or imply that the department is interested in a particular candidate due to some demographic attribute. Nobody wants to feel like they were selected primarily because they check off a box. Candidates should leave the interview, feeling reassured that they were selected as a finalist because of their scholarship, teaching, and service contributions.

Interviewing Candidates *(continued)*

✓ **Make sure everybody who has contact with candidates knows the list of inappropriate and illegal questions.** Either the search committee chair or the department head should circulate the list of inappropriate and permissible questions prior to the first interview. (See Appendix B.) These rules apply at all times, including meals. Asking inappropriate questions is likely to leave a negative impression, and can potentially have legal consequences.

✓ **Throughout the search, maintain professional and polite contacts with all prospective applicants.** Provide updates to all applicants as your search progresses through each stage. As you determine that certain group of candidates have been ruled out of consideration, you should go ahead and send them a polite update letting them know the status of the search. At the final stage of the search, ideally, the department waits until a finalist has accepted an offer to inform other candidates. However, if an offer is out and another finalist needs to know the status of the search due to an existing offer from another institution, it is best to be open and transparent and let them know that an offer was made, but they are still being considered for the position.

There are also circumstances that might significantly delay the top candidate's decision (such as a partner placement issue). In those cases, the search committee chair and/or department head will need to consider when and what information should be conveyed to other viable candidates. If there is an extended delay for this reason, it is probably best to be honest with any alternates, letting them know that an offer has been made while reassuring them that they are still being considered for the position.

Remember that it is important for all applicants to have a positive experience with Texas A&M University, even if they are not chosen for the position. Providing informative updates on the search, including polite notes to rejected applicants, reflects positively on the university. Even if applicants are not chosen for your particular position, they may be competitive for a different position in the near future, and/or they may have friends and acquaintances who are applying for other positions at Texas A&M. We want to make sure that all candidates have a positive view of the university at the end of the search process.

Interviewing Candidates *(continued)*

✓ **Each finalist for a position should be provided with information about the department, Texas A&M University, and the Bryan-College Station Community.** Some departments may want to provide a packet of information. Alternatively, candidates can be directed to the "Resources for Job Candidates and New Faculty" page of the ADVANCE website https:// advance.tamu.edu/Resources/Resources-for-Job-Candidates-and-New-Faculty/.

If packets are provided, each finalist should receive an identical packet. The packing might include the following items (and/or links to this information):
  - Dual Career Program;
  - Texas A&M Universities family-friendly policies (http://dof.tamu.edu/Faculty-Resources/CURRENT-FACULTY/Faculty-Work-Life)
  - Internal research funding opportunities (T3, PESCA, etc.);
  - Department, college, and/or university mentoring programs (such as the mentoring program offered by the Women's Faculty Network);
  - Programs offered by the Center for Teaching Excellence;
  - Information about Faculty Development Leave;
  - Information about Promotion & Tenure;
  - Information about a diverse range of faculty networks;
  - Student resource centers on campus (e.g. the Women's Resource Center, GLBT Resource Center; Disability Services, and Veterans Resource and Support Center);
  - Information about the Bryan-College Station community (events, neighborhoods, schools, religious organizations & institutions, etc.)

Recruiting (and Retaining) the Finalist

✓ **Seek approval before making an offer**. After a decision has been agreed upon, the department head needs to get the dean's approval to make an informal (oral) offer and then negotiates with the candidate in consultation with the college on the terms of the contract (including salary and startup costs). Final offer letters must be approved by the dean prior to extending a formal (written) offer. All new hires need to follow processes outlined by the Dean of Faculties Office (http://dof.tamu.edu/Hiring). Generally speaking, this handbook focuses on the search process as it pertains to search committee members (not the hiring process as it pertains to administrators). However, there are a few areas that pertain to department climate that are worth noting.

> **"Diversity is being invited to the party; Inclusion is being asked to dance."**
>
> **- Verna Myers, Diversity and Inclusion Expert**

✓ **Make offers promptly**. Once the decision to make an offer has been approved, the finalist should be contacted. Timely and professional contact signals that the department is eager to make the hire. Candidates who do not hear from a department in a timely manner are likely to question whether or not the department is still considering their candidacy.

✓ **Allow sufficient time for candidates to make a decision**. The finalist will need time to consider all of the factors that go into their decision to accept an offer (including negotiations over the terms of the contract, accommodations for partners, competing offers from other institutions, etc.) Forcing a candidate to make a decision quickly can send a bad signal. Departments that rush a candidate may risk losing that candidate to another department that seems more considerate of their needs.

✓ **Remind candidates of resources and services offered by the Dual Career Program at TAMU-College Station campus.** These services can be used for partners for all faculty positions. Additionally, the Dean of Faculties Office provides bridge funds to support the creation of new positions for the partner of tenure-track/tenured faculty members. Some candidates may not want to discuss partner needs for employment until

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Recruiting (and Retaining) the Finalist *(continued)*

an offer has been extended. This may extend the time it takes for a candidate to respond to an offer.

✓ **After an offer has been extended, encourage faculty in your department to contact the finalist and welcome them to the department**. This simple gesture provides an additional signal that the department provides a welcoming and inclusive environment.

✓ **Consider adding the cost of adding an external mentor to the startup package**. Funds could be used by the new hire to support a few mutual visits with his/her external mentor. This was one of several components of the initial ADVANCE Scholar Program that was found to be an effective tool for mentoring junior faculty and for establishing their professional network.

✓ **Make sure the candidate continues to have a positive experience after an offer has been made**. Department climate can play a key role in recruiting (and retaining) faculty. During a campus visit, candidates are likely to pick up on any tensions within the department. Departments that frequently have problems attracting top candidates, especially candidates from underrepresented groups, may want to reflect on things they can do to improve their departmental climate.

✓ **Make sure all new hires are provided with the resources they need to succeed.** Some considerations may fall beyond the scope of the search committee, but are worth mentioning here. The retention process is initiated when the offer is accepted. Long-term retention may become an issue if a new faculty member, for whatever reason, does not feel that they were treated well during the first six months of their hire. The terms of the offer need to be comparable to other faculty in similar positions. This is an equity issue. This includes office space, lab space (if applicable), computer and equipment. Any differences in start-up packages, salary, space allocations, or other accommodations for comparable positions in recent years should be explainable by objective factors (not skills in negotiation). New faculty should also be provided with access to mentors and a work climate where all faculty feel welcome and included in decision-making.

Appendix A. Recommendations for Deans and Department Heads

✓ Deans and department heads should always express the twin goals of (1) excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service and (2) diversity in faculty hiring. Encourage confidence that the two goals are mutually compatible and indeed mutually reinforcing.

✓ Deans and department heads should encourage the adoption of "open searches" (i.e. broadly defined searches) and remind faculty that they can be used to enhance both the diversity and excellence of applicant pools and subsequent faculty hires.

✓ Deans should publicly praise and consider rewarding departments or other units that succeed in increasing the diversity and excellence in their faculty. They should share information on best practices as a way to encourage others.

✓ Deans should provide resources for hiring that may be needed to increase diversity. This might include additional funds to support travel for one (or two) additional finalists, especially if multiple candidates are from underrepresented groups. This might also include funds to support the creation of an additional position if the department can make a compelling case for why two hires would increase the excellence and diversity of the department.

✓ Department heads (and deans, as applicable) should establish search committees that are diverse in terms of demographic characteristics and expertise but homogeneous in commitment to proactive, fair, and equitable processes.

✓ Deans should ask search committees to document the procedures they use to maximize the diversity of the applicant pool, the fairness of their procedures, and their outcomes. They should also ask questions in cases where it is not apparent that the department followed recommended practices.

Adopted from Abigail J. Stewart and Virginia Valian. 2018. An Inclusive Academy: Achieving Diversity and Excellence. The MIT Press. Pp. 192-193, 235.

Appendix B. Inappropriate vs. Permissible Questions

Protected Class	Examples of Inappropriate and Illegal Questions	Examples of Permissible Questions
Age	*Any inquiries that might indicate that there is an age preference for the position.* • What year were you born? • What year did you graduate from high school (college)? • When do you plan to retire? • What lovely gray hair. Is that natural?	None
Gender	*Any inquiry concerning sex assigned at birth or transgender identity.* • How shall I refer to you as a he or a she? • As a woman [or man], how do you feel about _____? • Your style of dress seems rather unusual for a woman [man]. Why do you dress that way?	*Pronouns are not always indicators of gender identity. It is permissible to ask candidates about their pronouns if you ask all candidates the same question and you ask in a consistent, respectful, and non-discriminatory way. You can start by providing your own pronouns. By asking pronouns, you are creating a respectful and inclusive environment for all.*
Sexual orientation	*Any inquiry regarding sexual orientation or sexual identity.* • What can you tell me about any significant other in your life?	None

Protected Class	Examples of Inappropriate and Illegal Questions	Examples of Permissible Questions
Marital status	*Any inquiry about the applicant's marital status whether an applicant is married, single, divorced, separated, engaged, widowed, has same sex spouse, etc. Any form requesting identification by Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. status.* • What does your spouse [partner] do? • Will your spouse [partner] be coming with you if you take this job? • Is that an engagement or wedding ring that I see? • How does your spouse feel about your job?	None
Family status	*Specific inquiries concerning spouse, spouse's gender, spouse's employment or salary, children, childcare arrangements, or dependents.* • Are you pregnant? • Do you have children? • Do you plan to have more children? • What are your childcare arrangements?	*If certain work hours are required for the job and you pose the question to all finalists, you may ask candidates if they can meet specified work schedules or whether they have activities, commitments, or responsibilities that may prevent meeting work attendance requirements (as long as you don't ask whether they have children).* *If travel is required for the position, you may ask about candidate's ability and willingness to travel.*

Protected Class	Examples of Inappropriate and Illegal Questions	Examples of Permissible Questions
Race	*Any inquiries regarding a candidate's complexion, hair, skin color, or eye color.* • What is your ancestry? • Are both of your parents [members of a specific race]?	None.
National origin	*Any inquiry into applicant's lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, birthplace, native language, or national origin of an applicant's parents or spouse.* • What is your ancestry? • In what country were you born? • Are both of your parents [members of a specific nationality]? • How long has your family been in this country? • That's an interesting name. What are its origins? • Where did you get that accent? • What's your native language?	*If proficiency in a specific language is a requirement for the job, you many inquire into the person's ability to read/write/speak foreign language. However, you must ask all candidates about their proficiency level.*
Citizenship status	*Any inquiry into citizenship that would tend to divulge applicant's lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, or birthplace.* • Are you a U.S. citizen? • Where were you born?	*You can ask candidates if they are legally authorized to work in this country (as long as you ask all candidates the same question).*

Protected Class	Examples of Inappropriate and Illegal Questions	Examples of Permissible Questions
Religion	*Any inquiry concerning religious preference, denomination, affiliations, church, parish, pastor, or religious holidays observed.* • Do you attend church (or any other religious service)? • Which holidays will you be celebrating? • Did you go to public or religious schools?	*If weekend work is required for the job, and you pose the question to all finalists, you may ask questions such as "Can you work on weekends?"*
Disability of Physical Challenges	*Any inquiry about nature, severity or extent of a disability or whether an applicant requires reasonable accommodation prior to a conditional job offer. Whether an applicant has applied for or received worker's compensation. Any inquiry that is not job related or consistent with business necessity.* • Do you have any physical disabilities? • Do you always need to use your walker, wheelchair or other accommodation?	*If you pose the question to all finalists, you may ask questions such as "Will you be able to perform the essential functions of this position, either with or without reasonable accommodations?"*
Pregnancy	*Any inquiry related to pregnancy, medical history concerning pregnancy, and related matters.*	*If you pose the question to all finalists, you may ask about any intended absences from the job.*

Protected Class	Examples of Inappropriate and Illegal Questions	Examples of Permissible Questions
Medical history	• Do you have any pre-existing medical conditions? • What medications do you use? • Do you use drugs or alcohol? Do you smoke? • How did you get that scar? • Do you exercise regularly? • Do you need to visit doctors frequently?	*If you pose the question to all finalists, you may ask questions such as "Will you be able to perform the essential functions of this position, either with or without reasonable accommodations?"*
Veteran status	*Any inquiry about military service in a country outside of the U.S.* • Was your discharge from the military honorable or dishonorable? • Do you have any lingering effects from your service? • How do you alleviate the anxieties and pressures that stem from your military service?	*If it is relevant to the job, you may ask about special training and skills the candidate developed while in the military.* *If the candidate has self-disclosed that she/he served in the military, you may ask in which branch the candidate served.*
Criminal history	• Have you ever been arrested? • Have you ever been pulled over for drunk driving? • Have you ever spent a night in jail?	*You can inform candidates that Texas A&M University routinely runs background checks on finalists before an offer is finalized. [Departments do not receive copies of the report.]*

Appendix C. Sample Confidentiality Agreement

Serving on a faculty search committee is an important responsibility. It is similar to being in a titled leadership role where my words and actions – even subtle actions such as body language and tone of voice – may carry more influence than I would normally expect. As such, it is important to always act in a way that is ethical and appropriate.

As a member of the committee, I may be given access to or updates on information that should be treated as confidential. It is my responsibility to maintain confidentiality in these areas, which include:

- Information about the identity of candidates who applied
- Scores candidates received
- Impressions/feedback of the candidate's interview
- Updates on the identity of the finalist
- Status of ongoing negotiations or verbal acceptance by a candidate

I will avoid expressing my personal opinions about a particular candidate, their interview, or the possible outcome of the search to others within the organization. Individuals hearing these comments may believe that I am speaking on behalf of or as a reflection of the committee perspective.

Recognizing that talking about my perspective can help to organize my thoughts or reach a subconscious realization, it is acceptable for me to debrief or share my thoughts with another search committee member or a member of the relevant leadership team. However, I will make sure I do so in a setting that is private and that the discussion cannot be overheard by others. I will stress that my observations are my own and that they may or may not reflect those of others on the committee.

If a search includes someone with whom I have a prior or close relationship and I cannot engage in a neutral, unbiased manner, I will recuse myself from my Search Advisory Committee role as it presents the perception of undue influence and possible conflict of interest. This would include not scoring the candidates or serving as a Search Committee escort during the interview.

I acknowledge having received and read this statement of expectations regarding the confidentiality and ethics of serving on the Search Advisory Committee. Failure to meet these expectations may result in my dismissal from the Committee prior to the completion of my term.

Appendix C. Sample Confidentiality Agreement
(continued)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Note: This sample confidentiality agreement comes from the Texas A&M University Libraries.

Appendix D. Statements Indicating a Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

✓ **Search committees may want to ask all applicants (or all semi-finalists) to write a statement indicating a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).** Search committees may include this in the initial job ad, or request such a statement after semi-finalists have been identified for the position. Adding something like this to your job ad sends a signal that diversity and inclusion is a core value for your department and college.

✓ **Requests for these statements should allow for a broad variety of responses.** The statement requires candidates to write about their past and future experiences and activities that demonstrate their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Responses may vary significantly from one applicant to the next, and that's okay. For example, candidates may be asked to comment on their demonstrated ability to mentor and support students from diverse backgrounds, their experience with different teaching strategies and learning styles, methodological or pedagogical approaches that demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusivity, their experiences mentoring and recruiting students from underrepresented groups, a research agenda that addresses issues that involve or affect diverse groups, and/or their experiences working with underrepresented communities.

This sample wording is used for the Texas A&M ACES Postdoctoral Fellowship Program:
   o *"Please provide a 1-3 page statement explaining how your scholarship, teaching, and/or other experiences have demonstrated a commitment to diversity and how that commitment may benefit Texas A&M University."*

Another variation is based on guidelines from UC-Berkeley:
   o *"Please submit a 2-3 page statement on your contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion, including information about your understanding of these issues, your record of activities to date, and your specific plans and goals for advancing equity and inclusion if hired as a Texas A&M faculty member."*

Appendix D. Statements Indicating a Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

(continued)

✓ **Search committees should decide in advance how much weight to assign to a candidate's statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion**. Candidates do not need to be a member of an underrepresented group to write a strong statement. A strong statement will include specific and detailed examples. For example, an applicant could write about how they routinely add scholarship from members of underrepresented groups in their courses.

✓ **Use a rubric to assess the quality of DEI commitment statements.** When applicants are required to include a DEI commitment statement with their application materials, search committee members should use a rubric to evaluate how each applicant's commitment to diversity and past and potential contributions to inclusivity align with department, college, and university's stated goals regarding diversity and inclusivity.

Borrowing from guidance provided by UC-Berkeley, the evaluation of DEI commitment statements should consider the following criteria:
  o Awareness of and ability to articulate understanding regarding diversity, equity and inclusion broadly conceived, and historical, social, and economic factors that influence the underrepresentation of particular groups in academia, as well as their experiences of inclusion and belonging. Life experience may or may not be an important aspect of this understanding.
  o A track record, calibrated to career stage, of engagement and activity on diversity, equity, inclusion, and creation of a respectful community. Demonstration requires specific details about these activities, including goals, strategies, and outcomes, as well as information about the role played. Strong evidence typically consists of multiple examples of action from undergraduate through graduate (and postdoctoral if relevant) studies.
  o Specific, concrete goals, plans, and priorities, calibrated to career stage, for engagement on diversity, equity, and inclusion as a potential faculty member at UC Berkeley. Ideally these plans involve an understanding of current programs and initiatives already taking place on campus.

Appendix D. Statements Indicating a Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
(continued)

✓ **Keep in mind the differences between a strong statement and a weak statement**. Among other things, relatively strong statements demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the key DEI issues in academia as experienced by members of underrepresented groups, and provide detailed descriptions of activities and plans. In contrast, relatively weak statements tend to demonstrate a simplistic understanding of DEI issues in academia, and provide vague descriptions of activities and plans.

✓ **Consider using a minimal score for the DEI commitment statement**. Candidates who do not meet that requirement would not advance forward in the search process. Such a procedure would ensure that candidates have already developed a commitment to DEI, and would avoid the tendency to rationalize a weak case.

✓ **Consider the context of each candidate**. Candidates who are at an earlier career stage (i.e. recent PhD graduates) may not have as strong of a track record with DEI work as a candidate who has already been employed as a professor, yet they may still be able to identify some experience in this area, and identify future plans and activities. Candidates from international institutions may look different due to a different context, but may be equally compelling.

✓ **Minimize implicit bias in the evaluation of DEI commitment statements**. Search committee members should use the same expectations for all candidates, regardless of whether or not they belong to a particular group, or hold particular viewpoints. Individuals from underrepresented groups should not be scored higher simply because they are from an underrepresented group. In other words, a candidate's demographic characteristics should not be used as the justification for moving that candidate to the next stage of a search. The corollary is also true: candidates from underrepresented groups should not be expected to do more than other candidates in order to get the same rating.

✓ **The interview process should also give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to DEI**. Search committees should

Appendix D. Statements Indicating a Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

(continued)

keep in mind that the job application is not the only opportunity to assess a candidate's commitment to DEI issues. The search committee should consider adding questions that gauge a candidate's interest and knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. For example, candidates may be asked to share any experiences they have learning about diversity-related issues; creating inclusive learning environments, mentoring students from underrepresented groups, and/or working with people who have a different background.

✓ **For detailed information, take a look at guidance provided to faculty search committees at UC-Berkeley.** https://ofew.berkeley.edu/

recruitment/contributions-diversity/rubric-assessing-candidate-contributions-diversity-equity-and .

Appendix E. Inclusive Advertising

In addition to posting your job ads in the "usual" places for your discipline, consider posting our ad in places that target underrepresented groups.

This is a partial list of sites that might be applicable to your search:

o Association for Women in Science
http://www.awis.org/

o Insight into Diversity Job Board
https://careers.insightintodiversity.com/

o IMDiversity.com

o SACNAS, Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science
http://careercenter.sacnas.org

o Diverse: Issues in Higher Education
http://diverseeducation.com/

o Directory of Ford Foundation Fellows
https://nrc58.nas.edu/FordFellows20/Directory_Ford30/ModulePage.aspx?Nav=Home

o The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education
http://www.hispanicoutlook.com

o American Indian Science & Engineering Society
http://www.aises.org

o Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists
http://mymaes.org

Additional links specific to a variety of disciplines (by category of diversity) can be found on this page:
https://advance.uncc.edu/sites/advance.uncc.edu/files/media/Savannah%20%20Diverse%20Recruiting%20Resources%20%28from%20Jeanine%29.pdf

Appendix F. Rubrics for Evaluating Candidates

Sample rubrics for evaluating candidates for faculty positions can be found on the ADVANCE site at the University of North Carolina –Charlotte: https://advance.uncc.edu/programming/programs/faculty-recruitment/resources-search-committees-including-evaluation-rubrics

Appendix G. Guidance for Interviewing During the COVID-19 Pandemic

✓ **Refer to the Office of the Dean of Faculties for up-to-date guidance on hiring procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic.**
http://dof.tamu.edu/Hiring/2020-Hiring-Authorization

✓ **Refer to Texas A&M Covid-19 information page for up-to-date guidance on travel restrictions.**
https://www.tamu.edu/coronovairus/travel.html

✓ **Consider the equity implications of having candidates travel to participate in interviews.** Assuming your unit is able to obtain approval for job candidates to visit the campus, consider how on-campus interviews introduces an equity issue. Not all job candidates will be able to participate in on-campus interviews due to travel restrictions at their home locations (including many international applicants). And, not all job candidates will feel comfortable traveling during a pandemic. This has the potential to create an inequitable interview experience where some candidates have a campus visit, while others do not.

✓ **Consider the other downsides of having candidates travel to participate in interviews**. Asking candidates to travel during the middle of a pandemic might send the wrong signal to candidates about the work environment at Texas A&M University. Even if candidates do visit campus, they will not have the same experience that they will have during a normal year given social distancing measures on campus and the high number of remote courses. Faculty participation in the search will be limited to faculty who feel comfortable meeting in person (with a mask). Job candidates will be left to wonder whether some faculty opted out because they were not interested in their candidacy for a position. One of the benefits of a campus visit is to show candidates what it is like to be on campus, but the campus experience is lacking normal energy due to the pandemic.

✓ **Send short videos of your department and facilities to candidates who have been short-listed for your position.** Use these videos to showcase classroom space, lab facilities, etc.

Appendix G. Guidance for Interviewing During the COVID-19 Pandemic *(continued)*

✓ **Be aware that recruitment efforts may need to intensify for some positions.** Position openings for junior faculty positions are likely to be quite competitive in disciplines where the typical applicant is likely to be a recent PhD graduate and/or postdoctoral scholar, and less competitive for senior faculty hires and administrative faculty hires where the typical applicant is already employed at another institution. Even for junior faculty positions, strong candidates are often people who are already employed in a similar position. During a pandemic, search committees may need to be more aggressive when it comes to encouraging potential applicants to apply for a position. (See p. 13 of this handbook.)

✓ **Communicate frequently with job candidates.** Whether you have more applicants than usual, or fewer applicants than usual, you want to

✓ **Use a web-based platform (e.g. Interfolio and Zoom) to review and discuss candidate application materials.** The use of Interfolio should make it easier for committee members to review applicant materials without the need of a copy machine, and the use of Zoom should allow for safe video-conference meetings.

✓ **Encourage short-listed candidates to review information for prospective faculty available on the ADVANCE website**. https://advance.tamu.edu/Resources/Resources-for-Job-Candidates-and-New-Faculty.

✓ **Make sure the host and the candidate are comfortable using Zoom prior to the interview**. Make sure your job candidate is a "co-host" of the meeting so they can share their screen. Offer to do a practice run so they can practice using the share screen function (if using Powerpoint), and/or practice any other Zoom features they might use during their job talk lecture (i.e. polls, chat, etc.)

✓ **Be as professional as possible in virtual spaces**. Faculty conducting interviews should take steps to ensuring that lighting is ideal for the web camera and that voices are audible. Faculty interviewing candidates should use their full names as usernames and mute themselves when not speaking (if there are background noises).

Appendix G. Guidance for Interviewing During the COVID-19 Pandemic *(continued)*

✓ **Understand the potential implicit bias of Zoom interviews AND the inherent inequities of Zoom virtual backgrounds**. Implicit bias may be at play when candidates interview via Zoom, as interviewers might pick up on social cues and codes in the background (i.e. the appearance of somebody's home office, children, partners, pets). To mitigate against this, some candidates may choose to use a virtual background in an effort to appear more professional and/or to block out aspects of their personal life. Search committees should realize that the face-detection algorithm that Zoom uses does not work as well for people of color. (Specifically, heads are more likely to disappear.) Allow candidates to decide on their own whether or not to use a virtual Zoom background, but be mindful of why some candidates may opt against using a virtual background, and be careful to avoid forming any opinions based on any real life backgrounds.

✓ **Retain essential aspects of the finalist interviews, but factor in Zoom fatigue and work-life balance issues when scheduling Zoom alternatives for campus visits**. Job candidates typically have fully packed schedules for campus visits. This makes sense when you are trying to fit a lot of activities into a short visit. It is less practical for a Zoom alternative for a campus visit, as job candidates are likely to have home responsibilities that they need to balance with the interview (including child care). In addition, participating in one Zoom meeting after another is likely to be more tiring than a typical campus visit.

✓ **Record essential aspects of the interview to allow greater participation in the process**. If interviews are conducted via Zoom, it is easy to record the job talk lecture (or open forum for administrative hires). These recordings can then be viewed later by individuals who are unable to participate.

✓ **Be creative in creating the Zoom interview itinerary**. Find ways for finalists to meet a mix of people, including students, staff, and faculty. For example, you might want to arrange a Zoom meeting with a select group of students. Have students prepare questions for the candidates before the meeting.

Appendix G. Guidance for Interviewing During the COVID-19 Pandemic *(continued)*

✓ **Be prepared to address concerns about the financial security of the institution**. This is a stressful time for everybody, and candidates are likely to be wondering whether it is a good time to relocate. There are likely to be real financial impacts of the pandemic at ALL institutions of higher education. Relatively speaking, large public universities like Texas A&M are likely to "weather the storm" better than other institutions due to relatively stable enrollments and high levels of investment from endowment funds. As a state institution, however, Texas A&M is likely to face some budget cuts as the state responds to the pandemic.

✓ **Consider inviting the finalist to visit campus after an offer has been made**. If your department decides against having campus visits, this will still provide candidates with the (optional) opportunity to visit the campus and the community, and to ask additional questions in person before accepting an offer.

Some Additional Resources Specific to Interviewing during COVID-19:

Bryan A. Banks, Stacy Blersch, Patty Chappel, Amanda Rees, and Eric Spears "Keep Calm and Hire On" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 6, 2020)

Kim Brettschneider, "How to Ace the Virtual Interview" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 22, 2020)

Brian T. Edwards, "The Job Season Without In-Person Interviews" The Chronicle of Higher Education (October 8, 2020)

Lucy Leske and Ann Yates, "As Classrooms Go Virtual, What about Campus-Leadership Searches?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 19, 2020)

Julia Piper, "When COVID-19 Makes Campus Visits Impossible, How are Colleges Hiring?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (April 6, 2020)

Links to these articles can be found at:
https://advance.tamu.edu/Resources/Resources-for-Faculty/COVID-19-and-Academia

Appendix H. Additional Resources

All of the materials in this guidebook have been adapted and modified from existing sources. The following sources have been used extensively in putting together this handbook.

Academic Impressions. 2019. *Recruiting, Onboarding, and Retaining Underrepresented Faculty. Conference Program.* October 21-23, 2019. Savannah, Georgia.

American Association of University Professors (AAUP). 2014. *Affirmative-Action Plans: Recommended Procedures for Increasing the Number of Minority Persons and Women on College and University Faculty*. AAUP Reports and Publications. Available online at: http://www.aaup.org/report/affirmative-action-plans-recommended-procedures-increasing-number-minority-persons-and-women.

Buller, Jeffrey L. 2017. *Best Practices for Faculty Search Committees: How to Review Applications and Interview Candidates*. Jossey-Bass.

Fine, Eve and Jo Handelsman. 2012. *Searching for Excellence and Diversity: A Guide for Search Committees*. Second edition. Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute (WISE-LI). University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Gvozdanovic, Jadranka and Katrien Maes. 2018. Implicit Bias in Academia: A Challenge to the meritocratic principle and to women's careers – and what to do about it. League of European Research Universities (LERU). Advice Paper No. 23. January 2018.

National Research Council (NRC). 2009. *Gender Differences at Critical Transitions in the Careers of Science, Engineering and Mathematics Faculty*. Washington, D.C. National Academy Press.

Stewart, Abigail J. and Virginia Valian. 2018. *An Inclusive Academy: Achieving Diversity and Excellence.* MIT Press.

University of North Carolina-Charlotte. 2019. "Resources for Search Committees Including Evaluation Rubrics and Link to Project Implicit."

Appendix H. Additional Resources *(continued)*

Available online at:
https://advance.uncc.edu/programming/programs/faculty-recruitment/resources-search-committees-including-evaluation-rubrics.

University of Oregon. 2019. "Expected Practices for TTF Searches." Available online at: https://provost.uoregon.edu/expected-practices-ttf-searches.