Best Practices
Faculty and Leadership Searches

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Yale University | Office of the Provost
Faculty Development & Diversity

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Introduction

Best Practices are guidelines that provide search committees with skill sets and strategic methods to conduct consistent, fair, and effective searches that maximize the diversity of candidate pools. Best Practices are meant to raise awareness of potential impediments that can inhibit candidate pool diversity and inherently limit the effectiveness of a search to find the most excellent faculty.

Faculty and leadership searches are among the most important responsibilities at the university. The outcomes of these decisions have far reaching implications and impact the future of the university for years, if not decades. It is therefore vital that search committees have and deploy the skill sets and resources necessary to develop an inclusive and fair search process that leverages opportunities to find the most excellent candidates through diversity and gender equity.

> *"An excellent faculty is a diverse faculty"*
>
> *Ben Polak, Provost*

Being an expert in a particular field of scholarship and conducting an effective and fair search often require distinct skill sets. A world renowned scholar in physics, english, or molecular biology does not necessarily have the skills sets necessary to conduct the most effective faculty search, be vigilant against implicit bias, committee group dynamics that compromise the effectiveness of open and useful discussion, or questions to a candidate that may be discriminatory or deleterious to the search process. Best Practices identifies factors that may interfere with the scholarly assessment of the candidate and provides strategies to address them.

While search chairs are required to review this material, it is highly recommended that all search committee members as well as the department chairs and deans become familiar with this document. This guide and other resources can be found at http://faculty.yale.edu/. This document covers the following topics:

- *Strategic Vision*
- *Preparation*
- *Logistics*
- *Responsibilities of the Diversity Representative*
- *Launching the Search*
- *Narrowing the List*
- *Interviewing Finalists and Campus Visits*
- *Un/acceptable Interview Questions*
- *Departmental or School Discussion and Vote*
- *Preparing and submitting FSQ*

Strategic Vision

Each faculty search should be conducted within an overall strategic vision of the department or school. Questions that should be discussed among the faculty and department/school leadership *prior* to the planning and initiation of a search include:

- What *is* the long-term strategic vision of the school/department?

- What areas of research and teaching would keep or put the department or school on the cutting edge of high quality research compared to our peer institutions?

- Is there overlap or areas of mutual interest with other departments or schools?

- How would this search affect the overall strategic vision of the department or school?

- How would this search affect the faculty profile in five or ten years?

- Are there opportunities to increase the quality of the department or school through the recruitment of a candidate who would diversify the faculty?

- What is the status of women faculty in the department/school?

- What lessons could be learned from past searches in that school/department?

In 1952, 251 years after the founding of Yale, Bessie Lee Gambrill became the first woman faculty member tenured in what was then the Department of Education.

Preparation

- The Faculty Search Questionnaire (FSQ) is official documentation of compliance with university-wide regulations of a faculty search. While it is completed at the end of the search, search chairs should review this form before the start of the search so that the committee is aware of university-wide policies on advertising, recruitment, and mandated efforts to create an inclusive and diverse candidate pool. Searches that do not adhere to these policies may be delayed or even denied.

- Most faculty searches utilize Interfolio, which is an online faculty search software tool that is licensed to Yale University. There is no charge with using this software. It is highly recommended that this software is used in lieu of paper

forms. This software facilitates easier compilation of candidate application material as well as demographic information that serves to inform the university about faculty search effectiveness and candidate pool diversity and inclusion. For information on training and using this software, refer to your search coordinator or chair's assistant.

- The selection of committee members should be mindful of diversity and inclusion. Committees should include women and faculty from racial/ethnic minorities whenever possible while being aware to not overburden faculty who may have other similar responsibilities. Diverse committees not only facilitate the creation of diverse candidate pools, but have also been demonstrated to promote more effective decisions compared to homogenous decision-making bodies (e.g., Levine et al., 2014).

- The committee should discuss strategies for actively recruiting women and underrepresented minorities. Committee members should refer to Strategies for Generating Diverse Candidate Pools before the search process begins. Department and search chairs, deans, and whenever possible, committee members should engage with relevant professional organizations and groups that are involved with issues related to women and diversity in academia. Attending functions at conferences, contacting group leaders, and faculty on campus are all encouraged.

- Appointment of a Diversity Representative is required for all faculty searches and can be coordinated between the search and department chair, although the relevant Dean and Deputy Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity may serve in an advisory role in the appointment. In the case of leadership searches (ie., decanal), the committee will be briefed directly by a representative of the Office of the Provost, usually the Deputy Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity.

- Implicit Bias has been shown to affect the diversity and scope of candidate pools as well as selection outcomes. While explicit bias and discrimination is a violation of federal and state law, a robust body of peer-reviewed research has demonstrated implicit bias against women and ethnic/racial minorities to be common and have a detrimental influence on decision making and assessment. Implicit bias is therefore an important risk that can compromise the effectiveness and inclusiveness of a search. Greater training and awareness can mitigate this risk.

- It may be useful to review demographic data on past departmental/school searches to understand the broader context of your search. Information can be attained by contacting the Office for Faculty Administrative Services

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(http://facultyadmin.yale.edu), http://faculty.yale.edu/faculty-demographics, or the Office for Institutional Research (http://oir.yale.edu).

- Discussing search criteria prior to assessing candidates is vital. How will research, teaching, mentoring, and service be weighted? These are important conversations to have beforehand in order to have a clear vision and common set of expectations. Defining criteria during and after candidate assessment can lead to committee members weighting criteria towards favorite candidates. This does not mean that criteria cannot be flexible, but it is best to start from a position of inclusivity and consistency and adjust later.

Responsibilities of the Diversity Representative

- Coordinate with the deputy provost for faculty development and diversity or the deans designated diversity contact to undergo training on faculty search Best Practices as well as strategies to maximize diversity and gender equity in the candidate pool.

- Partner with the search chair to insure that all committee members are aware and informed of resources pertaining to implicit bias and search Best Practices.

- Serve as the point of communication with the Deputy Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity.

- Monitor and record the demographic profile of the candidate pool to insure that women and ethnic/racial minorities are identified prior to the assessment process and creation of a short list of candidates. If Interfolio is used, this information is collected automatically during the compilation of candidate application materials.

- If the committee encounters challenges with a lack of diversity and women in their candidate pool, it is the responsibility of the Diversity Representative to review whether the committee has deployed the Strategies for Generating Diverse Candidate Pools in an effective manner. The Diversity Representative is also encouraged to seek guidance from the Deputy Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity on potential steps forward to augment the number of women and ethnic/racial minorities in their candidate pool.

- During faculty discussions, present a brief report on efforts to insure diversity and gender equity in the candidate pool, challenges that emerged in regards to generating a diverse candidate pool, and whether any final candidates on the short list were from racial/ethnic minorities or women. If the short list does not include

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women or diversity, it is the responsibility of the Diversity Representative to justify their absence to the faculty, Dean, Department Chair, and the Deputy Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity.

Launching the Search

- The search advertisement should be as broad as possible. Focusing on a narrow set of specialties or subfields may narrow the pool of candidates unnecessarily.

- Earlier posting of advertisements allows for a broader application window. This mitigates the risk of rushed decisions, administrative errors, and in the case of tenured appointments, difficulties with scheduling tenure reviews. This also implicitly encourages a larger and inclusive pool of candidates.

- Be aware that searches may move in unanticipated directions and areas of scholarship depending on the profile of the applicants. Committee and faculty discussions should be open to this possibility.

- The quality of the candidate is tantamount, however committees should be mindful of the future impact and importance of the candidates research.

- Framing a search as a "replacement" for a departing colleague or as a scholarly niche that needs to be filled tends to limit search possibilities. Each search should be viewed by the committee and faculty as an opportunity to move in novel scholarly directions that reflect the *future* of the field and the department/school.

- It is common for potential candidates to self-select and not apply to institutions such as Yale. This is detrimental to our common mission of faculty excellence, inclusivity, and diversity. It is therefore imperative that all aspects of the search from the advertisement, campus visits, and interviews be as welcoming and proactive as possible.

- Search committee memberships should reflect a diverse and wide range of opinions. An important dimension of this process should include gender and ethnic/racial diversity. While diversity can provide additional perspectives, it is not a substitute for training and awareness of implicit bias. Research has shown that implicit bias can affect decision-making and outcomes independent of gender or ethnic/racial diversity.

- Group dynamics can influence the scope and outcome of a search. Some committee members may be more vocal and dominate conversations when it is

vital that other voices and opinions be heard. Search chairs should therefore be vigilant against a narrow range of voices dominating committee discussions. Strategies to mitigate this risk include:

- o Developing and distributing an agenda before the committee meets.
- o Allocate time to each committee member for views and discussion.
- o Randomize committee members to start discussion.
- o Start each meeting by outlining the goals of the discussion.
- o End each meeting by summarizing the discussion and soliciting 30 second summary statements from each member.
- o Designate one or two committee members to present a minority opinion of the discussion to insure that all perspectives are given consideration.

Towards a Short List of Candidates

- Has there been sufficient effort to recruit a diverse pool of candidates? Faculty searches that are deemed to have not done due diligence may be delayed. For example if a short list is devoid of women and/or other faculty who would contribute to diversity, the search committee may be asked to review their efforts prior to having the short list approved by their dean.

- Do not assume that some candidates are unwilling or unable to re-locate. Such an assumption limits the pool of candidates unnecessarily.

- To expedite searches, some committees designate a subset of committee members to review the full set of applicants. However, we strongly recommend that all committee members review a subset of applications. This leverages the full diversity and experience of the committee and increases effectiveness.

- When generating a short list, committees should consider gender and diversity. While this may be perceived to be a source of bias itself, a robust body of peer-reviewed research has shown that candidates with identical achievements are often regarded as unequal based on their gender and racial/ethnic identification (ie., Moss-Racusin et al, 2012).

- "Intuition" and "fit" are often used as criteria to shape a short list of candidates. Chairs and committee members should be vigilant of these criteria and ask committee members to explain their perspective and provide details for their views.

Interviews and Campus Visits

- Interview style and culture can and does vary by department, school, and faculty member. Nonetheless, it is important to remind faculty that the primary goal of the interview is to assess the candidate, not necessarily "test the candidate under fire". Confrontational or demeaning questions, comments, or behavior are not useful, professional, or in line with the overall goals of the university.

- Schedule visits with consistency. To acquire good comparative data, every effort should be made to schedule equal time for each candidate (including internal candidates) to interview and meet with as many of the same faculty as possible.

- Be mindful that every aspect of the visit is not just part of the evaluation process, but is also an opportunity for recruitment. Remember that the candidate's experience can affect not only this recruitment but future searches. Subtle indicators of dismissal or disrespect are easily detected and can impede diversity and gender equity progress for many years.

- Whenever possible, all job talks (or similar) should be videotaped for faculty who could not attend. Voting should occur only after all voting members unable to attend the job talk have viewed the video.

- Each faculty member should develop her/his own independent evaluation of the candidate prior to and during the on-campus interview. Informal conversations between faculty members are inevitable, are often constructive to the evaluation process, and are conducive to open dialogue and debate. But all faculty (and especially senior faculty) should be careful not to make their colleagues (especially their junior colleagues) feel improperly pressed to adopt a particular view. Because implicit bias creates unintended and unrecognized negative consequences, faculty should be mindful to engage in conversations in a manner that facilitates independent assessment.

Un/Acceptable Interview Questions

- Be aware that some questions cannot be asked, and learn what they are. *All faculty on search committees must read the "Guide to Un/acceptable Interview Questions" and understand that it is illegal to base your hiring decisions on the answers to such questions*. If a candidate voluntarily provides information in non-permissible areas, the best practice is to make no further comments or inquiries, even if they seem harmless.

All members of a search committee should be aware of these guidelines and follow them in both spirit and letter. It is best to avoid any direct or indirect questions that touch on material that may not be asked. This information about an applicant should never be discussed with regard to his or her candidacy for a position.

Subject	What may NOT be asked	What may be asked
Name	Taken name of spouse. Inquiry about the name that would seek to elicit information about the candidate's ancestry or racial or ethnic background.	Whether the applicant has worked for the University under another name. Whether any other information, such as a nickname or initials, is needed to check the candidate's work and educational record
Race, Ethnicity, or Ancestry	Inquiry into an applicant's racial or ethnic background. Questions that may indirectly elicit information about an applicant's race or ethnicity.	No questions
Age	Inquiry into the date of birth or age of an applicant	Discussion should be kept to questions about the applicant's career stage.
Gender	Inquiry into an applicant's taken spousal name or any question that pertains to only one sex. Inquiry regarding pregnancy.	No questions.
Gender Identity	Inquiry into an applicant's gender identity or transgender status.	No questions.
Sexual Orientation	Inquiry into an applicant's sexuality	No questions.
Religion	Inquiry into an applicant's religious denomination, affiliation, church, parish, pastor, or religious holidays observed. Avoid any questions regarding organizations and/or	No questions.

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Subject	What may NOT be asked	What may be asked
	affiliations that would identify religion.	
Birthplace	Birthplace of an applicant. Birthplace of applicant's parents, spouse, or other close relatives.	No questions.
Relatives	Names, addresses, ages, number, or other information concerning applicant's children or other relatives not employed by Yale.	Name of an applicant's relatives already employed by Yale.
Citizenship or National Origin	Any inquiries about n applicant's citizenship or whether the applicant intends to become a U.S. citizen.	"Are you legally authorized to work in the United States?"
Language	Inquiries into how applicant acquired the ability to read, write, or speak a foreign language.	What languages do you read fluently? Write fluently? Speak fluently?
Disability	Inquiry into whether the applicant has a physical or mental disability/handicap or about the nature or severity of the disability/handicap. Inquiry into whether an applicant has ever been addicted to illegal drugs or treated for drug abuse/alcoholism. Inquiry into whether an applicant has AIDS. Inquiry into whether an applicant has ever received worker's compensation. Inquiry into whether an applicant has ever been absent from work due to illness.	You can ask an applicant about his or her ability to perform essential job-related functions, as long as the questions are not phrased in terms which would elicit whether the applicant has a disability.

Subject	What may NOT be asked	What may be asked
	An employer may not inquire as to the nature, severity, treatment, or prognosis of an obvious handicap or disability or of a hidden disability or handicap voluntarily disclosed by the applicant.	
Marital Status	Are you married? Are you divorced? Where does your spouse work? What are the ages of your children, if any? What was your taken married name? What do you do for childcare?	No questions.
Address	Do you rent or own your home? How long at each particular address?	Applicant's place of residence.
Height, Weight, Strength	n/a	Questions regarding height, weight, or strength may only be asked if the employer can prove these requirements are necessary to do the job.
Photograph	An employer cannot ask for a photograph to accompany an application.	No questions.
Military/Veteran Status	Inquiry into the applicant's general military experience or type of discharge.	Applicant's work experience, including names, addresses of previous employers, dates of employment, reasons for leaving.
Criminal Record	Inquiry related to arrests, juvenile record, sealed court records, misdemeanors more than five years old. Any inquiry or check into a person's arrest, court, or conviction	Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

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Subject	What may NOT be asked	What may be asked
	record if not substantially related to functions and responsibilities of the prospective employment.	
Education	Questions about education designed to determine the age of the applicant.	Inquiry into the academic, vocational, or professional education of an applicant for employment.
Experience	Inquiry into the organizations of which the applicant for employment is a member, the nature, name, or character of which would likely disclose the applicant's protected class status.	Inquiry into work experience. Inquiry into countries that applicant has visited. Inquiry into references.
Organizations	Inquiry into an applicant's membership in non-professional organizations (e.g., clubs, lodges, etc.)	Are you a member of any professional societies or organizations? (Exclude the organizations' name or character of which indicates race, creed, color, or national origin of its members

Sources: MIT Faculty Search Committee Handbook (2002), Yale Office of General Counsel, Harvard Office of Human Resources, Harvard Office of General Counsel.

Department/School Discussion and Vote

- Schedule department/school meetings at times that will maximize attendance with ample notice. Be mindful of times that might conflict with family responsibilities (ie., childcare). Allow sufficient time for discussion.

- Prior to the discussion, the search committee should inform the department/school of both the criteria applied during the search and the efforts made to attract a diverse applicant pool. As there are always pros and cons to each candidate, both the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate should be discussed. Indeed, it may be useful to assign one or two members of the search committee to provide a

minority opinion of each candidate to insure that all assessment views are fully considered.

- Some departments/schools find it useful to schedule a discussion and vote meeting on two separate days. This allows the discussion to be fully considered before a vote occurs.

- It is often preferable for every voting member to offer an opinion before a vote is taken. Otherwise, a call for a vote can prematurely curtail discussion.

Online Resources

All documents and resources mentioned here can be accessed at the following website:

http://faculty.yale.edu/

http://facultyadmin.yale.edu (forms and information on Interfolio)

http://oir.yale.edu

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Cover art credit: Women Faculty Forum (WFF) commissioned portrait by Brenda Zlamany of the first women to earn Yale Ph.D.'s to increase the portraiture of women on campus and to commemorate the admission of women to Yale's graduate school in 1892. The seven women in the portrait — Cornelia H.B. Rogers, Sara Bulkley Rogers, Margaretta Palmer, Mary Augusta Scott, Laura Johnson Wylie, Charlotte Fitch Roberts, and Elizabeth Deering Hanscom — graduated in 1894, two years after Yale opened its doors to 23 women seeking graduate degrees, becoming one of the first universities to admit women.

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