

## **Guidelines for Writing Faculty Job Advertisements that Sincerely Welcome Broad Application of Qualified Candidates**

*11 October 2012*

### **Explanation:**

For under-represented minorities, and other demographic groups who are in a distinct minority in a given academic field, even highly qualified candidates for a faculty position may be deterred from applying by a carelessly written job ad. Words are powerful. Their presence (absence), placement, and tone all convey (in)sincerity and signal that an applicant is welcome (or not), and/or may be a part of a larger community of like-minded individuals (or not) regardless of scholarly affinity.

The following best (worst) practices were assembled from an analysis of *actual job advertisements* vetted through the College of the Environment Diversity Committee. Examples of best practice wording, although adapted to the UW, are provided with their original attribution, in part to underscore those institutions with advanced practices regarding engagement, inclusion, and diversity. Worst practice language has been minimally altered to remove attribution, and is set apart with quotes to indicate language written by others.

We consider this a living document, and welcome edits and inclusions.

### **Best Practices:**

An "ideal" job advertisement should incorporate diversity into many different parts of the ad. Collectively, this wording should strongly suggest that the university and the unit are committed to furthering diversity throughout the UW (that is, not just in the faculty):

1. in the "intellectual language" describing the position, ideally in the first paragraph of the ad.
2. in the description of the UW (who we are as a university, who we serve) - specificity is key to believability.
3. in a description of the region within which the UW is located
4. if qualification bullets of the position are used (specific "shape" of the desired candidate - should be linked to one or more of the statements above; should not be the last bullet; should never be a list)
5. link diversity statements with strong positive words (e.g., excellence, demonstrated success, richly varied)
6. incorporate in a list of benefits available
7. use a specific disability accommodation statement

**Intellectual Language (must be ad-specific):**  
*example for planned Fresh Water Cluster Hire:*

The provision, or lack, of fresh water defines the rights and privileges of individuals, societies, and nations.

*stronger wording which may be applicable depending on disciplinary focus:*

We are especially interested in candidates whose work has a specific focus on understudied peoples, communities, and nations.

**Who We Are (UW):**

The University of Washington serves a diverse population of 80,000 students, faculty and staff, including 25% first-generation college students, over 25% Pell Grant students, and faculty from over 70 countries. (Virginia Tech)

We seek to recruit and retain a diverse workforce to maintain the excellence of the University, and to offer students richly varied disciplines, perspectives and ways of knowing and learning. (Wake Forest)

**UW Regional Setting:**

The University of Washington is located in the greater Seattle metropolitan area, with a dynamic, multicultural community of 3.7 million people and a diversity of ecosystems from mountains to ocean. (Texas A&M)

**Candidate Qualifications:**

*mild wording:*

We welcome applicants with demonstrated success in working with diverse populations. (Wake Forest)

*stronger wording:*

(All applicants must have...) A desire to advise and teach a student body which is diverse with respect to socio-economic status, culture, academic interests, and career paths (Virginia Tech)

(Qualifications...) Must be committed to excellence in teaching and mentoring our diverse student population and to working effectively with faculty, staff and students across a wide range of disciplines (CS Fullerton)

(Qualifications...) Willingness to work collaboratively with faculty and to mentor students from a wide range of disciplines, cultures and academic backgrounds is essential. (Berkeley)

*even stronger wording:*

(Qualifications...) We seek candidates whose research, teaching and/or service has prepared them to contribute to our commitment to engagement and inclusion of culturally diverse audiences in higher education, and particularly in the SUPER-DISCIPLINE HERE. (Berkeley)

**Benefits:**

health/vision/dental plans including spouse, domestic partner and/or dependents (CS Fullerton)

access to campus child-care (CS Fullerton)

a wide range of networking, mentoring and development opportunities for junior faculty (Virginia Tech)

A recipient of the 2006 Alfred P. Sloan Award for Faculty Career Flexibility and a National Science Foundation ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Award to increase the advancement of women faculty in science, engineering, and math (see [www.engr.washington.edu/advance](http://www.engr.washington.edu/advance)), the UW provides a wide range of networking, mentoring and development opportunities for junior faculty. (CoEnv ATM S, and Virginia Tech)

**Accommodation:**

Individuals with disabilities desiring accommodations in the application process should notify NAME SPECIFIC PERSON, UNIT NAME, PHONE # or call TTY PHONE #. (Virginia Tech)

**What IS required:**

At the UW, according to Executive Order 11246 and the associated regulations (e.g., 41 CFR Section 60-1.4), faculty job advertisements must include a statement pertaining to our institution as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, such as:

"The University of Washington is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer."

This statement should not be confused with welcoming language.

**Worst Practices:**

Poor ads do not incorporate diversity throughout, but rather use a poorly placed generic statement or legalese. In particular, these ads:

1. encourage X,Y, Z people to apply but don't reference diversity anywhere else in the ad list the groups of people encouraged to apply - "The List"

"Women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply...the University of X does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation,

gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status."

2. use a broad, impersonal statement, especially in a different font and offset from the rest of the ad - "The Diversity Stamp"

*"The University of X is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status or sexual orientation."*

3. use legalese that implies a legal obligation rather than a commitment to diversity

"The University of X, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action."

4. do not consider context and place diversity language at the end of the ad. In particular: (1) come after the "housekeeping" details such address for application materials, and (2) are adjacent to statements implying those with criminal records may not be hired

"Finalists must provide a transcript for the highest degree. Applications must be postmarked by DATE. ... University X is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and encourages applications from women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. Background check required for employment."