

College of the Environment
Guidelines for Diversity-Friendly Finalist Selection and Interviewing

The [Faculty Code](#) was recently changed to recognize excellence in research, teaching and service that promotes diversity and inclusion:

Evaluation of effective teaching includes the degree to which teaching strategies that encourage the educational **advancement of students from all backgrounds and life experiences** are utilized;

Contributions to a profession include, in particular, professional service activities that address the **professional advancement of individuals from underrepresented groups** from the faculty member's field.

Faculty's public services includes the **faculty member's involvement in the recruitment, retention, and mentoring of scholars and students in an effort to promote diversity and equal opportunity.**

Consider what diversity means to your unit.

Underrepresented minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (URM in STEM) has a very particular definition courtesy of the National Science Foundation: a U.S. citizen of African American, Latino, Native American, or Pacific Islander descent. These are communities who are a distinct minority in the disciplines represented in our college. We know that we won't build a URM-diverse faculty overnight - this is a long process.

In fact, a diverse faculty can mean many things. At the UW, and in CoEnv, we choose a wider definition, and with particular emphasis on bringing in individuals who can augment your department by providing approaches and perspectives that are underrepresented in your unit and/or in your discipline. This *doesn't mean* that we are not interested in URM candidates, but it does mean that you should not be looking for a person from a specific ethnic or cultural background to the exclusion of all others.

Within the college, we have multiple units that have successfully recruited faculty of color and female faculty. Contact those units, and those faculty, and ask how and why the search successfully recruited them.

Before creating your short-list of candidates to be invited to campus, consider re-examining the CV's of **strong** female and URM candidates. Research shows that women's applications are often more critically reviewed and that women tend to self-promote less.

Also, check with the Dean's Office about possible funding that may be available to bring an additional candidate to campus.

Clearly articulate the attributes or qualities you are looking for in the "winning candidate."

A clear rubric, one that allows all candidates to understand what you are looking for, is essential. Ideally, you have already incorporated elements of this in your job ad. Studiously avoid pointing to the august silverback who is being "replaced" as the model of what you're striving for; a woman of color, a gay man, or a person with a disability may see the "white male" rather than the scholar (if the silverback is, in fact, a white male).

Make sure you are as operational as possible; so, "a bold scientist who is not afraid to engage in higher risk-higher reward work" instead of "a superstar." Avoid putting too much weight on a few one-dimensional criteria.

Here are some general suggestions - any/all should be tuned to the specifics of your unit, discipline and the position:

- working at the leading edge of the field, instead of comfortably in the middle; a balance of high risk-high reward and lower risk efforts.
- will become a leader in the field (e.g., invited to present in symposia and at peer institutions as an assistant professor; invited to participate in multi-PI grants; being awarded grants - as lead PI - from the major funding institutions in the field).
- is or will be a superior graduate student and postdoctoral mentor, including the ability to mentor diverse students.
- is or will be a highly acclaimed undergraduate instructor (e.g., receiving at or above a 4.0 on course evaluation forms, together with an "hours per credit" score of 3 and a ratio of hours in to valuable hours of 1.0).
- works with students from diverse backgrounds, providing opportunities for underrepresented students to excel.
- superior public outreach (e.g., invited to give public lectures, appear on radio or TV, or write for a magazine or blog; featured by UW News or makes the CoEnv main webpage; works with citizen groups or other stakeholder groups; works with communities of color and/or underrepresented communities)
- incorporates diversity directly into their scholarship or teaching.

Be prepared to bring up these specific points to all of your candidates *in advance of their interview*, so that they all know how they are going to be judged and can prepare.

Design your interview to test or otherwise afford the candidates a chance to highlight their performance on all metrics.

The "job seminar" gives a good sense of research breadth and excitement, and of communication skills; how will you assess the other measures?

With specific respect to diversity - bring it up early in the interview. This signals that your unit is serious about a commitment to diversity, and also allows candidates to weave diversity into many of the discussions and events they will participate in during the interview. It is effectively an invitation.

Be prepared to talk specifically about what your unit is doing to promote diversity - in the unit and in your discipline(s). Don't expect that the weight of responsibility lies only with the candidate. For candidates who are themselves underrepresented minorities - be prepared to "sell" the position, the college, and the UW to the applicant. They can already see that they may not belong socio-culturally - why *should* they come?

Assess what you heard.

Prepare your search committee, your Director or Chair, your faculty and your graduate students to give their input on each candidate's performance on all of the rubric measures you decide on. With specific reference to diversity:

1. Is the candidate at ease discussing diversity-related issues and their significance to the educational enterprise? Or is the candidate reluctant to discuss diversity issues?
2. Does the candidate use gender-neutral language or are "males" used for examples and answers?
3. Does the candidate address all the members of the interview committee?
4. How does the candidate show experience, concern, commitment or willingness to advance the University's diversity efforts?

Remember that it is the totality of attributes that should sway your unit to support a particular candidate. At the same time, you want to be on the lookout for "red flags" that might indicate truly poor performance. Little to no attention to diversity, or teaching, or mentoring, or service, would be such flags.

Realize that all interviewees should be asked about diversity.

Understanding their experience with diverse populations (and especially students), and their thoughts/plans about how they would incorporate diversity into their scholarship, teaching, and engagement is a crucial part of *any* faculty interview. No candidate should get a "pass," and certainly these questions shouldn't be reserved for a "diversity" candidate. At the same time, women and URM candidates realize their gender or race may be a factor in your considerations; it is important to focus on their scholarship, qualifications, and potential academic role in the department.

Offer all candidates information on family issues, including maternity/paternity leave, tenure clock stoppage, family care leaves, etc., not just women.

Offer all candidates information on whom to contact to discuss any special requirements or circumstances, including the need for partner job assistance or disability accommodation. Don't wait for a candidate to ask.

Think about your language.

Use inclusive language (i.e. “partner” instead of “spouse,” “husband,” or “wife”).

Review what constitutes “fair and legal” inquiries and what doesn’t. Keep [the AHR guide](#) on-hand during interviews.

<p>You CAN ask whether an applicant can be lawfully employed in the US because of visa or immigration status.</p>	<p>You CANNOT inquire if an applicant is a citizen or ask anything that would lead an applicant to divulge his/her national origin, descent, birthplace, etc.</p>
<p>You CAN ask an applicant if s/he can perform the essential functions of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation.</p>	<p>You CANNOT ask about the nature, extent, or severity of a disability. Note that being unable to perform non-essential functions (ie, loading 10 lb of paper into a copier) does not disqualify an applicant. These are duties that they can reasonably ask for assistance with.</p>
<p>You CAN ask an applicant if s/he will be able to meet specific work schedules or if they have responsibilities that may prevent meeting work attendance requirements.</p>	<p>Information about family friendly policies and resources should be provided to all candidates, but you CANNOT ask about a partner, a partner’s employment, or anything regarding children, childcare, or dependents.</p>
<p>You CAN (and should) ask an applicant about their experience teaching and mentoring students from diverse backgrounds and their commitment to professional/public service and diversity. Ex: experience or opportunity to recruit, retain, and promote women and minorities in a previous position and success at these efforts; information about programs, committee memberships and diversity initiatives in previous position.</p>	<p>You CANNOT ask an applicant anything concerning his/her race, color, religion, or sexual orientation.</p>

Not convinced?

Review [the research](#) that indicates unintended biases results in unfair evaluations for women and people of color.

For additional resources on diversity and faculty hiring, check out:

[UW Faculty Recruitment Toolkit](#)

[Penn State Guidelines](#)

For a start-to-finish faculty hiring guide, check out the [UMich Advance Handbook for Faculty Searches and Hiring](#).