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# THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

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School of Medicine & Health Sciences

## **THE SEARCH FOR INCLUSIVE FACULTY AND INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP\***

**“When the people in power receive a mandate to search out excellence, the first place they look is to people like themselves, and too often that is also where the search ends.”** ----*Gagriella Gutierrez y Muhs et al, Presumed Incompetent*

### INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences is committed to excellence in patient care, education, and scientific inquiry. We understand that achieving these goals includes our success as an institution that values diversity, equity, and inclusion. We envision a community at GW SMHS where we embrace and appreciate differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, and other areas that distinguish us from one another. In particular, we recognize the history of racism that results in the underrepresentation of black and brown people in medicine and science. Diversity is a structural goal in which we hire not only a workforce that is representative of our community and our nation but also a systemic goal in which we create a culture that highly values our talents as unique individuals.

Studies show diversity and a favorable institutional climate impact faculty hiring and retention, improve the teaching and learning environment for all students, and produce higher quality research outcomes and solutions to problems. Despite efforts to diversify the pipeline, SMHS faculty and leadership remain homogeneous, and we must consider broader, institution-wide strategies to reduce structural barriers to achievement and fully develop diversity among our faculty and inclusion across our campus.

This document identifies best practices in hiring and promotion to assist in diversifying faculty searches at SMHS.

## SEARCH COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

- All full-time regular faculty should be hired by an internal search committee. This committee should receive instruction as to their roles and responsibilities.
- When forming a committee, consider members with different perspectives (discipline, rank, demographics) and faculty with a demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Refer to the document on Inclusive Committee Formation (<https://smhs.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaskib1151/files/2023-04/smhs-inclusive-committee-formation-final.pdf>)
- Consider faculty from outside of the search department or school to ensure that these perspectives are included.
- Ensure that women and people of color have an equal opportunity to serve on search committees and, conversely, that these faculty members are not being overburdened with service activities due to their gender, race, or ethnicity. To avoid isolation and discounting of these faculty members, include more than one faculty member with this experience or commitment.
- Designate one search committee member as responsible for oversight of equal opportunity and equitable review practices or request an **equity advisor**.
  - Equity Advisors for Search Committees
    - Grace Henry EdD, Office of Diversity & Inclusion
    - Nadia Cureton, Office of Faculty Affairs
    - Howard Straker EdD, Department of Physician Assistant Studies
    - Chavon Onumah MD, Department of Medicine
    - Denise Cora-Bramble, MD, Department of Pediatrics
    - Susan LeLacheur, DrPH, Department of Physician Assistant Studies
    - Alison Hall, PhD Sr. Associate Dean for Research
    - Yolanda Haywood MD, Sr. Associate Dean for Diversity
    - Kat Ogle MD, Department of Emergency Medicine
    - Maranda Ward EdD, Department of Clinical Research & Leadership
    - Maria Portela MD, Department of Emergency Medicine
    - Andrea Anderson MD, Division of Family Medicine
    - Lorenzo Norris MD, Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Chief Wellness Officer
    - Cynthia Tracy MD, Department of Medicine
    - Tenagne Haile-Mariam MD, Department of Emergency Medicine
    - Lawrence Deyton MD, Department of Medicine
    - Marie Borum MD, Department of Medicine
    - Victoria Shanmugam, MD, Department of Medicine
    - Sonal Batra MD, Department of Emergency Medicine

## SEARCH COMMITTEE CHARGE

- Conduct a fair and equitable search using best practices to recruit a diverse applicant pool.
- Actively participate in the recruitment of candidates.
- Emphasize institutional values and missions for excellence and commitment to diversity, inclusion & equity.
- Work to finalize a position description and search plan.
  - Position descriptions should be crafted in a way that does not eliminate individuals based on arbitrary requirements for years of experience and/or exhaustive required work experiences and qualifications.
- Consider the adoption of the “Rooney Rule,” the policy adopted from Dan Rooney, former owner of the Pittsburgh Steelers and past chair of the National Football League’s diversity committee. The rule requires organizations to interview minority candidates for top positions.
- Consider a search that includes no diverse candidates in its pool of finalists a failed search. Exceptions to this policy may be presented as an appeal to the Dean. These should be rare and must include a written evaluation of the methods used to pursue an inclusive search as outlined in this document.

## SEARCH COMMITTEE PROCESS

- All committee members must attend anti-bias training designed to promote a fair and equitable search. In addition to an in-person discussion of bias, committee members are required to view the AAMC Online Seminar: The Science of Unconscious Bias and What To Do About it in the Search and Recruitment Process found at <https://www.aamc.org/what-we-do/diversity-inclusion/unconscious-bias-training>
- The Chair should communicate goals that the committee will respect differences of opinion, ask for individual opinions, provide the opportunity to respectfully challenge each other, and establish a committee culture of mutual respect.
- Work to create an environment where all committee members are valued and any power dynamics are minimized. This may include the use of first names and encouraging seating with unfamiliar colleagues.
- Before any candidates are considered, establish a set of criteria by which all candidates will be evaluated and use this to develop a core set of interview questions.
- Ensure compliance with applicable laws and university policies. Review university policies here <https://facultyaffairs.gwu.edu/recruitment>.
- Maintain confidentiality of candidates and process.

- The Chair must prepare a search committee report that describes the number and characteristics of all applicants, interviewees, and finalists to be presented to the Dean. This report should also include details of the recruitment process, such as where recruitment material was posted, what personal contacts were made, and how applicants learned of the position.

### THE POSITION DESCRIPTION

- Describe the attributes of the work unit (e.g., outstanding care, number of faculty, mission).
- Describe functional qualifications or competencies: e.g., “proven ability to develop ...” “evidence that works collaboratively, “experience facilitating...” “a personal track record of ...”
- Describe the commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential to all aspects of our work. “experience empowering underserved patient populations,” “ensure equal access to care,” “eliminate health disparities,” “enrich learning environment.”
- Require that applicants include a statement that demonstrates their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of the application.

### REACHING DIVERSE NETWORKS OF CANDIDATES

Active recruitment strategies recognize that simply drafting and posting an announcement is not sufficient to achieve a diverse applicant pool. To identify the broadest possible pool of potential candidates, all members of the search committee must actively recruit candidates. Remember that all candidates wish to be evaluated on the basis of their credentials; use care to avoid subtle or overt indications that diverse candidates are valued only on their gender or race.

- Ask committee members, current faculty, and students to help identify women and underrepresented faculty candidates.
- Post recruitment materials on sites focused on or including diverse physicians or scientists for the position (see example List below)
- Advertise position with major research organizations and their minority affairs committees.
- Many physician specialty organizations have committees on diversity & inclusion or organizations associated with the specialty that may also be useful to contact or advertise with. Some examples of organizational contacts are listed below.

**Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc.**

122 East 42nd Street New York, NY 10168

<http://www.abc cardio.org>

**Black Women’s Health Imperative**

100 M Street, SE, Suite 600

Washington, DC 20036

<http://www.bwhi.org>

**National Medical Association (NMA)**

8403 Colesville Road

Suite 820

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

<http://www.nmanet.org>

**Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, Inc.**

3700 Koppers Street, Suite 570

Baltimore, MD 21227

<http://www.sicklecelldisease.org>

**Gay and Lesbian Medical Association: *Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality***

1629 K Street, NW Suite #300

DC 20006

202 600-8037

**Latino Commission on AIDS**

24 West, 25th Street, 9th Floor

New York, NY 10010

<http://www.latinoaids.org>

**Females Working in Emergency Medicine**

<https://feminem.org/>

**National Alliance for Hispanic Health**

1501 16th St., NW.

Washington, DC 20036

<http://www.hispanichealth.org>

**Society of Black Academic Surgeons (SBAS)**

http: [www.sbas.net](http://www.sbas.net)

**Association of Black Women Physicians**

[www.blackwomenphysicians.org](http://www.blackwomenphysicians.org)

## **National Hispanic Medical Association**

1920 L Street, NW, Suite 725

Washington, DC 20005

<http://www.nhmamd.org>

## **Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine (women alumnae)**

<https://drexel.edu/medicine/academics/womens-health-and-leadership/elam/>

## **Association for Academic Minority Physicians (AAMP)**

<https://www.aampinc.org/>

- **Major Research organizations and their minority affairs committees**  
Cancer: American Cancer Society, ASCO, ASCI  
Neuroscience/Neurology/Neurosurgery: SFN, ANA,  
Microbiology/ infectious disease:  
Cardiology/Physiology

The search committee can tally what connections the institutions faculty and staff have and use these connections to reach out to new and different candidates.

- Make contact with faculty at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Tribal Colleges, as they are usually good sources of recommendations for applicants to recruit. Building relationships with faculty members in analogous academic units in these institutions can create a “pipeline” for excellent applicants as faculty members in these institutions recommend their own and other students.
- Utilize directories and rosters of prestigious fellowship programs at both the dissertation and postdoctoral levels that support individuals from diverse backgrounds. Examples include:
  - Harold Amos Medical Faculty Development Program
    - <https://www.amfdp.org/about>
  - Merck UNCF, Gates Millenium, HHMI Gray Fellows Program  
<https://www.hhmi.org/programs/hanna-h-gray-fellows-program>
  - NIH IRACDA program which supports under-represented postdocs in research and teaching. Program website <https://www.nigms.nih.gov/training/careerdev/pages/PartInstIRACDA.aspx#VA>); speakers bureau of IRACDA <https://www.nigms.nih.gov/Pages/Postdocspeakers-Search-Results-All.aspx>

## EVALUATING APPLICANTS

- Require that the committee review Research on Bias and Assumptions in evaluating applicants at [https://wiseli.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/662/2018/10/BiasBrochure\\_3rdEd.pdf](https://wiseli.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/662/2018/10/BiasBrochure_3rdEd.pdf)
- Develop evaluation criteria **before** reviewing applicant materials. Look for skills and strengths the person has exhibited and how they align with the criteria established for the search.
- When evaluating letters of recommendation or reviewing references, be mindful of stereotypical thinking and how certain words or phrases may be utilized when describing characteristics of men and women. How? Resource?

## AN UNBIASED INTERVIEW

- Before interviews, remind the committee of the pertinent points of the bias training. This task should be assigned to the equity advisor.
- **Commit to a standard list of questions for all candidates scheduled for interviews. Questions should be based on the job-related criteria by which candidates are to be evaluated. (examples below)**
- Remember to base all discussions of the candidate around factual information and not “gut feelings.” Record statements that support your positive or negative evaluation of the candidate.
- Listen for content and not just interview “performance.”
- Look and listen for self-awareness; the applicant who can identify what they already do well and how they can improve is a better hire.
- Focus on willingness to learn, perhaps the most important characteristic.
- Keep each other honest, especially around discussions of “fit,” which may imply a preference for the status quo.
- Search committee members should consider themselves “recruiters” and commit to providing “concierge-level” service to all candidates. This sends the message that we are serious about attracting and retaining top-quality talent.

## SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS<sup>i</sup>

The committee should modify the sample questions below for the type of candidate (clinician, researcher) and the specific position characteristics. Consider behavior-based interviewing techniques to understand a candidate’s potential based on actual past behaviors rather than relying on responses to hypothetical questions. Ask the candidate to describe a situation in which they effectively used the kinds of skills and strengths that our organization needs.

### **Introductory Questions**

What attracts you to this position?

How has your work addressed health disparities relevant to our catchment in Washington, DC?

What is it about this position that makes you excited about learning and what is it you know you will have to learn?

What contributions can you make to our institution?

The SMHS is committed to building an anti-racist, culturally diverse and inclusive environment. How will you contribute to this goal?

### **About the candidate's professional background**

What do you consider your particular strengths? Tell us about a time when these strengths were demonstrated.

Tell us about a complex problem you were faced with and how you went about solving it.

Describe your current clinical activity and patient care/ research program. What makes your team effective?

Can you discuss a conflict you have been involved in and how you handled the situation? What did you learn?

Describe a situation in which you did all the right things and were still unsuccessful. What did you learn?

How do you view your role in faculty development?

Can you describe an experience mentoring diverse students, faculty and/or staff?

What professional development activities have you been involved in over the past few years?

How do you see your area enhancing our mission and vision?

Describe your experience in the recruitment and retention of diverse teams



### **About the candidate's leadership skills**

What are three leadership competencies you possess? Please provide an example of when you have used these to provide effective leadership during a difficult time.

Have you ever experienced a situation in which you had difficulties getting people to accept your ideas? What was your approach to handling these situations?

How have leadership programs helped develop your skills? (AAMC, ELAM, 360)

If we were to ask your superiors (i.e., department chair/dean/provost) or your colleagues to comment about your leadership, how would they respond?

What are the techniques that you use to clarify the meaning of unclear messages?

How do you maintain a positive discussion?

What do you want to change about yourself or your leadership style?

How do you view your role in faculty development?

### **About candidate's administrative or management skills (senior position)**

What are your experiences in developing a good team? How do you build mutual trust and cooperation?

Provide an example of when you set expectations and monitored the performance of subordinates. What guidance and direction did you find most effective?

Tell me about your last experience recruiting, interviewing, or hiring an employee. What techniques did you find most effective in finding the right person for the job?

Share an experience you had in dealing with a difficult person and how you handled the situation.

### **About the candidate's outreach/community/fundraising**

### **About the candidate's teaching**

Describe an experience in which you identified the educational needs of your students and successfully developed a way to teach/train them.

What pedagogical changes do you see on the horizon in your discipline?

Describe strategies you have used to create an inclusive learning environment for students/residents/faculty.

Tell us about a time when you successfully managed a difficult student/faculty member and a time when you did not successfully manage that situation.

How have your teaching evaluations influenced the way you teach today?

A sample interview evaluation tool is included in Appendix A.

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<sup>i</sup> Source documents for Sample Interview Questions:

<https://health.ucdavis.edu/facultydev/pdfs/search-materials/SampleFacultyInterviewQuestions.pdf>

Iowa State University,

<http://www.provost.iastate.edu/administratorresources/recruitment/guide/appendix-5>

University of Massachusetts, Lowell [http://www.uml.edu/hr/pdf/REVISED-F-Sample%20Interview%20Qs- %20Faculty.pdf](http://www.uml.edu/hr/pdf/REVISED-F-Sample%20Interview%20Qs-%20Faculty.pdf)

Search Committee: A Tool for Human Resource Professionals, Administrators, and Committee Members by Christopher D. Lee, Ph.D. SPHR, CUPA-HR

How to Assess a Job Candidate Who Doesn't Fit the Mold, HBR. Ranieri A. Feb 12, 2016

GWIMS Equity Recruitment Toolkit-AAMC. Burden M, del Pino-Jones A, Shafer M, Sheth S, Rexrode K.

Mallon, Grigsby, & Barrett, 2009

We Are All for Diversity, but... How Faculty Hiring Committees Reproduce Whiteness and Practical Suggestions for How They Can Change, HER. Sensoy O, Diangelo R. 2017.