Evaluating an Applicant’s Contributions to Diversity
Faculty Senate Educational Equity Committee

The mission of California State University, Northridge clearly articulates its values, including a “respect for all people” and a “commitment to educational opportunity, inclusion, and excellence.”

While gender or race may not be considered in the selection of faculty members, in order to attract excellent faculty who will contribute to the University’s commitment to diversity, search committees may find it helpful to consider the following UC guidelines for evaluating candidates’ contributions to diversity:

- Candidates who have engaged in service to increase participation in science, engineering, arts, humanities, education, social sciences, medicine, management or other related fields, by group historically under-represented in these areas or in higher education: for example
  - participation as undergraduates, graduates, postdocs or faculty in academic preparation, outreach, tutoring or other programs designed to remove barriers facing women, minorities, veterans, people with disabilities or other individuals who are members of groups historically excluded from higher education.
  - serving as an advisor to programs such as Women In Science An Engineering, SACNAS (Society for Advancement of Chicanos and native Americans in Science) or other equivalent programs in all disciplines.
  - exceptional record of mentoring students and junior faculty from groups under-represented in their field or historically under-represented in higher education
Candidates who have made a contribution to pedagogies addressing different learning styles; for example

- developing courses or curricula designed to meet the needs of educationally disadvantaged students;
- developing effective teaching strategies for the educational advancement of students from groups underrepresented in higher education;

Candidates who have an understanding of barriers facing women or historically under-represented minorities in science careers or higher education careers generally, as evidenced by life experiences and educational background;

Candidates who have significant experience teaching students who are under-represented in higher education, for example

- teaching at a minority serving institution;
- record of success advising women and minority graduate students;
- experience teaching students with disabilities

Candidates who have the communication skills and cross-cultural abilities to maximize effective collaboration with a diverse community of campus and external colleagues;

Candidates who have research interests in subjects that will contribute to diversity and equal opportunity in higher education, for example:

- research that addresses health disparities, educational access and achievement
- political engagement, economic justice, social mobility, or civil and human rights
- research that addresses issues such as race, gender, diversity and inclusion,
- research that addresses questions of interest to communities historically excluded by or underserved by higher education
- artistic expression and cultural production that reflects culturally diverse communities or voices not well represented in the arts and humanities

http://facultyequity.ucsd.edu/pdf/contributions_to_diversity.pdf
Enhancing Search Committee Effectiveness

The following is a list of best practices for recruiting and retaining faculty.¹

1. Establish Department Goals for Inclusion and Diversity
The University, the President’s office, Academic Affairs, Faculty Affairs, and the various colleges, all have commitments to inclusion and diversity. Articulating concrete goals for departments and programs will aid in the fulfillment of those commitments. Deans and Chairs can provide valuable leadership to help establish and maintain a strong and consistent message.

2. Targeted Marketing
You may find it helpful to use a more “targeted” approach, if you have not yet met with success in attracting qualified, diverse candidates.
- Use your contacts at other universities to identify minority candidates;
- Identify individuals and make them aware of specific positions that will be available, with as much advance notice as possible, and invite them to apply.

3. Job Announcements Shaped to Attract Diversity
In order for a diverse set of applicants to become interested in CSUN’s open positions, they must find something in them that sets them apart from other institutions they are considering. It is therefore critical that we make our position attractive to diverse candidates. This starts with the job announcement.

The job announcement is our single most effective tool in recruiting anyone. When candidates read that working with multicultural or otherwise diverse groups of people is a required qualification, the diverse candidate then is more likely to be interested and confident in researching the position and our institution.²

Enhance your ad by conveying your program’s desire for women and minority applicants, beyond the AA-I statement.

4. Highlight/Publicize Diversity Growth
Even if your department has not yet made the strides it had hoped for with respect to inclusion and diversity, still articulate to candidates whatever gains it has achieved, particularly with regard to students.


²
5. Diverse Candidates and our Community

Search committees need to find out what is important to individual candidates during the telephone screening or interview process. Highlight what the Northridge community and Los Angeles has to offer in terms of those things, i.e. schools, cultural events, etc. Candidates are not only making a decision to work at CSUN, but to build a life for themselves and their families here. The focus should be on the individual, rather than on any particular group. Tailor to meet the candidates’ needs.

6. Recognition and Rewards Critical to Successes

Departments or programs that achieve goals or milestones should receive some recognition and/or reward. Those who value diversity will achieve these quickly and will gain early recognition. Those who need to be motivated to value diversity will seek to be recognized just as their colleagues have been.

Stories of success can be shared with the Sundial, college newsletter or the university PR department to recognize these successes. Financial or ceremonial awards to the department or program, as well as special public presentations, can provide motivation toward success in this area.

7. Search Committees Need Diversity

A search committee needs diversity within it. All members should be specifically chosen for their strengths and talents so the best choice is made at the end of the process.\(^3\)

In a department that is not yet highly diverse, one must be sensitive to not asking the same faculty and staff repeatedly to sit on an unreasonable number of search and personnel committees. Broaden the current paradigm and if necessary, consider minority faculty outside the specific department or program of the position being searched. The perspective the diverse search member can bring can be as valuable as those within the department/unit who are the “subject matter experts”.

\(^2\) http://www.villanova.edu/studentlife/assets/documents/multicultural/diversity_report.pdf
\(^3\) http://www.irvine.org/assets/pdf/pubs/education/insight_Revolving_Door.pdf
Recommendations of the Deans of the Colleges & Associate Deans

Utilize “Mission based hiring.”
Drive the hiring process with our mission. Be honest about the mission and commitment to supporting diverse faculty.

Articulate the CSUN mission when hiring. Communicate what the reality is at CSUN; share the cultural reality of our campus, not just California beaches.

Balance the criteria for diverse faculty.
Too often, there are higher standards for minority faculty, i.e. going after minorities or women with Ivy league backgrounds, when R-1 institutions provide excellent educations.

“If we are truly this inclusive institution, then we have to allow people, when they come here, to teach their research,” even if another faculty member also teaches in that area.
Too often, faculty are "recreating themselves" during the hiring process, i.e. hiring people like themselves. This is a "hurdle" in hiring diverse faculty.

Do more one-to-one recruitment. This could help the large number of departments that find it difficult to hire diverse faculty.

One dean shared that he had met candidates who were attracted by what they had heard about CSUN's commitment to research and support for faculty. People are turning down higher salaries at Tier One institutions to take advantage of what we can offer in that respect.