

Guide to Diversifying Faculty Searches

Addressing Common Misconceptions

While not an exhaustive list, these are five common perspectives and experiences that routinely hinder the progress diversifying the faculty in academic searches.

Misconceptions	Tips
We should not bring in more diverse candidates until we fix the climate in our department.	Hiring for diversity and improving the climate and culture in the department are goals that should be pursued concurrently. A less than desirable climate should prompt urgency in addressing climate issues, not hamper goals with hiring a diverse faculty.
It is only the Diversity Representatives job to ensure the pool is diverse.	All search committee members are responsible for advancing the commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Those who serve on the search committee should be individuals who are knowledgeable about the possibility of implicit biases emerging. Knowledge does not ensure the biases will not operate, but it does increase the likelihood of self-conscious efforts to use procedures that will minimize that possibility. The search committee members should be a diverse representation within the department.
Candidates who worked under advisors the search committee members know are deemed the best candidates for the job.	Search committee members tend to give preference to applicants who have worked under advisors they know. While leveraging networks in the <i>recruitment process</i> is an important way to diversify the pool of applicants, the search committee should not over-rely on affinity based networks during the <i>evaluation process</i> , particularly when there is an opportunity to advance faculty diversity goals with applicants who have worked under advisors that are less well known to the search committee members.
There is only one perfect candidate for the job.	Research conducted at Brown suggests a sizeable number of candidates from the short list end up thriving wherever they gain employment, sometimes earning the discipline's highest honors. With multiple strong candidates, affirmatively consider how the department can diversify the faculty.
Once you make the hire, the job is done.	The work of recruiting and retaining diverse candidates as well as fostering an inclusive environment is an ongoing commitment and should be seen as parallel to other academic exercises such as departmental reviews that seek to make the department stronger over time. Identify a proactive plan to help new hires get acclimated and connected, based on their interests and needs.