

THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY DIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVE

Faculty Hires and the Role of the Faculty Diversity Representative

The faculty diversity representative system is the method currently used at Brandeis University to ensure that minority and female candidates are given due consideration in hiring procedures for tenured and tenure-track faculty. The focus of the role of the faculty diversity representative (DR) differs from that of other members of the search committee. While all members are concerned with how well the candidates match the selection criteria, the faculty diversity representative pays particular attention to the diversity of the applicant pool. It is the DR's responsibility to monitor the emerging applicant pool and to alert the search committee (chair) if it lacks diversity so that reasons for the deficiency can be identified and further outreach initiatives implemented, if necessary. It is recommended that the DR attend all key meetings of the search committee (typically as a non-voting member of that committee).

Section A – Key Stages of a Search for a Faculty Diversity Representative

There are several stages in the course of a search where the faculty diversity representative's input is important but, given the focus of the role, it is in the early stages, i.e., before a shortlist has been drawn up, when the DR's input is most critical. Below is an outline of a diversity representative's typical involvement in a search, along with suggestions about how to make the most of the role.

Search Plan

A search plan should reflect a good faith effort by the search committee to maximize outreach. Below are some of the elements that would feature in a good search plan:

- i) Proactive measures to help bring about diversity in the applicant pool. See *Section B* below.
- ii) Where feasible, the inclusion of women and minorities on the search committee.
- iii) An advertisement that includes text along the following lines:

Brandeis University is an equal opportunity employer, committed to building a culturally diverse intellectual community, and strongly encourages applications from women and minorities.

Experience shows that the more broadly the search goals and the description of the position are defined, the larger the pool of potential applicants will be.

- iv) A list of advertising venues that includes both those traditional to the field and those designed specifically to target women and minorities. See *Section B* below.

Standards/Criteria for Evaluation - Initial Search Committee

Early in the search – after ads have been placed and networking with other institutions has begun, but before the committee begins to review completed dossiers – the search committee

chair should convene a meeting of the entire committee at which the faculty diversity representative should be present. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss and set transparent and uniform standards/criteria for the evaluation of applicants.

As the Applicant Pool Forms

As faculty diversity representative, you will want to monitor the emerging applicant pool to assess its diversity. If the pool cannot be considered diverse and/or representative, you should notify the search committee (chair); it may be that recruitment efforts have to be refocused or expanded. For searches conducted through Academic Jobs Online (AJO), <https://academicjobsonline.org/ajo>, up-to-the-minute information on the make-up of the applicant pool is available as part of the online recruitment process. For searches not conducted through AJO, as DR you will need to keep in touch with the academic administrator who is responsible for maintaining the search's files.

The Interim Search Memo

The search committee chair writes the interim search memo and sends it, along with the dossiers of the proposed shortlist candidates, to the assistant dean associated with the search (either Heather Young (hkyoung@brandeis.edu) or Lorna Laurent (lalorent@brandeis.edu)). The memo will require the faculty diversity representative's signature. Your role, at this stage, is to verify that the search plan was followed. Your signature on the interim search memo signifies your approval of the committee's report and your confirmation that the search plan was adhered to.

The memo includes a brief statement about the process by which the shortlist was determined, including an explanation of the reasons behind the elimination of women and minority applicants. In order to be in a position to endorse the shortlist, you will need to have familiarized yourself with the selection criteria for the position. (This is one of the reasons why the DR's involvement in key search committee meetings is strongly recommended.) Please refer to section 5 of the *Summary of Fair Search Procedure for Tenure and Tenure-Track Fair Searches*, available from the assistant dean, for information on the elements that make up an interim search memo.

Job Talks

It is also strongly recommended that the faculty diversity representative attend candidate job talks, especially for junior faculty positions. This is because, as DR, you will be required to approve the fair search report (see Stage Six), which contains a recommendation to the dean about the top candidate, as well as a rank ordering of all candidates shortlisted. Attending the job talks will enable you to better evaluate whether a candidate lived up to the promise of his/her CV.

The Fair Search Report

The search committee's recommendation is sometimes made available to a department for review before being submitted to the dean or provost. It is strongly recommended that the faculty diversity representative be invited to the departmental meeting where the search committee's recommendation is presented. In cases where the departmental meeting leads to an adjustment of the ranking recommended by the search committee, and the DR had not been given the opportunity to hear the discussion that led to that adjustment, a further meeting will be

required. This meeting must take place before the Fair Search Report is submitted to the dean or Provost, and will involve the department chair, the search chair, the DR and, if necessary, the dean and/or provost. The purpose of the meeting is to enable you as DR to satisfy yourself that the adjusted ranking does not represent a breach of search procedures.

The search committee chair signs and submits the Fair Search Report to the dean's or provost's Office. The Fair Search Report will need to have been signed by the faculty diversity representative. In signing the report you are indicating that you are familiar with the search criteria and endorsing the rationale that led to the committee's recommended candidate, and to the ranking in general.

Section B – Tips for Achieving Diversity

1) Resources for Achieving Diversity

There are many resources available to help achieve the widest possible exposure for a search. A few are listed below, divided into the categories "General" and "Field-specific."

a) General

- i) Insight into Diversity at <http://www.insightintodiversity.com/>
- ii) Diverse (formerly Black Issues in Higher Education) at <http://www.diverseeducation.com/>
- iii) Hispanic Outlook on Higher Education at <http://www.hispanicoutlook.com/>
- iv) Utilizing existing directories and databases listing details of potential minority candidates, for example, the *Minority and Women Doctoral Directory*.

b) Field-specific

- i) The Web is a rich source of information about minority caucuses that exist within a field's national association. A national association's website is often a reliable gateway, however the net can be cast much wider by simply using a good search engine and key words.
- ii) Calling chairs of graduate programs in the country to establish who their best students are, their fields, and whether they know of any potential minority candidates.

2) Tips on Proactive Personal Outreach

Please note that personal outreach efforts are undertaken by the search committee chair rather than the faculty diversity representative.

- a) Ask female and minority faculty and advanced doctoral students at Brandeis, in departments with overlapping research areas, for advice on networking contacts. They may even have acquaintances at other institutions who might make ideal hires for Brandeis.
- b) Send emails, with ad attached, to women and minority faculty at other institutions to request their assistance in identifying possible candidates. Whenever possible, follow the email inquiry with a brief phone-call. In soliciting nominations and recommendations (whether by email or phone), be sure to inquire not only about promising graduate

students and new scholars, but also suggestions for other networking contacts, especially women and minorities. Ideally, this networking phase should be expanded beyond the “usual suspect” list of top peer programs/departments as there may be a number of reasons why a highly qualified candidate did not attend a school on this list.

- c) If possible, review lists of women and minority candidates from past faculty searches to identify possible sources. Review lists of referees from such searches, who wrote letters on behalf of women and minority candidates, to develop a list of possible sources to contact.

If you have any questions on the above, please contact the appropriate assistant dean:
Heather Young or Lorna Laurent.

cc: Search Committee Chairs