Faculty Search Guidelines

**Goal:** To hire excellent, diverse faculty through an equitable search process that minimizes bias.

This document (updated in September 2021) outlines best practices and recommendations for carrying out a robust and equitable faculty search. Search committees are encouraged to adopt all the steps listed; however, some steps are required and must be reported to the Associate Dean for Faculty Development for inclusion in annual ADVANCE EDEI (Equity, Diversity, and Excellence Initiative) report (see Appendix 1). The guidelines which follow are specifically geared toward tenure-track faculty hiring, but many of the steps will also apply to non-tenure track faculty hiring.

1. **Dean approves a search for one or more positions following a review of the School’s Strategic Hiring Plan**

2. **School Chair appoints a diverse search committee with a DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) advocate**
   - Strive for a diverse search committee while recognizing that diversity, equity, and inclusion should be everyone’s shared mandate.
   - Appoint a search committee Chair (should not be the School Chair).
   - Appoint a DEI Advocate; this should normally be a member of the search committee, not the committee Chair or School Chair, and ideally not a woman/URM (underrepresented minority, which the NSF defines as Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, or American Indians/Alaska Natives).
   - The DEI Advocate’s job is to make sure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are taken into consideration throughout the search process, and to remind search committee members of the Best Practices outlined in this document.
   - Note that active recruitment of excellent, diverse candidates must begin as early as possible, and is the job of every faculty member in the department, not just those on the search committee.

3. **School Chair provides charge to the search committee**
   - Share these CoS (College of Sciences) Faculty Search Guidelines with the committee.
   - Remind the search committee that all discussions and application materials are subject to strict confidentiality rules. The School Chair should describe the confidentiality expectations in as much detail as possible.
   - Notify committee members that they must document Implicit Bias training. Training should be repeated every 4 years and should be completed before reviewing any job applications. The Committee Chair must report compliance with the Implicit Bias training requirement to the Associate Dean for Faculty Development.
     - Training can be scheduled here: [http://www.advance.gatech.edu/bias-awareness-workshops](http://www.advance.gatech.edu/bias-awareness-workshops)
     - Additional Resources
• Harvard Implicit Association Test: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/
• IDEI (Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) trainings, conversations, and courses: http://education.diversity.gatech.edu/
• ADVANCE Faculty Hiring best practices: http://www.advance.gatech.edu/hiring-best-practices
• ADVANCE Faculty Additional resources, research articles, and links: http://www.advance.gatech.edu/resources

4. Discuss equity & diversity in COS faculty searches (30-60 minute presentation and discussion among search committee members, facilitated by the ADVANCE Professor and/or CoS Dean’s Office)

• Include explicit discussion of key points in search process where bias is well-documented.
• Discuss role of diversity in meeting strategic goals of hiring.
• Resources can be found at https://cos.gatech.edu/diversity/task-force/tf-resources

5. Define criteria for the evaluation of candidates

• Set explicit criteria for evaluating candidates, including criteria that reflect School, CoS, and Institutional priorities for hiring diverse faculty.
• Incorporate these criteria into a written evaluation rubric, to be used for evaluating application materials and interviews.
• Sample text for a DEI-related category in the rubric: “Candidate will enhance the diversity of our faculty and/or has a demonstrated track record in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion”.

6. Write the job ad

• Follow updated template available through Faculty Affairs, linked here, which highlights institutional goals around diversity, equity, and inclusion.
• Be sure the job ad contains a detailed job summary, required qualifications, required documents to attach, the location of the position, contact information, and the template’s EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) statement.
• Submit ad to School HR representative for listing in the CAREERS application system. Note that there is some amount of OneUSG position maintenance needed for many job postings; please factor this in as a possible short delay to the approval of the job ad via Careers. The Careers posting must be approved before the position is advertised online or in a print ad. The approval process may take upward of a week.
• In addition to the job ad, the following details will be needed by the School HR representative: job opening date, job closing date (at least 30 days from the opening date, but can be longer), target start date of selected candidate, and the names of everyone on the search committee.
• The job ad and evaluation rubric should be developed in concert with one another so that the search committee assesses applicants on the criteria mentioned in the ad and applicants are aware of the criteria being used.
7. **Determine the committee's goal for achieving diversity of the applicant pool**
   - Before recruitment begins, the committee should decide on an appropriate benchmark for applicant pool diversity, and be prepared to justify that choice (e.g. for a geoscientist assistant professor search, the committee should take into account the fact that 45% of recent PhDs in the AGU (American Geophysical Union) are women).

8. **Actively recruit candidates**
   - Proactively reach out to e-mail listservs, social media channels, and organizational contacts to disseminate the position announcement to diverse audiences (discipline-specific lists can be compiled to this end by each school).
   - Design a social media outreach strategy (which might involve non-committee members who have large followings), noting that Facebook and Twitter users are generally younger and therefore more diverse.
   - Encourage all faculty to reach out proactively via their own networks and channels.
   - Encourage all faculty to reach out to potential candidates from underrepresented groups with personal invitations (as is currently done on Dean-level search committees) and consider having each member of the search committee reach out to at least N such candidates (for an agreed-upon value of N).
   - All tenure-track job ads must be posted in a national professional journal (in print or online) for at least 30 days. Job ads for non-tenure track faculty must be posted for a minimum of 5 business days.
   - Note that building a diverse, excellent pool of candidates is hard work and takes time, personal outreach, and follow-up conversations.

9. **Evaluate diversity of the applicant pool**
   - Use GT’s centralized CAREERS application portal, which aggregates demographic data of the applicant pool for committee review in real-time.
   - If the applicant pool does not hit the committee’s previously determined goal for diversity,
     i) consider additional, targeted recruitment of outstanding candidates who will help meet the goal, and/or
     ii) provide justification to the Associate Dean for Faculty Development of why the target was not met, and show evidence of aggressive outreach to diverse audiences.

10. **Request reference letters from candidates ’letter writers**
    Please note that Careers is not currently able to request and/or collect reference letters on behalf of candidates. Georgia Tech recommends that you employ a secure method of soliciting these letters outside of Careers.

    Some schools request letters for all applicants, while some make a “long list” for letters. For those schools that only request letters for a subset of applicants (i.e., a “long list”):
    1) Be wary of applying shortcuts to arrive at suitable candidates (i.e., favoring candidates from elite institutions, top labs, friends of committee members, etc.), which can undermine equity and decrease the diversity of the applicant pool.
2) Ensure that the diversity of the “long list” pool is equal or better than that of the applicant pool; the idea is to “leave no stone unturned when it comes to diverse candidates”.

11. Form a short list

- Use the evaluation rubric from Step 5 to assess and score letters/applications and thereby ensure some consistency and objectivity, scoring against the original search criteria.
- Avoid identifying an “anointed candidate(s)” – someone who is seen as superior to other candidates even though the search is not complete - during all steps of the evaluation process.
- Remember that studies show that a rushed process leads to shortcuts which allow for implicit bias to tip the scales against women and URM candidates.
- Review the scientific literature around the presence of bias in evaluation letters (length shorter for women, URM candidates; descriptions differ by gender (“team-player” vs “genius”); culturally inappropriate language, etc); review relevant slides from ADVANCE presentation; see relevant study linked here.
- Any committee members with conflicts of interest should recuse themselves from the deliberations as well as the vote, and be reported as recused. Conflicts can include family relationships; close collaborations; advisor-advisee relationship; business relationships; or marked personal or professional conflicts.
- Come up with a process for evaluating application materials (the NSF Graduate Research Fellowships Program review process follows as an example):
  1. each file gets 3 or 4 different reads by random assignment
  2. use a screening rubric to assess and score letters/applications
  3. for consensus strong files (low spread of high scores), put in “possible shortlist” pile for review by entire search committee
  4. for consensus low files (low spread of low scores), put in “unlikely shortlist” pile
  5. for split score files (high spread of mixed scores), have the files read by entire search committee
- Scores on rubrics should be used to promote discussion and should not be used solely to compute numerical rankings.
- Some search committees conduct short video interviews for candidates on a long list. If you do this, a best practice is to have the same set of interviewers asking the same set of questions. A rubric should be used to provide feedback on video interviews.
- Once a short list has been decided upon, submit the short list (which could be either ranked or unranked) to the School Chair and Associate Dean for Faculty Development for approval.
- If diversity of the shortlist is a lower percentage than that of the applicant pool or target applicant pool, provide a detailed justification to the ADFD and/or consider adding extra slot(s) to increase diversity.
- The School Chair and Dean reserve the right to reject a short list on the basis of inadequate diversity (both are accountable to Georgia Tech’s goal of increasing the diversity of our faculty). In this case the committee will need to form a new short list.

12. Interview candidates
13. Select the top candidates

- The search committee discusses the results of the interviews and the input received from faculty, staff, and students through the online rubric/survey.
- When the discussion is complete, encourage the use of a secret ballot for the search committee to vote on:
  1. which candidates are above the bar for a faculty hire at GT, according to the original criteria
  2. from the group of candidates identified in step 1) above, each committee member should rank their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd top candidates, according to the original criteria
- Some search committees may decide to take a secret ballot vote before the discussion and another one after, others just a single vote at the end.

14. Report committee findings to the School Chair and ADFD

- Report committee-generated scores for each candidate and the strengths/weaknesses of each, as measured against the original criteria.
- If there is insufficient diversity in top tier of candidates, look at the top-ranked female/URM candidate(s) and where they fall on the list and report this to the Chair as well.
- Consider including a quantitative representation of uncertainty in scores (averages and standard deviations or distributions; representations may be numerical or graphical) and narrative reports for each of the top candidates.
- Include a discussion of suggested improvements for the search process to better promote equity and diversity in future searches.

15. Faculty discusses and votes on hire(s) (not applicable in every school, depending on the level of the search)

- Schedule a faculty meeting to discuss the top candidates identified by the search committee. Make sure there is ample time for discussion.
- The search committee should coordinate with the School Chair before the faculty meeting to frame the discussion, making sure that diversity is taken into account.
- Include a discussion of potential target-of-opportunity (ToO) hires for highly ranked diversity candidates who did not make the cut in Step 13 above.
• When making a ToO case to the Dean/Provost, consider promising to make the ToO candidate a standard job offer should the top-ranked candidate(s) turn down Georgia Tech’s job offer.

16. Chair recommends hire(s) on basis of search committee report and faculty vote

17. Dean reviews search committee report, faculty vote, and recommendation of the School Chair and approves hire(s)

18. Search committee chair fills in search outcomes report for COS Dean & ADVANCE (see Appendix 2 for template)

Appendix 1. Mandatory reporting steps for all search committees (report to the Associate Dean for Faculty Development unless otherwise specified)

☐ Appoint a search committee Chair and a separate DEI Advocate (Step 2)
☐ Certify Implicit Bias Training (Step 3)
☐ Set explicit criteria for evaluating candidates, including one or more criterion related to diversity, and incorporate these criteria into written evaluation rubric(s) to be used for evaluating application materials and interviews (Steps 5, 11, and 12)
☐ Submit job ad to HR representative for listing in the CAREERS application system (Step 6)
☐ Decide on an appropriate benchmark for applicant pool diversity (Step 7)
☐ If the applicant pool does not hit the committee’s previously determined goal for diversity, provide justification for why the target was not met and show evidence of aggressive outreach to diverse audiences (Step 9)
☐ Submit a short list to the School Chair and ADFD (Step 11)
☐ Following the interview process, submit the search committee rankings and recommendations to the School Chair and ADFD (Step 14)
☐ As soon as the search has been completed, submit a table of demographic data from the search to the ADFD for inclusion in the annual IDEI report (Step 18)

The current Associate Dean for Faculty Development is Matt Baker
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Appendix 2. Search committee Chair report on final search outcomes

For consistency across Georgia Tech, an informal offer is defined as the point at which the Provost’s or Dean’s approval was obtained to move forward, either through the “formal request to negotiate” process, or through email or other written communication with the Provost’s or Dean’s office, but has NOT yet been logged into GT-TRACS. In this definition, a verbal communication with a candidate inviting them to enter negotiations, and/or return for a recruitment visit, etc is considered an informal offer. A formal offer is defined as an offer that has been logged into GT-TRACS.
For consistency across Colleges and years, only report formal offers made, or offers accepted, any time in July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022, even if the interviewing started earlier.

Please note that **URM** is defined as the following races/ethnicities: African-American, Hispanic, Latino/a or Native American/Pacific Islander.

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