



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ILLINOIS**  
SPRINGFIELD

OFFICE OF ACCESS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

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**BEST PRACTICES**

**FOR RECRUITING AND RETAINING**

**DIVERSE FACULTY AND STAFF**





American colleges and universities recognize the benefits of hiring and including diverse faculty, staff and administrators in all campus enterprises. Also, our students are increasingly diverse. We know that evidence of diversity confirms the value and potential of all, and undercuts the persistence of stereotypes and assumptions to the contrary. We know that the world's stage is increasingly closer in, and that our students are preparing to

participate on that virtual or actual global stage with individuals who may differ greatly in terms of language, color, culture, sexuality, religion, or customs, yet who may ultimately pursue the same goals.

We care a lot about best practices for increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff, and many such best practices follow to serve that goal. We highlight concrete practices for enhancing diversity through intentionally inclusive recruitment and retention strategies. Best practices for enhancing the climate in which diverse faculty and staff will contribute and interact are included in this compendium as well.

The campus climate within which diversity blooms, and whether it is *chilly or welcoming*, is vital. Indeed, inclusion and diversity are, in many ways, issues of climate and environment: a chilly climate for diversity can lead to resistance to change; resistance to difference that does not readily assimilate to existing norms, customs, and assumptions; and a resistance to the hard work necessary for purposeful inclusion. Such resistance can chill hiring initiatives and increase retention difficulties for diverse hires.

It is one thing to recruit undergraduate students from increasingly diverse backgrounds, and it can be quite another undertaking to purposefully recruit, retain, and promote diverse faculty and staff members, particularly faculty and staff of color. Even the notion that efforts will be futile because available pools of qualified candidates are scarce can contribute to a chilly climate through the underlying message that scarce availability is a function of group deficit. According to the deficit model, there just aren't enough qualified minorities, and those few who might be qualified won't come to our campus, and if they do come, they won't stay here, and if they're here, they'll soon be snatched away.

By contrast, many faculty and staff of color and other diversity will say, if asked, that they will come if their qualifications are seriously valued and they feel wanted, and they will stay if they feel welcome and supported. Despite contrary beliefs, some faculty applicants who would enhance diversity also attest that they have not - even with credentials from highly elite institutions - been the beneficiaries of bidding wars with several competing universities fiercely vying for their services (see *How to Diversity the Faculty*). The fact is, qualified applicants may be available for faculty and staff positions, including in the STEM fields, campus law enforcement, or other disciplines which report challenges. Qualified, diverse applicants *do* exist and *can* live in our community, with our active and purposeful action.

The Office of Access and Equal Opportunity (AEO) assists hiring units with targeted outreach to qualified applicants, and offers this document as a general guide and resource for best practices to enhance diversity recruitment and retention of UIS faculty and staff. Please contact AEO for additional assistance!



## **BEST PRACTICES FOR RECRUITING DIVERSE FACULTY AND STAFF**

### **DEVELOP A MORE INTENTIONAL STRUCTURE TO ENHANCE DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT INITIATIVES:**



**Communicate the importance of diversity and how it is connected to the University's mission, goals, and strategic priorities.**

- Examine why current efforts are not working; develop solutions.
- Select a diverse search committee, or a committee which includes at least one individual who would be at least an institutional peer to the position to be filled to serve as a diversity advocate empowered to promote and keep diversity goals active during the search.
  
- Define measurable goals for diversity and hold search committees accountable.
  
- Consider Diversity training and unconscious bias awareness support for every search committee.
  
- Assign Diversity Advocates in each Division to work with the AEO office before search plans are finalized, to help implement and champion diversity goals and ideals.
  
- When campus-wide search workshops are presented, require representatives from all divisions.
  
- Also consider requiring all search committee members and hiring officials to participate in an AEO educational recruitment and retention session.
  
- Develop position descriptions and qualifying criteria that highlight a commitment to diversity, and interview questions and assessment instruments that evaluate candidates' commitment to and experience with diversity and inclusion.





## **BEST PRACTICES FOR RECRUITING DIVERSE FACULTY AND STAFF**

➤ Recruit for diversity as Athletics would for student-athletes – actively and purposefully!

➤ **Network to build a deep and viable diverse pool of applicants- Networking must happen!  
Contact existing professional and personal networks or seek assistance from AEO to outreach.**

➤ Examine campus customs which appear diversity neutral but might have the effect of limiting access to diverse candidates, including.

- Advertising professional positions in Sangamon County only
- Assuming diverse candidates won't come, won't stay, or would prefer to be around greater numbers of their identity or affinity group than are present at UIS

➤ **Prepare University and surrounding community diversity resource information for all finalists.**

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## **BEST PRACTICES FOR RETAINING DIVERSE FACULTY AND STAFF**



➤ Encourage everyone in the community to take responsibility for making the community welcome to all.

Consider establishing networking and support groups for all new faculty members. This is different than the idea of providing mentors for faculty of color exclusively, which might unintentionally lead to feelings of marginalization or a sense they are less qualified or need greater support or assistance.





## **BEST PRACTICES FOR RETAINING DIVERSE FACULTY AND STAFF**

➤Exit Interviews should be required for faculty and staff who leave the University – especially those considered diverse, and including tenure-track faculty who do not receive promotion and tenure, to gather information on potential climate issues.

➤Provide cross-cultural coaching and awareness for in faculty development workshops and employee orientation and professional development programs to increase retention by developing a diversity-friendly culture.

➤Establish and strengthen cultural competency and multicultural respect. Cultural competency means the ability and skills to work with diverse people and to manage the process in an inclusive way.

### ➤WHEN PLANNING COMMON CAMPUS THEMES AND EVENTS:

Consider unintentional impacts to members of the community who do not share histories or perspectives we might consider “normal.” For example, not everyone has the same shared experience about the pre-Civil Rights 1950s, or celebrates the same military conquests or religious observances.



➤Consider making attendance at annual diversity professional development seminars and workshops part of annual staff performance reviews.

➤Consider that when we don't act *intentionally to include* historically, numerically, or culturally marginalized groups in planning, resource allocation, or decision-making teams it can feel like *exclusion*.

➤Learn what appeals or is important to multicultural groups by asking and doing.

➤Encourage and support the participation and creation of academic, professional, cultural, and social activities that connect potentially marginalized individuals to the institution at large in a genuine way.