Introduction

Northwestern University’s Affirmative Action program seeks to ensure that it attracts to its faculty the best possible teachers and scholars and that qualified women and minorities are provided opportunities to become members of the University faculty. Toward this end, a thorough Affirmative Action search must be conducted when filling any regular full-time faculty position. Such a search includes not only widespread publicizing of the position but also efforts to encourage qualified prospects who do not formally apply for the position to allow themselves to be considered. In extraordinary cases, the requirements for an Affirmative Action Search to fill a particular faculty position may be waived, but only upon prior approval from the Provost. In requesting such a waiver for the appointment of someone who is not female or a member of a minority group, the department and school must provide evidence that no female or minority group member of similar qualifications is available for appointment to the position.

The following guidelines are prepared to assist deans and department heads in carrying out searches for qualified candidates.

I. Prior Authorization

Before initiating a search to fill an actual or anticipated vacancy, authorization to fill the vacancy must have been obtained from the Office of the Provost as part of the normal hiring planning process.

II. Initial Stages of the Search

A. A Position Description is drafted, which includes:

1. a brief statement of duties
2. minimum objective qualifications (i.e., degrees and experience requirements), other desirable qualifications
3. rank and/or title
4. full/part time – specified term/continuing
5. proposed starting date
6. closing date for receipt of applications (or the statement “In order to ensure full consideration, application must be received by [date].)

7. name and address of contact person

8. the following statements:
   a. “Northwestern University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer”
   b. “Hiring is contingent upon eligibility to work in the United States”

B. The appropriate dean or department chair appoints a search committee, generally comprising three or more faculty members. Whenever feasible, a search committee should include female and minority representation within the discipline or a closely allied discipline. Deans and department chairs are urged whenever possible to include on the search committee faculty members in related fields from schools other than the school in which the appointment is proposed.

C. The Search Committee develops plans for the search and completes the Pre-Search Review Form for submission first to the dean, and upon the dean’s approval then to the Provost. The form should also have a copy of the position description.

D. After review and approval by the Provost, the Pre-Search Review Form is assigned an “Academic Search number” and returned to the dean. The academic search number must be entered on each Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) data collection card sent along with acknowledgement of receipt of an application (see III.D.1).

III. The Search

A. Undertake search as set forth in the approved Pre-Search Review Form.

B. All publicity (advertisement, letters, etc.) must include or be accompanied by the approved Position Description.

C. Create complete records.
   1. copies of all advertisements and letters
   2. notes on efforts to publicize, including recipients of advertisement and letters, special efforts to identify women and minorities and phone calls

D. Acknowledge Applications
   1. For each application, send written acknowledgement, accompanied by a business reply enclosure card addressed to the Equal
Employment Opportunity Office. In the case of non-applying prospects the card should be completed to the best of its knowledge by the Search Committee and sent to the EEO Office. The Search Committee must write on each card sent to an applicant the academic search number as designated on the approved Pre-Search Review Form.

2. Form letters may be used for initial acknowledgement and these should contain a brief statement to the effect of:
   a. receipt of application
   b. further contact will be forthcoming if deemed warranted

E. Conduct review of applicants and non-applying prospects

1. The same number of committee members should read each prospect’s application and material.

2. Give comparable attention to non-applying prospects as well as to those who apply.

3. It is helpful to date the receipt of all materials and maintain a logsheet recording all review steps for each applicant.

F. Create a “short list” of worthy prospects.

1. Rank-order the most likely prospects.

2. Submit the short list to the department chair and then the dean before any on-campus interviews are arranged. Documentation for each of the persons on the short list should be included.

3. If the short list does not include a minority prospect and a female prospect, the search committee chair should provide to the department chair and the dean documentation concerning the best prospects who were seriously considered by the committee, and who are known to be females or members of minority groups.

4. Whenever possible, on-campus interviews should follow the short list as approved by the dean.

G. Recommend to make an offer

1. Recommendation should be made to the department chair or the dean.
2. Recommendation should be accompanied by:
   a. Completed Affirmative Action Summary Report
   b. Material pertaining to the achievements of the proposed candidate (CV, letters of recommendation, etc.)
   c. If the proposed candidate is not a female or a minority group member, the CVs (see 2b above) for each of the best prospects who were seriously considered for the position, and who are known to be females or members of minority groups, should also be included

IV. Review by the Provost

   A. The school dean submits the following material to the Office of the Provost for review: The search committee’s recommendation; the Affirmative Action Summary form; the recommended prospect’s material; and a copy of the curriculum vitae for each female or minority group member on the list of finalists who was not offered the position.

   B. No offer, oral or written, may be made for a regular full-time faculty position before the Office of the Provost has reviewed the material submitted and approved the appointment.

V. School or Department Responsibility

   A. After the appointment is made, assemble search records for maintenance, including:

      1. The Pre-Search Review form and any related documents

      2. All correspondence between the department and dean; the chairperson’s request to fill the position; the dean’s authorization to search; the dean’s authorization of a campus visit, etc.

      3. All advertisements and notices of the position; photocopies or tear sheets of the actual ads and notices; correspondence pertaining to placement of ads; etc.

      4. All notes and other documents pertaining to the department’s special efforts to seek out female and minority group prospects for the position.

      5. All letters of application, CVs, job-placement folders (containing letters of recommendation, etc.) of candidates. Notations on correspondence, such as “Send standard NO letter” (always initialed and dated) are especially useful.
6. All letters of recommendation, solicited or unsolicited.

7. All follow-up correspondence and notes of follow-up telephone calls about candidates’ qualifications (notes of calls should be initialed and dated).

8. All written evaluations about candidates’ written work initialed and dated by reviewer. (It is not necessary to retain the work itself, which can be returned to the candidate.)

9. Lists of those who survived the first screening and were seriously considered – e.g. candidates interviewed in their graduate departments, interviewed at professional meetings, etc.

B. Retain all search records, including letters relating to unsolicited applications, for at least three years.

VI. Responding to Unsolicited Applications

Departments occasionally receive unsolicited applications for positions that have not been advertised or do not in fact exist. These letters should be acknowledged. It is important not to make any such commitment as, “Your application will be considered for the next appropriate vacancy.” Such a commitment implies that the department will in fact review that application. Instead, the acknowledgement should state that no appropriate vacancy exists and that the applicant should consult [name of standard professional journal or job-list] where regular faculty vacancies are routinely advertised.