

Recruiting for Diversity



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Why is diversity recruitment important?

Not only is diversity recruitment the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do. Where there is a University determined Affirmative Action Goal, EEO/Affirmative Action laws require us to make a “good faith effort” in the outreach and recruitment of women and minorities. But at least equally important, recruiting a diverse staff is essential to our sustainability—for your department, for the FAS, and for Harvard—for the following reasons:

- Each FAS team has a global and diverse constituency, whether dealing with students, faculty, researchers, other departments within Harvard, or external contacts. Having diverse staff enables us to understand and meet the needs of people from diverse perspectives, and creates an atmosphere that supports positive relationships and communications.
- Different backgrounds and perspectives lead to a variety of ideas, knowledge, and ways of doing things. The converse is often true as well: team members from the same background may take actions based on a narrow range of experiences. By ensuring that your team includes staff from various social and cultural backgrounds, you will widen the range of perspectives, knowledge, and approaches from which decisions are made.
- By building a reputation for valuing differences, we can attract talented employees who know that we will appreciate and utilize the skills, backgrounds, perceptions, and knowledge they bring to the table. This leads to greater commitment and higher productivity.

By making diversity recruitment deliberate, we can bring in employees who might not otherwise consider Harvard, and who can enrich and broaden our community.

How to think about diversity and your own staffing needs

Before embarking on a recruitment effort, use the information and ideas on these pages to consider the diverse perspectives you wish your team to include, and any challenges you might face in recruiting the right staff. We often think about “fit” when considering a potential hire. “Fit” does not mean hiring someone who is the same as your existing staff. Instead, the concept of “fit” might be better understood by thinking of a jigsaw puzzle, where the pieces mesh together but where each piece is unique and contributes something that is otherwise missing. Here are some things to think about to help you find the right person for the job.

- **Understand what constitutes diversity.** Diversity is a broad concept that implies inclusion of the many characteristics that differentiate us from each other. Sometimes these characteristics affect our view of the world, our experiences, and our ways of relating to our surroundings and each other. At the FAS, we value the many perspectives that arise from a variety of cultures, races, gender, religions, national origins, ages, physical and cognitive capabilities, sexual orientations, and other ways we identify

ourselves. By hiring a diverse staff, you will have access to different perspectives that can optimize your team's capacity.

- **Recognize your own biases, both conscious and unconscious.** We all have certain leanings or preferences—often called biases—and often we are not even aware of them. Focus on uncovering your own biases, so that they won't get in the way of your making the best hiring choices. For example, do you tend to “tune out” those with foreign or regional accents? Feel uncomfortable around people with disabilities? Make assumptions about graduates of religious schools, Historically Black Colleges, or women's colleges, or about scholarship in women's or minority studies? Believe that a younger person will be quicker and more creative than an older person? It is worth the effort to uncover your own biases; once they are out in the open, you will be able to consider whether your image of the “perfect candidate” is affected by your particular preferences rather than the actual qualifications and competencies needed for a position, and you will be able to judge candidates on their individual merits rather than on your own conscious or unconscious responses to their characteristics. A good place to start, in identifying your own biases, is with these Implicit Association Tests on topics including age, gender, sexuality, and disability at: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/selectatest.html>.
- **Evaluate the diversity of your current team.** To find the best “fit” for your team—that missing jigsaw puzzle piece—first take stock of the characteristics currently represented on your staff. Ask yourself these questions:
 - › What are the diversity strengths in my department?
 - › How can I build on those strengths?
 - › What are the diversity challenges in my department?
 - › How can I address those challenges?
- **Include FAS Human Resources in your planning.** Before launching a recruitment campaign, discuss your hiring goals with your HR Consultant and/or a member of the FAS HR Diversity Team (including your Affirmative Action Liaison) or FAS Recruitment Services (see [page 55](#)). This will help assure that all parties involved in the hiring process will consider your department's current demographic profile and note if there are Affirmative Action goals associated with the position. If there are Affirmative Action goals, the recruitment strategy should reflect the required good faith efforts to have a diverse pool of applicants.

Proactive diversity recruiting: the importance of networking

To improve your chances of attracting diverse candidates when job opportunities arise on your team, start recruiting now, by networking with people and groups that are likely to lead to diverse talent—and continue to network. Women in non-traditional fields and professionals of color in particular are highly sought-after as employees, and when you are ready to hire, you are likely to face competition from other would-be employers. Developing a diverse slate of candidates—particularly for more senior level positions and those requiring specialized knowledge, such as IT—may take time. By networking continuously, you can build relationships that will serve as a feeder for underrepresented talent across disciplines and interests, and will give you an advantage when you are ready to hire. In particular, seek out opportunities that create face time with

potential candidates—and remember, every connection made is an opportunity to promote FAS commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Diversity Networking—Where to Go and What to Do

Networking is a continuous, broad activity that can occur anywhere and anytime. To make connections to the diverse communities from which potential staff may be identified, be aware of these resources:

- Professional organizations representing diverse groups ([page 20](#)), such as the National Black MBA Association.
- Diverse affinity groups at Harvard
<http://www.hr.fas.harvard.edu/pages/community-and-special-interest-groups>
- Conferences, seminars, job fairs, and networking events. Many of the resources listed in *Diversity Recruitment Resources* ([pages 18-21](#)) announce and sponsor such events.
- Online professional social networking media, such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Joining online groups relevant to your department and taking an active part in them will increase your networking opportunities. (Search for the women and minority subgroups within these professional social media sites, for optimal diversity outreach.)
- Your own diverse friends, neighbors, and colleagues.

How to promote the FAS and Harvard to network connections and potential candidates

It's not enough to locate potential diverse new hires; you also have to convince others to work for you in your department/center and at the FAS. It may help to include the following “talking points”:

- **Our commitment to and progress in hiring for diversity.** For example, “Since 2007, the percentage of FAS minority staff has been increasing at a faster rate than ever before, from about 16% in 2007 to about 19% in 2010. (*Your HR Consultant can provide up-to-date statistics*). We know we need to do more, and are committed to continuing our efforts to hire, support, and engage minority staff.”
- **Proactive recruitment efforts.** These include the creation of internal and external diverse pipelines, including:
 - › the *Year Up* internship program, which is a national program that provides urban young adults with education and support to develop professional careers in IT and finance. Interns are placed in FAS departments for a 26-week period, during which they receive training and mentoring from Year Up coach advisors.
 - › the Research Administration Services Internship Program for college seniors, which has a goal of transitioning these interns to FTE positions in Finance, HR, and RAS following internship;
 - › Harvard's *Administrative Fellowship Program*, a University-wide fellowship program that provides talented professionals - particularly from ethnic minority groups - an opportunity to learn leadership and work in a significant academic administrative role in the Harvard community for one year. Sponsoring an external recruit (a Visiting Fellow) is an excellent way to build

a management pipeline. For information about AFP, see <http://diversity.harvard.edu/pages/fellowship>.

- › working with diversity recruiters; and
 - › equipping hiring managers with our *FAS Staff Hiring Toolkit: A Guide for Department Administrators and Hiring Managers*, which includes chapters on hiring diversely.
- **Developing and advancing career opportunities.** FAS programs with this goal include:
 - › Harvard’s *Administrative Fellowship Program*. In addition to bringing external talent to Harvard, as described above (Visiting Fellows), AFP’s “Resident Fellows” program component recognizes existing administrative staff of color who demonstrate leadership potential. This component was designed to enhance professional development and networking opportunities for underrepresented minority professionals at Harvard, and to encourage these professionals’ career mobility and advancement. Fellows participate in a seminar series in addition to a full-time work assignment. The overall goal of the education program is to encourage Fellows to assess their own career development and to generate strategies for advancement.
 - › the *FAS Career Plus* Program provides career coaching and competency development for up to seven strong-performing and highly-motivated FAS staff members. The program looks for talented mid-level FAS staff members (job levels 56-58), especially ethnic minorities and others who may contribute to the diversity of FAS leadership. A core program goal is to build a diverse talent pipeline within FAS.
 - **Maintaining an inclusive work environment.** You might mention:
 - › *FAS Managers’ Essentials* program, which includes a session dedicated to “*Valuing Differences and Promoting Inclusiveness within FAS*”;
 - › staff focus groups to assess inclusiveness;
 - › FAS-wide and departmental “*Diversity Dialogues*,” such as the “*Bystander Awareness Workshop—The Role We All Can Play in Creating an Inclusive Community that Respects Diversity*,” and
 - › Harvard’s diverse affinity groups
<http://www.hr.fas.harvard.edu/pages/community-and-special-interest-groups>.

Recruiting diversely for an open position: posting the position

To attract a wide range of diverse candidates, you will need to cast a wide net. This means:

- **Recruit externally, to access an adequate and diverse pool.** Our Diversity Recruitment Resources ([page 18](#)) can serve as your guide.
- **In developing job descriptions for posting, be clear, but as broad as possible in describing the competencies and experiences needed for the job.** Avoid describing the job so narrowly that all but a small group of job-seekers will view it as attainable.

Read more about the process of posting a job ([page 9](#)).

If your initial applicant pool does not include a meaningful number of diverse candidates (including women and those of color), reevaluate your job postings and repost if warranted. This is especially important if the job is underutilized for women and/or minorities (has Affirmative Action goals).

Selecting candidates for consideration: screening and interviewing

As you follow the general steps of selecting candidates for your open position, here are some tips to help ensure diversity in your candidate pool and enhance your interviewing and selection process.

- **Select an inclusive interview team.** In selecting an interview team, consider including people who will bring diverse outlooks, and who are respectful of different cultures and characteristics. Recognize the potential to bring unintended biases to the process, and address this by having a clear and open discussion among team members before beginning the interview process.
- **Use the screening process to include rather than exclude candidates, to avoid missing attractive candidates.** In reviewing qualifications, consider how each applicant might enhance diversity in the department and university-wide. Some applicants may expressly identify themselves as diverse; in other cases, a resume or application may reflect diversity affiliations such as membership in a diverse organization or attendance at a Historically Black College, or a women-only or disability-focused school. If after screening candidates you find that there are only a few diverse candidates remaining, take a fresh look at those who have been passed over, to make sure that you have not overlooked any potentially attractive candidates.
- **Avoid making assumptions about a diverse candidate’s ability to conform or “feel comfortable” on your team or in the position.** For example, do not assume that a female candidate would not be compatible with your all-male team, or that an African-American candidate would not be able to relate to your largely Caucasian constituents.
 - › Focus first on the candidate’s similarities to, rather than differences from, the way your staff and their colleagues and constituents approach their work. If your constituents are fast-paced, does the candidate have a similar style? If your staff is direct with each other, does the candidate demonstrate that he or she is comfortable with such communications?
 - › Next, consider whether the candidate’s differences matter to the work he or she would do, and how those differences might actually enhance your team and its efforts.
- **Avoid prematurely labeling one or more of your candidates as the “most promising” until all candidates have been considered.** This will help ensure that all qualified candidates receive equal consideration.
- **Prepare yourself with answers for questions diverse candidates are likely to ask.** Diverse job candidates often ask important questions aimed at helping them determine whether an organization is truly inclusive and supportive, and whether they will be comfortable in a position. Be prepared to answer these commonly-asked questions:
 - › What are my chances for progressing/advancing my career here?
 - › Do you have a formal mentoring program and/or career development programs?

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- › What does the FAS/ Harvard do in terms of community outreach efforts to partner with diverse groups?
 - › Do you have employee affinity groups that focus on the needs of people like me and other groups?
 - › Are managers trained to communicate with and manage diverse employees?
 - › What initiatives has the FAS/ Harvard participated in regarding diversity?
 - › Does the FAS/ Harvard have formal diversity initiatives and programs in place?

Even if a candidate does not ask these questions, you may volunteer information that may help inform the candidate of your—and Harvard’s—sincerity in welcoming diversity. FAS Recruitment Services can help you to answer questions and offer information.