

Best Practices in Faculty Search

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The logo for 'Advance at UNM' is centered on the slide. It features the word 'Advance' in a large, italicized font, with 'Adv' in purple and 'ance' in orange. Below it, the words 'at UNM' are written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a light beige oval background.

Advance
at UNM

Goals of Faculty Search

- ▶ Recruit excellent faculty
- ▶ Retain excellent faculty
- ▶ Project a positive image of UNM to scientific and scholarly communities in U.S. and abroad

Federal law vs. UNM policy and procedures

- ▶ U.S. Civil rights laws and educational amendments prohibit discrimination and require universities to be fair and to offer equal opportunities
- ▶ Universities decide what this means and how to put it into practice
- ▶ Evolving “best practices” (and “worst practices”) determine what the “law” means in each organization

ADVANCE and Reform of Faculty Search at UNM

- ▶ UNM procedures should conform to national best practices
- ▶ Retain our excellent faculty by responding to grievances
- ▶ Advance our excellent faculty

Four stages of search

- ▶ Formulating the position description or ad
- ▶ Search committee
- ▶ Screening and evaluating applicants
- ▶ On-campus interviews

1. Position descriptions or job ads

- ▶ Actively recruit candidates
 - ▶ All department members should treat this as a year-round activity
 - ▶ Don't assume people aren't interested or won't move!
- ▶ Describe job in broadest possible terms
 - ▶ Narrow qualifications → people self select out of the pool
 - ▶ Broad qualifications → more people self select into the pool
- ▶ Include “cues of belonging” in ad
 - ▶ “this is a family-friendly institution”
 - ▶ UNM has dual career policies
 - ▶ This school or college is partnering with ADVANCE at UNM to recruit and retain excellent faculty
- ▶ Analyze how your department or unit represents itself online

Potential candidates will look at department and university websites. You should therefore examine your unit's webpage and consider the following:

- ▶ Is there enough information available on the website for potential candidates?
- ▶ Is it easy for them to acquire this information?
- ▶ Does the website portray the department as an open, accessible, friendly place?
- ▶ Does the website portray Albuquerque as a fun, diverse, inclusive community, with great weather and abundant natural beauty?

2. Search committee

- ▶ Include a diverse range of background, experiences, perspectives
- ▶ Establish a process and timeline for screening and evaluating candidates ahead of time, before the files come in
- ▶ Adopt procedures so all can have voice and influence
- ▶ Collect and review data on composition of your pool and how it compares to the national Ph.D. pool

Make the search a satisfying and professional process for everyone!

Minimizing the effects of group dynamics

To include everyone and prevent some folks from dominating the discussion:

- ▶ Develop and distribute an agenda before the committee meets.
- ▶ Allocate time to each committee member.
- ▶ Randomize order of committee members to start speaking.
- ▶ Start each meeting by outlining goals.
- ▶ End each meeting by summarizing the discussion.
- ▶ Designate one or two committee members to present a minority opinion.
- ▶ Large committees may consider using clickers to record votes anonymously.

3. Screening applicants

- ▶ Monitor adherence to pre-established criteria and processes for evaluating candidates and narrowing the pool
 - ▶ Develop strategies to apply the criteria fairly to candidates in different situations
- ▶ Work to minimize the effects of evaluation biases
 - ▶ Presence of women and minorities on committees does not on its own solve the problem
 - ▶ Avoid evaluative language such as “intuition” and “fit”; explain what you mean in terms accessible to everyone
 - ▶ Avoid relying on “proxy” indicators of accomplishment, such as prestige of Ph.D. institution, number of publications or grants, reputation of advisors, or citation count
- ▶ Consider conducting 12-minute virtual interviews with semi-finalists to help decide whom to invite to campus

4. Campus visits

- ▶ Inform candidates ahead of time about what the visit will involve, so they can prepare
- ▶ All interview visits should include the same components
 - ▶ Ask all candidates if they would like to schedule any personal time during the day
 - ▶ Offer information about parental leave, spousal hiring, child care, schools, etc. to all candidates
- ▶ Pay attention to research findings on what behavior has been more and less effective in campus visits
- ▶ Everyone who meets the candidate should complete an evaluation form immediately after their interaction

Dos and don'ts of campus visits

- ▶ Do:
 - ▶ Warm and frequent attention from the department chair
 - ▶ Punctual communication; sticking to a hiring and decision timeline, and explaining deviations
 - ▶ Provision of information about work-life balance, dual career opportunities, city environment, etc.
 - ▶ Respectful and interested treatment of partners and other family members
- ▶ Don't:
 - ▶ Contradictory information from chair or other senior faculty
 - ▶ Apparent disorganization or lack of unity in the department or unit
 - ▶ Comments about race or gender, and not scientific excellence, as influences on recruitment
 - ▶ Questions about personal circumstances, such as marital and family status
 - ▶ Interactions with candidates' partners in ways suggesting that the partner is not valued

- ▶ For more information, see the toolkit on best practices in faculty search, available at: <https://advance.unm.edu/resources/>
- ▶ Following these guidelines will make your search a more pleasant experience for everyone, and enhance UNM's reputation for excellence at home and abroad.