

Excellence and Diversity in College of Engineering Faculty Recruitment: Recruiting an excellent and diverse candidate pool.

Currently, there is a significant disparity in student/faculty demographics in engineering. For instance, in our college, approximately 23% of our undergraduate students come from underrepresented groups, while approximately 32% are women. In contrast, only 8% of our faculty members are from underrepresented groups, and 22% are women. This discrepancy has major implications for how our students view themselves and the opportunities available to them.

Numerous studies show that academic excellence and student outcomes are greatly enhanced when the faculty demographics are representative of student populations. This document offers guidelines for building a larger and more diverse pool of applicants to ensure that the best candidates are in the pool and will add diversity to the College. Much of this material is adapted from *"Searching for Excellence and Diversity: A Guide for Search Committees"* by Eve Fine and Jo Handelsman, published by WISELI: Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute.

Common misconceptions on diversity: To build a diverse pool of applicants, it is important for the entire department to engage actively in efforts to build a diverse applicant pool and hold an open discussion on diversity at the beginning of the search. Common misconceptions on diversity are listed below.

- 1. Quality and diversity are opposing objectives:** We do not recommend sacrificing quality for diversity. Numerous studies show that diverse faculty members are recruited when the applicant pool is enlarged and diversified. Diverse faculty members bring new perspectives and ask research questions that enhance knowledge and academic excellence in departments. Diverse and excellent faculty members can help attract and retain URM students and enhance the educational experience of all students - minority and majority. Search committees should not only be responsible for including highly qualified diverse candidates in the applicant pool, but also for ensuring that the department, college, and university know that the candidates were selected based on merit. Critically, every person hired should know that they were hired because they were the best person for the job.
- 2. Absence of women and minorities in a field:** Though women and URM scholars may be scarce in some fields, it is never the case that there are none. As the search committee builds its pool, it must actively seek women and URM applicants. Data on numbers of women and URM Ph.D. recipients in different engineering fields are available at <https://nces.gov/surveys/earned-doctorates/2022>

Guidelines for actively building a diverse pool of applicants

- 1. Advertise broad searches.** Narrowly defined searches not only limit underrepresented candidates due to pipeline issues, but may also limit our ability to consider candidates with diverse profiles. Be very clear and thoughtful about what is actually "required" and what is "preferred". Pay close attention to language used in description of the position. Gender neutral terminology such as 'accomplished', 'successful', 'committed' are preferred over stereotypically masculine attributes such as 'aggressive', 'forceful', and 'competitive'.
- 2. Expand evaluation criteria to include aspects of diversity.** Pay careful attention to the required statement on Contributions to Diversity and Inclusion. It is recommended that the committee carefully evaluate the applicants' experience teaching or mentoring diverse

students and ability to contribute to diversity at the department/ college/campus/discipline level.

3. Develop an active recruitment plan.

- a. Attend, advertise and recruit applicants at professional meetings and societies targeted to women and URM scholars.
- b. Identify fellowship programs (for example UC President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program) that aim to expand representation of women and URM scholars in the professoriate.
- c. Actively identify and contact applicants with diverse backgrounds

3. Expand pool of applicants

Strategies for cultivating a diverse pool of applicants for future searches: To recruit applicants from underrepresented groups, we encourage all faculty to cultivate professional networks that include scholars from underrepresented groups. Suggested practices for establishing and expanding inclusive professional networks include:

1. Faculty members attending conferences should:

- a. Make conscious efforts to establish collegial relationships with women and URM scholars.
- b. 'Cultivate' promising scholars who present at the meetings.

2. Ensure that speakers from underrepresented groups are well-represented at department seminars.

3. Establish professional relationships with colleagues at institutions with a proven record of graduating women and URM Ph.D. students.