



Dr. Yvette Murphy-Erby shares her faculty recruitment experiences.

[CHALLENGE THE SENTIMENT HELD BY SOME THAT SEARCHING FOR A DIVERSE CANDIDATE MEANS YOU ARE LOWERING YOUR STANDARDS; MAINTAIN THE SAME HIGH STANDARDS.]

[REMEMBER THAT THE EXPERIENCES AND RESEARCH AGENDAS OF DIVERSE CANDIDATES MAY BE NON-TRADITIONAL IN NATURE. HOWEVER, JUST BECAUSE THEIR EXPERIENCES ARE DIFFERENT, DOES NOT MEAN THEIR EXPERIENCES ARE LESS-THAN.]

Tips from the Trenches:

Faculty Recruitment Strategies

Recruiting diverse faculty is a deliberate endeavor. Dr. Yvette Murphy-Erby shares the following secrets to attract qualified and diverse applicants:

PREPARATION: Planning ahead is essential

- I. Avoid the biggest mistake of all; saying or believing, "There just aren't any qualified diverse candidates".
- II. Be careful to not let traditional and dominate paradigms hinder the process of hiring a diverse candidate. Challenge the sentiment held by some that searching for a diverse candidate means that standards are lowered; maintain the same high standards.
- III. Be clear about what the university has to offer diverse candidates.
III. Remember that relationships are the key to successful searches!
 - a. Form relationships prior to receiving search approval. For example, find creative ways to get potential candidates to campus even when you are not conducting a search; once people visit they tend to appreciate all the UA has to offer. You can issue an invitation to present, conduct a guest lecture, or have a faculty member with a similar interest reach out to engage a potential candidate in a collaborative effort (i.e. write a paper; present at a workshop, etc.). Be sure to take recruitment items when attending the annual national meeting. Send cards, pens or other recruitment incentives to individuals of interest in the years prior to graduation.
 - b. Host a conference around a theme that is central to an area that would be important for your next department hire. The conference gives potential candidates a chance to put the experience on their *curriculum vitae*, to practice presenting their research, and to network with UA faculty. The conference also allows the department to see the candidate present their material, form a relationship with the candidate, and to further assess their interest in the candidate.
 - c. Encourage faculty members to identify students and post-docs that are potential "stars" in their area of interest; ask faculty members to stay in contact with these students at regular intervals.
 - d. Host "get-to-know-you" dinners/lunches at conferences.
 - e. Form relationships with the graduate or PhD program directors at other universities; these partnerships are mutually beneficial as they want to place their students.
 - f. Help your faculty members understand the value of having a diverse faculty and how students, the program, the scholarship and the university will benefit.
 - g. Develop relationships with other programs or departments (i.e. African and African-American Studies, Latin America Studies, women and gender studies etc.) that might have an interest in diverse hires. Offer to cross list classes, engage in joint appointments, and participate in other collaborative efforts with these departments or programs.

ADVERTISING YOUR POSITION

- I. Advertise in venues that target diverse candidates (diverse issues, Southern Regional Educational Board Doctoral Scholars, etc.).
- II. Word of mouth is an efficient and cost effective method of advertising, engage your entire faculty in spreading the word.

SCREENING AND INTERVIEWING

- I. Remind the interview team/faculty that they may naturally “feel more comfortable” with candidates that are like themselves and less comfortable, and therefore more critical, of diverse candidates. Encourage everyone on the team to be on the lookout for these feelings and how they might affect decisions. Challenge these realities by, asking, “Are our concerns about this candidate driven by the fact that this is a diverse candidate”? It’s important to ask this and other hard questions when assessing candidates.
- II. When candidates come for a visit make sure they feel comfortable
 - a. Arrange for them to meet alone with diverse faculty and diverse students from within and outside of your department and encourage that faculty member to be transparent about the pros and challenges they have faced on campus.
 - b. Include a diverse student on the interview team; they bring a valuable perspective.
 - c. When arranging meetings with diverse faculty consider demographic similarities such as gender, age, single-parent with young child vs. single parent with teenager, sexual orientation, etc., because the challenges they encounter may vary.
 - d. Be prepared to help the candidate learn about or be exposed to the social aspects of our community.
 - e. Host a reception and invite diverse members of the community to participate.
 - f. Be clear about all the resources the UA offers that can help them to succeed.
 - g. Ask candidates to express their concerns or hesitations about the university or NW Arkansas; try to respond to those during the visit.
 - h. Follow up and show interest after the visit, people are likely to come where they feel “wanted”.

RETENTION STRATEGIES

- I. Have systems in place to make sure the new hires will be successful
 - a. Mentors in the department, outside of the department, and in the community are important for retention; assign mentors for different functions (writing, teaching, external funding etc.)
 - b. As soon as the position is accepted, arrange connections by creating or sponsoring opportunities for the new hire to connect with their community.
 - c. Encourage the continuation of a previous mentoring relationship; perhaps offer to fly the new hire once a year to meet with a former mentor or dissertation chair; offer a stipend to that mentor to work with the recent grad on completing a paper.
 - d. Provide opportunities for the new hire to travel in the early years; especially if the person moved here by him or herself. Encourage them to “go-home” over the breaks during the first year transition period. Try to provide some type of summer funding the first year or two. It may be helpful to attach some type of on-campus activity to a small portion of the summer money; this will deter the likelihood of them spending the *entire* summer away from campus.
 - e. Before making an offer, discuss in DETAIL what this person needs to succeed and strategize a plan to address the needs. Do not make an offer if you are not committed to helping this person succeed; the reputation of failure can be far-reaching and may haunt your department for years.
 - f. The department chair and the hire should devise an action plan for success TOGETHER. The plan should include goals, timelines, activities, and responsibilities for the new hire, the department, department chair etc. Progress towards this plan should be reviewed regularly and amended as needed.
 - g. Make sure the person is meeting regularly with the department chair, a faculty peer, and someone outside of the department.
 - h. While it is important for the candidate to be engaged on the campus and in the community; help them to avoid getting bogged down with extra service; help them to balance their responsibilities.