Inclusive Hiring Practices for Staff from the Office of Diversity & Inclusion

The following articulation of some of the college’s foundational principles for shaping its community, written by Amherst’s Board of Trustees two decades ago, provides a compelling guidepost as we work to bring talented staff to Amherst who are more demographically representative of the diversity of our student body and the country. “...The college’s commitments both to distinction and to inclusion have brought to Amherst a long line of extraordinarily talented students and scholars who have enriched our campus, our country and the world. Amherst is a community that draws its strength from the intelligence and experience of those who come here to learn, to teach, to work. We reaffirm our goal of fashioning the Amherst College community from the broadest and deepest possible range of talents that people of many different backgrounds can bring to us.”

The success of our college depends on the staff’s participation in this recruitment effort. We seek representation of all forms of diversity, including, but not limited to, race, religion, ethnicity, ability, gender, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, and country of origin. Data suggest that the use of strategic and imaginative methods of recruiting individuals results in candidate pools that are much more likely to be demographically representative. The approach that we take to building candidate pools must be disciplined, rigorous, ongoing, and systematized.

In furtherance of the goal of diversifying the staff, the steps outlined here should be considered the standard practice for all searching departments.

Departments are asked to work on the following projects on a constant, ongoing basis:
1. Maintain a list of programs that produce graduates in your discipline, broadly defined, that are known to produce job candidates who are more demographically diverse.
2. Maintain a list of pathway programs that can help you find viable candidates for positions in your department.
3. Maintain a list of professional associations (both in the field and more broadly) that compile and house lists of candidates by diverse characteristics. If possible, join the list serves of such groups to establish a regular system of updates and communication.
4. Maintain a library of conference programs to help identify professionals-of-interest as either potential candidates or as key references for identifying staff who are more demographically diverse and other candidates.
5. Maintain a database of potential candidates who are more demographically diverse at all stages of their careers whom department members have met through their professional networks. The database should be updated regularly.
6. Maintain a database of Amherst alumni who are more demographically diverse and contact them to make connections and obtain referrals. Encourage alumni who are pursuing careers in higher education to consider returning to Amherst as staff. Encourage current students and alumni who are more demographically diverse to pursue careers in higher education.
7. When department members attend conferences, they should make every effort to meet professionals in their fields who are more demographically diverse. The names of professionals with whom staff meet should be entered into the departmental database.
8. Maintain ongoing contact with potential candidates in the database.

**When building the candidate pool after a position has been opened, do the following:**
1. Write ads that describe the position in the broadest terms. Keep in mind that a certain amount of experience may potentially take the place of a higher degree.
2. Weave language, competencies and specific duties related to diversity, equity and inclusion into the job description.
3. Avoid standard tag-lines in job ads, but rather incorporate D, E & I into both the position duties and requirements.
4. Use online tools (such as [https://textio.com](https://textio.com)) to test for potential bias in language and ensure neutral language to reach the broadest possible audience. Use they/them pronouns as opposed to s/he to ensure inclusivity.
5. Send all ads to Amy Rondeau ([arondeau@amherst.edu](mailto:arondeau@amherst.edu)) for final editing. Amy will ensure that ads are shared with the Director of Inclusive Leadership, who will review for inclusive language.
6. Share the ad widely, including posting in professional organizations serving demographically diverse populations and with career centers serving demographically diverse students and graduate students.

**When preparing the search committee to screen candidates, do the following:**
1. Develop a rubric or matrix that specifically articulates what is necessary for a successful candidate, allowing all members of the search team to have the same understanding of what to look for.
2. These criteria should come directly from the responsibilities and competencies articulated in the job description.
3. Put into context information that may not indicate the potential for success (such as the prestige of the institution attended), and consider redacting identifying information such as name, identity-based affiliations, etc.
4. Consider the ability of the candidate both to add intellectual and experiential diversity to the department and to work successfully with diverse students and colleagues as important selection criteria for all candidates (regardless of their own demographic characteristics).

**When preparing first and second round interviews, do the following:**
1. Standardize the interview process so each candidate is asked the same questions in the same order, ideally by the same people.
2. Avoid conversational interviews, but rather develop questions directly from the rubric/matrix so that each question allows the committee to evaluate the candidate’s skills and abilities as they directly relate to their ability to perform the job and their potential to bring insight to the College.
3. Mitigate implicit bias by allowing yourself enough time to read application materials, knowing and being on the lookout for your own biases, and practicing constructive
uncertainty (challenging yourself when you find yourself making judgements or reaching premature conclusions). You may find it useful to raise awareness of biases at https://implicit.harvard.edu/

**When candidates have been hired, do the following:**

1. Share information about development opportunities for new staff. These opportunities include resources for staff trainings, Colleague Resource Group, and other programs intended to retain diverse talent.

Finally, think proactively. Consider pipeline initiatives that may diversify your office in the short term through internships or apprenticeships, and can bolster the diversity of the field overtime. Even if your outreach efforts do not result in an appointment that enhances diversity at Amherst, research shows that the more diverse a qualified applicant pool, the stronger the overall hire, regardless of the identity of the hire. Additionally, these efforts get the word out that Amherst is serious about recruiting and retaining a diverse staff, aiding us all in future searches.