

Policy on Hiring and Retention - Faculty of Medicine, University of Ottawa

Preamble:

Increased faculty diversity is a desirable objective on many fronts. A diverse faculty is important for training our future doctors and scientists, for addressing health care disparities in our community and for improving the care of our most vulnerable citizens. When a workforce reflects the demographics of the community that it serves, it leads to increased opportunities, increased access to healthcare and greater sensitivity to the needs of under-represented minorities within that community. It results in greater patient choice, greater trust in the healthcare professions and better compliance by patients and caregivers.

The purpose of this policy is to identify best practices and procedures that should be followed to improve faculty hiring and retention strategies, in order to create and maintain a diverse and inclusive working and learning environment that reflects the demographics of our population. Promoting the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion will support increased participation of under-represented groups* and ensure the following:

- We have a more satisfied and productive workforce
- There is less turnover and less absenteeism
- There is better job satisfaction and improved wellness (reduced stress levels)
- We meet the equity and diversity targets set by the university and by funding and government agencies
- We provide better health care due to increased understanding of the needs of marginalized groups
- We meet the accreditation standards set for our medical school programs

In order to achieve these outcomes, the Faculty will ensure that this policy is communicated to all members of search committees by including it in a training package that is given to committee members. In addition, the Faculty will institute a support system (details below) aimed at the long-term retention of faculty members, in order to maintain a diverse workforce and minimize additional costly recruitment efforts. Our goal is to develop a diverse workforce that is representative of the Canadian population.

**Under-represented groups refers, but is not limited, to the groups identified in the Canada Employment Equity Act - women, visible minorities, indigenous peoples and people with disabilities – as well as LGBTQ2SA+ individuals, men in female-dominated disciplines and Francophones.*

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1. Hiring Process:

A. Position description

Prior to drafting the description, enlist feedback from stakeholders on the needs of the organization, and the types of expertise required. Identify both hard skills and soft skills that will be assessed. Once this feedback is secured, draft a position description. The description should include:

- Title and responsibilities of position
- Educational and work experience requirements (including which requirements are mandatory and which ones are considered assets)
- Remuneration statement
- Information on the department, university and/or city
- Language requirement (In order to fulfill our bilingual mission, it is important to establish whether the position necessitates a fluency in both English and French or if bilingualism is present enough in the particular department or section).

The position description should use gender neutral language as much as is feasible (e.g. the candidate, the applicant, they (rather than he/she)), and include a statement that reinforces the Faculty of Medicine's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion. This statement may vary, depending on the nature of the search. An example is provided below:

The University of Ottawa Faculty of Medicine is an equal opportunity employer. While the ultimate selection of the successful candidate will be based on merit, we are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. We encourage applications from women, members of visible (and non-visible) minorities, Indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities. As a bilingual institution in a francophone minority setting, we also encourage applications from French-speaking candidates. If you are invited to continue in the selection process, please notify us of any particular adaptive measures you may require. Any information you send us will be handled respectfully and in complete confidence.

B. Advertising

The position should be advertised widely in order to ensure that it is viewed by a diverse pool of candidates. Suggestions include, but are not limited to:

- Professional organizations:
 - eg. Canadian Federation of University Women - <http://www.fcfd.org/>
 - eg. Federation of Medical Women of Canada - <https://fmwc.ca/>
 - eg. Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women - <https://www.criaw-icref.ca/en/>
 - eg. The College of Family Physicians Canada - <https://www.cfpc.ca/Home/>
 - eg. Canadian Association of University Teachers - <https://www.caut.ca/>
 - eg. Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada - <http://www.ipac-amac.ca/>
 - eg. Black Physicians' Association of Ontario - <https://bpao.org/>
 - eg. University Affairs - <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/>
 - [Médécins francophones du Canada - www.medecinsfrancophones.ca](http://www.medecinsfrancophones.ca)

- [Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne – www.acufc.ca](http://www.acufc.ca)
- [Association canadienne française pour l’avancement des sciences \(ACFAS\) – www.acfas.ca](http://www.acfas.ca)
- Scientific journals, including ,when relevant ,journals in French
- The Faculty of Medicine website
- Universities serving under-represented or diverse populations
- Personal mailings to colleagues, encouraging them to recommend candidates from the diversity categories

C. Search and selection committee

There are a number of criteria that are encouraged to ensure a fair and equitable selection process and to promote diversity and inclusion:

i. Composition and Preparation of Selection Committees:

- Committee members should be selected with diversity in mind
- Unconscious bias training should be mandatory for all search committee members. This training should be renewed every two years.
- Criteria for selection and evaluation should be discussed with all members prior to the examination of the applications so that everyone uses similar metrics to evaluate candidates
- If possible may include a person from human resources

ii. Reviewing of applications:

- Shortlisting of candidates should not proceed unless there is a diverse pool of candidates, or an attempt has been made to diversify the pool. A pool of candidates should reflect the goals of increasing diversity within the profession. If diversity does not exist in the pool, delaying shortlisting and interviews until diversity has been achieved is perfectly acceptable. Diversity can be increased by:
 - a. Making diversity a requirement for headhunting firms
 - b. Using active recruitment to diversify the pool of candidates (e.g. encouraging faculty to contact members of their networks to support and advance minority candidates)
 - c. Advertising widely (see section 2 above).
- A list of prohibited questions should be provided to members of the committee to ensure that there is no perception of discrimination by candidates. Questions that seek information on any of the protected grounds identified in the Canadian Human Rights Act (i.e. race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered) are illegal. These topics should be avoided, unless the candidate brings them up.
- Conflicts of interest should be declared by all committee members in regard to any applicant.
- Where possible, the same questions and scenarios should be presented to each candidate, in order to reduce bias and to allow a direct comparison of answers and capabilities.
- Committee procedures should be strictly confidential, and all discussions should occur in the presence of all members of the search committee (and not informally outside the committee meeting).

iii. Post-committee procedures:

- Data collection on the reviewing and interview process is highly recommended. This should include the number of applications received, the diversity of the candidates (where this information is available), which candidates were invited to interview, and who was offered the position.
- Debriefing of the committee should occur in order to provide practical information for future committees – what worked, what didn't work, what can be done differently next time.

2. Retention Process

Whereas the process of recruitment is episodic, the process of retention is a long-term investment, which begins by welcoming, and integrating as soon as the candidate is hired, and continues throughout the new recruit's employment. Retention activities are crucial for all hires, but especially important for diversity hires. There are numerous studies which suggest that diversity hires are more likely to leave an organization (REFs). The reasons are numerous. Diversity hires are often 'solo' faculty who may not feel included and who may not easily integrate into the culture of the organization. There is the perception by some within the organization that the diversity hire did not obtain the position based on merit, and this can lead to discrimination and exclusion, making it difficult for diversity hires to obtain the resources and the support needed to succeed. Additionally, in organizations where diversity is limited, there is increased pressure on diversity hires to take on more than their share of administrative (committee) work. This work may not be adequately valued when promotion or leadership initiatives are considered, further disadvantaging the diversity hire and increasing the chances that the individual will not be retained.

There are a number of actions that should be followed, in order to address any potential problems and to ensure the satisfaction, success and retention of the recently hired recruit.

A. Pre-arrival activities

- Send welcome letter with information on orientation activities, email setup, ID badge and keys, office and lab space, parking arrangements
- Provide assistance to allow a relatively stress-free transition (information on housing, schools, family doctors, dentists, moving companies)

B. First week orientation activities

- Announce and welcome the new hire internally through a website, general email or newsletter
- Schedule tours of the organization
- Introduce the new hire to colleagues and administrative staff
- Provide contacts for questions re: organizational procedures (travel, finance, ordering, etc.)
- Assign mentors
- Identify support services (eg. Help with grant application and grant review, workshops offered through CPD, support offered by Affaires francophones, etc.)

C. Ongoing activities

- Set up mentoring activities – ensure that new hire meets regularly with mentors to ensure smooth transition and continued guidance
- Maintain regular contact
 - a. eg. Bi-monthly contact for 1st year and then annual meeting with Department Head and/or Program Director to discuss what is going well, what is challenging, what are the needs of the recruit, how the organization can help)
- Ensure that there is a professional development plan for the new hire (ie. They are familiar with promotion workshops, teaching workshops, grant writing workshops)
- Discuss opportunities for advancement and leadership, and sponsor or encourage the individual to explore these opportunities

D. Organizational activities

While many of the activities discussed above will help the new hire to feel engaged and included, fostering a general climate of equity and inclusion within the Faculty of Medicine will help with employee retention, will improve the reputation of the university as a desired employer, and will help with recruitment and with fund-raising. Examples of efforts that can help to promote an equitable climate include (but are not limited to):

- The promotion of family friendly policies:
 - eg. Develop clear and well-disseminated guidelines for parental leave
 - eg. Encourage consideration of family responsibilities in seminar and meeting schedules
- The re-evaluation of merit criteria, which may have inherent biases that can disadvantage specific groups:
 - Publications and grants are historically used to assess excellence and are used as criteria for promotion and evidence of scholarly contribution. This strict and narrow definition of excellence minimizes the importance of the excellent contributions to the Faculty by teachers and senior administrators, who have huge impacts on the day to day function of the Faculty. Solo faculty may be particularly over-burdened with committee work due to the need for diversity on committees. This work should be considered for promotion or merit-pay increases, especially since the increased commitment takes time away from traditionally evaluated criteria such as publications and grant applications.
- Regular climate surveys and employee satisfaction surveys with appropriate follow to ensure equal opportunities for all (including diversity hires), competitive benefits and salaries
 - Surveys provide important information on required improvements in organizational procedures to ensure employee satisfaction and engagement. It is important to follow-up on suggestions provided in these surveys so that employees feel their input is valued.
- Mandatory training related to diversity, equity and inclusion

E. Exit interviews for individuals leaving the organization

In order to identify issues with retention, all faculty leaving the institution should undergo an exit interview. The reasons for leaving the organization should be discussed in order to identify key issues and help in implementing changes that can support retention in the future.

Committee

Executive Leadership Team
Faculty Council (ELT)
Executive Committee of the Senate

Approval Date

April 21, 2020