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## Inclusion and Equity Committee Diverse Recruitment Task Force 3 “Qualitative/Community-Specific Data Gathering”

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# Inclusion and Equity Committee

## Diverse Recruitment Task Force 3 “Qualitative/Community-Specific Data Gathering”

Avery Boddie, Kristen Costello, Leah Howd, David Trillo, James Cheng (IEC representative)

### Introduction

The Diverse Recruitment Task Force 3 was charged to “focus on a qualitative environmental scan of UNLV University Libraries’ current hiring practices” with the goal of understanding the staff perceptions of current cultural climate and recommending potential areas of focus for future changes. Task Force 3 initially planned a formal qualitative research project with IRB approval around interviewing Libraries’ staff on their experiences with the hiring process. However, this was changed to an informal town hall-style information sharing meeting after reviewing the timeline.

Two meetings were held: one on November 19th, 2019 which focused on attendees’ reflections and experiences with the hiring process, and one on December 9th, 2019 which focused on attendees’ feedback on the recommendations of the other two task forces. Both meetings were approximately an hour long with about 20 attendees broken into four or five small groups at each meeting; a five minute recap of the Diverse Recruitment project was provided at the beginning with the rest of the time devoted to discussion. Notes were taken by task force members and then grouped by topic. See appendix for pre-prepared questions for each meeting.

### Recommended Goal: Create Consistency and Standardization of Hiring Practices

All groups in the meetings spoke about the need to create consistency in hiring practices. However, what specifically needed standardization was varied. Some actions to meet this goal include:

- Require consistent diversity and inclusion language in all future job ads
- Develop rubrics at the same time as the job description
- Require all searches to provide interview questions in advance
  - Providing interview questions in advance was seen helpful to the candidate as mentioned in the comments of several groups, though it was acknowledged that this practice is not required but recommended.
- Require someone from HR to ‘monitor’ and provide guidance for each search committee
- Provide welcome bags to every on-site candidate even if they are local candidates

- Provide further information about the tenure process when applicable, particularly the “invisible” expectations
- Several groups brought up mandatory trainings or workshops as a method to create consistency in the hiring process. Some wanted everyone on a search committee to have some sort of required training beforehand, while other groups thought search committee chairs should have some sort of extra training. Topical areas for trainings include:
  - Anti-bias training
  - How search committees work
  - Creating and using rubrics, a best practices workshop
  - Creating and using interview questions
- Reconcile differences in hiring best practices between campus and library
  - Those who attended the campus’ *Best Practices in Faculty Searches & Hiring Workshop* noted differences in what is recommended by the campus and what the Libraries practice. For example, the campus workshop recommends severely restricting what can be discussed during a candidate’s lunch or whether asking for pronouns is acceptable. Clarity on these issues should be developed.
- Further investigate and provide transparency on the hiring process for classified staff
  - It was noted that the majority of recommendations were focused on the academic/administrative hiring process. While many of the recommendations could be easily applied to the classified staff hiring process, more investigation should be done into this area. Because many of the attendees of these discussions are rarely a part of classified staff hirings and/or do not supervise classified staff, there seemed to be a gap in knowledge of this area which limited discussion.

## Recommended Goal: Minimize the Burden Candidates Carry

All groups in both meetings recognized that candidates face many obstacles during their job search. The Libraries can help minimize many of these burdens up front and create a welcoming environment which acknowledges and values the effort a candidate brings during a search. The following recommended actions will minimize burdens from the candidate to the Libraries:

- Create and give candidates a portfolio of search committee members before the telephone interview/on-site visit
- Ask, but not require, candidates invited for an on-site visit for their name pronunciation, preferred pronouns, or any dietary restrictions
- Provide accommodations for interviews around religious holidays, any mobility needs, accessible hotel rooms, and those coming from different time zones
- Explicitly create and list break times on the candidate’s interview day schedule
- Provide information beforehand on...
  - The existence of the Libraries’ Inclusion and Equity Committee and its activities

- Ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, or accessibility-related communities and organizations and groups on campus and in Las Vegas
- PDQs, if available
- Develop a method for candidates to choose to meet one of these organizations or groups during their on-site interview
- Offer candidates the option to tour the city or see something of interest to them
- Develop a method to pay for a candidate's travel costs up front instead of reimbursing them after their interview
- Require a statement of diversity with their applications.
  - It was argued that this helps candidates by giving the candidate to reflect and think in depth about their relationship to diversity instead of being 'surprised' and having to answer on the spot. Having a candidate provide a statement of diversity can also help lead to varied responses. This statement could then be rolled into their annual review.

## Recommended Goal: Conduct Ongoing and Transparent Assessment

Several groups noted the difficulty of knowing whether the Libraries' hiring practices needed improving or not without previous data and feedback with which to compare. Assessment of the Libraries' efforts in the area will be needed to understand whether any implemented changes have succeeded or not. Additionally, these assessments must also be accessible to the organization to create a shared understanding of the current state of diverse hiring and its progress. The following actions help further this goal:

- Solicit feedback from search committee members after each search
- Solicit feedback on the search process from candidates after their on-site visit
- Current staff who leave should have the opportunity to provide feedback through exit interviews
  - It is currently unknown if the campus consistently conducts exit interviews or what happens to this information if they do
- Create standards of privacy regarding the collection of feedback regarding diversity hiring
  - Feedback should be confidential, deidentified, and reported in aggregate
  - Feedback should not be collected in ways which may potentially harm the respondent, e.g., a supervisor should not conduct an exit interview with their direct reports
- Track if different positions attract different types of candidate pools
- Create a new question in the candidate feedback form in Qualtrics specifically for individuals who have one-on-one meetings with a candidate, e.g., supervisors, deans

## Recommended Goal: Reinvestigate the Formation and Composition of Search Committees

An area of considerable discussion was the formation and composition of search committees at the Libraries. There were differences in opinion on several areas with no clear consensus. For example, the role of the supervisor on the search committee was questioned. Some argued that the position supervisor should not be on the search committee because they have too much inherent influence on discussion and decision making and that they do not necessarily need to be on a search committee because they have one-on-one meetings and/or dinner or lunch with the candidate. Another area of difficulty was about having diverse representation on each search committee and not burdening those individuals. Further reinvestigation of search committee formation and composition should be a long-term discussion and cultural change.

## Miscellaneous Items

Discussion during both meetings were varied and not everything could be grouped meaningfully together. The following are an assortment of recommendations and comments:

- Do not conduct multiple interviews with multiple candidates on the same day
- The Libraries should be prepared to answer questions about diversity, e.g. UNLV's student composition or whether the staff is as representative as the student population
- Expect candidates to use their networks to ask about experiences of working at the Libraries. Thus, retention is still an important component of the hiring process as potential candidates may make soft inquiries to current staff about working at the Libraries before even applying
- Bias continues to exist and has been observed during search committees, such as in the search committee discussions or in the anonymous comment feedback of the surveys.

Additionally, some noted areas of bias include:

- The notion of professionalism, such as someone using the phrase "not professional"
- A sense of snobbery such as whether a candidate's previous work was in academic libraries or not
- A sense of ageism such as comments about a candidate being either too young or too old
- Credentialism such as whether a candidate's previous position or degree were from an Ivy League or state institution, online or on campus institution, or tenure track or non-tenure track institution

## Conclusion

Developing a shared understanding and direction for improving the Libraries' diverse recruitment practices is difficult. It only begins with sustained dialogue and careful consideration

of everyone's feedback. The four goals developed by this task force (Create Consistency and Standardization of Hiring Practices, Minimize the Burden Candidates Carry, Conduct Ongoing and Transparent Assessment, and Reinvestigate the Formation and Composition of Search Committees) are overarching areas which were brought up consistently throughout the town hall discussions. These goals, however, are not exhaustive, but a beginning in developing more inclusive, fair, and welcoming hiring practices for diverse candidates to the Libraries.

We thank the members of the Diverse Recruitment Task Force 1 and Task Force 2 for their work. Their thoughtfully created reports were the basis for our discussions and could not have happened without them. We also thank the engagement of those who attended the town hall discussion we held.

## Appendix

### **November 19th, 2019 suggested discussion questions:**

These can be from either the perspective as a candidate or as a member of the search committee.

- What information about diversity and inclusion efforts at the Libraries and the University were shared with you?
- Were there things related to diversity and inclusion that you wanted to talk about but were not able to?
- Did you feel that there was any conscious or unconscious bias during your search? E.g. microaggressions.
- Which aspects of the hiring process (from job description, to interviews, and throughout negotiations and job acceptance) were particularly successful?
- Which aspects of the hiring process (from job description, to interviews, and throughout negotiations and job acceptance) were particularly unsuccessful?
- What changes would have improved the overall hiring process?
- What additional resources or tools would you have liked to have had access to during the hiring process?
- Is there anything else you'd like to say about your experience with the hiring process?

### **December 9th, 2019 suggested discussion questions:**

1. Look through the bullet points and mark what you think we are already doing in our candidate searches.
2. Of the remaining points, which are more:
  - a. Administrative (job posting, providing sample questions)
  - b. Interpersonal (implicit bias training, being mindful of comfort during on-site good)
3. What are the easiest points to address? Most difficult?
4. Does anything strike you as missing from the list?