Status of Women and Equity Committee's Recommendations for Implementing Best Practices in Hiring: Discussion Document

This document was prepared after SWEC's initial Best Practices in Hiring Document (see Appendix One) received approval from the Faculty Relations Committee.   It is premised on a mutual acceptance of two objectives (1) the implementation of best practices training and (2) the development of an interactive online site that will provide real time resources, feedback and data gathering. The goal of this document is to facilitate discussions that will move UWaterloo toward fulfilling these objectives.

Implementing best practices will facilitate efficient faculty searches that result in the successful recruitment of an excellent and diverse faculty. We believe these recommended changes to be merely procedural, putting into practice the principles of Policy 76.

Best Practices Training

Goal: The goal of this training is to enable the University of Waterloo to develop and implement hiring practices that facilitate efficient searches that identify and recruit excellent faculty from a diversity of backgrounds, including women and men, and members of underrepresented groups.

SWEC has two recommendations to facilitate moving forward on this item.

1a: SWEC recommends that, in hiring departments, a subset of the DACA (or SACA) that includes the department chair and at least one additional member of the DACA, take part in this training. These members would have the responsibility of briefing the full committee and the rest of the department on key issues.

1b: SWEC recommends that members of UARC (or its replacement) be trained. SWEC also recommends that high-level administrators in each faculty and in Central Administration be invited to take part in training sessions.

1c: SWEC recommends that information about best practices in hiring be made available to all faculty members.

Benefits of these recommendations include:

1) Training chairs allows them to be informed leaders with regard to the implementation of best practices in their departments.

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2) This training can help chairs develop a wide range of departmental norms and practices that can improve the job satisfaction and job success of all faculty members. For example, an awareness of how gender biases can act below the level of conscious awareness (implicit bias) and negatively impact assessments of women faculty not only facilitates hiring excellent faculty, it also helps chairs implement fair performance reviews, and fair distributions of service and teaching responsibilities among all faculty members.

3) The inclusion of an additional DACA member and availability of information to other faculty, is useful because more people with direct access to information improves information flow to the rest of the DACA and the rest of the department, and increases the likelihood of this information being incorporated into departmental cultures.

4) The inclusion of an additional DACA member has the effect of developing potential future department leaders. It is part of succession planning.

5) The inclusion of UARC members or any equivalent committee is necessary as their mandate is to oversee whether hiring has followed best practices.

6) The inclusion of administrators in one of these training sessions allows administrators to make use of this training in the leadership development, promotion and hiring that they oversee.

7) The inclusion of administrators in one of these training sessions demonstrates to the faculty the importance of this training.

Alternatives to this recommendation include:

1) Train the entire DACA in hiring departments.

   a. Benefit: More people with direct access to the training improves the likelihood that this training will have a significant impact of departmental practices and culture.

   b. Con: As the number of people being trained increases, the challenges of scheduling and the cost of training increases.

2) Train a member of the DACA but not the department chair in hiring departments.

   a. Benefit: this does not add to a department chair's responsibilities.

   b. Con: If only one person on the DACA is trained it is possible for them to convey an idiosyncratic understanding of this training to the DACA and the department and to have difficulty convincing their colleagues of its importance.

2: SWEC recommends that for at least the first two years of this training UWaterloo hire an outside expert who is a faculty member with expertise in best practices in faculty hiring. In addition to training administrators and DACA members, these outside experts would also train the future trainers. These future trainers would be members of a faculty committee who could then run future training workshops. It is essential that this committee of trainers (1) have a rotating membership so that experienced members could train new members and (2) recruit from across the campus so that eventually there are experts in each Faculty. Depending who is hired into the Director of Equity position and the mandate of that job, the Director of Equity may play a role in this training process that is commensurate with their expertise.

Benefits of this recommendation include:

1) Developing an expanding group of trainers is an excellent way to develop grassroots support and buy-in for these best practices, and so is a good way to influence university culture.

2) We will eventually have trainers in each of the Faculties and these trainers will have a more detailed understanding of the culture of the hiring in their respective departments.

3) The external trainer, as a faculty member with expertise in this area, will have cutting edge research and contemporary best practices to offer UWaterloo.

4) External and internal faculty members with experience doing this sort of training are more likely to be effective because they will have credibility in the eyes of faculty members.

5) It does not entail the indefinite expense of hiring external experts.

Alternatives to this recommendation include:

1) A high-level staff person might conduct this training. This will depend on the mandate, interests, and skills of the future Director of Equity.

   a. Cons:

      i. Challenges with faculty buy-in, and hence lower likelihood of effectiveness.

      ii. Possible lack of experience in faculty hiring, which has key differences from staff hiring

      iii. Challenges finding a staff person who is, and has time to remain, current on the literature in this area.

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b. Benefit: The training can be a regular part of this person's job responsibilities and so would not be contributing to faculty service workload.

2) An external expert might conduct these trainings on an annual basis.

   a. Con: Expense

   b. Benefit: This training would always be up to date.

3) UW faculty members might conduct all of these trainings.

   a. Benefits:

      i. A faculty member with expertise in this area is likely to be credible in the eyes of other faculty members.

      ii. A UWaterloo faculty member will be familiar with the current culture at UWaterloo.

   b. Cons:

      i. There are very few faculty members at UWaterloo with the expertise to conduct these trainings

      ii. Developing and implementing these trainings would constitute a heavy service load.

Real time resources, feedback and data gathering

Goal: To institutionalize best practices through the creation of an online interactive site that facilitates reporting and provides resources and feedback to DACAs throughout the hiring process *without* an increased workload to DACAs.

DACAs will use this site to report the same information that they currently report to UARC. But they will do so in stages as they move through the search processes, rather than at the end of the search. UARC (or a similar faculty committee) will continue to monitor the search for compliance with best practices. But it will do so in a way that allows it to provide constructive feedback when it will be of use to DACAs.

SWEC has three recommendations to facilitate moving forward on this item.

3: SWEC recommends that a working committee be struck to oversee the development of this interactive Best Practices In Hiring Website.

4a: SWEC recommends that UARC (or a similar faculty committee) use this site to monitor and encourage best practices during the hiring process.

4b: SWEC recommends that this committee have the assistance of a senior staff person.

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Benefits of these recommendations include:

1) Having UARC play this role minimizes the structural changes required to implement this site.

2) Having UARC play this role does not involve faculty giving up control over this part of the hiring process.

An alternative to this recommendation:

1. A senior staff person might monitor this site for DACA compliance.

   a. Benefit: this can be part of their regular duties for which they are paid.

   b. Cons:

      i. This may involve decreasing faculty control over this aspect of hiring.

      ii. It may be difficult to find a staff person with the authority to stand up to DACAs or Department chairs if best practices are not being followed.

      iii. Faculty members may question whether a staff person could have an in depth understanding of faculty hiring

5a: SWEC recommends that data from the interactive best practices website, as well as relevant demographic data from the searches, be compiled and reported annually to Senate (as UARC currently reports).

5b: SWEC recommends that IPR create a report of this data that describes the trends in candidate pools and hiring over a five-year period.

1. Benefits:

   a. This will allow the university to measure the effectiveness of the recruitment practices.

   b. This will allow the university to identify departments and faculties that are improving the representation of women and members of other underrepresented groups among their faculty.

APPENDIX   Best Practices in Hiring

The *Sixth Decade Plan* and Policy 76 commit the University of Waterloo to the recruitment of the best faculty through application of the highest standards in faculty recruitment in order to achieve its academic excellence goals.

SWEC believes that there is more the university can do to achieve these recruitment standards, and proposes two specific improvements to aid in more effective, equitable, and efficient hiring of excellent faculty: (1) provide training in best practices to those involved in hiring, and (2) provide real-time resources, data collection, and feedback so that DACAs (and SACAs) can develop, implement and report on best practices throughout the hiring process.

Principles

 (1) Waterloo's hiring practices should be based on established best practices. These should be shared and implemented in all searches. In particular, these practices should ensure that our processes do not fail to attract or select top candidates by inadvertently excluding any social groups.

 (2) The hiring process as a whole should be as efficient and proactive as possible and provide constructive, timely feedback to departments that are hiring faculty.

 (3) We should collect longitudinal data useful for evaluating the effectiveness of hiring practices.

 (4) The more equitable and effective the hiring that results from implementing and monitoring best practices, the more competitive we will be nationally and internationally. Our reputation will be enhanced both by these practices and by the excellent faculty hired.

Proposals

There are countless proven, effective measures Waterloo could implement to improve hiring outcomes. SWEC proposes two, supported by current research, that can be implemented quickly and would have a significant impact on the effectiveness of hiring practices at Waterloo.

1. Best Practices Training

SWEC recommends mandatory training for those involved in hiring processes and decisions. The aim of this training would be to acquaint those involved in hiring with University of Waterloo hiring policies and procedures, and current best practices for academic hiring.

2. Real-time Resources, Feedback and Data Gathering

SWEC recommends the creation of an online interactive site that facilitates reporting and provides resources and feedback throughout the process, to:

- provide guidelines on best practices at the time they are most useful and applicable;

- reduce workload for DACA members by integrating reporting more naturally into the recruiting & hiring process and eliminating assembling of information after the process;

- ensure compliance with university hiring policies;

- enable earlier detection of potential problems and the provision of constructive feedback for improving the process while it can still be modified;

- allow units to speed up the process of sending offers to selected candidates; and

- provide longitudinal data useful for evaluating the effectiveness of hiring practices.