

DRAFT- University of Missouri- Comments on Bylaws regarding Vice Provost and Dean Search Committees – Bylaw 2.2

After reviewing the current approved bylaws regarding Vice Provost and Dean Search Committees, we have several suggestions on how to strengthen them in terms of diversity and inclusion. Because the composition of the search committee is likely to have significant impact on the search process - which could in turn have critical consequences for the outcome of the search - it is vital that issues of composition and task be addressed proactively.

The current requirement that at least two-thirds of the search committee must be tenured faculty has a high probability of having a negative impact on the diversity & inclusion goals at the University. The demographic composition of faculties (by race/ethnicity, gender, age) often changes as instructors transition from untenured to tenured positions, resulting in a much higher percentage of tenured positions (and tenure track positions) being occupied by men - more particularly, white men. This limits the amount of input and impact that women and historically underrepresented can have if search committees are limited to primarily tenured faculty. The following statistics illustrate the disparities in representation between men and women, whites and people of color:

In the US in 2013-

- Women held nearly half (48.4%) of all tenure-track positions, but held just over one third (37.5%) of tenured positions.
- There were 1.5 times as many women in non-tenure track positions as men.
- Asian women held only 4.8% of tenure-track positions, and 2.6% of tenured positions.
- Black women held just 3.7% of tenure-track positions, and 2.2% of tenured positions.
- Hispanic women held barely 2.5% of tenure-track positions, and 2.3% of tenured positions.

Source: <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-academia>

Dr. C.S.V. Turner collected data from 689 faculty searches at 3 large elite public research universities, and identified three best practices for successfully hiring a female and/or historically underrepresented minority faculty member:

1. **Diversity on the committee**
2. **Diversity valued in the job announcement and at the institutional level**
3. **Strong advocate for diversity on the committee**

Source: <https://www.engr.washington.edu/lead/biasfilm/best-practices/>

Based on our research and knowledge, we recommend the following change to Section 2.2:

- 1) If it is still possible to emend the by-laws, reduce the minimum representation of tenured faculty on the search committee from two-thirds to half of the committee. This would allow for more representation from women and historically underrepresented minorities.

In addition, we propose the following as best practices to ensure that the search is conscientious, thorough, and attentive to diversity.

- 2) In order to have the most impact, we strongly recommend that the Provost make the remaining appointments in close consultation with the institution's Chief Diversity Officer (CDO).
- 3) We also advise that the search committee include the institution's Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) as a member, as appointed by the Provost. This will ensure that someone well versed in diversity issues and unconscious bias dynamics is present during the entire process.
- 4) The Provost should consider appointing to the committee some members of the College community who are not faculty, such as individuals from such constituent groups as staff, graduate students, and alumni. These individuals would give voice to other, previously unheard perspectives. Including non-faculty members on the committee would also create another means of increasing the racial and gender diversity of the search committee. (If they cannot be included on the committee itself, it can be helpful to enlist their help in other ways in the search process.)
- 5) At the initial committee meeting, the CDO (and possibly an EEO Officer) should talk with the committee about important protocols to use for a successful search. Some schools call this an orientation, but it can also be framed as a discussion with the committee. The CDO can elaborate on these concepts with the group and also ensure that they are followed during the search process. Emphasis would be on the section of this bylaw that states, "This committee shall work together to develop a strong and diverse applicant pool and recommend candidates for interviews, conduct interviews, solicit and consider feedback from the campus community and ultimately, present their recommendation, including an unranked listing of acceptable candidates, to the

Provost.” When the CDO and EEO Officer talk with the committee at that initial meeting, they can propose in more detail ways to implement these best practices.

Note: among the issues to be addressed in that initial meeting would be how to deal with the intrinsic power dynamics inevitably at play between the various members of the search committee, who differ in rank and status. The establishment of meeting norms and guidelines can facilitate more equal- and more equally valued- participation rates of all committee members. Ground rules that encourage participation from all members (whether spoken aloud or written) can increase the comfort level of all committee members, especially non-tenured faculty, junior faculty, minority, and/or women, who may not otherwise be comfortable advocating for diverse candidates.

- 6) The Provost should not accept a slate of candidates that is not diverse. If the committee is unable to find any suitable candidates from underrepresented groups, first, the committee chair should provide a detailed, written description of what steps were taken to reach out to, identify, and screen diverse candidates, and an explanation of why they were unable to build a diverse slate. Following that, the Provost and CDO should meet with the committee chair to re-evaluate the search process and determine what steps need to be taken to broaden the search.

- 7) Develop well defined evaluation criteria that focus on recruiting and assessing candidates based on key competencies and skills. This will ensure that the hiring process is objective and reduce the impact of unconscious bias from members of the search committee. Include in the job posting and evaluation criteria aspects such as:
 - a. experience working with, teaching or mentoring diverse groups or students, and
 - b. ability to contribute to the institution’s diversity and inclusion efforts, including revising curricula.