Source: Best Practices for a Successful Academic Search: Practical Tips & Resources for Recruiting & Selecting a Diverse Faculty

Office for Inclusion & Intercultural Initiatives
Michigan State University

Enlarging the Pool

NOTE: These invitations, including personal contacts, are desirable during the application period. Formal or informal interviews, however, must not take place until after the advertised closing date of a vacant position.

- Write directly to colleagues to request nominations of minority and women candidates.

- Write to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and tribal colleges to secure lists of faculty in various disciplines and doctoral students graduating.

- Write to persons of color and women one year prior to their completion of a terminal degree program to inform them of upcoming job openings. Letters should clearly state needs and interests of the program and be followed up by telephone calls.

- Consider women and persons of color who have performed successfully as lecturers, instructors or research associates in the department and at other institutions.

- Use the visiting scholar program to create opportunities for women and minorities. This contact may pave the way for recruitment to a regular tenure-system position.

- Write position postings to ensure that they attract the widest possible range of candidates. For example, a labor history position might be written to indicate a specialty in labor and/or women's history. An urban sociology position might include familiarity with urban minority groups as one of its desired qualifications.

- Follow up contacts at professional meetings with recruitment letters that describe your department and demonstrate interest in an individual’s candidacy for faculty positions.

- Contact women and persons of color directly to inform them of vacancies or anticipated vacancies and invite their application, as opposed to sending a letter to a school asking that they communicate the vacancy to potential women and minority candidates. Often, outstanding potential candidates do not apply for advertised positions; a member of the search committee must approach them. If an individual declines a nomination or does not respond to your letter of inquiry, you should telephone the person to determine if the reasons for declining can be addressed and resolved. A telephone call will help demonstrate to a potential candidate that your department is serious about its efforts to have a diverse faculty.
• Consider a faculty exchange program with a Historically Black, Hispanic or tribal college. Consider cooperative working arrangements with such institutions.

• Encourage faculty who will be attending conferences, particularly ones that attract large numbers of women and persons of color, to combine visits with recruitment efforts for present and future positions.

• Send small teams of faculty, students, and administrators for visits to campuses where potential minority and women students/applicants reside.

• Keep resumes of prospective candidates on file.

• Search for senior scholars who may be employed outside of academe but who, through cutbacks or simply the desire for a career change, may be well suited to a faculty position.

• Contact women and minorities who have received significant grants or professional recognition and ask for the names of promising women and minority scholars.