

Year 1 Public Description of Work for  
Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Washington University in St. Louis

**Diversity Advisors**

**This Action Applies to Rubric Item(s):**

1. **Embedding the Values of Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect into Hiring, Promotion, Advancement, and Admissions**

**Description of Work:**

First established in 2009, the Faculty Recruitment and Hiring Process Improvement Team at the Washington University School of Medicine (WUSM) within the past year (2019-20) has expanded its scope beyond searches for leadership positions to impact the general faculty recruitment and hiring through active collaboration with the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. This expanded process improvement team is now actively training **Diversity Advisors** to participate in all faculty search committees with the goal of enhancing the faculty search and hiring process to reduce bias and broaden the diversity of the candidate pool. This process improvement around faculty recruitment and hiring aligns directly with Action Collaborative (AC) goals to “take explicit steps to achieve greater gender and racial equity in hiring and promotions and to improve minoritized representation at every level.”

This WUSM team for process improvement around leadership recruiting and hiring was first established by the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs (ADFA) as a result of the Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI) leadership group from the University of Wisconsin visiting Washington University to present two days of workshops on improvement of the faculty recruitment and hiring process with *excellence* and *diversity* of applicants as the bottom line objectives. These workshops were very impactful and were attended by more than 65 mid-senior rank faculty and leaders at the School of Medicine. Following the lead of the WISELI team, we developed a short presentation (less than 1 hour) to be given to search committees at the outset of each search process. The presentations are delivered in person by one of the process improvement team members, of which the ADFA has been the constant member. Other members of the team have been committed faculty members who have voluntarily served for varying periods of time. The presentation focuses on search process best practices and on implicit bias and its effects on searches and hiring and combines a locally developed presentation platform and parts of the impactful Association of American Medical Colleges’ (AAMC) e-learning seminar, entitled “The Science of Unconscious Bias and What To Do About it in the Search and Recruitment Process.” <https://www.aamc.org/what-we-do/mission-areas/diversity-inclusion/unconscious-bias-training>

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This search process improvement activity appears to be quite effective. Since the introduction of these activities, the School of Medicine has appointed women (5/20) and persons of color (1/20) as Chairs of Departments. Prior to this process improvement action, in the greater than 130 year history of the School of Medicine, no women had ever been appointed as permanent department heads.

Limitations in the number of individuals at the School trained to give these presentations in the first decade of our work forced the process improvement team to restrict its scope to WUSM leadership position searches. However, following the recommendations of our Senior Leadership Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, co-directed by the ADFA, plans were enacted this past academic year (AY-20) to broaden the scope of this process improvement to all general faculty searches. In order to accomplish this goal, we have actively collaborated with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) including the Associate Vice Chancellor/Associate Dean for DE&I and her diversity and inclusion leaders. Working together over the past year, we developed a training program which has been piloted with many stakeholder faculty volunteers. These included faculty members who have been actively engaged in DE&I efforts through the years, some of whom are officially designated as “DE&I Liaisons” between their departments and the Office of DE&I. We have gathered their feedback and incorporated it into revisions of the training program.

Another recommendation of the Senior Leadership Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and implemented four years ago was a new formal **Faculty Hiring Policy** which requires formal search committees for all new faculty recruitments.

<https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.wustl.edu/dist/4/1323/files/2018/10/Faculty-Hiring-Policy-adopted-by-Executive-Faculty-February-2016-2i6e5z7.pdf>

This policy motivated the development of the diversity advisor training kit and program. Each search committee must include an officially designated “**Diversity Advisor**” for the purposes of keeping the committee focused on issues around diversity, equity and inclusion. The following is copied from the larger policy document cited above.

*“Each search committee should typically be composed of a minimum of three faculty members and should appoint one of the search committee members or add a staff member to serve as a “diversity advisor” to the committee. In addition to the usual functions of the search committee, the faculty member serving in this role will monitor the procedures and outreach efforts of the committee, review the diversity of the applicant pool and group interviewed, compile data and report back to the committee and Hiring Authority. The diversity advisor also will assist the Hiring Authority in posting the search description in the Hiring Summary form. Staff members on faculty search committees serving in the role of “diversity advisor” will not participate in other functions of the search committee including decision-making regarding candidates.”*

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In addition to tracking the diversity of candidates, assisting the hiring authority in composing job descriptions that appeal to a wide range of applicants is part of the work of the enhancement of search committee processes through the **Diversity Advisor** program for all faculty searches.

The presentation on unconscious bias for training Diversity Advisors and for search committee members in general will be kept on a School of Medicine intranet site. Hence, it cannot be accessed from outside our organization. A “Hiring Authority Conversation Checklist” and “Diversity Advisor Checklist” included in the Diversity Advisor toolkit are included behind this [link](#).

**Website for further information (if applicable):** <https://diversity.med.wustl.edu/>

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