# University of Arizona

# Strategic Hiring Priorities Initiative (SPFI)

**Relevant Rubric Areas**

Embedding the Values of Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect into Recruitment and Hiring

**Description of the work**

The implementation and review of university system-wide practices that create opportunities for strategic hiring that is rooted in faculty activities that represent University of Arizona inclusive excellence values. This initiative embeds DEI values in recruitment and hiring (guided by Faculty Affairs) through the development of inclusive applicant pools, and a DEI focused vetting, review and strategic funding initiative.

The Office of the Provost developed a targeted hiring initiative, **Strategic Priorities Faculty Initiative (SPFI)** which provides support to recruit and hire faculty who advance inclusive excellence priorities of the university. The SPFI program provides three years of temporary additional funding to recruit and hire tenure-track or continuing status track faculty. SPFI is part of the intentional multi-pronged approach to embed diverse representation and inclusion in our faculty hiring culture. This is a targeted hiring opportunity that is not linked to competitive search processes.

SPFI began in 2009, and has provided University financial support to academic departments to support hiring of full-time, tenure-track faculty or continuing track academic professionals who enhance the University of Arizona's distinctive strengths in advancing Inclusive Excellence via as outlined in the University's Purpose and Values. The focus of this program is to support hiring of new faculty whose work addresses pressing issues of inclusive excellence in their teaching, research and service. A few of the pressing issues identified include topics from the Black Lives Matter movement, being a predominantly white Hispanic Serving Institution, having the highest percentage of Native Americans among all U.S. states who are still underrepresented on campus, and issues facing women in STEM. The review and vetting process considers not only the relevance of faculty research/scholarship for these topics, but also how their teaching increases institutional capacity to serve diverse students, as well as how their professional service serves to advance inclusive excellence goals for the institution or their discipline.

From the SPFI university materials, the following language identifies candidates whose work will be considered:
    1) foster new and creative ways of involving our diverse student body in an accessible and engaged educational experience that is aimed at producing highly capable graduates who will meet the state's critical workforce needs,

2) develop new approaches to discoveries and cutting-edge interdisciplinary research, scholarship or creative work that benefits our diverse communities and addresses complex global problems, and

3) expand collaborations with community and business partnerships, including those involving traditionally underserved groups.

Departments may also request SPFI Recruitment Funds to invite candidates to present their work to the department, meet colleagues and visit campus. The purpose of these funds is to develop relationships with potential faculty candidates. Amounts up to $1,500 will be allocated for approved recruitment costs, which may include items such as an honorarium for a lecture, travel for a campus visit, or involvement with special interest groups or national organizations to develop relationships for future recruitment. After review and vetting of candidates, the department prepares an application. This application considers not only the candidate CV, but also a description from the department about how the candidate's work meets the SPFI criteria, their vetting of the candidate, letter of support from the Dean, and the plan for mentorship. The application is reviewed by a university level committee, and final decisions are made by the Provost. Typically, SPFI Hiring Funds cover 75% of the salary of the candidate in the first year (up to a maximum of $100,000), 50% in the second year, and 25% in the third year, with units taking on all the salary costs in successive years. This is a long-term commitment by the department and college, with three years of launching funds for the hire by the Provost.

Since the program began, 68 faculty have been hired with currently 55 active faculty with a retention rate of 80%. The retention rate of faculty hired through the SPFI program is 5% higher than the all faculty retention rate. Between 2008-2020, an average of 7 SPFI offers were made each year, yielding an average of 4-5 new SPFI faculty. The last two years have shown a significant increase in SPFI application activity and department commitment. In 2020-2021, 19 offers were made, yielding 12 new SPFI faculty. Thus far, at midpoint in 2021-2022, 11 SPFI offers have been made.

In Fall 2020, a survey of all SPFI faculty was conducted. This was one of the most detailed surveys conducted since the program began and provides a guidepost on how to improve the program. A comprehensive report summarizing years 2008-2020 of the SPFI program can be found on the following site:

https://facultyaffairs.arizona.edu/strategic-priorities-faculty-initiative

Based on feedback from the survey regarding faculty engagement, a mentoring component has been added to the SPFI Program. Starting in fall 2021, all new SPFI faculty are paired with a current SPFI faculty member and are connected with mentoring resources offered through Faculty Affairs. New SPFI faculty are also invited to mentoring receptions with university leadership and current SPFI faculty members in an offer to build community and collaboration across disciplines.

https://facultyaffairs.arizona.edu/mentoring

# Year 2 Public Description of Work for
# Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

In Spring 2020, UArizona created a new position, Associate Vice Provost of Faculty Development and hired Dr. Judy Marquez Kiyama as the new AVP in July 2020. In this role the AVP implements efforts that further the aims of the UArizona to excel in its Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) designation through increasing institutional capacity among faculty. The responsibility of the role includes developing equity-focused recruitment and hiring practices. Dr. Kiyama works closely coaching deans and department heads in the preparation of their SPFI recruitment and application processes.

The positive outcomes documented in this report led, in part, to increase of the funding by half a million dollars. This initiative aligns with the NASEM rubric by working to continuously embed inclusive recruitment and hiring practices into hiring processes and expand the networks from which candidates are drawn. While the fundamental initiative began in 2008, there have been an increase in the number of SPFI applicants in most recent years.

> **Website for further information (if applicable):**
>
> https://facultyaffairs.arizona.edu/strategic-priorities-faculty-initiative
>
> **Point of Contact Name:** Kathleen L Melde
>
> **Email Address for Point of Contact:** melde@arizona.edu