Guidelines for Faculty Recruitment
Keck School of Medicine of USC

Goal

An exceptional institution needs an exceptional faculty. We seek to enhance how KSOM identifies, recruits and hires the most talented and diverse individuals to advance its missions. The goal is to develop a process for faculty recruitment that spreads a broad net, incorporates accepted best practices, and mitigates bias in the evaluation of candidates. Those steps to bring new faculty to KSOM will ensure a creative and dynamic intellectual climate that will benefit our students and trainees, our research, our patients, and our community.

1. Opening and Posting Faculty Positions

a. Opening Positions

- Every faculty position must have a Workday requisition and position.
- Departments request a new faculty position by submitting a Request for Recruitment (RR) form to Faculty Affairs, who will post the position in Workday for approval.
- Requests for tenured/track and educational positions require prior authorization (Dean); clinical and research track positions can be posted without prior authorization.

b. Posting Positions

- Once the position is approved in Workday, it is posted in Faculty Application Manager (FAM), the USC faculty recruiting tool for receiving, managing, and reviewing applicants.
- Open positions are posted online at usccareers.usc.edu.
- Applicants submit all application materials through FAM; reference letters are submitted in FAM.
- In specific circumstances, a posting waiver may be requested through the Dean's office for approval by the SVPHA.

c. Position Descriptions and Advertising

- Position descriptions must include USC-approved equal opportunity/affirmative action language.
- Under California Pay Transparency Law SB1162, all position descriptions must include a minimum to maximum salary range. This range is informed by current faculty salaries, external benchmarks, and funds budgeted for the position.
- Ideally, position descriptions should convey a commitment to excellence, equity, and diversity and be screened for stereotype-primed language. Position descriptions and postings should be reviewed with attention to gendered or otherwise biased language such as "assertive, action-oriented leader," or "proven track record". Excellent resources include:
    - Gender Decoder: http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/
    - University of Arizona "Avoiding Gender Bias in Reference Writing": https://csw.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/avoiding_gender_bias_in_letter_of_reference_writing.pdf
- Position descriptions and job postings should be written to attract the widest possible range of qualified candidates; specifically, with appropriately limited "required" qualifications distinguished from those that may be "preferred".
- Job postings should be placed in both field-specific journals and job forums and resources highlighting women and under-represented minorities such as:
    - ELAM https://drexel.edu/medicine/academics/womens-health-and- leadership/elam/job-postings-search-committees/
    - National Medical Association https://career.nmanet.org/
    - Association of American Medical Colleges: https://careerconnect.aamc.org/
    - Women in Higher Education: https://www.wihe.com/
    - HBCU Career Center: http://thehbcucareercenter.com/

2. **Search Committees**

a. **Guiding Principles:**

- Search Committees are required for leadership positions such as decanal positions, chair, vice chair, and division director; tenure-path faculty positions; and other strategically important faculty positions. Open national searches are encouraged for all other faculty positions.
- The membership of the committee should be aligned with a commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration and an inclusive culture.
- The confidentiality of prospective candidates and of search committee deliberations must be respected at all times.
- Search Committees are typically advisory to the hiring authority (e.g., chair/dean); thus, negotiation with prospective candidates is outside of the scope of the committee.

b. **Composition of the Search Committee**

The size of search committees may vary depending on the scope and level of the position for which the search is being conducted; typically, 10-15 members for leadership positions and a minimum of three members for faculty positions. Attention to diversity of gender, gender identity and/or sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability, and professional degree among the membership is strongly encouraged, and should be representative of the composition of the faculty body. Where appropriate, cross-departmental faculty, staff, students and/or residents and other stakeholders should be included. Search committees are encouraged to include a diversity champion or representative. Search committees for leadership positions (e.g., department chairs) should not include individuals (e.g., department faculty) who would report to the person being recruited.

c. **Charge to the Committee**

The hiring authority (dean, chair) should join the initial meeting to charge the committee. This includes an outline of the absolute and desired qualifications and competencies to be included in the position description, institutional priorities for the successful candidate, envisioned timeline, scope, and support for the committee's work, and the imperative of confidentiality. The hiring authority should emphasize seeking a diverse candidate pool and encourage committee members to avoid common cognitive errors that result in biased assessments. The hiring authority may also present their vision for the ideal candidate, the relative merits of technical expertise versus leadership experience in the ideal candidate, and review guiding principles and procedures for the search.

d. **Responsibilities of Search Committees**

- Receive and ensure understanding of the charge to the committee.
- Review and approve position description.
- Develop announcement/ad for the search and prioritize appropriate methods of distribution: e.g., relevant professional journals/websites, targeted letters to appropriate sector of the academic community, and advertising in appropriate venues that ensure broad and inclusive reach of potentially qualified candidates.
- Develop and prioritize evaluation criteria prior to candidate interviews and consistently apply to all candidates. Unconscious bias may cause use of different standards to evaluate candidates. Additionally, evaluators may shift or emphasize criteria that favor candidates from well-represented demographic groups.
- Seek names of potential qualified candidates from a variety of sources such as national conferences, consultation with internal and external field leaders, etc.
- Identify and contact potential candidates.
- Review all submitted materials (CV, cover letter, letters of reference)
- Screen applications for qualified candidates relative to the specified qualifications and essential functions of the position. At the discretion of the committee chair/co-chairs, further screening of a large pool of qualified candidates may be done through audio/videoconferences by a subset(s) of the

search committee through structured questions.
- Select a minimum of 3 or more typically 6-12 qualified candidates to invite for “airport” style panel interviews using structured questions (for most searches, these may be performed through video conferencing).
- Prioritize semi-finalist candidates (typically 3-6) for on-site confidential interviews with key leaders and stakeholders and host a small group dinner for each candidate.
- Collect confidential feedback using standardized evaluation forms and prioritize a short list of qualified candidates.

e. Responsibilities of Committee Chair(s)

The search **committee chair or co-chairs** is/are responsible for setting the frequency of meetings; leading those meetings in an efficient and effective manner; providing brief interim reports to the executive sponsor (e.g., chair, dean) on the progress of the search process; assigning tasks to committee members such as soliciting and reviewing letters of interest and curriculum vitae, conducting screening phone/skype interviews, and serving as host(s) for candidates invited for first interviews.

f. Mitigating Bias in Searches

At the first search committee meeting, the full committee is required to undergo a discussion of unconscious bias led by a certified unconscious bias trainer prior to initiating any part of the search process. In this session, sources of bias will be reviewed as well as best practices to mitigate their influence.

- Job postings and ads should ideally be available for a minimum of three weeks before selecting candidates for interviews.
- Where there is an available database that could widely reach potentially qualified individuals (e.g., a field-specific vice chairs’ organization in the setting of a chair search), these may be used to distribute notices of the position and invite applications.
- Search committee members should also take advantage of their professional networks to solicit diverse, qualified candidates who may not be actively seeking new opportunities.
- Interviews should *not* be scheduled until a diverse pool of applicants that is representative of the field with respect to gender and representation from groups historically underrepresented in medicine (URiM) is identified.

g. “Airport” Style Panel Interviews

- Develop and prioritize evaluation criteria prior to candidate interviews and consistently apply to all candidates.
- Allow for time (typically 5-7 min) for the candidate to describe his/her experience relative to the specific qualifications of the position and reason for interest in the position.
- Panel interview questions should be tailored to the position qualifications and be behavioral based. This method of questioning encourages candidates to describe how they responded to past challenges relevant to the most relevant job competencies.

Examples:

Non-Behavioral Based	Behavioral Based
“How do you usually deal with a difficult student?”	“Tell us about a time you faced a particularly difficult challenge involving a student. What was the situation and what did you learn from it?”
“Would you say you are an innovative thinker?”	“Tell us about a time you had to think outside the box to solve a research goal that proved more difficult than you first thought.”

- Allow the opportunity for the candidate to ask questions of the search committee
- Search committees may consider situational questions, e.g., describing a typical scenario that may arise in the position and ask the candidate to address how he/she would approach such a situation.
- Best practices include distributing the panel interview questions among members of the search committee and having the same committee member ask the same question of each candidate.
- Total panel interview time is typically 45–90 min for each candidate.
- Search committee members should individually fill out evaluation forms on each candidate during and/or immediately after their panel interview. The evaluation form might include a Likert scale to assess competencies relevant to the position. Ideally, evaluation forms should be available in electronic form configured to ensure anonymity of responses.
- Candidates should never be asked questions aimed at determining age, marital/partner status, family planning, gender or gender identity, race/ethnicity/ancestry, sexual orientation, membership in non-professional organizations, birthplace, ability, or religion. Interviewers need to be mindful that candidate dinners are also part of the interview process.
- Debriefing after a panel interview is an opportunity to amplify verses mitigate bias typically at play in group search processes.

h. Search Committee Deliberations

- The chair/co-chairs, with the guidance of the equity liaison, have the responsibility to ensure that interview debriefing discussions and selection deliberations are conducted with an express purpose of mitigating implicit bias.
- Best practices for post-interview debriefings include allowing each committee member to briefly express his/her assessment of the candidate’s competencies relevant to the position description without embellishment. In order to avoid conformity bias (i.e., “groupthink”), all committee members should have this same opportunity prior to group discussion. Varying the order in which committee member discuss their assessments can help to ensure no single member’s view exerts disproportionate influence.
- Attention should be paid to dampen power dynamics in the committee; for example, if a C-suite leader expresses a strong opinion about a candidate, a student or junior faculty committee member may be less inclined to thereafter verbalize an opposing view. Wherever possible, the committee chair/co-chairs should refrain from presenting their own assessments until all members have had the opportunity to weigh in.
- Where biased language may creep into the conversation (e.g., “I’m not sure that as a woman, she would have the gravitas to control that division”), the group should discuss this and reframe the deliberations with the help of the equity liaison).
- The committee should prepare and provide a final report to the hiring authority. Typically, this report will briefly summarize the committee’s process and deliberations and include an unranked list of 2-4 qualified candidates; the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate relative to the position specifications should be detailed in the report. If there was dissent with the final candidate list within the committee, this should be noted. An accounting of self-identified gender and race/ethnicity of the applicant pool and short list should be submitted as an appendix.

3. Hiring Process

- The hiring authority (chair, dean) reviews the list of candidates provided by the search committee and decides whom should be approached as the final candidate for the position.
- The hiring authority may use a “term sheet” to describe details of the offer to the candidate. Term sheets for tenure and tenure track positions and any that include funding from the Dean’s office must be reviewed and approved by the Offices of Finance & Budget and Faculty Affairs before presentation to the candidate.

- When the final candidate is selected, the department submits a Final Candidate Request (FCR) form to the Office of Faculty Affairs, which includes the request to recruit from the chair, statement from the search committee, request for appointment (RFP) form, the candidate's profile of activities, the candidate's CV, and reference letters.
- Candidates for tenured/tenure track positions must be reviewed by the Tenure Review Committee and approved by the Dean. The Provost's Office must be consulted for candidates for appointment at Associate or Full Professor on the tenure track or tenured.
- Faculty Affairs reviews the candidate's materials, obtains necessary approvals (Dean, SVPHA, Finance, Provost's Office, as appropriate), and drafts a letter of offer for review by the hiring authority. Once approved, the letter is signed (Dean, Chair) and sent to the candidate.

Other Resources:

Emory Guide for Search Committees http://college.emory.edu/hr/documents/guide-for-search-committees.pdf

Best Practices for Conducting Faculty Searches, Harvard University
https://faculty.harvard.edu/files/faculty-diversity/files/best_practices_for_conducting_faculty_searches_v2.0.pdf?m=1628525836

Best Practices: Faculty and Leadership Searches. Yale University Office of the Provost. 2016.
https://faculty.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Best%20Practices%20for%20Conducting%20Faculty%20and%20Leadership%20Searches%2009-12-2016.pdf

Rubric for Assessing Candidate Contributions to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, UC Berkeley
https://ofew.berkeley.edu/recruitment/contributions-diversity/rubric-assessing-candidate-contributions-diversity-equity

Johnson SK, Hekman DR, Chan ET. If There's Only One Women in Your Candidate Pool, There's Statistically No Chance She'll Be Hired. Harvard Business Review. April 26, 2016.
https://hbr.org/2016/04/if-theres-only-one-woman-in-your-candidate-pool-theres-statistically-no-chance-shell-be-hired

Biernat M, Fuegen K. Shifting Standards and the Evaluation of Competence: Complexity in Gender-Based Judgment and Decision Making. Journal of Social Issues 2001;57(4), 707-724.
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Uhlmann EL, Cohen GL. Constructed Criteria: Redefining Merit to Justify Discrimination. Psychological Science 2005;16(6), 474–480.
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Behavioral-Based Interviewing: Tools and Templates for Enhancing Candidate Selection. 2008. The Advisory Board Company, Washington, DC.