

# ADVANCE

Office of Faculty Development  
Northeastern University



The following information on good practices for faculty on-campus visits is gathered from focus groups of Northeastern junior faculty hires and from research literature.

## Before the On-Campus Interview

- Advertise broadly, including diversity-relevant professional associations.
- Personally invite a diverse set of scholars to apply.
- Be cognizant of possible bias when reading applications.
- Expand the long list by seriously considering all qualified women and/or underrepresented minority candidates. If possible, avoid interviewing only one candidate from an underrepresented group.
- Provide potentially useful information to *all* candidates invited for an interview (e.g., contact person within HR, dual career process, leave policies, faculty development/mentoring opportunities, living in Boston).

## Develop an Interview Schedule

- Ask each candidate if there are individuals or groups that they would like to meet.
- Include diverse individuals and possible future collaborators from outside your department on the schedule, as well as graduate students. If the candidate will work in a lab, include a lab visit in the schedule.
- Be clear with the candidate about any expected job presentation(s) and allow reasonable time in the schedule for the candidate to prepare before any presentation.
- Send the complete schedule (including the names of people with whom the candidate will definitely meet) to the candidate well before the visit.

## During the On-Campus Interview

- Provide individuals on the interview list with the candidate's schedule, application materials, and a structured evaluation form to be completed by each interviewer for each candidate. Structured evaluation forms are very helpful in avoiding inadvertent bias.
- Inform interviewers that some questions are unlawful/inappropriate to ask: if it doesn't relate the candidate's ability to do the job, it probably shouldn't be asked. Visit the *Resources* page on the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs website <https://provost.northeastern.edu/resources/faculty/>
- If a candidate discloses a disability, have a discussion regarding any needed accommodation.
- For women candidates: include meetings with women faculty and postdocs (not meeting with them may lead them to unresolved questions about the climate for women in the department).

- Ensure that any job presentation is well attended and that the discussion is engaging but not aggressive.
- Include information on university resources that support the candidate's research. Inform the candidate of the timeline for the hiring process and end the visit on a positive note.
- Reimburse the candidate for expenses soon after the on-campus visit.
- Focused attention from the department chair, including hosting social interactions, is viewed positively.

### **After the On-Campus Interview**

- Ask faculty to provide feedback about each candidate immediately after their visit on the evaluation form.
- Establish a process for discussing and voting on candidates that will contribute to unbiased decision-making.
- Personally call all interviewees to inform them of the final decision and remaining decision contingencies.
- Follow up with a formal letter.
- Frequent and prompt attention (by phone and email) from the department chair is viewed positively.
- Department chairs need to negotiate with the candidate's long-term best interest as a primary consideration.

### **Problematic Practices\***

- Contradictory information from the chair and the other senior faculty members.
- Evidence of disorganization or lack of unity in the department's approach.
- Suggestions by department faculty that candidates are not being recruited for their scientific excellence (but based on some personal characteristic, like gender or race).
- Being asked questions about family issues before any offer is made (marital status, planning for a family in the future, etc.); these generated resentment. Such questions are both irrelevant and illegal, and yield inaccurate information.
- Potential department faculty colleagues interacting with the candidate's partner in a way that suggests that the partner is not valued or desirable on his or her own terms.

### **Sources:**

- Focus group discussions with recently-hired Northeastern junior faculty
- Columbia University Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion – Best Practices in Faculty Search and Hiring. [http://facultydiversity.columbia.edu/files/viceprovost/content/after\\_the\\_search.pdf](http://facultydiversity.columbia.edu/files/viceprovost/content/after_the_search.pdf)
- Cornell University Office of Faculty Development and Diversity. <http://facultydevelopment.cornell.edu/department-resources/recruitment/>
- University of California Recruitment and Retention of Faculty Handbook <https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/files/documents/affirmative.pdf>
- University of New Hampshire ADVANCE Program <https://www.unh.edu/advance/faculty-recruiting-resources>
- \* Study of junior faculty at University of Michigan – Positive and Problematic Practices in Faculty Recruitment [http://advance.umich.edu/resources/PositiveAndProblematic\\_RecruitmentPractices.pdf](http://advance.umich.edu/resources/PositiveAndProblematic_RecruitmentPractices.pdf)
- University of Michigan <http://advance.umich.edu/resources/handbook.pdf>