

Faculty Search and Hiring Guidebook

OXY
Occidental
College



INTRODUCTION

Affirmative Action Committee developed this guidebook in collaboration with the Chief Diversity Officer and the Dean of the College. These guidelines are reviewed and updated periodically, and reside in the Office of the Dean of the College.

Occidental College is an Equal Opportunity Employer and complies with all applicable state and federal laws on the matter. The College does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, breastfeeding or related medical condition, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic characteristic or information, military and veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

How to Use the Guidebook

This guide synthesizes best practices from scholarship on equal opportunity hiring (a bibliography of this scholarship is available in Appendix II), as well as procedural materials created by Columbia University, Harvard University, Indiana University, Johns Hopkins University, Stanford University, UC Riverside and Irvine, and University of Washington.

It is intended to support search committee Chairs and Affirmative Action representatives as they provide leadership to the search committee during each phase of the faculty search process. Before the search begins, search committee Chairs and AAC representatives should review the guidebook thoroughly. When starting each new phase of the search, consult the pertinent section of the guidebook as a reminder of processes and procedures. The guidebook will alert you to required elements of the search process, as well as effective strategies for conducting the work of the search committee.

The guidebook includes “Best Practices” boxes designed to highlight both outside resources and internal practices that are particularly effective. “Quick Tip” boxes provide strategic reminders for search committees. Finally, the Moodle icon () alerts search committee members to additional resources available on the Affirmative Action Committee Moodle site.

This guidebook is a living document. At the end of each search cycle, the Affirmative Action Committee will invite feedback from search committee members, search committee Chairs, AAC representatives, and administrative assistants to further refine our procedures.

If you have any questions about the faculty search and hiring procedures, please consult the Dean of the College (hereafter “the Dean”), the Chair of the Affirmative Action Committee (AAC), AAC Chair(s), and/or the Chief Diversity Officer (hereafter “CDO”).

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BEFORE THE SEARCH

Conducting faculty searches equitably and without bias is vital to mission and future of the College. These searches determine the future direction of the college and have a long-term impact on the shape of the curriculum, as well as the composition of academic departments. Search committee members; therefore, ought to take their work on seriously. Therefore, too, departments should understand themselves to be always “searching,” long before a new hire has been formally approved. This section will give advice on the pre- and early phases of any search.

Preparing for the Search

In the early stages of planning for a search, department members should work actively to establish relationships with graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and other scholars in the field who could apply for new positions or be nominated as Target of Opportunity (TOP) candidates.

Some strategies for identifying and nurturing potential candidates include:

- Attend conference sessions where junior scholars give papers, introduce yourself to them after the sessions and exchange contact information.
- Get involved in professional mentoring programs for junior scholars.
- Regularly review author bios in journal publications.
- Invite potential candidates to teach a course(s) or give a guest lecture to introduce them to the department and the College.
- Meet with the CDO (or AAC Chair) to discuss the anticipated search, and to discuss an approach for identifying diverse candidates who can contribute to the diversity of the faculty.

New Position Application: Academic Planning Committee (APC) Process

In the application for a new position, the department will be asked to provide logistical information about the new position, intellectual and curricular justification for the position, details about how the position supports the college’s institutional mission, vision, and strategic plan, and to include both data and concrete plans for attracting underrepresented candidates to the position.

The APC will evaluate the department’s proposal using a rubric based on the components of the new position application, as outlined above. The Affirmative Action Committee Chair is a member of the APC (*ex-officio*) who, with the Chair of APC, provides support and training to eliminate bias in the evaluation of new hire proposals and who is particularly attuned to

applications' plans for attracting underrepresented candidates. At the conclusion of evaluative discussion, APC members provide their rankings of proposals to the Dean.

✂ **BEST PRACTICE:** When applying for a new position, the department will be asked to identify discipline-specific data on underrepresented scholars in your field, and specify the subfields in which you find the largest numbers of minorities and women. Departments may be able to find data on field-specific underrepresented scholars through the NSF: <https://www.nsf.gov/statistics/2016/nsf16300/data/tab13.pdf> Department's should consult with the CDO for assistance with the data.

When possible, the College urges departments to conduct faculty searches in subfields that will generate the largest pool of underrepresented applicants.

The Search Plan

Congratulations! Your position request was approved! Notifications normally occur early in the Spring semester prior to the search year, which will allow time for department faculty to attend a meeting with the President and the Dean and the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs to discuss the upcoming hire. The purpose of this meeting is to consider the moment of transition for the department, and to ensure that all parties agree on the basic considerations regarding the position (e.g., area of specialization, rank, facilities needs, or required infrastructure support).

The first step in the search process is for the department to assemble the search committee, which will select a member to serve as the Chair. The search committee Chair may or may not be the department Chair, but would (when possible) be a member of the "home" department of the approved new position. The search committee Chair and search committee, in collaboration with other members of the home department, draft the Search Plan.

The search plan is submitted to the Dean, (with copy to mmancera@oxy.edu), the AD for Faculty Affairs, the CDO, and the AAC Chair at least one month prior to the first advertisement deadline. After receipt of the search plan, a meeting will take place among the ADFA, the Chair of the search Committee, and the Chair of the hiring department (if different), the CDO, and the AAC Chair. The purpose of the meeting is to review the inclusive hiring aspects of the upcoming search, but will also consider basic search logistics to ensure that each search is set up to succeed. Following that meeting, a revised search plan must be resubmitted to the Dean's Office for final approval.

Note that the search timeline sometimes means that the wording for the search ad needs to be approved prior to this meeting taking place. In general, committees should strive to engage with the Dean's office, the CDO, and the AAC Chair regarding the search process as early in the process as is feasible. No search ad can be placed without approval of these



You can find sample search plans on the AAC Moodle site.

parties or their designees. A complete search plan consists of the following components (*see below for detailed instructions on each component*):

1. Search Committee Membership – List of Members
2. Position Criteria
3. Job Advertisement
4. Outreach Plan – Active Recruiting
5. Search Procedures
6. Search Timeline
7. Appendices

1. Search Committee Membership

The search committee members should be listed at the top of the search plan. The search committee is traditionally composed of approximately six members. The search committee must include a representative from the Affirmative Action Committee and at least one faculty member from outside the home department. The remaining committee members will include the search committee Chair and faculty members from the home department (or, when relevant, from an ancillary department directly involved in the search). [*For a discussion of the roles and responsibilities of each search committee member, see below.*]

 **BEST PRACTICE:** In deciding the composition of the committee, be mindful that search committees with diverse membership, and committees with an expressed commitment to identifying a diverse candidate pool, are more likely to develop such a pool (National Research Council, 2010).

2. Position Criteria

Before drafting the job advertisement, the search committee must identify the key characteristics of the position and the qualifications of strong candidates. What areas of subspecialty are desired or necessary? What past experience is desired or necessary? What aspects of teaching or mentoring are most significant? What courses must they be able to teach? What contributions to the department are desired or necessary? What other skills, talents, or evidence of success will the search committee look for in applications to identify the strongest candidates? Consider listing required *and* preferred criteria for the position. What rank are you hiring at or, if the position is open rank, what reasons do you have for preferring candidates that would be hired at a particular rank? In short, anticipate what qualifications or experience the search committee will find the most compelling when reviewing files.

The position criteria in the search plan should align with the position description articulated in the new position application. In other words, search committees should not change—whether slightly or radically—the parameters of the position that was approved by APC and the Dean without an express request made and without approval of the Dean at this stage.

One criterion that every search committee must include is an applicant’s demonstrated commitment to, past evidence of, and future plans for creating and advancing equitable opportunities for learning and mentoring, especially for underrepresented students.

After listing and briefly describing these criteria for the position, the search committee should list and briefly discuss the materials (i.e., the evidence) they will request in order to assess applicants according to these criteria.

🔄 **QUICK TIP:** Search committees need not ask for evidence related to every criterion in the initial job application. Rather, you may assess the most important criteria in the first deliberation and then ask for additional materials in subsequent stages of the search (at the semi-finalist stage, at the on-campus stage). This strategy will not only help to avoid overburdening search committee members who are reviewing dozens of files, but is also more humane to job applicants preparing materials for many institutions (see Cattapan 2017).

3. Job Advertisement

In this section, please include a draft job advertisement, as well as a list of the places where the ad will be posted (with timeframe of posting and cost of each posting).

When drafting your job ad, remember:

- The key characteristics of the position, qualifications of strong applicants, as well as the evidence that will be used to assess these key characteristics and qualifications (all of which are identified in the previous section) should structure the job ad;
- All job advertisements must ask for a teaching philosophy using the following language:

A statement of teaching philosophy that includes a discussion of your demonstrated commitment to, past evidence of, and future plans for creating equitable opportunities for learning and mentoring especially for underrepresented students

All job advertisements must also include the following Equal Opportunity Employer language:

Occidental College is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not unlawfully discriminate against employees or applicants on the basis of

race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, breastfeeding or related medical condition, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic characteristic or information, military and veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by State or Federal Law. We strongly encourage all underrepresented candidates, especially women and persons of color, to apply.



The mission of the College and sample mission-driven statements are available on the AAC Moodle site.

- The Affirmative Action Committee strongly suggests that job advertisements incorporate the mission of the College or a mission-driven statement in your job ad.

- If you have a long and short version of your job ad, you must include both in your search plan.

All job ads should be posted on the Occidental College Human Resources page, in addition to profession- or discipline-specific venues. To post your ad on the page, contact HR.

4. Outreach Plan – Active Recruiting

Search plans should clearly outline the strategies the search committee will employ to actively recruit and attract the widest possible range of applicants to the position. Some methods for engaging in this active recruitment include:

- Invite the junior scholars you have networked with at conferences or mentored to apply for the position.
- Scan or review past and upcoming conference programs, websites of leading graduate programs in the field you are searching for, and websites listing fellowship/grant awardees for underrepresented scholars. Send personalized invitations to these scholars to apply.
- Contact faculty at graduate institutions—especially those with a strong record of producing scholars from underrepresented groups and women scholars—asking them to forward your job ad to their students, and asking them for names of graduate students or recent Ph.D.’s you might invite to apply.

👉 **QUICK TIP:** Solicit help identifying applicants from the CDO, who may be able to direct you to resources in your field to enrich your applicant pool.

5. Search Procedures

Search plans should provide information about how applications will be collected, the procedures of the semi-finalist interviews, and the on-campus visit.

- The number of applications anticipated and an estimate of how long each committee member will spend on each application. Therefore, each committee member should have an idea right from the outset of how much time will be needed to devote to reading his or her allotment of files.
- The search plan should include the auto-reply that will be sent to applicants acknowledging the receipt of their materials and soliciting them to fill out the demographic survey. [*For the auto-reply language, see Receipt of Applications subsection below.*]
- The process for collecting, organizing, and sharing applicants' materials (decided upon in consultation with the administrative assistant assigned to the search). Separate email addresses should be established for each search so that applications are not lost in anyone's inbox.
- A brief explanation of the process by which the search committee will split and review the applicant files.
- Note: Every search is required to discuss ALL first-priority applicants at their first deliberation meeting.
- A brief explanation of how the semi-finalist interviews will be conducted (via videoconference, or at a professional conference).
- A plan for how the on-campus visits will be arranged, including specifying the length of research presentations and teaching demonstrations; if the teaching demonstration will take place in a class; potential dates for the candidates' visits; and individual meetings with the faculty, student advisory groups, and administrators.

👉 **QUICK TIP:** The search committee Chair might find it helpful to consult with the administrative assistant to draft the tentative plan outlined in the Search Procedures section of the Search Plan, as administrative assistants may have coordinated searches in the past and will have programs and procedures that were useful in planning previous campus visits. If administrative assistants have not coordinated other searches, the search committee Chair might ask the Dean's office for recommendations on administrative assistants in other departments who would be able to share advice and resources.

- If applicable, an explanation of the role of a student advisory board, including the information to which they have access, their role in soliciting student feedback on the candidates, and their voice in search committee deliberations or voting.

- An explanation for how the search committee Chair will coordinate student feedback and seek input from members of the College who meet with finalists.
- A plan for how the search committee will achieve the final ranking of the candidates, including how the committee intends to strive for consensus and what steps they will take if they are unable to reach consensus.
- An acknowledgement that the CDO has the authority at any stage of the search to recommend to the Dean that the search be cancelled or postponed if processes are not followed. The Dean has the final authority regarding the possible cancellation or postponement of a search.

6. Search Timeline

The search plan should identify dates for every stage of the search, including:

- Date for posting the job advertisement(s);
- Due dates for applications;
- Due dates for applicants' completion of the demographic survey;
- All search committee meetings, including the AA trainings;
- Dates for selecting semi-finalist candidates and dates of semi-finalist interviews;

➡ **QUICK TIP:** The most common error of searches is not to allow sufficient time between the application deadline and the first deliberation meeting to read carefully through the applications. Even if you plan to split up files between search committee members, be mindful that it takes approximately 30 minutes to review one file. Therefore, it will take a search committee member 25 hours to read 50 files. To avoid the cognitive errors that result from being pressed for time, we recommend at least 2 weeks to review files. (Note: If you are worried about losing candidates to other searches, should you delay your timeline? This may mean that you want to set an earlier application deadline.

- Date for search committee meeting to plan on-campus visit;
- Dates for selecting finalists
- Potential dates for on-campus visits (in coordination with the Dean's office and with the administrative assistant supporting the search);

➡ **QUICK TIP:** Although it is impossible to set firm dates for the on-campus interviews, it is best to set four target visit dates so that you have some flexibility in terms of your finalists' schedules; but also so that you can set other logistics that can be tricky: such as the meetings with the Dean and President and the Samuelson Alumni Center room reservations.

As part of the approval process of the search plan, the search committee Chairs should contact the President and Dean's office to hold potential meeting dates for each of the four visits and contact the Samuelson Alumni Center to reserve four sets of accommodation dates (knowing that you will cancel one of these meetings and one of these sets of housing reservations once you know your finalists' schedules).

- Dates for search committee deliberation of the finalists;
- Date for bringing the committee's recommendation to the Dean.

➡ **QUICK TIP:** Be mindful of the typical timeline of hiring in the field. To ensure that you do not lose candidates, select application, interview, on-campus visit, and final determination dates that coincide with – or are even slightly ahead of – field-specific hiring timelines.

7. Appendices

Append to the search plan:

1. The new position application submitted to the Academic Planning Committee;
2. The most recent departmental program review;
3. Demographic data on underrepresented scholars/Ph.D.'s in the field (data that should have been included in the new position application).



The search committee Chair may not convene the committee or post the job ad until they have received approval of the search plan from the Dean, CDO, and AAC Chair(s).

At this point, search committee Chairs should submit a budget for the search (including job ad placement, travel of search committee members to semi-finalist interviews, finalist travel to and accommodations on campus, and any other expenses normally associated with administering a faculty search) to be approved by the Dean. The search committee Chair should discuss the proposed and approved budgets with their administrative assistant.

Roles & Responsibilities of Search Committee Members

Below is an outline of the roles of each member of the search committee.

1. The Role and Responsibilities of the Search Committee Chair

- Circulate both internally and externally to search stakeholders, such as candidates, committee members, colleagues not on the search, majors and minors, alumni (as appropriate), administrative offices, etc.
- Work with the CDO to collect information regarding field demographics, the demographics of the department, demographics of the students in the department, and demographics of the local region to disseminate that information to the search committee to inform deliberations. Share with search committee members (and to the CDO) any hiring best practices available in your field (usually established by professional association).
- Manage logistics of the search with the search administrative assistant.
- Review past departmental search practices, procedures, and/or conditions that have been successful or unsuccessful in hiring underrepresented faculty.
- Undergo two trainings on anti-bias hiring practices and common cognitive errors: the first with the CDO and AAC Chair(s), the second with the Affirmative Action representative.
- Work with the administrative assistant to schedule a sufficient number of search committee meetings for the full timeline of the search.

➡ **QUICK TIP:** It is a good idea to set up all of the semester's meetings at the beginning of the semester and to set up more meetings than you think you may need—it's easier to cancel a meeting than to schedule a new meeting at the last minute.

- Co-facilitate (with the AAC representative) the anti-bias hiring practices and common cognitive errors training for the full search committee. Ensure that no applicant files are read until all search committee members have undergone this training.
- In consultation with the search committee, discuss how the criteria from the search plan will be weighted and valued when evaluating applicants' files.
- In consultation with the search committee, discuss the data on underrepresented groups in the field and priorities for the department.
- Establish clear ground rules for committee meetings in terms of the process for discussing and evaluating applications, and ensure that committees maintain fair and equitable processes throughout the various stages of the search.

- Work with the administrative assistant assigned to coordinate the logistics of the search. Clear and frequent communication with the administrative assistant is vital to keeping the search on track.

2. The Role and Responsibilities of Search Committee Members

- Work with the search committee Chair to establish the criteria by which applicants will be evaluated, how the criteria (which should align with the requirements delineated in the job ad) will be prioritized, and the priority of underrepresented candidates given idiosyncrasies of your field or department.
- Attend every committee meeting. If one member is unable to attend a meeting, the Chair should first attempt to reschedule the meeting. If it is unavoidable to hold a meeting without a member of the search committee, the search committee Chair and/or the AAC representative should fill them in on the meeting to ensure consistency and equal input.
- Undergo anti-bias hiring practices and common cognitive errors training conducted by the search committee Chair and the AAC representative.
- Set aside the time necessary (i.e., the time agreed upon by the committee) for a complete and thorough review of assigned applicant files.
- Adhere to confidentiality and not discuss candidates outside of meetings or deliberations in which all search committee members are present.

3. The Role and Responsibilities of the Affirmative Action Committee Representative

- Be considered and included by the search committee as a full voting member of the search committee, which means they should:
 - Be present at all search committee meetings and included in all emails pertaining to the search.
 - Have the same access to applicant files, evaluation rubrics, and meetings with candidates on campus as other members of the search committee.
- Circulate and discuss with the search committee the Affirmative Action policy, drawing attention to the difference between first- and second-priority candidates, as well as facilitating a discussion of underrepresented groups in the field of the search and priorities of the department.
- Circulate to search committee members the relevant readings on common cognitive errors and organizational dysfunctions. Co-facilitate (with the search committee Chair) the search committee training.



The Affirmative Action policy, training materials, additional scholarship, and the AAC “Tip Sheet” are available on the AAC Moodle site.

- Ensure (with the search committee Chair) that no applicant files are read until all members of the search committee complete the anti-bias hiring practices and common cognitive errors training.
- Review the cover letter, teaching statement/philosophy, CV, and if relevant, teaching evaluation in order to assess for evidence of a demonstrated commitment to, past evidence of, and future plans for creating equitable opportunities for learning and mentoring especially for underrepresented students.
- Support the search committee Chair in establishing clear ground rules for committee meetings in terms of the process for discussing and evaluating applications, and ensure that committees maintain fair and equitable processes throughout the various stages of the search.
- Provide additional materials throughout the search—relevant to its stage—such as handouts on devising interview questions, illegal and inappropriate questions, etc.
- Write a report at each stage of the search—after the winnowing from long to medium to short list; after the semi-finalist stage; and after the on-campus interview stage—on the procedures followed, the strengths and weaknesses of these procedures, and the ratio of underrepresented candidates relative to the full pool. At the end of the search, the AAC representative will consolidate these reports and add summative assessments to create a single, final report.
- Communicate regularly with the AAC Chair(s) on the progress of the search, and seek assistance from them when concerns about the search or the search processes arise. If needed, the AAC Chair(s) will consult with the CDO and/or the Dean to resolve these concerns, especially concerns having to do with issues of process.

Trainings

Before the faculty searches begin, the CDO and AAC Chair(s) will conduct a training for search committee Chairs, Associate Deans, Affirmative Action members, and administrative assistants. This training will orient everyone to the college's Affirmative Action policy, including the categories of first- and second-priority applications defined therein, and explain the procedures of a faculty search throughout its various stages and the value of these procedures in terms of equal opportunity hiring, and clarify the roles of everyone involved in the search process. The training will also forge relationships with the CDO and AAC Chair(s) who, with the AAC representative, can serve as consultants throughout the search.

At the first full meeting of the search committee, the AAC representative and the search committee Chair will lead a training for the search committee members and any department members not on the search who will read files. The training will cover the College's AAC policy, including the categories of first- and second-priority applicants defined therein, cognitive errors and organizational dysfunctions to guard against, search protocols detailed

in the search plan, and the position criteria for the search. *[More details on this training can be found in the Search Committee Training section below.]*

As part of regular AAC meetings, the Affirmative Action representatives will undergo additional trainings, including a training on how to prepare for the search committee training; how to assess the inclusive learning components of the teaching philosophy; organizational processes for a fair and equitable review of files; and structuring equitable and fair deliberations.

Finally, the search committee Chair should train any students interacting with the on-campus finalists. *[On student training, see Preparing for the On-Campus Visit subsection below.]*

STAGE 1: FROM APPLICATIONS TO LIST OF FINALISTS

Receipt of Applications & Demographic Survey

After each application is received, an electronic note with the following language should be sent to candidates acknowledging receipt of their materials. Search committee Chairs should work with administrative assistants to ensure all applicants receive this note:

*Thank you for applying to the **SPECIFY POSITION HERE (e.g., tenure-track Assistant Professor position in ethnomusicology)**. This email confirms that we have received your application materials. The Search Committee will review your materials and contact you as the search progresses.*

Occidental College is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not unlawfully discriminate against employees or applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, breastfeeding or related medical condition, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic characteristic or information, military and veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by State or Federal Law. Additionally, all Search Committee members undergo anti-bias training and each Search Committee includes a representative from the college's Affirmative Action Faculty Committee. And, finally, we also conduct a survey of all applicants to tenure-track positions. The purpose of this survey is to ensure that faculty searches at Occidental College attract a diverse pool of candidates for each search, in support of our mission of excellence and equity. No question on this survey is used to limit or exclude any applicant from consideration for employment on a basis prohibited by local, state, or federal law. Applicants may choose to decline to answer individual questions and will not incur a penalty for so doing. Once you take this survey, your application will be complete.

*Please take the survey **by ADD DATE HERE**. The survey is **LINKED HERE**.*

If you have any questions about the survey or about equal opportunity hiring at Occidental, please contact the AAC Chair.

The search committee Chair and the administrative assistant will receive a personalized link for your search's demographic survey.

After the due date for the demographic survey, ITS will provide the CDO and the AAC Chair(s) with the raw data of the survey, which will be shared with the search committee Chair and the AAC representative. The AAC representative, in consultation with the search committee Chair, will use this information to ensure that underrepresented applicants receive a fair and

equitable assessment. Upon the receipt of all applicant files, the AAC representative will use the demographic survey information to identify first- and second-priority candidates per the Affirmative Action policy categories. At each stage of the search—when winnowing from full applicant pool to long, medium, and short lists—the AAC representative will assess whether the ratio of underrepresented candidates remains relatively constant with the applicant pool.

In cases in which the search committee Chair receives inquiries from non-U.S. applicants about eligibility to work in the U.S. and the College’s role in sponsoring new hires, you may reply with the following language: “All faculty hires must be eligible to work in the U.S. before they can begin employment. The College is willing to provide H1B Visa sponsorship and, on a case-by-case basis, to offset the filing/legal costs for new tenure-track faculty hires.”

In all cases in which an applicant has a relationship with the College (e.g., is a non-tenure track faculty member, an alumnus, or is related to an Occidental administrator, staff, or faculty member, the candidate must be evaluated according to the same criteria as all other applicants. We do not automatically extend an interview invitation to an internal candidate as a “courtesy.” And although it is awkward to Skype interview someone who is in an office down the hall, it is essential that all candidates have as similar an experience as is possible. Should a search committee member have a close relationship with a candidate in a search, they should discuss the possibility of recusal with the Dean.

Search Committee Training

The Affirmative Action representative and the search committee Chair should meet a few weeks prior to the first search committee meeting to plan the training of the search committee. At least one week prior to the first search committee meeting, they will pre-circulate readings on anti-bias hiring practices and common cognitive errors, the AAC policy, and data on the underrepresented groups in the field.

This first meeting of the search committee includes the following elements:

- Search committee members discuss and ask questions about pre-circulated readings on common cognitive errors. The AAC representative circulates the AAC Tip Sheet as a reference of these cognitive errors. Every search committee member should commit themselves to reflecting on their own biases and the committee as a whole should discuss strategies for calling out and addressing bias found in the applicant materials and in discussions of the applications.
- The AAC rep will orient the search committee to the AAC policy, including especially the first- and second-priority categories. The AAC rep will facilitate a discussion of the priorities of the department, given the data on underrepresented groups in the field.

- Search committees should set ground rules for reading applicant files, including a discussion of:
 - The position criteria used to evaluate files and the relative weight of each criterion;
 - The use of an assessment rubric to focus assessment on the predetermined criteria and to note evidence found in the files relative to each criterion;
 - Strategies the committee will take to avoid overloading (such as, the process by which they will split up the files among search committee members, the average time spent with each file, etc.);
 - The procedure of deliberations.



No review of files may begin before this training has been conducted.

Reviewing Applications—Winnowing to Long, Medium, and Short Lists

Careful advanced planning is required in order to equitably and fairly review dozens—sometimes hundreds—of applicant files. Two preliminary concerns to be mindful of:

1. **Avoiding cognitive errors that occur when overburdened.** Remember that bias is a cognitive shortcut that occurs when we do not have adequate time to process information. It is important to ensure that search committee members are allotted a manageable amount of information to process and given sufficient time for a thorough review of that information.
 - The search committee Chair should allow at least a few weeks between the assignment of files and the first deliberation meeting.
 - The search committee Chair should devise the most appropriate strategy to reduce overload:
 - *Strategy #1:* if the applicant pool is too large for the search committee members to read all of the files, the Chair should read all of the applications and assign subsets of the pool to committee member. (In these cases, every file should be read by at least two or three members of the search committee—never a sole reviewer—and the subsets of reviewers should be varied so as not to create mini-committees within the committee.)

- *Strategy #2*: review only a subset of the application materials on first pass (e.g., cover letter, CV, teaching statement, letters, etc.) and then read rest of materials, such as writing sample, once a long list is generated.
2. **Ensuring a standardized and fair assessment of applications.** Remember that each applicant should be judged on the criteria set out at the beginning of the search, criteria that should have shaped the job ad and the materials requested from applicants. To keep the search committee focused on these criteria:
- The review of files should not begin until *after* the due date and until *after* the search committee Chair has given assignments and instructions. Although it is hard to resist the curiosity, early and uneven review can prejudice a fair assessment of all applicants. The committee should also consider how it will handle incomplete files after the due date.
 - The search committee Chair should create an assessment rubric that each search committee member fills out as they are reviewing files. (Note: avoid using a rubric that is shared by all search committee members so as not to influence or prejudice one another's judgments.)
 - The search committee should review *only* the materials requested. Tracking down additional information that was not requested has the potential to advantage some applicants and disadvantage others. If, in the process of reviewing files, it becomes clear the search committee wants to see additional materials, they should request these materials from all candidates to ensure every applicant has *equal opportunity* to prepare these materials and has *full knowledge* that these materials are part of their assessment.
 - For this same reason, search committee members should never Google applicants for additional information. Should you want to consult applicants' disciplinary website or other public information, the link should be requested in the job advertisement to ensure every applicant has *equal opportunity* to prepare these materials and has *full knowledge* that these materials are part of their assessment.
 - Search committee members should remember that it is illegal to make judgments about applicants based on protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.
 - Throughout their review of files, search committee members should remain vigilant regarding the cognitive errors they are inclined to make.
3. **The AAC representative** reads every applicant's cover letter, teaching statement and CV:



Sample assessment rubrics are available on the AAC Moodle site.

- The AAC representative will be specially trained to assess the teaching statement for a demonstrated commitment to, past evidence of, and future plans for creating and advancing equitable opportunities for learning and mentoring especially for underrepresented students.
- The AAC representative will request the demographic survey results from the CDO/ITS. Throughout the search, the AAC rep will keep track of the ratios of first- and second-priority applicants in the total pool, semi-final pool, and finalist pool.

Long, Medium, and Short List Deliberation(s)

In advance of these early deliberation meetings, search committee members should be instructed regarding what to prepare. Should they be prepared to speak about every applicant they reviewed? Should they be prepared to speak about the top ten or twenty applicants in the pool of applicant files they reviewed? Regardless, they should be prepared to justify their assessments based on *evidence* from the files related to the committee's pre-determined criteria.

The following suggested list of discussion topics at the early deliberation meetings represent best practices that search committees may wish to adopt.

- The search committee Chair should open the meeting with a reminder of the pre-determined assessment criteria to frame the discussion, as well as a reminder of the protected characteristics that may not be factors in the deliberation: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.
- The search committee should avoid rushing to numerical ranking and avoid a rush to consensus. The search committee should discuss each applicant in the long list one-by-one, citing evidence related to the position criteria. Applicants should be discussed in alphabetical order. (Discussing in order of individual rankings biases the conversation, undermining an ability to change minds through the discussion).

✘ BEST PRACTICE: At the first deliberation meeting, search committees may strive to winnow to a long list of 30-35 top applicants. To this list, the AAC representative and search committee Chair will add in files of high-priority, underrepresented applicants not already in the long list. The purpose of this practice is to ensure these applicants who are the most prone to search committee members' negative bias, receive a thorough and fair assessment. Then, before the second deliberation meeting, every search committee reviews or re-reviews ALL of these files.

- On average, search committees tend to select between 10-14 semi-finalists.

- Throughout these deliberations, the AAC representative will stay attuned to a fair and equitable review process, and to cognitive errors or bias in the applicants' files or in the discussion among search committee members.

✂ BEST PRACTICE: When winnowing the long, medium, or short list, search committees should be aware of tokenism: one woman, one minority, and an otherwise all-white, all-male list. Women and people of color are more likely to be evaluated fairly when they are not the only candidate of their gender, race, or ethnicity under consideration (Heilman 1980).

- At this stage of the search, the AAC representative will determine whether the ratio of underrepresented applicants remains relatively constant with the full applicant pool. If underrepresented applicants fall out at a disproportionate rate, the AAC representative, search committee Chair, and CDO will query whether it is merited or if the committee needs to consider whether cognitive errors or organizational dysfunctions are to blame.



At this point, the search committee Chair should contact the Dean, CDO, and AAC Chair(s) with a list of the committee's semi-finalists. The AAC representative will also submit a report documenting the process thus far. The Dean will make every effort to give her approval or request additional information very soon after receiving the report.

The Chair may move forward only after they have received approval from the Dean and CDO.

Once the slate of semi-finalists has been approved by the Dean and CDO, the search committee Chair may begin scheduling the semifinalist interviews and notify the other applicants that they were not selected to progress through the search.

Semi-Finalist Interviews

Search committees may choose to interview semi-finalists face-to-face at an academic conference or—as is becoming more common—through videoconference. In order to ensure that no candidate is inadvertently advantaged or disadvantaged, every candidate should be provided the same interview circumstances (e.g., if one person on the long list is interviewed by videoconference, all candidates should videoconference *even if one is local and/or one is available to meet at a conference*).



Tips on how to set up and use BlueJeans, as well as instructions to send to applicants, are available on the AAC Moodle site.

In advance of the semi-finalist interviews, search committee should meet to make the following preparations:

- The committee should decide if there are additional materials (syllabi, assignment prompts, sample labs, websites, student evaluations, etc.) they want to consult at this stage. If so, you may ask all of the semi-finalists for the same set of materials. Be sure to give the applicants the same amount of time to prepare and submit these additional materials.
- The committee should together devise a standard set of interview questions to be asked of every semi-finalist. In addition to the standard questions, search committees are permitted to ask a limited number of candidate-specific questions (these may include follow-up questions or questions of clarification that came up during the review of application materials). Search committee Chairs and AAC representatives will ensure that questions are tethered closely to their assessment criteria and that none of the questions are illegal or inappropriate.

➔ **QUICK TIP:** Some search committees find a shared Google doc to be an efficient way to brainstorm and edit interview questions.

- Once you have finalized your list of questions, the search committee Chair should assign individual questions to individual members of the search committee so that every question is asked by the same person/the same way.
- Well before the semi-finalist interviews, the search committee Chair should provide semi-finalists with the names and departmental affiliations of those present at the interview.



Sample interview questions, as well as a list of illegal questions are available on the AAC Moodle site.

During the semi-finalists interviews:

- On average, the length of semi-finalist interviews tend to be 30-45 minutes.
- As noted above, the same set of questions should be posed to all semi-finalists, as much as possible asked by the same member of the search committee.

➔ **QUICK TIP:** In order to ensure that every member of the search committee has a uniform memory of all semi-finalists responses, regardless of whether they were the first or the last interview, some search committee Chairs print up the interview questions with space for search committee members to take notes.

- At the end of each semi-finalist interview, the Chair of the search committee should give the candidates a sense of next steps, including a timeline by which they should hear back.

To anticipate unforeseen delays, it is best to overestimate the time it will take to get back in touch with semi-finalists.

- Remember that you are recruiting at the same time as you are interviewing, so be warm and collegial, opening with a comment about how impressed the committee was with the file and their eagerness to learn more and ending with gratitude for their time.
- Videoconference interviews may be recorded and stored in a shared location so search committee members, especially those unable to attend every interview, have access to reviewing them before the deliberation meeting to winnow to a short list.

➔ **QUICK TIP:** Before recording the interviews, be sure to procure semi-finalists' permission and explain to them who will have access, for what purpose the recordings will be made, that the recording will be stored in a secure location, and that the recording will be deleted after the search concludes.

Semi-Finalist Deliberation

- The search committee Chair should open the meeting with a reminder of the pre-determined assessment criteria to frame the discussion, as well as a reminder of the protected characteristics that may not be factors in the deliberation: race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, breastfeeding or related medical condition, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic characteristic or information, sexual orientation, military and veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law.
- The search committee should avoid a rush to consensus. Plan a sufficient number of meetings (at minimum 2) and length of meetings to ensure adequate time to fully consider and to fully discuss all semi-finalists.

✂ **BEST PRACTICE:** At the first deliberation meeting, many search committees talk through the strengths and weaknesses of each semi-finalist and then seek consensus on the top three finalists. At the second meeting, after some time to mull over the provisional selection, search committee members may lobby for a reconsideration of another candidate(s) or confirm the finalists chosen at the previous meeting.

- Throughout all of the deliberations, the AAC representative is charged with staying attuned to a fair and equitable review process, as well as pointing out cognitive errors or bias.

✂ **BEST PRACTICE:** When winnowing to a slate of applicants in the long, medium, or short list, search committees should be aware of tokenism: one woman, one minority, and an otherwise all-white, all-male list. Women and people of color are more likely to be evaluated fairly when they are not the only candidate of their gender, race, or ethnicity under consideration (Heilman 1980).

- At this stage of the search, the AAC representative will determine whether the ratio of underrepresented applicants remains relatively constant with the full applicant pool and the semi-finalist list. If underrepresented applicants fall out at a disproportionate rate, the AAC representative, search committee Chair, and CDO will query whether it is merited or if the committee needs to consider whether cognitive errors or organizational dysfunctions are to blame.
- Search committees identify three finalists to invite to campus.

➡ **QUICK TIP:** The Dean will consider requests to invite a fourth on-campus finalist, especially when that candidate is local. Search committees **must receive the Dean's approval** in such cases, but they should also weigh carefully the advantage of a fourth finalist against the possibility of losing a candidate due to a prolonged search timeline, and the time cost for all campus constituents that will be meeting with the candidates. Local candidates are not automatically approved as fourth candidates – there needs to be a compelling reason such as a competitive fast-moving market with high likelihood of candidate attrition (although time constraint must be managed), or specific characteristics of the candidate pool.



At this point, the search committee Chair should contact the Dean, CDO, and AAC Chair(s) regarding the committee's selection of finalists. The Chair should send the Dean (copy Maria Mancera) a list of candidates they would like to invite to campus, including their CV's, cover letters, teaching philosophies, and (if collected) research statements. The AAC representative will submit a report documenting the process at this stage. Again, the Dean will respond as quickly as possible to the request to invite finalists.

The Chair may invite the candidates to campus *only after* they have received approval from the Dean and CDO.

Once the slate of finalists has been approved, the search committee Chair may begin scheduling the finalists' on-campus interviews. Search committee chairs should also notify the other applicants that they were not selected to progress through the search. Searches may want to inform a handful of semi-finalists who were not invited to campus that there are alternates in the case that one of the finalists declines an on-campus visit or accepts a competing offer before their campus visit.

➔ **QUICK TIP:** Immediately after receiving approval for your slate of finalists (if not before), contact the Dean's office to coordinate schedules and to determine when the campus visits will take place. At this point, you will also want to make reservations at the Samuelson Alumni Center since these rooms fill up very quickly in the Spring semester.

STAGE 2: FROM ON-CAMPUS VISIT TO MAKING THE OFFER

Preparing for the On-Campus Visits

Immediately after receiving approval for your slate of finalists, the search committee Chair should email the on-campus finalists with a sketch of the on-campus visit. This will ensure the finalists have adequate time to prepare and that their preparations are pitched to the expectations of the search committee. Specifically, this email should include answers to the following questions:

- What is the context of the research talk? To what audience should they target their remarks? Faculty? Student majors? Students with no background? How many people should they expect will attend? How much time for the talk and how much time for Q &A?
- What is the context of the teaching demo? What are the parameters of the teaching demo in terms of topic, the ability to assign a reading (if so, how many pages and by when must they get the reading to you?), time allotted, etc.? How many students will be present and will they have background in the field (e.g., majors, students in a class)? What technology will they need (if any)?

Immediately after receiving approval for your slate of finalists, the search committee Chair should work with their support staff on the logistical arrangements for the campus visit: airfare, hotel accommodations, transportation to/from the airport, and any special accommodations, such as physical or dietary needs.

✕ BEST PRACTICE: Local candidates should be invited to stay in the same accommodations as other applicants. This ensures that they have the opportunity to enjoy the same candidate visit experience as other applicants (e.g., time the night prior to practice their talk, a comfortable room away from hectic concerns at home, the ability to walk around campus (if staying at Samuelson), etc.). Candidates should have the option of declining should they prefer to stay at home.

As soon as possible, the search committee Chair should work with their support staff to *devise the on-campus schedules*.

- The Dean will need a one-on-one meeting with every finalist and will want to attend the teaching demo so their schedule should be the first to consult. Then identify times for the teaching demonstration and research talk when all of the search committee members are available.
- On-campus visits will include the following components:
 - teaching demonstration—*required*



Sample on-campus schedules are available on the AAC Moodle site.

- presentation of research (a talk or other discipline-appropriate format) — *required*
- meeting with the Dean of the College (typically 30 mins)—*required*
- meetings with each member of the search committee, including the AAC representative (typically 30 mins each)—*required*
- meetings with all three academic Associate Deans (may be combined or separated into 2 meetings) — *required*
- meeting with the Chief Diversity Officer (typically 30 mins)—*required*
- meeting with the President (typically 30 mins)—*required*
- dinner with search committee members—*required*
- a meeting with the full search committee (typically 60 mins)—*optional, but suggested*
- campus tour (45-60 mins)—*optional, but suggested*
- meeting or meal with students from the department (typically 60-90 mins)—*optional, but suggested*
- meeting with HR representative to discuss College benefits (typically 30 mins)—*optional, but suggested*
- exit meeting to discuss how the visit went and to field any lingering questions the candidates may have (typically 30-45 mins)—*optional, but suggested*
- meetings with faculty in related departments or with overlapping areas of teaching or research expertise (typically 30 mins)—*as relevant*

✘ **BEST PRACTICE:** The candidates should be allowed input in determining the schedule. Specifically, the search committee Chair should ask candidates if there is anyone on campus they want to meet, if they require any special accommodations, such as access or dietary restrictions.

- Make sure to schedule breaks throughout the visit, including especially time for the candidate to prepare *directly before the teaching demo* and *directly before the research presentation*, as well as sufficient time for meals.
- In order to ensure that finalists are assessed on their performance—more so than the *conditions* in which they performed—all of their teaching demos and research talks should be scheduled for approximately the same times of day, in the same rooms (or the same kind of room—i.e., not putting one teaching demo in Thorne and the other in a small seminar room), etc.
- The search committee Chair should provide each on-campus finalist with a schedule for their visit, including the names and departmental affiliations of everyone they will meet, **at least two weeks prior** to their visit. When sending the candidate the schedule, explain who the individuals are that they will meet with, the purpose of each meeting, and invite questions.

➔ **QUICK TIP:** At the bottom of finalists' schedules, you may wish to include contact information for the search committee Chair, the administrative assistant(s) supporting the search, the hotel/accommodations, the driver transporting them to/from the airport, and campus safety.

The search committee must meet in advance of the on-campus visits to make the following preparations:

- The search committee should together devise interview questions to be posed at the full search committee meetings with finalists and/or the one-on-one meetings. Again, questions should be tethered to assessment criteria.
- The search committee should determine which search committee members will inform finalists about unique programs or benefits at Oxy, including the CSP program, senior comps, URC, CCBL, MSI, tenure process and standards, early-career leave and sabbatical policy, annual travel funds, faculty enrichment funds, housing, tuition remission, child development center, the new faculty orientation, FYFLC, and other CTE support, CRS, etc. Some of these topics could be assigned to one-on-one meetings, to faculty driving the candidate to/from dinner, or when walking from one meeting to the next.
- Well in advance of the visits, the search committee Chair should circulate the candidates' CVs, cover letters, and teaching statements, in addition to research statements if applicable, to everyone meeting with the candidates, especially the Dean and ADs.
- The search committee should determine who will escort the candidates from one meeting to the next, drive to/from dinner, share meals with the candidates, etc. The search committee Chair should then work with the administrative assistants to include this information on the candidate's schedule.
- The search committee should determine their approach to soliciting feedback. Most search committees create a feedback form especially suited to each event: one for those attending the teaching demo; one for those attending the research talk; one for students meeting the candidate; etc. The search committee may decide if they want separate forms for students and faculty, but regardless the questions on the feedback forms should be tailored to the search committee's assessment criteria.
- The search committee members should be reminded that they are *recruiting* at the same time as you are interviewing. This means:



Sample interview questions, as well as a list of illegal questions are available on the AAC Moodle site.

- Be interested in the candidate. Reflect their strengths back to them. If possible, find a way to engage in a discussion with them during the interview more so than a one-way question-response format.
- At the end of each individual meeting, the interviewer should leave a lasting, positive impression—“It was so nice to talk with you. I wish we had more time.” Or, “I look forward to our time to speak again tonight at dinner.”

The search committee Chair should meet with students who will interact with the candidates to conduct a mini-training on implicit bias, to share the search committee’s assessment criteria, to discuss the goal and nature of their conversations with candidates, to shape the questions they pose to candidates, to foreclose any inappropriate talking points or illegal questions, and to discuss the mechanism by which students will provide feedback to the search committee (whether through a feedback form, rubric, survey, etc.).

✦ **BEST PRACTICE:** Students should not be provided any confidential materials in the finalists’ files, such as recommendation letters.



Sample feedback forms are available on the AAC Moodle site.

The search committee Chair should ensure that the teaching demos and research talks are well attended by:

- Publicizing the events with flyers that are circulated to the faculty, admin, and student listservs well in advance and multiple times
- Sending personalized invitations to faculty with related teaching or research interests
- Sending personalized invitations to students in the department or in ancillary departments
- Consider situating teaching demos in an existing class to have a standard set of students

On-Campus Visit Best Practices

- All search committee members should attend all of the teaching demos and research talks in order to participate in the final deliberation.
- Search committee members should make every effort to attend dinners with candidates.
- Candidates should have a space in which to take their breaks, to stash their belongings, etc. The search committee Chair should make sure there are water and snacks available for the candidate in this space.
- It is a good idea to videotape the teaching demos in case any committee members have a last-minute conflict.

➡ **QUICK TIP:** Before recording the teaching demos, be sure to procure semi-finalists' permission and explain to them who will have access, for what purpose the recordings will be made, that the recording will be stored in a secure location, and that the recording will be deleted after the search concludes.

- Always remember that you are recruiting and interviewing at the same time. Be welcoming, warm, and respectful.
- After each campus visit, the search committee Chair might send a note to the candidate, thanking them for visiting, commenting on the strengths of their campus visit, and reminding them of the time frame in which they might hear back.

After the visits, the Chair should synthesize feedback from everyone with whom the candidates met—this will include the feedback forms (see above), as well comments from the Dean, Associate Deans, CDO, etc.

✂ **BEST PRACTICE:** Feedback from a colleague or student who did not meet ALL of the candidates or did not attend ALL of the demos/talks should be weighed less than those who met all candidates and attended all of the demos/talks.

Final Deliberation

- The search committee Chair should open the meeting with a reminder of the pre-determined assessment criteria to frame the discussion, as well as a reminder of the protected characteristics that may not be factors in the deliberation: race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, breastfeeding or related medical condition, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic characteristic or information, sexual orientation, military and veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by state or federal law.

✂ **BEST PRACTICE:** Structure this final deliberation meeting according to the assessment criteria. Specifically, discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of the candidates according to each assessment criterion one-by-one. To keep everything in full view, notes can be taken on the board or in a shared spreadsheet. Then, after the search committee discusses the relative merits of the finalists according to each assessment criterion, they can take into account the feedback they have received from colleagues and students before coming to a final decision.

- Throughout the deliberations, the AAC representative is charged with staying attuned to a fair and equitable review process, as well as pointing out cognitive errors or bias.

- The goal of the committee is to reach consensus. If this requires additional meetings, the search committee Chair should schedule them. They should not rush a decision.
- At the end of the final deliberation meeting, the search committee should debrief how the search process went—what aspects of the search are you particularly proud of, what issues came up and how did you handle them, and, were you to conduct another search, what could you improve in the future.
- The AAC representative will record points of this conversation in their final report.



Once a consensus is reached by the search committee, the search committee Chair should send an assessment of each candidate’s strengths and weaknesses, and the committee’s recommendations, in writing to the Dean. If necessary, the Dean will contact the search committee Chair for further information or discussion. The Dean will provide the search committee Chair instructions on contacting the committee’s choice.

Once the Offer is Out

The Dean of the College will extend an offer. Once this offer has been made, search committee members may contact the candidate to congratulate them, to answer any questions they have, and to encourage them to accept the offer.

Once the offer has been (verbally) accepted, the Dean’s office will send a contract. The search committee Chair may not notify the other finalists until after the signed contract has been received.



Sample language for rejection emails is available on the AAC Moodle site, in the emails to applicants folder.

AFTER THE SEARCH

Evaluating the Search

During the final deliberation meeting, the search committee should debrief how the process went—what aspects of the search are you particularly proud of, what issues came up and how did you handle them, and, were you to conduct another search, what could you improve in the future.

The AAC representative will record points of this conversation in their final report. The AAC representative will submit a full report documenting each stage in the search process, as well as an assessment of the search's practices. This report will be shared with the Dean, CDO, AAC Chair(s), and the search committee Chair.

Welcoming and Supporting your New Hire

Help the new faculty member set up courses and textbook orders.

Connect your new hire with faculty who share similar intellectual interests or backgrounds.

Work with administrative assistants to put in requests for new furniture, to paint office, for email address, office keys, access codes to department equipment (such as copiers), and any other resources (software, books, lab equipment, etc.) they need to get up-and-running.

Email the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence to ensure they are included in the New Faculty Orientation and First-year Faculty Learning Community.

Archiving Search Files

According to the College's retention policy, departments should retain all of the files for a search for at least five years and retain the application materials for the new hire for as long as they are active at the College, plus additional five years.

APPENDIX I: Resources available on Moodle

- Affirmative Action policy
- Scholarship on equal opportunity hiring
- Training materials and AAC “Tip Sheet”
- Sample search plans (with sample assessment criteria)
- Sample mission-driven statements for job ad
- Sample agenda for first search committee meeting
- Sample assessment rubrics
- BlueJeans video-conference software instructions for search committee & interviewees
- Sample interview questions
- Illegal and inappropriate interview questions
- Sample on-campus schedule
- Sample feedback forms for on-campus visits
- Sample emails to applicants