



## College of Agricultural & Life Sciences

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

### College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Hiring Best Practices For Faculty and College Leadership Positions

Diversity, equity and inclusion are core values of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS). These values are a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for both the college and the university as a whole. The college is committed to utilizing best practices in recruiting and hiring to ensure that these processes are inclusive and that bias is avoided.

The following document outlines hiring best practices for recruitment of faculty and college leadership<sup>1</sup> positions, following the typical stages of the recruitment process. All units are strongly encouraged to develop a hiring plan that includes the following best practices. The hiring administrator/authority<sup>2</sup> is encouraged to determine and communicate who is responsible for these items in the recruitment process.

#### 1. Basics

- Require all faculty in the department and all college leadership appointees who are involved in a search to attend the WISELI training, [Searching for Excellence and Diversity](#), within the four years prior to a search.
- Refer to campus and college HR policies:
  - [Recruitment, Assessment, and Selection of Academic, Faculty, Limited and University Staff Employees](#)
  - [CALS Recruitment, Assessment and Selection Plan](#)
  - WISELI PVLs (available on the [CALS HR website](#)) as a recruiting tool (advice and examples) document
- Utilize the Hiring Best Practices Checklist for Faculty and College Leadership Positions.

#### 2. PVL guidelines

- Work with CALS HR early in the development of a PVL and throughout the recruitment, assessment, and selection stages as needed.
- Include a statement in the PVL that indicates: "It is expected that the candidate selected for this position will have a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion."

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<sup>1</sup> These best practices pertain to searches conducted by CALS administration for college leaders, including associate deans, assistant deans and directors of college-wide centers and programs. Note that recruitment of the dean is conducted at the provost level and will follow policies and practices for inclusive recruitment practices established centrally.

<sup>2</sup> In a search for a CALS leadership position, the hiring administrator would typically be the dean or an associate dean that oversees the unit for which a search is undertaken.

- Include the CALS diversity statement in the PVL: *“The UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences is committed to maintaining and growing a culture that embraces diversity, inclusion, and equity, believing that these values are foundational elements of our excellence and fundamental components of a positive and enriching learning and working environment for all students, faculty, and staff.”*
  - Provide a timeframe for application submissions that will allow for a large and diverse pool of applicants to apply. Increasing this window can increase candidate numbers and the diversity of applicants.
  - Require a one-page, single-spaced statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion, to be submitted with the application, which may describe prior efforts to advance diversity and inclusive practices in education, research and the workplace, and will outline a plan for activities to be conducted if selected for this position.
  - Decide as a department/unit and/or search committee on the critical skills required of the candidate for which they will be evaluated. Include these in the PVL.
3. Recruitment recommendations
- Consider different recruitment strategies to increase diversity in the candidate pool and document those efforts.
  - Use professional networks to identify and encourage applications from department/unit-identified underrepresented groups.
  - Include a variety of advertisement venues to maximize outreach to different groups.
4. Application review
- Meet with CALS HR to assist in outlining criteria, methods, strategies, etc. to decide and agree upon selection criteria and selection methods before viewing applications, to ensure selection criteria do not include areas of potential bias (e.g. likeability).
  - Decide on criteria for triage of applications (including assessment of critical requirements) before viewing the applications. Distribute the written criteria to all departmental faculty/unit staff.
  - Application cover letters and resumes may contain identification details that can lead to biased decisions. Determine if a blind review process will be utilized as a mechanism to minimize potential biases (conscious or unconscious).
  - Ensure each applicant is reviewed by more than one search committee member, and by at least three search committee members if potential bias is possible (e.g. known/internal candidates).
5. Candidate interviews
- Communicate with the department/unit to describe the process and expectations of anybody expected to interact with interviewees.
  - Ensure everyone who has contact with the interviewing candidates (e.g. faculty, staff, graduate students) has a copy of the WISELI questions *not to ask* when interviewing candidates. Consider discussing this in a faculty/staff or other departmental/unit meeting just prior to the start of the interview process.
  - Create pre-determined questions and/or topic areas to guide interviews to ensure equity and consistency within the process.

- Communicate what will be expected in the interview process to candidates before the interview so everyone has the same information in advance.
  - Ask candidates about how they would contribute to 1) maintaining a diverse and inclusive research group/administrative unit and 2) supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the department/unit.
    - For faculty, ask how they would contribute to maintaining an inclusive classroom and recognizing diversity of learning styles.
    - For those with Extension appointment, ask how they will engage with diverse stakeholders and provide inclusive programming.
6. Candidate selection
- Use the core selection criteria (i.e., qualifications) as outlined in the PVL.
  - Develop a rubric before interviewing candidates.
  - Ensure that all search and screen committee members have the opportunity to voice opinions.
  - Develop a mechanism to gather information/feedback. Outline a plan to use information from others in the department/unit prior to the start of the interview process.
  - Develop a detailed selection process prior to the interviews.
7. Reflect and update
- Use time in a faculty/staff or other departmental/unit meeting to reflect on the process you have outlined and make updates/vote while the information is still fresh.