# Hiring With CARE

https://z.umn.edu/hiring_with_care

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# ASR DEI Hiring Principles

ASR's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee finalized a set of Principles meant to improve our hiring process

# Why Principles and not Practices?

In the past, the committee had delivered a toolkit and practices to follow.

But practices can go out of date.

# Principles can guide

Practices are important, but the committee wanted a high level set of 'values' that we could set as a north star.

# Thanks

→ Members past and present of the ASR DEI Committee

→ Christina Yoong for developing the CARE acronym

I joined the committee fairly late in this process. Much of the work here was done by current and previous committee members.

Christina Yoong developed the CARE acronym

We happened to be hiring while these were being finalized, so I was able to both offer specific feedback but also try to have my team follow these principles.

# Hiring, not retention

Improving your hiring process is useful, but if you hire folks that leave right away then nothing has changed

That said, this work was focused on hiring so that's what I'm going to talk about today.

# The Principles

## Hiring Diverse Teams Takes Time and Intentionality

→ **C**ommitment

→ **A**ccountability

→ **R**epresentation

→ **E**mpathy

## Let's dig in deeper

# Hiring Diverse Teams Takes Time and Intentionality

Basically, this sums everything up. You have to want to do the work and then you have to do the work.

# CARE

→ **C**ommitment

→ **A**ccountability

→ **R**epresentation

→ **E**mpathy

# Commitment

→ Recognize the importance of diversity hiring

→ Dedicate time to include DEI hiring principles and practices in your process.

CARE > Commitment

# It's important!

While I've been with the ASR Custom Solutions team
^ We've continuously worked on improving our hiring process to make it more open and equitable
^ The diverse skills, backgrounds and identities on our team are a big reason for our success and satisfaction

# Make hiring the team's job

## Before and After the person is hired

Early on when trying to hire I figured that it was my job, so I tried to do everything
^ This led to bad results. I don't have the time
^ I started having team members lead parts of our interview process.
^ This allowed each lead to focus on one part.

And I made it clear that this was their 'job' for the duration of the hire
^ Did that mean we did less development? Yes.
^ I tried to communicate that to my managers and the stake holders affected by the slow down.

The time starts well before we talk to any candidates
^ - Researching groups to send our job posting to
^ - Building relationships
^ - Reviewing and rewriting questions

And it goes well past the time a person is hired
^ - retrospectives
^ - Action items

Overall I'd say a hiring process takes us 3-4 months

# Accountability

→ Acknowledge biases and implement plans to mitigate them

→ Provide transparency to candidates about the position, process, and communication

→ Reflect on the hiring process and utilize measurable goals for improvements

CARE > Accountability

# Easy (ish)

→ Reduce requirements to a bare minimum

→ Don't use homework assignments that bias towards candidates w/o kids, obligations

→ Focus job posting on higher-level values,

# Harder

→ Resume formatting

→ Cover letters

→ Names

CARE > Accountability > Acknowledge Biases

When I started, the team was not diverse.
^ And the hiring process that brought me in had tons of gatekeeping that would prevent the team from changing
^ - Requiring a Bachelors
^ - Preferring a Masters
^ - Homework using incredibly opaque code
^ - High, and uncommon, technical requirements

There were a mountain of biases, explicit and implicit, that pushed us to hire the same kind of person, people like me, over and over.

We've used planning and retrospection in our hiring process to try to counter these biases

I still find myself drawn to a snazzy resume.
^ I don't know how to solve this problem.
^ Have someone transcribe each resume to a plain format?

We used to have a line in our job posting:
> **We place a lot of value on the cover letter**.

In a recent conversation with Prince Sah of OIT HR, he pointed out that this is a cultural bias. Many countries and cultures don't use cover letters at all. So we dropped that text and had a great round of hiring. Some folks still sent in cover letters, but that didn't factor in to any hiring decisions.

We have been trained to bias on a person's name.
^ Think of jokes you've heard, in mainstream TV or movies, about stereotypical African American names or Asian names
^ What impact does that have when you get a resume from a person with a name that is not culturally familiar to you?

Currently we try to address this bias by being aware of it and calling it out when we see it in ourselves
^ I know some folks have tried anonymizing resumes to address this. We have not.
^ Because names are only one signifier of class and identity.
^ Colleges, fraternities/sororities, place of residence, resume formatting

# Job Posting



## We Want to Work with You

### Help Us Make a Positive Difference

Custom Solutions is hiring a new developer and we want it to be you! We're looking for a developer ready to drop the 'junior' from their title; a developer who has worked on Web applications and wants to improve their skills; a developer who wants opportunities for learning, advancement and professional development; a developer who wants to solve real problems faced by over 60,000 students.

### What You'll Do

*In your first week* you'll meet the team and learn about our portfolio and our stakeholders. You'll have time dedicated to training on Ruby, Rails and other tools we use. At the end of your first week you'll attend our weekly retrospective, where you can help shape the team's processes and goals.

*In your first month* you'll be pairing with other members of the team, using test-driven development to deliver features. You'll help resolve problem tickets along with an experienced team member. And you'll attend some of the University's coding meetups and professional groups.

*In your first quarter* you'll learn how to write robust, fast tests in RSpec and Jest while pairing on both new and long-lived Rails and JavaScript applications. You'll explore new technologies and meet the UMN IT community at events like Hacker Hours, Tech-People, and hackathons.

*In your first year* you'll become an experienced pair programmer familiar with the full process of application development. You'll use Ansible and Docker to manage infrastructure. You'll configure Continuous Integration and Delivery tools to test and deploy the features you and your pair wrote.

### Values

We build with code, but our foundations are these values

- Diversity: A mix of experiences, opinions and approaches makes all our work better
- Best Practices: Use and refine techniques like Pair Programming and Test Driven Development that result in better code
- Continuous Learning: We dedicate time each week for learning new tools, languages and techniques
- Mentoring: Take what you have learned and return it to the community

### Benefits

The Office of Human Resources has a guide to the University's benefits including the Regent's Scholarship, Faculty Retirement Plan, Leave, and Medical.

For this job we have funding for a salary range of 70,000 to 78,000.

https://z.umn.edu/asr_job_description

CARE > Accountability > Transparency

Read summary of above
^ This one is different from what goes up on the U Jobs site, because we can put a lot more detail here
- Here's exactly what you'll do in the job
^ - Here's exactly the hiring process
^ - Here's the pay

# Hiring Process

Once we have an applicant we focus on honest, transparent communication

→ When a round will start

→ Why there is a delay

→ What the next interview will consist of

→ Their status

CARE > Accountability > Transparency

# Retrospectives and Metrics

→ End of hiring retrospective

→ Get diversity metrics from HR

→ Review the things you tried, evidence of them working or not

SparkHire

# Representation

→ Focus on inclusion over exclusion

→ Form hiring committees with staff from various backgrounds

→ Recruit and select from a diverse candidate pool

→ Give every candidate every opportunity to succeed

→ Offer as much info as you can up front

→ Clear goals

Current IT hiring practices focuses on weird puzzles, arcane algorithm whiteboarding and a series of gates

It's exclusionary. If you're the last one standing after a series of trials, you get a job!

In our coding interview we state and restate that working code is not the goal, that this is not a puzzle to solve.
^ The interview is to emulate something the team does all the time, talk through existing code and discuss changes.

We try to not exclude those with kids, or with limited time, by taking up their entire weekend.

# Reflect the full team

My team is small enough that we are all involved in hiring committees
^ But the team also works with folks from other groups
^ So we try to bring representatives from those groups in

# Honestly reflect your diversity

So, there's obviously a value in having committees show the diversity your department currently has
^

^ If you have a team with low diversity then you are going to be asking those few diverse members of your team to be on every hiring committee
^ And that's exhausting
^ And tokenizing
^ So ask them if they want to be involved, and how
^ Don't make them the poster child to paper over your department's diversity problem

# Recruitment Options

→ Personal networks

→ Professional networks

→ Paid networks

The first two take time to cultivate.
^ Realize that your personal network probably mirrors your identity, so may lead to more candidates that similar to you
^ Time and effort here help.
^ Folks are less likely to respond to some rando, but they may respond better to a posting from
^ - Someone involved in the community
^ - Someone who has proven that they are doing the work
We have not used paid networks, but I can see us doing that in the future.

# Empathy

→ Give the candidates every opportunity to succeed

→ Remove barriers to the hiring process

→ Provide a welcoming environment for all candidates

CARE > Empathy

# Include, don't exclude

This is a mirror of the "include, don't exclude" principal
^ People like succeeding, not failing
^ When people are working on my team I want them to be successful that starts before they join
^ Provide questions in advance, explain exactly what you're looking for

# Help people apply

A step-by-step guide to using the HR job site
^ - Remove unnecessary requirements
^ - Don't require a ton of their time

# In person

→ Easy to find

→ Transportation

→ Reduce scents

# Remote

→ Camera optional

→ Introduce self with pronouns

→ Simple backgrounds

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