Some recommended "best practices" for hiring

[compiled by John Forbes & others for the ITC Fellowship selection committee]

We ask that you keep in mind the following recommendations to improve equity & inclusion in the selection process (as adopted from this document https://provost.uiowa.edu/sites/provost.uiowa.edu/files/wysiwyg_uploads/Search%20Committee%20Practices%20to%20Advance%20Equity.pdf).

- Develop and prioritize evaluation criteria prior to evaluating candidates; apply them consistently to all applicants. Research shows that unconscious bias may cause use of different standards to be used to evaluate applicants. In addition, when criteria are not clearly articulated before reviewing candidates, evaluators may shift or emphasize criteria that favor candidates from well-represented demographic groups (Biernat & Fuegen, 2001; Fine & Handelsman, 2012; Uhlmann & Cohen, 2005, 2007).

- Disambiguate criteria as much as possible (Biernat & Fuegen, 2001); when the basis for judgment is somewhat vague, biased judgments are more likely to occur (Casey, Warren, Cheesman, & Elek, 2012). Scrutinize the criteria being used to ensure they are the right criteria and don't unintentionally screen out certain groups of candidates or outcomes (Correll, 2015).

- Be able to defend every decision for eliminating or advancing a candidate. Research shows that holding evaluators to high standards of accountability for the fairness of their evaluation reduces the influence of bias and assumptions (Foschi, 1996). Using an evaluation rubric when reviewing CVs/résumés encourages Faculty Search Committee Practices to Advance Equity (Version 12.20.17) 9 objective justifications before discussions at search committee meetings.

- Use an inclusion strategy rather than exclusion strategy when evaluating CVs. An inclusion strategy identifies which candidates are suitable for consideration; whereas, an exclusion strategy decides which should be eliminated. Studies show that exclusion strategies result in higher levels of criterion stereotyping (i.e., setting different decision thresholds for judging members of different

groups), sensitivity stereotyping (i.e., greater difficulty distinguishing among members of stereotyped groups), and larger sets of ultimately excluded candidates due to inclusion-exclusion discrepancy (IED; Hugenberg, Bodenhausen, & McLain, 2006; Yaniv & Schul, 1997, 2000).

- Spend sufficient time evaluating each applicant. Reduce time pressure and cognitive distraction when evaluating applications. Evaluators who were busy, distracted by other tasks, and under time pressure gave women lower ratings than men for the same written evaluation of job performance. Bias decreased when they were able to give adequate time (approximately 15-20 minutes per candidate) and attention to their judgments (Fine & Handelsman, 2012; Martell, 1991; Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2002).

- Evaluate each candidate's entire application; don't depend too heavily on only one element (e.g., focus too heavily on letters of recommendation, prestige of the degree-granting institution, teaching evaluations, excellent communication skills). Studies show significant patterns of difference in letters of recommendation for male and female applicants (Madera, Hebl, & Martin, 2009; Trix & Psenka, 2003), and differences in student evaluations for women, gay men, and faculty of color (MacNell, Driscoll, & Hunt, 2015; Schmidt, 2015; Tilcsik, 2011).

- Periodically evaluate your judgments, determine whether qualified women and underrepresented minorities are included in your pool, and consider whether evaluation biases and assumptions are influencing your decisions. Assign someone to remind the committee members to reflect on the following questions (Fine & Handelsman, 2012):
  - Are women and minority candidates subject to different expectations or standards in order to be considered as qualified as majority men?
  - Are candidates from institutions other than the major research universities that have trained most of our faculty being under-valued?
  - Have the accomplishments, ideas, and findings of women or minority candidates been undervalued or unfairly attributed to a research director or collaborators despite contrary evidence in publications or letters of reference?
  - Are negative assumptions about whether women or minority candidates will 'fit in' to the existing environment influencing evaluation?

After the initial review of candidates, reflect on the following questions (Gilies, 2016):

 - What facts support our decisions to include or exclude a candidate? Where might we be speculating?

 - How do the demographics of our shortlist compare with our qualified pool, and with the national pool of recent Ph.Ds.?

 - Have we generated a list with more than one minority finalist?

 - If a high percentage of underrepresented candidates were weeded out, do we know why? Can we reconsider our pool with a more inclusive lens, or extend the search?