

Position Development

Faculty who have served on many search committees tell us that the development of the position and the position description is the first important opportunity to open the door for a diverse applicant pool, or to make such a pool unlikely. In fact, some faculty now decline invitations to serve on search committees when this step has already been completed without committee involvement.

Pitfalls in Position Development

1. Unexamined assumptions about excellence
 - Pedigree
 - Publications/citations
 - Pure vs. applied scholarship
 - Research, teaching, service
 - Collegiality
2. Unexamined assumptions about searches
 - Appropriate things to say in the announcement
 - What kind of information will interest people in the job, the university and the community
 - Whether search should be streamlined and efficient or complex and rigorous
 - Who would be interested in and qualified for the position
3. Reliance on past models
 - Using previous position description without critical examination, due to time and budget constraints
 - Using previous incumbent as the standard to emulate or to avoid
4. Procedural mistakes
 - Not involving people early enough
 - Not including people with valuable insights and diverse perspectives
5. Errors in establishing and using screening criteria (see *Establishing and Using Screening Criteria* page)