



Process for Evaluating Search Committee Composition

(Ensuring Diverse, Representative and Appropriately Skilled Membership for Successful Search Outcomes)

Purpose:

To establish a clear, compliant process for evaluating the composition of search committees to ensure they reflect the diversity of perspectives, roles, experiences, and institutional knowledge across the university — while fully adhering to legal and policy guidelines, including prohibitions against considering race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics in employment decisions.

Step 1: Define Diversity Broadly

- Evaluate diversity through **institutional and professional lenses**, including:
 - Different **divisions, departments, and functional areas**
 - **Role diversity** (faculty, staff, administrators, technical staff, students, alumni, etc.)
 - **Years of service/experience levels** (early-career, mid-career, senior employees; and years at Montclair)
 - **Educational backgrounds** and professional areas of expertise
 - **Geographic backgrounds** (e.g., people from different regions or who have worked at various types of institutions and industries)



- **Lived experiences**, where voluntarily shared, such as first-generation college graduates, military service backgrounds, caregivers, etc.
- **Identity and Ability**, where voluntarily shared however individuals define themselves or declare important parts of their identity, ability and background.

Note: Voluntarily self-identified lived experience may inform—but not determine—committee selection.

Step 2: Conduct a Functional Mapping of Potential Members

- Map potential search committee members by:
 - **Department/Unit** affiliation
 - **Job Function/Classification** (academic affairs, student services, administration, facilities, finance, etc.)
 - **Experience/Skill Sets** (e.g., leadership, project management, people management, collaboration, academic research, advising, administration, compliance knowledge)
 - **Industry** (accounting for members from different industries that may collaborate with the new hire, ie. finance, career advising, learning and development, trades, customer service, etc)
- Prioritize a **cross-functional** mix whenever possible.
- Four to Six (4-6) search committee members are required for all positions (this number includes the search chairperson and hiring manager)
- Civil Service positions are subject to State guidelines regarding selection and appointment.
 - Classified positions **do not** require a committee.



- Unclassified positions require a search committee.

Step 3: Use a Structured Review Template

- Evaluate committees using a **Search Committee Composition Checklist**, considering:
 - Does the committee include individuals from more than one department/unit?
 - Does the committee include individuals from different job classifications and experience levels?
 - Does the committee have individuals with different professional or academic backgrounds?
 - Does the committee include individuals with institutional knowledge and those newer to the university/higher education?
 - Are there individuals with demonstrated experience in inclusive recruitment and hiring practices and/or training and/or inclusive initiatives?
 - Are there individuals with any current open investigations or compliance or professionalism issues?
 - Are there any individuals with any conflicts of interest (define it for the potential members in detail when considering them so they can accurately assess any relationship to potential candidates or the position)?

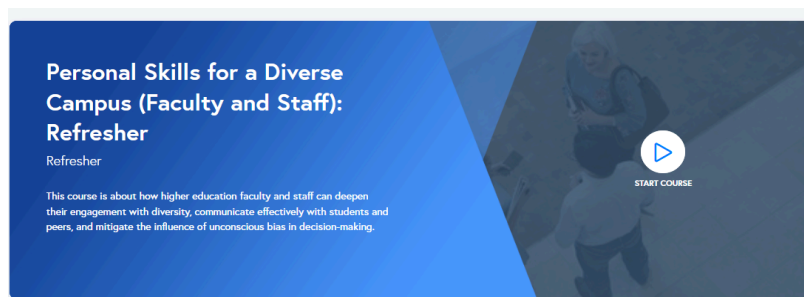
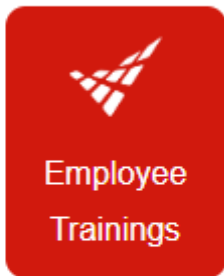
(If gaps are found, the search committee chair and hiring manager will be asked to propose additional members.)

Step 4: Require and Review Inclusive Search Training



- Ensure all committee members complete **inclusive search training** that:
 - Reviews legal guidelines
 - Addresses implicit bias in evaluation
 - Reinforces the value of broad, representative perspectives in hiring
 - Reinforces engagement in inclusive communication, collaboration and relationship building
- Training completion should be completed **before** interviewing of candidates begins.
- Also note any additional training outside (for example: Faculty Best Practices from Office of Faculty Excellence.)

Access the Training Here: via Nest



- <https://montclairstate-nj.vectorlmsedu.com/training/home>



Step 5: Document the Review

- Maintain a record of each search committee's composition evaluation, including:
 - The rationale for committee member selections
 - Checklist of diversity across departments, roles, experience, and functional areas
 - Confirmation of inclusive search training completion
 - Any corrective actions taken to improve representativeness, if needed

Step 6: Continuous Improvement

- Annually review aggregated data about search committee compositions to:
 - Identify patterns or persistent gaps (e.g., if most committees over-rely on a few individuals or units); also identify patterns in recruitment strategies and collect data or request data from Talent Acquisition regarding what recruitment sources yielded the most qualified candidates that exemplified our university mission, vision and values.
 - Proactively broaden future committee invitations; pipeline building in and outside of your immediate unit (Who can be developed to serve, and serve in different roles? What relationships do you need to establish to broaden the potential member pool?)
 - Offer additional outreach or training (or request training) where needed, including around active recruitment at in person events, and via social media and other online platforms; Workday training; and inclusive recruitment and hiring practices and inclusion training.