# UMKC Task Force on the Recruitment and Retention of

# Diverse Faculty and Staff

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**Background**

The recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff is critical to the advancement of our University mission and the realization of our vision to be an exemplary public urban research university of the 21st Century, pursuing excellence as a human-centric learning and discovery community, fostering equity, diversity and inclusion to enrich the lives of the people and regions we serve. Our campus climate and culture form the foundation of our recruitment and retention efforts, and each of us have a responsibility to create a campus culture that attracts and supports the retention of diverse faculty and staff. Built upon that foundation, systematic policy and standardized practice are also necessary to reach our strategic recruitment and retention efforts. As part of [Roos Advocate for Community Change](https://www.umkc.edu/chancellor/initiatives/racc/), a task force was developed to evaluate our recruitment and retention strategies and to recommend actions steps for improvement. Although the task force grew out of an effort to improve experiences for faculty and staff of color, its recommendations are applicable to the recruitment and retention of all under-represented groups of individuals (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender/sex, disability status, and veteran status), as described below.

## **Recruitment**

**Search Committees**

Search committees should be evaluated for diversity and representation of under-represented groups of individuals prior to launching a search. We recommend that search committees be reviewed for diverse representation and approved by the office of Diversity and Inclusion prior to launching a search. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as well as Faculty Affairs, can be resources for best practices in designing search committees to maximize representation for staff and faculty hiring. When necessary, units should seek participation from individuals external to the unit who can bring diversity to the search process (e.g., individuals from similar disciplines, community representatives from the Chancellor’s Diversity Councils). Although search committee service is typically voluntary or part of one’s service load, when appropriate, an honorarium for time and expenses should be provided to external search committee members. Faculty providing search committee service to departments outside their own unit should receive appropriate service credit in the annual evaluation process.

### **Communicating the Position**

### Position Descriptions

Position descriptions should be written to attract diverse faculty and staff, including reference to opportunities for mentorship and support, opportunities for research with certain populations, diversity of the curriculum, and community resources. Position descriptions and all recruitment materials should be reviewed for majority-centric language. For faculty hires, the [American Psychological Association](https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/brochures/how-to) has detailed suggestions and example position descriptions that can be tailored to other disciplines.

### Supplemental Position Materials

Supplemental materials (e.g., brochures created by HR or Academic Units) should be reviewed for majority-centric language and examples. KC area resources included in supplemental materials should reflect the diversity of our community. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion, as well as the Chancellor’s Diversity Councils, can serve as a resource for information and review. Supplemental materials should also direct candidates to data demonstrating our commitment to diversity and inclusion (e.g., dashboard data, unit Inclusive Excellence plans, the [UMKC Strategic plan](https://www.umkc.edu/about/strategic-plan.html), and the [Roos Advocate for Community change website](https://www.umkc.edu/chancellor/initiatives/racc/).

### Sourcing

It is the expectation that units familiarize themselves with best practices and alternative sourcing strategies for diverse candidates prior to launching a search. Sourcing for faculty and staff should be comprehensive, and verification of a robust sourcing plan should be documented prior to approval of the request to recruit. As part of comprehensive sourcing, search committees and unit leaders should familiarize themselves with the OAA resource list that includes Black, Latinx, and tribal professional organizations and annual meeting information across disciplines, as well as a list of historically Black, predominantly Latinx, and tribal colleges and universities for outreach and solicitation of nominations. The sourcing module in the hiring committee training should review best practices in sourcing diverse candidates, including communication and outreach strategies. The University needs to continue investment in the annual Southern Regional Education Board’s Institute on Teaching and Mentoring recruitment fair with UM System.

### **Application Materials and Interviews**

We recommend that all applicants be required to submit a *behavioral* diversity statement that includes their specific contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly for faculty hires. Similar to candidate statements describing their experience and plans for effective teaching practices and for the development of independent lines of research, behavioral diversity statements should be used to gauge candidate experience with and commitment to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in their support of students, their pedagogy, their research and scholarship, and their contribution to a positive University climate. We recommend that the for faculty searches the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, in collaboration with Faculty Affairs, develop a standard prompt for the diversity statement so that all candidates are responding to the same assessment of their behavioral commitment to diversity. More information about diversity statements can be found at [UC Davis](https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/statements_of_contributions_to_DEI), [Inside Higher Ed](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/11/19/new-paper-explores-what-faculty-candidates-include-their-diversity-equity-and), [Vanderbilt University](https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/developing-and-writing-a-diversity-statement/).

When conducting off-list reference calls, we recommend that all candidates be provided the opportunity to exclude names of anyone who might intentionally or inadvertently undermine their success, including because of a history of overt or covert hostile or discriminatory behavior, microaggressions, or other interpersonal conflict.

All candidates should be given the opportunity to meet with the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion during their on campus interview. When candidates visit Kansas City as part of their interview or post-offer decision-making process, they should be given the opportunity to ask questions about the Kansas City community and learn about aspects of the community that most interest them.

### **Offers**

Supervisors/Department Chairs/Deans should work with HR and Faculty Affairs to ensure equity in compensation prior to making an offer. We recommend that Deans negotiate salary with candidates so that Department Chairs can maintain a neutral relationship with candidates during this process. Supervisors/Department Chairs/Deans should maintain a list of non-compensation benefits that can be negotiated with candidates in order to maximize the likelihood of accepting an offer, particularly when salary opportunities are not optimal.

## **Retention**

### **Onboarding**

All new faculty and staff should be provided with information about campus and community professional or affinity groups that can provide a source of support.

### **Mentorship and Leadership Training**

All incoming faculty should be assigned a senior faculty mentor; this has been standard practice in many departments and the mentorship is part of a faculty member’s service obligations. When no potential mentors are available within a department/division, the department chair should work with the Dean and Vice Provost for Faculty affairs to seek a mentor external to the department/unit/university. Faculty affairs should develop training for faculty mentors so that they are prepared to support diverse faculty with their adjustment to UMKC. We recommend that the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs be provided an annual pool of funds to support external mentorship, when needed.

Senior staff should also be provided opportunities for mentorship training, managed through HR.

Under-represented faculty and staff who are interested in leadership opportunities should be encouraged to participate in leadership programs offered by UM System (e.g., LDP and ALDP) and externally (e.g., NCFDD). Funding should be made available to HR and Faculty Affairs to support such opportunities annually.

### **Retention Offers**

In better financial times, we recommend that funding should be allocated strategically to support retention offers for diverse and under-represented faculty and staff. In our current fiscal climate, creative retention strategies focused on improving work satisfaction (e.g., flexible work schedules, extension of start-up funding or opportunities for leadership roles) should be pursued.

### **Reclassification and Administrative Appointments**

The retention of diverse faculty and staff is also important when positions are filled without a competitive recruitment process, such as academic administrative appointments and internal promotions or transfers. When a position will be filled without a competitive recruitment process, we recommend that the supervisor consult with Human Resources and/or the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to establish an appropriate process for equitably soliciting and considering candidates before making a decision.

### **Annual Evaluation of Faculty and Promotion and Tenure**

In many academic units, service, particularly representation-based service, is not identified and quantified adequately in the annual evaluation process. This can lead to disparate impact on faculty workload, as well as productivity in research and teaching. Each academic unit should develop metrics to quantify service roles and ensure that service obligation aligns with workload. When an individual clearly engages in more service than their assigned workload, the unit should recognize this through the annual evaluation process. When unit leaders recognize disparities in service workload, they should reassign or remove service roles to achieve greater equity in service assignments.

Each unit’s P&T criteria should be evaluated for majority-centric values with regard to research, teaching, and service obligations.

## **Efforts to Advance Both Recruitment and Retention**

To implement the faculty-focused suggestions of the task force, we recommend the creation of a D&I Provost Faculty Fellow housed in Faculty Affairs. The Fellow would assist with the sourcing, training, and hiring practices of units, as well as lead mentorship programming and support units in the evaluation and revision of annual reviews and discipline-specific P&T criteria.

Each unit currently has a designated Diversity Coordinator, and in most units this work is part of one’s administrative/service load (faculty) or additional duties as assigned (staff). We recommend that the unit Diversity Coordinators meet twice/year with the Vice Chancellor for D&I, Provost, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Provost Faculty Fellow to evaluate barriers and facilitators of change across campus. Based on the feedback obtained in these bi-annual meetings, policy and strategy for the implementation of recruitment and retention practices will be modified as needed.

## **Evaluating Outcomes**

Leadership should continue to engage in a regular equity review process focused on representation and salary disparities within units. Over time, accountability measures should be established for units who continue to experience disparities in representation or salary of under-represented faculty and staff.

## **Resources**

American Psychological Association How to Recruit and Hire Ethnic Minority Faculty: <https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/brochures/how-to>

Inside Higher Ed:

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2018/07/19/advice-deans-department-heads-and-search-committees-recruiting-diverse-faculty>