



Science of Diversity



Building Evidence



Sociocultural



Sustaining Diversity

ACHIEVING EQUITY IN FACULTY: PROS AND CONS OF COHORT RECRUITMENT

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University of San Diego

Scientific Workforce Diversity Seminar Series

Wednesday, December 8, 2021
1:00 – 2 :00 p.m. ET

IMPETUS FOR COHORT SEARCH

NSF ADVANCE AWARD (1106890)

“Advancing Female Faculty: Institutional climate, Retention and Mentoring (AFFIRM)”

Interdisciplinary PI Team

Lisa Baird, Biology

Susan Lord, Engineering

Perla Myers, Mathematics

Sandra Sgoutas-Emch, Neuroscience



IMPETUS FOR COHORT SEARCH

Climate study in Science and Engineering to understand attitudes and perceptions about hiring. Themes:

- Diverse pool unavailable or not captured by traditional methods
- Many unqualified candidates (candidates that lack experience or rigor required for role)
- Quality candidates recruited by other campuses or, when successfully recruited, are not retained

PROCESS

Disrupt traditional methods of recruiting candidates.

Traditional procedures generally entail:

1. writing a narrow job description that focuses solely on disciplinary scholarship and teaching (to the exclusion of other elements that could more broadly appeal to a wider pool);
2. publishing the position announcement in the leading journals in the fields (and neglecting specialty outlets);
3. using networks that perpetuate typical hiring practices;
4. recruiting at traditional disciplinary conferences to meet and sometimes interview, prospective candidates.

PROCESS

Create a new structure for recruiting candidates.

Conditions that allowed for this:

1. NSF award as external catalyst for experimental approach to recruiting.
2. Findings from campus climate study were publicly shared with campus community to generate awareness and feedback.
3. PI Team regularly promoted the ongoing work of the AFFIRM project.
4. Key leaders offered buy-in and support (upper administration and deans).
5. Agreement on cohort theme = Interdisciplinarity in STEM (dismantled “ownership” of faculty lines)

METHODS

Recruiting candidates differently.

1. Funding made available for two new faculty lines in STEM, in undesignated departments, to be determined.
2. Thus, faculty lines did not “belong” to any department.
3. Instead, the AFFIRM PI team members ran the search process, conducting initial screening of all prospective candidates and vetting files prior to sharing with appropriate departments.
4. Screening of prospective candidates included ensuring they met eligibility requirements of: “Interdisciplinary STEM research” + Experience mentoring under-represented STEM students + Interest in developing new interdisciplinary collaborations as part of a cohort.

OUTCOMES

Eight faculty members were selected to be invited to the cohort.

LESSONS LEARNED

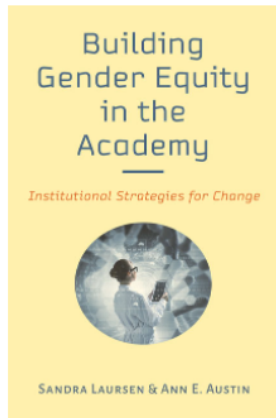
Importance of collaborating with leadership vertically and horizontally – especially on EDI initiatives.

To generate buy in at upper administration levels, there is value in demonstrating synchronicity between cohort initiatives and university's mission/ strategic plan/ accreditation-requirements.

Create alignment with departmental structures so candidates are not isolated.

Formalize mentorship structures.

SUGGESTED RESOURCE:



Building Gender Equity in the Academy

Institutional Strategies for Change

Sandra Laursen and Ann E. Austin

An evidence-based, action-oriented response to the persistent, everyday inequity of academic workplaces.

Despite decades of effort by federal science funders to increase the numbers of women holding advanced degrees and faculty jobs in science and engineering, they are persistently underrepresented in academic STEM disciplines, especially in positions of seniority, leadership, and prestige. Women filled 47% of all US jobs in 2015, but held only 24% of STEM jobs. Barriers to women are built into academic workplaces: biased selection and promotion systems, inadequate structures to support those...[Read more »](#)

John Hopkins University Press 2020

<https://jhupbooks.press.jhu.edu/title/building-gender-equity-academy>

View the authors discuss the book via a short 7 min video clip [here](#).



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Thank you – Questions?

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National Institutes of Health

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Scientific Workforce Diversity*

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