

Equity in Faculty Recruitment, 4(12)

Ruth Rees

reesr@educ.queensu.ca

Faculty of Education, Queen's University

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Abstract

This paper looks at equity in employment and in particular, recruitment and hiring practices in Canadian universities. First, I review the literature on equity in employment in Canada and Ontario in particular, and also organizational hiring practices, and those mainly at the university level. Next, I describe the cycle that one university department underwent of the hiring process. I question whether the recruitment and hiring process is and can be equitable.

Overview

Recruiting and hiring for any institution is considered by some to be an opportunity; recruiting new university faculty members in the late 1990's is considered a rare opportunity. For more than a decade, the university community has not been hiring new faculty members in significant numbers. Declining budgets and hence a decreasing number of faculty positions coupled with low faculty turnover and some early retirement programs were past norms in Canada. Consequently, the recruitment and hiring of new faculty is an exciting opportunity in current academe, not experienced for a while.

It is a time for organizational renewal and hopefulness -- knowing that necessary vacancies will be soon filled, providing some continuity in teaching and perhaps even complementing other faculty members' research interests. Yet, it is also a period of doubt and uncertainty. With legislation and collective agreements addressing issues of equity, university officials are obligated to ensure that its faculty members are more broadly representatives of the national population and somewhat more representative of its student enrolment. Skeptics wonder if the process will unearth the best person for the position, what is meant by 'best,' how the person will be received by colleagues and students, how long the person will remain in the university, and if the hiring decision will result in a grievance procedure. Recruiting for any institution is an important responsibility.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the process and potential pitfalls of equity in the recruitment and hiring process in a university setting. Specifically, the objectives are threefold: one, to review the literature on equity in recruiting and hiring; two, to document a recruitment and hiring process undertaken by one university department — the Faculty of Education at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, Canada; and three, to describe and analyze one cycle of that process in terms of reflection and feedback. The aim of the recruitment committee was not only to hire the person most suited academically for the position, but also to ensure equity in recruitment and hiring process — a process that might be a template for future hiring. The feedback from this process which is incorporated in this paper includes responses from those people who were offered appointments as a result of this hiring cycle, faculty members, members of the recruitment committee, and two individuals in equity-related positions within the university.

The author invites readers to forward suggestions for improving this recruitment and hiring process in a quest for equity in employment.

Review of the Literature

History of Employment Equity in Canada, Ontario and Ontario Universities

Employment equity is generally viewed as an organizational change strategy designed to prevent and remedy discrimination and disadvantage by identifying and removing barriers in employment policies and practices and in the culture of the organization, as well as by improving the numerical representation and distribution of designated groups...It has avoided the negative aspects of quotas and is designed not only to improve numerical representation through hiring, but to provide fair employment systems and a supportive organizational culture for women, racial minorities, aboriginal peoples and persons with disabilities. (Agocs & Burr, 1996, p. 35)

Under Section 15 of the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms \(1978\)](#), there is a clear constitutional mandate for employment equity. Despite the Charter, a report six years later on employment in Canada by Judge [Abella \(1984\)](#) brought to the forefront the need to identify and overcome systemic discrimination in the workplace. In order to achieve demonstrated equity (i.e., equality of outcomes in the workplace), Abella insisted that equity means not just treating all groups equally (i.e., equality of condition), but treating different groups differently ([Agocs, Burr, & Somerset, 1992](#)). Consequently, two Acts were passed in 1986: the federal [Employment Equity \(EE\) Act](#) and the [Federal Contractors Program Employers \(FCPE\) Act](#), both which were revised in 1995. The former, the EE Act, required employers to collect and report data on the representativeness of their workforce and to make a plan which includes targets for hiring and promotion including measures to remove discriminatory barriers in employment policies and practices and to accommodate diversity within the workforce. Employers are subject to a compliance audit; these reports available to the public; and the Canadian Human Rights Commission has the power to file and adjudicate complaints of systemic discrimination (activities undertaken within the institution which intentionally or unintentionally prejudice certain groups of people).

The [Federal Contractors Program Employers \(FCPE\)](#) applies to organizations that bid on Canadian government goods and services contracts worth \$200,000 or more, and which have 100 or more employees. Employers who do not comply with the terms of the Act are excluded from bidding on future Federal Government contracts. Many Canadian universities are part of this Program. The Program requires the organization to commit to implementing employment equity as a condition of their bid. The first stage requires collecting and maintaining data on the distribution of designated members in the university and in the relevant workforce categories outside the university, and reviewing the university's policies with a view to eliminating systemic discriminatory practices. The second stage requires the establishment of goals for the hiring and training of members of designated groups. ([Agocs & Burr, 1996](#))

My university is not only a member of the FCPE, but also is subject to Ontario laws and Acts. Those two that pertain to equitable hiring are the Ontario Human Rights Code (1981) and the Ontario Employment Equity Act (1993, repealed in 1995). The Ontario Human Rights Code promotes equal employment opportunity regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or handicap. Human Rights legislation is based upon the principle that employment decisions should be based upon criteria relating to the applicant's ability to do the job in question, rather than on factors unrelated to job performance. Also covered by the Code are recruitment and employment practices that are not openly or intentionally discriminatory, but are discriminatory in their effect. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has published "Employment Applications and Interviews" to disseminate the types of questions that are appropriate or inappropriate at employment interviews.

The Employment Equity Act (1993) required employers to: one, provide information to employees about employment equity; two, conduct a census of the workplace based on voluntary self-reporting by employees of their membership in the designated groups; three, conduct a review of the formal and informal policies and practices used to make decisions about all aspects of human resource management in order to identify any that contain systemic barriers; four, prepare a plan for removing discriminatory barriers and for undertaking measures to accommodate the needs of disadvantaged groups; five, set goals and timetables for improving the representation of women, racial minorities, aboriginal persons and persons with disabilities over time at all levels of the organization's hierarchy; and six, monitor and assess the progress of the equity process, with revision of the equity plan every three years in order to make it as effective as possible.

It is uncertain as to why it was repealed in 1995, other than to indicate a change in Ontario Government's priorities. [Agocs and Burr \(1996\)](#) attest, however, that employment equity policy has had only limited results in Canada, primarily consisting of the increased hiring of white able-bodied women and, to a lesser extent, of racial minority women, in selected job classes. Some advances have been made with these two same groups in the university sector. Canadian university groups have made many recommendations to encourage the hiring of more women into the academy. Some of these groups are the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), Ontario Council of University Faculty Association (OCUFA) and its Status of Women Committee (SWC), as well as several Canadian women academics (The Chilly Collective, from Wilfrid Laurier University, Breslauer, Caplan, Innis Dagg, Prentice, Stalker, and Thompson). Many of their recommendations are reflected within the Queen's University faculty hiring practices. The literature contends that the goal of increasing the diversity of the workforce should be firmly ensconced into the search process, described below.

Recruitment and Hiring: The Search Process

Certainly the recruitment and hiring process in itself is neither new nor without documentation. Indeed, the steps have been outlined in many books and articles, for example by [Half \(1985\)](#), [Perlman and McCann \(1996\)](#), [Ryan and Martinson \(1996\)](#), and [Tucker \(1993\)](#). Briefly yet in a comprehensive manner, the search process consists of: one, identify the unit's goals, needs, and personnel gaps; two, create a representative search committee; three, determine the criteria for the position; four, draft and place the advertisement; five, review and assess materials from candidates; six, create a short list; seven, design the interview questions; eight, plan the site visit; nine, conduct the interviews; ten, assess the files, post-interview; eleven, select a candidate for the position; twelve, document the process; and thirteen, provide an orientation to new and existing faculty.

This process is a generic one. All personnel searches should include the above steps; but, in reality, many of these steps are overlooked or left up to a secretary (e.g., planning the site visit). Each of these 13 steps is a whole process in itself. Briefly, each step is described below, highlighting its equity initiatives and applied directly to the university setting.

1. *Identify the unit's needs, goals, and hence personnel gaps.* Usually the unit head and group responsible for strategic or long-term planning of the unit collaborate to identify the unit's direction and the types of positions to be filled. The expectations of that position should be clear before the search committee begins its work; otherwise, "the search will almost always lead to two negative results: first, a split department, since some faculty members will accuse the committee of ignoring the will of the department; and second, very unhappy applicants," ([Emmerson, 1995](#), p.24).

2. *Create a representative committee.* [Bugliani \(1992\)](#), [Coady \(1990\)](#) and [Half \(1985\)](#) are just several who write that the composition of the search committee is very important, particularly if the committee is attempting to hire traditionally under-represented people. A broadly represented search committee is more likely to value differences in people. Moreover, a visually diverse search committee actually demonstrates to the short-listed candidate that the committee is serious about widening the academic pool ([Perlman & McCann, 1996](#)). OCUFA (1985) is explicit: each search committee should have at least one woman on it. The goal of attaining a truly representative search committee is difficult to achieve, however. Few people of aboriginal origin (1.3%) or persons with disabilities (3.7%) self-disclosed as being Canadian university faculty members ([Breslauer, 1996](#)). If faculty were already representative of the wider population, then the universities would not require these equity initiatives. Moreover, those few existing women faculty are already overburdened and have been asked too often to be members of too many committees ([Caplan, 1992](#)).

Critical to the success of the recruitment effort is the appointment of the chairperson of the committee ([Cooper & Garmon, 1990](#); [Perlman & McCann, 1996](#)). That person must be skilled in conflict resolution ([Cooper & Garmon, 1990](#)) and be someone who is respected and trusted. It is not in an institution's best interest to assign a chairperson who is "vastly inexperienced and untrained in the art of identifying, recruiting, and hiring faculty" and/or has a history of "telling the candidate everything that is wrong with the institution and for airing all the grievances the members of the search committee have against the institution" ([Stein & Trachtenberg, 1993](#), p. 10). Furthermore, the attitude of the chairperson has been said to affect the candidate's reaction to the institution and her or his decision to accept the position (Harris & Fink, 1990, cited in [Stein & Trachtenberg, 1993](#)).

According to [Cooper and Garmon \(1990\)](#), the search committee "ought not to be too large (over twelve is too large) or too small (fewer than five)" (p.4). [Perlman and McCann \(1996\)](#) argue for a small committee (three to four members); they see no reason for a committee larger than five members.

Regardless of the actual number of committee members, [Perlman and McCann \(1996\)](#) suggest that special roles be assigned to members even if they overlap and if one committee member holds several key roles. These key roles are:

An ethical leader. This person will become familiar with the ethics of recruitment and will remain sensitive to, guide, and advise the committee on ethical issues throughout its work.

A teaching leader. The teaching leader serves as a source of expertise on good teaching and the use of teaching portfolios. The teaching leader serves a second function, perhaps even more important, which is to keep the spotlight on teaching throughout the recruitment. It is all too easy for a recruitment effort to begin by valuing teaching only to become enamoured with candidates with high scholarly and / or grant activity, thus losing sight of earlier planning and other criteria.

A scholarship performance leader. This individual will assist the committee in attending to relevant scholarship abilities and potential. (S)he will focus on the fit between candidates' scholarly performance and interests and position needs and is sensitive to differences between quality and quantity of candidates' scholarship. This person may have some good-natured debates with the teaching leader, interchanges which will assist the committee in selecting good candidates who meet all of the selection criteria.

A recorder. The person assigned to this role will take and file meeting minutes. This should be a faculty member, in addition to a secretary. Keeping a record of the decisions made as they are made is essential. This documentation could be referred to if there is a grievance.

An employment equity leader. This person is to ensure that the hiring is carried out in an equitable fashion, in accordance with legislation and institutional policies.

Other roles. These might include someone who is familiar with legal issues in recruiting (e.g., immigration). Depending on the nature of the position to be filled, it may make sense for the committee to have a resident expert on the department's or institution's laboratories, studios, or art or computer facilities.

Drucker points out that "the first rule is to make sure that everyone who will have to do something to make the decision effective - or who could sabotage it - has been forced to participate responsibly in the discussion" (as cited in [Cooper & Garmon, 1990](#), p.2). But [Bugliani \(1992\)](#) argues that it is "a bad idea to exclude difficult [undefined] faculty members from the hiring process." She believes, "If they participate in it, they are less likely to try to scuttle it. You don't normally try to destroy what you feel a part of," (p.27). It is inappropriate to place a candidate in an unwelcoming, if not hostile, environment ([Cooper & Garmon, 1990](#)).

Most of the writing on diverse hiring practices states that the process be monitored and documented ([OCUFA, 1986](#); [Ohio State University, 1988](#); [Perlman & Mann, 1997](#)). Several Ontario universities have the Equity Advisor or delegate as a member on all search committees for senior administration; this is to ensure that the process is monitored, and that the candidate is asked questions pertaining to equity.

3. *Determine the criteria for the position.* The selection criteria provides an organized structure for decision making ([Perlman & McCann, 1996](#)). The guide entitled Recruitment and hiring for faculty appointments, ([Queen's University, 1995](#)) states:

Setting out and agreeing upon the actual selection criteria and the weighting of each factor is one of the most important aspects of the process. This step should be completed prior to advertising so that those charged with the selection are clear about what qualities and qualifications they are searching for and are completely aware of the selection criteria before screening and interviewing (p.6).

In establishing the selection criteria, [Perlman and McCann \(1996\)](#) present these questions: *What is the most essential experience, ability, or characteristic that the successful candidate must have? What is the second most important, and the third?* The selection criteria should be a relatively brief list, in priority order, of the most important position characteristics. They provide an example of a prioritized selection criteria, as follows:

PhD Developmental Psychologist: Must be able to teach child/adolescent with secondary abilities in social psychology.

Excellent teaching abilities and/or potential.

Breadth (i.e., knowledge in more than one area) in disciplinary background and specialty.

Research program that involves collaborative work with both graduate and undergraduate students.

Retention potential. An interest in a regional university, teaching, and/or Midwest location.

[Perlman and McCann \(1996\)](#) make four points about their criteria: (1) the number of criteria is limited; (2) each criterion can be measured; (3) other criteria such as scholarly potential will certainly be used in selection but are not primary (in some institutions, scholarly potential may well be a priority); and (4) these criteria provide a focus for the members of the recruitment committee as they read credentials and select finalists for the position (p.123).

To ensure that employment equity is practiced, the recommendation is that non-traditional, unpaid and related types of work experience ([OCUFA, SWC, 1992](#)) as well as women's differently-structured careers (OCUFA, 1986) are somehow incorporated into the criteria. Moreover, another criterion could be the designation of the applicant, giving weight to those applicants who represent those four designated groups ([Queen's University, 1995](#)).

Not only must the criteria be determined, but the mechanism for evaluating the candidates must also be developed. "Consistency in the evaluation of candidates is essential to standards of fairness. Committee members who use measurable criteria for all candidates have a clearer view of each individual" ([Lawhon & Ennis, 1995, p.353](#)). [Cooper and Garmon \(1990\)](#), [Lawhon and Ennis \(1995\)](#), and [Perlman and McCann \(1996\)](#) all suggest devising an evaluation sheet. An evaluation or rating form allows committee members to keep track of each applicant's credentials in accordance with the selection criteria. [Perlman and McCann \(1996\)](#) suggest the use of a detailed rating form corresponding to each of the criteria giving each candidate an overall rating which falls between "highest priority," "satisfactory," and "unsuited to our needs." A numeric Likert-like scale is also frequently used. The members may not agree to using the same system for evaluating candidates against the criteria, however. Members of the committee must sign their forms and submit them as part of the documentation of this hiring process (as at [Queen's University](#)); moreover, the Ontario Human Rights Office has demanded to see these forms when a hiring was grieved.

4. Draft and place the advertisement. Typically the advertisement contains the information needed to describe the position and the application process. The advertisement must accurately reflect the criteria required for the position and must be specific enough to deter anyone with a general background from applying or being misled ([Bugliani, 1992](#); [Lawhon & Ennis, 1995](#); [Perlman & McCann, 1996](#); [Ryan & Martinson, 1996](#)). [Ryan and Martinson \(1996\)](#) reported that applicants were dissatisfied if advertisements were too vague. [Lawhon and Ennis \(1995\)](#) suggest that the announcement should clearly request an applicant's background, certification, qualifications, and any other specific job requirements. The advertisement is generally on one page and identifies the application deadline, job responsibilities, position description, need for references, salary range, contact person, and other information needed, such as a letter of application, a current curriculum vitae or résumé, transcripts, and letters of recommendation. (See Appendix I for suggested content of the advertisement.) [OCUFA \(1986\)](#) recommends that reference be made to the university's Employment Equity policy on both the job description and the advertisement.

Employment equity advocates strongly suggest that the committee broadens the search and finds ways to widen the pool of applicants (see, for example, recommendations from CAUT, 1995; [Ohio State University, 1988](#); [Spann, 1988](#)). This can be done by actively seeking out women and members from other under-represented groups and inviting them to apply; contacting departments at other universities that have similar programs and doctoral candidates in the area of expertise sought and asking colleagues as to who might qualify to apply; and advertising through listserves, at professional conferences, and in newspapers and journals which are likely read by people with the qualifications required ([Agocs & Burr, 1996](#); CFUW, 1992; [OCUFA, 1986](#); OCUFA SWC, 1992; [Ohio State University, 1988](#); [Queen's University, 1995](#)). [Spann \(1988\)](#) documents how the University of Wisconsin aggressively recruited American Indian and Black academics: the first step was by actively seeking these qualified applicants, not just through advertisements, but by visiting other universities where these potential applicants either worked as academics or were doctoral students. This personal and face-to-face approach is highly recommended when seeking diversity within the academic unit ([Ohio State University, 1988](#)).

5.6. Review the applicants' files, and create a short-list. The applicants' files are assessed against the criteria. Often input is solicited from faculty with expertise in a field similar to the applicant. Referees are normally contacted only if the applicant has been short-listed; but sometimes the referees are contacted earlier, to assist the committee in reducing the list of qualified candidates to a more manageable short-list.

Recommendations are that the short-list should include at least one qualified women for each position (CFUW, 1992; OCUFA, 1986) or that there be two short-lists (one for women, one for men) (OCUFA, SWC, 1992). Regardless of

what method is used, qualified applicants from traditionally under-represented groups should be invited to attend the interview.

7. *Determine the interview questions and format.* [Coady \(1990\)](#) suggests dismissing traditional methods of interviewing potential faculty. He recommends alternative screening methods that include descriptive interviews, assessing teaching performance, and extensive essay answers. Descriptive interviewing, assuming that past behaviour is an indicator of future performance, entails asking candidates to explain how they have behaved in real situations. Candidates are asked to provide highly specific answers to specific questions about past performance. "For instance, in a typical interview, the question might be: *What do you think is a good evaluation system?*" In a descriptive, interview, a candidate might be asked, *"Would you please describe the evaluation system you used in the most recent course you taught?"* ([Coady, 1990, p.6](#)). Some limitations exist with descriptive interviewing, however. If the candidate is new to teaching, s/he may be unable to cite past performance. Also, the questions require considerable thought.

Teaching simulations are a means to ensure that the committee "hir[es] people who could actually perform in the classroom [where] the teaching simulation shows how well a candidate relates with students and how coherently she or he can deliver information and stimulate thinking" (Coady, 1990, p.10). Students in the academic unit are asked to attend these sessions and to give feedback to the search committee. This is to overcome the concern of [Ryan and Martinson \(1996\)](#) that, in higher education, "good teaching is taken as a given and research is given too much weight," (p.11).

[Cooper and Garmon \(1990\)](#) present a holistic approach to hiring which reviews every aspect of each candidate's qualifications from various points of view. Initially, candidates submit a detailed résumé and complete a comprehensive application form. A list of 12 - 15 semi-finalists is generated. The committee develops essay questions designed to obtain additional information. The semi-finalists are asked to complete these detailed questions, including such inquiries as:

Please describe the training and experiences that you have had which you feel to be most significant in terms of filling the job requirements and leadership role for this position.

Provide brief statements of your educational philosophy to include the role of the community college in terms of the people we should be serving, how we should be serving them, what we should be doing for them, and why we should be serving them.

What are your long-range goals? What would you like for this position to do for your career?

Once semi-finalists receive the request for additional information, many screen themselves out of the process. Finalists are invited to the campus for a full day at which time a one to two hour interview is planned. The interview consists of a series of questions such as the following:

What do you consider to be your most positive strengths or characteristics? What do you need to improve on the most?

How would you describe yourself as a professional?

Why do you think you are the candidate we should choose?

All Ontario employers must follow the Human Rights Code (1981); questions are in that Code that may and may not be asked of applicants. Sound advice is for the committee to contact the department head or Dean, the institution's Employment Equity advisor, Human Resources Office or even the institutional lawyer, if in doubt. Moreover, some books and articles on hiring faculty offer a list of acceptable questions as well (such as by the [Ohio State University, 1988](#)).

8. *Plan the site visit.* In addition to the interview, [Coady \(1990\)](#) suggests that the site visit includes meetings with the candidate's prospective colleagues, teaching simulations, opportunities for students to interact with the candidate formally and informally, and a tour of the facilities. Just how welcoming the institution is depends on every communication made with the applicant ([Ohio State University, 1988](#)). How can the comfort levels of those academics who have been traditionally under-represented in the university (such as Aboriginal peoples, minority groups, women, and persons who are differently abled), who are additionally in the stressful position of being scrutinized by many people, be maximized? Who hosts the candidate? Who coordinates the visit? Will the unit head have an opportunity to meet with the candidate? What types of accommodation does the candidate require--such as

issues of accessibility, family, and diet? Is there any 'down' time included in the site visit, for both the host and the applicant to recuperate on their own for a short period? Attention to every detail is imperative here.

9. *Conduct the interviews.* Basic guidelines are: similar questions should be asked of each candidate, only job-related questions may be asked of an candidate in an interview and the candidate should have an opportunity to ask questions. All members of the committee should take notes, with the criteria as a guide. Some criteria are unable to be assessed on the paper qualifications (such as excellent oral communications) and require the face-to-face interview. The evaluation sheet should be completed at the time of the interview for each candidate. [Spann \(1988\)](#) says that those involved in the interview process should be prepared to discuss maternity leave policies, housing and schools, child care services, spousal placement services, the minority community, and the racial climate on and off campus. "The current focus on quality of life factors and campus and community climate points up the interrelatedness of all aspects of the diversity issue," (p. 49).

10,11,12. *Assess the file post-interview, select a candidate for the position, and document the process.* With input from all members of the search committee and any other members of the academic community and in particular the candidate's immediate future colleagues, the search committee must re-assess each of the short-listed candidates. Evaluations from people commenting on a candidate's suitability should be evidenced in writing ([OCUFA, 1992](#)). In my university, the chair must write a detailed letter to the unit head describing the number of applicants and short-listed candidates, and why the committee recommends a particular candidate for the position, and not the other short-listed candidates. Details on the designation of all applicants, those who made the short-list, and the person who was recommended are suggested for inclusion ([Ohio State University, 1988](#); [Spann, 1988](#)). Some Canadian associations provide guidelines for increasing the pool of university professors: where candidates are approximately equal, the department should nominate the female candidate (CAUT, 1985) and a minority applicant over a non-minority (CFUW, 1992), until the unit has met its employment goals. Furthermore, a full report of the committee's activities should be documented and open for public scrutiny. Some reports also include a section specifying the ways that this interview process was carried out to address issues of equity.

After the offer of employment has been accepted, those unsuccessful applicants have a right to know the reasons that they were not chosen for a position ([OCUFA, 1992](#)).

13. *Provide an orientation.* "I felt like I was thrown to the wolves." "I felt like someone had just dropped me on the ground and I was on my own." "I would have liked to get some input without having to be assertive all the time." These are only three of many comments received from new faculty members at Queen's University when asked about the accessibility of information on "... policies, procedures, standards and practices that they do not have when they arrive" (Knox, 1994, as cited in [Queen's University, 1995](#), Appendix 3, p.1). Queen's University is becoming increasingly aware of the present situation by systematically exploring the environment of junior faculty. Faculty retention is likely to be a major issue in the next decade ([Dunn, Rouse & Seff, 1994](#)). After all, "What is the point of all your work recruiting the best possible new faculty members if you then abandon them to their own devices?" (Perlman & McCann, 1996, p.185). It is important for recruiters to provide evidence that creating an inviting culture in which to work is a priority ([Perlman & McCann, 1996](#)).

"Support programs for new faculty make sense as institutional investment; the costs, both economic and human, of losing new hires to competitors or to unproductive and unhappy beginnings are clearly greater than those of setting up effective support programs," (p. 185). Support programs can include a program where new faculty are assigned a mentor who is proficient in teaching and scholarship, and who is familiar with the people and the processes of the university. Later, the new faculty member may want to select a different mentor. All these steps assist the new faculty member to "hit the ground running" ([Whitt, 1991](#)).

Established faculty may require an orientation too. They should be made aware of the areas of expertise and interests of the new hired faculty member. Issues of climate may have to be addressed if the climate toward this new member is "chilly," particularly if s/he is a member of a designated under-represented group.

Altogether these steps form the recruitment and hiring process. All are processes within themselves; all require thought, planning, and careful implementation for the overall success of the process. Each entails careful attention to principles of equity: fairness, openness, and lack of bias. Now, each of the steps are discussed in relation to the work of the search committee that was carried out in the Queen's Faculty of Education. Then the feedback, which the committee solicited and received from faculty and others, is documented and commented upon. Finally, some recommendations are offered.

The Recruitment And Hiring Process In One Faculty Of Education

Below is a description of a search process within one university department. This example is unique in several ways that require clarification. The purpose of this specific process was to hire, over a two-year span, a maximum of eight faculty members for the Faculty of Education at Queen's University at Kingston. Four points make this process distinctive. One, this hiring process was an attempt at hiring people from broad areas within Education, rather than specific subspecialties (e.g., not secondary English, but someone from the area of language and literacy). Two, one omnibus search committee was established for the hiring, over a two-year period, of all eight faculty positions. Three, the committee was intent on developing and carrying out practices within the process in order to realize the university's statement that it is "an employment equity employer." Four, the committee agreed that it wanted to learn from and improve upon this process. Accordingly, the process and the feedback of this process are included in the documentation below.

The Faculty of Education at Queen's University in Kingston has had all its full-time tenure track positions frozen for four years (1993-1997), along with most other units at the university. Dramatically reduced funding at the provincial level, a government edict to look at programs systemically (across the province) rather than institutionally and a retiring Dean, all contributed to the hiring freeze. In September 1995, a new Dean began her tenure and energized the Faculty. The previously-defunct strategic planning committee was asked by the Dean to clarify the mandate of the Faculty and then to identify, through faculty-wide collaboration, those tenure-track positions that required filling in order for the Faculty to better meet its mandate. A priority list, complete with rationale for each of those positions, was developed.

The Dean of Education was granted approval by senior university administration to hire a maximum of eight tenure-track faculty positions. The agreement was that all positions would be advertised at once (for expediency and efficiency) but that not all these positions would be filled in the first year. The Faculty was guaranteed these positions for at least two years.

As a requirement of Federal Contractors Program, the Dean is required first to analyze the composition of the current faculty, comparing the data in the four federally-designated groups (women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and persons who are because of their race or colour in a visible minority in Canada) to their representation in the workforce in Canada.

Next, the Dean wrote up an advertisement and asked for feedback from members of the Education Faculty as well as from the university's legal advisor. Advertisements, according to university policy, were placed in the one national newspaper and in two national academic newsletters. A statement attesting to the university's commitment to equity was placed with the advertisement, required by the recently ratified and first collective agreement ([QUFA, 1996](#)) stating:

In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, this advertisement is directed to Canadian citizens and permanent residents. Queen's University has an employment equity program, welcomes diversity in the workplace and encourages applications from all qualified candidates, including women, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, and visible minorities.

All applications were to be forwarded to the search committee upon receipt and acknowledgment by the Dean's office. Complete files consisted of a covering letter, a curriculum vitae, the names of three references and a sample of the applicant's scholarly writing.

A committee, called the Omnibus Search Committee, was formed to carry out the recruitment and selection process for all eight positions. The committee of eight was composed of two full professors (one who was the chair), two associate professors, one assistant professor, the Associate Dean, one preservice teacher education student (a student with a first degree and now in the one-year professional program) and one Education graduate student. Because eight diverse positions were to be filled, the committee was broad-based (i.e., someone on the committee had some expertise in at least one of the areas where a vacancy existed). I had two roles on that committee: one as a regular member and the other as the "equity officer," as required by the collective agreement.

"to ensure that the process [meets] equity criteria," ([Queen's University, 1995](#), p. 4). Further, the faculty's collective agreement not only states that each member of the committee had to attend an employment equity workshop, which they did. Furthermore, I as the equity advocate had to attend two equity workshops and then document the hiring process for submission to the Joint University-Faculty Association Equity Committee.

Of the eight-person committee, the chair was male, only one (of six) of the faculty members was female; both students were women, one being a woman of color. No other women faculty member agreed to be on the committee. Furthermore, no faculty members representing Aboriginal peoples, minority cultural/racial groups, or people with disabilities were on the committee.

The university's [Hiring guidelines for faculty appointments](#) (1995) was read and the committee discussed the applicable passages from the newly formed collective agreement concerning equitable faculty recruiting and hiring practices. Trainers from the Office of Human Resources addressed the committee on common pitfalls of the hiring process. The half-day training program included an overview of pertinent legislation, a review of potential selection criteria, guidance on asking behavioral-oriented interview questions based on the selection criteria, interviewing etiquette and how to accommodate to candidates' special needs.

The search committee did not have input into the advertisement, but it did have input into where the advertisement was placed. Article 32, the Employment Equity article of the university faculty's collective agreement, stipulated that there should be "an active search for qualified members of under-represented groups." Accordingly, the first thing the committee addressed was the issue of outreach. How and where could the notice be advertised in order to reach a broad audience including some of the non-traditional groups currently under-represented in the academy? Faculty members knowledgeable about the discipline advertised were contacted as to specific networks, journals, electronic listserves, electronic bulletin boards, conferences in their field; attempts were made to place the ad in as many of these sources as were available and feasible (due to time and monetary constraints). Advertisements were placed in three Aboriginal newspapers and at one national conference.

While waiting for the closing date of the advertisement, the search committee determined some generic criteria for screening the applications. As stated in the collective agreement, "the primary criterion for appointment to positions to the university is academic and professional excellence; and no candidate shall be recommended who does not meet the criteria for the appointment in question," (QUFA, 1996, Article 32). After several iterations, criteria were determined (see [Appendix II](#)). As the committee was concerned as to whether the criteria were bias-free, someone from the university's Human Rights Office reviewed and approved the criteria. Weight was given to an applicant who was a member of one of the four federally designated under-represented groups. The committee unanimously agreed to keep those criteria confidential.

Each of the eight committee members was the overseer of applications from one of the disciplines advertised. That person was to screen all applications against the criteria and divide the applications into three piles: definite "no," "maybe," and "great." At the weekly meetings, each committee member justified to the group the reasons for each rejected application. Article 32 of the collective agreement informs the appointments committee to "take special care not to eliminate at early stages potentially strong candidates" who represent one of the four federally designated groups. The committee knew the sex of the applicants. Also one person self-identified as being a member of a minority group.

The second task was for all members to read the applications in the "maybe" pile, comparing each application to ones in the third pile of "great" applications. In addition, each committee member chose another committee member to go over the same set of applications and resolve any differences between themselves regarding their decisions (inter-rater reliability). As before, all newly rejected applications were discussed at weekly meetings. Several iterations of these two phases were carried out prior to the closing date of the advertisement. Two hundred twenty-nine applicants had applied to at least one of the eight positions, for a total of 325 applications. The large number of applications, several not directly relevant to any of the advertised positions, made the committee realize that future ads should be more explicit about each position. Increased detail may prevent the many inquiries made to the Dean.

[Table 1](#) below reveals the total number of applications received by discipline advertised. Eight people applied to a non-advertised, non-specific "assistant professor" position. Data were maintained by sex of the applicant because that was the only variable that was clearly distinctive in the applications. The sex was determined from the name and after having read the file. Over 50% of the applications were from women; twice as many applications from women were received for the Elementary Curriculum position; more than twice as many men than women applied for the Mathematics and Technology position. The fewest number of applications was for the Counselling and Career Guidance position. The low response rate was puzzling, however. It may have reflected the lack of precise information in the advertisement for this position, a lack of interest of people with that background, or an indication that few people qualified.

The next assignment was to rank all the applications in the third pile (those "great" applications). For each of the eight positions, several people were involved in this task: one, the committee member responsible for the particular discipline, one other committee member, and at least two faculty members who were knowledgeable of the same

discipline as the position advertised. For example, no one on the committee was an 'expert' in Cognitive Studies, one of the areas advertised. Accordingly, all four Education Psychology professors were requested to review the files, to rank order the applicants and to comment in writing as to their "fit" with the position advertised and within the Faculty, and to the criteria that they were asked to keep confidential.

Table 1. Distribution of applications received by discipline and gender

Discipline	Females		Males		Total		
	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Language & Literacy	44	62.9	26	37.1	70	21.5	
Mathematics & Technology	9	32.1	19	67.9	28	8.6	
Science & Society	13	46.4	15	53.6	28	8.6	
Counselling & Career Guidance	8	47.1	9	52.9	17	5.2	
Cultural Studies	42	56.8	32	43.2	74	22.8	
Cognitive Studies	15	55.6	12	44.4	27	8.3	
Elementary Curriculum	21	67.7	10	32.3	31	9.5	
Social & Environmental Studies	21	50.0	21	50.0	42	12.0	
(Assistant Professor	5	62.5	3	37.5	8	2.5)	[discarded]
Totals	178	54.8%	147	45.2%	325	99.9%	

Then the committee short-listed some applicants in each of the eight academic areas. Each file was discussed with information supplied from those professors within the Faculty who had also read the files. At the end of that session and with the committee's unanimous agreement, the committee asked the Dean to approve two positions (not just the one advertised) in Language and Literacy -- one for elementary and one for secondary. She did. Subsequently three people were short-listed for the Language and Literacy positions — two for secondary education and one for elementary education. Only one person was short-listed for the Social and Environmental Studies position. Finally, the committee short-listed two people for the Cognitive Studies position.

Three people were put on the Cultural Studies short-list. One person who had been interviewed twice before for a transition position within the Faculty was considered outstanding by members of the committee. The Faculty, however, had been unsuccessful in obtaining funding for that transitional position and hence had not been able to offer her even a temporary position. Consequently, as that particular candidate had been interviewed twice before with several of the same committee members present, the committee recommended to the Dean that she be offered the position immediately. The Dean made an offer for the Cultural Studies tenure-track position, which was accepted. The committee then asked the Dean to request letters of reference for all those remaining short-listed candidates.

The next task of the search committee was to develop the questions asked of each candidate (for the presentation and for the subsequent interview) and to plan for the site visit. Each candidate was told beforehand to prepare a 40-minute talk about her/his most current research. The title of the presentation was to be forwarded to the chair of the search committee so that the session could be advertised in-house.

The list of questions developed by the committee is outlined in [Table 2](#) below. This list was revised with input from various legal and administrative bodies within the university.

Table 2. Interview Questions

1. Do you have a criminal record?
2. If appointed, would you plan to live within the Kingston area?
3. What is your experience, given the expectations that we have of our colleagues regarding how you might act as a liaison in the schools?
4. How do you see your involvement with the field, and how would this be enacted?
5. What is your philosophy of education and how is this manifested in your teaching?
6. What innovative approaches do you employ in your teaching?
7. How has your research informed your own teaching?
8. What courses do you see yourself teaching in our BEd, MEd., and Continuing Education programs?
9. Where has your teaching experience with students been and what has the experience been like? What have you learned from it?

10. What direction would you like your research to take and what plans do you have for taking it there?
11. What opportunities do you see in our Faculty of Education for cooperating in research with specific colleagues?

Each of the visits was hosted by different members of the search committee. The host contacted the candidate before the visit to the Faculty and asked about particular needs. Two different types of accommodation were made: one person requested to meet with a faculty member whose work she refers to in her own writing; another person asked if her spouse could come and arrangements were made for him to meet with local education officials. Candidates were given the day's itinerary in advance consisting of an interview with the Dean; separate meetings with undergraduate and graduate students; lunch; the candidate's one hour presentation on her/his latest research (40 minutes to present, 20 minutes to answer questions); a one and one-half hour interview in which those questions in Table 2 were asked by committee members followed by an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions of the committee; a tour of the facilities, university and city (depending on time and interest); and then dinner. Faculty from a similar discipline to the applicant were invited to meals. Flowers and a couple of books authored by Education faculty members were put in the candidate's hotel room with a welcoming note from the Dean.

The interviews proceeded as planned. The presentations were open to members of the Education community and many attended. The presentation was to allow the candidate an opportunity: to inform possible future colleagues of the type of research in which the candidate was involved; to be assessed in a teaching situation; and demonstrate her/his oral communication skills.

Each candidate presented to an audience averaging nine people. Those faculty and students who attended the presentation or who met with each candidate were asked to provide written feedback as to the quality of the presentation. One-third provided written feedback; others provided verbal feedback, but the committee had agreed that only written feedback would be considered.

The committee held post-assessment sessions after each set of interviews. First the pertinent section from Article 32 of the collective agreement was discussed (QUFA, 1996), and then each interviewee was discussed.

Written comments from members of the audience were shared with committee members at this debriefing session. The committee openly reviewed each candidate's assessment ratings. Strengths and weaknesses of each applicant were discussed while the chair took notes. All the decisions were unanimous; in all cases, one candidate stood out from the rest as being clearly superior academically. The chair then wrote a comprehensive memo to the Dean recommending that particular candidate.

In total, then, four of a possible eight people were appointed into tenure-track positions: three women, one man. One woman represented a visible minority group. All were hired for the fall and each person was assigned a more senior faculty member as a mentor. All new faculty members are currently on site and, to date, all reports of their contributions have been positive.

Feedback on the Process

While the features of the recruitment and selection process end with the final step, the orientation of new faculty, the selection committee did not believe that its responsibilities ended. Indeed, four of the eight positions remained to be filled in the subsequent year. Hence, the committee sought feedback in order to improve its recruitment and hiring process. First, the process with which the Faculty of Education undertook to recruit faculty members was scrutinized by an outside equity officer and another senior administrative officer in the university with a background in law and equity. Both liked what had transpired but asked the following questions:

Did the committee advertise the positions broadly? Did any applications come in as a result of a non-traditional advertising source? How many women, aboriginal peoples, people from minority cultural groups, and people who were physically challenged applied and were interviewed? Was the interview held in a place that was accessible? Had the applicants been asked if they had any special requests for accommodation (i.e., any special needs)? Have the questions been reviewed by someone outside the Faculty?

Most of these questions had been considered by the omnibus search committee.

The committee next requested faculty input on the process; seven people responded with the majority being somewhat negative. Reasons for dissatisfaction were: three had wanted to meet with the applicant but did not have the opportunity to do so because of teaching commitments; two articulated that the search committee was not competent to make a decision about the research area or the potential of the applicant as an academic; two said that

there should be more members of the designated groups on the short-lists; the same two faculty members stated that they did not think the search committee was open enough in its deliberations, and in particular regarding keeping the faculty informed as to the step in the recruitment and selection process.

Furthermore all newly hired faculty members were interviewed toward the end of the first term of their appointment and asked about their likes and dislikes of the recruitment process that they had recently undergone six months previously. Their likes and recommendations are described below. First, their likes are: the opportunity to meet with both undergraduate and graduate students and having their presence on the committee; the speed with which the committee made its recommendations (one week after being interviewed); knowing the size of the short list; the broad-based composition of the committee; the warm reception they received by committee members and their host; a meeting with the Dean early in the day; and an opportunity to meet with colleagues in the same discipline. They also made some recommendations to correct aspects of the interview process that they did not like. Those were: provide an opportunity for the applicant to meet separately with newer faculty members and faculty members in the same discipline/field as themselves; have candidate teach a class; have the Dean, rather than the search committee, ask the first two questions (regarding criminal record and place of residency); allow the interviewee to have more input into the day's schedule; schedule individual meetings with the candidate and each member of the search committee; allow for some "down" time after the applicant's presentation and before the interview with the selection committee; and have meals in quieter restaurants, more conducive to talking.

A final suggestion made by a faculty member and the University Advisor on Equity for future selection committees was to interview the non-successful applicants.

Recommendations For Future Recruitment and Hiring Committees

Through both the review of the literature and the documentation of the process that occurred within one university department, several points bear emphasizing. First of all, there are very distinct and explicit steps in the recruitment and hiring process. Each step must be addressed carefully and with a focus of equity in employment, or else the ramifications will be felt further along in the process. For example, careful thought must be put into the crafting of the advertisement. Too little detail has resulted in many too queries by potential applicants and then too few applications, as [Bugliani \(1992\)](#) contended. Advertising is both time-consuming and extremely expensive. Normally a university only advertises its vacancies once per year. Unfilled positions may be "lost" to central administration. Furthermore, these ads must reflect the requirements for the position as identified within the assessment criteria or the university is liable for misrepresentation.

Second, the recruitment and hiring process is a complex one involving commitment by members of the search committee. Members are compelled to gain even a rudimentary understanding of the organization's hiring practices and employment equity legislation, to attend all meetings and interviews, to develop criteria and then the interview questions, and to gain input from other members of the faculty (those who have some expertise related to the position). This commitment involves time, expertise, and particularly energy or concentration in reading the files and attending the interviews. We learned, in addition, that the order of the questions asked and the person who asked the questions (i.e., the Dean or a member of the committee) also affected the interviewee. A concern is that the time demand (and accompanying cost) of this process may deter potentially good applications, whose current circumstances may not enable them to make such a commitment of time. Commuting time and childcare costs should be taken into consideration.

Third, detailed planning for the site visit is crucial to the success of the process. Moreover, it is very arduous and requires input from many people – on and off the search committee. Many aspects are involved in the site visit, such as who will coordinate it, who should be and who wants to be involved, whether the department is welcoming and accommodating, how flexible the plans are, and, if meals are involved, where meetings and meals should be held. It seems appropriate to develop a checklist of all aspects of the site visit for future committees and for further refinement so that we learn from others' experiences (and mistakes).

Fourth, clear, consistent, correct and similar information must be communicated. [Ryan and Martinson \(1996\)](#) recommended this with the applicant in mind. Many of the applicants know each other, as our committee soon discerned; if one learns about the "confidential" selection criteria while another does not, potential problems may ensue. We learned that the selection criteria should not have been "confidential" for they did not remain so for very long; someone from the committee leaked the information to an applicant's referee and hence to the applicant. Moreover, faculty members felt even more isolated because of this. Accordingly, our experience leads to a broadening of the importance of communication -- to the current faculty members, as well. Several of the faculty members in my department felt alienated from the search process because they were not kept informed as to what stage of the process that the committee was in, lack of information about the "confidential" selection criteria, and not

being asked to review the files of applicants in their same discipline. Communication is a two-way endeavour – input must be solicited and seriously considered from the current faculty complement. This means that a committee, at times, may have to proceed somewhat slower than it might wish, to ensure that members of the department feel included. The future colleagues of the applicant are key players in the new faculty member's adjustment to the university. Boice (1992) reminds the university community of this point as well with his thesis that attention must not only be paid in order to attract the best prospects but also to retain these individuals. We know from the "chilly climate" research the importance of a welcoming climate throughout the whole recruitment and selection process (The Chilly Collective, 1995). But if that climate of openness and trust is seriously impeded during the recruitment and hiring process, then the climate will undoubtedly negatively affect the newly hired faculty members, particularly when they begin their employment. Perhaps then more attention should be given to the final component of the recruitment and hiring process – orientation of new faculty and of existing faculty.

Finally, equity in employment and particularly equity in the recruitment and hiring process will be evidenced not just in the steps comprising the process, but also in the product. How many of the short-listed applicants and the newly hired faculty are from one of the four traditionally under-represented groups? How many of the newly hired faculty remain with the department or is turnover an issue? Employment equity is to "provide fair employment systems and a supportive organizational culture for women, racial minorities, aboriginal peoples and persons with disabilities" (Agocs & Burr, 1996, p. 35). Each step in the recruitment and hiring process and the outcome of the process have the potential of contributing positively to this same end of employment equity.

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Appendix I

Suggested Content of Advertisement

Identify the disciplinary specialization sought.

Tell what types of candidates will be preferred (preferences should reflect selection criteria).

Indicate the type of position (e.g. tenure line or not, title of position-assistant professor, instructor).

Identify your institution and department.

State if funding is secure or anticipated.

State excellent teaching is an important criterion.

Request a curriculum vitae

State if teaching and/or research statements are required.

State if copies of scholarship should be submitted (recent, select, or all).

Provide procedures for submission of letters of recommendation.

Ask for official, unofficial, or no transcripts at this time. We recommend unofficial ones. Finalists can be asked to obtain official transcripts.

State when screening begins and the closing date for applications.

State if pre-screening is to occur at professional meetings and list the meetings.

Contain a line or two about the assets (e.g. beauty, climate, culture) of the area.

Source: Perlman and McCann, 1996, pp. 127-8

Appendix II

Criteria for reviewing applications

APPLICANT _____ POSITION(S) _____

REVIEWER _____

DEGREES/ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

A. Critical

Completed doctoral degree/equivalent

Research agenda and specific research steps for accomplishing it.

Academic background congruent with the position advertised.

Assistant professor level

B. Important

Expertise in second area

PUBLICATIONS

A. Critical

Scholarly & professional publications appropriate to stage of career

TEACHING

A. Critical

Evidence of teaching excellence.

Teaching experience school grades & subject germane to position.

(Note: an "asset" in cognitive studies applications)

Ability to supervise graduate students
Commitment to supervising teacher education candidates.

B. Important

Evidence of teaching at the undergraduate (BEd) and graduate level
Knowledge of the Canadian education system
Evidence of ability to provide curriculum leadership

C. Desirable

Evidence of some reflective practice
Some association with a teacher education program

OTHER ATTRIBUTES

A. Critical

Projects a passion for education, students, fellow teachers
Excellent communicator in speech and writing.
Collegial, flexible, hardworking, encourages feedback, takes initiative
Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada

B. Important

Evidence of service beyond teaching and research
Can both support and enhance existing faculty research interests

C. Desirable

Member of an under represented group
Has international links

Author Notes

Ruth Rees is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, and the Chair of the Queen's University Council on Employment Equity. She can be reached at reesr@educ.queensu.ca