



Developing Diverse Department Faculties  
**A GUIDE FOR  
DEPARTMENT HEADS**

NC STATE UNIVERSITY





# Developing Diverse Department Faculties

## A Guide for Department Heads

**Most department heads and faculty members agree** that having a diverse faculty is a desirable goal, but many departments have serious difficulties in moving toward it. In 2012, an evaluation team visited seven departments at NC State to see what kinds of strategies the departments were using to recruit and retain a diverse faculty. These site visits included in-depth interviews with the department heads and small group meetings with faculty of all ranks and were sponsored by Developing Diverse Departments, a National Science Foundation grant program administered by Marcia Gumpertz, NC State Assistant Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity. This brochure is a compilation of practical strategies for increasing faculty diversity, as suggested by site visits and discussions with many NC State department heads and faculty.

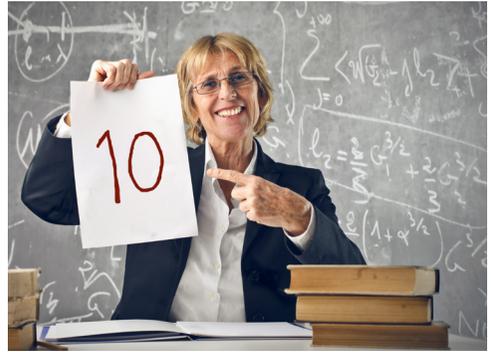


## What is a diverse faculty and why is it desirable?

NC State defines a diverse community as “an inclusive community of people with varied human characteristics, ideas, and world-views and whose interactions both benefit and challenge each other to grow while making the community better.”(1) In this publication, faculty diversity will denote having a mix of different racial and ethnic groups and genders. Research indicates that faculty diversity correlates with enhanced perspective taking and self-awareness by students, better cross-cultural and teamwork skills for students and faculty, and greater self-perception and motivation for under-represented minority students. Seeking out diverse faculty leads to greater access to the best talent available.

## How can a department achieve greater faculty diversity?

In most fields at most universities including NC State, there are few underrepresented minority and (in STEM disciplines) women candidates for faculty positions, and many institutions are trying to hire the very best of them. Competing successfully for them and retaining them once they have been hired requires doing more than just sending out position announcements, screening candidates, and making offers. To persuade them to come to NC State, a department must cultivate relationships with them — ideally before they become candidates — and convince them that the department is a great place for them.

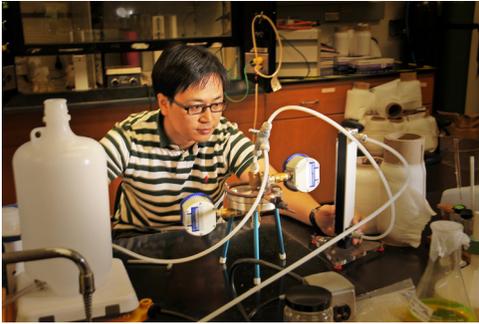


## What are NC State departments doing?

In the table on the facing page, we contrast recruitment strategies used by most NC State departments with those used by departments that have successfully increased their faculty diversity. For a strategy-by-strategy contrast, read the table horizontally and think about where your department practices fall. To get a more holistic look at both categories, read the table vertically and think about how the strategies may work synergistically.

## What are departments at NC State doing to recruit diverse faculty?

TYPICAL Departments	DIVERSE Departments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department heads may mention developing a diverse faculty when searches are underway, but no clear vision or mission related to diversity is articulated in the charge to the search committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department heads articulate a vision for why the department will be strengthened by faculty diversity and use it to frame the search committee charge.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment is left primarily to the search committee and generally occurs only when there is an open faculty position.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All faculty in the department are challenged to look for and cultivate relationships with potential faculty candidates—particularly those from underrepresented groups—at conferences and visits to other institutions, whether or not there is an open position. The department head also pursues opportunity hires to increase diversity.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search committees include mainly (or exclusively) faculty members in the research area of the open position, paying little or no attention to diversity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search committees include a diverse group of faculty members.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Position descriptions address specific research areas and are narrow in scope.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When possible, position descriptions are written broadly to attract a diverse pool of excellent candidates.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positions are advertised in traditional outlets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positions are advertised in a wide range of outlets, including some specifically designed to reach diverse applicants.</li> <li>• Faculty ask colleagues at other institutions for names and contact information of graduate students and postdocs contemplating academic careers, and recruit those individuals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search committees initially screen candidates by individually taking notes and possibly rank-ordering the candidates. The committee then discusses the candidates and makes decisions about whom to interview.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search committees discuss unconscious bias and how it may affect the recruitment process, and a rating form is used as a tool to help minimize bias in the screening process. (Resources for this process are provided at the end of this document.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family-friendly policies and dual career assistance are discussed when a candidate asks about them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All candidates are told about family-friendly policies and dual career assistance without having to ask.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The times between campus visits and offers frequently stretch out over a long time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once a campus visit has been completed, decisions and offers quickly follow.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department seminar series plays little or no role in recruitment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The department seminar series is used as a platform for potential candidates, enabling relationships to be built before official recruiting begins. The next section provides more details.</li> </ul>



## Campus Visits

Campus visits leave an impression of the department climate that can play a major role in candidates' decisions to accept or turn down job offers. The most effective visits include provision of information about family-friendly policies in the department, college and university, including policies in place to assist dual career couples. Even if the department determines they are not interested in candidates, the candidates should leave the campus having been treated well; a positive experience will stick with them (as will a negative one) and will influence what they say about NC State in the future to students and colleagues.

## Successful Recruitment Strategies at NC State

### Department Seminar Series

At least one STEM department at NC State uses its seminar series to increase the diversity of people heard and seen in the department. When planning the series each semester, the department invites faculty, postdocs, and graduate students from diverse backgrounds at other institutions to present their research. Students in the department then see diverse role models and faculty get to know and build relationships with potential future candidates.

### Diverse Search Committees

Department heads of several NC State departments form diverse search committees and charge them to develop a diverse pool of candidates. Each committee uses a rating system for reviewing candidate applications and explicitly talks about unconscious bias that might cause the committee to overlook a potentially strong candidate. While not every search has led to the hiring of a candidate from an underrepresented group (nor should it), each group of candidates brought to campus in recent years has been diverse and the faculty diversity in each of those departments has steadily increased.

### Grow and Recruit Your Own

Several departments at NC State conduct outreach to high schools specifically to encourage women and persons of color to pursue degrees in the departments' disciplines. They look for talented undergraduates in the same groups to participate in undergraduate research and encourage them to consider graduate study. They look for talented graduate students and talk with them about pursuing careers in academia. When they have strong graduate or postdoctoral students from an underrepresented group, they consider directly hiring them for faculty positions, or they recruit them back to NC State after they have spent a couple of years in a postdoctoral or faculty position elsewhere.

## References

1. Definition of diversity from NC State's Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity ([oied.ncsu.edu/diversity](http://oied.ncsu.edu/diversity)).
2. Research citations on opening page of NC State Faculty Search Toolbox, ([oied.ncsu.edu/faculty/faculty-search-toolbox](http://oied.ncsu.edu/faculty/faculty-search-toolbox)).

## Resources

1. NC State Faculty Search Toolbox ([oied.ncsu.edu/faculty/faculty-search-toolbox](http://oied.ncsu.edu/faculty/faculty-search-toolbox)) provides a one-stop shop for resources on recruiting including:
  - databases and online resources to identify potential candidates;
  - recommended three-part process for search committees;
  - position announcement template, sample candidate evaluation form, search committee guidelines, and videos;
  - Target of Opportunity Hiring Program and assistance for dual career couples; and
  - who to call to set up meetings for faculty candidates with diverse faculty.
2. NC State Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity, Faculty Diversity ([oied.ncsu.edu/faculty](http://oied.ncsu.edu/faculty)) has resources including:
  - links to resources for women faculty and faculty with families;
  - faculty diversity data and reports;
  - Faculty Search Toolbox (see above); and
  - a religious holidays calendar and guidelines for its use.
3. Building Future Faculty Program ([oied.ncsu.edu/faculty/building-future-faculty-program](http://oied.ncsu.edu/faculty/building-future-faculty-program)), sponsored by NC State's Office for Institutional Equity and Diversity, is an opportunity for departments to engage diverse graduate students and post-doctoral scholars.

