

SEARCHING FOR EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY:  
EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOPS PRESENTED TO  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL AND LIFE SCIENCES  
FALL 2008

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## Table of Contents

<b>I. DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. RATINGS AND COMMENTS ON WORKSHOP CONTENT .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>III. OUTCOMES: GAINED KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES THAT PARTICIPANTS WILL APPLY IN THEIR ROLE ON A SEARCH COMMITTEE .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>IV. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS GIVEN BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
A. IMPROVING THE WORKSHOP EXPERIENCE .....	3
B. TOPICS THAT PARTICIPANTS HOPED WOULD BE COVERED IN THE WORKSHOP, YET WERE NOT .....	4
C. WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THIS WORKSHOP TO OTHERS?.....	4
<b>V. GENERAL COMMENTS.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>APPENDIX I. SURVEY INSTRUMENT.....</b>	<b>5</b>

## I. DEMOGRAPHICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Out of 12 invitees, 6 people responded to this survey for a response rate of 50%.

Title/Role on campus	%
Faculty	67%
Department Chair	33%

Role on Search Committee	%
Member of Search Committee	33%
Search Committee Chair	33%
Other	33%

The source that informed them of the workshop offering	%
Dean	33%
Search Committee Chair	33%
Attendance was required	17%
No response	17%

## II. RATINGS AND COMMENTS ON WORKSHOP CONTENT

*(Note: Written comments in this document are verbatim responses from workshop participants, altered in some cases to remove identifying information.)*

Overall rating of workshop	%
Very Useful	4 (67%)
Somewhat Useful	2 (33%)
Not at all Useful	0 (0%)

Workshop Component	Not at all Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	Didn't Attend
Session I: Introduction	0 (0%)	3 (50%)	2 (33%)	1 (17%)

No comments.

Workshop Component	Not at all Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	Didn't Attend
Session I: Running an Effective and Efficient Search Committee	0 (0%)	1 (17%)	4 (67%)	1 (17%)

No comments.

Workshop Component	Not at all Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	Didn't Attend
Session I: Actively Recruiting an Excellent and Diverse Pool of Candidates	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (83%)	1 (17%)

No comments.

Workshop Component	Not at all Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	Didn't Attend
Session I: Evaluating the Pool of Applicants: Raising Awareness of Unconscious Assumptions and Their Influence	1 (17%)	0 (0%)	4 (67%)	1 (17%)

- This wasn't valuable because I have taught the literature on which the presentation was based.

Workshop Component	Not at all Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	Didn't Attend
Session I: Ensuring a Fair and Thorough Review of Candidates	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (83%)	1 (17%)

No comments.

Workshop Component	Not at all Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	Didn't Attend
Session II: Introduction	0 (0%)	4 (80%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)

- I give this a 2 because as cogent as the remarks were, they were ironically full of stereotypes about groups of people and departments. Well done though if you accept the axioms and presuppositions.

Workshop Component	Not at all Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	Didn't Attend
Session II: Small Group Discussion of Your Efforts to Recruit an Excellent and Diverse Pool of Candidates	0 (0%)	5 (83%)	1 (17%)	0 (0%)

- Good ideas from Dan Scheiffer.
- It was useful, and the guy I talked to gave me some insight into hiring in fields far beyond my own.

Workshop Component	Not at all Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	Didn't Attend
Session II: Small Group Discussion of Your Evaluation of Candidates	0 (0%)	4 (67%)	1 (17%)	1 (17%)

- It was hard to find a common theme across all the departments.
- Same as above. [previous response: It was useful, and the guy I talked to gave me some insight into hiring in fields far beyond my own.]
- This component was the most spontaneous of the various workshop components and the most helpful.

Workshop Component	Not at all Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	Didn't Attend
Session II: Questions and Answers about Dual Career Couples Program and Other Aspects of Interviewing Finalists	0 (0%)	2 (33%)	4 (67%)	0 (0%)

- I knew a lot of this from my role as department chair. I thought it was a really good idea to have her there. I knew a lot of this from my role as department chair. I thought it was a really good idea to have her there.

- Again, useful if you accept the presuppositions, which I do not.

Workshop Component	Not at all Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Very Valuable	Didn't Attend
Session II: Developing and Implementing an Effective Interview Process	1 (17%)	1 (17%)	2 (33%)	2 (33%)

- Very important to have Luis present. In particular his ability to bring home the message that awful things are still said and done, no matter how much people believe that we are past that.
- Seemed like a recitation of suggestions any academic these days could do off the top of her head.
- I gained direction from Luis's answers.

### III. OUTCOMES: GAINED KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES THAT PARTICIPANTS WILL APPLY IN THEIR ROLE ON A SEARCH COMMITTEE

- [1] Better awareness of our unconscious biases and ways to deal with them.
- [1] New strategies for widening the search. [2] Ideas about how to evaluate the success of recruitment. [3] Reminders about some of the details.
- [1] Policies/legal concerns; [2] attracting a diverse applicant pool; [3] evaluating applicants.
- 1) The array of steps we can take to broaden our applicant pool. 2) How to deal with surprises that arise in the recruitment process.
- I did find this workshop more interesting than I expected it to be, particularly in gaining insights into problems in fields other than my own. But with respect to the Humanities, the world the presenters assumed existed vanished long ago.
- [1] Knowledge of unconscious biases. [2] Instruction of all interviewers regarding inappropriate questions. [3] Many helpful lists in the Search Handbook.

### IV. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS GIVEN BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS

#### A. Improving the workshop experience (5 responses)

- The 2nd session was less useful, not sure why.
- Perhaps more concrete examples of how to achieve a diverse pool when you have a really specific target.
- N/A
- Go through all of your materials and remove everything that assumes false consciousness on the part of attendees: it is insulting and a little cultish. Many of us have been dealing with these issues since the beginning of our careers. It also seemed terribly out of date, as though we were trying to remedy the 70's, though admittedly the problems in other fields may not be the same as my own.
- The emphasis on diversity is important, but perhaps a bit over-emphasized since the workshop is advertised for search committees, in general. The PVL, advertising, screening, interviewing and making the choice are important elements, too.

B. Topics that participants hoped would be covered in the workshop, yet were not (3 responses)

- Organizational strategies for dividing some of the work that search committees go through – I think some of this was covered but I tend to forget.
- N/A
- The importance of intellectual diversity, the absence of interest in which is related to the cultish attitudes and presuppositions mentioned above. The issue of intellectual diversity is often taken to be a fallback point for retrograde conservatives, but as a man of the left I worry that the humanities risks irrelevance if we only hire people like ourselves.

C. Would you recommend this workshop to others?

83% percent of survey respondents reported they would recommend the workshop to others. Their comments regarding this question follow:

- I found it useful, especially the 1st session.
- It has so many practical tips for a fair and successful search (from legal to web resources).
- Diversity aspect.
- Although I was familiar with many of the issues, which formed the basis of the two sessions, there were still issues that were brought more fully into my consciousness. Some people may have my background and will still benefit. Others will have less background and are sure to benefit.
- The discussion with other faculty members and campus resource persons will inevitably be educational.

17% percent of respondents reported they would *not* recommend the workshop to others citing the following reason:

- If you are cursed with a curious mind, you will find this workshop an illuminating introduction to other disciplines and mindsets. I did. But it was full of the very things it was set up to prevent: stereotypical depictions of individuals and groups, questionable axioms and presuppositions, the assumption of a privileged point of view.

**V. GENERAL COMMENTS**

- Session one is dynamite – so many things that help you get started. I'm not sure how to strengthen session two. It seems less concrete, perhaps because experiences diverge so much depending on the size of the applicant pool.
- Just being honest here, what this workshop needs to have credibility is an engagement with other points of view, an anticipation of possible objections, a willingness to engage in debate over its presuppositions. It seemed a bit frozen in time. My own view is that a workshop devoted to the hiring process in general would be much more useful than one devoted to a problem that in many fields either doesn't exist or is not addressable by a therapeutic approach to attitudes. I know of no one in the Humanities who thinks well of these exercises, except perhaps as a means of tormenting the afflicted. What we need is an environment in which these issues can be debated at length and civilly.

APPENDIX I. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**Searching for Excellence and Diversity: A Workshop for Search Committees**

1

Your title or role on campus:

2

Your role on the search committee or in the search process:

3

Please rate the value of each of the following aspects of the workshop using the scale from 1-3. Also, feel free to include additional comments about the presentation or small-group discussions:

1                      2                      3                      Didn't Attend  
Not at all Valuable      Somewhat Valuable      Very Valuable

**Session 1: Introduction** (With remarks from Irwin Goldman and Eve Fine)

1                       2                       3                     

Comments:

**Session 1: Running an Effective and Efficient Search Committee** (Presented by Eve Fine)

1                       2                       3                     

Comments:

**Session 1: Actively Recruiting an Excellent and Diverse Pool of Candidates** (Presented by Eve Fine)

1

2

3

Comments:

**Session 1: Evaluating the Pool of Applicants: Raising Awareness of Unconscious Assumptions and their Influence** (Presented by Leann Tigges)

1

2

3

Comments:

**Session 1: Ensuring a Fair and Thorough Review of Candidates** (Presented by Eve Fine)

1

2

3

Comments:

**Session 2: Introduction** (With remarks from Leann Tigges)

1

2

3

Comments:

**Session 2: Small Group Discussion of Your Efforts to Recruit an Excellent and Diverse Pool of Candidates**

1

2

3

Comments:

**Session 2: Small Group Discussion of Your Evaluation of Candidates**

1

2

3

Comments:

**Session 2: Questions and Answers about Dual Career Couples Program and Other Aspects of Interviewing Finalists** (Presented by Laurie Mayberry)

1

2

3

Comments:

**Session 2: Developing and Implementing an Effective Interview Process** (Presented by Luis Piñero)

1

2

3

Comments:

4

Please identify up to three things that you gained at this workshop and will apply in your role as Chair or as a member of a search committee:

5

Please provide us with ideas or suggestions that would have improved your experience in this workshop:

6

What topics did you hope would be covered in this workshop, yet were not?

7

Please provide an overall rating for this session.

Not at all Useful                      Somewhat Useful                      Very Useful

1

2

3

8

How did you hear about this workshop?

9

Would you recommend this workshop to others?

Why or why not?

10

Any other comments?

Please click on the "SUBMIT" arrow below. You will know that your results have been recorded if you see WISELI's website on *Training for Hiring Committees*. Feel free to browse through these resources. Thank you for completing this survey!

