

Guidelines for Writing Faculty Job Advertisements that Sincerely Welcome Broad Applications from Qualified Candidates

About: This reference elaborates upon the recommendations made in the 2012 Lehigh University Faculty Search Handbook (FSHB). Specifically we present details on *Define the Position*, page 5 and *Wording for Announcing Positions*, page 6. http://www.lehigh.edu/~inprv/faculty/hiring/pdf/faculty_search_handbook_2012.pdf. Recall our FSHB says:

- **Define the Position, p5:**
 4. *Develop a clear position description that includes minimum qualifications and experience desired.*
- **Wording for Announcing Positions, p6:**
 1. *Cast the net as wide as possible.*
 2. *Eliminate unnecessary qualifications and use the description as a tool to widen the pool of candidates and/or broaden the range of teaching and research areas.*
 3. *Ensure that the position description does not unnecessarily limit the pool of applicants.*
 4. *Consider how the position will add to the intellectual diversity of the department/program.*
 5. *Include language in position ads that underscore the desire for diversity and inclusion, such as one of the following statements.*
 - a. *“The College of XXXX at Lehigh University is committed to increasing the diversity and inclusion of the college community and curriculum.”*
 - b. *“The College of XXXX at Lehigh University is especially interested in qualified candidates who can contribute, through their research, teaching, and/or service, to the diversity and excellence of the academic community.”*
 6. *AcademicJobsOnline includes the following statement in all ads. “Lehigh University is an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Employer. Lehigh University provides comprehensive benefits including partner benefits.”*
 7. *Include a statement, as appropriate, that “Lehigh University is a recipient of an NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation award for promoting the careers of women in academic science and engineering.*

Explanation:

For under-represented minorities, and other demographic groups who are in a distinct minority in a given academic field, even highly qualified candidates for a faculty position may be deterred from applying by a carelessly written job ad. Words are powerful. Their presence/absence, placement, and tone all convey (in)sincerity and signal that an applicant is welcome (or not), and/or may be a part of a larger community of like-minded individuals (or not), regardless of scholarly affinity. Furthermore, wording in job ads may perpetuate institutional barriers to gender equity (Guacher D, Friesen J, & Kay, AC. 2011).

The following best and worst practices were assembled from an analysis of actual job advertisements vetted through The University of Washington College of the Environment Diversity Committee. Examples of best practice wording, some adapted to Lehigh University or taken from Lehigh University advertisements, are provided with their original attribution, in part to underscore those institutions with advanced practices regarding engagement, inclusion, and diversity. Worst practice language has been minimally altered to remove attribution. Samples from ads show how the components fit together (and are not always perfect). Additional resources are listed at the end.

We consider this a living document, and welcome edits and inclusions. Many thanks to The University of Washington, Cornell University, Iowa State University, and others, for assembling resources that we share with our faculty at Lehigh.

A. Best Practices to Welcome a Qualified and Diverse Applicant Pool:

Remember To:

- Develop broad descriptions of scholarship, experience, and disciplinary background. Take into consideration the specific needs of the department as well as the broad needs of the institution.
- Where appropriate, label qualifications preferred instead of required. Use *should* rather than *must*.
- Whenever possible, be flexible with arbitrary numeric measures, such as years of experience.
- In addition to a cover letter and a curriculum vitae, request other materials such as copies of articles and samples of course syllabi.
- Ask applicants to describe their experience with diversity issues, diverse students, and working in multicultural environments.

Diversity Language: An "ideal" job advertisement should incorporate diversity into many different parts of the ad. Collectively, this wording should strongly suggest that the university and the unit are committed to furthering diversity throughout Lehigh (that is, not just in the faculty). Language expressing a commitment to diversity can appear in the following sections (specific examples for each section are provided below):

1. in the "intellectual language" describing the position, ideally in the first paragraph of the ad.
2. in the description of Lehigh University (who we are as a university, who we serve) -specificity is key to believability.
3. in a description of the region within which Lehigh University is located
4. if qualification bullets of the position are used (to describe the specific "shape" of the desired candidate) these should be linked to one or more of the statements above; should not be the last bullet; should never be a list), link diversity statements with strong positive words (e.g., excellence, demonstrated success, richly varied)
5. in a list of benefits available, including HR (health, dental) and Professional Development (like mentoring)
6. in a specific disability accommodation statement

1. Intellectual Language (must be ad-specific):

Text from a hypothetical Fresh Water Cluster Hire:

Example: "The provision, or lack, of fresh water defines the rights and privileges of individuals, societies, and nations."

Stronger wording, which may be applicable depending on disciplinary focus:

Example: "We are especially interested in candidates whose work has a specific focus on understudied peoples, communities, and nations."

2. Who We Are, Lehigh University:

Language should convey who we serve, our status, our context—why live and work here?

Examples:

"Lehigh University, founded in 1865, has combined outstanding academic and learning opportunities with leadership in fostering innovative research. The institution is among the nation's most selective, highly ranked private research universities. Lehigh's four colleges provide graduate and undergraduate education to about 7,000 students." (Lehigh University)

"Lehigh is a premier residential research university, ranked in the top tier of national research universities each year. Lehigh University is a coeducational, nondenominational, private university that offers a distinct academic environment of undergraduate and graduate students from across the globe. Lehigh offers majors and programs in four colleges: The College of Arts and Sciences, The College of Business and Economics, The College of

Education and The P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science. More than 4,700 undergraduate and 2,000 graduate students call Lehigh "home." (Lehigh University)

"The College of Business and Economics in home to approximately 1200 undergraduates, 450 graduate students, and 81 full-time faculty. In addition to offerings at the undergraduate level, an MBA, an MSAF, and an economics based doctoral program are also offered. Joint programs exist between business and engineering both at the BS and graduate levels. Lehigh University is ranked 31st in Bloomberg Businessweek's annual undergraduate business school ranking of 124 schools. The part-time MBA program has been recognized as the nation's 15th strongest and the third best in the Mid-Atlantic region." (Lehigh University)

"The University serves a diverse population of 4500 students, faculty and staff, including 25% first-generation college students, over 25% Pell Grant students, and faculty from over 70 countries." (Virginia Tech)

"We seek to recruit and retain a diverse workforce to maintain the excellence of the University, and to offer students richly varied disciplines, perspectives and ways of knowing and learning. (Wake Forest)

3. Lehigh University's Regional Setting: Specifically focus on the positive attributes of our location; demonstrate positive geography and community.

Examples:

"Located in Pennsylvania's scenic Lehigh Valley, the campus is situated on 1,600 acres in close proximity to both New York City and Philadelphia." (Lehigh University)

"The University of Washington is located in the greater Seattle metropolitan area, with a dynamic, multicultural community of 3.7 million people and a diversity of ecosystems from mountains to ocean."(Texas A&M)

4. Candidate Qualifications: Use phrases like the ones below to emphasize a commitment to diversity:

- Experience with a variety of teaching methods and/or curricular perspectives
- Previous experience interacting with communities of color
- Experience in cultures other than their own
- Academic experiences and interests in culturally diverse groups
- Interest in developing and implementing curricula that address multicultural issues
- Demonstrated success in working with diverse populations of students

Mild Wording Example:

"We welcome applicants with demonstrated success in working with diverse populations." (Wake Forest)

Stronger Wording Examples:

"(All applicants must have...) A desire to advise and teach a student body which is diverse with respect to socio-economic status, culture, academic interests, and career paths." (Virginia Tech)

"(Qualifications...) Must be committed to excellence in teaching and mentoring our diverse student population and to working effectively with faculty, staff and students across a wide range of disciplines." (CS Fullerton)

"Lehigh (and The College of Arts and Sciences) is especially interested in qualified candidates who can contribute, through their research, teaching, and/or service, to the diversity and excellence of the academic community." (Lehigh University)

“(Qualifications...) Willingness to work collaboratively with faculty and to mentor students from a wide range of disciplines, cultures and academic backgrounds is essential.” (Berkeley)

even stronger wording:

“(Qualifications...) We seek candidates whose research, teaching and/or service has prepared them to contribute to our commitment to engagement and inclusion of culturally diverse audiences in higher education, and particularly in the SUPER -DISCIPLINE.” (Berkeley)

5. Benefits:

Examples:

“... health/vision/dental plans including spouse, domestic partner and/or dependents.” (CS Fullerton)

“Lehigh offers excellent benefits including domestic-partner benefits.” (Lehigh University)

“...access to campus child-care...” (CS Fullerton)

“...a wide range of networking, mentoring and development opportunities for junior faculty.” (Virginia Tech)

Sample for Lehigh-combines benefits with context and commitment:

“A recipient of the 2006 Alfred P. Sloan Award for Faculty Career Flexibility and a 2010 National Science Foundation ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Award to increase the advancement of women faculty in science, engineering, and math (see <http://advance.cc.lehigh.edu>), Lehigh provides a wide range of networking, mentoring and development opportunities for junior faculty.” (CoEnv ATM S, and Virginia Tech)

6. Accommodation:

Example: “Individuals with disabilities desiring accommodations in the application process should notify NAME SPECIFIC PERSON, UNIT NAME, PHONE # or call TTY PHONE #. (Virginia Tech)”

B. What IS Required: At Lehigh, job advertisements must include a statement pertaining to our institution as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, such as:

Example: “Lehigh University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer”

Additional language, as noted in the Lehigh FSHB, is recommended if appropriate:

Example: “...is a recipient of an NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation award for promoting the careers of women in academic science and engineering (<http://advance.cc.lehigh.edu>)”

This AA/EOE statement should not be confused with welcoming language.

C. Worst Practices for Faculty Position Advertisements:

Poor ads do not incorporate diversity throughout, but rather use a poorly placed generic statement or legalese. In particular, these ads:

1. encourage X,Y,Z people to apply but don't reference diversity anywhere else in the ad – i.e., "The List"
Example: "Women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply...the University of X does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status."
2. use a broad, impersonal statement, especially in a different font and offset from the rest of the ad – i.e., "The Diversity Stamp"
Example:
"The University of X is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status or sexual orientation."
3. use legalese that implies a legal obligation rather than a commitment to diversity
Examples:
 "The University of X, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action."

 "X University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, seeking a diverse faculty."
4. do not consider context and place diversity language at the end of the ad. In particular, these diversity statements (1) come after the "housekeeping" details such as address for application materials, and (2) are adjacent to statements implying those with criminal records may not be hired .
Example:
 "Finalists must provide a transcript for the highest degree. Applications must be postmarked by DATE. ...University X is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and encourages applications from women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. Background check required for employment."

D. Putting it all together: Samples of Position Announcements

For the first two samples, text in **green** enhances the inclusivity of the original.

RESPONSIBILITIES: Requires a commitment to excellence in teaching; student advising activities; professional development/scholarship; and service to the department, school, college and community. Additionally the candidate must engage in the equivalent teaching load of 12 credit hours in undergraduate education with the expectation of teaching foundations, methods, classroom management, **and multicultural courses for teacher candidates in the secondary licensure programs.**

Furthermore, the candidate must have a willingness to collaborate with colleagues and school personnel in supervising students in the field and developing partnerships with K-12 schools and a desire to **work with a diverse student body (including, but not limited to, working adults, women and students of color) to increase student retention and success.**

The successful candidate must have the ability to **work with and be sensitive to the educational needs of a diverse urban population.**

Additional responsibilities include advising pre-service teachers.

QUALIFICATIONS: Required: Masters + 30 in education or related field. Preferred Doctorate in education or related field. Demonstrated abilities to use technology in instructional delivery **and intellectual contributions in multicultural education.** Demonstrated abilities to develop public school partnership activities. **Experience in Urban Schools.**

*source: Academic Impressions

The University of X actively promotes a dynamic learning environment in which qualified individuals of differing perspectives and cultural backgrounds pursue academic goals with mutual respect and shared inquiry.

The Department of Occupational Therapy invites applications for a tenure-track faculty position, open rank to begin DATE. Candidates with a foundation in occupational science and a defined research program are encouraged to apply; those seeking senior and junior positions will be considered.

QUALIFICATIONS: Candidates must have a research doctorate in occupational therapy or a related field, a record of effective teaching, and a developing or established research program. They must demonstrate an orientation towards occupation-centered practice and an ability to work with individuals and groups of diverse socioeconomic, cultural, sexual orientation, disability, and/or ethnic backgrounds.

The university seeks excellence through diversity among its administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The university prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran status, or marital status. Applications by members of all underrepresented groups are encouraged. *Source Academic Impressions

In the next example, a full ad from Cornell University, **RED text** is how the advertisement originally showed support for diversity. Additional text in **BLUE** was added to widen the pool of candidates and show investment in diversity and dual career issues. Also take note of the language supporting an interdisciplinary faculty, other attractive resources and programs, as well as the distinction between welcoming inclusive language and boilerplate “diversity stamp” language.

The Sibley School of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York invites applications for a tenure-track faculty position in biomechanics and analysis of biomechanical systems. Applicants must hold a doctorate in an appropriate field, must have demonstrated an ability to conduct outstanding research, and show promise for excellent teaching. **Exceptional candidates in all areas will be given serious consideration.** We anticipate filling the position at the Assistant Professor level, **but applications at other levels will be considered;** salary and rank are commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Current areas of biomechanics research in the department include: orthopaedic and neuromuscular biomechanics; tissue engineering; and bioMEMS. Cornell fosters interdisciplinary research through the New Life Sciences initiative. Faculty in biomechanics also have opportunities to collaborate with: CU-HSS Program in Biomedical Mechanics; IGERT Program on Nonlinear Systems; Cornell Center for Materials Research; Nanobiotechnology Research Center; Cornell Nanofabrication Facility; and Cornell High Energy Synchrotron Source.

The Sibley School, and the College of Engineering at Cornell embrace diversity, and seek candidates who will create a climate that attracts students of all races, nationalities and genders. We strongly encourage women and underrepresented minorities to apply.

Cornell University seeks to meet the needs of dual career couples, has a Dual Career Program, and is a member of the Upstate New York Higher Education Recruitment Consortium to assist with Dual Career Searches. Visit (website) to see positions available in the upstate New York Area.

Applicants should submit a curriculum vita, a research statement, a teaching statement, and complete contact information for at least three references. **Personal statements summarizing teaching experience and interests, leadership efforts, and contributions to diversity are encouraged.**

Submit your application to: XXXXXXX

Cornell University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer; qualified women and minority candidates are particularly encouraged to apply. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. *Cornell University, CITE

E. Other resources:

- Guacher D, Friesen J, & Kay, AC. 2011. “Evidence That Gendered Wording in Job Advertisements Exists and Sustains Gender Inequality”. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. http://www.fortefoundation.org/site/DocServer/gendered_wording_JPSP.pdf?docID=16121).
- University of Washington: <http://coenv.washington.edu/about/Faculty%20Hiring%20-%20job%20ad%20language%2017nov2.pdf>
- Cornell: <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-affairs/chair-handbook/sample-faculty-job-ads.shtml>
- Iowa State University: http://www.advance.iastate.edu/pdfs/fac_search_resources/R09WritingThePositionDescription.pdf
- ISU: <http://www.provost.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/model-docs/model-nov-documents.docx>
- Butler’s Faculty Hiring Guidelines: http://www.butler.edu/media/830122/hiring_guidelines.pdf
- University of Rhode Island Recruitment Handbook: especially the myths section and the guidance on writing the ad: http://www.uri.edu/advance/files/pdf/Recruit_Handbook_Web.pdf