**UCR 2016-17 Making Excellence Inclusive (MEI)**

**Cultivating a Community of Respect**

**Capstone Project**

**Hiring Manager’s Guidelines and Promising Practices on Recruiting**

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**Executive Summary**

The 2016-2017 “Making Excellence Inclusive” certificate program was organized around the theme “cultivating a community of respect.” With this theme in mind, our workgroup was tasked with addressing diversity and inclusion issues related to the hiring manager and making recommendations for promising practices around the hiring process. Our team began by conducting an in-person survey with campus members engaged in the hiring process at different phases to determine common problems that undermine UCR’s commitment to equitable hiring. We also researched UC-wide hiring practices for both faculty and staff and innovative hiring models at non-UC universities. Finally, we “attended” all six available online training modules for the AACL role and attempted to attend the new EEAA course, however, these sessions were all cancelled. Our research helped us to focus on two major issues in the hiring process: 1) the excessive influence of the hiring manager and 2) the relative lack of influence of the AACL. In this white paper, we propose three specific policy changes to reduce the influence of the hiring manager and a new AACL training program to empower and educate a voluntary pool of MEI graduates to serve as AACLs for searches across the campus. Because the ramifications of administrative decisions can be unanticipated, we propose that the use of the AACL pool be piloted by the Chancellor and Provost organizations prior to full campus implementation. In this way, we can measure the results and work out any difficulties at a smaller scale. Ultimately, we hope that attention to administrative policy and enhanced AACL training will increase the number of diverse staff members at UCR, thus helping to create an inclusive campus climate for our diverse student body.

**Introduction**

On an annual basis, UCR has approximately 350 staff vacancies. The recruitment process can be long and complex, requiring the review of every resume accepted within the given initial recruitment period, an optional phone screen/interview of those that meet the minimum qualifications, a panel interview, and an optional final interview with the Hiring Manager/Supervisor/Department Head, before it goes to Human Resources for finalization. Due to the length of this process, the average hiring time for staff at UCR 82 days. Given this significant investment in hiring, every effort should be made to ensure that the process is equitable and supports UCR’s values of excellence and equity. The recommendations below are intended to enhance the UCR staff hiring process by eliminating current practices that conflict with our values and by increasing training for staff members to better implement UCR policies and escalate problems.

**Problem Definition**

Because of the decentralized way recruitments are conducted at UCR, hiring managers have autonomy and are able to make hiring decisions in isolation, thus limiting or discounting the input of the search committee and AACL. Further, the AACL receives very limited training and is often unprepared to challenge the rest of the committee or the hiring manager’s inequitable actions. Currently, AACLs are only required to take a class on the Learning Management System (LMS) called “The Role of the Affirmative Action and Compliance Liaison” in addition to one other class of their choice offered through the same LMS. Not only is the AACL not properly trained, they typically report to the hiring manager or to the someone who reports to the hiring manager. Because of this, the AACL is unlikely to feel empowered to escalate problems, particularly when those problems relate to the hiring manager. These issues with the recruitment process can negatively impact the diversity in UCR staff which can trickle down to our most important constituents: the students.

**Description of Resource**

*Suggested Policy Changes*

1. Pre- and Post- Meetings

In order to better facilitate communication with the hiring manager and avoid silencing minority opinions on the committee, search committees would convene at the beginning of the search for a process meeting and at the end of the search for a feedback meeting with the hiring manager. The process meeting would include “back to basics” information for the committee members insuring that they are adequately prepared to serve on the committee. During the process meeting, the committee members will be introduced, fully review the job description, discuss how each committee member brings value to the panel, review interview questions, and briefly describe and understand how to differentiate between a good and excellent answer from the candidate for each interview questions. The post-interview feedback meeting will be an opportunity for the search committee to engage in a robust conversation with the hiring manager about the pros and cons of candidates. This will prevent search chairs from misrepresenting search committee perspectives to the hiring manager and ensure that the search committee’s input is a valued part of the hiring process.

1. Initial Screening of Applicants

Because the hiring manager holds ultimate hiring responsibility, they should not also perform the initial long-list screening of applicants. We recommend that an HR representative complete the initial screening of applicants to determine who satisfies the posted minimum requirements. This ensures the same person is evaluating applicants based on the same criteria ensuring that the most qualified candidates can be recommended for interviews based on selection criteria.

1. Re-defining the AACL Role The AACL

The AACL should come from a unit or department that does not report to the hiring manager making them more empowered to act on concerns. AACL’s will be drawn from a voluntary pool to serve in this critical role and will thus approach the role with enthusiasm for equity rather than solely from a compliance perspective. In order to be in the voluntary pool, staff members must be a graduate of MEI and have completed an intensive, in-person training that will be renewed yearly through additional training.

*AACL Training Plan*

A major deliverable for this group is a set of recommendations for the development of an in-person AACL training program that will extend the MEI training program by one session. This additional day will allow all MEI graduates to receive targeted training that will help them to serve as AACLs for search committees across UCR. We propose that MEI alumni who would like to remain in the AACL pool attend the training yearly to refresh their skills. The program is composed of four major features:

1. Implicit Bias Tool

All participants will take one of the Project Implicit tests prior to attending the AACL training. The first portion of the in-person day will focus on unpacking the results of this test in order to help participants recognize their own biases and learn techniques to help mitigate the effect of their biases on their decision-making. We hope that implicit bias testing will also help participants to work with their own defensiveness around bias so that they can be a more effective resource to search committees.

1. Advertising and Building a Diverse Candidate Pool

There is already an online training that focuses on diversifying the candidate pool and we would hope to include this vital information in the day-long session. Without a diverse candidate pool, equity in the hiring process is impossible, and the in-person session would help the AACL to learn the methods and locations for effectively advertising the search.

3. Techniques for Intervention and Escalation

One concern we heard repeatedly when talking with staff members who had served on search committees was that they were not sure how to intervene in inappropriate conversations. We recommend that a significant portion of the AACL training day be spent teaching methods of intervention around a variety of issues. This is the main role of the AACL on the committee, but it’s a skill that receives very little emphasis in most training. In general, diversity and inclusion training at UCR tends not to focus on concrete administrative interventions and we recommend that this not be the case for the AACL training.

Further, the AACL should know exactly how to escalate a problem and what the ramifications are for escalation at each level. The training should provide an overview of the kinds of problems that typically get to different levels of escalation and what to expect at each phase. We have outlined the AACL’s modes of recourse below.

4. Case Studies

Finally, we recommend that the training include three substantial case studies so that trainees can see the intervention techniques and escalation methods in action. Case studies are a valuable training tool and could be based on commonly escalated issues in search committees. There are currently case studies available in one of the online trainings, but including it here would make it a required element.

*Suggestions for Case Studies*:

The search committee is comprised of the hiring manager, a senior leader, two peers, and HR who is serving as the AACL. Three candidates are being interviewed for the position which entails high level interaction with faculty, assisting students, and performing senior administrative type work.

One of the candidates arrives for the interview, answers the pre-determined and clarification questions, and near the conclusion of the interview – the AACL asks the search committee if they have any additional questions for the candidate.

The following questions are asked – should the AACL intervene? Why or why not?

* Where is your accent from?
* How are you going to improve your English speaking skills so others can understand you better?
* Can you read and write in English?

Same scenario as above, however the search committee is now debriefing. Each search committee member has completed the scoring on the interview rubric and there are differences in how the candidates are ranked. The committee proceeds to commence discussions stating their pros and cons about the candidates.

* Should the AACL stay quiet or speak?
* What is the best way to bring the committee to consensus on next steps?

*AACL and Search Committee Resources*

The AACL and other search committee members are often unaware of the process by which they can address issues with the search. Any member of the search committee may bring up concerns relating to the selection process at any time. A search committee member has several options when it comes to bringing up concerns or grievances:

1. Speak with the Chair or the Hiring Manager directly. The Chair or Hiring Manager may or may not be the same person but often, they have influence on how the recruitment and selection of the requisition and may be able to find middle ground for the committee.
2. Reach out to the Ombuds on campus (Surge 390) to explore different options in a confidential setting. The Ombuds is a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resource that assists UCR community members (student, faculty and staff) in addressing or resolving a conflict or dispute.
3. Speak with the Human Resources Business Partner (and their team) or with Central Human Resources Talent Acquisition Department. Depending on which college is hosting the recruitment, the Human Resources Business Partner (and their team) contact information will vary. The Central Human Resources Talent Acquisition Department are subject matter experts when it comes to requisitions and all of their different components. They will be able to provide guidance on what steps can or should be taken to ensure that the University is in compliance with Local and UC Policies as it pertains to recruitment.
4. Reach out to the OFCCP for an independent review of the recruitment for compliance. This is often the final step as it is very closely related to grievances and would require intervention at the federal level.

**Resource Implementation**

Because the pool of AACLs would be comprised of the graduates of an already existing program, implementing the AACL training program and pool would be relatively cost effective. There would be some costs associated with extending the training an additional day and the expense of yearly retraining. We propose piloting the new AACL process in the Chancellor and Provost organizations both to set an example for the rest of the campus and to identify logistical issues on a small scale before changes are rolled out to the entire campus.

We suggest that the AACL be assigned through a modification iRecruit that would use an algorithm to identify the next available AACL who does not report to the hiring manager. This process could also be done manually, but would require additional staff time in the EEAA office.

The MEI application would require that participants’ supervisors recognize and approve the continued time commitment of becoming a member of the AACL pool.

**Risks**

Several identified obstacles to the above recommendations are:

1. Objection to policy changes from the general campus. The campus community in general are resistant to change simply because of the time that it takes to learn the new policies and the new process. And due to the decentralized recruitment process at UCR, it is difficult for Central Human Resource to ensure compliance with the new regulations.
2. Resistance from hiring manager to the policy changes. Despite having a search committee for every recruitment, the hiring manager ultimately has the final say on who to hire, unless an empowered committee or AACL speaks up and questions the selection process. Implementing the new process could potentially cause friction between the search committee members and the hiring manager because by empowering the search committee, the influence that the hiring manager has on the recruitment is reduced.
3. Soliciting volunteers to build a network of advocates/volunteer AACLs. We recommend that UCR maintain a pool of volunteer AACLs to serve on committees. With the typical employee already working on several projects and assignments, oftentimes it could be difficult to reserve blocks of time to serve in the committees outside of one's own department on a volunteer basis.
4. Increased grievances. The more people are aware of the process, policies, and procedures, and the more empowered they are by the process, the more they will speak up on any issues they feel are not align with the Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity policies. This would in turn lead to more grievances being filed and more work for the University.

**Benefits**

UCR strives to support diversity to create a culture of belonging in which differences are valued and honored for the improvement of our university and world. One important way that UCR is able to welcome a diverse student body is to have diverse and staff as a resource to students. Students are more inclined to discuss their experiences and challenges with faculty and staff with whom they are able to relate to ethnically, ethically, physically, and spiritually. It is UCR’s obligation to fulfill the needs of their students in this respect. We are able to promote staff diversity by having a fair and ethical hiring process to attract and hire the nation’s top diverse candidates.

**Measures**

The recommended changes can be evaluated in two key ways: a confidence survey that will be sent out to individuals who are volunteer AACL members and the number of formal grievances that we receive. It can be assumed that AACL and search committee members who have received proper training and are empowered will be able to steer the search committee into compliant waters. Grievances are another way to measure the success of the program because if every recruitment is equitable and fair and can be proven given evidence, the number of filed grievances should initially increase while the campus culture adapts to the newly empowered AACLs and will hopefully lessen as time goes by.

We also hope that our employee demographics will reflect these efforts as diverse candidates receive equitable consideration in our hiring processes.