

Search Advocate Pilot Program—Value Added (2020)

1. Are there specific ways that search advocacy added (or is adding) value to your search?

- The Search Advocate Program has significantly enhanced the cultural aspects of our search that center around the philosophy of candidate review and what makes candidates qualified. Xx has been wonderful in reinforcing conscientious practices and habits of mind among the committee members and ESPECIALLY with regard to reinforcing and establishing positive practices for the search chair. Having someone from outside the unit who is able to provide perspective on that without being enmeshed in unit power dynamics is invaluable in that regard. *(Business Operations Manager)*
- Xx added value to the search by being an unbiased outside party that by her presence at the search committee meetings served to hold members of the committee accountable. She was also a valuable resource for committee members. *(Department Business Manager)*
- Search advocacy added value to the search. The advocate challenged (in a good way!) us to be specific about the evidence that qualifications were met and at what point in the process (application materials, phone interviews, in-person interviews, etc.) the qualifications would be best demonstrated. *(Assistant Vice President)*
- Our search advocate attended all the recruitment and search meetings until the final selection process. Her most valuable input was in helping ensure the recruitment was broad and inclusive and the search disciplined and consistent. She also provided feedback when appropriate to indicate variance in interpretations of language, helping the committee think through the implications. *(Professor)*
- We worked with xx and I think I speak for the entire committee when I say how valuable and crucial her guidance and contributions were to the process. Xx worked with us from the beginning to intentionally think about how to remove implicit bias from all levels of our process--from thinking about how best to actively recruit for DEI, developing a rigorous Search Plan, and composing gender-neutral job ad language to formulating evaluation criteria tied to our qualifications, developing assessment tools, scoring metrics, and campus visit Qualtrics forms for department feedback. She was also instrumental in keeping committee deliberations at each level of the search closely tethered to the criteria, tools, and metrics that we'd developed and in helping us develop materials and instructions for the department to encourage them to do the same. Additionally, xx consulted us on best practices for conducting campus visits, advised the department on how to ethically and professionally interact with job candidates, and was present for every major moment in the search, including online Skype interviews. As a result, I think we were able to conduct one of the most rigorous, transparent, and inclusive searches arguably in department history. I would work with a Search Advocate--and particularly with xx!--again in a heartbeat. *(Associate Professor)*
- Our advocate is a good resource during our meetings for information regarding best practices in running a search, limiting bias, and focusing questions/evaluations on our articulated preferred/required qualifications. In one specific case, her help in developing an evaluation matrix made us realize the stated qualifications for

the position were not exactly aligned with our expectations (so we definitely improved the list of qualifications as a result of her help). *(Professor)*

- Xx was an important and valuable member of our search committee. Her training and thoughtful feedback helped us, I believe, maintain an appropriate standard of equity and diversity outreach throughout our search. *(Professor and Associate Head)*
- Xx has been a fantastic addition to the committee. He is making sure that we have diversity, equity, and inclusion in mind at all stages, from the questions we ask, to process-related question, to accessibility matters. He's done a fantastic job helping the committee remain aware of how approaches sometimes can result in impairing inclusion goals. *(Senior Executive)*
- It was nice to have an outside voice that was not necessarily worried so much about the content fit. *(Research Assistant Professor)*
- On multiple occasions, she called out assumptions or unelaborated comments. She also kept us focused on process. *(Chair and Associate Vice President)*
- Xx was VERY helpful in combatting very dominant male voices in the room. A number of times there were one or two committee members trying to steer the committee in ways I found very inequitable, and she helped support my objections simply by noting that my objections were, in fact, consistent with equitable hiring practices (and the others being suggested were not). For example, several committee members wanted not to interview an applicant because he had applied for similar positions in the past and not performed well. My point was that this was a NEW search, and if he met the criteria for the first round of interviews (which he very clearly did), then we had to include him. It didn't help that this applicant was one of the sole people of color in the pool. She ultimately had to back me up for another two committee members to speak up to agree with me, which ultimately led to the applicant being interviewed. Xx was also really helpful because it was apparent that most members did not take the implicit bias training very seriously. That may point to revisions needed there, but regardless, she was a great check against bias creeping into our process. *(Associate Professor and xxChair)*
- The search advocate ensured that we were aware of and followed current university hiring guidelines *(Associate Professor)*
- The search advocate was a tremendous help in keeping us on track. Xx prompted us with questions to be sure we were all on the same page; she steered the conversation back to the center when it veered off; and she helped us anticipate future tensions/questions. *(Associate Professor)*
- Yes indeed. She is facilitating the drafting of our evaluation rubric in the group and doing so with great skill, making sure all voices are heard and remaining neutral with respect to the final content that we together choose to include. She is able to move the discussion along efficiently but also able to take charge in facilitating the discussion. *(Professor)*
- I think the presence of the advocate enables other search committee members to raise issues of diversity. It's a signal that we won't be shrugged off or made to feel out of place. *(Director)*

- It was good to have a non-invested person from outside the department to bounce our search approach off of, and to get their friendly reminders about what was and was not acceptable to ask during interviews, etc. *(Associate Professor, Director)*
- It does make us think about the reasons for evaluating candidates as qualified and for further evaluation as to their merits for rising to the level of semi-finalists for the first round of interviews. *(Professor)*
- Our search advocate is helping us figure out our criteria in advance in order to avoid later bias. That's helpful, but the whole process and discussion seemed really helpful overall in terms of tightening up what we're looking for. *(Professor)*
- Our search advocate is doing a great job of recognizing all members of the committee, looking to all in the room, more and 'less' powerful members of the committee. *(Professor)*

2. Do you think search advocacy has the potential to build culture and shift climate at UO?

If so, how?

- Yes. I have already seen evidence of climate shift by having a search advocate on UO search committees. The search advocate presence reminds search committee members to act responsibly and that pattern eventually becomes habit. *(Department Business Manager)*
- Yes! By raising awareness of implicit bias and by replacing assumptions with actual evidence of qualifications. And by keeping us all more and more aware of our biases. *(Assistant Vice President)*
- I think this would be ideal and if anything, the continuous presence of a search advocate, including their training and the awareness of the position needs to be present. Having said that, it likely will take several years for this to happen. *(Professor)*
- I think there is a huge potential to build culture and shift climate at UO. I think there are two main points of intersection that matter most from my perspective. First, and most immediate, is the change in culture around the expectations of hiring practices and outcomes from an execution standpoint—that's a lot of what I referenced above, but also in educating hiring managers about what they should be concerned with above and beyond their typical priorities in filling vacant positions, opportunities, pit falls, and blind spots. The second element I think has the potential to be more transformative, and that's the stage at which we're able to get advocates involved with hiring processes earlier—at the point of developing position descriptions and job postings. The potential there is great to actually rethink how we conceptualize work at the UO as well as the relationship of every job to the values and mission of the institution. I had a conversation with a co-worker just today about the potential to transform our entire orientation to equity and inclusion, one job at a time. *(Business Operations Manager)*
- Once this process becomes standard practice across campus, I do think that it will help build a more equitable culture and climate specifically around hiring procedures (there's MUCH more work in a host of other areas that needs to happen to complement this initiative). It educates about and holds departments and committees accountable for implicit bias; standardizes hiring practices and procedures across units while also leaving room for department autonomy; encourages transparency at every level of the process; reminds departments and colleagues of professional best practices for interviews, campus visits, and post-visit discussions/debates; and works to reduce subjective assessments, feedback, and conversations around issues

and dynamics not immediately relevant to the job criteria or search. I do think there will be resistance to this kind of external oversight/accountability at first; however, based upon my experience with xx, I think it's a crucial move to standardize across all units on campus. *(Associate Professor)*

- I would hope so—I assume as more people have the experience that I had of working with a search advocate on a search, they will be educated about ways to improve on equity and fairness, as I was. The impact is also broader due to the widespread involvement of department members in the search process: xx's appearances at department meetings, as well as her impact on developing the documents we used (such as our Qualtrix survey after the campus visits) I hope helped begin a culture shift around our search procedure. *(Professor and Associate Head)*
- I think it's an important step toward increasing equity in hiring decisions. *(Research Assistant Professor)*
- Yes, I do. I think hiring habits are powerful, and people don't always think about the ways they're undermining themselves in discussions, evaluation protocols, and in interactions with candidates. In all of these ways the search advocate process can help faculty to be self-reflective about their goals and plans for achieving those goals. *(Associate Professor)*
- I think it can. I've personally been impressed by xx's active involvement, though I imagine some of this is personality driven. It is definitely a way to embed certain values/goals/principles in the search process and to ensure that they do not get buried in the rush to make decisions. *(Senior Executive)*
- I do! There is a lot of inertia among faculty who have been at their jobs a while and participated in more than one search. They need real pressure to do things differently and to see that just because something has been done one way in the past does not make it right. I think it also changes people's behavior (somewhat) to have an objective party in the room to serve as a resource and a witness/advocate as needed. *(Associate Professor and xxChair)*
- The search advocate brings perspective that helps ensure that committee members recognize and minimize potential bias. *(Associate Professor)*
- Yes, I think with an advocate in the room, members are more careful and less likely to express sentiments that could be taken as discriminatory. *(Director)*
- Yes, I believe so. Although search committees go through the implicit bias training, it is good to get the steady reminder of 'best practices' regarding each step of the process. This will likely lead to a change in culture over time. *(Associate Professor, Director)*
- I think it can make search committee members more conscious of the evaluation metrics and how they use them - so perhaps, given enough time and enough faculty members joining search committees. *(Professor)*
- By not just introducing the idea of bias but showing us concrete steps that can be taken that make sense and seem like they would reduce bias. *(Professor)*