

Cover Page

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Project Title: *Assessing the Effectiveness of Inclusive Practices in Faculty Search Committee Trainings*

Project Dates: March 2024 to May 2025

Assessing the Effectiveness of Inclusive Practices in Faculty Search Committee Trainings

Abstract:

Indiana University Indianapolis launched a mandatory training program on equity and inclusion for faculty search committees to address bias and attract diverse candidates in 2022. The program's effectiveness will be evaluated through surveys, document analysis, interviews, and hiring data. The goal is to refine the training, inform university policy, and contribute to research on equitable hiring practices. This initiative is expected to have a broad impact on the campus community and make long-term shifts in faculty hiring from underrepresented groups possible.

*Assessing the Effectiveness of Inclusive Practices in Faculty Search Committee Trainings***Introduction**

In response to the critical need for racial and ethnic parity in U.S. higher education, especially with a diversifying student body (Matias et al., 2022), the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) at IU Indianapolis, under my leadership, launched an equity and inclusion-centered training for faculty search committee members in late 2022. As of August 2023, the training has become mandatory for all search committee members, and over 300 participants across our 17 schools and units have already completed it, highlighting its broad reach and commitment to change. Since my goal has always been to assess the effectiveness of the training, I obtained IRB approval for this project in August 2023 (IRB 20316).

Project Goals

This training aims to address several factors that serve as significant challenges in achieving parity between the demographics of IU Indianapolis faculty and the broader population. These challenges include existing bias and inequitable practices in the faculty hiring process (Culpepper et al., 2023; Liera & Hernandez, 2021) that manifest in a variety of ways, including the use of narrow search criteria, reliance on implicit bias in candidate evaluations, and a lack of transparency in the hiring process.

This project aims to evaluate the effectiveness of required faculty search committee training offered by OAA designed to equip faculty search committees with inclusive practices. This work seeks to determine the impact of these trainings on committee members' understanding and application of equitable strategies during faculty searches, striving for demonstrably fairer and more transparent hiring outcomes. Two specific aims of this project will be assessed:

Deeper Understanding and Equitable Practices: Through the training, committee members are expected to gain a heightened awareness of potential biases and develop the skills to effectively

address them. This will be reflected in their increased use of inclusive frameworks and strategies throughout the recruitment and selection process.

Mitigating Bias and Attracting Diverse Candidates: The training is expected to equip committee members with tools and techniques to recognize and mitigate implicit biases during candidate assessment. This, in turn, is anticipated to lead to a wider pool of qualified applicants from underrepresented and minoritized backgrounds, culminating in a more diverse faculty on campus.

Assessment Methods and Data Analysis

This project will utilize a multi-pronged approach to assess the effectiveness of the training program for faculty search committees. These methods will help capture various aspects of the impact, from individual knowledge obtained to organizational change. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data from various sources will provide a more comprehensive picture of the training program's effectiveness.

Pre- and Post-Training Surveys: Surveys are administered to committee members before and after the training to measure their understanding of inclusive practices and implicit biases. This self-reported data will provide insights into the practical application of the training.

- Analysis of surveys (quantitative): We will use descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, measures of central tendency) to compare pre- and post-training scores on attitudinal questions about inclusive practices and implicit biases.
- Analysis of surveys (qualitative): Open-ended survey questions will be coded thematically to identify patterns and emergent themes in committee members' self-reported experiences and perspectives.

Search Committee Documents: The effectiveness of rubrics developed by search committees for incorporating inclusive practices will be assessed through content analysis.

- **Content Analysis:** Rubrics will be analyzed based on research-based equitable search principles. Analysis will include examining the language, criteria, and weights assigned to different elements. This analysis will reveal whether the rubric explicitly addresses key aspects of inclusivity, such as bias mitigation, diverse candidate evaluation, and transparent decision-making.

Committee Interviews and Focus Groups: Interviews and focus groups will provide valuable insights into the rationale of their rubric development and into committee members' experiences and perspectives on the training and its impact.

- Specific codes will be applied to analyze focus group and interview data related to challenges, successes, and recommendations for improvement, providing valuable input for program refinement.

Candidate Outcomes and Faculty Diversity Data: The proportion of faculty hires from underrepresented and minoritized backgrounds before and after the training program implementation will be monitored (from 2023 to 2025). This will provide a direct measure of the program's impact on diversifying the faculty at IU Indianapolis.

- **Quantitative Analysis:** We will compare pre- and post-training hiring statistics for underrepresented and minoritized groups using chi-square tests to determine if the training program demonstrably increases faculty diversity. Time series analysis may be used to assess the long-term impact of the program on hiring trends.

Continuous Improvement and Feedback Loops

The data and insights gathered through these assessment methods will be used to continuously improve the training program. We will share findings with university leadership to inform future iterations of the program and potentially influence broader institutional policies related to faculty recruitment and selection.

Evaluation and Dissemination of Results

Internal Communication: We will share key findings with IU Indianapolis stakeholders through presentations to faculty, administration, and search committee chairs. This fosters internal dialogue and informs potential adjustments to university policies and procedures related to faculty recruitment.

Peer-Reviewed Publications: We will submit research articles to relevant academic journals focusing on higher education, diversity, and faculty development, sharing our findings with a wider academic audience, and contributing to the broader conversation about equitable faculty search practices.

Online Repository: In conjunction with University Library, we will develop an online repository of resources including the training program curriculum, rubrics, tools, and research-based practices for equitable faculty searches. This resource can be accessed and utilized by other universities and institutions pursuing similar goals of diversifying their faculty.

Conference Presentations: We will present our research findings at national and regional conferences focused on diversity and inclusion in higher education. This allows us to connect with practitioners and researchers, sharing insights and promoting best practices across the higher education landscape.

Potential Impact

This project can make considerable progress towards achieving parity in faculty representation at IU Indianapolis. By creating a more inclusive and equitable hiring process that diversifies our faculty, the project can enhance the learning experience for all students and contribute to a more diverse and equitable university community. Beyond our campus, this grant proposal addresses a critical need in higher education by addressing the gap in research on the effectiveness of inclusive faculty search committee training programs.

Brief Timeline: The project began in August 2023 with IRB approval. Some data collection (pre and post surveys) has begun, and participants will be recruited in Spring 2024 for interviews and focus groups to be conducted over Spring and Fall 2024 semesters. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be compiled in early spring of 2025. The project final report will be submitted to PRAC by May 30, 2025.

Budget: Amount Requested: \$5,000 Grant funds will be used to support a graduate student (hourly, approximately \$3,000) who will conduct data analysis and co-author presentations and publications. The rest of the funds (approximately \$2,000) will be toward conference presentations to share initial findings and obtain feedback on project design and assessment of data.

References:

- Culpepper, D., White-Lewis, D., O'Meara, K., Templeton, L., & Anderson, J. (2023). Do Rubrics Live up to Their Promise? Examining How Rubrics Mitigate Bias in Faculty Hiring. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 1-28.
- Liera, R., & Hernandez, T. E. (2021). Color-evasive racism in the final stage of faculty searches: Examining search committee hiring practices that jeopardize racial equity policy. *The Review of Higher Education*, 45(2), 181-209.
- Matias, J. N., Lewis, N. A., & Hope, E. C. (2022). US universities are not succeeding in diversifying faculty. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6(12), 1606-1608.