



Abstract

Background

In Spring 2022, Himmelfarb Library formed a working group charged with reviewing policies, procedures, and outcomes related to hiring in support of institutional anti-racism goals. The group also sought to reduce the burden on staff involved in searches by standardizing practices, expanding the group of staff participants, and making resources like sample interview questions and orientation schedules easily accessible.

Methods

The working group, made up of librarians and library staff from the Staff Development and DEI committees, used a variety of resources to inform recommendations including webinars and published literature, as well as the GW Council of Librarians Search Committee Procedures for Librarian Searches, a policy document adopted by the main campus library in the previous year.

The group assessed current practices by documenting two searches underway at the time and interviewed recent hires and committee chairs for two recently completed searches. The interviews revealed pain points as well as what worked well during recent searches.

Results

The working group completed the research and documentation phase in February 2023, culminating with a presentation to the library's administrative team. The final Hiring Best Practices document was then forwarded to Human Resources and Faculty Affairs for review and comment on any areas of concern. The document was approved as library policy in Summer 2023. Key recommendations include:

- improving transparency around the position announcement and formation of the search committee
- guidelines addressing position descriptions and salary transparency
- communicating interview questions to applicants in advance
- recommendations for eliciting useful feedback from interview groups

Conclusions

The project has now moved into the implementation phase. The Staff Development Committee conducted a Lunch & Learn event for staff in September 2023 to review the best practices guide and elicit feedback on areas that could be improved further. Additionally, library staff have begun a broader assessment of equity practices at the library, which will inform further development of the Hiring Best Practices.

Why?

In the Fall of 2022, the Hiring Best Practices Working Group was formed to develop a hiring and onboarding policy for Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library. The goals of the group were:

- to document current practice and recommend changes to make practices more consistent, fair, and unbiased
- attract larger and more diverse candidate pools.
- make the hiring and onboarding process more transparent, easier to navigate, and more effective for new hires
- reduce the burden on staff involved in searches by standardizing practices and expanding the pool of participants
- make resources like where to post positions, sample interview schedules, interview questions, and orientation schedules available for new search committees

Key Recommendations

Search Committee

- Standardize expectations for committee chair, diversity advocate, hiring manager, director, others

Position Description

- Increased/earlier stakeholder input on the position description
- Focus on specific responsibilities rather than general skills/experience
- Limit requirements to key job functions to discourage unnecessary self-eliminations
- Diversity Advocate: review all materials for use of inclusive language
- Provide clear indications of salary range, benefits, hybrid eligibility, and review timeline

Advertising

- Central spreadsheet of venues to advertise positions broadly and attract a diverse pool of candidates
- Created a new **Working @ Himmelfarb** guide to promote the library and provide a central hub for information useful to applicants
- Cross-post jobs on library social media accounts so staff can share with their networks

Screening

- Diversity Advocate: identify and communicate potential sources of bias throughout process
- Consider what each candidate would add to the team if hired, rather than looking for the "best fit"
- Standardize screening rubrics, both for the committee's internal deliberations and when requesting feedback from external reviewers

Interview Logistics

- Default to virtual interviews unless all candidates are local and able to participate without barriers. (Candidates are extended a site visit prior to accepting an offer.)
- Ask candidates proactively about any accessibility or technology needs
- Share interview questions from all groups 48 hours in advance
- Provide questions both in writing and orally during the interview

Onboarding

- Clearly document the full onboarding process to decrease confusion and avoid duplication of effort

Implementation and Transition to Ongoing Practice

- Spring-Summer 2023: reviewed and approved by Library Administration, GW Human Resources and Faculty Affairs
- Fall 2023: Lunch & Learn session for library staff; full report adapted to LibGuide for ease of use
- Underway (Fall 2023): Broader assessment of equity practices
- Ongoing: Develop and implement methods to gather and review feedback from each completed search



Questions??

Himmelfarb Hiring Best Practices LibGuide:
<https://guides.himmelfarb.gwu.edu/hiring-best-practices/home>



Clockwise from above: Screenshot from Lunch & Learn session; Hiring Practices LibGuide; Working at Himmelfarb LibGuide

