

# 2019 TA Institute

**Topic:** Hiring for Success

**Notetaker:** Dorothy Garcia

**Facilitator:** Kelly Roberts

**Participants:** Brent Askvig, Celia Feinstein, Zolinda Stoneman, Donna Gilles, Colleen McLoughlin, Emily (Georgia State University)

## Background/Intro

- Address hiring at all levels, even administrative levels
- Need to recruit people from diverse backgrounds
- Build pipeline contacts/promotion
- Can't figure out why some hires worked out well, and others didn't/predictive capacity is not great
- Job descriptions
- Succession planning
- What to do to help with success
- If you're in a small center (5 faculty or less); lots of training and consultation specialists; hard to hire with the intention of promotion or helping people grow in their job

## Discussion and examples:

What are your funding streams like?

- Partial university funding, but most are funded outside the university

Interview questions

- Sample interview questions
  - What are your pet peeves in the workplace?
  - Ask: Given a choice, would you rather work by yourself, or with a team? You MUST choose one. (this is important in a highly collaborative environment)
  - What would your boss/coworkers say is your greatest strength?
  - If we hired you, what kind of supports would you need from us in your first six months? What kind of supports would you need after a year?

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- Most people don't ask good questions from the references
  - Ex: "When this candidate worked with you, can you tell me about a collaboration they had that was really successful?"
  - HR limits what you can ask references; may be Department of Labor standards, but more often than not, it's the university standard
- How can you steer away from hiring highly competent, yet toxic people whose attitude/behavior can bring down team morale?
  - Hard to measure and use in performance review
    - Brent: You can use the word "collaboration"- rate employees' ability to collaborate
  - Improper hiring can be a huge time suck
- Teleworking policies
  - Preference in the room: In office work rather than teleworking
- What type of personalities are able to work on soft money
  - Celia: We let people know upfront that we are 100% soft money, but we also want them to know it's a stable job; we've only laid off people twice in 30 years
- Emily: We hire a lot of trainees, so we already know what their work ethic determinants are
  - But how do you hire a good mix of people with diverse backgrounds
- Recruitment venues
  - Recruitment matching and supervision
  - Hiring through the dean, since we don't have capacity to provide stipends, tuition money, etc.
    - Dean came to center and said "would you like a graduate assistant?" Seemed like a good match. They pay for tuition, UCEDD pays for stipend.
    - Good model: university pays the tuition, center pays the stipend
    - Tuition waivers for students are helpful; or a pool of money for tuition (getting rarer)
  - Challenge: Diversity hiring in a state that is 90% Caucasian
    - Brent: We hired permanent residents (often from a nearby airforce base with 30,000 people). Airforce base represented the diversity across the nation (gender orientation, ethnicity, language, etc). And their hires have been excellent (project directors, etc)
  - Celia: Even in a city as diverse as Philadelphia, it's been difficult to recruit minorities for senior level positions
    - Leadership positions are held mostly by white women
    - Competitive recruits will be wooed by organizations with a lot more money
    - Doing fellowships to end up in disciplinary positions
      - Hope that LEND people end up in leadership positions

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- Recruitment is really hard in academia; not very welcoming, not lucrative, need for mentors, very narrow standards
- Soft money funding is hard for people to rely on
- Recruits are making decisions based on family decisions, may be more receptive to soft money positions
- Gender diversity: recruits at these UCEDDs skew heavily female and Caucasian
  - Lots of energy around a good mix of employees (race, gender, religion, political affiliation, etc)
- Some centers have highly qualified people who would make fantastic directors, but don't have the PhD credentials and can't take a tenured position

## Strategies:

- Tests – editing and proofreading
  - But beware of scaring off people who have learning disability or those for whom English is a second language
- Listen to what the candidates are telling you, not what you want them to say
  - Sometimes there are red flags but you end up ignoring them because you want to hire that person
  - Once you hire that person, you realize that you should have taken to heart those initial warning signs
- Ask for examples of research products, written work

What advice would you give:

- Six-month probationary period
  - When you hire, trust your gut. Five months in, trust it again
- Reopen the search, don't pick the best of what's available, if you're not satisfied with the pool
- Be motivating throughout the probationary period, but also give honest appraisal
- Think of yourself as someone's past supervisor

How can you help people to succeed:

- Be as realistic as you can about your expectations
- Be conscientious about peer mentoring

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- Be comfortable with letting them grow into their jobs; it may take them up to a year to grow into their job
- If you're with us for a year, you will likely be doing a job that is different in a year
- Keep the title, but the actual job/tasks/content will be broad, and you don't have to change the job description and risk losing your grant
- Immigrants tend to be overqualified, with advanced degrees from their home countries- try to make inroads into those communities, see who might be open