

I. OVERVIEW

The second meeting of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago's (SAIC) Anti-Racism Committee (ARC), Law and Hiring Subcommittee, was held on Friday, November 20, 2020 online from 1:00–2:30 p.m.

A. ATTENDING

Shelly Booker, director of talent acquisition; James Connolly, assistant professor, adjunct; Leslie Darling, executive vice president, general counsel, and corporate secretary; Matt Morris, assistant professor, adjunct; Jefferson Pinder, director of diversity, equity, and inclusion for academic affairs (co-chair); Molly Scranton, associate director of faculty affairs; Roberto Sifuentes, professor; Amy Vogel, associate professor; Jeff Ward, special assistant for executive communications (notetaker); Timeka Young, manager of employee relations and training (co-chair)

B. AGENDA

- Discussion

II. DISCUSSION

Building on the presentation on staff and faculty hiring, protected status, and recruitment programs and strategies from the prior meeting, subcommittee members held a wide ranging discussion that covered the following topics and observations, driving towards recommendations for improvements they could make:

A. OPEN STAFF POSITIONS

While hiring is currently limited, there are a number of open staff positions seeking applicants. Importantly, these vacancies are the result of turnover, not positions eliminated during the previous summer's reduction in workforce. Nevertheless, recruiting and retaining diverse talent remains of paramount importance. Salient points from the discussion included:

- Current search pools for open positions, particularly for a number of positions in admission and enrollment, are quite diverse. Posting open positions on diverse career websites, e.g., Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement, National Association of Asian American Professionals, and on LinkedIn, which had a particularly high level of activity, was a key strategy in building those diverse pools.
- Early in the pandemic-related campus closure, a talent exchange program allowed staff with extra capacity to volunteer for additional work in other areas while their regular workload was reduced during the stay-at-home order. A program like this, adjusted for a more regular, steady workflow, might aid in staff retention.

- Building a pipeline through techniques commonly used by talent acquisition, e.g., recruitment events, is an essential to building diverse candidate pools for staff searches; some of these strategies may also be useful in faculty searches.
- Staff hired over the last few years may be able to provide feedback on what resources would have been useful during onboarding in terms of setting expectations for a diverse campus.

B. LANGUAGE IN HIRING

Discussing how language is used in job postings to recruit diverse talent, the members made the following points:

- “Diversity” is a broad concept, which could be better defined in hiring language, signaling the School’s anti-racist ambitions and commitments in a frank and contemporary way that is more reflective of the world. It could help galvanize vision for hiring departments and aid in shared, transformative approach to diverse recruitment.
- Cluster hiring, i.e., simultaneously searching for a number of positions, could be a powerful statement. Hiring a cohort of faculty with anti-racist research interests, for example, could be symbolically fulfilling while also leading to significant change; current searches at RISD and UChicago are recent examples. However, such a strategy could not target hires based on a protected class.
- While hiring for diverse research interests and skill sets is a lawful strategy, and one members want to embrace, ways to encourage diverse applicants for positions that aren’t specifically dealing with anti-racism in their curriculum or job duties is also a priority.
- An example from the list of diverse faculty hiring programs that the subcommittee reviewed at their last meeting has potentially useful language for positions without specifically DEI or anti-racist duties or expertise: “encourage women and minority [candidates] to pursue careers at the University of California.” In general, the fellowship and internships examples from this list are less instructive, as those programs are less restricted by nondiscrimination law than job searches and hiring.
- An ambitious new statement that signals the School’s intention to seek candidates who are Black, indigenous, and people of color could be used in job positing, hiring guidelines, website, and anywhere staff and faculty recruitment takes place.
- Existing value statements could inform a new statement for SAIC.

- Morris would take the lead on establishing a shared document that would propose a value statement for diverse and anti-racist hiring for future discussion; other members were encouraged to review and contribute to the document in the interim.

C. PART-TIME FACULTY HIRING

Part-time faculty hiring is managed in each academic department with little consistency throughout the institution. Members discussed the challenges in hiring part-time faculty and how more regularity in the process might encourage diverse hiring. Salient points included:

- A more formal part-time faculty search process—which may have guidelines like a minimum number of candidates or required consideration of a pre-vetted pipeline of candidates—could help ensure diverse candidate pools; however, the variable and often truncated timeframe for hiring part-time faculty is an impediment.
- Unlike full-time faculty hiring, a year-long process, many part-time faculty positions need to be filled quickly as additional classes or replacement instructors are needed just before a new term begins.
- An [open application](#) for external applicants interested in part-time teaching and a [skills-sharing questionnaire](#), intended to broadcast skills of existing part-time faculty to department chairs looking to hire someone with particular expertise, currently exist to help formalize part-time hiring. Increasing the visibility of these tools among department heads and external candidates, via job listing tools like Chicago Artists Resource (CAR), may also aid in establishing diverse candidates for part-time faculty positions. The skill-sharing tool could also be introduced when onboarding part-time faculty.
- Creating rolling candidate pools with appropriate skills for specific areas, e.g., Contemporary Practices, might ameliorate some of the time-sensitivity challenges and familiarity bias in part-time faculty hiring. The existing pool of temporary staff may be a model for such an initiative.
- A more thorough management of part-time faculty candidates might require additional staffing.

D. OTHER TOPICS

In addition to the topics discussed in depth, subcommittee members also observed:

- Diverse staff at all levels, like diverse faculty, are important to student retention, as it singles a sense of belonging and gives students more individual with whom they might find affinity.
- SAIC's reputation in terms of anti-racism and DEI is poor among some potential job-seekers; a candid narrative of strengths, weaknesses, and commitment on the website might positively influence external reputation.
- Some academic departments have already used Full-Time Visiting Artist positions as a method to diversify the curriculum; that strategy could be formalized and extended.
- Several members expressed the need for implicit bias training, which was also expressed in the prior meeting. Young would provide access to some online training modules that members could take and evaluate for future discussion.