Part 6: Retention

Once a finalist has been selected and approved, it becomes the responsibility of the entire unit as well as the relevant college, school, or campus—administrators, faculty, and staff alike—to create a welcoming atmosphere to facilitate the new colleague's transition to professional life at the University of Washington.

It is helpful to develop **a clear plan for bringing new colleagues into the unit, college, school, or campus and the university community** and for making sure they have **access to resources** that will promote success in research, teaching, service, and work-life balance. **What will it take for your new colleagues to thrive at UW?** And who will be most useful as resources, mentors, or allies?

6.1 After the Search

As you develop a plan for welcoming and supporting new colleagues, **some things to keep in mind**:

- Most of us are easily overwhelmed by too much information given all at once. Think about how to **prioritize information** and how to **distribute an orientation** to the unit and to the university across the first quarter or even the first year.

- Be careful not to immediately **overburden** faculty from underrepresented backgrounds, including women, with additional "diversity" demands or expectations (e.g., multiple committee assignments or multiple advisees, multiple peer or student mentees, or a major overhaul of the curriculum).

- At the same time, be careful not to **overprotect** new colleagues from service or outreach opportunities they seek out or that will be essential to their professional and personal success, since overprotection can lead to isolation.

- The key is to help new colleagues find **balance** among research, teaching, and service obligations and opportunities, on the one hand, and, on the other, to maintain **open communication** about the unit's expectations and reward structures. It is also imperative that new colleagues have a high level of control over decision-making about how they will deploy their time.

It is thus important to ask: **How can the search committee, unit leadership, dean or chancellor, and others assist new colleagues in developing strong support networks that are relevant and useful?**

6.2 Mentoring

Although there is considerable agreement that the success of new faculty depends in part on the effectiveness of the mentoring they receive from colleagues, there is a wide range of opinion about

which forms of individualized mentoring and/or mentoring communities are most effective. **A few things to consider:**

- Mentoring can be both formal and informal, and it should extend beyond the minimum effort of informing faculty about the requirements for achieving tenure and promotion.

- Many faculty express a desire for help with short- and long-range professional development planning and with time management, as well as for open conversation about work-life balance, rather than for mentoring focused exclusively on their research and teaching.

- Faculty benefit from having access to a "team" of mentors: from within and outside their home units, from multiple faculty ranks (including peer mentors), and from across the faculty/staff divide. Rather than assigning a single mentor and hoping for the best, consider what kind of "team" might be formed to help meet multiple needs and goals.

- Faculty benefit from having access to different kinds of mentors at different stages of their careers.

- Faculty benefit from having access to mentors who can help them articulate their own definitions of success in the academy, rather than (only) mentors who can provide examples of what has worked for others in the past.

In addition to local mentoring resources, the University of Washington has an institutional membership with the **National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD)**. This membership allows all UW faculty, post-docs, and graduate students to access NCFDD resources that are designed to offer online mentoring and to promote professional development and work-life balance through a variety of online resources.

Information about NCFDD and additional mentoring resources are available in the Toolkit.

6.3 Climate

Ultimately, the best retention tool is a vibrant and welcoming university community where all faculty feel they can thrive and make meaningful contributions in research, teaching, service, and outreach. Of course, **climate is also an important issue during outreach and recruitment**, since potential applicants may inquire about the unit's and the university's climate before they consider applying, and since finalists will try to gauge climate during interview activities and campus visits.

If your unit has not already done so, consider gathering information from current faculty on issues related to climate through individual conversations, focus groups or surveys, discussion with unit leadership, and exit interviews with faculty who are departing the University of Washington for other opportunities.

Some issues that can **negatively affect climate**:

- Unintentional bias experienced in formal and informal faculty interactions.

- Undervaluing research, teaching, service, or outreach focused on diversity, equity, access, and inclusion.

- Experiences of professional isolation and/or feeling invisible within the unit.

- Experiences of feeling overburdened with "diversity" work.

- Lack of transparency in key unit operations, such as teaching and service assignments, merit review, promotion and tenure guidelines, and salary adjustments.

- Lack of transparency in other unit operations, such as access to travel or research support, fiscal reimbursement processes, and so forth.

- Lack of organized, formal support and sharing of information for faculty preparing for tenure or promotion review.

- Lack of open support for ongoing professional development or for collaboration in research or teaching.

- Lack of open support for faculty experiencing microaggressions in the unit, in the classroom, or on campus.

- Lack of open discussion about support available for faculty experiencing stress, health issues, or difficulties in their work or personal lives.

Some issues that can **positively affect climate**:

- Informal social networks organized for faculty by unit leadership.

- Active appreciation of faculty by unit leadership in both formal and informal settings.

- Positively valuing research, teaching, service, and outreach focused on diversity, equity, access, and inclusion as related to the specific discipline.

- Transparent rotation of committee memberships and other kinds of service.

- Transparent guidelines for merit review, tenure, and promotion.

- Annual reviews constructed as opportunities for mentoring and coaching.

- Regular and open discussion about resources available to faculty.

- Regular and open discussion about important issues within the unit, including those related to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion.

- A clear articulation of commitment to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion in every aspect of the department, school, or program.

Resources for conducting a faculty climate survey are available in the Toolkit.