

NJIT Faculty Search and Selection Guidelines



Hiring for Inclusive Excellence

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Faculty Search and Selection Guidelines:

Hiring for Inclusive Excellence

The *2020 Vision* strategic plan puts NJIT on track to become one of the premier institutes of technology in the country, renowned for excellence in education and research. The process of attracting and hiring excellent academic colleagues is central to achieving that goal--one of the most important things we do together as faculty members. It is also one of the most difficult.

The *Faculty Search and Selection Guidelines* below are designed to assist you in this effort, providing clear procedures, best practices, and useful resources for each step in the process. The subtitle of the document (*Hiring for Inclusive Excellence*) embodies, not only the goal of the search, but also the philosophy and methodology that underpins it--namely, the belief that excellence and diversity are fundamentally intertwined.

This belief flows from NJIT's core values, but it is not merely idealistic; it is pragmatic. Diversity drives excellence. Research clearly demonstrates that diverse groups engage in a more robust exchange of ideas, design more innovative solutions and bring a higher level of critical analysis to complex problems. Moreover, the presence of a diverse faculty is integral to the recruitment and retention of a diverse student body. Indeed, the 2012 Middle State Commission Report urges NJIT to "[increase] the number of women and underrepresented minority faculty" for just this reason: "a faculty that reflects the nature of the student body and the society that the university serves will pay rich dividends in terms of future student recruitment, retention, graduation, and ultimate success."

NJIT has responded to this challenge by pledging in *2020 Vision* to achieve a meaningful increase in the number of women and underrepresented minority tenured and tenure-track faculty over the next five years. In order to meet this goal, the faculty searches need to be broad and proactive. We don't recruit star athletes by simply running an ad and waiting to see who shows up; and we can't recruit star faculty members that way either. A proactive search committee does more than weed through resumes; it reaches out to prospects through multiple professional networks; it chooses candidates to *include* in the pool rather than choosing candidates to eliminate.

The *Faculty Search and Selection Guidelines* document is structured to help you be proactive as you work through the three fundamental tasks necessary for inclusive excellence: 1) Broadening the applicant pool; 2) Minimizing implicit bias in evaluation; and 3) Creating a welcoming climate that sells candidates on the university, and on the community. The *Guidelines* will help make the most efficient use of your time and effort and ensure that at the end of the search process; even the candidates not chosen will carry away a positive impression of NJIT.

Thank you for your commitment to this important work.

Dr. Fadi Deek
Provost and Senior Executive Vice President

INTRODUCTION



The Faculty Search and Selection Guidelines document, below, brings together best practices at universities across the country that have had success in recruiting and hiring excellent new faculty members, including women and underrepresented minorities. The goal of these guidelines is to provide a resource for faculty search committees that will optimize the effectiveness of their time and effort.

The procedures described here are largely advisory in nature and are designed to provide a roadmap for inclusive faculty searches. Provisions in the *Guidelines* that are mandated by federal or state law, the NJIT *Faculty Handbook*, and/or other official university policies and commitments are **marked with an asterisk** in the document, indicating that they are requirements rather than suggestions.



1. BEFORE THE SEARCH

OPTIMIZING THE TIMELINE: Ideally, the search process should begin in the spring semester the year *before* the anticipated hire date. Budgetary constraints may make this timing difficult; however, there are a number of actions a department can take to prepare for an anticipated search even before formal authorization is granted--including composing the search committee, drafting the charge, defining the position, and proactively identifying potential candidates.

PROACTIVELY IDENTIFYING WOMEN AND MINORITY CANDIDATES: To increase their competitiveness, many universities follow the principle "Search all the time." This is especially important in attracting women and underrepresented minority candidates.

Strategies for Identifying Potential Women and Minority Candidates:

- ❑ Establishing a consistent presence by networking at national conferences and professional society meetings to build a list of potential candidates--especially at **conferences** where women and minorities are strongly represented.
- ❑ Identifying and establishing connections with **organizations** and faculty groups that advocate for women and underrepresented minorities; establishing partnerships with them; and maintaining a consistent presence within them.
- ❑ Inviting potential candidates to campus to present their **research scholarship and creative academic activity** before a search is even authorized.
- ❑ Establishing partnerships with **historically black and Hispanic universities** that offer advanced degrees as well as other universities that are also seeking to increase faculty diversity.
- ❑ Accessing online databases and resources, such as associated journals, directories of recent PhDs, minority job postings and national databases of prospective women and minority faculty candidates.
- ❑ Mentoring NJIT women and underrepresented graduate students to become future faculty.
- ❑ Collecting data on the national pool of qualified women and minority candidates in the department's key areas of **research, scholarship and creative academic activity**. [The search committee chairperson may wish to consult with HR for assistance.]



3. INITIATING THE SEARCH

Obtaining Formal Authorization to Search: At NJIT as elsewhere, authorization to begin a faculty search follows the chain of command: The Dean receives approval from the provost and then authorizes the departmental chairperson to initiate the search process. *

Composing the Search Committee: As outlined in the *Faculty Handbook*, the department chairperson selects the members of the search committee.*

The *Handbook* also specifies that the department search committee should be “appropriately diverse.” That is, the search committee should include members with different perspectives, backgrounds and expertise--members who are committed to diversity and excellence.*

University policy requires that all search committee members be trained for “accountability and implicit bias awareness.”* (Additional refresher training will be made available as needed or requested.)

Best Practices Re Search Committee Composition:

Departments are encouraged to consider adopting the following best practices that have worked well at many of NJIT's benchmark universities:

- ❑ Allowing the Search Committee to select one of its members to serve as the Search Committee Chairperson. (Departments that want their departmental chairperson to have the sole power to choose the search committee chairperson can specify this arrangement in their bylaws.)
- ❑ Including on the Search Committee a faculty member from outside the department.
- ❑ Assigning at least one Search Committee member the specific responsibility for seeing that a proactive search for minorities and women candidates is carried out.
- ❑ Being cognizant of the potential difficulties faced by junior faculty serving on a search committee, who--in order to argue for a candidate of their choosing--will have to challenge senior faculty or administrators who will later evaluate them for tenure and promotion.

3. BROADENING THE POOL



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To be competitive in attracting a pool of excellent applicants, committees need to search proactively and strategically. The following strategies may help to ensure that the pool is broad and appropriately diverse:

- Obtaining lists of women and minority PhDs from professional societies and sending the job posting to them;**
- Reaching out to women and underrepresented minority colleagues and alumnae who can broker introductions;**
- Personally inviting women and underrepresented minorities that search committee members have met at conferences to apply for the position;**
- Contacting colleagues at other institutions to seek nominations of students nearing graduation or others interested in moving laterally, making sure to request inclusion of minorities and women;**
- Proactively recruiting female and minority PhDs working at national laboratories and corporations;**
- Using electronic job-posting services, particularly those targeting diverse groups such as women's caucuses or disciplinary networks;**
- Using social media such as LinkedIn and other professional networks strategically;**
- Ensuring that the criteria for evaluation of candidates do not preclude people with non-traditional career patterns.**

4. SCREENING APPLICATIONS



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Documenting the Search:

As the person designated by the *Faculty Handbook* to oversee the search process, the Department Chairperson is responsible for collecting and retaining all faculty search records, including a physical and/or electronic file for each candidate who meets the objective criteria established by the search committee. *

To ensure confidentiality, the Department Chairperson needs to keep search committee records in a secure location, such as a password-protected website designed to track candidates, their status, and associated materials throughout the search process. [HR provides such a website.] *

Search Committee records must be retained for a period of three years after the conclusion of the search. *

4. SCREENING APPLICATIONS

Documenting the Search:

In making its final recommendations to the Department Chairperson, the Search Committee will need to provide a rationale for its decisions. (**See section 7 below.**) In order to prepare for this task, the Search Committee will normally want to document the search as it goes along, noting specific job-related reasons for selection or non-selection of candidates at each step in process. This documentation can be as extensive as notes to the candidate files or as brief as a line in committee minutes (e.g., “The Committee decided to limit interviews to those candidates have more than ten years of teaching experience.”)

In addition to maintaining minutes of its meetings-- documenting their evaluation criteria and decision-making process--Search Committees will normally want to keep copies of letters and advertisements, especially those detailing efforts to recruit women and underrepresented minority candidates.

4. SCREENING APPLICATIONS

Minimizing Implicit Bias during the Search:

Implicit bias is the bias in judgment and/or behavior that results from subtle cognitive processes (e.g., implicit attitudes and implicit stereotypes) that often operate at a level below conscious awareness and without intentional control. ¹

Social science research has demonstrated that implicit bias results in unfair evaluations of women and underrepresented minority candidates.

University policy requires that all Search Committee members be trained for “accountability and implicit bias awareness.” *

Prior to screening applications, the Search Committee Chairperson may want to review the key concepts in the bias training to ensure that all members of the committee understand the potential role that evaluation bias plays in the search and selection process—and the practices that can mitigate the impact of evaluation bias, e.g.

- Using criteria-based evaluation methods and tools;
- Selecting candidates to include in the pool rather than focusing on eliminating candidates.

4. SCREENING APPLICATIONS

Determining Selection Criteria:

Search Committees should agree on selection criteria and how they will be weighted before beginning to screen applications—using only criteria that are clearly related to the job requirements. *

Search committees may consider as an important selection criteria for all candidates (regardless of the candidate's demographic characteristics), the ability of the candidate to add intellectual diversity to the department, to work successfully with diverse students and colleagues, and to mentor diverse students and junior colleagues.

4. SCREENING APPLICATIONS

Using Criteria-Based Evaluation:

In screening applications, Search Committee members should use a scoring sheet that identifies measurable qualifications.* Using a standard evaluation tool will keep Committee members focused on the agreed-upon criteria and provide documentation for the process. (**Sample evaluation tools** are provided in this document.)

All candidates, internal and external, should be treated the same. *

Discussions of applicants should focus on tangible evidence of specific accomplishments, leaving out information that is not relevant to the job (i.e. family status). *

4. SCREENING APPLICATIONS

Using Criteria-Based Evaluation:

In order to minimize implicit bias and avoid reaching closure prematurely, search committees might consider employing some of the best practices described below:

- Asking search committee members to assess and rank the candidates separately before discussing their recommendations to avoid activating biases in group dynamics. (This allows for committee members to evaluate the candidate without their view being swayed.)**

- Creating separate short lists ranking people on different criteria and developing a final shortlist by taking the top candidates across different criteria.**

- Developing a “medium” list from which to generate the short list.**
 - Are there underrepresented minority or women candidates on it? If not, expand the search.**

- Re-examining the CV’s of strong women and underrepresented candidates before finalizing a short list of candidates to be invited to campus for further interviews. [Research shows that women’s applications, for example, are often more critically reviewed (Biernat and Fuegen, 2001) and women are less likely to self-promote (Valian, 1999).]**

- Developing a mechanism for screening applications that includes documenting why the applicant was or wasn’t selected. (The search committee should be able to justify its final recommendation based upon the position description.)**

5. INTERVIEWING APPLICANTS



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After an initial screening of applications, the Search Committee should select a subset of applicants with whom to conduct preliminary interviews. * These interviews can take place face-to-face--at disciplinary meetings, for instance--and/or online using a Web-based conferencing system.

The Committee should use the same set of interview questions with all candidates. * Using a customized version of the ***Applicant Evaluation Form*** provided in these *Guidelines* can help to ensure consistency in assessment and provide a place for noting relevant applicant responses.

The Search Committee Chairperson is responsible for ensuring that all committee members are familiar with and follow the interviewing protocols laid out in ***A Guideline for Nondiscriminatory Interviewing***. *

5. INTERVIEWING APPLICANTS

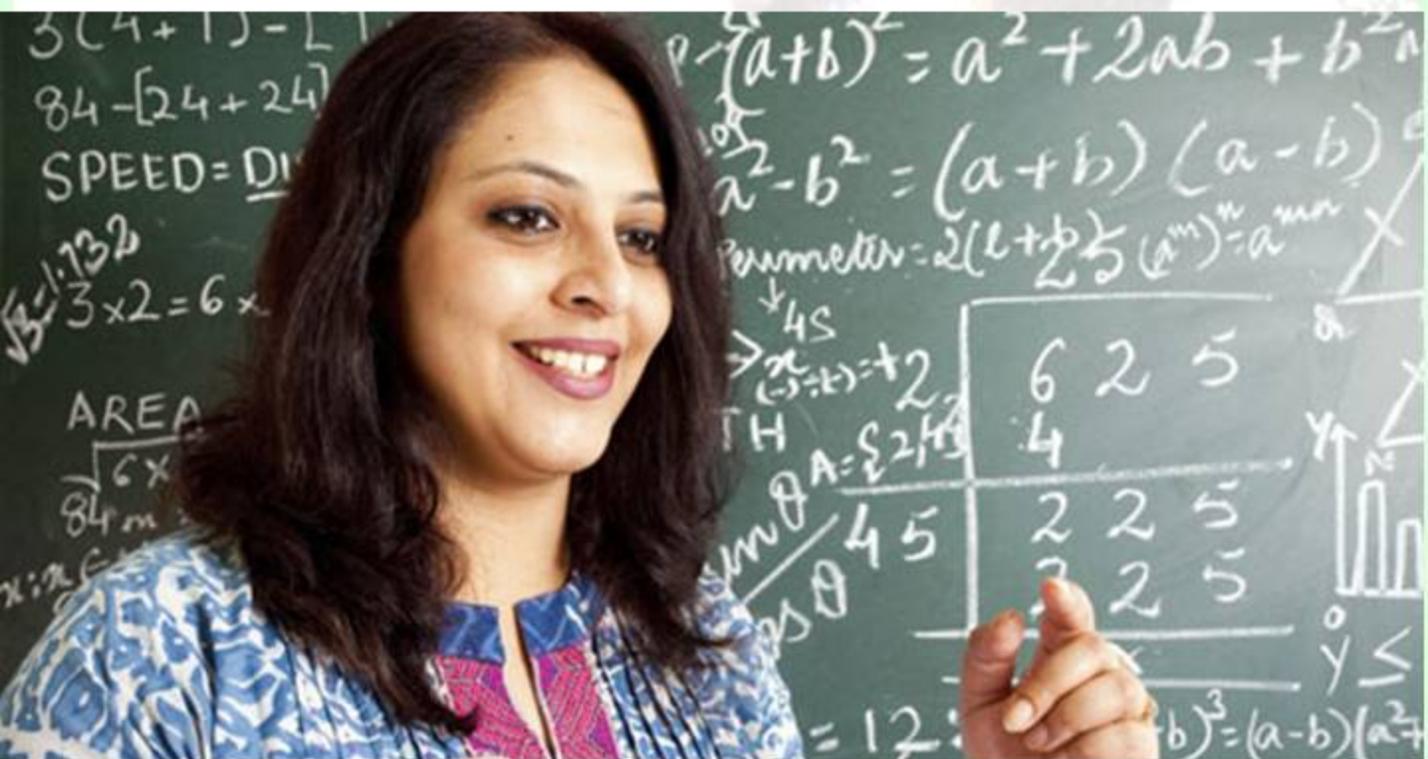
In interviewing applicants, the Search Committee should use criteria-based evaluation methods.* [See Section 4.] It is helpful for the Search Committee Chairperson to ask committee members to evaluate specific facets of the candidate's potential, rather than providing generic, yes/no judgments.

To make certain that its search process is inclusive and free from implicit bias, the Search Committee may want to make an effort to interview more than one woman and more than one member of an underrepresented group. (“Research shows that interviewers more fairly evaluate women when there is more than one woman in the candidate pool” (Valian, 1999).)

If a formal *Search Plan* was developed and approved, the Department Chairperson may want to confirm with the Search Committee Chairperson that the plan was followed before giving the Committee the green light to interview.

If the applicant pool does not include a sufficient number of women or underrepresented minority candidates, the Department Chairperson may decide to ask the Committee to continue soliciting applications.

6. THE CAMPUS VISIT



After screening applications and conducting preliminary interviews, the Search Committee should invite at least three finalists to visit the NJIT campus to deliver a professional presentation about their research and teaching (“The Job Talk”).

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Creating a Welcoming Climate:

Before the Visit:

Before the candidates visit, the Search Committee will want to plan how it will demonstrate that the department, and NJIT as a whole, is a place in which all faculty--including women and underrepresented minorities--can thrive.

As an essential part of this process, the Search Committee Chairperson should ensure that all committee members are thoroughly familiar with each candidate's [research, scholarship / creative academic activity](#) and credentials--and familiar with the **Resources for Prospective Faculty** on the provost's website. *

It is also a good idea to make sure that the department's website has been updated and that the content effectively showcases faculty strengths in [research, scholarship and creative academic activity](#).

6. THE CAMPUS VISIT

Creating a Welcoming Climate:

During the Visit:

During the visit, the Search Committee may want to orchestrate its interactions with the candidate in many of the following ways:

- ❑ **Discuss the department's mentoring process for junior faculty;**
- ❑ **Find a number of ways to demonstrate that faculty at NJIT engage in lively intellectual interaction and have opportunities to collaborate;**
- ❑ **Point out the varied and exciting cultural resources available in the Newark/New York area;**
- ❑ **Distribute information about potentially relevant policies and resources to *all* job candidates. For example:**
 - Stress that NJIT has family-friendly policies that can aid in balancing work and life, e.g. the [Active Service Modified Duties Policy](#).
 - Provide candidates with the [Resources for Prospective Faculty](#) on the provost's website and be prepared to explain policies and procedures.
- ❑ **Introduce women and underrepresented minority faculty members to *all* candidates. (It is generally *not* helpful to stress that the department is eager to hire women and underrepresented minorities.)**

The Search Committee Chairperson should keep all candidates informed in a courteous and timely manner about the progress of the search--and make it clear that the university is genuinely interested in the candidates' **research, scholarship and creative academic activity**, rather than their demographic characteristics. *

6. THE CAMPUS VISIT

The Job Talk:

The Search Committee should invite at least three finalists to visit the NJIT campus and deliver a professional presentation about their [research, scholarship / creative academic activity](#) and teaching ("The Job Talk"). *

All department faculty and instructional staff should be invited to attend each job talk and to comment upon the candidate's performance. * (The Search Committee can distribute a customized version of the [Candidate Evaluation Form](#) to collect faculty feedback.)

The Department may also want to invite faculty and instructional staff from other departments who have an interest in the field, as well as departmental graduate students and undergraduate majors.

If possible, department faculty should have an opportunity to interact with the candidate, individually or in small groups.

7. REACHING CONSENSUS



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Obtaining Departmental Feedback:

In addition to collecting written feedback (Candidate Evaluation Forms) from people who attended the candidate job talks, the department may want to hold a meeting of its faculty and instructional staff to discuss the finalists. This discussion may, or may not, culminate in a formal vote. (Departmental practice varies.)

Departmental discussion should consider only the candidate's ability to perform the essential functions of the job and avoid assumptions based on perceived race, ethnic background, religion, marital or familial status, age, disability, sexual orientation, or veteran status. *

7. REACHING CONSENSUS

Submitting the *Hiring Recommendations Report*:

At the conclusion of its deliberations--and, ideally, after departmental discussion--the Search Committee, as specified in the *Faculty Handbook*, submits its recommendations in writing to the Department P&T Committee which then “determine[s] appropriate Faculty rank and tenure status of [the] finalists” and makes “the final decision about which candidate(s) to recommend for appointment. (Department Bylaws may specify the roles of the Chairperson and other Faculty in the Department in this process.)” *

In its *Hiring Recommendations Report*, the Search Committee should explain the criteria it used in evaluating candidates; should provide a rationale for its decisions, analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each finalist vis a vis the criteria; and should include the departmental vote, if one was taken. * CVs of the finalists' should be included. *

Ideally the report should also provide the total number of applicants, the number of women and underrepresented minority applicants, and the number of women and underrepresented minority short listed candidates.

If a Search Plan was developed and approved, the Hiring Recommendations Report should indicate how each step in the plan was followed.

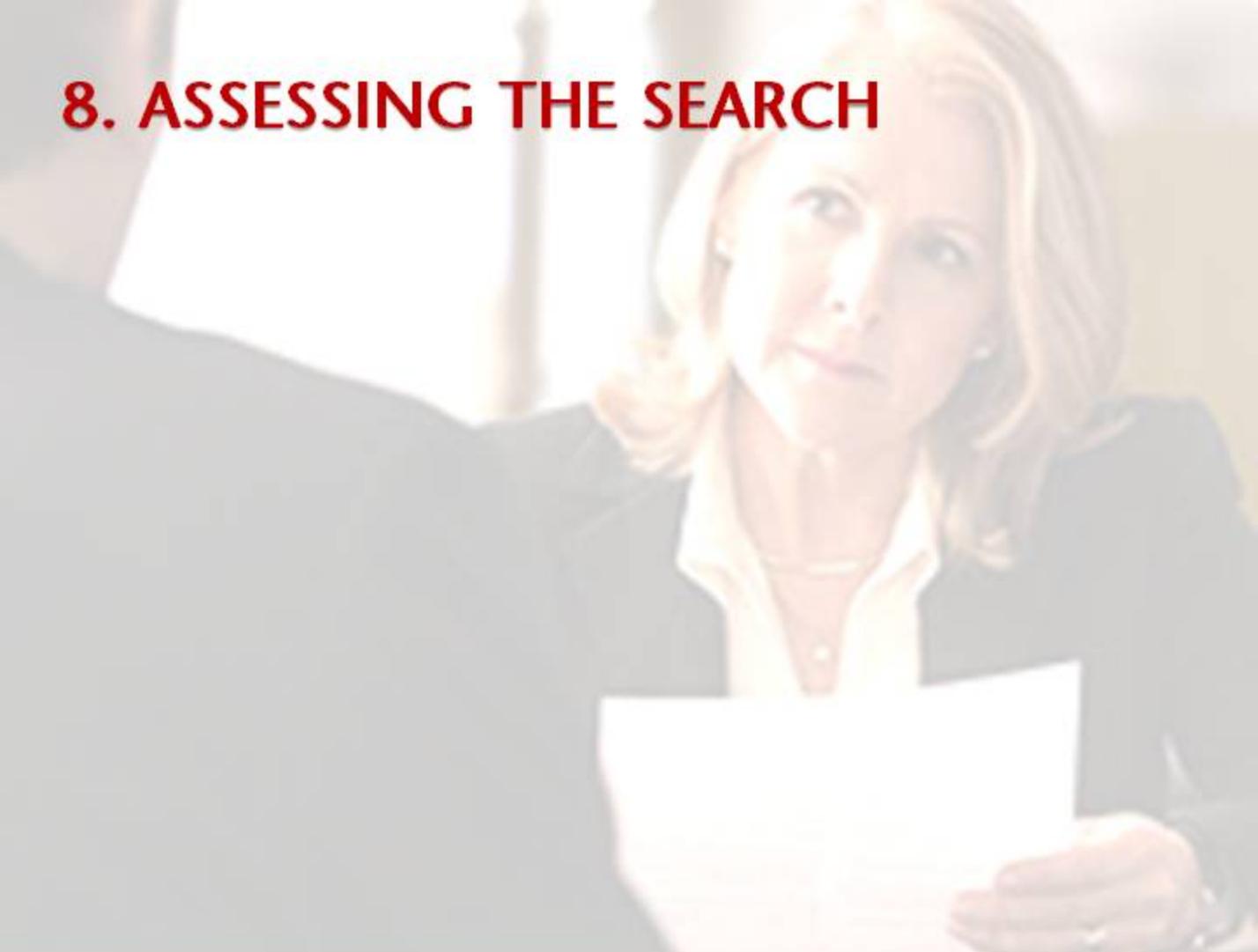
7. REACHING CONSENSUS

Submitting the Hiring Recommendations Report:

In cases where consensus cannot be reached within the Search Committee, dissenting Search Committee members may submit a minority report to the Dean, via the Department Chairperson. *

The Department Chairperson's final recommendations to the dean should be consistent with the P&T Committee vote and should reflect the Search Committee's recommendations and the departmental consensus. *

8. ASSESSING THE SEARCH

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored collared shirt, is looking down at a white document she is holding. She has a serious, focused expression. The background is blurred, suggesting an office setting.

After the hire is made, the Department Chairperson may want to take time to evaluate the overall success of the search process in meeting both the department's research and teaching goals and the broader goals of the NJIT strategic plan. In particular, a candidate declined the university's offer, the Chairperson may want to follow up, find out why, and determine what, if anything, future search committees might do differently.

Similarly, if the applicant pool and/or short list did not contain a representative sample of women and minority applicants, the Chairperson may want to determine what could have been done differently prior to and during the search.