

**Common Views On Diversity In Hiring – And Some Responses**  
**(From: Guidelines for Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce,**  
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Previous search committee chairs have sometimes heard the following, or similar, statements from their search committee members and other faculty in their departments. These views may be raised during your discussions of diversity. Some suggestions for responding to such statements are provided below:

- “I am fully in favor of diversity, but I don’t want to sacrifice quality for diversity.” No one wants to or recommends sacrificing quality for diversity; indeed, no qualified minority/female candidate wants to be considered on the basis of diversity alone. The search committee should be responsible not only for finding and including highly qualified minority and female candidates, but also for ensuring that the candidates and the department/university in general know that they were selected on the basis of merit.
- “We have to focus on hiring the ‘best.’” True. But what is the best? If we do not actively recruit a diverse pool of candidates, how will we know we have attracted the best possible candidates to apply? What are the criteria for the “best?” What is “best” for the department? The University? The students? Diverse faculty and staff members will bring new and different perspectives, interest, and research questions that can enhance knowledge, understanding, and academic excellence in any field. Diverse and excellent faculty and staff members can help attract and retain students from underrepresented groups. Diverse faculty and staff members can enhance the educational experience of all students—minority and majority, alike. Interacting with diverse faculty and staff offers all students valuable lessons about the increasingly diverse world in which we live, and lessons about society, cultural differences, value systems, etc.
- “There are no women/minorities in our field, or no qualified women/minorities.” Though women and minorities may be scarce in some fields or professions, it is rarely or never the case that there are none. The search committee, as part of its efforts to build its pool, must actively seek out qualified women and minority candidates.
- “Minority candidates would not want to come to our campus.” The search committee should not make such decisions for the candidates, but should let the candidates decide if the campus and/or community are a good match for them. The search committee should show potential candidates how they might fit into our campus, provide them with resources for finding out more about our campus and community, and help them make connections to individuals and groups who may share their interests, race, ethnicity, etc.
- “The scarcity of faculty of color in the sciences means that few are available, those who are available are in high demand, and we can’t compete.” In a recent study of the recipients of prestigious Ford Fellowships, all of whom are minorities, the majority, 54%, were not aggressively pursued for faculty positions despite holding postdoctoral research appointments for up to six years after finishing their degrees. Only 11% of scholars of color were simultaneously

recruited by several institutions, thus, the remaining 89% were not involved in “competitive bidding wars.”