



GUIDELINES

WRITING MISSION-AND-CULTURALLY-SENSITIVE

POSITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

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WRITING MISSION AND CULTURALLY-SENSITIVE POSITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

MISSION – SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

The boilerplate description of the University included in every position announcement highlights LMU's Catholic identity and Jesuit-Marymount traditions. It underscores our desire to attract professionally outstanding faculty who will share our mission, including our commitment to building an intercultural community.

As this standard language implies, all searches are expected to yield new hires that have a good “fit” as regards their understanding of Loyola Marymount University's religious identity and their support for its mission. But sometimes departments realize it is not enough to be content simply with a good mission fit. Beyond that, it can be important to attract candidates capable of making specific contributions to the Catholic intellectual/artistic tradition at LMU. In this regard, the following comments by Peter Steinfels are apposite:

Probably the most obvious of the questions that any Catholic college or university might ask itself in the process of concretely examining identity and mission [is]: what is being taught? Are the catalogue of courses; the core curriculum; the research interests that faculty share with both graduates and undergraduates, with their peers and the public; the programs of professional education . . .—are any of these in any significant way distinct, distinct in any significant *Catholic* way, from what might be offered in a corresponding state or secular institution?

Andrew Greeley has argued that both at the research level and in undergraduate courses, there should be an emphasis, though not an exclusive emphasis, on Catholic aspects, themes, and topics—in history, social theory, literature, art, spirituality, ethnic studies, political science, and philosophy—and areas of interest not likely to be available elsewhere and by no means limited to the discipline of theology. . .

If the answer to “What is being taught?” turns out to be “Nothing significantly different than in corresponding secular schools,” there is clearly a problem of Catholic identity. Catholic identity must be centered in the Catholic university's intellectual life, and not assigned exclusively to campus ministry Catholic identity should somehow, even if indirectly, pervade the curriculum of the university as a whole. (*A People Adrift: The Crisis of the Roman Catholic Church in America* [New York, 2003], pp.149-50)

Echoing these sentiments, John T. McGreevy, Chair of the History Department at the University of Notre Dame, has written that “surely one responsibility of the faculty at a Catholic university is to cultivate possible areas of expertise that resonate with the long, rich heritage of Catholic Christianity” (*Commonweal*, September 28, 2007, p.8).

Examples of Mission-Sensitive Language

It is important for every department to consider whether, how and to what extent its discipline invites academic focus on what McGreevy has called “the long, rich history of Catholic Christianity.” When the departmental self-study that takes place prior to a search reveals an opportunity to introduce or enhance such a focus, appropriate signals should be included in the position announcement. The examples that follow are offered by way of suggestion:

- Candidates who desire to contribute to the broad Catholic intellectual and artistic tradition are especially encouraged to apply.
- Strong candidates for this position [e.g., in history, literature, or the social sciences] will bring sensitivity to the independent cultural role of religion.
- The ideal candidate for this position will be knowledgeable in the area of Catholic social teaching.
- Our department is strongly committed to the mission of the University and has a special concern for issues of social justice and the dialogue between faith and culture.
- Besides teaching in their area of specialization, _____ department faculty have opportunities to list courses in interdisciplinary-minor programs such as Catholic Studies and Jewish Studies.

In addition to the mission-sensitive language above, each position announcement must include either the short or long version of the Loyola Marymount University Boilerplate (see Appendix J).

CULTURALLY- SENSITIVE LANGUAGE

The Department

It is important to inform potential applicants about the diversity of the faculty and majors. Examples are listed below.

- The Department of Music has a diverse group of 100 majors including 50% European American, 15% African American, 16% Asian/Pacific Islander, 15% Latino, and 4% Native American. Fifty-six percent of our majors are female; 44% are male. The diverse faculty represents the ethnic groups present in the student body and the United States.
- The Department of Physician Assistant Education at Saint Louis University is one of the first 2 in the country and enjoys a solid reputation as a leader in the field of PA Education. The program mission and philosophy reflect the faculty's commitment to excellence in teaching, research and service. Our diverse faculty offer a dynamic curriculum designed to prepare graduates for cutting edge practice in the global environment in which they will work. The program is a Masters Degree curriculum and accepts 34 students each year.

Primary Job Responsibilities

A Department should identify job responsibilities in association with its mission and educational goals. The aim is to inform potential applicants of the Department's genuine interest in them and the expertise they bring to the workplace in helping to achieve a culturally-diverse academic environment.

Responsibilities of a position should be clearly stated. In an instance of broad-based curricula needs, an advertisement might identify the need for a person with the skills necessary to develop courses that incorporate issues of diversity. Another job responsibility might be to work with and advise students representing various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Or, a Department may simply want to have diverse viewpoints represented among its membership to promote academic excellence. These responsibilities may be used in combination when developing an advertisement as noted below in the examples. Examples are listed below.

- Develop a program in Asian-American Psychology.
- Develop training models and curricula designed to reduce physical and mental health risk in ethnically-diverse populations.
- Serve as role models for African-American, Latino, or Native American Students.

Desired Qualifications

Two main requirements in developing job qualifications are: (a) clarity and (b) flexibility. Poorly specified or unclear job qualifications increase the risk that excellent minority or women candidates will be eliminated for undefined reasons, such as that they were "not qualified" as faculty for the Department.

A tendency toward the comfort of homogeneity also results in committees not hiring candidates that do not fit their own model. Moving away from being satisfied with candidates who are most similar to existing faculty to considering candidates that are different involves more expanded and innovative ways of thinking about faculty positions.

This flexibility in thinking about job qualifications is part of understanding and valuing diversity and creates the opportunity for attracting minority applicants who can make significant contributions, initiate new ways of thinking, and introduce more diverse ideologies.

Career paths for minorities and women may vary in comparison to mainstream or European American candidates. Therefore, when developing job qualifications, search committees need to identify characteristics that allow for more varied backgrounds and experiences. This helps to prevent minorities and women who may have less traditional career paths from being eliminated from the pool of viable candidates for a position. Consider the following:

- If a candidate has not had extensive experience, a situation that may be the result of past discriminatory practice, should that rule out his/her ability to perform the job successfully if given the opportunity?
- Can a similar, but not parallel, work history provide enough experience for an applicant to assume a position, even though on paper it may not be immediately apparent?
- Does the candidate have potential that, with support and mentoring, could develop the ingredients of a successful faculty member?

Search committees must be sensitive to differences and guided by this wariness when outlining the important and unique qualifications desired in a job applicant. Although this way of thinking may not be new, its use in developing job qualifications that are later used in the selection and screening process can contribute to broadening the committee's perspective, thus promoting and supporting diversification in the pool of candidates to be considered for a given position.

Qualifications described in the position announcement should focus upon opening the pool to a wide range of applicants, in particular to minority candidates. Use a broader definition of scholarship that encompasses specialties in minority or women issues. Abilities to teach in a number of areas should be the aim in developing the list. A search committee would find it useful to keep in mind that the experiences of minority candidates differ. Some candidates may not mirror the characteristics of majority candidates, but that does not mean that ethnic minorities are less able or less qualified. For example:

- When reviewing research manuscripts and/or research studies, reviewers may consider that traditional experimental matched control research designs might not be possible in research studies involving certain minority neighborhoods or communities.
- A candidate may have discontinued education for awhile to earn money to support finishing graduate school; hence, such time off is not reflective of poor motivation, but rather heightened motivation.
- Search committees must keep focused on the goals of the identified qualifications, which are to determine a person's ability to perform the job responsibilities and assess the contributions he/she can make to the program. In the case of minority and women candidates, the search committee must also assess potential contributions based on the candidate's ethnicity and/or cultural background.

Departmental Needs

The search committee must focus upon identified needs of LMU and the program, and take care not to develop requirements that either exclude minority candidates during the search and screening process or discourage candidates from applying when they read a position announcement. See the examples below.

- Research program that focuses on issues relevant to minority populations.

- Ability to work effectively with diverse populations.
- Preference will be given to candidates who are able to teach courses that integrate diverse content and issues.
- Teaching and/or research area is open, but an emphasis in Inclusive Counseling, Community Counseling, or Counseling At-Risk Groups is preferred.
- Proficiency in one of the following areas is desirable: child clinical, community psychology with emphasis on minority or rural populations.
- Interest, training, and demonstrated expertise in counseling and programming to meet the personal, career, and academic concerns of Latino students.

The Importance of Diversity at LMU

Given LMU's commitment to diversity and interculturalism and consistent with its Catholic/Jesuit/Marymount traditions, position announcements should indicate that a candidate must be committed and able to work effectively within our diverse campus community. See the examples below.

- LMU is committed to diversity in its faculty as well as its student population.
- The LMU community is composed of faculty, staff and students from a wide range of culturally-diverse backgrounds. Applicants should be experienced with and committed to work in and with this diverse population.
- We invite applications for this position from qualified persons who value our mission and share our commitment to diversity and educational equity.
- LMU is committed to enhancing diversity and creating an inclusive learning and working environment.
- The successful candidate will be committed to supporting and enhancing a culturally rich and diverse learning environment.
- Diversity enriches the educational experience of all students. Therefore, we consider diversity at LMU a priority. Providing our students a more diverse learning environment will better prepare them to succeed in an increasingly global society.

The Value Placed Upon Those Who Can Share and Teach Differing Points of View

Another pivotal factor that enhances the attractiveness of a position to minority and women candidates is the use of statements that convey an interest in the contributions that these candidates can make and the impact their work can have on the overall training and goals of the academic program. Normally, the commonly used phrase “women and minorities are encouraged to apply” is limited in its ability to convey the broader messages associated with more direct statements about the contributions that a minority member can bring to a position. Moreover, more specific statements help dispel concerns often associated with affirmative action hires. Take a moment to read the following example of a position announcement. Notice the different ways that the factors discussed have been incorporated to aid in the development of an ethnically-sensitive position announcement.

- The School of Education invites applications for two openings for the position of: assistant/associate professor of School Psychology to begin fall 2001. The University seeks to attract an active, culturally and academically diverse faculty of the highest caliber, skilled in the scholarship of teaching, discovery, application, and integration of knowledge. The University is a doctoral granting public institution that enrolls about 32,000 students, including nearly 14,500 minorities. Twenty-five doctoral programs are offered. The School has been recognized nationally for its leadership in the preparation of educational professionals and as a principal contributor to professional literature. In addition to the Baccalaureate, Master’s, and Ed.D. degrees, a Ph.D. degree is available in five major program areas. The School of Education is fully committed to a culturally diverse faculty and student body. The faculty have identified six mission priorities for the School, which are:
 - (a) work in “at-risk” settings;
 - (b) development of multicultural educational environments that affirm the value of cultural diversity;
 - (c) establishment of formal collaborative partnerships designed to achieve professional impact;
 - (d) development of the School as a learning community;
 - (e) engagement in systematic inquiry; and,
 - (f) development of improved methods of evaluation and research.

Successful candidates will evidence commitment to those priorities and also contribute to the attainment of extramural funding in support of collaborative projects and increased utilization of technologies to improve professional education.

The idea, as demonstrated by this example, is to develop position announcements that convey the value of ethnic diversity and the importance of attracting candidates who bring that added dimension and can facilitate further growth in creating a more culturally and ethnically diverse setting within a department.

LMU as an Atmosphere Where Minority and Women Faculty Can Thrive

Academic Departments should hire more than one or two minority and women faculty to establish an intra-departmental base of support for minority faculty and women members. Candidates do not want to be considered the token minority or woman in a Department and, in some instances, may not want to be the only minority or woman faculty member in the program.

A clear message about the campus climate and the value placed on minority representation in the faculty helps potential applicants anticipate the presence of other minority faculty, who can provide support for dealing with the negative forces of tokenism or be available for discussing shared concerns. Keep in mind, however, that minorities and women can be attracted to a position and a campus even in the absence of a large minority community, student body, and faculty if they perceive the Department to be a supportive environment committed to their interests and wellbeing as prospective faculty members. Examples are listed below.

- LMU aspires to become a leader among its peer institutions in making meaningful and lasting progress in responding to the needs and concerns of minorities and women.
- LMU places a high priority on the creation of an environment supportive of the promotion of minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.
- LMU seeks to create a work environment and organizational culture that reflect the society and community in which it is located and a climate for the success of every employee by appreciating the uniqueness that each one brings to the workplace.

Standard Language to Describe LMU

1. Long Description

Loyola Marymount, founded in 1911, is a comprehensive university in the mainstream of American Catholic higher education. Located on the west side of Los Angeles overlooking the Pacific, LMU is one of the nation's 28 Jesuit colleges and universities and five Marymount institutions. It serves 5400 undergraduates and over 2500 graduate students in the Colleges/Schools of Liberal Arts, Science and Engineering, Business Administration, Communication and Fine Arts, Film and Television, Education, and Law.

Loyola Marymount seeks professionally outstanding applicants who value its mission and share its commitment to academic excellence, the education of the whole person, and the building of a just society. LMU is an equal opportunity institution actively working to promote an intercultural learning community. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. (Visit www.lmu.edu for more information.)

2. Short Description

Loyola Marymount, a comprehensive university in the mainstream of American Catholic higher education, seeks professionally outstanding applicants who value its mission and share its commitment to academic excellence, the education of the whole person, and the building of a just society. LMU is an equal opportunity institution actively working to promote an intercultural learning community. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. (Visit www.lmu.edu for more information.)

CRITERIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

Mission and culturally-sensitive position announcements must be crafted by paying careful attention to the following criteria:

1. Overview of the department
2. Importance of diversity
3. Value placed upon those who can share and teach differing points of view
4. Departmental needs identified in the *Department Review Report*
5. Primary job responsibilities
6. Qualifications for the position
7. Description of an atmosphere where minorities and women faculty can thrive