

## Target of Opportunity Program (TOP) Process

Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) is committed to enhancing its diversity (race, gender/gender-identity, veterans, and disabled persons) among faculty and administrators and is committed to maximizing the opportunity to employ faculty who have achieved national or international distinction. To accomplish these goals, the University uses the Target of Opportunity Program (TOP) for faculty and administrators; classified personnel are NOT eligible for the TOP Process.

### Purpose

The TOP is designed to increase the diversity of faculty and administrators at MSU Denver such that our employees reflect the diversity of our student body and surrounding community. We seek to accomplish this goal by supporting flexible recruiting/hiring procedures. Preference will be given to persons not adequately represented in a department/unit. This Process does not take the place of established appointment processes, but is an alternative to it under circumstances where it is authorized. Its implementation will be determined each year as a result of analysis of the University priorities and budget.

**TOP Categories** - The categories for use of the TOP are:

- **TOP I - Diverse Faculty.** To be used under three circumstances: when there is
  1. Underutilization of diverse faculty (regardless of race, gender, veteran or disabled person) in a particular discipline;
  2. No representation of diverse faculty (regardless of race, gender, veteran, or disabled person) in a particular discipline; or
  3. Little diversity among faculty (regardless of race, gender, veteran or disabled person) in a particular discipline.
- **TOP II - Nationally/Internationally Recognized Faculty.** To be used as an expedient, flexible hiring procedure when the University has the opportunity to hire a nationally/internationally known scholar.
- **TOP III – Diverse Administrators.** To enhance the ethnic, gender, veteran, disabled person and cultural diversity of administrators at MSU Denver.

### Eligibility

- A) Before a TOP search can be initiated, a position line must be available and allocated to the Department/Unit by the Appropriate Vice President or the President.
- B) Candidates must belong to one of the following four classes:<sup>1</sup>
  - 1) **Non-Represented** refers to *no* representation of any race, gender/gender-identity, veterans, or disabled persons in a department or unit.
  - 2) **Underutilized** refers to the *under* representation of any race, gender, veterans, or disabled persons in a department or unit – a condition in which a statistical disparity exists between the percentage of women and/or ethnic minorities, non-minorities, veterans, or disabled in a given segment of the University work force and the percentage of *qualified* women and/or ethnic minorities, non-

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<sup>1</sup> NOTE: Utilization data is available in the Equal Opportunity Office.

minorities, veterans, or disabled persons available for these positions.

- 3) **Veterans and Disabled Persons:**<sup>2</sup> Federal Regulations require that employers be measured against a benchmark “goal” for hiring veterans and people with disabilities. The Department of Labor has set a 7% goal of hiring veterans and persons with disabilities within each established job group.
  - Each applicant must be invited to self-identify as a covered veteran or person with a disability before a hiring decision is made (e.g., with the “application materials for the position”); and
  - Each applicant receiving an offer must be invited to self-identify as a covered veteran or person with a disability after an offer is extended but before the applicant begins working.
- 4) **Special Needs** could include areas where there is a high concentration of ethnic minority majors or courses with a high concentration of ethnic minority students but little ethnic minority faculty. Special needs in consultation with the Equal Opportunity Office as determined by the Provost must be presented on a case-by-case basis.

### **Target of Opportunity Program (TOP) I (Diverse Faculty)**

#### **Purpose**

The TOP I is designed to increase the ethnic, gender, veteran, disabled person and cultural diversity of our faculty. To meet unique hiring opportunities, TOP recruitment/hiring strategies are particularly flexible. While candidates are required to meet the usual high standards of the University as well as to contribute to the unit’s programmatic needs, the process calls for a method of recruitment different from the traditional approach. Only positions that have *not* been advertised can be used for TOP hires. A unit that wishes to conduct a TOP search will initiate inquiries about prospective candidates in the protected class category being sought through professional networks and other information sources. This flexible approach toward identifying potential candidates from underutilized groups should give departments the capacity to act quickly without a long screening process.

#### **Authorization**

To be authorized to hire a faculty using the TOP I, the Dean must demonstrate to the Provost that the position fits under one of four allowable circumstances:

- 1) **Non-Represented** refers to *no* representation of any race, gender/gender-identity, veterans, or disabled persons in a department or unit.
- 2) **Underutilized** refers to the *under* representation of any race, gender, veterans, or disabled persons in a department or unit – a condition in which a statistical disparity exists between the percentage of women and/or ethnic minorities, non-minorities, veterans, or disabled in a given segment of the University work force and the percentage of *qualified* women and/or ethnic minorities, non-minorities, veterans, or disabled persons available for these positions.
- 3) **Veterans and Disabled Persons:**<sup>3</sup> Federal Regulations require that employers be measured against a benchmark “goal” for hiring veterans and people with disabilities. The Department of Labor has set a

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<sup>2</sup> See 41 C.F.R. §§ 60-300 and 60-741 Vietnam War Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (as amended by the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002) and Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

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7% goal of hiring veterans and persons with disabilities within each established job group.

- Each applicant must be invited to self-identify as a covered veteran or person with a disability before a hiring decision is made (e.g., with the “application materials for the position”); and
- Each applicant receiving an offer must be invited to self-identify as a covered veteran or person with a disability after an offer is extended but before the applicant begins working.

- 4) **Special Needs** could include areas where there is a high concentration of ethnic minority majors or courses with a high concentration of ethnic minority students but little ethnic minority faculty. Special needs in consultation with the Equal Opportunity Office as determined by the Provost must be presented on a case-by-case basis.

Since the campus, as a whole, suffers from a lack of diverse faculty in certain areas, candidates from these groups will receive highest priority. Attention will be paid to the individual circumstances of the proposing department. The attached form, “Target of Opportunity Proposal,” is used for justification; the “Checklist for TOP Appointments” should be used for procedural direction.

### **Procedure**

When a TOP-eligible department has identified candidate(s) it wishes using the TOP I process, it will submit to the Dean the candidate(s)’ name, a *Curriculum Vitae*, and a completed copy of the “Target of Opportunity Proposal.” In addition, external letters of recommendation and the traditional documentation (i.e., verification of degree via confirmation letter from graduate school) will be required. At the Dean’s level, the steps taken will be the same as in the traditional hiring process. Each Dean (screening committee(s) are optional) will screen the proposals from his or her unit and forward materials, accompanied by the department Chair’s ranking and comments, to the Provost.

## **Target of Opportunity Program (TOP) II (Nationally/Internationally Recognized Faculty)**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of a TOP II Search is to improve the representation of outstanding faculty who have achieved national or international distinction.

### **Authorization**

The authorization and search procedure outlined below occurs after the Provost has given authorization for a search. Colleges, Schools, or Departments seeking to hire a TOP II candidate must be able to demonstrate s/he has a national or international reputation of excellence. See Procedure for more information.

### **Procedure**

The procedure for this type of search is flexible in that a pool of one is allowed and authorization for this type of search is based on the qualifications of the particular candidate. Therefore, the authorization and search procedures collapse into an analysis of a particular candidate. The Dean must demonstrate to the Provost that the candidate has a national/international reputation. Justification must minimally include

- Demonstration of excellence in teaching (within the last seven years) in higher education as a full time

faculty member.

- Demonstration of publications (within the last seven years) in the discipline-recognized most authoritative periodical(s).
- Demonstration of presentations (within the last seven years) in the discipline-recognized most authoritative conference(s).
- Demonstration of having met departmentally set criteria for proof of national/international reputation with those criteria approved by first the Dean and then the appropriate Vice President.

### **Target of Opportunity Program (TOP) III (Diverse Administrators)**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of a TOP III Process is to enhance the ethnic, gender, veterans, disabled person and cultural diversity of administrators at MSU Denver.

#### **Authorization**

The authorization and search procedure outlined occurs after the appropriate Vice President has given authorization for a search.

#### **Procedure**

The procedure for this type of search is flexible in that the department can recommend to the hiring authority/AVP/VP an applicant for appointment using the TOP III Process. To be authorized to hire an administrator using the TOP III Process, the hiring authority (i.e., Directors, Dean's, AVP's, etc.) must demonstrate to their respective Vice President or President that the position fits under one of the four allowable circumstances outlined above. Attention will be paid to the individual circumstances of the proposing department. Should you have any further questions concerning the above plan, please contact Dr. Percy A. Morehouse, Jr., Equal Opportunity Director and Assistant to the President at 303-556-4746 or [morehoup@msudenver.edu](mailto:morehoup@msudenver.edu).