Target of Opportunity Hiring Program  
(ToO Mechanism, ToO New Lines)

“Boston University’s founders opened its doors to all students without regard to religion, race, or gender. Building and sustaining a vibrant community of scholars, students, and staff remains essential to our mission of contributing to, and preparing students to thrive in, an increasingly interconnected world.”

Rationale

Boston University is committed to developing an extraordinary, world-class faculty, which requires and that actively reflects a significantly increased breadth of cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity.

In service of this goal, we have developed the Target of Opportunity (ToO) Hiring Program, which comprises two distinct tools: the ToO Mechanism and the ToO New Lines Program. The goal of the ToO Hiring Program is to provide nimbleness and flexibility in hiring and to allow academic leadership to capitalize on potential hires that represent an extraordinary opportunity for the University to support the above stated goals.

Program Definitions

- The Target of Opportunity Mechanism provides much needed flexibility and allows hiring departments that have been allocated a search under the existing process to identify, target, and recruit faculty who support the University’s diversity goals. The mechanism encourages hiring deans to reallocate anticipated vacant lines (e.g. from upcoming retirements) within their school/college to make hires that pose extraordinary value to the University, including in situations where bridging funds are needed from the Provost. Although some elements of this mechanism have been in practice for several years, this document provides transparency and additional details.

There are a small number of departments within BU that year after year are consistently in “search mode.” Those departments should be in perpetual “search mode” with this mechanism in mind. That said, the Target of Opportunity Mechanism will only be authorized in cases where a candidate emerges that provides a truly extraordinary and

1 From the Boston University Diversity Statement
highly unusual opportunity to support the University’s strategic goals of developing a diverse, world-class faculty.

- **The ToO New Lines Program** is strictly related to the creation of new faculty slots and is used in the very rare case when a candidate emerges that provides a truly extraordinary and highly unusual opportunity to support the University’s strategic goals of developing a diverse, world-class faculty.

The ToO New Lines Program should not be considered a method by which to increase the department’s full-time equivalency (FTE) faculty, particularly in relation to ongoing searches. Rather, it is meant to address nearly insurmountable challenges posed by the field/pipeline and/or as an opportunity to hire a candidate that brings nearly incalculable value by virtue of their stature and/or potential to the University. We therefore believe this part of the ToO New Lines Program will be rarely employed.

### Eligibility

The Target of Opportunity Hiring Program is designed to increase diversity primarily within the ranks of unmodified faculty. However, in exceptional circumstances, lecturer and modified positions may be considered.

### Program Structure

**The Target of Opportunity Mechanism:**

Because the Target of Opportunity Mechanism is *a means* by which to achieve a hire under varying constraints and realities on the ground, it is much more multi-faceted than is the ToO New Lines Program and is therefore varied in structure. The most fundamental aspect of this instrument is the fact that the line needed for the hire is *pre-existing* and can be allocated within the school or college. The mechanism provides hiring units with the opportunity to use existing lines in a more flexible way in order to elicit a result in hiring in accord with our commitments as stated above.

Examples of how the ToO Mechanism might be employed:

- **Reallocation of Existing Lines:** An ongoing search identifies two candidates as finalists, one of whom provides an extraordinary opportunity to diversify the faculty. The dean might reallocate existing unfilled lines within the school/college to make two hires as the outcome from one approved search. The ToO mechanism in this case is triggered *after* the search process has already been undertaken and a final conclusion is close-at-hand. Note that this mechanism makes it obvious that lines are held at the level of the school, not at the level of a department or program. This mechanism has been successfully deployed for the past four years.
• **Bridge To Retirement:** An ongoing search identifies two candidates as finalists, one of whom provides an extraordinary opportunity for the University. The school has no unfilled lines. However, there is a formally documented retirement that will provide a vacant line in two years. The dean may (a) request to fill the line two years early using the ToO mechanism, or (b) request support from the Office of the Provost to help to bridge the salary needed until the retirement releases the salary on the line. This mechanism does not increase the number of lines in the school or college in the long term but it does allow us to leverage future vacancies to hire excellent candidates who provide an extraordinary opportunity for the University.

• **Silent Phase/2-Year Search:** A department has requested and has been granted a new search that uses an existing line from within the school or college. However, the department’s last two searches have not netted as much diversity as exists in the national pool, and so the department seeks to undertake other programmatic efforts to deepen the pool such as University Scholars Programs, conference and meeting attendance, and engaging in substantive national outreach. As a byproduct of that, in their faculty search proposals to the deans, departments should request permission to:
  
  o Host an extended search, using the first year to undertake strategic actions that will broaden their networks and ensure a more diverse pool; and
  
  o Hold the national search in the second year, with the goal of significantly increasing diversity in the pool.

If an extraordinary candidate that supports the strategic objectives articulated above is identified in their first-year endeavors, the Dean and Provost commit to using the ToO mechanism to allow the hire. (Please see details for implementation under “Process” below.)

The **ToO New Lines Program**:

While these are new lines and are therefore unencumbered by previous field, department or school/college affiliations, the University’s key strategic goals regarding the academic program and growth will inform its willingness and ability to authorize net additions through the ToO Program.

When a dean identifies a potential ToO candidate, the dean should undertake a thorough assessment of the school/college’s existing unfilled lines and/or future retirements. In cases where an extraordinary candidate has been identified and there is not a current search being undertaken by the department, the University will always seek to work with the dean to first identify opportunities to move the proposal from the allocation of a new line to the use of an existing line. This would necessarily move the proposal from being a new slot (ToO New Lines Program) to using an existing or anticipated slot via the mechanism (ToO Mechanism).

Once the dean determines that the ToO Program is the appropriate course of action to pursue and is in strategic alignment with the academic needs of the school/college, the dean should:
- Initiate a preliminary conversation with the Senior Associate Provost and the Associate Provost for Diversity & Inclusion, providing them with as much information about the candidate and the circumstances as is possible without engaging in a formal query to the candidate. The Associate Provosts will confer with the Provost and return guidance as to whether the University will support the dean’s proposal.

- If the Office of the Provost authorizes the ToO Program, the dean should work with the department and appoint staff as they would in a traditional hiring process. (Please see additional details for implementation under “Process” below.)

### Funding

Because of the variable nature of this program, the Office of the Provost will work with the deans to support the ToO Program on a case-by-case basis.

### Process

**ToO Mechanism Process:**

In cases where an ongoing national search or a search that is in a “silent phase” identifies a possible Target of Opportunity candidate who represents an extraordinary opportunity for the University, the following should occur:

1. The search Chair should contact the appropriate dean (e.g. associate dean of faculty affairs, dean of the school/college, etc.) within the school/college and discuss the opportunity, including why, in the cases of ongoing searches, if the candidate poses such an extraordinary opportunity, they are not considered the top candidate in the search (please note, this will be a high bar and the Office of the Provost will ask this question first);
   a. In the case of the associate dean being engaged in the preliminary discussion, the associate dean should speak to the dean for clarification and direction about possibilities within the school/college and the dean’s strategic vision as the matter may end at this point without consultation with the Office of the Provost.

2. If there is agreement in the office of the dean that the candidate represents an extraordinary opportunity for the school/college and is in accord with the strategic direction of the school/college, the dean or the dean’s designee (after consultation) should contact both the Senior Associate Provost and the Associate Provost for Diversity & Inclusion in the Office of the Provost to discuss the opportunity, consult and align support, and then discuss potential next steps;

3. The Office of the Provost will then work with the dean to identify resources within the school/college as a first and primary means by which to pursue the hire using the mechanism. Two possible outcomes may emerge from this stage;
a. If school/college resources are identified, the dean and the search chair should undertake discussions within the department first, and then with the candidate to ascertain their continued interest in joining the faculty of Boston University.

   i. If the candidate is still interested, the department should proceed with its normal faculty hiring process.

b. In the case that no existing school/college resources exist, the Office of the Provost, in consultation with the dean, will determine if the opportunity is of exceptional importance, possibly moving the opportunity to a “new line” from which the following will take place:

   i. In the case that a new line is authorized by the Office of the Provost, the search process will proceed following the normal search and evaluation process from that point forward.

   ii. In the case that a new line is not authorized by the Office of the Provost, the search process regarding the potential target of opportunity will be terminated.

ToO New Lines Process:

1. When a candidate of exceptional opportunity emerges (most often a senior hire, but occasionally emerging scholars who are truly extraordinary may emerge), the order of inquiry should follow traditional hierarchies within the school or college. For instance: Faculty => Department Chair => Associate Dean => Dean => Office of the Provost or an iteration appropriate to the department and school/college structure.

2. Departments interested in pursuing a ToO New Lines should:

   - Identify potential candidates;

   - Make informal inquiries to potential candidates to ascertain availability, interest, and suitability [this could include inviting the individual to campus to present a lecture or colloquium, for example]; and

   - Secure preliminary information such as curricula vitae, evidence of scholarship, and any materials that will help the department and dean formulate an informed proposal. [Departments should be clear with prospective candidates that the department is investigating the possibility of engaging a ToO process and that such investigations are contingent on many factors, not least among them is the relative rarity with which new lines are allocated.]

3. The department should then submit a written proposal to the dean that shall include:
• A departmental rationale that includes a detailed explanation of the ways in which the candidate represents an exceptional opportunity and is in strategic alignment with the department’s long-term goals, the curricular impact of the proposed candidate’s addition to the department, how the candidate adds to the overall diversity of the college, and a 5-year departmental plan.

4. If the dean is in support of the application, the dean should then write a shorter proposal for the Office of the Provost outlining the ways in which this potential hire strengthens the dean’s strategic vision for the school/college, a short review of the candidate’s productivity, and a thoughtful discussion addressing the value of adding faculty members to the department in question.

5. Deans will submit their proposal to the Senior Associate Provost and the Associate Provost for Diversity & Inclusion who will then consult with the University Provost and respond to the proposal in a timely manner.

6. If approved, the Senior Associate Provost will notify the dean, associate dean, and department chair of the decision and instruct the department with the approved proposal to proceed.

7. The department shall undertake the process of engaging a non-competitive search and create an evaluation committee. It would be understood that any such search would have only one purpose: to determine whether the candidate in question should be offered a tenure-track position at the University.

8. Once the department is authorized and the evaluation committee is established, the chair of the evaluation committee should inform the prospective candidate that their candidacy has become formal and request from the candidate a placement file, which should include a c.v., letter of application, letters of recommendation, teaching philosophy, and if possible, student evaluations, etc. The department should then invite the candidate to campus for a formal interview, which may include meetings with individual faculty, a professional presentation, lunch with students, dinner with departmental members, and other opportunities to interact with the academic community.

9. Subsequent to the on-campus visit, the search committee would submit a formal recommendation to the dean, and the dean would then determine whether the candidate possesses the kind of excellence and high potential as a teacher/scholar required of all tenure-track appointments at the University.

10. Once the dean has determined whether to hire the candidate, the Office of the Provost should be informed of the dean’s recommendation and provided with the candidate’s packet for review, so that it may provide ultimate authorization for the offer to be made or not.