

Call for Applications: STRIDE at UTK

The University's STRIDE Committee is excited to announce that it is currently seeking new members. Those interested in joining are invited to review the information below to learn more about this opportunity.

Background and History

The purpose of STRIDE (Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence) is to revitalize the University of Tennessee Knoxville's efforts to hire and retain a diverse faculty by using peer-to-peer instruction about academic research on bias and diversity. The Committee was formed in 2013 by the Provost's office. The inspiration for STRIDE comes from an NSF ADVANCE project at the University of Michigan. The first academic year (2013-2014) was used by the initial committee of 12 members to study many of the most important peer-reviewed published papers on diversity in order to generate material for a set of STRIDE workshops for members in faculty search committees. The material for the workshops followed the University of Michigan's curriculum fairly closely, but over the years the UTK committee has generated its own material and by now nearly all of the content has been generated locally. The STRIDE workshops started in September 2014, and typically STRIDE holds 15-20 workshops annually. In 2018-19, STRIDE developed an additional workshop, STRIDE 2, for members of faculty search committees who had initially attended a STRIDE workshop more than 4 years ago. Whereas STRIDE 1 is primarily focused on diversity and equity issues and recommendations closely related to the faculty search process, STRIDE 2 focuses on issues and recommendations related to the retention of underrepresented groups and the climate in academics units.

Committee Member Responsibilities

By bringing together faculty from various colleges across campus, STRIDE is an opportunity for those committed to enhancing diversity and inclusion to deepen both their understanding of the various issues that currently exist at the University of Tennessee as well as the resources available to help combat those problems. Because STRIDE is committed to improving diversity in hiring and retention at the University of Tennessee, it is work that can be quite impactful and, thus, extremely rewarding.

At the same time, STRIDE is a work-intensive committee. STRIDE members are responsible for giving priority to their duties as Committee members and only teaching duties, search committee work and similar important work duties can have priority over their STRIDE commitments. Each member is responsible for attending the bi-weekly, two-hour STRIDE committee meetings and for making a good faith effort to schedule their teaching efforts so that they do not interfere with the STRIDE meetings. Each member is also expected to be familiar with the STRIDE curriculum as defined by the content of the two STRIDE workshops and, at a minimum, have studied the academic papers supporting the material used in the workshops.

All members, except first-year members, are expected to conduct 4-6 STRIDE 1 or STRIDE 2 workshops during each academic year. They should be familiar with conducting these workshops either in-person or online, usually using Zoom.

First-year STRIDE committee members are responsible for studying the material covered during both the STRIDE 1 and STRIDE 2 workshops. The first-year members are also responsible for attending both a STRIDE 1 and a STRIDE 2 workshop as an observer prior to facilitating their first workshop. First-year members will normally not be workshop facilitators during their initial year in STRIDE but are expected to be available as facilitators from the second year of membership. However, for their first couple of workshops they will be paired with more experienced STRIDE members, who will be responsible for helping them and giving them feedback on their performance as facilitators.

In addition, each new committee member is expected to serve a 3-year term. At the end of that 3-year term, the committee member has to decide whether they will fully commit to another 3-year term.

Committee Composition

The STRIDE committee consists of UTK tenure-track faculty members in order to provide the peer-to-peer instruction that is fundamental to STRIDE's purpose. In general, faculty serving in full-time administration cannot be members, but exceptions can be made if it is found to be in STRIDE's interest in order to fulfil its purpose. Historically STRIDE has found that 11-13 members is an optimal size for the Committee, because it allows for a sufficiently large set of knowledgeable workshop facilitators while also allowing for meaningful interactions in a manageable small group.

The STRIDE committee aims to have a composition that reflects the UTK faculty with respect to gender, race, sexual orientation, and other areas of diversity broadly defined. Although STRIDE welcomes applicants from diverse backgrounds, all applicants should have a commitment to diversity and inclusion. STRIDE is also particularly interested in those who bring expertise in a variety of areas important for its mission: academic research on diversity, teaching about diversity issues, peer instruction both in-person and online, interacting with faculty that might not value the importance of diversity, development of workshop material, and legal issues related to diversity.

Application Procedures

Those interested in applying are invited to send the following materials to STRIDE@utk.edu:

- A letter, detailing your interest in joining STRIDE;
- A current CV.

Applications are due April 7, 2021.

Potential applicants are invited to direct any questions to current members of the Committee, and that list can be found here: <https://stride.utk.edu/committee-members/>