Best Practices

RECRUITING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
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To better connect with, recruit, and develop an inclusive culture for students with disabilities, Carol Glazer, president of the National Organization on Disability (NOD), and Kara Leonard, program coordinator in Rochester Institute of Technology’s office of cooperative education and career services, encourage employers to:

• Include candidates with disabilities as part of their overall diversity recruiting strategy. Many employers focus solely on gender and ethnic diversity when developing their diversity-related recruiting goals; however, employees with disabilities can play an important and beneficial role in broadening the diversity within a company.

• Feature employees with disabilities and/or disability-related employee resource groups on the company’s website and in marketing materials.

• Make sure their recruiting, hiring, and accommodation policies and processes are disability friendly. Little things like providing application materials in alternative formats (for example, in large font or in Braille) and making sure the company’s website is accessible can go a long way in making candidates with disabilities feel welcomed.

• Create an employee resource group and/or a mentoring program for employees with disabilities.

• Create a centralized accommodation budget.
• Provide training to managers on the benefits of hiring employees with disabilities and to all team members so they feel comfortable working with colleagues with disabilities.

• Offer disability etiquette interviewing skills training for their recruiters and hiring managers.

• Collaborate with representatives in campus career services and/or disability services offices to establish connections with this population.

• Request assistance in communicating to students (through e-mail, campus websites, and social media) that the employer is disability friendly and has job opportunities available.

• Participate in employment programs targeted to job seekers with disabilities and post job opportunities on databases targeted to job seekers with disabilities.

• Join professional associations that focus on disability-related employment issues and can provide connections to candidates with disabilities such as Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD).

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