Search Committee Process
Best Practices

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Agenda

• Helpful Resources
• Role of the Search Chair
• Role of the Search Committee
• Starting the Search
• Evaluating the candidates
• Hosting Interviews
• Documentation Retention
Role of Compliance in Equal Opportunity & Recruiting

In accordance with **System Policy 08.01, Civil Rights Protections and Compliance**, 

- Prairie View A&M University will provide equal opportunity for employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and members are encouraged to develop and maintain programs for building diversity in potential candidate pools.
The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC or Commission) is the federal agency responsible for enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability, or genetic information.

- Title VII was passed in June 1964 and signed into law by President Johnson on July 12, 1964;

- Prohibits intentional discrimination in all employment decisions

More than 53 years later, the public continues to rely on the Commission to carry out its responsibility to bring justice and equal opportunity to the workplace.
Office of Federal contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) monitors compliance towards Executive Order 11246, as amended.

**Requirement** = All federal contractors must do an annual Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) to:
- demonstrate efforts toward affirmative action
- determine whether employment practices are potentially discriminatory

OFCCP conducts compliance evaluations (audits) of Federal contractors to ascertain their compliance with equal opportunity and non–discrimination requirements in their employment practices.

A compliance evaluation is – a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of each aspect of hiring and employment practices, policies and conditions, including such things as hiring, training, employment benefits, promotion, etc.
PVAMU
Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity

- Provide leadership in the development, evaluation and coordination of Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/ADA and Diversity plans and programs for all employees;
- Provide advice and assistance to faculty, staff and students regarding discrimination;
- Conduct investigations of harassment and discrimination complaints and facilitate resolutions;
- Act as liaison to federal and state agencies
- Implementation of Educational Training Programs
- Monitor search and hiring process
- Review and Revise Discrimination and Harassment Policies
Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity - Goals

- To prevent employment practices that discriminate against applicants and employees on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity.

- To ensure compliance with applicable federal and stated equal employment regulations

- To ensure that reasonable ADA accommodations are made for individuals with disabilities, when such accommodations are requested

- Ensure a learning environment and workplace where every student, employee and applicant knows he or she is valued as an individual and is treated with respect and dignity without regard to protected class status of: (race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity)
Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity - Goals

• Dedicated to ensuring a discrimination free workplace and learning environment where every employee and student is valued as an individual and treated with respect and dignity.

• Through a proactive approach of implementing awareness training and educational materials and programs to prevent discrimination and sexual harassment.
Best Practices
SUCCESSFUL SEARCHES

• Successful searches begin with successful search committee members ~ trained, dedicated and experienced individuals.

• Search committees succeed when they build highly qualified, diverse applicant pools.

• Highly qualified diverse applicant pools lead to the potential for outstanding hires which, in turn are natural recruitment vehicles for the next searches.
Best Practices
SEARCH COMMITTEE METHODS

- **SORT**
  - Advertise & wait
  - *Sort thru applications
  - *Unoriginal, same ad in traditional posting locations

- **SEARCH**
  - *Reach out to your professional organizations
  - **DOCUMENT** all personal outreach efforts/activities and contacts as part of the search process in the search file
  - *Actively, continuously search for applicants
  - *Aggressive, creative outreach
  - *Ask colleagues at other institutions for names of promising candidates

• The job of the *Search Committee* is **to conduct an active search**, **NOT to passively wait for release of applications**.
It’s mostly dependent on committee members availability and level of commitment!

TIP:
- Review timeline at the first meeting to ensure everyone begins with realistic expectations and can commit to the schedule.
Best Practices
HIRING AUTHORITY’S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

• Searches are most successful when hiring authority has a diversity plan to guide the search committee;

• Sample diversity plan initiatives to recruit and retain underrepresented groups;
  
  ➢ Invite minority and women scholars to present symposia; serve as visiting scholars, etc.
  
  ➢ Provide mentoring and other resources for junior faculty, exp. Women and minority faculty;

  ➢ Build cultural competency into clinical and education experiences;

  ➢ Build diversity into curriculum;
Best Practices
SEARCH COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

- The composition of the search committee is critical to its success.
- Involve diverse people with fresh ideas and diverse viewpoints;
- Generally (5) members, but may be smaller or larger
- May identify other individuals to evaluate candidates during the interview process;
- Departmental faculty and staff not on the search committee still play a critical role in the search process, if possible include them.
Best Practices
SEARCH COMMITTEE COMPOSITION
(cont.)

• Include women and minorities whenever possible, you may use community members.

• Include members with track records for hiring underrepresented groups and/or educated in affirmative action policies and procedures.

• **RULE**

  ❖ The appointing/Hiring Authority/Supervisor is **NOT** a search committee member.
Best Practices
Hiring Authority’s Charge to Committee
First Meeting

- Describe title, job description, essential and preferred criteria *(make sure these are in the job description and evaluation criteria)*

- Describe position’s scope, challenges and opportunities;

- Give realistic timeframes;

- Preferred # of finalist, format of finalist feedback *(ex: ranked, random)*

- Committee support *(administrative assistance, travel budget, etc.)*
Best Practices
Hiring Authority’s Charge to Committee
First Meeting (cont.)

• **TIP:**

• Particularly for high level, leadership positions—invite department leaders, affiliate partners, and other interested parties to share their views about the position.

• This gives committee members a better understanding about the position, and the qualities necessary for successful candidates.
Best Practices

SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR’S RESPONSIBILITIES

• Search chair is appointed by the hiring authority

• Should be a person at the same or higher level than the vacant position

• Search chair must ensure proper recordkeeping

• Search chair determines committee process, including voting (or) consensus for decisions
Best Practices

SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR’S RESPONSIBILITIES (cont.)

- Serves as liaison between hiring authority and committee
- Ensures committee charge is carried out
- Keeps hiring authority informed
Best Practices
SEARCH COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

• Be an active recruiter

• Consistently and fairly evaluate all applicants

• Show up at meetings!

• All search committee members share responsibility to attract diverse pool applicants and ensure fair and equitable treatment of all applicants.
Best Practices

Search Committee (Staff) Responsibilities

• Ensure hiring process is followed

• Schedule committee meetings and applicant interviews

• Maintain documentation

• Maintain applicant confidentiality
Best Practices

“CONFIDENTIALITY”

• All discussions among committee members are confidential. Be particularly careful about internal applicants;

• Applicant names and material should be kept in a secure location.

• Applicants are confidential until they reach “finalist” level.

• Confidentiality breeches should be disclosed to the committee chair immediately.
Best Practices

SELECTION PROCESS

1. Develop evaluation process
2. Conduct initial applicant evaluation
3. Develop interview format (ex: telephone, skype, zoom, face to face, etc.)
   (same interview format for each applicant)
4. Develop standardized interview questions
5. Conduct interviews
6. Submit recommendations to hiring authority
7. Hiring Authority conducts (work) reference checks
8. Hiring Authority selects finalist
Best Practices

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Must be based on job description, consistent with advertisements

- Must be written, available to committee members, and saved as part of the committee search process materials

- Does not need to be numerical – can sort applicants into groups and rank order;
Best Practices

**TAMUS Policy**

- All committee members should be up to date with required trainings (before) reviewing any applicant materials;
  - *Creating a Discrimination Free Workplace* – (Every 2 years)
  - *Effective Hiring Practices* – (Every 12 months)

- Committee should establish selection/evaluation criteria and scoring process (before) reviewing any applicant materials.
Internal Applicants:

- Should meet the same level of qualifications as external applicants
- Should not be given “courtesy interviews” – if they do not meet the minimum qualifications. It raises unrealistic expectations for internal applicants

RULE

- Internal applicants should not participate in the evaluation process of other applicants
Best Practices

INTERVIEW FORMAT

Formal interviews: are conducted by the search committee and sometimes additional evaluators:

- Must be consistent for all applicants;
- May conduct phone or skype interviews first, to determine the number of in-person interviews;
- Must ask the same standard set of questions of all applicants, but can ask varying follow up questions depending on applicants’ answers and/or experience/education;
- Develop standardized questions that cover essential job functions and desired skills/abilities
- Use interview questions to probe ‘potential’ using ‘what if’ questions;
- Probe actual behaviors (vs. theoretical responses) by using scenario questions such as “tell us how you would...”
Committee members who miss some or all of the interviews should not participate in discussion of rank ordering of applicants, but may provide comments on those interviews that they attended.

Typically interviews are best conducted within 45 minutes with 8-10 questions and time for the applicant to ask questions at the end.
Best Practices

WHEN AN INTERVIEWER IS NOT A SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBER (ex. general sessions)

- If the outside person is being used for evaluation, make sure s/he is briefed on the job description AND the evaluation criteria;

- These additional interviewers/evaluators should adhere to the same rules for interviewing as search committee members must regarding “confidentiality”
• All contact between applicants and search committee members (as well as any outside evaluators) is considered ‘interview time’

• Applicants are always ‘ON’
Best Practices

INTERVIEW FORMAT (cont.)

- Inappropriate interview venues:
  - Sporting events
  - Your home
  - Dinner with spouses
  - Party
UNLAWFUL INTERVIEW TOPICS
(See Unlawful Questions Handout)

- Do not ask about or discuss the following (even if applicants volunteer the information):
  - Age
  - Sexual Orientation
  - Marital status
  - Religion
  - Children (present or future)
  - Ethnicity/culture
  - Veteran status
  - Disability status (except may ask if the applicant can perform the essential functions of the position as listed on the job description and posting.)
Best Practices
Ensuring a Positive Campus Visit

• Arrange for applicants to meet with other faculty of similar interests or backgrounds on campus

• Prepare a ‘welcome packet’ for campus visits (e.g., employee handbooks, school policies, benefits summary, web site info, annual reports, chamber of commerce materials, etc.)

• Use an evaluation form to gather campus input
Best Practices

REFERENCE CHECKING

• Do it!

• Hiring Authority should complete all (work) references for the # of years of experience required for the position.

• Be sure to get the applicants permission.

• Let applicants know when you will be making contact.
Definition of a finalist:

- Candidates that are recommended to the Hiring Authority based on their initial charge to the committee.
- May be more than one name.
Best Practices

WHEN THE SEARCH IS OVER

Search committee should **debrief**

- What worked, what didn’t work?
TAMUS POLICY
RECORDS RETENTION

• Each hiring authority will maintain, in accordance with the respective retention periods in the Texas A&M University System Records Retention Schedule, all employment selection records and other records that document the selection process on all job applicants including evaluations, interview questionnaires and interview notes for a minimum of (5) years.

• All final selection process records are subject to release under the Texas Public Information Act or other legal proceedings and audit purposes.
Best Practices
Search Committee Process Handouts

- Sample Evaluation Form
- Sample Questionnaire
- Unlawful Interview Questions
- Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity (website)

http://www.pvamu.edu/hr/office-of-equal-opportunity-diversity/hiring-process-resources/