

INTRODUCTION

Search committees play a vital role in recruit, evaluating, and recommending the most qualified candidates for employment by the University. Search committee members are often the first University employees that a candidate will meet. Each member has an opportunity to represent the University as a diverse and welcoming community while carrying out the search in accordance with University policies, procedures, and recommended best practices.

Due to the fact that the University is composed of a variety of disciplines and interdisciplinary groups no one universal policy could accommodate all of the unique organizational needs. Therefore, in lieu of a formal campus search committee policy, process and advisory best practices in faculty search committee processes are provided in this toolkit. The advisory best practices included are based on the professional expertise of University staff well-versed in the relevant standards. Individual units or search committees are encouraged to review and discuss these practices and to develop practices consistent with these best practices, tailored to fit their individual needs. Because these recommended best practices may be based on legal requirements or considerations, the Vice Provost for the Faculty should be consulted before any substantial changes are made and adopted as unit or search committee practice.

THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

The role of a Search Committee is to search, not to hire. Before conducting a search, the unit chair develops a search committee according to the Merced Academic Personnel Policies (MAPP). The search committee should include individuals who are committed to diversity and excellence. The unit chair must ensure that women and underrepresented groups have equal opportunity to serve on search committees. Each search committee will have a Faculty Equity Advisor assigned to provide guidance throughout the search process.

THE SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Search Committee Chair has overall responsibility for managing a proactive, timely, fair and legal search process.

Chairing an Effective Committee

In order to minimize conflict and increase the productivity of search committee meetings, it is a good idea to establish processes, ground rules, and evaluation criteria at a meeting held before any applicant materials are reviewed.

Discuss how the committee would like to conduct its business:

- How will committee discussion be recorded?
- What are the rules of discussion, including how will disagreements be handled?
- How will the committee fairly and equitably review and evaluate objectively against the same criteria?
- Require that statements made about candidates be backed up by factual information.
- How will the committee decide which applicants are invited to campus?
- How will candidates be presented to campus colleagues?
- What is the end product of the Search Committee's work?

In order to maintain a fair, equitable and legal search process, it is important that the same evaluation criteria be applied to all candidates. Adding "special" or additional criteria for one candidate and not for another in the midst of the process is not equitable. In order to develop evaluation criteria, the committee should refer to the position announcement and the job description. The terms of the job posting, the criteria for evaluation, and the criteria for an

assessment matrix, if utilized, need to be consistently applied to all applicants. All committee members should understand the potential for unconscious or implicit bias and take action to ensure equity in your decision making.

Consider developing the following tools for consistency:

- A candidate evaluation tool with agreed-upon criteria (See section 15 & 16 for sample rubrics)
- A list of standard questions
- Standard campus visit agendas and pre-visit checklists
- Standard information package for candidates

The unit academic personnel staff may be able to prepare some of these materials for the committee.

FACULTY EQUITY ADVISORS

The role of the Faculty Equity Advisor (FEA) is to:

- Work with unit chairs and Deans to constitute Search Committees to encourage each hiring committee to include people familiar with best practices for diversity and equity in hiring.
- Explain best practices to Search Committees: FEAs will meet with Search Committees to review best practices to secure candidates who contribute to diversity.
- Work with Search Committee to write an inclusive job ad that will lead to a broad pool of candidates.
- Work with Search Committee to help them develop a Search Plan that 1) includes outreach to relevant disciplinary groups; 2) explains the search process; and 3) includes benchmarks for candidate pool diversity that are both reasonable to the Search Committee and reflective of the PhD candidate pool.
- Work with Search Committee to help them meet benchmarks in terms of a diverse candidate pool. When benchmarks are not met, the Dean will be consulted, and the search could be extended. FEA will meet with the Search Committee to review candidate availability pool as well as check in with Search Committee at least every 30 days after advertisement is released.
- Work with Search Committee in an effort to meet benchmarks in terms of a diverse long list and set of on-campus interview candidates. FEA will meet with and provide guidance to the Search Committee when they are selecting the long list as well as the candidates who will come to campus.
- Provide guidance to hiring units in assessing the Contribution to Diversity Statements.
- Work with hiring units to ensure that when candidates come to campus they are connected with any relevant interest groups such as Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), the Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Faculty, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies minor (WGSS) Faculty Working Group, the UC President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program local advisory group and/or Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) faculty group.
- Serve as a liaison between the Dean and the hiring units to help ensure success of the search in finding excellent candidates who contribute to diversity.
- Serve as a confidential liaison to any faculty member involved in the search who has concerns or recommendations with regard to the search process.

SEARCH COMMITTEE PRACTICES TO ENABLE EQUITY

Search Committee Composition

- △ Include faculty who are committed to diversity and excellence.
- △ Ensure that women and underrepresented groups have equal opportunity to serve on search committees.
- △ Include faculty members from other fields to enhance equity and create a more explicit and open discussion

Job Description/Position Announcement

- △ Include language that expresses an interest in candidates who will advance our commitment to diversity.
- △ Broaden the job description to attract the widest possible range of qualified candidates.
- △ Advertise in venues that reach women and underrepresented groups, such as special subgroups of professional organizations or focused conferences.
- △ Note in the ad that UCM has family-friendly policies.

Active Recruit

- △ Go beyond the 'usual' range of institutions from which you recruit.
- △ When contacting colleagues, specifically ask for recommendations of candidates from groups that are underrepresented in your unit, in addition to other recommendations.
- △ Consider candidates who may be currently thriving at less well-ranked institutions.
- △ If multiple searches are taking place in your Unit, consider using a single search committee for all positions, to allow the consideration of a broader range of applicants.
- △ Consider hiring outstanding former students after they have had experience elsewhere

The Interview

- △ Avoid illegal and discriminatory questions.
- △ Use a standard protocol for each campus visit.
- △ Give candidates the opportunity to talk with others, not the search committee, and not even in the same unit, about gender and climate issues.
- △ Provide information about family-friendly policies and partner hiring to all candidates

Evaluating Candidates

- △ Self-Correction: be aware of the possibility of your own unconscious bias.
- △ Agree upon evaluation criteria and ground rules for the search committee and stick to them.
 - Agree on rules of discussion and how to handle disagreement.
 - Agree on a method for determining who will be invited to campus.
- △ Develop evaluation and interview tools to ensure consistency.
- △ Slow down.
 - Make time to review the entire application.
- △ Calibrate the committee.
 - Review and discuss one or two CVs before beginning the review process.
- △ Do not rank immediately.
 - Consider alternatives to rank ordering, such as summaries of each finalist or creating multiple lists.
- △ Insist on the evidence.
 - Require faculty members to back up statements and opinions with facts and evidence.