

Selecting and Preparing a Search Committee

(For Hiring Managers) Updated July 2015

Select Your Committee

When compared to interviewing by yourself, there are advantages to the committee or committee interview format. Multiple interviewers hear the same information and have a common basis for comparison reactions and how well they believe the applicants match the requirements of the position. Feedback from multiple people increases the credibility of the process and can provide additional protection from discrimination claims. Disadvantages include scheduling everyone, the increased risk that someone may utter something inappropriate and an increase of tension for the applicant. Applicants tend to be more nervous in front of a group.

Remember that a crucial part of a successful interview process is presenting the University in the best possible light. We want potential new employees to see that we are organized and singularly-focused on hiring quality individuals that can help us meet our goals and objectives. The applicant is watching to see how committee members get along with each other as an indication of the working environment in your department or section. Making a good and lasting impression directly contributes to securing and keeping quality employees.

When selecting members of the search committee, keep the following tips in mind:

- Try to find committee members who are available to participate fully for duration of interviews. If someone knows in advance they will miss any part of the process, it's not a deal-breaker but you may want to consider either rescheduling or finding a different member.
- Committees should include at least one female and one male.
- In general, an interview committee should not exceed six persons and not exceed three for staff searches in the lower grades
- Your committee should be diverse in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and work experience. Just as important are picking members who understand the job in question, can objectively evaluate the applicants, can actively participate in the discussions and can maintain confidentiality.

Prepare Your Committee

A well-prepared committee factors significantly into a successful recruiting process. Your Affirmative Action Coordinator is available to help develop this process or any of its components.

Before the Interview the following information should be prepared, placed in a folder, and shared with committee members before the interviews:

- Interview schedule and questions
- Position announcement
- Position description
- A list of the selection criteria
- A set of applications including the cover letter or resume if required
- Copy of *Interview Guidelines for Committee Members*
- Screening forms if applicable

The day of the interview assemble committee members early - at least 30 minutes prior to first interview (20 minutes if they committee members have reviewed the selection criteria, the application materials, the position description and the Interview Guidelines for Committee Members in advance) unless you have had prior committee preparation meeting.

1. Explain objective of interview, and specifically the role or the “charge” to the committee. For example:
 - ❖ To recommend one final candidate; or
 - ❖ To recommend, in ranked order, three acceptable candidates; or
 - ❖ Just to discuss strengths and challenges of each candidate.Discuss the method for finalizing the recommendation. It is to develop a consensus, majority vote or something else?
2. Review and answer questions regarding information in folder.
3. Discuss the value of diversity and try to select a diverse group for interviews.
4. Discuss the key job duties with the committee. Discuss how this position fits within the department and University and how it contributes to the University’s mission, values and goals.
5. Describe the ideal candidate. Discuss the selection criteria in enough detail so that the committee members have sufficient understanding of each, their priority and why each one is important.
6. Give the committee enough time to adequately review the application materials in advance so that they are not fumbling with papers throughout the interview. Remember, we want to present ourselves as organized, professional and attentive.
7. Discuss the interview format and the role of each committee member during the interview.
8. Discuss the evaluation method you wish to use. Forced ranking? Strengths and Challenges? A combination of both? Other?
9. Discuss specifically what confidentiality means in relation to their role on the committee.
10. Answer questions.