Search Committee and Chair Training

Colorado School of Mines

Human Resources

Topics

- Roles & Responsibilities
- Use of Page Up
- Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action
- OFCCP/Federal Contractor Status
- Candidate Evaluation
- Interviews
- References
- Recordkeeping

Roles and Responsibilities

Search Committee Chair Responsibilities:

- Has overall responsibility for managing a proactive, timely, fair, and legal search process. Is responsible for defining what the roles and expectations are for the search committee as well as each individual committee member. This will include adherence to university, EEO and Affirmative Action regulations.

Roles and Responsibilities

Search Committee Members and Chair

- Engage in a fair and equitable recruitment process.
- Put aside personal agendas, biases or political positions so that each candidate has an honest, fair and consistent evaluation.
- Disclose all conflicts of interest to the chair and the entire committee.
- Protect confidentiality of the applicants and the decision making process.
- Meet obligations and deadlines, working promptly and efficiently to help ensure that top candidates are not lost to other employers.

Roles and Responsibility

Proactively recruit highly qualified candidates by:

- Tapping into formal/informal networks to identify potential candidates
- Proactively reaching out to national peers by email, letter, or phone to identify potential candidates, including potential nominations
- Researching peer institution colleagues to find potential candidates
- Providing input on recruitment strategies and advertising plans

Remember – you are a SEARCH committee, not merely a SELECTION committee!

Active Recruitment – Broadening the Applicant Pool

- Active recruitment is the process of "generating a pool rather than merely tapping it" (*NSF ADVANCEMichigan, 2007*).
- Active recruitment strategies recognize that simply posting an announcement is not sufficient in achieving a diverse applicant pool.
- In order to identify the broadest possible pool of potential candidates, all members of the search committee must actively recruit candidates.
- Following is a list of best practices for active recruitment:

Strategies to Increase Diversity

- Establish and cultivate long-term relationships and connections with those who may become applicants for a position at some future point, especially those from underrepresented groups.
- Ask current staff, faculty and graduate students to help identify under represented candidates.
- Attend conferences that provide opportunities to recruit candidates. Consider special subgroups of professional organizations or focused conferences.
- Identify individuals who have achieved excellence outside academia.

Strategies to Increase Diversity (continued)

Diversity isn't limited to gender and ethnicity but also encompasses experience. Examples:

- Advised a summer academic support program for low-income students
- Created STEM research program for first-generation college students
- Participated in postdoc program for under-represented students
- Co-authored an interdisciplinary research article on ethnic studies and psychology

Roles and Responsibilities

Hiring Manager Responsibilities:

- Facilitates the search process within the PageUp system. In most cases this will be the Department Assistant. *This is a different definition than currently used on campus where the hiring manager is the person who decides who gets hired.*
- The Hiring Manager initiates the requisition (formerly RAF), changes status of applicants, creates and books phone and campus interviews, and initiates the offer card in PageUp. Also ensures that all applicants receive notice of their status. Emails are generated by PageUp depending upon applicant status.

Roles and Responsibilities

Human Resources

- Resource for Search Chairs and committees.
- Provide guidance and advice to departments on recruitment and hiring policies, use of PageUp, processes and regulations.
- Provide guidance on EEO/AA compliance.
- Investigate complaints of discrimination.

Search Sequence / Timeline

After requisition is submitted and position is advertised,

Search Chair --

- Establish initial committee meeting where you explain ground rules, expectations, timelines and end product. Discuss “lessons learned” from previous searches and establish how the committee will manage the overall search process to better serve the department and candidates.
- Assure that review application materials occurs **individually** and that committee work progresses timely.
- Ensure that all statements made about candidates be backed up by facts.

Search Sequence/Timeline continued

- Committee scoring documentation **must include a job-related reason for an applicant's removal** from consideration at each step in the process. It is not sufficient to say "didn't score well, not ranked high enough." (Federal Requirement)
- Once all committee members have individually scored the applicants, Chair runs the ranking report. Then schedule a committee meeting to determine the short list and next steps.
- Conduct phone interviews (optional as needed) to further reduce the short-list.

Search Sequence/Timeline
continued

- Schedule and conduct on-campus interviews
- Optional – Request a "Welcome" packet from HR.
  - *Requests for packets must be made at least 3 days in advance of an on-campus visit. If you want the packet mailed, the request must be made at least 1 week in advance.*
- Assures reference checks on top finalists (in addition to letters of recommendation if previously requested)
- Recommendations submitted to DH
  - Offer made by Dean and/or Provost
  - Background checks initiated
  - Offer accepted and confirmed

Overview of the PageUp Process

- Committee members can view, score and comment on applicants as soon as their materials are submitted. It's all done in the PageUp system now!
- Search Chair will run a report to rank applicants after they have been scored and reviewed.
- Search Chair and committee cannot change applicant status; "Hiring Manager" does this. "Hiring Manager" is the Department Assistant who is facilitating the search process.
- Candidates receive system-generated email notices when they are no longer being considered.

Overview of the PageUp Process continued

- Criteria is submitted/approved prior to the job being posted.
- The system is designed for all committee members to review all applications. However, a pass/fail step can be used if desired.
- Applicant scoring for any review criteria is done on the following scale:
  - 0-Not Present
  - 1-Very Weak
  - 2-Marginal
  - 3-Acceptable
  - 4-Strong
  - 5-Superior

Overview of the PageUp Process continued

- Search Chair partners with Hiring Manager who creates events (phone and campus interviews) in PageUp. Applicants will select day/time in the system.
- There is a reference check feature in PageUp. References can upload letters directly into the system OR Hiring Manager can notify applicants via PageUp that their references will now be contacted.
- All documentation (interview notes, information from references, etc.) will be uploaded into PageUp.
- The Interview Recommendation Form is no longer a part of the process.
- Offers will be approved and made through Pageup.

Getting Familiar with PageUp

Let’s log in!

Equal Employment Opportunity

- Equal employment opportunity means that all individuals must be treated equally in all employment decisions including at all stages of the recruitment process.

- Each applicant must be evaluated solely on the basis of his or her ability to perform the duties of the position without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Affirmative Action

- Affirmative action requires that additional efforts be made to increase employment opportunities for women and members of underrepresented groups.
- Affirmative action also requires an organization to demonstrate a good faith effort to recruit, employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities and veteran status.
- These efforts may include expanded efforts in outreach and recruitment to increase the pool of qualified women, people of color, individuals with disabilities, and veterans.

OFCCP/Federal Contractor Status

- Office of Federal Contract Compliance and Programs (OFCCP)
  - "The purpose of the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs is to enforce, for the benefit of job seekers and wage earners, the contractual promise of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity required of those who do business with the Federal government."
- ***Mines is a federal contractor***
- Required by OFCCP to maintain specific information about the search process, applicants and hires.
- Search processes must be followed - all required documents sent to HR in order for Mines to meet its federal compliance obligations.
- Failure to comply could have costly implications for Mines
- Federal Compliance Audits – not "IF" but "WHEN"

Process Detail

- Confidentiality –
  - The search process is confidential, and it is the responsibility of the search committee to ensure confidentiality.
    - Applicants should not be discussed with others who are not part of the search committee.
    - Applications should not be shared with others who are not involved with the decision making process.
      - CVs and letters of interest may be shared for informational purposes once candidates are invited to campus. Reference lists or recommendation letters should not be included in any distribution.
- Discovery –
  - All committee discussions and documentation are subject to discovery in the event we receive a formal complaint about the search process.
    - It is important to keep all discussions and documentation focused on the applicants' qualifications and how they meet the stated job requirements.

Candidate Evaluation

Tips and Strategies

- All eligible applicants for the position must be screened and evaluated in the same manner, using job-related criteria. Adherence to established criteria will assist in defending against allegations of unequal treatment.
- Evaluation criteria --
  - As objective and measurable as possible;
  - Clearly understood by search committee; and
  - Applied consistently to each candidate.
  - Should incorporate how a candidate will advance the mission of the institution
    - "Candidate increases the diversity of the department/campus in background, experience, perspective, and/or talent."
    - "Evidence of extraordinary, relevant experience that is not otherwise rewarded by these criteria."

Candidate Evaluation

Tips and Strategies (continued)

- Spend sufficient time evaluating each applicant. Most research on this topic recommends at least 20 minutes for each application. Many researchers have concluded that an undistracted, thorough review of this time length is the best counterbalance to unconscious and unintentional bias or assumptions.
- Evaluate each applicant's entire file – do not depend too heavily on one aspect to speak to evaluation criteria.
- Periodically evaluate the pool to determine whether women and people from underrepresented groups are included and consider whether biases and assumptions are influencing your decisions.
- Committee discussion - ensures no candidate is eliminated by a member based upon a non-job-related reason or bias.

Candidate Evaluation

Unconscious Bias

There is a wealth of information on bias and assumptions in hiring generally as well as in faculty hiring specifically. It is important for search committee members to be aware of the possibilities for bias in screening applications. Some areas that show potential for bias are:

- Homogeneous search committee
- Poorly articulated screening criteria or rigidity in a screening matrix
- Inconsistent weighting of criteria among committee members
- Inaccurate or unconscious assumptions about merit

Candidate Evaluation

Bias and Assumption - Examples

- When evaluators were busy, distracted by other tasks, and under time pressure, they gave women lower ratings than men for the same written evaluation of job performance. Gender bias decreased when they gave ample time and attention to their assessment of the applicant *(Martell, 1991).*
- *Preference for males was greater when women represented a small proportion of the pool of candidates (as is typical in many STEM fields) (Heilman & Stopeck, 1985).*

Candidate Evaluation

Bias and Assumption - Examples

- A study in which emails were sent to more than 6,500 randomly selected professors from 259 American universities from a (fictional) prospective out-of-town student whom the professor did not know, expressing interest in the professor's Ph.D. program and seeking guidance showed that professors were more responsive to white male students than to female, black, Hispanic, Indian or Chinese students in almost every discipline and across all types of universities. *(Chugh, Milkman and Akinola, 2014).*

Candidate Evaluation

Bias and Assumption

Many of these potentials for bias can be mitigated by good communication in committee meetings regarding these topics and follow-up with individual members by the committee chair to ensure that members are clear on instructions or assignments. Unconscious bias and assumptions are less easy to mitigate and the consequences can range from undesirable to severe.

- Research shows that every one of us brings a lifetime of experiences and cultural history that shapes our evaluation of others.
- Results from several studies in which people were asked to make judgments about human subjects demonstrate the potentially prejudicial nature of our many implicit or unconscious assumptions. Examples range from physical and social expectations or assumptions to those that have a clear connection to hiring.

Interviews

Phone Interview (optional)

- All members of the search committee are involved in the phone interview process.
  - If a committee member cannot participate in any one phone interview, s/he cannot be part of the decision that either eliminates an applicant from or moves an applicant forward in the process
- Critical to treat all candidates the same.
- Skype or video conferencing is acceptable if done for all of the applicants.
- Remember the candidate is also evaluating the search committee, department and the university during this time.

Interviews

On-Campus Interview

- Search committee members should view themselves as "recruiters" and commit to providing "concierge-level" service to all candidates. This commitment sends the message that Mines is serious about attracting and retaining top-quality talent.
- All members of the search committee are involved in the on-campus interviews
- Visit may include formal interview with search committee, lunch or dinner with the candidate, campus tour, presentation by candidate, meeting with faculty and/or students, meeting with special interest groups.
- Critical to treat all candidates the same; visits should be similar in structure.
- Remember the candidate is also evaluating the search committee, department and the university during this time.

Interviews

On-Campus Interview continued

- During on-campus interviews, part of the concierge-level service means that the search committee is attentive to balancing the interview with the interests of the candidate.
- Search committees are encouraged to use a consistent interview schedule, but also encouraged to give individual consideration to candidates, tailoring the schedule to accommodate each candidate's personal and professional interests.
- Search committees should provide candidates with clear and comprehensive information regarding the position, the campus, and the Golden community prior to or during the visit.

Interviews

On-Campus Interview continued

This information may include (but is not limited to):

- Institutional and departmental strategic plans;
- Institutional and departmental financials;
- Institutional and departmental histories and fact sheets;
- Institutional and departmental summaries in education and research;
- Selected summaries or excerpts of departmental reviews;
- Details on important strategic initiatives, and/or new programs;
- Brief bio-sketches on all individuals with whom the candidate will meet;
- Other important non-confidential materials such as information on university benefits, etc.

Reference Checks

- Timing varies – academic faculty process v. administrative faculty process.
  - Administrative - in general, check references prior to submitting the recommendation to invite finalists to campus. Allows the committee an opportunity to obtain additional information about the finalists prior to the interviews.
  - Academic – extensive reference checks prior to offering position
- The Search Committee Chair should notify the finalists prior to any references being contacted to confirm that the candidate is still interested in the position.
- It is not necessary during the reference check process to include each member of the search committee. This duty can be assigned to a smaller group of search committee members who can then report back to the committee as a whole of the findings in the reference checks.

Reference Checks

- Search committee members **may not be** references for applicants, nor may they write letters of recommendation for applicants in the search for which they are serving as a search committee member.
- If a search committee member has been identified as a reference or asked to write a letter of recommendation, the search committee member must decline the designation as a reference.
- It is recommended and permissible to contact references that have not been disclosed by an applicant. Professional courtesy dictates that prior to doing so, the applicant must be advised.

Recordkeeping

- The search committee must keep records (Federal Requirement). These must contain, at a minimum, committee notes, scoring and ranking reports, interview notes, supporting documents, reference letters, correspondence letters from the search committee, and any other created or obtained as part of the application process. All documentation is now stored in PageUp.
- It is the responsibility of the Search Chair to ensure that all documents used in the search process are included in PageUp. All search records must be maintained for three years from the date search is completed.

Questions?

Credits

- Interrupting Bias in the Faculty Search Process
  - University of Washington, ADVANCE Center for Institutional Change
- University of Utah
- Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- OFCCP Mission Statement and Technical Assistance Guides

Introduction

As a public institution of higher education, Mines has a particular interest in promoting diversity among faculty, staff, and students. Exposure to diversity is at the core of a meaningful educational experience at Mines.

To best prepare students for future challenges and develop critical skill sets, diversity in our faculty and staff is essential. Research has shown that contact with faculty, especially a diverse faculty, is the single largest contributor to students' retention and graduation.

Actively working to hire the brightest and most innovative and diverse faculty and staff provides untold educational benefits for our students as well as the skills they need to succeed in a competitive and diverse workforce.

Introduction

Mines is making strides to achieve increased diversity in our student population. However, we have not been as successful in attaining racial, ethnic and gender diversity within our faculty and staff.

This training was developed to offer faculty search committees the information and resources necessary to achieve greater awareness of hiring within institutional values, as well as to provide an overview of proven best practices for recruiting, attracting, and retaining diverse, highly qualified faculty and staff members.