



FORMING A FACULTY SEARCH COMMITTEE

Faculty search committees play an invaluable role in identifying and recruiting new talent for the University. How these committees construct and conduct themselves has important implications for not only who is chosen for each position, but for the future strength of the department and the University, and for the University's reputation to outside scholars.

When forming and managing your committee, a few considerations can guide your work.

FORMING YOUR COMMITTEE

- **Consider committee size.** While smaller committees allow for more focused and efficient searches, these committees also limit the number of available perspectives through which to consider applicants.
- **Be intentional about committee diversity.** Diverse committees are more likely to identify diverse applicant pools, while committee homogeneity signals lack of institutional commitment to candidates. Consider diversity broadly, including diversity of rank, race, gender, discipline, etc.
- **Define roles and responsibilities.** Decide who will take on the committee's most important responsibilities, including drafting and posting job advertisements; making special outreach efforts to build your pool; identifying evaluation criteria and creating evaluation rubrics and tools; maintaining necessary records (candidate dossiers, interview notes, etc); handling direct correspondence with candidates before, during and after the visit; hosting candidates during on-campus visits, etc.

ESTABLISHING EXPECTATIONS

- **Prepare the committee to recruit and fairly evaluate a diverse applicant pool.** Explicitly state your committee's commitment to diversity. This centers diversity as a shared value, and increases your likelihood of identifying a diverse applicant pool. Ensure your committee is up-to-date on equitable search practices, as well as the affirmative action laws and policies that will guide your search.
- **Consider department history.** Review past searches for patterns or areas of underutilization. Address these directly in committee meetings to avoid them in your current engagement.
- **Set ground rules.** This includes communicating how decisions will be made (consensus vs. voting) and sharing expectations around attendance, confidentiality, and group conduct (turning off cell phones, giving all members an opportunity to speak, etc.).

MANAGING GROUP DYNAMICS

- **Establish a timeline.** Faculty search activities can drag. During an early meeting, establish a schedule for each stage of the process. Doing this in tandem with communicating attendance expectations can ensure each committee member can comply with shared expectations.
- **Set meeting agendas.** To honor committee members' time, create meeting agendas for each meeting. Agendas can allot time to each topic or candidate packet to ensure important topics are not rushed or skipped. End meetings on time to make sure all committee members can be present for important discussions.
- **Level the playing field.** Particularly in committees with a range of faculty ranks, make sure everyone feels welcome. Begin the first meeting or two with brief introductions to get committee members talking and comfortable around each other. Openly thank committee members (particularly early-career faculty) for their contributions to the committee. Ask untenured colleagues outside official committee meetings whether rank may be influencing how they discuss the activities and opinions of the committee at large, and consider serving as the official source of "alternative points of view" in order to help said faculty members save face.
- **Actively solicit quiet voices.** Actively encourage contributions from less vocal individuals during meetings by speaking directly to them, inquiring whether they agree with the conclusion or have anything to add, or by explicitly asking individuals who have not yet spoken to weigh in.