

MEMORANDUM

To: Deans
From: Provost Charlena M. Seymour
Date: September 17, 2007
Subject: Revised Guidelines for Faculty Searches

Having now had additional experience with the procedures for tenure track faculty searches, I would like to update the guidelines that I expect us to follow. I also ask that you share copies of this document with your Department Chairs, Search Committee Chairs, and the School/College Personnel Assistant.

To start with an overview, I envision the process as involving essentially 3 checkpoints. (If you'd like a mnemonic for the checkpoints, it could be R.I.O: Requisition, Invitations, and Offer.)

OUTLINE OF CHECKPOINTS (assuming concerns are resolved at each stage)

CHECKPOINT 1: REQUISITION

- A. Faculty Personnel Requisition (signed by Department Chair and Dean) is submitted to the Office of EO&D (c/o Lori Prince).
- B. EO&D reviews and forwards to the Provost's Office (c/o Sue Kokoski).
- C. Associate Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention reviews for diversity concerns, fit with faculty hiring plans, budget and space implications, etc., and recommends to the Provost.
- D. Provost authorizes search.

CHECKPOINT 2: INVITATIONS

- E. Search committee recruits, reviews and recommends to Department Chair who recommends to the Dean the set of finalists to be invited to campus.
- F. Dean recommends finalists to be invited to campus to Associate Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention who reviews and recommends to Provost.
- G. Provost authorizes invitations to finalists.

CHECKPOINT 3: OFFER

- H. Search committee interviews finalists and recommends who should be hired to the Department Chair who recommends to the Dean.
- I. Dean recommends a candidate to the Associate Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention and to the Office of EO&D. They advise the Provost on the authorization of hiring. If the Provost approves, a formal offer is made.

Detailed Summary of Provost's Office Checkpoints for Tenure Track Faculty Hires

Mission

“Our goal is to achieve a campus where men and women of diverse groups come to understand and appreciate the variety of perspectives which diversity makes possible. In pursuit of this goal, we seek to redress the imbalances described in this document.

“Our commitment to affirmative action means providing an opportunity to increase employment of qualified persons from protected ethnic and racial groups, women, persons with disabilities, Vietnam-era and other veterans. This effort should be visible in our recruitment, hiring, promotion, transfer, training, career development, compensation, benefits and termination decisions.”

John V. Lombardi, Affirmative Action Plan, 2006-2007

GENERAL

Communications Chain

Search requisitions, recommendations to invite a set of candidates, and recommendations to hire a particular candidate should be made by the Dean to the Associate Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention who then makes a recommendation to the Provost.

Reaction or response time has been and is expected to continue to be rapid from the Provost's Office – generally, within 24-48 hours during the business week (i.e., excluding weekends and holidays).

Electronic (e-mail) correspondence facilitates the speed and efficiency of communication, and is the recommended mode wherever possible.

At each of the checkpoints below, information is needed by the Provost's Office to affirm that a proactive search will be or has been undertaken in order to ensure that the strongest, most diverse candidate pool possible has been constructed. In addition, resource impacts of an anticipated hire (for example, laboratory animal housing requirements) must be identified and accounted for early in the process.

CHECKPOINT 1: REQUISITION

Regardless of the procedures internal to a School/College and Department, a duly signed (Department Head/Chair plus Dean) Faculty Personnel Requisition and appropriate cover letter should be submitted first to Lori Prince in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (EO&D) for review and comment. EO&D forwards the Personnel Requisition to the Provost's Office (c/o Sue Kokoski).

The Associate Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention follows-up with the Dean and Department Chair concerning the comments of EO&D and works to resolve any outstanding issues and to maximize the recruitment strategy to attract a diverse candidate pool. Seven facets of the requisition form and cover letter are particularly considered:

- **relation to the School/College strategic plan**
The proposed position should clearly be a priority in the broader context of the School/College longer term hiring plan.
- **composition of the search committee**
The search committee should include racial/ethnic as well as gender diversity. Data strongly suggest there is a positive relationship between the diverse composition of a search committee and achieving a diverse hire. In order to construct more diverse search committees while not over-burdening diverse faculty with excessive search committee assignments, it may be necessary to make tradeoffs in people's service loads, to go outside the department for membership, and to appoint graduate student members where possible.
- **language of the position description/advertisement**
Most ads now go beyond the minimal obligatory "We are an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity institution" to make the ad as inviting as possible to encourage a strong and diverse pool to apply, e.g., "The Department is committed to increasing the diversity of the faculty, student body, and curriculum."

Ads should be placed in traditional print publications. If you want to hire an applicant who will need a permanent visa, the U.S. Department of Labor will not approve the visa unless the position was advertised in a traditional print publication.

- **rank**
If a search for a senior level hire or a rank open search is proposed, the Department Chair and Dean should justify this in terms of department demographics and Red Book 4.2a, b, c (affect on program plans, flexibility as affected by rank and tenure distributions, and department affirmative action goals). It is important to be transparent about these considerations – the department as well as the Provost should be informed.
- **financial support**
Indicate if Amherst 250 Plan money or the Department's/College's money is funding the position. Amherst 250 Plan money is intended to support junior level hires. Only in very exceptional circumstances (such as when there are very few senior level positions in the department) might the Provost authorize the use of Amherst 250 funds for a hire beyond the Assistant level. If a more senior hire is requested, an indication of the source of the additional funds should be included in the cover letter. If funds are from a faculty departure, indicate the specific source in question.

- **space and start-up support**

As much as possible, significant cost and space (office, laboratory, and animal care) implications should be addressed specifically at the time of requisition.

- **recruitment and advertising plan**

The requisition should include a plan for actively contacting appropriate individuals and institutions to recruit a strong and diverse pool.

“Detectives for Diversity” is one organizing image for what we are hoping to foster. Effective search and recruitment strategies entail:

- direct personal contacts (calls, e-mails) to expert informants
- reaching out to senior faculty in kindred fields who could suggest prospects
- cultivating networks that could help to develop diverse applicant pools such as our own doctoral recipients, the NEAGEP network, etc.
- developing diverse networks, including connecting with cognate disciplines in Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other prospective “feeder” institutions [Top producers of Black and Hispanic Ph.D.’s are: Harvard, Howard, Maryland, Michigan, Michigan State, NYU, Ohio State, Stanford, UC Berkeley, UCLA, USC, UT-Austin.]
- announcing position in diverse outlets, for example: Appropriate on-line listservs or journals such as *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* (formerly *Black Issues in Higher Education*) and *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*.
- recruiting at relevant conferences – in addition to the major association meetings, probably the best single other one is the **Annual Institute on Teaching and Mentoring** sponsored by the Compact for Faculty Diversity to be held this year from October 25-28, in Arlington, VA – see www.instituteonteachingandmentoring.org (Andy Effrat will be coordinating our recruitment presence there.)

Assuming the above sets of concerns are addressed satisfactorily, the Provost signs off to authorize the search and the Requisition is returned to the Department.

CHECKPOINT 2: INVITATIONS

The search committee then proceeds to advertise, actively recruit, and review applicants. To enhance the diversity of the applicant pool, it is expected that relevant individuals and institutions will be contacted directly to proactively encourage applications, that notices will be placed on appropriate listservs to reach a diverse audience, and that association meetings and conferences will be used as occasions to reach out to a diverse pool.

It is strongly recommended that, early in their deliberations, an orientation and “coaching” session be held for search committees to which a representative of the Office of Equal Opportunity & Diversity (Lori Prince) is invited to discuss proper procedures and the like.

A “**Search File**” must be created by the Faculty Search Committee that provides a description of the demographics of the applicant pool and the proactive steps taken in the search process. Specifically, it includes:

- a) A summary of the actions taken to seek the broadest pool of high quality candidates.
- b) A list of the candidates proposed for invitation to a campus visit showing their expertise, racial/ethnic diversity characteristics and gender as far as known.
- c) Comments regarding the rest of the pool with regard to diversity. Discuss how the remaining pool is outmatched by the candidates proposed for invitation. Note whether there are any candidates from diverse backgrounds who are close to those proposed for a visit, e.g., if 3 candidates are proposed, are #4 and #5 possible candidates.
- d) Also describe the prospective candidates from part (a) and how they were contacted and by whom. (When prospective candidates do not formally apply, it would be helpful to learn the reasons for that to inform our procedures going forward.)

If the applicant pool or short list lacks diversity, specific indication of efforts made to diversify the pool should be provided.

Every effort at every stage of this process should be made to give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate their strengths and potential contribution, even if this involves, when in doubt, providing an interview opportunity. The applicant’s contribution to workforce diversity should be carefully considered.

The Provost’s approved list of invitees or short list is, in a sense, a “**contract.**” Variations from it – the addition of other candidates, the loss of approved candidates, and the like – should be brought to the attention of the Associate Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention as they occur with a request to amend the short list and proceed with invitations.

When the Search Committee decides to schedule campus visits for finalist candidates, a request to invite the short-listed finalists (accompanied by the “Search File”) should go forward from the Search Committee chair to the Department Chair to the Dean to the Associate Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention who reviews the diversity of the applicant pool and the short list.

Note that, in the interest of honoring equal opportunity regulations, it is urged that the complete set of finalists be identified and invited essentially at the same time. However, in exceptional circumstances, requests to proceed with invitations may be made prior to the identification of the complete set of finalists. (The Search Committee may elect to work with the Associate Provost in advance to ensure that a diverse pool is being recruited.) Also note that remaining issues of budget, space, and start-up should be resolved by the Dean with the Associate Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention prior to the first candidate visit. If no issues remain outstanding, the Provost will confirm that candidate visits may begin.

Finalists’ visits should show off our quality and diversity, be sensitive to diversity concerns in questions, comments, assumptions made, and be essentially equal or comparable in what candidates are asked to do and who they meet. For example, EO&D instructs search committees to make sure that all candidates who participate in

campus interviews for a given position are given access to the same levels of decision makers. Because of equal opportunity concerns, Deans (or their appropriate substitutes) should either meet with every candidate who comes to campus or none of the candidates during that stage of the search.

CHECKPOINT 3: OFFER

The Search Committee proceeds to interview finalists and progresses to the point of an anticipated hire offer. The Search Committee recommends to the Department Chair and Dean who should be hired. The Dean recommends to the Associate Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention who advises the Provost. At the same time, clearance should also be sought by the Dean from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity. If all is in order, the Provost authorizes an offer being made.

The search and evaluation of candidates should be completed before proposing to make offers to candidates!

A recommendation to appoint a faculty member should include basic information about the candidate -- when and where they got their degrees, current position, highlights of their research, grants, and publication record, teaching experience, any other reasons for their being selected, and racial/ethnic and gender information where known or estimated.

No communication of any kind that might be construed as relating to employment, salary or working conditions occurs with the candidate prior to explicit authorization from the Provost and approval of the Applicant Log Summary by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity. There are no "informal" or "unofficial" offers contingent on subsequent approval. The formal offer letter will be reviewed and approved by the Provost prior to its delivery to the candidate.

Offers and terms of offers should only be made with the Provost's approval, and department chairs and search committee chairs should be reminded of this. For example, years of credit towards tenure should only be promised with the explicit permission of the Provost. As one Dean put it in an e-mail to her department chairs:

"I wanted to remind everyone that it is absolutely essential that no verbal or written offer is made without the express approval of the Provost. I know that recruiting involves many different levels of conversation and negotiation, but even in informal discussions, emails, phone calls, etc., it is really critical that the candidate understands that nothing is final until the Provost has officially signed off on the offer. When you write offer letters, or orally communicate the offer, please ensure that you explicitly state that the terms are those that you are going to recommend to the Dean and the Provost. Would you please pass this on to your faculty and particularly to search committees and search committee chairs." (quoted with permission of Dean Janet Rifkin)

Generally, the proposed hire should be a graduate of and/or a faculty member at a comparable (or better) institution. At the same time, "the search committee must be sensitive to the need to fairly evaluate the non-traditional careers of some protected group members who have had interruptions in their work/study history, who follow a partner's relocation, who study/work at physically accessible institutions, and/or who

choose to contribute to the alternative rather than the traditional forms of scholarship related to their group memberships." (from EO&D search procedures guideline)

The proposed hire should rank among your top 2 or 3 choices. It is better to extend the search than to lower standards.

No senior appointment should arise out of a search advertised as junior. Nor should there be a promise of being brought up for tenure in a year or so.

It is suggested that you build into the offer letter (especially to administrators) the expectation that they will "focus on growing the program, and enhancing the quality, diversity and number of students and faculty." (with permission from the offer letter by Dean Malone to a new department chair)

Reassurance of effective mentoring and appropriate resources appear to be crucial factors in helping to recruit candidates.

TIME IS THE ENEMY

We acknowledge that we are in a highly competitive hiring environment, thus, every effort should be made by all involved to anticipate and keep the search process moving as expeditiously as possible. One way in which we are distinctively disadvantaged is by our January break. If candidates are not notified of being on the short list or invited to campus before mid-December, then they are unlikely to be interviewed here or know that they are on the short list until February at best.

It is suggested that searches commence as soon as possible, be kept moving with appropriate vigor, and not be delayed unduly for candidates unable to visit in a reasonable timeframe. To expedite formal consideration at the offer stage, it is urged that the EO&D paperwork be sent to EO&D at the same time that you seek approval from the Provost's Office.

SOME USEFUL REFERENCE WORKS

Moody, J. (2004). *Faculty Diversity: Problems and Solutions*. N.Y.: Routledge Falmer.

Turner, C.S.V. (2002). *Diversifying the Faculty: A Guidebook for Search Committees*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges & Universities.

Vicker, L. A. & Royer, H.J. (2006). *The Complete Academic Search Manual*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishers.