

Faculty Search Committee Training

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Topics

- Roles and Responsibilities
 - Search Sequence and Timeline
 - Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action
 - OFCCP/Federal Contractor Status
 - Process Detail
 - Interview Questions
 - References
 - Recordkeeping
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Roles and Responsibilities

Appointing Authority

- The appointing authorities within the University are the chancellor, the vice chancellors, who may delegate any or all of their responsibilities to designees.
 - Only the appointing authority has the power to make a formal offer of position to a candidate and to negotiate salary issues.
 - The appointing authority conveys to the search committee the precise criteria for filling the position and a commitment to addressing the unit's affirmative action goals, usually referred to as the "charge to the committee." The "charge to the committee" also includes directions regarding ranking the recommended finalists following the interviews.
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Roles and Responsibilities

Search Committee Chair

- Compiling the initial search documentation.
 - Coordinating outreach to increase the applicant pool, including telephone calls and emails.
 - Ensuring that all committee members clearly understand the requirements of the position and the diversity goals of the department and School/College.
 - Ensuring that all committee members clearly understand their confidentiality obligations.
 - Call and chair search committee meetings, if applicable.
 - Ensuring that accurate documentation of the search process is kept.
 - Maintaining contact with the appointing authority about relevant search information.
 - Communicating with candidates and finalists on behalf of the University.
 - Submitting the committee's final recommendation to the appointing authority.
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Roles and Responsibilities

Search Committee Members

- Help to identify and contact potential applicants who could contribute to workforce diversity.
 - Screen applicants and selecting candidates for interviews.
 - Design and participate in the interview process, including the inclusion of eligible department faculty when applicable.
 - Maintain appropriate confidentiality about search committee proceeding.
 - Contribute to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of final candidates for recommendation to the appointing authority.
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Equal Employment Opportunity

- Equal Employment Opportunity prohibits discrimination. It attempts to ensure that all applicants have a fair opportunity in all employment decisions and during all stages of the recruiting and hiring 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.
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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.
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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.”

- UMass 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 maintained in order for UMass to meet its federal compliance obligations.
 - Failure to comply could have costly implications for the University.
 - Federal Compliance Audits – not “IF” but “WHEN.”
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Process Detail

Confidentiality

- All aspects of the search process, including the status of application in the process, must remain confidential throughout the process and thereafter.
- 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.

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Process Detail

Conflict of Interest

- Search Committee members who have personal or professional relationships with candidates must disclose that information to the search committee, the search chair, and Dean.
 - Neither professional or personal relationships between applicants and evaluators should influence or appear to influence the selection decision.
 - Depending on the nature of the relationship, the Dean will determine if a recusal is necessary.
 - Search Committee members may not provide reference letters for candidates in the search.
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Process Detail

Disability

- Candidates with disabilities may request an accommodation either for submitting the application materials or during the interview.
 - If this is requested, please contact Lori Corcoran, our Accessible Workplace Manager. She will work directly with the candidate to determine what a reasonable accommodation might be.
 - No decision about the candidacy should be made based on their request for accommodation.
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Process Detail

Demographic Data

The university examines the demographic make-up of applicant pools at different stages.

- The university looks at the demographic composition of pools after there has been a screen for the minimum qualifications. This is an internal review that helps shed light on the effectiveness of our recruitment efforts.
 - After a search committee has decided who is on its “long, short list” of individuals who they would like to screen (via video conferencing, phone, etc.), HR will review that list to see how it compares to the expected number of women and racial minorities within the job market for that field. HR partners with Academic Affairs to determine next steps should the pool seem drastically out-of-line with the market.
 - To protect the integrity of the process, and to ensure there is no perception of bias, the candidates’ demographic data is not shared with search committees.
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Process Detail

Consistent Treatment of Candidates

- A search committee should strive to have each candidate treated in a similar manner through every stage of the search process.
 - Interview questions related to the position must be planned ahead of time and asked of all candidates—although follow up questions may be different.
 - All candidates must have the same access to decision makers.
 - Narrowing of the pool should be done based on the same criteria.
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Interview Questions

- Ask only questions related to the position.
 - Do not ask any personal questions related to age, marital status, ethnicity, religion, children, gender, location, disability, lifestyle choices, etc.
 - Massachusetts Pay Equity Act - Employers may not seek the salary or wage history of any prospective employee before making an offer that includes compensation, and may not require that a prospective employee's wage or salary history meet certain criteria.
 - This applies to every interaction with the candidate, including dinners, social functions, etc. If the candidate offers the information unsolicited, that is okay.
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Interview Questions

- Behavioral questions ask candidates how they handle particular aspects of their work.
 - Situational questions ask candidates to describe how they would respond to a particular situation or fact pattern.
 - Informational/Background questions ask candidates to provide additional context to their specific accomplishments, background, and experiences.
 - Multicultural proficiency questions ask candidates to describe how they understand diversity and can contribute to a building an inclusive campus.
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Interview Questions

Implicit Bias

- Implicit biases are stereotypes about people that we all form without realizing it. They may be positive or negative.
 - The process of filtering, generalizing, and focusing on certain pieces of information during an interview can allow for quick decisions that may not be the right decisions.
 - Examples include, education, experience, enthusiasm, and “like me” biases.
 - To avoid implicit bias, establish objective, performance-based criteria and determine how the different criteria will be prioritized in the search.
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References

- Applicants for entry level positions or junior faculty positions are usually better evaluated if letters of reference are immediately available because references speak to potential while CVs focus on accomplishments.
 - Applicants for senior-level positions with extensive experience enumerated on the CV may hesitate to apply for positions in which they are required to provide reference letters before they know if their application has received some interest from the search committee.
 - Telephone reference checks are encouraged because they enable the committee to secure specific information about the applicant.
 - The committee should have a standardized protocol of questions.
 - When conducting reference checks by telephone, references must be informed whether the candidate has waived or not waived his/her right to have access to reference materials.
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Recordkeeping

Documentation

- Document every step of search process and maintain a detailed set of documentation, including search notes, search tools, interview questions, and reference responses.
 - Document only objective position related information.
 - Members should hand over any document to the search chair for the records.
 - When candidate list is narrowed, document what criteria is used, how it is applied, and what results are.
 - Retain for three years.
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Faculty Search Activities Guide

<https://www.umass.edu/diversity/faculty-search>

QUESTIONS?
