Confidentiality in the Search Process

Thank you for your willingness to serve as a member of the search committee. This process is important for our university and your involvement is appreciated.

One of the critical aspects of the search process is ensuring confidentiality of applicants. This outline is intended to assist you in understanding your responsibility in maintaining confidentiality. Any questions about this information should be directed to the search committee chair and/or search coordinator.

1. Complete confidentiality in the search process is essential in order to attract qualified candidates who trust that their information will not be prematurely disclosed.
2. Search committee members will have access to private personnel data, and each search committee member must take all necessary precautions to safeguard the information received.
3. The identity of all applicants should remain confidential except for those who are asked and accept the invitation to interview on campus. Names of applicants must never be released or shared with others, even after the search process is complete.
4. Private data on applicants must not be discussed or shared with anyone outside the screening committee except as specifically authorized by the search coordinator and/or the Office for Access and Equity (OAE).
5. The following lists additional considerations in the search process:
   • Be sure to protect data so that others cannot gain access. For example, when making photocopies of search data, safeguard information that you have in your files (including notes, etc.), and avoid discussing or revealing information where others might overhear or see it, such as hallways, elevators, or open offices.
   • If you are contacted by someone who wishes to discuss a candidate, refer the person to the search chair or the search coordinator. Do not acknowledge whether the candidate is an applicant, since that would disclose information that is confidential.
   • Once the final debrief meeting has occurred, committee members will be advised to destroy all notes pertaining to the search process.
   • Be thoughtful when you generate written records related to a search. For example, a legitimate concern about the date of the candidate’s degree could be misinterpreted as age discrimination if your notes say something like, “Ph.D. in 1974!!!!” Consider writing only information that is relevant to the process. For example, whether the candidate has the necessary experience, education and skills for the position, or where there appear to be gaps in the needed qualifications.
Remember, communication about the search process is an important aspect of your role. Please do not hesitate to consult with the search committee chair or search coordinator if any questions arise concerning privacy and confidentiality.