Search Committee Chair Guidelines

The search committee chair serves as the leader of the search committee, coordinates the committee meetings, and facilitates the relationship between the committee and the hiring manager for the search. The chair is responsible for ensuring that every aspect of the search process is completed, whether they carry out the tasks personally or delegate them to others.

The search committee chair can call upon the hiring manager, search coordinator, EEO officer, OAE, or other ex-officio members to assist them in completing the duties of the position. The chair should hold a position at the same level as or a higher level than the vacant position.

The list provided below includes some of the typical responsibilities of the search chair.

Getting Started

- Complete the DiversityEdu training at least once every three years. It is recommended to complete the course as soon as feasible when you are assigned the role. For anyone who has not completed it by the time the announcement is posted, OAE will send an email and will temporarily remove access to view applications until the program is complete.
- Complete the Search Committee Chair training.
- Review and be familiar with the University of Illinois Recruitment and Hiring Guidelines, as well as other resources available in the Search Process Toolkit.
- Meet with the hiring manager to develop a search plan.

Committee Guidance

- Confirm that all search committee members have completed the Inclusive Hiring at Illinois training (required every two years).
- The hiring manager should attend the first meeting to provide the committee charge. The search committee chair will review the charge with the search committee at subsequent meetings, as needed.
- Develop timelines at the first search committee meeting, including plans for screening dates, future meetings, and interview schedule.
- Review expectations of confidentiality and attendance. Maintain confidentiality before, during and after the search of all search process discussions, candidate information and deliberations. All search committee members, including the diversity advocate, are expected to attend all search committee meetings.
- If working with Illinois Human Resources, include them in discussions of the search plan.

Job Description and Position Announcement

- Discuss the following with the hiring manager:
  - Using gender-neutral titles, checking pronouns and avoiding use of gender-charged words and superlatives (use Gender Decoder Tool).
  - Limiting the number of minimum requirements to broaden the pool of qualified applicants.
Posting duration is a reasonable amount of time to recruit a diverse pool of applicants.

Deciding what types of materials applicants will be required to submit that are job related (i.e., cover letter, resume/CV, teaching philosophy, diversity statement, etc.).

- Review position announcement with the hiring manager, search committee, and/or stakeholders, as appropriate.

Diversity of the Applicant Pool: Recruiting, Advertising, & Networking

- In collaboration with the diversity advocate, develop a recruitment strategy to ensure a diverse and talented pool of applicants. Good faith efforts (GFEs) should include outreach sources focused on addressing placement goals and hiring benchmarks. (Refer to dashboard)
  - Identify publications, websites, listservs, institutions, personal/direct contacts, professional social media groups, etc.
  - All search committee members should actively participate in networking, seeking out and recruiting qualified, diverse candidates.
  - Remind search committee members to save a copy of any postings/emails or notes regarding GFEs and provide information to the search coordinator.
- Before the search closes, review diversity of the applicant pool report (which can be requested by the department HR employee) and inform diversity advocate, hiring manager, and search coordinator of the characteristics of the pool if it is not diverse. The announcement can be extended before the close date, to conduct additional outreach, if needed.

Reviewing Applications and Selecting Finalists

- Prior to the review of any application materials, determine a plan to screen and evaluate candidates in a fair and equitable manner, as well as how screening decisions will be documented.
  - Agree on job-related evaluation criteria and develop a written outline that will be used by all committee members (i.e., checklist, rating form, spreadsheet, etc.)
  - Agree on rules of discussion and voting, and how to handle disagreement.
  - Avoid comments (either orally or in notes) that are not job related.
  - If bias is noticed, speak out and redirect the conversation.
  - Be aware of the possibility of your own implicit bias.
  - Consider alternatives to rank ordering, such as summaries of each semi-finalist.
- All applicants will need to be assigned a status/disposition code in Cornerstone.

Interviews Process

- Identify stakeholder groups you wish candidates to meet who are not on the search committee.
- Design a plan for the interview process and campus visits that provides similar opportunities for each finalist and follows interview procedures which treat all applicants equitably and consistently.
  - If a candidate requests an accommodation, please contact OAE for assistance.
- Develop specific job-related questions to ask during interviews. All candidates should be asked the same core set of questions, allowing for individualized follow-up questions as needed.
For topics to avoid please see: pre-employment inquiries – topics to avoid.
Consider including a diversity related interview question.

Create an interview rating sheet. Provide this to each interviewer before the interview and explain the importance of completing it based on job-related criteria.
Ensure that someone has scheduled online meetings and/or room reservations.

Checking References
Work with the hiring manager to determine who will check references. If the search chair or committee members will be checking references, use the reference checking guidelines and provide reference check notes to the search coordinator and/or hiring manager. The notes should include the name and title of person(s) contacted, the date they were contacted, if they are a personal or professional reference, and summary of their responses/feedback.

Completing the search
Search chair and search committee meets with hiring manager to give feedback.
Provide the search coordinator with a copy of the evaluation criteria, interview questions, and any supplementary materials pertaining to the selection process. Also, ensure closed/disposition codes are assigned to each applicant except the proposed hire, along with the required approvals, prior to anyone extending an offer.
Ensure an offer letter is prepared for the proposed appointee (in coordination with hiring manager).
Keep all non-selected applicants informed of the progress of the search.

Resources

Affirmative Action
- Review affirmative action laws, regulations, required posters, and the University’s commitment statement.

Search Process Toolkit
- Recruiting and hiring individuals to work at the University of Illinois is one of our most important cooperative responsibilities. The Search Process Toolkit is designed to provide resources to guide you through the various stages of the search process, to ensure the university is recruiting talent and making hiring decisions, in a fair and equitable way.

Recruitment Sources
- The recruitment resources section provides a broad range of recruitment ideas to help you optimize your hiring process and achieve your affirmative action goals.

Applicant Tracking System (ATS)
- The ATS is the web-based tool that job applicants use to browse and apply for open faculty and staff positions at the university, and which search committees and HR professionals use internally to manage recruitment workflows. Review job aids here.