Quick Reference Guide: Search Committee Best Practices

Who should be on a Search Committee?

- Four to six people makes it easier to schedule meetings and make decisions. One member will be appointed the search committee chair.
- Composition of committee members should include:
  - Members with different backgrounds, perspectives, and expertise
  - Members with knowledge of the department
  - Members with technical expertise that can evaluate the candidates’ qualifications
  - Appropriate stakeholders, such as peers, supervisors, those in similar positions, and people in other departments who will work with the person who is hired

Why Ensure a Diverse Search Committee?

- Provides a welcoming and inclusive environment to all applicants
- Offers a diversity of perspective to hiring managers, who make the final hiring decisions
- Can help to mitigate implicit (or unintentional) bias which otherwise might lead to inadvertently removing well-qualified applicants from the pool

Roles and Responsibilities

- Search Committee Chair (SSC)
  - Facilitate the search process
  - Organize committee
  - Provide committee with search criteria based on the minimum and preferred education and qualifications listed in the posting
  - Keep detailed documentation of the process
    - Communications and documentation related to a search may be subject to a public records request so it is important to be mindful of this
    - Inquires related to a public records request should be directed to the Office of Legal Affairs
  - Compliance
- Search Committee Members
  - Review all applicants
  - Advocate for candidates who should be considered
  - Be consistent in the way applicants are evaluated
    - Search committee members should all be using the same criteria to evaluate applicants
    - This criteria should be based on the minimum and preferred qualifications as they are listed in the job posting and should be set prior to the initial review of applicants
    - Use tools such as screening matrices to quantify your evaluation of the applicants
  - Maintain confidentiality
    - Discussion among search committee members are confidential
    - Applicant materials should not be shared with people outside the committee
• All notes and records of the search process should remain confidential, even when the search process concludes
  o Avoid unconscious bias and assumptions when evaluating candidates
• Administrative Support
  o Schedule search committee meetings
  o Organize applicant materials for committee
  o Schedule interviews with candidates
  o Coordinate travel for candidates
  o Assist with NinerTalent documentation

Unconscious Bias

• Implicit/Unconscious Bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner
• Avoid Unconscious Bias
  o Contemporary forms of discrimination are subtle, unintentional, automatic, unconscious, and pervasive
  o These effects are the same as for “traditional” discrimination, but they are harder to address
  o Best Practices for Avoiding Bias
    ▪ Ensure the position description aligns with the evaluation matrix
    ▪ Candidate evaluations should be completed prior to any group discussions
    ▪ Take time when evaluating the candidates
    ▪ Be aware of the possibility of your own bias
    ▪ Insist on evidence and not opinions
    ▪ Test yourself at: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

Links and Information

• EHRA Non-Faculty Administration Website
• Legal Affairs – Search Committee Fundamentals Website
• Contact eparecruitment@uncc.edu with any questions