

Search Committee Instructions



Search Committee Composition

The composition of a search committee should be carefully constructed in order to create a group of individuals who can work together to accomplish the goal of recommending the best qualified candidates. The search committee serves as a partner with the administration in filling college vacancies. The chair has several criteria to consider when nominating members for the search committee. These include: personal integrity, good judgment, and independent thinking. The committee also needs to reflect the interests of various constituencies who have a stake in the outcome of the search. These stakeholders need to be willing and able to make the time commitment to the process and be willing to perform the work required of search committee members.

A successful committee is also composed of individuals that represent a broad base of interests throughout the college. Bargaining unit and administrative representation, student and community representation, gender and minority group representation all need to be balanced with the stakeholder and personal qualities criteria in the art of creating a successful working committee. Having an odd number of team members helps to avoid gridlock.

The search chair is responsible for identifying individuals willing to serve and for making the final recommendations of committee members. The committee membership is approved by the Affirmative Action Officer.

Search Committee Responsibility

Commitment and Attendance: Search committee members are making a commitment to the search process. They must agree to make themselves available during all aspects of the search process.

Confidentiality: Committee members must adhere to the strictest of confidentiality standards in their communications outside the committee. All searches are confidential in nature and the candidates must be able to trust that the privacy of their application will be protected. The following items are of particular concern: (1) confidentiality of the names of candidates, prior to the selection of finalists, and (2) committee member opinions expressed during deliberations. Committee Chair and members must agree to and sign the Confidentiality Agreement.

Record Keeping: It is imperative that the committee members keep good records. These records should include rules made by the committee, screening criteria, interview questions and schedules, and lists of candidates interviewed.

This information is available in alternative formats by calling (763) 576-4700. TTY users can call Minnesota Relay at (800) 627-3529. Anoka Technical College • (763) 576-4700 • 1355 West Highway 10, Anoka, MN 55303 • A member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System • Anoka Technical College is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and educator.

Communications: In order to build a climate of acceptance for the eventual appointment, it is advised that the committee establish in advance a plan for the communications that will occur throughout the process. Depending upon the type of vacancy, the committee may decide to report the number of applicants, the interview dates or other update information in a formal manner to keep the rest of the employee populations informed.

Search Committee Role

Prior to the Search Committee being established, the President must approve a Permission to Hire form and appoint Search Committee Chair. For an existing position, the position description will have been reviewed and updated as necessary. For a new position, the vacancy will have been established, the position description written, the position given a classification, the employment conditions of the position established, and a determination made whether or not underutilization exists under the Affirmative Action Plan.

Criteria Development, Posting and Recruiting: The criteria development, posting, recruitment and advertising phase of the process is the first major task of the committee. The Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) will assist the committee in providing resources and information as to posting requirements. The committee will discuss and recommend the advertising and recruitment activities with the goal of creating the best and most diverse pool of qualified applicants.

In conjunction with posting and recruitment, the committee will need to establish the screening criteria. The tools needed for this phase of the process are the job description (or the faculty criteria) and the language used to create the postings and advertising copy. The information in these documents will serve as the basis for the criteria developed for screening out unqualified candidates. The committee needs to keep in mind that screening criteria may not exceed posted and advertised criteria.

For example: the committee may want to establish that at least 2 years of experience is necessary to be successful at this position. This becomes a criterion for screening out applicants. The art in this is to create rules that are realistic and valid for the position and to document them well so that they are consistently applied during the screening phase.

The committee will need to document the screening criteria on a worksheet/grid. This worksheet, or rating form, will then be used by the committee members to screen and take notes while reviewing all the applicant files.

Approval of the Pool of Applicants: Prior to the screening process, the pool of applicants must be approved by the Affirmative Action Officer. It is possible that the pool of applicants is not sufficient to begin the process and that additional recruiting activities will be considered. Additional recruiting may continue until there is an adequate pool or it is determined that further recruiting efforts will not positively affect the pool. The Affirmative Action Officer gathers the information as to the composition of the pool and

is responsible for approving the pool of applicants, or discussing the need for additional recruiting efforts with the search chair. **The search will continue only when the pool of applicants has been approved by the Affirmative Action Officer.**

Screening

The screening process may take place on an individual basis or, if there are a large number of applicants, committee members may want to work in teams. Each applicant file will already have been reviewed for completeness and timeliness and all identifying information redacted by the Human Resources staff and made available for review. Each committee member screener should review applicant files within the agreed upon time frame, using the criteria/rating form established by the committee, and should document their own recommendation to the committee for candidates selected for interviews.

Selection of Semi-Finalist

The committee will meet again after the screening process is complete to bring forward their individual recommendations and to deliberate in order to arrive at the group of semi-finalists to interview. If a semi-finalist is a friend or relative of one of the members of the search committee, it is strongly recommended that the search committee member withdraw from the committee so there will be no charge of bias or conflict of interest.

Interview Preparation

The committee will decide how to communicate with the semi-finalist to determine the interview date, time and location. The committee will develop interview questions that will test the strengths, weaknesses and qualifications of the candidates. All of the questions the committee develops should be job related. There may be questions concerning:

- the applicant's previous education and work experience;
- interest in the job duties and the college;
- willingness to accept the working conditions;
- hypothetical situations where you ask the applicants to tell you how they might handle a particular problem;
- behavioral questions/scenarios;
- essay questions;
- exercises dealing with creation of written materials (may be assigned in advance);
- a teaching demonstration for a faculty position;
- a sales presentation for a customized training coordinator position.

The CHRO is available to help the committee with creating the questions and provide sample questions. There are endless possibilities that may be helpful in creating a situation that will provide useful information. Again, the questions, demonstration or exercises must be job related and be administered to all candidates that are interviewed.

The interview questions should be prepared in written format with adequate space for committee members to take notes during the interview on the applicant's responses. Each committee member should be provided a set of interview questions and a copy of each candidate's resume for reference during the individual interviews. The committee should plan the interview session including determining who will greet the applicants, who will make introductions, the amount of time available for each interview, and assign questions to each committee member.

Interviewing Guidelines: Federal and state laws, regulations and court decisions in the area of equal opportunity all point to the necessity for employment interviews which are job related, standardized, and objective. To those ends, the following guidelines have been developed for persons responsible for interviewing prospective employees.

Although questions regarding any of the following areas may or may not be discriminatory or illegal, an interviewer should be aware that these are the factors most commonly involved in charges of discrimination. Therefore, as a general rule, unless there is an overriding job related, documented necessity to know, DO NOT inquire into the following:

- Arrest or conviction records
- Age, date of birth, birthplace
- Citizenship
- Credit or garnishment records or public assistance status
- Family situation - number, ages of children, child care
- Marital status or number of dependents
- Disabilities
- Religious or political affiliations or activities
- National origin or ancestry
- High School graduation date

Answers to questions in some of the above areas may produce an adverse effect on the opportunities of protected class members (women, minorities, disabled), or of older persons, to receive full consideration for employment. In any of the listed areas, answers to questions may trigger biases, either positive or negative, on the part of the interviewer which have no relationship to the ability of the candidate to perform the work for which he/she is being interviewed.

If the applicant discloses private data, it is the committee's responsibility to NOT consider that information during their deliberations.

During the interview, do not allow your words or actions to convey an incorrect or biased impression by:

- Joking or talking down to candidates
- Patronizing or presuming
- Using terms that trigger negative reactions such as referring to women as

“gals” or “girls”, identifying staff as “minorities” or “handicapped.”

Do focus your attention on job-related abilities and avoid questioning in areas that make no difference to job performance, are none of the committee’s business, and could open an individual or the committee to a charge of discrimination.

Do keep the entire process job-related, standardized, and objective. The rewards should be not only avoidance of charges of discrimination, but also selection of the most qualified candidate.

The Interview: Schedule the interviews in an appropriate setting. Interviews should be conducted in a quiet, private area where interruptions will not occur. The committee may chose to provide water, a tablet of paper and a pen for the applicant to take notes. It is important to remember that every candidate should be treated similarly and given the same amount of time and consideration during the interview. Differences in the interview setting could be perceived as unfair by applicants.

Allow enough time for each candidate so that you can get complete answers to all of your questions and have time to review prior to the next interview. Begin the interview by trying to put each candidate at ease and introduce all of the committee members. Using the interview question documents, ask the same job related questions of all candidates and record the major points of their answers.

Second Interviews: If, after the initial interviews, the committee feels they do not have enough information to make an adequate recommendation, they may certainly narrow the pool again and bring candidates back for a second interview. Conducting reference checks at this stage of the process can help the team in narrowing the pool.

Reference Checks

Reference checks must be conducted prior to the committee’s recommendation of candidates to the President. The search committee chair is responsible for conducting reference checks and may enlist the help of team members. Once reference checks have been completed, the supervising administrator will make the final recommendation first to their Vice President and then to the President. The President makes the final hiring decision..

Recommendation:

The final charge of the search committee is to recommend at least three fully qualified, unranked candidates to the Vice President/Hiring Supervisor and the President. After the interviews the committee members will individually review all the information related to the candidates and summarize the strengths and weaknesses. The committee members will put forth their individual recommendation of three candidates to the committee chair. Every search committee will determine the method for individuals to put forth their recommendations. The committee may want to pass slips of paper to the chair anonymously or use a more verbal approach.

Once the search committee has agreed upon the top three unranked candidates their charge is complete. The search committee may be called together again in cases of applicant withdrawal, or negative reference checks.

It is the responsibility of the committee chair or appropriate administrator to communicate with the interviewees and the Search Committee members as to the outcome of the process. The Human Resources staff will communicate with all other candidates as to the outcome of the process.

All records including copies of applications, rating forms, interview questions, search committee notes from interview, etc. are to be turned in to Human Resource upon completion of the search process.