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Standards & Guidelines

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A Guideline for the Screening and Appointment of Academic Librarians Using a Search Committee

I. Personnel Officer

The role of the personnel officer, if there is one, is to administer the search for the search committee. The personnel officer may serve as a regular or ex-officio member of all search committees.

II. Formation of search committees

The primary goal in the formation of a search committee, elected or appointed, should be to create a body representative of the constituencies affected by the position. Persons accepting appointment to the committee disqualify themselves as candidates for the position.

The administrator to whom the committee reports should give the following written information at the first meeting:

1. Approximate date for submission of a list of nominees and proposed date of appointment;
2. Number of finalists to be recommended;
3. Affirmative action/equal opportunity requirements;
4. Arrangements for payments, reimbursements, and clerical assistance;
5. Standards for documenting committee actions and preserving those records;
6. Importance of confidentiality and discretion;
7. Concerns specific to the position; and
8. Copy of the position description.

III. Development and use of the position description or position announcement

At the outset of the search, the supervisor of the position should write (or approve) a position description with equal opportunity and affirmative action considerations in mind. The description should serve as the standard against which the candidates are judged. It should list the responsibilities of the position in detail and describe the education, experience, and competencies that are required, preferred, and desired of candidates.

IV. Posting the position

The library should advertise the position within the campus community and in appropriate regional and national publications, taking care to notify all potential groups of candidates protected by equal opportunity/affirmative action legislation. The advertisement should include a brief description of the responsibilities, qualifications, salary, and other benefits. It should also specify the date the position is available, application deadline, name of the person to whom to submit applications, and a list of items each candidate must submit. The library should advertise in print publications, on electronic discussion lists, and on the Web; it may consider using placement centers.

V. References

The search committee should solicit references only for qualified candidates under active consideration and from the list supplied by the candidate. The search committee may only contact additional referees with a candidate's permission. The search committee must hold all references in strict confidence and should advise each referee what information will be made available to the candidate in accordance with local practice. Each candidate should list only referees who can provide substantive information about his or her professional qualifications and should also list an administrator in the direct reporting line.

VI. Selection, Interview, and administrative Procedures

A. Selection Procedures

Each committee should screen and evaluate applicants according to library and institution-wide policies. All applications will undergo an initial screening for compliance with the qualifications and requirements stated in the position description. Unqualified candidates will not receive further consideration.

Fair, objective, and consistent procedures should be used to narrow the field of candidates to the desired number of finalists, whom the committee will invite for interviews. The search committee should be aware of institutional guidelines and all applicable laws when developing questions to ask the candidates selected for interviews.

B. Interview Procedures

The committee and the appropriate administrative officer shall determine the interview agenda. All parties should adhere to this schedule in the interest of time and fairness.

Candidates invited for an interview should receive a copy of the interview schedule and information about the library and its parent organization in advance of the interview. Such information could include guides to the library, promotion and tenure guidelines, organizational charts, and by-laws.

The expenses of travel, meals, and lodging for the candidates should be borne by the inviting institution whether the interviews are held on or off campus. When this is not the practice, the candidate should be so apprised when an invitation is issued.

If a presentation is required of the candidates, that requirement should be clearly communicated to each candidate when the interview is first scheduled.

C. Administrative Procedures

The responsible administrator should instruct the committee chairperson in the prompt and accurate completion of all search-related reports. Sensitive files relating to the search should be treated in accordance with laws, regulations, and local practices.

VII. Communications with Candidates

A. Successful Candidate

Only the proper administrator should contact the successful candidate after the interview. The initial notification of selection may be oral, but the official offer should be in writing and should include the specific terms of employment.

B. Unsuccessful Candidates

A letter should be sent to all unsuccessful applicants thanking them for their interest and indicating that the search has concluded. Special acknowledgement should be accorded all interviewees.

C. Miscellaneous

All active candidates should be notified if the decision is made to close or extend the search.

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Last Revised: July 17, 2007