Faculty Search Committee Guide: Practices & Workflow

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This document is meant to serve as a guide to search committees leading up to and during the search process. It is designed to work in conjunction with the English department's Search and Hiring Protocols as well as the department's Search Workflow and Toolkit packet.

Part I: Roles and Expectations of Search Committees

General Committee Procedures: What procedures or best practices should the committee put in place at various stages in the search process? Some questions to consider:

- How—through which modalities—will members of the committee communicate their concerns or raise questions (i.e., via email, in meetings)?
- At each stage, how often will the committee meet? Starting in Fall quarter, would it make sense to pre-schedule a weekly or biweekly meeting? Should the committee decide to pre-schedule regular meetings, these might be used for checking in during the application review period?
- Who sets meeting agendas and/or runs committee meetings, and how can the committee ensure that members' perspectives are represented in agendas?
- How—through which procedures—will members of the committee attempt to resolve conflicts?
- How should conflicts of interest between members of the committee and concerns regarding the integrity of the search be raised and addressed? (Please be sure to refer to the department search and hiring protocolss for guidelines on addressing conflicts of interest.)
- When—under which circumstances—should the department chair play a role in the committee's proceedings? Possible circumstances could include:
    - Solving conflicts between committee members.
    - Clarifying/explaining the committee's work within the context of departmental and UW policies and procedures.
    - Intervening in committee incidents that require the input and decision-making of the EC.
    - Note: Except for circumstances that require intervention or changed search circumstances, the department chair does not typically call search committee meetings.
    - See "The Role of the Department Chair" below for routine interactions between the department chair and search committee.

The Committee in General: What are the expectations, responsibilities, and roles of search committee members?

- Any committee member can request search committee meetings.
- All members of the committee are expected to contribute to the success of the search.
- Unless the search committee appoints an ad-drafting group prior to the appointment of a search committee, committee members contribute to the drafting of job ads and search criteria and are

responsible for adhering to the terms of the ad and criteria (see sample job ad and criteria in the Search Workflow and Toolkit packet).

- All members contribute to the work of publicizing job ads by identifying job posting venues, reaching out to professional networks, and soliciting potential candidates.
- Via the criteria, all members reach an agreement about shared standards for evaluating job applications.
- All members are responsible for reading and ranking job applications.
- All members contribute to a deliberative process through which a long list of candidates for preliminary interviews is determined.
- All members draft interview questions and participate in long list preliminary interviews.
- All members contribute to a deliberative process through which 3-4 candidates are chosen for final/campus interviews.
- When consensus cannot be reached, committee members should make every effort possible to reach compromise, consulting with the department chair as needed. If a compromise cannot be reached, the search committee and department chair will consult about how to faithfully represent the disagreement during the committee's recommendations to the department.
- Committee members should create room as needed for revisiting decisions if one or more members seek further deliberation. Such space should ideally take the form of an in-person or virtual meeting. *Certain decisions—such as those that pertain to details about candidates and applications—must not take place over email.*

Committee's Spring and Summer Tasks: In regard to steps 1-7 of the "Search Workflow" packet (covering Spring and Summer prior to start of search), what can committee members expect to be asked to do?

The search committee mainly needs to be available during summer in order to answer questions regarding the ad and criteria posed by the EC, the College, or AHR, or to approve changes recommended by any of the above. Although the process of moving the ad and criteria through each of steps 1-7 could begin in Spring quarter, the process will likely continue—and has customarily continued—into the summer.

- Once a search is approved by the College, the department chair works with EC to appoint a search committee. [May]
- Department chair creates a search case ("Request to Search") for each search in Interfolio. [May]
- If a job ad drafting group was not appointed beforehand, the search committee drafts the job ad and criteria and shares it with the department chair and EC. [May or June]
- Department chair schedules a preliminary meeting with the search committees to review search committee expectations and discuss application review start dates, as these will appear in the ads. At this meeting, search committees also consider venues in which to distribute the ads and other recruitment strategies. [May or June]
- The EC reviews and endorses job ads and criteria.[May or June]
- If the EC suggests revisions, the search committee responds. [May or June]

- Department chair submits the ads and criteria, along with search committee names, to the Divisional Dean for review and approval. [May or June]
- The department chair shares the job ads and criteria with the department [May or June] and passes along any feedback for the committee's consideration.
- Department chair submits ad(s) and criteria for AHR review via Interfolio; this process cannot happen until the Provost has approved the search(es) and could take 2-3 weeks.[July or August]
- AHR feedback is shared with committee members and the committee consults with the chair about any revisions. Department chair communicates any changes to the EC. [July or August]
- After AHR approval, the department chair shares the final version of the ad(s) and criteria with the department and posts job ads in Chronicle and MLA. [September]
- Note: If additional venues are identified in Spring quarter to widen and diversify the applicant pool, then consider simultaneously posting job ads at these venues. [See "Appendix A" of the 2013 "Diversity Committee Guidelines for Hiring Best Practices," which recommend that "Letters of solicitation should be sent out in early September [...] This means that work constructing the applicant pool should take place during the summer prior to the search."

The Role of the Committee Chair: What is the role of the search committee chair? What are the specific expectations, responsibilities, and capabilities of faculty assigned to this role?

- The chair calls and schedules committee meetings.
- Sets an agenda for the committee's work based on the search workflow process and helps to manage search logistics.
- Creates conditions for collective deliberation and faithfully represents the will of the search committee in decision making.
- Negotiates disagreements and works collaboratively to negotiate and resolve differences. When differences can't be resolved, the search committee chair constructively reports these differences.
- Acts as the liaison between the committee and the department Chair and EC.
- Submits disposition codes to the appropriate departmental administrator at the close of each stage of the review process. (See "Disposition Codes" below as well as in the Search Workflow and Toolkit packet.)
- Presents committee decisions and processes to the department.
- Notices issues that may emerge among committee members and attempts to address them, if needed in consultation with the department chair, EC, vice provost of faculty advancement, or divisional Dean.
- Works with staff to coordinate preliminary interviews and final interviews/campus visits. This includes organizing meetings with departmental faculty and graduate students, and faculty from around the College, for finalists' itineraries.
- Works with staff and search committee members to host each finalist's visit. For virtual visits, the chair might begin each remote meeting, facilitating introductions, and making the transition between meetings. The chair will work with other members of the search committee to distribute responsibility for introducing finalists before each job talk.

- The committee chair writes to the department seeking feedback on finalists after campus visits.
- The committee chair presents the search committee's process and committee's hiring recommendations in a department faculty meeting.
- With feedback from the committee, the committee chair drafts a final committee report after the faculty meeting and vote (see samples in Search Workflow and Toolkit packet).
- The committee chair submits disposition codes for the remaining finalist to Karla Tofte or other appropriate administrator.

The Role of the Department Chair: At which stages of the search process is it customary for the departmental chair to be in conversation with the search committee?

- After the committee has been constituted, to explain the committee's obligations over Spring quarter and during the summer as the job ad and criteria go through the College and AHR review and approval process.
- At the beginning of Autumn Quarter, to discuss the Search workflow and best practices, as well as to schedule a meeting with the Divisional Dean and the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement.
- At the end of the meeting during which the search committee has discussed the long list of candidates for preliminary interviews, to discuss the committee's process and decisions.
- To send the names/files and share feedback about the long list from the divisional dean.
- Reviews and gives feedback on long list interview questions.
- Participates in conducting Zoom interviews with long list candidates.
- At the end of the meeting during which the committee has selected its campus finalists, the department chair meets with the search committee to discuss the committee's process and decisions.
- To inform and share feedback from the divisional Dean about the finalists.
- To notify finalists about their selection and discuss the next steps toward planning campus visits/final interviews.
- To meet with finalists during the final interview/campus visit.
- To discuss the committee's final ranking of finalists ahead of the faculty meeting and prepare for the faculty meeting and vote.
- To negotiate all aspects of the job offer and negotiations, and to keep the search committee as well as the department updated on the status of the negotiations.
- The department chair serves as the primary point of contact and communication with applicants throughout the search process, including sending notifications of search committee decisions during various stages of the review process. *All individual communication from applicants to search committee members should be sent to the department chair.*

Part II: Guidelines for Conducting Faculty Job Searches

Reading Applications

- In early Fall, the committee should decide on how to handle applications received after the priority due date, including whether it will read applications received a few hours past priority date. Typically, the committee is not expected to read applications received after the priority due date. It may choose to do so if all committee members want to expand the applications pool because they are not satisfied with the priority pool.
- Some applications might not include reference letters by the priority date, and the committee can consider those, especially if it is not reviewing letters in the early stages. However, as per AHR rules, an applicant will not be able to advance to a later stage if their application is considered incomplete.
    - The committee may decide to hold reference letters in abeyance until a second review round. The second round could occur after identifying the top 20-30 candidates and before constituting a long list (8-14 candidates) for preliminary interviews. If the timeline for searches is early (ie, the priority deadline is in September), then the committee could solicit letters from only long-listed candidates.
- Prior to reviewing applications, the committee should revisit the job ad and criteria, and should discuss strategies for using the criteria while reading.
    - If early during the review process search committee members realize the criteria need to be adjusted, the committee should meet to discuss and agree on adjustments. The committee should then re-read applications that had been reviewed prior to the revised criteria.
    - **As part of best practices:** The committee could test the rubric by collectively reviewing one or more application(s) with it.
- Minor concerns about any of the long-listed candidates' materials can inform the questions the committee asks during the preliminary interview stage.

Disposition Codes

- "As a federal contractor, UW is required to track disposition data in order to maintain compliance with applicable regulations and laws. [...] UW has created distinct disposition codes to identify why an applicant falls out of consideration (i.e., reason for rejection)." For more information, visit the Office of Academic Personnel webpage.
- The committee chair must assign a "disposition code" to each candidate not chosen for the long list (see Search Workflow and Toolkit packet).
- **Best Practices:** Review the "Disposition Matrix" with committee members and department chair in advance to understand and confirm the relationship between the search criteria and the disposition codes.
- Once the committee agrees on the long list, the committee chair submits disposition codes for all other applicants to Karla Tofte (or the appropriate departmental administrator).

- When sending disposition codes, please identify which candidates were in the top 20-30, and which of those have been chosen for the long list. Should a long-listed candidate withdraw, another from the top 20 or 30 may be chosen.

Long List Preliminary Interviews

- Once the committee agrees on the long list of candidates for preliminary interviews and after the list has been approved by the divisional dean, Karla Tofte sends interview invitations to the candidates and manages the scheduling.
- Interviews are generally held during finals week at the end of autumn quarter. During years when the department is conducting multiple searches, we will need to stagger the interviews and start earlier.
- Interviews run for 45 minutes each, with 15 minute breaks in between.
- The committee formulates a list of interview questions that cover three main areas: research, teaching, and service (see sample questions in the Search Workflow and Toolkit packet). The committee may determine whether to send interview questions to candidates in advance, not to send them, or to send a partial list of questions in advance and alert the candidates that there will be a couple additional follow up questions that the committee will also ask during the interview. It is permissible to ask follow up questions while keeping in mind the time constraints.
- After the interviews, the committee meets to discuss the candidates in order to arrive at a short list of 3-4 finalists and two alternates for final/campus visits interviews. The department chair will attend the latter part of this meeting.
- The committee chair shares the short list and alternates with the department chair, who passes these (along with the candidates' complete files) to the divisional dean for approval to invite candidates for campus visits. Once the divisional dean approves, the department chair sends a "Notice of Intention to Invite" to the department faculty, which includes the names and CVs of candidates, and a deadline for objections. If objections are received, please refer to the Department Search and Hiring Protocols for guidance.
- Afterward, the department chair proceeds to call the finalists and extend invitations to them for campus visits to take place between mid January and mid February.
- During this time, each committee member sends a list of dates when they would not be available for the virtual campus visits to the department chair.
- **For virtual campus visits**: The chair may offer each of the finalists a set of times from which they can select a three day window. Once they have selected those, the chair runs the visit days by the search committee before confirming with the finalists. From there, the assistant to the chair begins working with the committee chair to build the schedule.

Campus Visits (virtual or in-person)

- Job talk prompts:
    - The committee sends a job talk prompt to finalists in advance of the visit. This is an example of the prompt, which can be adjusted to suit specific search conditions: "Please prepare a talk of about 40 mins, followed by 20-30 mins for Q&A, on a topic related to your research. The

audience will be faculty and graduate students from all three tracks of the English department: Language and Rhetoric, Literature and Culture, and Creative Writing. We also expect to have in attendance colleagues from affiliated departments and programs across the College, such as American Ethnic Studies, History, Comparative Literature, Gender Women and Sexuality Studies, and Communication."

- The department chair and assistant to the chair request job talk title and description from the finalists, and will create and distribute the job talk flier.
- The department chair announces the finalist visit dates.
- The department chair sends the finalists a packet of information about the department as well as campus resources and videos maintained on the Office of Faculty Advancement website.
- For virtual visits: Offer stipends (to be given for the job talks) for finalists to reduce barriers to sufficient and equitable meeting conditions. Stipends from department gifts or endowments may be used for such things as hotel stays, child and/or elder care, or electronic equipment.
- Organizing finalist visits:
    - The search committee chair is responsible for organizing visits, and works with Karla Tofte or the appropriate departmental administrator.
    - Finalists may request to meet with particular members of the faculty from the department, College, and/or University.
    - The Office of Faculty Advancement's "Faculty Hiring in a Virtual Environment" offers useful guidelines for hosting virtual campus visits.
    - **DEI Best Practices:** Organize small group session with faculty from across the College and/or University for unfiltered conversation about how non-white faculty experience the UW, Seattle, and the Pacific Northwest. Include any faculty finalists requested to meet. Minimizing one-on-one meetings reduces the inequitable burden placed on non-white faculty in the recruitment process.
    - Itineraries are generally composed of meetings with small "coffee" groups of departmental faculty. Other meetings are mandated for every itinerary. These meetings are with:
        - The Department Chair (required)
        - The Divisional Dean of the Humanities (required)
        - The Director of the Simpson Center (typical)
        - The Suzzallo Librarian for the English department (typical)
        - Department undergraduate and graduate directors (typical)
        - Graduate students (typical)
    - Other meetings may be organized thematically and could include faculty from the department and across the College and/or University. Other potential meeting guests who highlight key aspects of University life may include:
        - Alexes Harris - Special Assistant to the Provost, Faculty Development Program.
        - Polly Olsen (Yakama) Director DEAI & Decolonization; Tribal Liaison, Burke Museum.
        - Alvin Logan, Director of Education, Burke Museum.

        - Kathryn Pursch Cornforth - Director of Community Engagement, Center for Experiential Learning and Diversity.
    - The decision to add other meetings/meeting guests may be guided by specific interests and requests of visiting finalists.
- During finalist visits:
    - The committee chair works with staff and search committee members to host each finalist's visit. For virtual visits, the chair might begin each remote meeting, facilitating introductions and making the transition between meetings. The chair will work with other members of the search committee to distribute responsibility for introducing finalists before each job talk.
    - Since some visits might still be in the planning stages while another visit is underway, the committee chair continuously works with staff to coordinate finalist visits. This includes organizing meetings with departmental faculty and graduate students, and faculty from around the College, for finalists' itineraries.

Post-Visit Practices & Concluding the Search

- After campus visits, the committee chair writes to the department seeking feedback on finalists after campus visits. (Karla Tofte or the appropriate administrator sets up an online survey.)
- The search committee meets to rank the finalists and discuss their rationale, including whether any of the finalists are not rankable. The department chair meets with the search committee to discuss their ranking and to prepare for the faculty meeting.
- The committee chair presents the committee's recommendations and processes to the department in a faculty meeting. The Google Slides presentation includes:
    - A recap of the job ad and search criteria.
    - A brief overview of the search process and timeline.
    - The committee's recommendation for ranking finalists.
    - A brief overview of each ranked finalist's record in terms of research, teaching, service, and commitment to DEI, as related to the job ad and evaluation criteria. (This overview provides a rationale for the committee's rankings.)
    - The committee's proposed motions for making an offer.
    - The committee chair may share presentation responsibilities with other committee members.
- The department chair reports to the department the results of the faculty vote (and in cases where an absolute majority approval is not achieved, will seek EC approval for a follow up mail ballot).
- The department chair reaches out to finalists after the faculty meeting and vote, and becomes the primary point of contact for communication with finalists during negotiations. At this stage, the department chair is the liaison between finalists and departmental faculty, including the search committee.
- Once an offer has been accepted, the committee chair drafts a final committee report with feedback from other committee members (see sample report in Search Workflow and Toolkit packet).
- The committee chair submits disposition codes for the remaining finalists to Karla Tofte or other appropriate administrator.