Faculty Recruitment:

Best Practices in Searching for Excellence

A Guide for Search Committee Members

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Introduction

Welcome to “Faculty Recruitment – Best Practices in Searching for Excellence,” a workshop sponsored by the National Science Foundation through the ADVANCE group at the University of Delaware. The University of Delaware has set out to extend the University’s growth and progress to new levels through a Path to Prominence™, which establishes faculty excellence at the top of a list of capabilities required to achieve the milestones the University community has defined as targets. Clearly, successful faculty searches are a critical ingredient to promoting faculty excellence and achieving milestones on the path to a University that is fully engaged in addressing the critical issues of our day at all levels and in all constituencies of the institution.

Their clear importance notwithstanding, successful faculty searches are not easily conducted. Several authors describe the challenges [Dettmar, Bromert, Fietzer, Gilreath]; they include expense (in money and faculty time), voluminous application packets in varied formats, short timelines to complete the search, disagreements among search committee members regarding priorities in candidate qualifications, inconsistent application of evaluation criteria to candidate dossiers, and inadequate communication with all candidates regarding the progress of the search. There are too few empirical studies of search committee effectiveness to make generalizations [Howze], but there is evidence that qualified candidates may be overlooked by search committees when the number of applicants is large. There is also evidence that candidate evaluation can be undermined by subjectivity and relativity in evaluation and assessment [Ariely, Dovidio (2005), Ditto, Tversky, Wenneras]. Many prescriptions have been advanced, but the idea that search committees benefit from training in task-specific skills such as interviewing and assessment is frequently repeated [Howze, Fietzer, Gilreath, Moody Blair and Banaji] and is an option that naturally appeals to academics.

This workshop seeks to initiate the dissemination of relevant social-science literature and task-specific search skills at Delaware to promote faculty excellence in the context of University core values. Our premise is that just as a more nuanced view of human rationality has led to improved models of decision making in economics, business and the law [Ariely, Kahneman, Korobkin], using the results of behavioral and cognitive science to improve search committee operation and deliberations will lead to improved practice and outcomes in faculty searches.

Development of this workshop was guided by a long bibliography, which you will find as an appendix to this manual. Thank you for your participation in this workshop--we hope you will stay in touch with us and give us the benefit of your insights after you’ve had
time to consider this manual and perhaps review some of the references in more detail. The workshop organizing committee looks forward to your feedback.
I. Running an Effective and Efficient Search Committee—For Search Committee Chairs

A. Before the Committee Meets

It is important to start thinking about diversity before your committee meets. In fact, as committee chair, your first responsibility is to build a diverse search committee.

Some units establish search committee composition with little to no input from the search committee chair. When you are asked to chair a faculty search committee, you should discuss the composition of the committee with the department chair, advocating for a role in building the committee composition.

Including women and under-represented minority members on your search committee can offer diverse perspectives and new ideas to enhance your efforts to recruit and evaluate candidates. You may consider inviting individuals beyond your own unit’s faculty members to participate. Examples include faculty members from other departments and alumni or colleagues from local industry (inclusion of the latter two requires approval of Office of Affirmative Action). When recruiting faculty from outside your unit, solicit support from the individual’s department chair. (Faculty recruitment is a time-intensive commitment that needs to be valued and rewarded.)

Remember, each search committee member need not be in a position to evaluate all aspects of an applicant to the same degree. For example, while some may be closely aligned with the proposed scholarly activities, others may be better positioned to evaluate teaching pedagogy.

Next, schedule your first meeting early. Holding your first meeting well before your application deadline will allow your search committee to develop and implement an effective recruitment plan and will provide the time needed to discuss and establish criteria for evaluating applicants.

Consider holding your first meeting the spring before the search officially starts. This strategy will give the committee an opportunity to plan discussions over the summer, leaving you better prepared for the fall when the search begins.

Leadership is critical. Make sure the dean (or a representative from the College) and the department chair attend the initial meeting to share their perspectives for the goals of the search, their commitment to diversity and excellence and to answer any questions.
Before concluding your meeting, schedule future meetings. (Ask committee members to bring their calendars to facilitate this goal). Taking the time to schedule additional meetings has the benefit of setting your expectations for the time commitment involved in the search process. Further, you should use this opportunity to set establish attendance guidelines. As delineated below, having all members attend all meetings greatly facilitates the search process.

B. Running an Effective and Efficient Search Committee

Now that your committee is formed, it’s time to start building rapport among the members. Active involvement of every committee member helps you reach a broad base of potential candidates. To generate active participation, set the tone in the first meeting. In productive search committees, the committee members feel that their work is important, that each of them has an essential role in the process, and that their involvement in the search process will make a difference.

Some tips include:

• Begin with brief introductions to get your committee members talking and comfortable with each other. The assumption that members already know one another may not be correct—particularly if the search committee includes a student representative or members from outside the department.
• Be enthusiastic about the position, potential candidate pool, and composition of the search committee.
• Remind committee members that building the applicant pool is critical and MUST be a proactive process. The committee should not wait for applications to “come in over the transom.”
• Explain that the search process is far more idiosyncratic and creative than the screening process and stress that committee members can put their individual stamp on the process by shaping the pool.

Remember to actively involve all committee members in discussions and search procedures. A broad pool is generated by a broad group of people. You will need assistance from every member of the committee for the process to be successful. Try to make sure that each member of the committee feels involved, valued, and motivated to play a significant role in the search.

Some tips include:

• Look at each member of the committee while you are speaking.
Include in your first meeting at least one exercise in which you ask for a contribution from each committee member—this might be a discussion of the essential characteristics of a successful candidate or a brainstorming session about people to contact to help identify candidates.

Take note of body language or speech habits that indicate someone is trying unsuccessfully to speak and then give them an opening.

Be especially sensitive to interpersonal dynamics that prevent members from being full participants in the process. Many of us may assume, for example, that senior faculty are more likely than junior faculty to have connections or ideas about people to contact for nominations, or that students will be less critical in their evaluations. Sometimes these assumptions are correct, but we have all had our assumptions challenged by the junior colleague who nominates a great candidate or the student who designs an insightful interview question.

Before leaving a topic, be sure to ask if there are any more comments, or specifically ask committee members who have not spoken if they agree with the conclusions or have anything to add. Be sure to do this in a way that implies you are asking because the committee values their opinion; try not to embarrass them or suggest that they need your help in being heard.

If you notice that a committee member does not speak at all, you might talk with them after the meeting and mention that you are grateful that they are donating their time. Ask if they feel comfortable in the meeting and if there is anything you can do to facilitate their participation. This may be particularly important if your committee has a student member who is intimidated by having to speak in a room full of faculty.

As chair, it is your responsibility to run efficient meetings. The first meeting can be a lot like the first class of a semester—it shapes the attitudes of the committee members about the process and their role in it. The goal is to make the committee members feel that what they are doing is important so that they will make time for the meetings and for work outside the meetings. It is essential that the committee members feel that attending committee meetings is a good use of their time and that their presence will make a difference.

Some tips to achieve this include:

- Present an agenda with time allotted to each topic and generally try to adhere to the agenda.
- Begin by reviewing the agenda and obtain agreement on agenda items. If one committee member is digressing or dominating a discussion, politely try to redirect the discussion by referring back to the agenda (e.g., “If we are going to get to all of our agenda items today, we probably need to move to the next topic now”).
- If you deviate from your agenda or run over time, acknowledge it and give a reason
(e.g., “I know we spent more time on this topic than we had planned, but I thought the discussion was important and didn’t want to cut it off”) so that your committee members feel that their time was well spent, that the meeting was not a random process, and that they can anticipate useful and well-run meetings in the future.

- Try to end your meetings on time so that all committee members are present for the entire discussion.

C. Tasks to Accomplish in Your Initial Meetings

Discuss and develop goals for the search and use the agreed-upon goals to develop recruitment strategies and criteria for evaluation of candidates. Frequently, refer back to the criteria you established to reinforce their significance.

Discuss and establish ground rules for the committee. These should cover such items as:

- **Attendance**: it is important to require all search members to attend all search-committee meetings and activities. The work of a search committee is cumulative and it can be very frustrating if a member who has missed one or more meetings raises issues and/or questions that have already been discussed at previous meetings. More importantly, evaluation of candidates can be hampered when one or more committee members have missed discussion of all candidates’ qualifications. In order to help committee members attend all committee meetings, it is important to schedule meetings well in advance. If you can, establish a schedule of meetings at the outset.

- **Decision making**: how will your committee make decisions? By consensus? By voting? It is important to determine this at the outset.

- **Confidentiality**: “One of the biggest challenges of maintaining confidentiality within the search is avoiding off-the-cuff informal comments search-committee members may make to colleagues,” says John Dowling, Sr. University Legal Counsel, UW–Madison. He recommends that to keep the process as focused and self-contained as possible, specifics of the search should not be discussed with anyone outside the search committee until finalists are announced. This policy respects and protects the privacy of candidates and protects the search committee. Search committee members must be free to discuss the candidates during committee meetings without fearing that their comments will be shared outside the deliberations. The names of candidates who have requested confidentiality should not be brought up even in casual conversations. This policy does not preclude committee members from soliciting advice/expertise from other faculty members within the unit.

- **Other common ground rules** you may wish to establish include turning off cell phones, being on time, treating other committee members with respect even if there is a disagreement, etc. Whatever ground rules you establish should represent a consensus
and should be accepted by the entire committee. They may need to be reviewed and updated periodically.

**Discuss roles and expectations of the search committee members** Make sure your committee members know what is expected of them in terms of attending meetings, building the candidate pool, evaluating candidates, etc. **Make sure your committee members know that participation in this search will require considerable time and effort.**

Some of the roles/expectations for search committee members include helping to:
- publicize the search
- recruit candidates
- develop evaluation criteria
- evaluate candidates
- develop interview questions
- interview candidates
- host candidates who interview on campus
- assure that the search process is fair and equitable
- maintain confidentiality

**Review University and College policies and procedures for search committees**
http://www.udel.edu/ExecVP/policies/personnel/4-01.html
http://www.art-sci.udel.edu/administrative/handbook/Recruitment%20Prodecures.doc

**Raise and discuss issues of diversity.** Hiring the best person for your open faculty position involves searching from a large and diverse pool of candidates. Additionally, just as your search committee benefits from the perspectives and insights of a diverse group of members, your departmental faculty grows in excellence and richness as it grows in diversity. Not all members of the search committee may have considered this fact before joining the committee, and it is your responsibility as chair to raise the issue and ensure that the committee as a whole has diversity in mind as it solicits and evaluates applications. Remember the dean has already discussed his or her commitment to recruiting a diverse and excellent faculty--it is your job to make sure that the committee shares this goal.

D. Anticipating problems

Despite your best efforts to gain the support of your search committee and actively involve them in the search process, your meetings and efforts may not proceed as smoothly and effectively as you would like. It may help to anticipate problems and
think about how to resolve them. You can seek advice from your department chair or from past search committee chairs. Some common problems that former search-committee chairs have identified are listed below, along with resources that may help you overcome them:

1. **Resistance to efforts to enhance diversity**

   - Allow all members of the search committee to voice their opinions and participate in a discussion on diversity and the search committee’s roles and responsibilities in recruiting and evaluating a diverse pool of candidates.
   - Remind your search committee that they represent the interests of the department as a whole and, in a broader context, the interests of the university.
   - Remind the search committee that it is not the case that they must sacrifice excellence for diversity (see Section II for more on this subject).
   - Stress that failure to recruit and fairly evaluate a diverse pool of candidates may jeopardize the search; that it may be too late to address the issue when and if you are asked, “Why are there no women or minorities on your finalist list?”
   - Rely on your discussion of diversity in this workshop and on the materials in Elements II and III to help you facilitate a discussion of diversity within your search committee and/or to respond to resistance.
   - Consider inviting someone with expertise on research documenting the value of diversity to your committee meetings. The NSF ADVANCE group is available to provide such assistance; email Pam Cook at cook@math.udel.edu.

2. **One member dominates the meetings**

   Review and/or refer to the ground rules you established for your search committee meetings.

3. **Power dynamics of the group prevent some members from fully participating**

   Although a search committee composed of a diverse group of individuals is recommended and helps you to incorporate diverse views and perspectives into your search, you should also recognize that differences in the status and power of the members of your search committee may influence their participation. Junior faculty members, for example, may be reluctant to disagree with senior faculty members who may later evaluate them for tenure promotion. Minority and/or women search-committee members may not be comfortable if they are the only member of the search committee to advocate for minority and/or female candidates. Though minority and/or women search-committee members can help you recruit a more diverse pool, it is not reasonable to expect them to be the only advocates for diversity. As search-committee chair you should evaluate your committee’s interactions to assess whether such power
imbalances are influencing your search. If so, you can attempt to improve the group dynamics by: having private conversations with relevant members of the search committee; or reviewing/establishing ground rules that encourage participation from all members.

E. Concluding your meetings

To encourage productivity between meetings, **assign specific tasks to committee members.** For example, each committee member could be asked to:

- identify/contact a specified number of sources who can refer you to potential candidates.
- suggest a certain number of venues for posting job announcements.
- review a specified number of applications.

Before your next meeting, send committee members a written or emailed **reminder of their assigned tasks** so that they know they are expected to follow through and to report on their activities at the next meeting.

**Hold committee members accountable.** Ask each committee member to report on his or her search activities at every committee meeting.

F. Resources

**Affirmative Action Recruitment Policy**

http://www.udel.edu/ExecVP/policies/personnel/4-01.html

**Faculty Search Manual, Council on Faculty Diversity and Inclusion, Boston University**


**Running a Job Search, American Historical Association**


**MIT, Faculty Search Handbook**

http://web.mit.edu/faculty/reports/FacultySearch.pdf
II. Actively Recruit an Excellent and Diverse Pool of Candidates

How, When, Where, and Why

The faculty search is a critical part of maintaining the vitality, creativity and relevance of scholarship and pedagogy at the university, and for expanding the university’s accomplishments on the Path to Prominence™. New faculty bring their own new insights but can also catalyze new efforts in current faculty through discussions and collaborations. Consequently it is imperative to ensure the broadest possible reach of the recruitment process, as a larger pool intrinsically increases the likelihood of identifying stronger candidates. Attaining this goal requires attracting applications from candidates who might not otherwise have applied, and this requires an active role from the search committee and others.

Growing the pool requires a conscious effort; the typical route of placing an ad and waiting for applications is no longer sufficient. In this competitive hiring market, some of the best candidates may not see your ad or may not see themselves in your advertised position without some encouragement. Think broadly and creatively about recruiting candidates, and do so continuously, not just when the search process gets under way. This is a responsibility not just for members of the search committee, but for all faculty interested in maintaining and improving the level of scholarship in the department.

A large and adequately representative candidate pool is necessarily also a diverse one. The diversity of the university’s faculty and staff influences its strength and intellectual personality. At the campus level as well as at the departmental level, we need diversity in discipline, intellectual outlook, cognitive style, and personality to offer students the breadth of ideas that constitutes a dynamic intellectual community. Diversity of experience, age, physical ability, religion, ethnicity, and gender contributes to the richness of the environment for teaching and research and provides students and the public with a university that reflects the society it serves (Smith 1997). More specifically, a diverse faculty is more likely to offer representative role models for the diverse student body that it serves.

The time to discuss diversity is at the beginning of the search. It is too late to address the issue when and if you are asked, “Why are there no women or minorities on your finalist list?” Frequently, search committees answer such questions by claiming that “there weren’t any women or minority applicants,” or “there weren’t any good ones.” (Smith 1996) One goal of your search should be to ensure that there are outstanding women and minorities in your pool of candidates.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that every person hired at the University of Delaware should know that they were hired because they were the best person for the job. By generating larger and more diverse pools of applicants for every position, the
best candidate for the position will be a woman, minority, or disabled person more often than in the past.

Notes

1 A valuable literature review and an extensive annotated bibliography of research on the impact of diversity on college campuses can be found in Smith 1997. See also Congressional Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering and Technology (CAWMSSET), Land of Plenty: Diversity as America’s Competitive Edge in Science, Engineering and Technology (Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation, September 2000), 1, 9–13; and Turner, et al. 2002.

2 For a discussion of the potential negative consequences of “affirmative action” and how these can be eliminated by focusing on the centrality of merit in the decision-making process see: Heilman, et al. 1987 and Heilman 1998. See also Brown, et al. 1984.

Common Views on Expanding the Candidate Pool—and Some Responses

Previous search committee chairs have sometimes heard the following, or similar, statements from their search committee members and other faculty in their departments. Such views may also be raised during your discussions. Some suggestions for responding to such statements are provided.

• “We shouldn’t have to convince a person to be a candidate.” In fact, many of the finalists in searches across campus—for positions as diverse as assistant professor, provost, and chancellor—had to be convinced to apply. Some candidates may think their credentials don’t fit, that they are too junior, or that they don’t want to live in a town like Newark. Talk to prospective candidates and ask them to let the committee evaluate their credentials. Remind them that without knowing who will be in the pool, you can’t predict how any given candidate will compare and ask them to postpone making judgments themselves until a later time in the process. Once they are in the pool, either side can always decide that the fit isn’t a good one, but if candidates don’t enter the pool, the committee loses the opportunity to consider them. Another argument to use with junior candidates is that the application process will provide valuable experience even if their application is unsuccessful in this search. Remind them that going through the process will make them more comfortable and knowledgeable when the job of their dreams comes along. Individual attention and persistence pay off—there are many examples from other searches of “reluctant” candidates who needed to be coaxed into the pool and turned out to be stellar finalists.

• “Excellent candidates need the same credentials as the person leaving the position.” There are many examples of highly successful people who have taken nontraditional career routes. Some of our best faculty were recruited when they had less than the typical amount of postdoctoral experience, were employed at teaching colleges, had taken a break from their careers, or were working in the private sector or in government positions. At the national level, it is interesting to note that none of the five female deans of colleges of engineering in the U.S. were department chairs before
becoming deans, and they are all highly successful deans. Think outside the box and recruit from unusual sources. You can always eliminate candidates from the pool later.

- **“I am fully in favor of diversity, but I don’t want to sacrifice quality for diversity.”** No one wants to or recommends sacrificing quality for diversity; indeed, no qualified minority/female candidate wants to be considered on the basis of diversity alone. The search committee should be responsible not only for finding and including highly qualified minority and female candidates, but also for ensuring that the candidates and the department/university in general know that they were selected on the basis of merit.

- **“We have to focus on hiring the ‘best.’”** True. But what is the best? If we have not sought to maximize the size and diversity of the pool of candidates, how will we know we have attracted the best possible candidates to apply? What are the criteria for the “best?” What is “best” for the department? The university? The students? Diverse faculty members will bring new and different perspectives, interests, and research questions that can enhance knowledge, understanding, and academic excellence in any field. Diverse and excellent faculty members can help attract and retain students from underrepresented groups. Diverse faculty members can enhance the educational experience of all students—minority and majority. Interacting with diverse faculty offers all students valuable lessons about the increasingly diverse world in which we live, and lessons about society, cultural differences, value systems, etc.

- **“Campuses are so focused on diversifying their faculties that heterosexual white males have no chance,” or “Recruiting women and minority faculty diminishes opportunities for white male faculty.”** A study examining the experiences of scholars who have recently earned doctorates and won prestigious fellowships (Ford, Mellon, and Spencer) found no evidence of discrimination against white men. Indeed, white men who had some expertise related to diversity had a significant advantage in the job market (Smith 1996, p. 65-70). Another study examining nationwide faculty hires in Sociology in 1991–92 also found no evidence of disadvantages for white men. Indeed, this study found that, despite some improvement, disadvantages still existed for “[white] women, minority men, and most especially minority women.” (Misra, et al., 1999)

- **“There are no women/minorities in our field, or no qualified women/minorities.”** Though women and minorities may be scarce in some fields, it is rarely the case that there are none. The search committee, as part of its efforts to build its pool, must actively seek out qualified women and minority candidates.

- **“The scarcity of faculty of color in the sciences means that few are available, those who are available are in high demand, and we can’t compete.”** In a recent study of the recipients of prestigious Ford Fellowships, all of whom are minorities, the majority, 54%, were not aggressively pursued for faculty positions despite holding postdoctoral
research appointments for up to six years after finishing their degrees (Smith 1996, p. 95). Only 11% of scholars of color were simultaneously recruited by several institutions, thus, the remaining 89% were not involved in “competitive bidding wars.” (Turner 2002, p. 16)

- “**Minority candidates would not want to come to our campus.**” The search committee should not make such decisions for the candidates, but should let the candidates decide if the campus and/or community is a good match for them. The search committee should show potential candidates how they might fit into our campus, provide them with resources for finding out more about our campus and community, and help them make connections to individuals and groups who may share their interests, race, ethnicity, etc. The Office of Equity and Inclusion, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission to Promote Racial and Cultural Diversity can help make these connections.

- “**People from Group X don’t make good teachers/administrators/faculty members, etc.**” We all make assumptions about people based on the university granting their degree, the part of the country or world they come from, and their ethnicity or gender. Encourage your committee members to recognize this and avoid making assumptions. Your pool will only be hurt by comments such as, “We never recruit well from the Midwest or the West” or “There are no women in [a given field].”

**How to Build a Large and Diverse Pool of Candidates**

Although the search committee is the focus of the effort to fill a particular faculty position, building a large and diverse pool of candidates should be an ongoing activity that involves all faculty and continues even when there is no current search active. Building an optimal pool requires making use of a wide variety of opportunities to identify suitable candidates, cultivating their interest in a position and maximizing the likelihood that they will apply. The following list includes numerous suggested approaches for building the pool; some of these actions can certainly be implemented successfully by a committee in the course of an active search, but others require a clear recognition by faculty of the importance of recruiting and a concomitant commitment to contribute.

- Develop a broad definition of the position and the desired scholarship, experience, and disciplinary background. Base the definition on longer-term programmatic priorities rather than on perceived short-term needs. Narrowly defined searches may tend to exclude women or minorities because of pipeline issues. Narrowly defined searches may limit your ability to consider candidates with a different profile who, nonetheless, qualify for your position. Be clear about what is really “required” and what is “preferred.” If appropriate, use “preferred” instead of “required,” “should” instead of “must,” etc., when describing qualifications and developing criteria. Consider including
“experience working with/teaching diverse groups/diverse students” as one of your preferred criteria.

• Reach out proactively via calls and letters to a wide range of contacts asking for potential candidates; individual discussions at professional meetings or during seminar visits are especially good opportunities for this. Ask specifically if they have female or minority candidates to recommend. Contacts who have diverse backgrounds or experiences may especially help you reach highly qualified minority/women candidates. Your own alumni in academic positions are familiar with the environment within the university and your department and should be committed to the continued growth and success of both, so they may be valuable sources as well.

• Make lists of professional meetings, professional societies, members of these societies, etc., and use them to recruit candidates. Many professional societies specifically include faculty search events in their programs.

• Make use of other databases and sources to help find lists of potential candidates. A list of on-line resources is included later in the chapter.

• Established faculty at smaller, less-well-known institutions may be good prospects. That they already have clear records of accomplishment makes it easier to evaluate their likelihood of success in a faculty position.

• Call potential candidates directly to encourage them to apply, or meet with them during seminar visits to their home departments. This can be done even before they are actively seeking positions; inviting especially promising prospects to visit campus for an informal seminar may help familiarize them with the opportunities here and raise their interest level in subsequently applying for a position.

• Remember to involve your search committee members actively and delegate specific tasks to them. For example, ask each member of your search committee to call ten colleagues and ask them to recommend potential candidates.

• At the spring faculty meeting before the search begins, charge the faculty with the task of attending meetings over the summer and reporting back in the fall on attendees who may be good potential hires.

• Obtain lists of attendees from specialty workshops such as the Rice University postdoc workshop (http://advance.rice.edu/negotiatingtheidealfacultyposition/resources.html). COACh also runs similar workshops for chemistry and physics (http://www.uoregon.edu/~coach/coachfiles/workshops.html).

• Above all, remember that at this point your goal is to EXPAND your pool of potential candidates. Sifting and winnowing will occur later in the process.
Resources for Writing a Job Description

The university's official procedures for faculty procedures are described at http://www.udel.edu/ExecVP/policies/personnel/4-01.html

This document also emphasizes the importance of diversity in the candidate pool, and incorporates procedures to enhance it.

Writing an Ad for a Faculty Position

1. **Title:** List all possible titles. Listing an Assistant Professor title would be incompatible with hiring a candidate who is currently an Associate or Full Professor elsewhere. The dean must have approved a search that would allow for hiring either at the junior or senior level; that information would have to be clearly stated in the ad.

2. **Required qualifications:** This is the heart of the ad and needs to be considered carefully, especially when determining what is required and what is preferred.
   - **Degree:** Make sure you don’t limit the pool artificially. If you write PhD, then an EdD is not acceptable. The phrase “earned doctorate” gives most flexibility if that is what you require. If other terminal degrees are possible (MFA, for example), be sure to include those options. You also should consider carefully what area that degree should be in, so as not to limit the pool; the phrase "or related fields" provides flexibility.
   - **Area:** There is a delicate balance between addressing departmental hiring priorities and ensuring excellence in the pool and in the candidate hired. Although there may be a clear or perceived need for adding faculty in a particular focus area, it is prudent to indicate to prospective candidates that the department is indeed open to hiring a very strong candidate in another area. Again this balance may be captured by using the term "preferred"; an explicit statement that applicants in all areas will be considered may also be added.

3. **Responsibilities:** It is not necessary to go into minute detail. However, don’t leave any area out. An applicant should be aware, for example, that responsibilities include: teaching at the undergraduate and graduate level; advising students; service activities at local, state, and national level, as well as at the university; research and scholarly productivity of nationally recognized quality. Applicants need to know what they are applying for.

4. **Application procedure:**
   - **Application package:** Decide exactly what you want in an application package, such as C.V., transcripts of graduate work, abstract of dissertation, and a description of research interests and likely projects.
• **Letters of reference**: State clearly whether you want three letters of reference sent directly to the search committee or if you just want names of referees. The last option can mean a lot of work for the search committee.

• **Deadline**: Choose a deadline that gives enough time to do the necessary advertising but doesn’t push you too close to the end of the hiring season. State what you expect to receive by the deadline, such as complete application package; complete application package plus letters of reference; letter of application and C.V.

• **Time for review of the ad**: Be sure you allow sufficient time for the ad to be reviewed. Keep in mind that some publications have long lead times for publishing notices of job openings.

5. **Affirmative Action and Confidentiality statements**: These statements are automatically included in the ad, which must be approved by the Office of Equity and Inclusion and the Office of Human Resources.

**Online Resources for Building a Diverse Pool of Candidates**

- The Association of American Colleges and Universities provides national leadership on issues of diversity in higher education. Its web site includes links at [http://www.aacu.org/resources/diversity/index.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/resources/diversity/index.cfm) to an extensive list of initiatives and publications relevant to campus diversity initiatives.

- The American Association of University Professors has long included as part of its core mission the challenge of increasing diversity in higher education. Its web site includes at [http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issues/diversity/](http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issues/diversity/) an extensive list of links to resources and a bibliography on the subject.

- The National Science Foundation conducts an annual survey of earned doctorates (SED) in collaboration with other Federal agencies; a related survey is that of doctorate recipients (SDR). Older publications and data are on the NSF web site at [http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvydoctorates/](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvydoctorates/), but the SED is now conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, which makes recent and current data available at [http://www.norc.org/projects/Survey+of+Earned+Doctorates.htm](http://www.norc.org/projects/Survey+of+Earned+Doctorates.htm). The university uses these data to benchmark national availability within academic positions by discipline.

**Online Postings of Job Announcements and/or Searchable Databases of Candidates**

This listing concentrates on databases for women and minorities in science and engineering, fields in which women and minorities are especially underrepresented. Professional societies in other areas may also maintain similar databases or postings.

- The Minority and Women Doctoral Directory ([http://www.mwdd.com](http://www.mwdd.com)) is a registry that “maintains up-to-date information on employment candidates who have recently received, or are soon to receive, a doctoral or master’s degree in their respective field from one of approximately two hundred major research universities in the United
States. The current edition of the Directory lists approximately 4,900 Black, Hispanic, American Indian, Asian American, and women students in nearly 80 fields in the sciences, engineering, the social sciences and the humanities.” The entire directory costs about $440, but you can reduce costs by purchasing rosters for specific disciplines. For ordering information see [http://www.mwdd.com/ORDER_FORMS.html](http://www.mwdd.com/ORDER_FORMS.html).

- Faculty For The Future is an initiative funded by the GE Foundation intended to increase representation of women and minorities on the faculty in several disciplines, notably science, engineering and business. The program is administered by Women in Engineering Programs and Advocates Network (WEPAN). The Faculty For The Future web site identifies itself as “the only Web site dedicated to linking a diverse pool of women and underrepresented minority candidates from engineering, science, and business with faculty and research positions at universities across the country.” Both résumés and positions can be posted at [http://www.engr.psu.edu/fff](http://www.engr.psu.edu/fff).

- The Association for Women in Science (AWIS) “is dedicated to achieving equality and full participation for women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.” Its website ([http://www.awis.org](http://www.awis.org)) includes job and résumé listings.

- The American Physical Society (APS) maintains the Roster of Women and Minorities in Physics ([http://www.aps.org/programs/roster/index.cfm](http://www.aps.org/programs/roster/index.cfm)), "a database that contains contact, educational and employment information for several hundred women and minority physicists."

- The American Chemical Society (ACS) includes the Committee on Minority Affairs (CMA) and Women Chemists Committee (WCC); links to their programs are at [http://portal.acs.org/portal/acs/corg/content?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=PP_ARTICLEMAIN&node_id=1167&use_sec=false&uuid=cae410fd-17f8-412b-b127-147275efd599](http://portal.acs.org/portal/acs/corg/content?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=PP_ARTICLEMAIN&node_id=1167&use_sec=false&uuid=cae410fd-17f8-412b-b127-147275efd599). ACS also provides for posting listings of job openings through the ACS Career Services ([http://chemistryjobs.acs.org/hr/jobs/](http://chemistryjobs.acs.org/hr/jobs/)) and the classifieds and careers components of Chemical & Engineering News ([http://pubs.acs.org/cen/](http://pubs.acs.org/cen/)).

- COACH was founded by a group of women faculty in chemistry but has a larger mission of aiding women scientists and engineers in overcoming obstacles to career advancement. Job listings may be posted at [http://coach.uoregon.edu/coach/index.php?page=Jobs](http://coach.uoregon.edu/coach/index.php?page=Jobs).

- The National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers ([http://www.nobcche.org](http://www.nobcche.org)) includes sites for posting and browsing both résumés and jobs.

- The Society of Women Engineers ([http://societyofwomencode.org](http://societyofwomencode.org)) maintains a résumé match/job match service.

• Professional organizations for the different engineering disciplines, e.g., IEEE, ASME, AIChe, include careers sections on their web sites that are suited for posting both jobs and résumés. These organizations also have print publications that can carry job ads.

• The Association of Women in Mathematics (AWM) has on its website information on careers as well as job listings of its own and of related organizations in mathematics and statistics (http://www.awm-math.org/career.html).

Places to Advertise Position Openings

In addition to the professional organizations and advocacy groups listed above, several publications and their on-line branches accept listings of academic positions.

• The Chronicle of Higher Education (http://chronicle.com/section/Jobs/61/)

• Diverse: Issues in Higher Education (http://www.diverseeducation.com/) was formerly Black Issues in Higher Education.

• Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education (http://www.hispanicoutlook.com/index.htm) is the “sole Hispanic educational magazine for the higher education community”.

• Insight into Diversity (http://www.insightintodiversity.com/) (formerly the Affirmative Action Register) has the objective of “connecting diverse professionals to diverse careers".
III. Raising Awareness of Cognitive Shortcuts and Their Influence on Evaluation of Candidates

What are cognitive shortcuts?

Every day our brains are flooded with information about the world around us and there are cognitive limits to our ability to process information. Cognitive shortcuts supply one way to deal with this “blooming buzzing confusion” of information. Category formation, for example, is one type of cognitive shortcut. Category formation involves sorting things into groups based on certain types of similarities. The formation of categories helps people form memories, make decisions, draw inferences, provides explanations, form generalizations, etc.

When we form categories about people—based on age, occupation, marital status, religion, sex, race, physical ability or appearance, and so forth—we develop certain implicit assumptions and expectations that we use in similar ways. These assumptions and expectations, in and of themselves, are not bad.

- We can use them to focus our attention on what is salient.
- We can use them to predict or understand the behavior of others.
- We use them to fill in gaps when information is absent.
- They help to process information quickly.
- They can facilitate new learning tasks.

However, research shows that they can sometimes be misapplied and can lead to inaccurate evaluations in individual cases.

Example: Evaluations of Height in Men and Women

Participants were shown photographs of people standing next to a reference point such as a desk or doorway, and asked to estimate the people’s heights. Participants were not aware that for each picture of a male subject there was one of a female subject of the same height. Researchers found that participants tended to overestimate the heights of male subjects and underestimate the heights of female subjects, especially in cases that violated the statistically accurate generalization that men tend to be taller than women (Biernat and Manis 1991).

From this example we conclude that:

- Implicit assumptions and expectations sometimes influence our evaluations of others.
- These assumptions, even when accurate, can sometimes lead to inaccurate evaluations of individuals.
Cognitive Shortcuts at Work in Evaluations of Professional Success

If cognitive shortcuts can lead to inaccurate evaluations of an objective and easily measured trait such as height, what happens when the qualities we are evaluating are not as objective or as easily measured? Numerous studies have examined the role of implicit assumptions and expectations in the evaluation of candidates for academic positions (Wennerås and Wold 1997; Steinpreis et al. 1999; Goldin and Rouse 2000; Trix and Psenka 2002). These studies—and many others (listed in the references below) — show that evaluations can be significantly influenced by the sex of the person being evaluated.

- A study of over 300 recommendation letters for medical faculty hired at a large U.S. medical school in the 1990s found that letters for female applicants differed systematically from those for males. Letters written for women were shorter, seemed to provide “minimal assurance” rather than solid recommendation, raised more doubts, and portrayed women as students and teachers while portraying men as researchers and professionals. While such differences were readily apparent, it is important to note that all letters studied were for successful candidates only (Trix and Psenka 2003). See Appendix C of this manual for further discussion of this study.
- In a national study, 238 academic psychologists (118 male, 120 female) evaluated a résumé randomly assigned a male or a female name. Both male and female participants gave the male applicant better evaluations for teaching, research, and service and were more likely to hire the male than the female applicant (Steinpreis et al. 1999).
- “Blind” auditions increased the percentage (25-46%) of women winning orchestral jobs and increased the probability that women would advance out of preliminary rounds (Goldin and Rouse 2000).
- A study of postdoctoral fellowships awarded by the Medical Research Council in Sweden found that women candidates needed substantially more publications to achieve the same rating as men, unless they personally knew someone on the panel (Wennerås and Wold 1997).
- Similar findings have been reported for NIH Pioneer Awards in 2005 (Carnes, et al. 1995).

Accumulation of Advantage

In some cases, the differences in evaluation may be large and in others they may be much smaller. It is important to keep in mind, however, that even small differences can add up over time and can have major consequences in salary, promotion, and prestige, including advancement to leadership positions.

“Mountains are molehills piled one on top of the other.” (Valian 1998, p. 25)

So, not only are implicit assumptions to be dealt with in recruitment activities, they must also be considered in all aspects of professional life.
We all do it...

Although we all like to think that we judge people based entirely on merit—the quality of their work and the nature of their achievements—studies suggest that every one of us has the potential to fall back on implicit assumptions in our evaluations of others.

- Most of us make implicit assumptions regardless of the social group(s) to which we belong (Valian 2000).
- Both women and men hold them about gender (Valian 2000).
- Both people of color and whites hold them about race and ethnicity (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Dovidio, 2001).
- Even those who are committed to egalitarian principles fall back on implicit assumptions sometimes (Dovidio, et al., 1997; Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Dovidio, 2001).
- People are often unaware that they possess them (Valian 2000).

When are we most likely to use them?

Research shows that people have a tendency to fall back on cognitive shortcuts when...

- Information is lacking or the situation is ambiguous (Dovidio).
- We are under stress, perhaps from competing tasks (Martell 1991).
- We experience time pressure (Martell 1991).
- We are distracted (Martell 1991).
- We see only a few individuals from the group we are judging (Heilman 1980).

These findings provide insight into how to reduce the influence of cognitive shortcuts.

Reducing the Impact of Cognitive Shortcuts

An important first step toward recruiting and reviewing an excellent and diverse pool of candidates is to reduce the influence of cognitive shortcuts. Below is a list of suggestions towards accomplishing this goal.

- Increase conscious awareness of cognitive shortcuts/implicit biases on evaluation of candidates.
- Learn about and discuss research on cognitive shortcuts.
- Develop explicit criteria for evaluating candidates, share them with the department, and apply them consistently to all applicants.
- Spend sufficient time (15–20 minutes) evaluating each applicant.
- Evaluate each candidate’s entire application; don’t depend too heavily on a single element such as the letters of recommendation, or the prestige of the degree-granting institution or postdoctoral program.
- Be able to defend every decision for rejecting or retaining a candidate—and keep careful notes.
• Periodically evaluate your decisions and consider whether cognitive shortcuts might have been at work.
• Periodically, qualified women and underrepresented minorities may not be included. If not, consider whether evaluation biases and assumptions are influencing your decisions.
IV. Ensuring a Fair and Thorough Review of Candidates

**Discuss And Develop Criteria For Evaluation**

It is not difficult to get a committee to agree that it should hire the best candidate. Determining the criteria for establishing who is “the best” is more difficult. The committee should meet early in the search process to discuss and develop criteria for selecting the best candidate.

- The search committee may wish to develop its selection criteria in terms of their validity as predictors of future success. Most agree, for example, that publications in top research journals predict future success. However, it is advisable to discuss other types of publications. In addition, publications are not the only indicator of the value of a candidate to a department. What other factors are important?

- Relatively broad criteria will generally lead to a more interesting list of candidates and leave room for “targets of opportunity.”

- Non-traditional or atypical career patterns should not exclude or inhibit otherwise qualified candidates from being considered.

- Although individual evaluation procedures may vary, the search committee may want to develop a rating form based on job-related criteria. A rating form may consist of a series of job-related questions or issues that the committee believes are crucial to the position.

- It is advisable that the committee periodically review their criteria to see if any need modification.

  **Example:** A candidate might bring interesting strengths to the department that differ from those originally sought. If such cases appear, the committee should reevaluate and possibly modify criteria for evaluation.

**Conduct the Review in Stages**

The first stage is the construction of a “long short list.” The goal, here, should be to come up with an interesting and diverse pool of candidates. The second stage is the creation of the short list. This list will consist of the candidates that the committee would like to interview.

**To get the both stages off to a good start, with the entire committee willing to consider all candidates objectively:**

- Emphasize that the committee represents the interests of the department as a whole and, in a broader context, the interests of the entire university.
• Remind the committee that the deans will expect the search committee chair to make a convincing case that the review was thorough and handled fairly.

• Remind the committee that increasing the diversity of the faculty is an important criterion to consider in choosing among otherwise comparable candidates.

**To make sure that diversity is considered seriously:**

• Remind the committee that diversity includes not only women and other underrepresented groups, but also diversity in national origin, research perspectives, religious perspectives, and so forth.

• Remind the committee of possible inadvertent assumptions that may intrude into the evaluation of candidates. Here are some examples:
  
  1. Degrees from smaller universities should not automatically be seen as inadequate.

  2. Reference letters from individuals not known to search-committee members should be given serious consideration.

  3. Applicants with disabilities must be evaluated in terms of the actual job requirements, with no thought given to accommodations.

  4. It must not be assumed, for example, that women are more transient than men.

• Require uniform application of standards in reviewing candidates.

**Creating the “Long Short List”**

• When reviewing candidates, start by briefly reviewing all applications to get a sense of the full range of possibilities.

  **Note:** Some search committee chairs recommend including a sign-in sheet in each candidate’s file for committee members to indicate that they have briefly reviewed the file.

• The next step is a more thorough review of each candidate. Each committee member should come up with his or her own list.

• Concentrate on selecting all potentially strong candidates regardless of personal preference. In cases of doubt, retain a candidate for review by the entire committee.

• Allow enough time to ensure consistent and reasonably thorough evaluation of each candidate. **Most search committee chairs recommend devoting at least 15–20 minutes per applicant.**
• Carefully examine all of an individual’s accomplishments, his or her potential for
growth, the diversity of perspective that he or she is likely to bring, and any unique
contribution the candidate would make to the department.

• Evaluate each candidate’s entire application; don’t depend too heavily on only one
element such as the letters of recommendation, or the prestige of the degree-granting
institution or postdoctoral program.

• To avoid eliminating potentially interesting candidates with nontraditional career
paths, examine a candidate’s entire career when applying selection criteria.

  Example: A woman who has earned her degree and entered the academic profession
  after taking time out to raise a family will undoubtedly have employment gaps
  and/or fewer publications than another candidate of the same age whose career
  has been uninterrupted. If one evaluates her publication record in terms of the
time period over which it was produced, however, she may well be the stronger
candidate.

• Committee members should periodically self-assess application of the criteria:
  Are you being consistent in your application of the criteria? Are you inadvertently
  relying on unwritten criteria? Are you unconsciously relying on cognitive shortcuts?

• Written comments reflecting the judgment of each member of the committee should be
  made for each candidate. Not only will this allow the search committee to determine
  which candidates are to be interviewed, it will also save time if it becomes necessary to
  return to the applicant pool at a later date.

  Note: Some search committee chairs find it helpful to provide a form that committee
  members can use to keep track of their evaluations.

• Meet with the search committee and develop a “long short list” by having the
  individual members present their conclusions.

• Discuss and evaluate your “long short list” before finalizing it. Are qualified women and
  underrepresented minorities included? If not, consider whether criteria were applied
  consistently.

Creating the Short List

This is likely to be the most difficult part of process, since committee members will
inevitably have different perspectives or preferences.

To handle the mechanics of selecting the short list efficiently and systematically:

• The committee meets to review and discuss their objectives, criteria, and procedures.

• Members of the search committee thoroughly review and evaluate the applications of
  those selected for the “long short list.”
• Devote at least 15–20 minutes to the evaluation of each applicant.

• Evaluate each candidate’s entire application; don’t depend too heavily on only one element such as the letters of recommendation, or the prestige of the degree-granting institution or postdoctoral program.

• Consider evaluating applicants on several different rating scales—one for teaching ability, one for research potential, one for mentoring potential, etc. Discuss the relative importance of different criteria.

• Keep sufficiently detailed notes so that the reasons for decisions will still be clear later.

• Consider including the top candidates from various separate rating scales in your “short list.”

• Search committee members meet to present initial evaluations.

• Do not allow individuals to dominate the process or to push for dropping or retaining candidates without defending their reasons.

• Ask quieter members of the committee for their opinions.

• Be sure that standards are being applied uniformly. Be able to defend every decision for rejecting or retaining a candidate.

• Evaluate your short list before finalizing it. Are qualified women and underrepresented minorities included? If not, consider whether evaluation biases or assumptions may be influencing your ratings.
V. Developing and Implementing an Effective Interview Process

There are **two key aims** of the interview:

1. Allow the hiring department to determine whether candidates possess the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes to be successful at University of Delaware.
2. Allow candidates to determine whether University of Delaware offers the opportunities, facilities, colleagues, and other attributes necessary for their successful employment.

Keep both of these aims in mind as you plan what to do **before, during, and after** the actual interviews to ensure an effective interview process and to enhance the quality of the overall hiring process.

**Before: Planning for an Effective Interview Process**

- **Together with your committee, articulate your interview goals.** Review and reflect on the desired qualifications of candidates; make sure that whatever interview design you develop will provide you with sufficient information to make your decisions.

- **Develop a set of core questions to be asked of each candidate.** Some search committee chairs prefer to rely on unstructured interviews rather than a prepared set of questions. This is acceptable so long as you develop some system of guaranteeing that someone asks every candidate the questions that will be key to your evaluation and comparison of the candidates. Such questions might include those relating to the following areas:
  - Educational background
  - Research experience
  - Teaching experience
  - Publication record
  - Current and future research interests
  - Current funding and potential sources of future funding
  - Ideas for future publications
  - Experience teaching and/or interacting with diverse populations

If, despite your efforts to ask each candidate all the questions you believe will be relevant to your evaluation, your committee finds itself evaluating one candidate on the basis of a response to an issue not raised with the remaining candidates, consider follow-up telephone conversations with the remaining candidates to solicit their responses and provide your committee with the ability to make comparisons.

- **Be sure all interviewers are aware of what questions are inappropriate.**
• **Consider who will interview the candidates.** Discuss how to raise interviewers’ awareness of potential for bias and prejudice. Discuss how to make sure that interviewers will not ask inappropriate questions. Discuss how to obtain and evaluate interviewers’ feedback.

• **Determine the interview structure and schedule.** Be sure to provide breaks for the candidate. Be sure to permit sufficient time for the interviews. Build in some flexibility.

• **Personalize the visit for each candidate.** Decide what events other than interviews the candidates will engage in (e.g., job talk, classroom presentation, tour of campus/city, meals, social events). Consider how you will learn about the candidates’ needs/interests.

• **Provide opportunities for women and minority members of the department to meet all candidates**—not just women and minority candidates. You may not always know that a candidate belongs to a minority group. Events at which candidates can meet other minority members can help them feel welcome.

• **Provide candidates with the opportunities to seek information about campus and resources from knowledgeable sources not directly involved in the search.** Ask someone from your college’s administration, a member of your college’s Human Resources department, or a dean in academic affairs, if they would consider meeting with each of your final candidates to provide them with information, referrals, or resources about diverse communities, university policies, childcare, etc. If the candidate has no diversity issues/needs, the person they meet with can serve as a neutral source of information about the department, college, community, etc. It is important that this individual be uninvolved in the evaluation process and that all matters discussed be kept strictly confidential. Scheduling a meeting for all of your final candidates with someone qualified to discuss their diverse needs or refer them to relevant individuals and resources prevents candidates from having to address these needs with members of the search committee.

• **Provide candidates with a detailed schedule** that identifies by name and affiliation each person who will interview them and a brief explanation of why this person is interviewing them.

• **Develop an information packet to share with all candidates.** This packet should include information about campus and the community and should provide candidates with references and resources they can use to meet their needs without having to inform search committee members of these needs. Human Resources at UD has developed a brochure “The University of Delaware and You” that can be obtained from HR to be distributed to the candidates when they visit. Additional useful information can be found on UD’s Human Resources’ web-page: [http://www.udel.edu/hr/](http://www.udel.edu/hr/)
During: Guidelines for Interviewing

- **Follow the plan established** before the interview process and allow enough time for the interviews.
- **Remind interviewers of what questions are inappropriate.** Also remind them that the same questions that are inappropriate for formal interviews are also inappropriate at meals, social events, and other informal gatherings.
- **Consider distributing a list of “inappropriate questions”** to all faculty members and interviewers shortly before candidates’ visits.
- **Make candidates feel welcome and comfortable.** It is critical to treat all candidates fairly and with respect. If you have reason to believe an interviewer may be hostile to hiring women and/or minorities, don’t leave the candidate alone with this interviewer. If a candidate is confronted with racist or sexist remarks, take positive and assertive steps to defuse the situation.
- **Encourage all faculty members to attend candidates’ talks/lectures.** This is an important part of making candidates feel welcome and respected.
- **Remind interviewers and faculty members to treat each candidate as a potential colleague** and stress that in addition to determining the candidates’ qualifications for the position, you want every candidate to conclude their visit with a good impression of the University of Delaware and its faculty. Point out that candidates who are not treated with respect and dignity can do lasting damage to a department’s reputation by informing others of how they were treated.
- **Allow sufficient time** for follow-up questions, candidate questions, and breaks.
- **Remind interviewers to complete evaluations.**

After: Evaluating the Interviewed Candidates

- **Meet with your search committee as soon as possible** after the completion of the interviews.
- **Follow the agreed-upon process for making hiring decisions**—evaluate candidates for their strengths and weaknesses on specific attributes.
- **Review the materials for Element III—Raise awareness of unconscious assumptions and their influence on evaluation of candidates.** Consider whether any such assumptions are influencing your evaluation of final candidates.
- **Check references following an agreed-upon format.** If phone calls are made, draw up a common set of questions to ask in all telephone interviews.
- **Communicate with both successful and unsuccessful candidates in a timely manner.**
- **Decide how to proceed if your top candidate turns you down.**
Appendix A: Interview Questions

Most materials taken from the University of Delaware’s Personnel Policies, Chapter VII
http://www.udel.edu/ExecVP/policies/personnel/4-01.html

You may ask certain questions about age, race, color, religion, sex, or national origin only if such questions are job related. If you are unsure what questions are permitted or not permitted, please contact the Office of Affirmative Action (302-831-2059) for advice.

There are three guidelines you should follow:

- Ask only for information you intend to use in making a hiring decision.
- Know in advance how you will use the information to make that decision.
- Recognize that it is difficult to defend seeking information that is not directly relevant to the job.

(In general: avoid questions related to race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, disability status, ancestry, religion, marital status and children, arrest or conviction record, guard or reserve status. And NO, there is no such thing as asking these questions “behind closed doors.”)

- **Marital and Family Status** – If you ask any questions about marital or family status, you must ask them of both male and female applicants. You may ask whether the applicant can meet specified work schedules or has commitments or responsibilities that may interfere with the position requirements. (This rarely applies to faculty positions!) You may not ask direct questions about the applicant’s marital status, the number and ages of children, childcare arrangements, or pregnancy, present or potential. For instance, you should not ask if a married woman’s husband is likely to be transferred or if a married man anticipates work absences because of his wife’s health.

- **Ancestry, National Origin, Race or Color** – You may ask what languages the applicant reads, speaks, or writes fluently when such skills are necessary for the vacant position; however, you may not ask how language skills were acquired because that may reveal the applicant’s nationality or race. You may not ask about the applicant’s lineage, ancestry, national origin, descent, birthplace, mother tongue or the national origin of the applicant’s parents or spouse. For example, you may not ask an applicant questions about race, skin color, eyes, hair, or other questions directly or
indirectly indicating race or color.

• **Education** – You may ask about an applicant's academic, professional, or technical education if it is a requirement for the position. You may not ask about the racial or religious affiliation of an educational institution. Such information may reveal the applicant's race, nationality or religious affiliation.

• **Organizational Affiliations** – You may ask about the applicant's membership only when the name or character would not reveal the race, politics, religion, color or ancestry.

• **Persons With Disabilities** – You may not ask whether applicants have any disabilities or health problems; sensory, mental, or physical. Also, you may not have medical examinations conducted until after you make a conditional offer of employment. If a conditional offer of employment is made, a medical examination may occur if the examination is required for all employees in that job category.

We have a responsibility to make an effort to accommodate employees and hire persons with disabilities as long as the accommodation does not create an undue hardship or the person with the disability does not create an immediate threat either to the health and safety of that person or others. Our obligation does not require that a job be designed for the person with a disability.

**NOTE:** If applicant states s/he has a spouse looking for employment, you can then discuss how you might be able to help.

**Logistics for Candidates Visits and Interviews**

Even if you have a staff assistant helping you in the logistics for the interview, it is critical that you as a search-committee chair take responsibility for that these items are appropriately handled:

• Clarify as to whether candidate’s expenses will be reimbursed and/or whether direct billing will be used. All candidates should be treated in the same manner and be clearly informed before the visit.
• Clarify who will make the travel arrangement (if via train or air: include transportation to and from the airport) and hotel reservations. What about transportation between hotel and campus? Campus parking?
• Who will greet the candidate? Will you have a “host” for the candidate? A host would meet with the candidate both formally and informally (e.g., dinner, breakfast, introduce the candidate at the seminar, office interview) and can serve as a natural point of contact for the candidate.
• Plan for individual and group meals and hospitality as well as refreshments and breaks
for candidates?

• Plan for tours of the department, campus, research labs, research centers. Ask the candidate if he or she would like to meet with someone in particular or visit particular labs/centers.

• What printed information do we wish to furnish regarding the campus, city, state?

• What do we need to tell the candidate about the interview activities, schedule, settings, types of presentations required?

• Providing all members of the interview team(s) or search committee with pertinent information about the candidates, rating forms, and interview schedule.

• Room reservations for interviews including AV equipment, flip charts, etc. needed for candidate presentations.

• Consulting the Human Resources for advice regarding visits to campus by candidates with disabilities.

• Send a schedule to the candidate well ahead of the interview.

• Clarify details about the presentation(s) the candidate is will give. Who will attend? Length of presentation? Time allotted for questions?
Appendix B: Responding to Applicants
(taken from www.ohr.wisc.edu/polproced/srchbk/sbkch3.pdf)

A thank-you letter should be sent promptly to all applicants upon receipt of their materials. This letter should state that unless confidentiality is requested in writing, information regarding the applicants and nominees must be released upon request; finalists cannot be guaranteed confidentiality. It may also contain information about the search committee’s time frame, since candidates will undoubtedly be anxious to know when they will be hearing about possible interviews. Additional information, e.g., papers or publications or a statement on his or her philosophy of education, may also be requested at this time.

It should also be added that no nominee for a position is a candidate until he or she has made direct contact with the search committee by letter, telephone, or submission of documents. Only bona fide candidates should be evaluated by the search committee.

In searches that involve a large number of candidates, not all members need to read all dossiers. It is advisable, however, for the chair of the committee to read all dossiers rejected in this screening. Polite letters of rejection should be sent at this point to candidates who do not meet the minimum qualifications for the position, rather than waiting until the entire search has been concluded.

Letters of Reference

Some candidates will ask their references to submit letters on their behalf; some will simply list the names and addresses of references willing to be contacted.

It is often advisable to state in the advertisement for the position that letters of reference should be sent directly to the chair of the search committee. The committee is not obligated to write to all the references submitted by the candidate; it may choose to contact only those whom it believes have the most pertinent information. When writing to a reference, it is advisable to send a copy of the position description along with whatever questions concerning the candidate’s experience, qualifications, and accomplishments the search committee wishes the individual to address. The reference should be informed that the recommendation will be treated confidentially only if he/she requests confidentiality in the reference letter.

If the search committee wants additional information or if the timeline is brief, telephone recommendations may be obtained. This is a valuable means of obtaining information about a candidate, for members of the search committee are able to cover issues and explore areas that are of interest to them. Specific job-related questions should be
developed for the telephone interview. Occasionally, references will prefer not to respond by telephone.

You may not ask questions of a reference that you are not permitted to ask of the candidate at an interview (refer to Appendix A). Please note that previous employers are often unwilling to give referrals to prospective employers for fear of negligent referral. In these cases, previous employers may do one of the following:

- Get a legal release of liability;
- Give no information; or
- Give only limited information, such as the employee’s title, dates of employment, and salary.

In giving references, a previous employer should give only truthful and job-related information about an employee, which includes anything in an employee’s personnel file that is signed by the employee. However, it is the prospective employer’s obligation to investigate, not the previous employer’s obligation to reveal information. To obtain meaningful references, prospective employers should:

- **Get the basics**: verify dates of employment, type of work done, job title, earnings, honesty, who the applicant worked for; and
- Get information on **job-related characteristics** the prospective employer is interested in, such as: honesty, integrity, work ethic, reliability, etc.

Convince the applicant that references will be checked by stating so in the application and at the interview. Ask the applicant about his or her eligibility for rehire, quality of work, attendance, and what his or her previous employer will say about the applicant.

Notes should be taken during the conversations with a candidate’s references so that a written record of the conversation may be placed in her or his folder. The search committee may request general personal and work references not relating to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or age. If there are select individuals whom the committee would like to contact about the candidate’s qualifications, it may inform the candidate of its wishes. It is not necessary, however, to have the candidate’s permission to make such calls. All questions asked and issues raised must, as with all references, be job-related and similar for all candidates. In addition, this information cannot be “off the record” or held confidential.

Occasionally, members of a search committee will receive unsolicited calls about a candidate. When this happens, it is advisable to ask the caller to restrict his or her remarks to job-related issues. The names of individuals who have provided information about a candidate to the search committee should be retained.
Appendix C: Letters of Recommendation

Letters of reference are a valuable tool for determining a candidate’s suitability for your open faculty position, and search committees tend to weigh these letters heavily. However, it is important to take into consideration that letters written for women can differ appreciably and systematically from letters written for men, and account for this trend when using the letters as an evaluation tool. In 2003 Trix and Psenka published a detailed study of over 300 letters of recommendation written for successful candidates for faculty positions at an American medical school (“Exploring the Color of Glass: Letters of Recommendation for Female and Male Medical Faculty,” Discourse Society 2003; 14; 191). In this appendix, we summarize the authors’ striking findings.

The authors found that letters written for female applicants tended to be shorter on average than those written for male applicants (227 words for women versus 253 for men), contained fewer references to professional attributes such as publication record and research, and contained more references to personal life (“she is close with my wife”).

Additionally, the authors devote several pages of their paper to the subject of “doubt raisers” or irrelevant, unexplained, or potentially negative comments such as “she has a challenging personality” or “he appears to be a highly motivated colleague.” Twenty-four percent of letters written for female candidates contained such doubt raisers, versus twelve percent for male candidates. Such doubt raisers weaken a candidate’s position, especially when they take the place of strong endorsements of a candidate’s research or teaching.

Since letters for women tend to be shorter than letters for men, in order for men and women—with presumably comparable training and publication records—to be presented equally, the women’s letters must be packed more tightly with strong, favorable information than the men’s. But according to this study, the opposite is actually the case—women’s letters contain more doubt raisers and less mention of research and career. The authors suggest that this trend may be a reflection of the composition of the medical community, where primarily male recommenders write letters to primarily male search-committee chairs, and resort to gender schemas when describing women, who are highly underrepresented among medical faculty.

Since women are also highly underrepresented in many science and engineering fields, we urge you to become familiar with this study and keep its findings in mind as you evaluate your candidate pool. To help summarize the authors’ findings, we include in this appendix one sample letter written for a female candidate and one sample letter written for a male candidate, copied directly from Trix and Psenka’s paper.
Sample Letter for Male Candidate:

Dear Dr Koop:

William Harvey MD, has been a Postdoctoral Scholar in Pediatric Orthopedic Oncology at Northsouthern School of Medicine. During his time at our institution Bill actively participated in our research and educational activities. During his last year at Northsouthern he also trained in Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery.

Dr Harvey’s research activities focused on the use of three dimensional contrast CT scanning for the assessment and quantification of blood flow and metabolism in solid bone tumors in the long bones of pediatric patients. An early study established a correlation between patterns of blood flow and tumor metabolism and the long term outcome of patients with solid tumors of long bones, while a second study . . . [+9 lines]

Some of this work has already been published in first rate orthopedic journals while other parts are currently under review by journals.

Bill’s accomplishments are important for they demonstrate and underscore the clinical significance of altered patterns of blood flow and tumor metabolism for patient mortality and morbidity as well as for defining their implications for the management of patients with expected very poor prognosis for limb salvage. His accomplishments have been recognized locally by having been awarded two consecutive grants by the Greater Affiliate of the American Society for Orthopedic Surgeons. We believe it is also fair to state that his accomplishments have received, at least to some degree, national recognition as evidenced by several job offers.

Overall, we have found Bill to be a highly intelligent and hard working young man. He communicates and collaborates well with his peers and supervisors. On a more personal side, it saddened us to see him leave our institution yet we were not able to retain him for lack of funds. We believe that Bill is a promising, highly productive and creative young researcher who undoubtedly will become an independent and innovative investigator. Therefore, it is with considerable enthusiasm that we support unequivocally the proposed appointment to Assistant Professor of Pediatric Orthopedic Surgery and Oncology.

Sincerely, Charles Lewis, MD
Chief, Dept. of Pediatric Oncology
Sample Letter for Female Candidate:

Dear Alfred:

I am writing to you a letter of recommendation for my good friend, Dr Sarah Gray MD. As you probably know, I’ve known Sarah for about 7 years. I watched her career development while working at Northsouthern University, her presentations and prize winning events at the Academy of Pediatrics while a resident at Northsouthern and then her fellowship year with myself and Dr Dolittle in St. Louis some years ago.

Without any doubt, I am struck with Sarah’s integrity. She is totally intolerant of shoddy research work and any work which has a hint of padding or error. Additionally, while working with her in St. Louis, I was able to watch her surgical skills. I felt she had been very well trained surgically in St. Louis but she has a slight touch of lack of confidence at times which I feel Sam Livingood is well aware of and will carefully work with Sarah regarding any matters like that during her clinical practice at Centvingtcsinq.

I feel the addition of Sarah to the faculty of Centvingtcsinq University and particularly to the Department of Cardiology of Children’s Hospital to be a tremendous plus for that center. Her research work over the last few years has been ‘top drawer’ and virtually unchallengeable. I can only predict a great future for this lady and I am delighted that she has returned to further her career.

If you have any further questions about Sarah I’d be happy to discuss it with you.

Sincerely yours,
Charles Lewis, MD
Chief, Division of Cardiology

Based upon these letters, which candidate would you hire?
References/Additional Resources


