SEARCH COMMITTEES

It is important to have a cross-functional search committee. For example, if hiring a librarian, it’s important to have a faculty member and student on the committee. If you’re hiring a purchasing agent, you might have a business manager and a faculty member, or possibly someone from the academic areas. Committees should be made up of at least three individuals. It’s helpful to have a committee that is diverse in technical expertise, gender balance and race/ethnicity.

A chairperson needs to be named to be in charge of every search committee. They are responsible for getting started, defining a mission or purpose statement, setting a timeframe on who’s going to contact applicants, preparing a screening matrix, discussing legal issues and sample interview questions, etc. The chairperson helps lay the groundwork for the committee, as well as rules and expectations for the group. Often, the chair is the main contact with the employment consultant. It is advisable to have an employment consultant attend the first committee meeting to answer member questions related to the hiring process and legal issues.

Other topics to predetermine would be
- additional advertisements, where to place, who will place, who will pay,
- screening criteria,
- budget issues beyond advertising,
- form of recommendation and who makes the final decision.

The charge should be written so there is no misunderstanding as time goes on. Many searches will take weeks, if not months, to complete.

The chair and other committee member roles should be identified in the first meeting. For example:
- Does the committee have the ability to make a hiring decision?
- Will they vote? If so, how – top candidate, top three candidates, etc.?
- What does the hiring manager expect from the committee?

Discuss different screening methods. Ranking applicants may take too much time depending on the number. Best to sort A,B,C or Y/N/Maybe piles.

One of the best screening tools is through a work example such as a case study question, responding to an email during the interview, debugging a computer program etc. Depending on the type of work examples and how much time you have, these examples can be done before or during the interview.
Prior to the first meeting

- Ensure the position is posted on the Purdue University employment Web site, http://www.purdue.edu/jobs.
- Notify members and thank them for their involvement.
- Have members bring calendars to schedule future meetings and interviews.
- Begin thinking of possible places to advertise.
- Arrange logistics of the meeting.
- Secure budget for search (transportation, travel, meals, etc.).
- Arrange for administrative support of the search.
- Assemble search documents (staff recruitment and selection manual, ad, job description, evaluation tools, charge, etc.)
- Invite your employment consultant to attend the first meeting.

First meeting

- Introduce committee members.
- Receive the charge, both written and verbal.
- Determine who on the committee will work with the employment consultant.
- Give each member a copy of the Staff Recruitment and Procedures Manual, or provide the Web site link.
- Review the job description and advertisement.
- Have any advertisements approved by the employment consultant.
- Discuss timeframe and plan future meetings/interviews.
- Receive training for the search.
- Design and/or agree upon screening matrix or device.
- Discuss roles and duties of committee members.
- Discuss how to review, rate, rank, or compare resumes. A matrix or spreadsheet with criteria/categories is often used.
- Discuss additional screening methods (presentations, work samples, portfolios).
- Begin to review resumes if they are available.

Second meeting

- Review and evaluate resumes.
- Agree upon screening methods.
- Discuss questions for phone interviews and follow-up interviews.
- Determine who to conduct phone interviews with.
- Work with the employment consultant for any prescreening questions that need to be answered by the applicant, such as salary needs, availability, etc.
Third meeting

- Conduct phone interviews.
- Update spreadsheets or matrix if being used.
- Determine candidates to bring to campus.
- Discuss logistics of campus interview: who will meet the candidate, interview, and go to lunch, etc.

Fourth meeting

- Determine top candidate or top three candidates - whichever the charge initially indicated.
- Conduct reference checks on top candidate or top candidates.
- Once an offer is accepted, make sure those interviewed but not selected have been advised in writing or by phone.
- Notify the employment consultant of the offer being accepted.
- Gather all hiring documentation, notes and questions etc. This should be returned with the hiring completion form once the position has been filled.
- Thank members for their time and involvement.