

## Guidelines for an Advisory Selection Committee

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Although there are defined procedures for Department Chair selection, there are not for other faculty leaders like Associate or Assistant Deans, Academic Directors of programs etc. This document is to provide guidance on advisory selection committees for faculty leaders. The objective is to assemble a diverse set of committee members who have a good understanding of the special nature of the institution and the portfolio and who understand the attributes and skill sets required to be successful as a committee member.

Selection committees should not be too large, with an optimal size of 5-7 members. The selection committee is advisory to the committee chair and the Dean.

**Search Committee Chair:** The chair of the search committee shall be the person to whom the leadership position in issue reports. The chair shall be a non-voting member except when necessary to break a tie vote.

Search committees are evolving from representative-based to competency-based. Members of the search committee should be selected based on their talents and skills for identifying the right candidates, more than the constituency each committee member represents. An ideal committee member is one with the right attributes AND also comes from a vested constituency

**Consider the following competencies** to help determine who should be included:

- Must be objective
- Must be candid
- Must set aside political agendas
- Must handle conflict like an adult
- Must keep confidences
- Must adopt an institutional orientation
- Is a good judge of people
- Is a good listener and communicator
- Is a skilled interviewer
- Must be an institutional ambassador
- Is a good recruiter as well as selector
- Must be able to compromise and build consensus

Members are normally leaders appointed by the Dean, or Chair of the committee. The Dean or Chair may also appoint other members of the University Community who would be able to provide an informed perspective relevant to the scope of responsibilities for the position in issue (such as students, alumni) where applicable to the position.

With respect to the question of a subordinate or direct report being on the selection committee: They should not be on a selection committee as they have an inherent conflict of interest.

Committee members will participate in “Understanding Unconscious Bias Training” and be provided with best practice education and guidance on the mechanics of the interview process. The committee should ensure best practices for equity and diversity are followed ([link to best practices guide](#)) and consult with a Diversity officer if needed. All members should complete a [Declaration of Conflict of Interest form](#).

### **Absolute Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is mandatory in order to ensure frank discussion and to respect the input and participation of everyone involved in each phase of the committee’s work. This requirement will ensure that the qualifications and appropriateness of individual candidates can be discussed openly within the committee, and that none of these discussions, even in part, will be disclosed. Members are committed to upholding the highest standards of confidentiality with respect to the committee’s activities. It is important to note, too, that this obligation of confidentiality continues once the committee’s work is complete and an appointment made. If there is any doubt at any time about the information that may be shared outside of the committee, members will seek the advice of the committee chair.

It is expected that committee members in a variety of settings, both professional and personal will receive advice and recommendations on issues and possible candidates. (Names of the committee members are not publicized as it induces lobbying; however represented constituencies or skill sets may be made known if asked.) In social settings and elsewhere, colleagues and acquaintances may suspect or be aware that one is a member of the search committee, and they will likely have heard of, or will speculate on, the names of potential or actual candidates who might be before the search committee for consideration. (If the committee decides to publicize the shortlist of candidates for a public presentation, which would be very unusual, then an electronic survey to collect opinions confidentially in a transparent and equitable fashion would be appropriate). Otherwise, speculative verbal feedback introduces a bias and should not be considered. It is essential that members not share their own commentary, assessment, or reflections on names or issues before the committee or believed to be before the committee.

### **Assessing Controversies or Unpopular Decisions**

Any successful administrator in any sector will have taken calculated risks or made changes to the status quo that may not be universally popular. As well, universities by definition are at times publicly disputatious places. Most candidates with meaningful administrative experience will accordingly have participated in some difficult decisions or weathered controversies.

Committee members, individually and collectively, must ensure that the facts of these controversies or unpopular decisions are well understood. Adverse experience may raise questions about a given candidate's judgment or character, or may highlight that candidate's courage, confidence, initiative, and capacity for growth.

A range of perspectives derived from comprehensive reference checking and due diligence is therefore important in helping committee members to form balanced conclusions.

### **Candidacy of Committee Members**

In drawing a committee together, the chair should take into consideration the potential candidacy of committee members but cannot be expected to determine *a priori* the appropriateness or otherwise of any one person's qualifications or interests. In addition, a committee member may be identified at some point in the committee's deliberations as a potential candidate, or may wish to be considered. For example, a search committee may choose to consider all committee members qualified for the position, using a process determined in advance by the committee. In instances where a committee member is identified as a candidate, the member should resign from the committee as soon as possible in order not to compromise the process. Declarations of candidacy by committee members after the process is well advanced should be discouraged, as these candidacies will almost always raise concerns about fairness and due process.

Exceptions may be made in those instances where: a committee member was seen as a candidate early in the process but did not seek the position; the field is deemed unsatisfactory by the committee; and a determination is made that the chair should approach the committee member to reconsider and enter the process.

#### ***\*The above taken and modified from Utoronto Search Committee Principles & Practices***

Review of resumes and Curricula Vitae should focus on the qualifications sought; this might require blinding of the personal data to objectify the review. (All reviewers are affected by personal bias and it is important that reviewers understand this.)

Interviewing can be structured in a variety of ways, but must be consistent for all candidates for a given position. Phone or video preliminary interviews can be conducted. Some structure should be outlined for each set of interviews, with pre-set questions prepared in advance and approved by the committee. Some behavioral questions should be posed to candidates. Interviews can be one-on-one or group, or a mix of the two.

Voting should be anonymous with ranked voting with all acceptable candidates ranked and recommended in order of committee preference

Notes of meetings should be kept only until the appointment is accepted and then they are destroyed. A record of the procedure followed, committee membership, meeting agendas etc. should be kept for a 1 month after the announcement.