Guidelines for Conducting Faculty Searches
Faculty Searches: Overview of Presentation

- Deciding to Search
- Justifying the Search
- Advertising the Position
- Forming the Search Committee
- Understanding Roles
- Planning the Campus Visit
- Conducting the Campus Visit
- Following the Campus Visit
- Finding Resources
Faculty Searches

Deciding to Search
Deciding to Search: Points to Consider

- **Point 1:** An unfilled position does not automatically have to be filled.

**Consider:**

- the curriculum: What courses must be taught for students to complete the program? Can current faculty cover the curriculum without additional faculty?
Deciding to Search: Points to Consider

Consider:
- the current enrollment: Does the department need to schedule as many sections of a course? With reduced sections, can existing faculty cover the courses?
Deciding to Search: Points to Consider

Consider:

- the mission: What courses must the department offer to fulfill the institution’s mission and to satisfy students’ needs across campus? Can existing faculty cover those courses?

- assessment: Can you tie the need for additional faculty to what the department has learned about student learning based upon student learning outcomes assessment?
Deciding to Search: Points to Consider

Consider:

- the college: Is one of the college’s departments growing more quickly than the other and thus in greater need of the faculty line?
Deciding to Search: Points to Consider

Consider:

- the university: Can funds allotted to a faculty line, one of the most expensive line items in a university’s budget, be reallocated in order to fund new initiatives that may have greater institutional impact?
Deciding to Search: Points to Consider

- Point 2: The new faculty member need not have the same qualifications and credentials as the predecessor.
  - The curriculum or the discipline may have changed since the previous hire.
  - A faculty member’s specialization may not have the same currency over the span of employment.
Deciding to Search: Points to Consider

- **Point 3:** A faculty member’s job description should not be limited to the content of the discipline.

  Consider:
  
  - skills in technology (web design);
  - innovative methods of course delivery, including online methods;
  - experience in service learning and problem-based learning;
Deciding to Search: Points to Consider

Consider:

- grant writing and other research skills;
- administrative experience;
- experience in team-teaching and interdisciplinary teaching; and
- other expertise that can benefit the university and reach out to the community
Faculty Searches

Justifying the Search
Justifying the Search

- The Department Chair submits the Position Justification Form: www.muw.edu/personnel/docs/posjustonline2.doc
- Hire is approved by Dean, Provost/VPAA, VPFA, and President.
Faculty Searches

Advertising the Position
Advertising the Position

- The Department Chair prepares the advertisement.
- The Dean approves it and forwards it to the VPAA for final approval.
- The Academic Affairs Office sends it to:
  - MUW HR site,
  - higheredjobs.com, and
  - Chronicle of Higher Education (multiple-position ad).
- Departments may pay for ads in discipline-specific listings.
Advertising the Position

- Academic Affairs Office helps with preparation of ad, and VPAA has final approval. The ad should include:
  - qualifications (teaching specialty, terminal degree, etc.)
  - terms (teaching load, rank, tenure track or not)
  - Candidate requirements and preferences
  - Departmental/Collegiate and University expectations (university service, advising, professional development)
Faculty Searches

Forming the Search Committee
Forming the Search Committee

- The Department Chair appoints a committee with a chair.
- The committee should include:
  - junior and senior faculty,
  - faculty inside and outside the department,
  - experienced and inexperienced faculty.
In some cases, you may wish to include a student, faculty from other departments/colleges, a member of the collegiate advisory board, or community partner.

Searches provide invaluable experience for faculty.
Forming the Search Committee

- The search committee should review the job description.
- The search committee should also review the roles of key players in the search as well as the process, as provided in the next few sections of this presentation, adapted from material prepared by Dorothy Kerzel and Patricia Donat.
Faculty Searches

Understanding Roles
Understanding Roles: The Provost

- Approves position
  - Position justification form establishes position description and salary range.
  - Approves content of advertisement
  - Approves the salary
  - Approves hire

- Approves contractual items
  - Length of contract, tenure-track status, years toward tenure

- Authorizes any interviews involving applicants who are not U.S. citizens
Understanding Roles: The Dean

- Approves position advertisement
- Approves final candidates for campus interviews
- Approves range for candidate travel expenses
- Offers the position, discusses salary with candidates, and conducts negotiations with final candidate (in special circumstances this may be delegated)
Understanding Roles: The Department Chair

- Initiates requests for positions
- Appoints search committee and committee chair
- Reviews and guides the work of the committee
- Recommends final candidates for campus interviews
- Approves candidate for hiring
Understanding Roles: The Search Committee

- Maintains confidentiality of the process
- Clearly establishes knowledge, skills, and qualities sought in candidates
- Reviews candidates’ applications
- Treats all candidates the same (internal, external, local)
- Conducts telephone interviews with top group of candidates
- Conducts reference checks for top group of candidates
Understanding Roles: The Search Committee

- Typically recommends up to 3 candidates for campus interviews
- Coordinates campus visits
- Conducts candidate interviews
- Gathers information from all groups who participate in the campus visits
- Coordinates reimbursement
- Collects and reviews responses from feedback instruments distributed during the campus visit
- Recommends candidate for hiring
- Maintains records of applicant materials, meetings, interviews for 3 years
Faculty Searches

Planning the Campus Visit
Planning the Campus Visit: Telephone Interviews

- Establishing a timeline for the search
- Ensuring confidentiality of candidates and the search process
- Telephone interviews
  - Use consistent questions across candidates
  - Consider group phone interviews
  - Ensure candidate interest/availability
  - Establish candidates’ continued viability in the search process
Planning the Campus Visit: Reference Checks

Reference Letters/Phone calls
- Set up appointments
- Establish consistent questions across references and candidates
- Recommend all interviews conducted by same person
Planning the Campus Visit: Reference Checks

- Identify candidate’s strengths/weaknesses
- Assess candidate’s
  - experience/potential in both teaching and scholarly research and creative activities
  - use of strategies that support student engagement
  - experience with instructional technology
  - interpersonal skills, communication skills, organizational skills
  - institutional fit (mission, size, teaching emphasis)
- Internet searches
- Off-list references: not prohibited, but not recommended and must obtain permission before calling
Planning the Campus Visit: Making Arrangements

- Scheduling the visit
  - Length of visit

- Travel arrangements
  - Driving vs. flying
  - Airport options
  - Car rental vs. faculty “taxi” service
  - Accommodation options
  - Candidate reimbursement
Planning the Campus Visit: Scheduling

- Interviews with Provost (optional unless position has administrative duties), Dean, Department Chair, Search Committee, Departmental Faculty
- Presentation/teaching demonstration
  - Schedule to ensure adequate attendance by faculty/students
  - Professional presentation in area of expertise focused toward student audience OR
  - Introductory topic in discipline, consistent across candidates
- Meeting with students
- Meals
- Human Resources
- Campus tour
- Community tour (time permitting)
Faculty Searches

Conducting the Campus Visit
Conducting the Campus Visit: Interview Strategies

- Setting the stage
  - Establishing rapport
  - Outlining session

- Questions
  - Drafting (and perhaps assigning) questions prior to interview
  - Close-ended questions
    - Establish job history; clarify resume
  - Performance-probing questions
  - Summary question
Conducting the Campus Visit: Performance-Probing Questions

- **Open-ended questions**
  - More challenging; reveal personal traits and opinions
  - “How would you describe your teaching style?”
  - “Describe your strategies for engaging students in the learning environment.”

- **Past-performance questions**
  - Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior.
  - “How have you integrated technology in your classes?”
  - “How have you involved students in research?”
  - “How have you modified your courses to improve student learning?”

- **Negative-balance questions**
  - Candidates put their best forward, you want to also know about weaknesses
  - “What are areas of weakness, areas for improvement?”
  - “Describe a student problem that perhaps you did not handle well. How would you handle the situation differently next time?”
Conducting the Campus Visit: Performance-Probing Questions

- Reflexive questions
  Helps to retain control of interview
  - “We’ve discussed your areas of research expertise, but we haven’t talked about your strategies for applying your research to the classroom. How would you incorporate your research in your classes?”
  - “We have several items that we need to cover during our short interview, so let’s move on to the next topic.”

- Loaded questions
  Requires a judgment call; explore divergent approaches to a problem
  - “If you have a student who is disruptive in class, how would you address the situation?”
  - “If a large percentage of your students fail the first exam, how would you address the situation?”

Remember: The committee should use a rubric to insure that each search committee member is evaluating the candidate against the SEARCH CRITERIA (do not evaluate candidates in comparison to each other).
Conducting the Campus Visit: Responses

- **80/20 rule**
  - If you are talking, you are not listening.
  - 80% of interview: You should be listening to candidate responses.

- **Take notes.**

- **Follow-up weak or incomplete responses.**
  - “Can you give me an example of …?”
  - “Could you provide more detail…?”
  - “We would be interested in hearing more about…”
Conducting the Campus Visit: Candidates

- The Baffled/Flustered Candidate
  - Don’t rescue (at least not immediately).
  - Allow time for reflection and answer.
  - Acknowledge challenging questions and give permission for reflection before responding.

- Chatty Candidate
  - Redirect discussion.
  - Use a reflexive question.
  - Start talking at the same time as the candidate and continue talking until candidate is quiet.
Conducting the Campus Visit: Inappropriate Questions

- Demographics
  - Age, race, sex, religion, marital status, parental status, disability, citizenship/national origin
- Friends, relatives
- Arrest record, credit record, worker’s compensation
- More information on this is available in the resources listed at the end.
Conducting the Campus Visit: Hosting

- Treat each candidate as your #1 candidate.
- Interviews provide not only an opportunity for us to evaluate candidates but also for candidates to evaluate us
  - Interview is two-way process of learning and selling.
- Be prepared to answer questions:
  - Basic institutional/departmental statistics
  - Policies and procedures related to faculty/academics
  - Institutional/departmental challenges/opportunities
  - Campus climate, colleagues, leadership
  - Honestly respond to questions, but don’t “air dirty laundry.”
  - Arrange a campus tour & arrange time to meet with Human Resources staff to discuss benefits.
  - Ask if candidate desires a tour of the community or wishes to meet with a local realtor or visit local schools. If so, set it up prior to the visit and confirm the day before the visit.
Faculty Searches

Following the Campus Visit
Following the Campus Visit: Money

- **Reimbursement**
  - Lisa Powers needs name, address, SSN, and receipts for airfare (coach only), parking, meals, hotel (if paid by candidate).
  - University arrangements
    - Puckett House: no charge
    - Hotel: direct university billing or reimbursement to search chair
    - Meals: will cover candidate and one search committee member; need itemized receipt; alcohol purchases may not be reimbursed
    - Mileage for picking up candidate at airport
Following the Campus Visit: Communication

- Communications with the candidate:
  - Provide general timeline for the decision.
  - Communicate any significant changes to timeline.
  - Notify final candidates of decision.
  - Thank candidates for opportunity to consider application, and explain that offer to another candidate has been made and accepted.
Finding Resources

- Hiring the Best by Martin Yate
  - in Deans’ offices
- Search Committees by Christopher D. Lee
  - in Fant Library
- MUW Fact Books
- About MUW
- Columbus Convention and Visitors’ Bureau
- Faculty Trends (AASCU)
- Faculty Work Trends (Liberal Ed)
The search committee should use standard forms and questions to order to achieve consistency of evaluation across committee members and to document the search process in case personnel questions are ever raised. Failure to do so puts the search process in jeopardy and possibly opens search committee to liability.

- Application review rubric
- Questions for Reference Checks
- Interview Questions
- Guidelines for legal questions
- Presentation evaluation form
- Feedback survey for campus visits