Faculty Search Process

One of the most important service activities of faculty is serving on a faculty search committee to help the institution recruit colleagues into the university. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to school directors/department chairs and faculty search committee members as they engage in this process.

Process. The search committee process is as follows:

1. Position Approval
2. Search Committee Formation
3. Job Posting
4. Recruitment
5. Candidate Review
6. Virtual Interviews
7. On-Campus Interviews
8. Survey
9. Search Committee Report
10. School Director/Department Chair Recommendation
11. Verbal Offer
12. Other Steps

Position Approval. Positions are approved by the Dean and come either from new positions that are granted to the college by the Office of the Provost or by vacant positions due to a faculty resignation.

New Positions. School director/department chairs work with their colleagues to identify faculty needs that are tied to a variety of factors, including enrollment growth and student interest in new programs. School director/department chairs collaborate with the dean to advocate for funding from the Office of the Provost for these new positions.

Vacant Positions. A faculty vacancy is an opportunity to examine student needs and to determine how best to use resources that are made available. Replacement in the same area as the vacated faculty member is not always the best option for schools/departments and the college. The school director/department chair should discuss a variety of possibilities with faculty and collaborate with the dean to determine the best use of these available resources. At the discretion of the dean, vacant positions may not be returned to a school/department if the need for that position in the school/department has diminished and/or if a greater need exists elsewhere in the college.

A position that becomes vacant early in the fiscal year can be searched for if there is sufficient time to recruit a robust candidate pool. Otherwise, temporary faculty (part-time or full-time, one-year appointment instructors) may be hired to meet any instructional needs in the school/department until a search can be undertaken.

Search Committee Formation. Once a search has been approved, the school director/department chair will consult with the dean on potential search committee members and chair of the committee. A search committee should consist of an odd number of members. Five members,

including the chair, is a typical number, but three members are acceptable in small departments. Search committee members should represent academic and research/creative activity areas similar to the position being sought, however, voices from outside this area to represent other interests in the school/department are also recommended.

The search committee chair will be appointed by the school director/department chair. The search committee chair is responsible for coordinating all search activities, collaborating with the school director/department chair in creating a schedule for the on-campus visit, and ensuring that all search committee guidelines are followed by all search committee members.[1] Finally, the search committee chair will collaborate with fellow search committee members in writing reports to the school director/department chair.

All search committee members must complete training prior to the beginning of a search process or as soon as training becomes available.

Job Posting. Using a template provided by the College Administrator, the school director/ department chair will draft a job posting in collaboration with the search committee. The draft posting is sent to the College Administrator. It is recommended that job postings remain "open until filled," with a clearly communicated "date of review" so candidates know when to submit application materials.

Recommended application materials include:

- Curriculum Vitae
- List of 3 references.
- Letter of interest.
- Unofficial transcripts.
- Artefact(s) that demonstrate excellence in teaching and research/creative activity, such as statement of teaching philosophy, links to teaching or performance videos or digital portfolio or website.

If approved by the dean, the job posting will be posted in "standard" sites, including:

- UTRGV Careers website (https://careers.utrgv.edu/).
- Inside Higher Ed.
- Chronicle of Higher Education.

School directors/department chairs may request the College Administrator to post the job in discipline-specific venues. This request should include the URL to post, associated costs, and the expected audience, including estimated size.

Recruitment. One of the most important jobs of the search committee is to actively recruit potential candidates to the position by contacting and sharing the job posting with members of

[1] The role of EEO is no longer a part of search committees. It is the responsibility of the search committee chair to ensure that no EEO violations occur during the search. If any concerns arise, the search committee should bring it to the attention of the school director/department chair immediately.

their professional network. Additionally, search committees can recommend candidates for the search committee chair or the school director/department chair to contact.

Candidate Review. All members of the search committee can access candidate application files through the "PeopleAdmin" application found in "myUTRGV." In the top right corner of the PeopleAdmin interface, search committee members will select "Search Committee Member" under the "User Group" drop down menu and then select the search. Each application should be thoroughly reviewed by every search committee member. If the position is listed as "open until filled," applications that are submitted after virtual and/or on-campus interviews should still be reviewed by the search committee and given full consideration.

Within a week after the "review" date listed in the job posting, the search committee should meet to narrow the field. Depending upon the size and scope of the position and candidate pool, the search committee should determine which of the candidates they would like to interview. Typically, the field is narrowed to six to eight candidates for virtual interviews through Zoom. Regardless of the next step, the search committee chair should send a list of candidates to be interviewed to the school director/department chair who will provide feedback and confer with the dean for approval to the search committee to proceed.

In Academic Policy Memorandum (2025-001): Hiring Doctoral Graduates to Tenure Track, UTRGV colleges and schools are "not permitted to hire UTRGV doctoral graduates immediately following graduation" into tenure-track positions. Per this policy, UTRGV colleges and schools may hire doctoral graduates "after many years have passed since they graduated, and the graduate has shown considerable success in their fields." Since the Master of Fine Arts is the primary terminal degree in art, creative writing, dance, and theatre, this policy will apply to MFA graduates from UTRGV. For an MFA alumnus to be considered for a tenure-track position, the school director/department chair must send a request to the dean confirming that the alumnus graduated at least three years prior to the hiring date and a narrative describing how the candidate has "shown considerable success in their field."

Virtual Interviews. The search committee chair will lead the search committee in writing a slate of questions in advance of the virtual interviews. To ensure that all candidates are given equitable consideration, each candidate should be asked the same questions and follow-up questions should only be asked if a member of the committee perceives that a candidate did not ask a question that was asked. Typically, virtual interviews consist of 20-30 minutes of questions and answers and 5-10 minutes of questions from the candidates to members of the search committee with 5-15 minutes of transition between virtual interviews, if conducted on the same day. To maximize the time, each committee member is encouraged to ask at least one question, introducing themselves when they ask their question.

Although candidates may communicate personal situations, such as marital status, children, or living situation, search committee members must not ask any questions or make any comments regarding personal situations. Additionally, search committee members should avoid questions or comments associated with race, gender identity, or other diversity topics.

On-Campus Interviews. The college is only provided funding by the Office of the Provost for tenure-track searches; however, all searches for budgeted positions (*i.e.,* tenure-track and three-year professional track) must include an on-campus interview. This funding is distributed by the college to schools/departments based on the number of searches (tenure-track and professional track), including additional funding from the college. On average, schools/departments should expect an average cost of $1,000 for each U.S. candidate requiring air travel. In most cases, funding from the college will have to be supplemented by departmental funding. The number of candidates invited for on-campus interviews is at the discretion of the school director/department chair based on available funding.

Depending upon the number of viable candidates, the search committee will make a recommendation to the school director/department chair who will consult with the dean on a list of candidates to be invited for campus interviews. A minimum of two candidates that must be brought to campus for an interview. The search committee should narrow the field to the most viable candidates for on-campus interviews.

The search committee chair will develop a draft schedule in consultation with all search committee members. Once approved by the school director/department chair, the search committee chair will work with departmental staff in arranging for the campus visit. Per Academic Policy Memorandum (2025-009): Faculty Candidates' Campus Visits, "campus visits for faculty positions and their job talks be arranged primarily on the campus for which the college or school is hiring." While "all faculty are expected to teach on both campuses and attend meetings on the campus where the meetings are scheduled. . .campus interviews should start and end" on the position's primary campus, "including airport and hotel arrangements." A visit to another teaching site where the successful candidate may teach can be visited if time allows, but it is not mandatory.

Below are some recommendations for on-campus interview activities in which candidates may engage in some or all:

- Interview with the search committee.
- Meals with two committee members.
- Interview with the school director/department chair.
- Interview with the dean.
- Interview with the area faculty.
- Meeting with students.
- Presentation of research and/or teaching philosophy.
- Teaching demonstration.
- Performance.
- Tour of facilities/campus.
- Tour of area with real estate agent.

All candidates must engage in the same activities, including modality (i.e., if the dean can only meet with one of the candidates via Zoom, he should meet with all candidates via Zoom, if feasible). Special events, such as performances or gallery openings, should be avoided unless these same events occur during the campus visit of other candidates.

Survey. The Search Committee should create an anonymous survey for all students and faculty to provide their input for each candidate. Surveys should solicit qualitative responses and not ask respondents to rank or vote for candidates. The search committee should take survey data into account when preparing their report.

Search Committee Report. Upon completion of on-campus interviews, the search committee chair will facilitate the writing of a search committee report. The report, submitted to the school director/department chair, should include strengths and weaknesses of each candidate with the search committee chair soliciting the evaluation of all members of the committee. It should be a composite report where the evaluation of each committee member is synthesized, rather than the individual evaluation of each committee member. The search committee should not take a vote on a preferred candidate, nor should the report contain a ranking of candidates. The only exception is if a majority of the committee evaluate that a candidate is "unacceptable," meaning a candidate does not meet the job requirements or has displayed significant concerns that could be detrimental to the school/department.

School Director/Department Chair Recommendation. Using the Search Committee Report, the school director/department chair will provide a recommendation for hire to the dean, including a rationale for the recommendation. If approved by the dean, the dean will give the school director/department chair a salary range, start-up package, and other negotiables.

Verbal Offer. The school director/department chair will arrange for a phone call or Zoom meeting with the recommended candidate to verbally offer the position, and if applicable, negotiate compensation or other terms. Candidates are typically given up to one week to consider the offer. Upon acceptance, the school director/department chair will notify the dean and the college administrator to initiate the written offer.

If a candidate declines the offer, the school director/department chair will submit a recommendation for another acceptable candidate to the dean.

Other Steps. If the position is not filled with any of the candidates who participated in on-campus interviews, the school director/department chair should meet with the search committee to determine if other candidates in the pool should be invited to an on-campus interview. If so, the school director/department chair will make the recommendation to the dean for approval.

If no viable candidates remain, the school director/department chair may recommend to the dean that the search be failed. A failed search does not result in the loss of the position, and no inferior candidate should be hired because of this concern. If the instructional and/or research/creative need continues into the future, the school/department will be allowed to conduct a future search.

In the case of a failed search, a temporary instructor(s) may be hired to fill the instructional need and a new search can be scheduled in the future. Anyone participating in the search, including search committee members and administrators, should reflect on why the search was unsuccessful in hiring a candidate and apply "lessons learned" to future searches.