

## General Guidelines for Dean's Representatives on Search Committees

### General Description of the Role of the Dean's Rep:

The Dean appoints a decanal representative to each search committee. The decanal representative is a full voting member and must be at the meeting where the short list is developed and the meeting where the final decision is made. The decanal representative should also be present at interviews with shortlisted candidates (if these are conducted by the committee as a whole). Dean's representatives are asked by the Dean to ensure that University and Faculty policies, procedures, and standards for appointments are followed throughout the search process and to act as a resource to search committees, in effect being the eyes and ears of the Dean on the committee. The decanal representative will in some circumstances be asked to submit a report on the proceedings of the Search Committee before the Dean will consider approving the department's final recommendation. Typically, a short e-mail from the dean's rep indicating that the search process was fair, appropriately attentive to quality and diversity, and procedurally correct will suffice. One important facet of the dean's rep role relates to changes in the process for consideration of Canadian versus non-Canadian applicants. In the past, in the event of a recommendation not to hire a Canadian, search committees were required to provide reasons why the top 3 Canadians were not considered suitable. As a result of new requirements from the government, in the event of an appointment of a non-Canadian, we must now report on the reasons why ALL Canadians were not considered suitable and did not meet the advertised requirements. We will be doing a lot of education of chairs about these new guidelines but would urge you to impress upon search committees and chairs the importance of following the new guidelines. If we receive a request for approval of a shortlist or a search report that does not respect the 'priority to Canadians' guidelines, we will send it back to the Chair for clarification.

### Unconscious Bias:

Many leaders worldwide support inclusion and diversity, and a number of organizations are raising unconscious bias awareness in an effort to foster an inclusive culture. Tackling bias through training sessions on unconscious bias are an important step. By addressing and managing biases, organizations can provide equal growth opportunities for persons of all groups and ensure a robust team. Please see the links below to assist you with addressing Unconscious Bias when conducting searches.

Reviewing Applicants, Research on Bias and Assumptions:

[http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure\\_3rdEd.pdf](http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure_3rdEd.pdf)

Resources for Conducting a Faculty Search: <https://faculty.harvard.edu/resources-conducting-faculty-search>

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### 1. What are my primary functions?

You are there to ensure that the search is conducted in a procedurally correct way and

with a view to the University's goals of diversifying our faculty and of hiring the best. If you have concerns or questions about procedures at any point, please contact the Manager, Academic HR, Dina Moreira ([dina.moreira@utoronto.ca](mailto:dina.moreira@utoronto.ca)) so that she may assist you or direct you as appropriate. To the best of your abilities, ensure that the search follows best practice, i.e. in terms of advertising widely, providing committee members with sufficient documentation, and ensuring that candidates are treated fairly and more or less uniformly. In addition, you are there to ensure that UTM's high standards of selection are upheld. If at any point you are concerned that they are being compromised, please contact the Vice-Dean, Faculty, Kathi Wilson ([vdfaculty.utm@utoronto.ca](mailto:vdfaculty.utm@utoronto.ca)).

*Some general principles that should guide the search are as follows:*

- a) That all candidates are treated equally, fairly and professionally. Certain types of questions are obviously off-limits (i.e. questions about marital status, sexual orientation, etc.)
- b) The committee should be sensitive to issues of diversity, and the University's goal of diversifying its faculty to include more members of visible minorities and more female faculty, particularly in areas where there is underrepresentation of these 2 groups. If the chair does not address these issues specifically in the introduction to the search, you should raise them yourself or ask the chair to address these in an upcoming meeting. The committee should also be sensitive to ways in which candidates from all groups, including members of the underrepresented groups, can be made to feel welcome during their visit and have exposure to the inclusive nature of our community.
- c) There must be undergraduate student involvement in the process for all searches, and graduate student involvement for searches for all tenure stream positions and teaching-stream positions that include graduate teaching. This does not mean that all candidates are required to give an undergraduate lecture, but there must be an opportunity for undergraduate students to meet with shortlisted candidates at UTM and give feedback to the committee.
- d) The confidentiality of each candidacy should be respected. Should the candidate agree (or if it is a disciplinary norm, as in Economics), C.V.'s can be viewed by members of the department. Letters of reference should only be read by the search committee unless permission has been obtained from all referees and candidates to have these shared.
- e) Strong applicant pools/hiring the best: Normally we expect to see an applicant pool of at least 20, typically far more, and only rarely less than 10. We also expect departments to pursue excellence: if faced with a mediocre pool, it is better for departments to postpone the search and resume next year. A very small number of disciplines and sub-disciplines will yield very small pools because the community of scholars is small: if you are on a search and the pool is very small, you might want to consult us. Similarly, if you are concerned that the department is settling for what is available this year rather than being guided by the pursuit of excellence, contact the Vice-Dean, Faculty.

- f) Pursuit of Excellence in Research AND Teaching: There is sometimes a tendency for search committees, particularly in the formulation of the short list, to focus exclusively on research potential. In some cases, our office struggles to find any evidence of teaching potential in curriculum vitae or in letters of reference. We strongly encourage you to ensure that teaching quality, particularly potential to teach undergraduates, is on the committee's radar and most certainly is addressed when candidates visit. Additional letters of reference may be solicited, and feedback from undergraduates about teaching should certainly be sought.
- g) Candidates should be made aware of the resources available to them, such as the Faculty Relocation Service, to enable them to make informed choices about working here.

**2. How much of the search process (i.e. job talks, lunches, etc.) must I be involved with?**

You must attend all meetings of the search committee and meetings with the shortlisted candidates in which the entire committee participates. It is not essential for you to attend the job talks and there is no need for you to attend the lunches/dinners, etc. with the candidate.

With respect to files, it is not necessary for you to review all the files in advance of the creation of the shortlist but once a shortlist has been identified, you should read through the materials to have familiarity with the candidates' qualifications and letters of reference.

**3. What are the implications of the University's equity guidelines for the search process?**

The University's proactive recruitment plan is geared towards attracting as many applicants as possible from groups that are underrepresented in our community. These groups are: Indigenous/aboriginal persons, women, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities. Chairs should have advertised the position as widely as possible, often in venues targeted specifically to these groups. When candidates are being considered, it is important to be sensitive to the issues of diversity and excellence and to ensure that scholars from underrepresented groups are given proper consideration.

When reporting on the outcome of the search, chairs are obliged by the Provost's office to report on the number of members of the underrepresented groups that applied to the position. If a member of the underrepresented gender is not selected, the chair must identify the top candidate in that category and give reasons why they were not selected.

**4. Are we obliged to consider Canadians first?**

Service Canada requires that all advertisements contain the following statement: "All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority." This means that, should we hire a non-Canadian, we must be able to justify to the Government that the candidate was the best qualified person for the position. In terms of process, it does not mean that we need to review all the Canadian applications first to gauge their suitability, then move on to the non-Canadians. ***It does mean that, if a non-Canadian is hired, the chair will be required to provide a spreadsheet listing the reason(s) why each Canadian was not shortlisted. These reasons should be related to the actual requirements as described in the job description.***

Chairs and committees need to be reassured by the Dean's rep about the guidelines and reminded that putting a Canadian on the shortlist does not bind the committee to hire that individual. The interviews and visits themselves often yield information about a candidate that is not evident from the dossier (i.e. quality of teaching skills; quality of research program, etc.) that profoundly influence the final outcome. If a Canadian is shortlisted but is not the first choice of the committee, the decision making process should be particularly well-documented. We expect to be scrutinized very closely with respect to any searches that result in the hiring of non-Canadians. In any case, the paragraphs in the shortlist letter that document the qualifications of the shortlisted candidates should make the rationale for ranking the candidates extremely clear but should not include direct comparisons between the shortlisted candidates. If a Canadian is not chosen, in addition to submitting the spreadsheet, the chair must identify the top 3 Canadian candidates (CVs and letters of reference must be submitted) and give reasons why they were not selected.

#### **5. What size should the shortlist be?**

A shortlist of three (3) is expected. Occasionally a committee will advance a shortlist of two and this is generally accepted. A shortlist of one would be highly problematic.

More commonly, committees wish to advance shortlists larger than 3. Occasionally a shortlist of 4 will be approved, particularly if the department had been searching for some time without success or the search is in a field that is known to be highly competitive. Those are the exceptions. Committees generally want an expanded list for any number of reasons, including the following: 1) one candidate is perhaps not quite as good but is well known to the group – often a graduate of our doctoral programs – and the committee wants to give him/her a chance; 2) the top 3 candidates are men and the committee wants to have a female candidate on the list; 3) the applicant pool was so strong that the committee simply couldn't whittle it down to three; and 4) one (or more) of the candidates is local and so the committee believes there is no harm in adding a fourth, thinking there is little cost involved. The Dean generally finds none of these reasons compelling. Further, we generally find that shortlists of 4 have one or two weaker candidates. It is not your job to try to persuade the committee against its will to produce a list of 3, but if it is heading in that direction, rather advise the members that the Dean will likely ask the committee to reduce the list to 3.

#### **6. The search is posted as an assistant professor but a number of associate professors have applied. Can they be considered?**

Our general rule of thumb is that candidates being considered for our assistant professor positions will normally be looking for their first tenure-stream position or recently have obtained one. Occasionally we get applications from recently tenured associate professors. If they work at a university that we do not consider to be our peer, often such individuals are eager to move to a better institution and are willing to take a lower rank to do so. It is perfectly appropriate to consider them if they are very recently tenured, provided they are willing to come at the assistant rank.

We do not however consider faculty who are even more advanced in their careers but claim that they are willing to take an entry level position because of personal or professional reasons. First, the Provost's office would almost certainly not approve the appointment. Second, considering them for tenure after 3 – 5 years would be highly problematic because their research and teaching record would also be highly developed and it would be hard to judge them against our typical tenure standards.

**7. The search is not run like the searches in my department (and I believe we have the best practice).**

Search practices will vary, within certain parameters, from department to department. For example, one department at UTM does not conduct committee interviews with candidates but rather has each committee member meet individually with each shortlisted candidate. This is the disciplinary norm for this department at U of T. Some departments do not have candidates give undergraduate lectures, arguing that this is simply not done in their discipline in North America. Some departments hold their meetings on St. George, though it is critical that candidates visit the UTM campus and department. There is room for flexibility in practices, provided that the principles articulated earlier in this document: involvement of students, attention to teaching and scholarly quality, etc. are observed.

**8. I am uneasy about some aspect of the conduct of the search. What should I do?**

If your concern relates to a procedural error/issue that the chair might reasonably address (i.e. a committee member asks a question of a candidate that is inappropriate or violates human rights protocol) or you perceive any unfairness in the treatment of candidates, you should voice your concern to the chair and ask him/her to address it.

If s/he doesn't, then contact the Vice-Dean, Faculty. If, however, you are concerned that the committee is making judgments about quality or selection that compromise our goals of hiring the best candidate, you should contact the Vice-Dean, Faculty. Similarly, if the committee becomes divided and seems unable to do its work effectively, you should contact the Vice-Dean, Faculty.