

# UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

## Guidelines for Search Committees for Senior Academic Administrators

### A. Scope of the Guidelines

Success in recruiting highly competent senior administrators depends on the search process. In accordance with widely accepted academic practices, the University of Pittsburgh recognizes the role of faculty, staff and students in the search process. The University has established certain guidelines as mechanisms for creating representative search committees and has developed procedures for determining how such committees will normally function.

These guidelines apply in particular to the following positions: academic deans, Provost, senior vice chancellor for the Health Sciences, regional campus presidents, Director of the University Library System, and directors of selected University-wide centers.

If any element of these guidelines is found by a search committee to impose undue constraints on its search, the chairperson of the search committee may request in writing appropriate relief from these guidelines from the Chancellor or his/her designee. A copy of this written request shall be sent to the Senate Committee on Bylaws and Procedures.

It is also recognized that there may be circumstances in which the process described in these guidelines may need to be altered, provided there will be no sacrifice of objectivity and openness or elimination of faculty participation. Prior to initiating such a process, the Chancellor should consult with the Executive Committee of the Senate and with the executive council or similar representative committee of the unit to be served by the appointee and continue to keep them informed of relevant activities throughout the modified search process.

#### *Notes On Related Search Processes:*

- As a general principle, when search committees are employed for recruitment of other senior academic administrators (e.g.: assistant/associate/vice Chancellors or Provosts), the process for the selection of search committee members should include consultation with the Executive Committee of the Senate and the constituencies to be served by a new administrator.

- Although the search process for Chancellor is managed by the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff and student representation on the Chancellor Search Committee should be selected responsive to the requests of the Trustees and in the spirit of this policy. The faculty representation should be well-balanced among the various faculty constituencies and should include at least one faculty member from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, one from the professional schools of the Provost area, one from the School of Medicine, one from the other schools of the Health Sciences area and one from the regional campuses.

## **B. Establishing and Organizing the Search Committee**

### 1. Purpose

A search committee will be responsible for recommending candidates for senior administrative positions to the Chancellor or to an administrator designated by the Chancellor (usually a senior vice chancellor). This search committee will include representatives of the faculty, representatives of the staff, representatives of the students and representatives appointed by the Chancellor or his/her designee. Such committees shall operate as a rule on a consensus principle.

### 2. Timeliness

The process for establishing and organizing a search committee should take place no later than the last half year of the incumbent's term – early enough to limit the period of vacancy to several months, at most. In the event of an unexpected vacancy, search committee formation should normally take place within two months. Longer delays should be explained publicly.

### 3. Creation and composition

#### a. Size

Committees should range in size between seven and twelve members, except for searches for Provost, Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences, and Director of the University Library System, which may range in size up to fifteen members or more, if necessary.

#### b. Selection: dean/regional campus president searches

There shall be four faculty members of each search committee who are elected for this specific task by the faculties concerned. These members shall include at least one representative from each of the three professorial ranks, provided that the rank represents at least 20 percent of the concerned faculty. The

representative of a professorial rank shall be elected by the members of that rank in the unit concerned.

One staff member shall be selected to serve on the committee by the staff of the concerned unit. to represent the staff concerned. There shall be one or two student members of each search committee: one an undergraduate student and the other a graduate student (unless more than 95 percent of the school's student body is of one of these two levels, in which case only one student member shall be selected from the larger group). Student members shall be appointed by the appropriate School or regional campus student government organizations.

Additional members of each search committee may be appointed by the Chancellor or his/her designee, to insure diversity and equitable participation by affected constituencies. However, fifty percent of the final committee membership must be faculty from the unit concerned.

c. Selection: Provost search

The elected faculty members of the search committee shall include two from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, two from the professional schools of the Provost's area, one from the regional campuses, and one from the Health Sciences area by the following process:

- The President of the Senate shall issue a University-wide call for volunteers who wish to serve on the search committee for the Provost.
- The President of the Senate shall appoint two nominating committees from among the elected members of the Senate Council representing the Provost's area and the Health Sciences respectively.
- From the lists of volunteers, the respective nominating committees will prepare slates of candidates for the election of the faculty members to the search committee from the Provost's area and from the Health Sciences selecting members from their respective areas. If insufficient numbers of volunteers arise, the nominating committees should attempt to recruit additional candidates to insure a rich and diverse slate.

In addition to faculty members selected by the nominating committee for the slate of candidates, faculty members may also become candidates for election to the place(s) for elected faculty on the Search Committee, by submission of a nominating petition signed by at least 5% of the faculty eligible to vote in the election of faculty representative(s). The petition

should be submitted within ten days after the nominating slate has been announced.

- Faculty representation on the search committee shall include at least one representative of each of the two tenured professorial ranks. In preparing the election slate, grouping of Provost area faculty nominees of like ranks will assist in reaching the desired faculty-rank diversity.
- Voters in the faculty election will participate in either in the Provost's area election or the Health Sciences election according to the location of their primary academic appointment.

One staff member shall be appointed to the Committee by the Staff Association Council to represent the staff concerned. There shall be one graduate student, one School of Arts and Sciences undergraduate student and one College of General Studies undergraduate student from the Provost's area of the Oakland campus on the search committee who are selected by the appropriate student government organizations.

Additional members of the search committee may be appointed by the Chancellor to insure diversity and equitable participation by affected constituencies. However, fifty percent of the final committee membership must be faculty from the Provost's area.

d. Selection: Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences search

The elected faculty members shall include two from the School of Medicine, two from the other schools of the Health Sciences, and one from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and the professional schools of the Provost's area by the following process:

- The President of the Senate shall issue a University-wide call for volunteers who wish to serve on the search committee for the SVC Health Sciences.
- The President of the Senate shall appoint two nominating committees from among the elected members of the Senate Council representing the Health Sciences and the Provost's area respectively.

- From the lists of volunteers, the respective nominating committees will prepare slates of candidates for the election of the faculty members to the search committee from the Health Sciences and Provost's area selecting members from their respective areas. If insufficient numbers of volunteers arise, the nominating committees should attempt to recruit additional candidates to insure a rich and diverse slate.

In addition to faculty members selected by the nominating committee for the slate of candidates, faculty members may also become candidates for election to the place(s) for elected faculty on the Search Committee, by submission of a nominating petition signed by at least 5% of the faculty eligible to vote in the election of faculty representative(s). The petition should be submitted within ten days after the nominating slate has been announced.

- Faculty representation on the search committee shall include at least one representative of each of the two tenured professorial ranks. In preparing the election slate, grouping of Health Sciences faculty nominees of like ranks will assist in reaching the desired faculty-rank diversity.
- Voters in the faculty election will participate in either in the Health Sciences election or the Provost's area election according to the location of their primary academic appointment.

One staff member shall be selected to the Committee by the Staff Association Council to represent the staff concerned. There shall be one graduate student and one undergraduate/professional student from the Health Sciences on the search committee who are selected by the appropriate student government organizations.

Additional members of the search committee may be appointed by the Chancellor to insure diversity and equitable participation by affected constituencies. However, fifty percent of the final committee membership must be faculty from the Health Sciences area.

e. Selection: Director of the University Library System search

There shall be four University Library System (ULS) librarian members of the search committee who are elected for this specific task by the ULS library faculty concerned. The four shall include at least one representative from the ranks of Librarian I and Librarian II and at least one from the ranks of Librarian III and Librarian IV.

There shall be three elected faculty members from the Provost's area. A slate of candidates for election of the faculty members from the Provost's area to the search committee for Director of the University Library System shall be selected, following a public call for volunteers, by a nominating committee appointed by the President of the Senate from the elected members of Senate Council representing the Provost's area.

One staff member shall be appointed to the Committee by the Staff Association Council to represent the staff concerned. There shall be one graduate student, one School of Arts and Sciences undergraduate student and one College of General Studies undergraduate student from the Provost's area of the Oakland campus on the search committee who are selected by the appropriate student government boards.

Additional members of the search committee may be appointed by the Chancellor or his/her designee to insure diversity and equitable participation by affected constituencies. However, fifty percent of the final committee membership must be ULS Librarians.

f. Selection: Director of University-wide center searches

There are many "centers" throughout the University having a variety of missions, organizational structures, reporting lines and membership. Selection of the search committee for a director of a center whose responsibilities include membership on the Council of Deans should be accomplished according to the following generalized format.

There shall be two participating faculty and two research staff of the search committee who are elected for this specific task by their respective constituencies. A slate of candidates for the election of the faculty members to the search committee shall be selected by a nominating committee appointed by the President of the Senate from the elected members of Senate Council.

There shall be one staff member on the search committee who is selected for this specific task to represent the staff concerned. Additional members of the search committee may be appointed by the Chancellor or his/her designee, if at least fifty percent of the search committee are participating faculty and research staff of the University-wide center. In making these appointments the Chancellor or his/her designee may occasionally find justification for including a representative of other key constituencies that have a specific interest in the search for director of the center.

Selection of other center directors should be conducted by a similar representative process that is appropriate to the mission and organizational

complexity of the center and is approved by the Provost or Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences as appropriate.

g. General aspects of selection

As affirmed in the University's policy on Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action:

*“The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, as fully explained in Policy 07-01-03, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. The University also prohibits and will not engage in retaliation against any person who makes a claim of discrimination or harassment or who provides information in such an investigation. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission. This policy applies to admissions, employment, access to and treatment in University programs and activities. This is a commitment made by the University and is in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.”*

Thus, the nomination of potential committee members, the selection of committee members and the functioning of the search committee will be carried out in the spirit of the University's stated values. Adherence to these principles will be reflected in a committee that is both diverse and representative in its membership and collegial in its operation.

Questions concerning election, selection or appointment of search committee members (such as selection procedures for student members or nomination mechanisms for slates of candidates for election) should be referred to the Senate Committee on Bylaws and Procedures. The election process should be conducted in accord with procedures established for Senate elections.

h. Appointment of a chairperson

A chairperson should be appointed promptly by the Chancellor or his/her designee. The chairperson will be a full voting member of the committee. A vice-chairperson may be appointed by the chairperson from among the committee membership to help manage a heavy committee work load. A qualified and experienced person should be appointed by the Chancellor or

his/her designee as administrative assistant to the committee to manage committee operations (see Section C.5).

i. The Charge

The Chancellor or his/her designee should meet promptly with the committee to charge it with its responsibilities. The charge should reflect University planning in terms of the goals and intentions of the unit(s) to be headed and the resources available. The Chancellor or his/her designee and the committee should discuss the qualifications that candidates must have, any geographic, institutional, or other limitations on the search, and a reasonable target date for completion of the search. A discussion of the University's commitment to Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action and the operational implications of this policy to the search process should also be discussed at this time. There should also be agreement upon the extent to which the committee will meet and interact with the Chancellor or his/her designee during the search process.

j. Orientation

Following the charge to the committee, the Chancellor or his/her designee should arrange an orientation meeting to deal with technical aspects of the search committee function. One or more individuals experienced in previous searches should review the Guidelines for Search Committees for Senior Academic Administrators and aspects of the search procedure that would be of value to a new committee. This may include methods of obtaining, verifying, and evaluating information; interviewing techniques; confidentiality; and the nature of the interactions that are to be expected between candidates, the committee, and other parts of the University community. The Search Committee Handbook of the American Association of Higher Education should be made available to the chairperson of the search committee at the orientation.

The Director of Affirmative Action and/or a representative from the Office of General Counsel should be present to review approaches toward meeting stated goals with respect to the Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action Policy. The committee should also be instructed on pertinent legal issues, including the need to avoid even the appearance of discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation or non-job-related disability in questioning or evaluating potential candidates.

Judicious use of institutional funds and the documentation of expenses associated with the search process should be discussed.



**C. Central Principles of Search Committee Operation**

1. Public Meetings

Because confidentiality is essential, most meetings of a search committee will be closed. Each committee, however, shall hold at least one well-advertised, conveniently timed open meeting early in its deliberations. During that time, faculty, staff and students of the relevant Schools or units of the University can present opinions about the objectives of the units and the characteristics desired in the administrator to be appointed. The starting time for the meeting should be specified. There is no set duration for the meeting (however, all who have requested an opportunity to speak, either in advance or while the meeting is in progress, should be heard). The announcement of the open meeting should also invite written comments, especially from those unable to attend.

2. Confidentiality

Common courtesy and the rights of privacy are essential elements in the search process. It is crucial to maintain confidentiality of the candidates' names, institutions and evaluative information during and after the search. Violations of confidentiality may cause a candidate to withdraw, may invite legal actions and certainly would reflect poorly of the culture of our University.

A successful search requires consultation with many people outside the committee's membership. However, these consultations with parties identified by the candidate (directed references) or those identified independently by the committee (non-directed references) must not be initiated without specific permission from the candidate to approach either of these two categories of references.

Judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of a particular candidate and comparisons among candidates must be sought. In all cases, however, information and opinion should be requested in a clear and authentic spirit of confidentiality and under a commitment to use the information or judgments only for the proper purposes of the committee. During the initial screening of candidates (see Section D.2.a) there is no need to divulge the identity of candidates outside of the committee. When the committee begins intermediate screening of candidates (see Section D.2.b), there is a need to broaden the spread of contacts outside the committee. Inquiries under these conditions require a special delicacy and sensitivity to minimize invasion of professional privacy. It is never appropriate to reveal the relative standing of candidates to anyone outside of the committee, including the candidates, or exploit such information for personal benefit. When questions arise about any possible breach, they should be thoroughly discussed and, when necessary, taken up with the Chancellor or his/her designee.

3. Records

The search committee is expected to maintain formal records of its deliberations. Dossiers for each candidate should include all relevant information including reference letters, correspondence, documents, and written records of telephone calls and interviews. The minutes of meetings should reflect the decisions made, but done so in a way to maintain the required confidentiality. The records should provide a firm foundation for the recommendations made by the committee, and should be transmitted to the head of the appropriate responsibility center and retained, according to the policy in **University Procedure 02-02-15, Recruitment: Faculty and Academic/Executive Administrative Positions.**

4. Duration

The committee should meet regularly, and seek to fulfill its duties promptly.

5. Support Staff

The Offices of the Chancellor, the Provost or the Senior Vice Chancellor for the Health Sciences shall provide staff liaison and administrative support for the committee. The supporting staff should be identified to the committee and continuity of personnel should be maintained throughout the search.

**D. The Search Process**

1. Development of a candidate pool

a. Scope of the search

Early in the process, following the charge, the committee should reach agreement on the requirements that a candidate must meet and on the breadth of the search. While it is appropriate to advertise the position broadly the committee must take the initiative through personal contacts and professional experience in seeking out potential applicants who would not necessarily respond to an advertisement. If internal candidates are to be considered, applications and nominations should be actively solicited within the University.

- b. Affirmative action

As a rule, the search committee should seek and consider both internal and external candidates, and special efforts must always be exerted to locate and to interest qualified women and minorities. As in the case of faculty appointments, the committee will be responsible for assuring full compliance with **University Procedure 02-02-15, Recruitment: Faculty and Academic/Executive Administrative Positions** in its work to publicize the availability of the position and to identify qualified candidates. In general, available positions must be advertised in professional publications if outside candidates are to be considered, and letters should be sent to those professional organizations that might be helpful in identifying such candidates.
  - c. Availability of information

The files (paper or electronic) containing all of the available information on the professional lives of the candidates shall be available to committee members in a secure and private setting designated by the chairperson of the search committee. A standard information summary should be prepared for each candidate suitable for distribution at an appropriate time to those who will meet with the candidate. The information in such summaries should be treated as confidential within limits set by the search committee.
2. Screening of the candidate pool
- a. Initial screening

Broad and general criteria with standards agreed upon by the committee should be used to screen the initial candidate list into four categories: meets or exceeds all screening criteria, meets or exceeds most screening criteria, not qualified for further consideration, and insufficient information. All committee members should screen all applications. Distribution among subcommittees should be considered only if the candidate pool is unusually large, but even in such a case, all committee members should have access to the entire pool. Provision for timely and courteous notification of those no longer in contention should be made.
  - b. Intermediate screening

A second screening of the highest ranking candidates from the initial screen will reduce the number to a select list of approximately 10 to 20 names. This should be achieved by application of more stringent criteria than the committee had adopted for its initial screening, including any modifications developed during the initial screening of the pool, and by the need to approach consensus.

Additional information about the candidates should be gathered from the internet (with the usual provisos regarding interpretation of said information). The committee should obtain further evidence by conducting reference checks, (usually by telephone) with the referees suggested by the candidates, after receiving the candidate's permission to go to this phase of the search. At a later phase of the search, the committee will want to check with references other than those suggested by the candidate. As this represents another level of visibility, the candidate's permission must also be sought prior to initiating this phase of the process. All such sources should be requested to maintain confidentiality.

The committee must be cautious in accepting unverifiable, ad hominem remarks from any source, or in being unduly influenced by supposed preferences of others. At this stage, it is important that all candidates be kept informed of their status by the chairperson of the search committee.

3. Interviews with selected final candidates

a. Selection of candidates for interview

Depending on the position, the committee may wish to conduct interviews in one or two phases. The first (optional), a brief off-campus meeting with 8-12 candidates and the assembled search committee. The second round (or only round, as the case may be) is on-campus interviews with a representative group of peer administrators/faculty, staff and students.

b. Coordination of visits to the campus

When candidates are invited for on-campus interviews, members of the committee should be explicitly assigned to help them meet their schedules of interviews, and to insure that they are gracefully introduced to interviewers. Interactions between committee members and the candidates in this setting may well produce new insights about the person under consideration. Internal candidates should be dealt with in the same fashion as external candidates.

Prior to a visit, the committee should give careful consideration to balancing the duration of the campus visit with the need provide for meaningful and productive meetings with appropriate members of the University community. The committee should obtain systematic, written feedback from those persons who met with and interviewed the candidates. These evaluations should be added to the candidates' dossiers and be available to the members of the committee. Internal candidates should not be asked to meet with other candidates in an evaluative setting.

c. Final review

At the close of the interviews, the committee will formulate its final lists of acceptable candidates to forward to the Chancellor or his/delegate. This should be accomplished through a group assessment of the feedback about the campus interviews and all previously gleaned information.

**E. Recommendation and Appointment**

1. The report

The committee will submit to the Chancellor or his/her designee a un-ranked list, of three to six candidates, all of whom have been deemed qualified and desirable by consensus of the committee. This list, as well as an oral report, shall be delivered at a meeting with the Chancellor or his/her designee. Each member shall be given the opportunity to comment on his/her rationale in selecting the individuals on the list.

2. The offer

After receipt of the committee's report, the Chancellor or his/her delegate will consider the information in the report, gather additional information through further reference inquiries or additional visits with the candidate(s) as deemed necessary and then make an offer to one of the people on the list, unless the Chancellor or his/her designee determines to re-initiate the search process for reasons he/she should explain to the committee.

The committee should not imply to any candidate that they will receive an offer or that they are on the list. During the time that offers are being made, the Chancellor or his/her designee should maintain communication with the committee. The committee should remain available to assist, but only if requested to do so. If an offer is declined, the Chancellor or his/her designee shall have the option of proceeding with another candidate on the list or resuming the search with the same search committee or with a new one. Following completion of the negotiations with the successful candidate, the required recordkeeping and treatment of the committee's documents should be accomplished as delineated in accord with **University of Pittsburgh Procedure 02-02-15**.

3. The public announcement

The public announcement of new appointments at the University of Pittsburgh should in all cases be coordinated with the announcement of the appointee's leaving his present institution and be preceded by notification to the unsuccessful finalists. The appropriate faculty or internal constituency of the University should be advised of the appointment before or at the same time as the public announcement.

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