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Table of Contents

If you're viewing this document online, you can click any of the topics below to link directly to that section.

Selecting College and University Personnel. ERIC Digest.....	1
WHAT HELPS SEARCH COMMITTEES FUNCTION WELL?.....	2
WHY IS CONFIDENTIALITY SO IMPORTANT?.....	3
WHAT SOCIETAL ISSUES NEED ATTENTION?.....	3
SELECTED REFERENCES.....	4



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The selection of the faculty and the administrative leadership on campus is at the very heart of the future of the academic enterprise. Institutions seek to recruit and hire the finest people possible, and the selection processes used include many elements of the monomythical quest or journey. The use of the search committee in the selection of campus leaders has evolved into an almost hallowed approach. Additionally, consultants are now providing support and assistance in recruitment of a number of

campuses. Findings about the search committee process include many positive elements. Procedural and societal issues, however, need to be addressed so that the potential pitfalls can be avoided while the best candidates are found

WHAT HELPS SEARCH COMMITTEES FUNCTION WELL?

The number of ways to increase the likelihood of an effective search include:

- * The process is highly politicized, particularly at the presidential level. Be sure that search committee members are constituency-inclusive.
- * Search committee dynamics can be superlative or bitter. Trust and open communications among committee members are important contributors to a positive environment and may need direct focus and attention.
- * There is no perfect candidate or perfect position; further, a superb candidate for one campus in one situation might be a disaster on another. It is important to delineate the particular needs of the campus (for the next five years at the very least) at the time of the search in order to determine the kind of leadership needed.
- * Actively seek candidates, including those who may be happily employed elsewhere. Good networking skills combined with effective and affirmative outreach are necessary in order to generate a good candidate pool.
- * Consultants are used more than in the past. A range of providers of consulting services is available. Consultants are most helpful in three ways: structuring the search, locating good candidates, and checking references. If consultants are to be used, make that decision early in the process.
- * Good candidates are lost when confidentiality is breached or absent; take steps throughout the process to assure that confidentiality is maintained.
- * Faculty salary inequities arise from the non-academic marketplace. Salary inequities raise issues of comparable worth and of fairness. These issues need to be resolved internally on campus, so that differences generated by them do not end up expressed as hostility focused on candidates for positions.
- * Women are gaining in numbers of administrative appointments; minority group members are not; further, the long-term pool of minority candidates has started decreasing. Extra efforts are needed to maintain these initial successes of women, and to increase the development of minority group members. Effective affirmative action programs help.
- * The Supreme Court strongly upholds affirmative action; the Executive Branch, under

its current leadership, does not.

- * True sensitivity to and concern for people may be the prime attributes of leadership; looking for these trait appears more important than particular degrees or publications.
- * Checking references requires maintaining confidentiality while securing accurate information; proceed with caution. Reference checks are important to determine whether a candidate has the necessary strength and courage to reach out, to survive some failures, and to keep trying, without ever losing sight of the individual people who are the most important part of any organization.
- * Interviews assess sociability and verbal fluency but don't predict administrative success. When a candidate is invited to a campus for an interview, in-depth, two-way interviewing is important if the selection is to be based on the qualities needed for that campus rather than on a slick or showy style. In an interview, learning why a candidate took a particular course of action is more revealing than what was done.
- * Personnel offices provide helpful support services in academic searches; make use of them.
- * Remember that candidates are vulnerable to the process that focuses so much energy and attention on them; be caring and thoughtful.

WHY IS CONFIDENTIALITY SO IMPORTANT?

Confidentiality is important in order to secure the very strongest possible candidates in a search. Search committees tend to look more for proven competence than for potential, particularly when seeking to fill a high-level vacancy. Most people with proven competence already are at work and most often that work involves sensitive political relationships. Some of those people may be willing to consider a move. But, while they are employed elsewhere, they are unwilling to take a chance on eroding their effectiveness on their current campuses.

The folklore, and now even a good bit of the literature, is replete with horror stories of candidates whose interest in a position became known on the home campus with sometimes quite negative results; candidates know those stories, and they are reluctant to risk having their careers jeopardized in like manner. McLaughlin and Riesman have focused significant attention on this issue.

WHAT SOCIETAL ISSUES NEED ATTENTION?

Two larger societal issues also need to be addressed. One relates to open meeting laws, and the other to the result of apparent social inequities. Clear evidence reveals that many good candidates are withdrawing from, or not even allowing their names to be considered in, high level searches in states which search "in the sunshine." The old,

secret ways of doing business too often were not in the best interests of the public. Sunshine laws are clearly intended to be, and for the most part very much are, in the public interest. However, good leadership from within public higher education, working with other comparably concerned public agencies, needs to seek legislative reexamination of that aspect of sunshine laws that requires the public listing of candidates and public discussions about the professional and personal reputations of those candidates.

Second, there is a need for multiphasic attention to actively develop the talent and abilities that are not adequately coming to maturation in our minority populations. If we are to have a broadly constituted faculty in twenty years, now is the time to increase broadly based social efforts to reach and nurture that future faculty.

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