# **Creating and Communicating with Your Search Committee**

Comprising a diverse Search Committee is a vital piece of the recruiting and hiring process; but where do you begin?

Selecting the committee is just the beginning...What happens once the committee is in place? How often should you be communicating with them? Here, we'll look at comprising the Search Committee and the communication strategy of leading a Search Committee.

## Creating a Search Committee

You will want to ensure you have a well-balanced and diverse committee to not only select the successful candidate, but to represent Radford University to potential future employees. Remember, we are not only interviewing them, they are interviewing us!

### **How do I select a Search Committee?**

There are several aspects to consider when selecting who should sit on your committee:

* **The "Home Department":** The newly hired employee is going to be working in your department, and who knows what is needed in your department better than those who work in it? Select one or two people from your department to act as the Search Chair or Search Committee Member(s).
* **Fellow Departments:** Think about various people and offices who may interact with this position on a regular basis. They will know what attributes an employee in this position will need to be successful. Ask for a representative from one of those departments to join the committee.
* **Like-position Employees:** Just as a "home department" knows best what they need, so do those working in the same position or a like-titled position. Think of adding a Search Committee Member who already works in a similar position.

### **How many Search Committee Members do I need?**

This largely depends on the level of the position for which you are searching. As a general rule of thumb:

* Positions at the Director/Dean level and above should have between 5-8 Search Committee Members.
* Positions at entry level to Assistant Director level should have no more than 4 Search Committee Members.

## The Communication Strategy

The Search Committee must be convened and directed throughout the various stages of the search process. The following timeline gives you an idea of when you should direct your committee:

* The Search Committee Charge
  + A Search Committee Charge can be given by the Search Chair, Human Resources, or a combination of the two. This charge is designed to walk Search Committee Members through the hiring process and their role in that process. This charge should be conducted while the position is still posted so that valuable time is not wasted once the position close date (non-exempt) or application review date (exempt) has passed.
  + At this meeting, bring the job description, along with minimum and preferred qualifications, and review it with the Search Committee. This will familiarize everyone with the type of position you are attempting to fill, along with the minimum qualifications candidates will be required to have in order to be considered.

Have the Search Committee Charge within the first 1-3 weeks, depending on position type.

* Once the screening matrix is complete
  + The screening matrix can either be completed by Human Resources or the Search Chair, over a period of time or all at once, so long as it includes applicants up to the application review date.
  + Once the screening matrix is complete, it can be shared with the Search Committee. Once their initial screening of the matrix and applicant materials is complete, they can then be convened for an intensive screening of applicants, with the intention of selecting semi-finalists/finalists.

Ideally, convene the Search Committee for an intensive review within 1 week of the closing date/application review date.

* To draft the interview questions
  + The first decision that you and your Search Committee need to make is whether or not you will utilize the skype/phone interview option. While these interviews are optional, it is recommended that they be used for national searches in which several candidates may be at some distance from Radford.
  + Whether or not you utilize the skype/phone interview, or skip directly to on-campus interviews, you will need to draft interview questions as a committee. This can be done in-person or over a Google document, shared with the entire group. This will allow the group to edit the document and come to a consensus on which questions should be included in the interview. All candidates will need to be asked the same set of questions.

*If you prefer for the Search Committee to develop the interview questions in-person, you will convene them in order to do so. This can be done prior to or immediately after candidates have been contacted and scheduled for their interview.*

* For the interview
  + Before the interview, send a communication to your committee and encourage them to review the job description. This will help re-familiarize them with the specifics of the position before meeting candidates.
  + On the day of the interview (whether skype/phone or on-campus), consider having the Search Committee meet early enough before the interview to decide the flow of the interview and to review the questions once again (who will be asking which questions or in which direction around the table you will go.) This will assist to prevent awkward silences or disorganization. Encourage the Search Committee to take notes regarding the candidate's answers. These notes should not be opinions about the candidate, but references to the candidate's answers in order to best review them later during the evaluation.
  + After the interview, the Search Committee will need to meet in order to complete a candidate evaluation form.

*This should be done shortly after the interview so that the answers and experience are fresh in the mind and can accurately be reviewed. For phone/skype interviews, these are easily completed once the interview is complete.*

*For on-campus interviews, this review is ideally done on the same day as the interview. If this is not possible, convene the committee the following day to complete the candidate evaluation form.*

* Post interviews
  + After the final interviews have been completed, all assessment materials will need to be collected. These include candidate evaluation forms from any other interviewing group, as well as any audience evaluations from candidate presentations.

*Once all of these materials are collected, convene the committee as soon as is possible in order to review the material. This meeting should be designed with the intention of selecting a candidate to recommend to the Hiring Manager/Department Head. You may also want to select the tier 2 and 3 candidates in the case that the first candidate declines the offer.*

Once you have selected a recommended candidate, your Search Committee's role in the process is over, and you all have completed a successful search!