



Search Committee Training

Texas A&M AgriLife Human
Resources

Why is this important?

- AgriLife wants to attract, hire and retain the best people for the job.
- Diversity should be kept in mind for each search.
- Increase knowledge of consistent, legal and recommended hiring practices.

Overview

- Selecting and forming a search committee
- Review of job description
- Starting a search
- Advertising
- Reviewing candidates
- Interviews
- Making the offer
- Recordkeeping
- After the hire

Know What it Takes

- Plan ahead, base search on departmental goals, follow AgriLife policy and procedures, clearly understand equal opportunity laws.
- Know what it takes to conduct a good and legal search.
- Ensure all applicants are considered equitably. Confidentiality should be maintained.

Definitions

- Affirmative action - efforts made to expand employment opportunity for members of a particular race, gender, ethnicity, or other group previously excluded from employment opportunities. These efforts must be consistent with applicable laws and regulations.
- Equal employment opportunity - the right of all persons to be considered based on their ability to meet the requirements of the job.

Forming a Committee

- The department/unit head, director or other administrator should select committee members who have broad perspectives and a commitment to diversity.
- Committee members should be able to develop a recruitment plan, establish a timeline for the overall search, interview candidates and attend meetings.

Selecting a Chairperson

Chairpersons should have

- experience in previous searches that have been successful;
- skills in conducting respectful, effective meetings;
- knowledge about legal processes relating to hiring, recruiting, equal opportunity and affirmative action;
- ability to be diversity-sensitive and be highly regarded in their unit/department, within AgriLife, and the community.

Review of Job Description

- Include required/preferred qualifications.
- Basis for reviewing, interviewing and selecting candidates - referenced at each stage of the search.
- Develop objective selection criteria based on job requirements.

Review of Job Description

- Include qualifications for teaching, research and service for faculty or specific qualifications needed for support staff, research and/or extension positions.
- Eliminate unnecessary qualifications.

Starting a Search

- Plan meeting dates, times and locations for committee
- Know long range plan for unit/department
- Know expectations of unit/department head or supervisor

Starting a Search

- Consider goals/objectives of position and strategic plan
- Consider new attributes needed in unit
- Consider tenure if applicable

Increasing the Odds for Success

- Begin searches early or as soon as possible.
- Include only needed qualifications.
- Search for multiple specialty areas.
- Use open-ended application deadline: review of applicants will continue until the position is filled.

Increasing the Odds for Success

- Use personal approach in recruiting applicants — get on the phone!
- Re-advertise/add more recruiting sources during search.
- Consult with AgriLife Human Resources.

Advertising

- Advertise widely including professional journals.
- Must include required EEO statement in ads:
“AGENCY NAME is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Veterans/Disability Employer”
- Include link to job posting on the advertisement.
- Additional resources for diversifying applicant pool:
<http://agrilifeas.tamu.edu/documents/building-diverse-applicant-pool.pdf>

Advertising Suggestions

- Professional or discipline-specific journals and publications
- Professional associations
- Personal contacts at conferences
- Colleagues at other institutions/agencies
- Job Boards targeting Veterans, Individuals with Disabilities, and other diverse populations

Veterans/Individuals with disabilities

Make sure to include qualified women, minorities, veterans and individuals with disabilities when advertising:

Recruiting Veterans

<http://agrifeas.tamu.edu/hr/diversity/veterans/#recruiting-veterans>

Recruiting Individuals with Disabilities:

- [Employing People with Disabilities - Resources for Employers \(whatcanyoudocampaign.org\)](http://whatcanyoudocampaign.org)

Reviewing Candidates

- Screen applications based on advertised minimum required and preferred qualifications from job description.
- Develop and retain ranking/matrix of all applicants.
- Selection criteria should be carefully defined, related to requirements of job position, and clearly understood/accepted by members of committee.

Reviewing Candidates

Document selection criteria for candidates in 3 areas:

- how the committee initially screened/ ranked applicants
- how applicants were selected for interview
- how the finalist was selected.

Fairness

Fairness can be achieved with:

- consistent treatment of applications at each stage of the selection process;
- consistent evaluation of all applicants;
- qualifications providing the basis for the selection criteria used in the final decision;

Fairness

- allowing each committee member to contribute to evaluation of all applicants.
- documented decisions

Committee Interviews: A Recommended Strategy

- Ensures objective screening and evaluation of candidates, building consensus in the evaluation process.
- Tends to be thorough, more focused and job-related.
- Members are accountable to each other.

Committee Interviews: A Recommended Strategy

- Personal biases are reduced.
- Able to evaluate same sample of candidate's responses/presentation.

Planning the Interview

- Schedule interviews/events to ensure consistent treatment whether internal or external applicants.
- Develop core questions based on position-related criteria.
- Use same core questions with all candidates to allow comparative judgment.

Planning the Interview

- Avoid problems such as repetitive questioning and atmosphere of “interrogation.”
- Assign each interviewer a specific topic such as technical knowledge, management style, past experience or specific questions to ask.
- Document all interview questions and answers.

Interviewing Resources

- Interview Questions Guide
<http://agrifeas.tamu.edu/documents/ag-422.pdf>
- Lawful Interview Questions
<http://agrifeas.tamu.edu/documents/lawful-questions.pdf>
- Acceptable vs. Unlawful Interview Questions
<http://agrifeas.tamu.edu/documents/acceptable-and-unlawful-questions.pdf>
- Sample Interview Questions
<http://agrifeas.tamu.edu/files/2013/04/sampleinterviewquestions.pdf>

Reference Checks

- Integral part of every search.
- Reference Check Form
<http://agriflifeas.tamu.edu/documents/ag-446.pdf>
- Document all reference check questions and answers.

Making The Offer

- Select candidate and make recommendation to hiring supervisor (Department Head if TAMU faculty).
- Hiring supervisor (Dept Head if TAMU faculty) makes contingent offer to candidate.
- Committee notifies unsuccessful candidates; provide timely notification to internal candidates not selected.

Making The Offer

- Offer letters – Follow Dean of Faculty process/templates if TAMU faculty positions; use AgriLife offer letter templates for all other positions – templates on HR recruiting website
- Foreign national considerations – contact ISFS or HR with questions

<http://agrifeas.tamu.edu/hr/supervisor-toolkit/international-employees/>

Recordkeeping

- Rating sheets/hiring matrix, interview questions & answers and reference check materials must be retained in recruiting file.
- Written documentation/notes must also be retained.
- Even casual comments noted in margins may be considered written evidence of discriminatory evaluations.

After The Hire

- Committee meets to gather required documentation/notes, discuss success of search and ways to improve process.
- Unit/department should be deliberate in welcoming new hires by providing onboarding assistance to enhance candidate's success in the new position.
- Suggest identifying someone to serve as mentor and participate in other professional development activities with new hire.

Resources

AgriLife HR Website: <http://agrilifeas.tamu.edu/hr/>

Dean Of Faculties Hiring Website: [TAMU DOF - Faculty Hiring Resources](#)

AgriLife Rules & Procedures:
<http://agrilifeas.tamu.edu/rules-procedures/>

Texas A&M University Rules & SAPS: <http://rules-saps.tamu.edu/>

TAMU System Policy & Regulation Library:
<http://www.tamus.edu/legal/policy/policy-and-regulation-library/>

Forms

Search Committee Identification Form

<http://agrifeas.tamu.edu/documents/ag-475.pdf>

Search Committee Guidelines

<http://agrifeas.tamu.edu/documents/ag-476.pdf>

Thank You

By following the basic steps outlined in this training, you are sure to conduct an efficient and legal search that is fair and consistent for all candidates and achieves the ultimate goal of equal opportunity.

Questions?

AgriLife Human Resources will do all we can to help you fulfill the important mission of search committees.

Please contact our office at 979-845-2423 at any time during the search process and we will be happy to assist you.