



Search Committee Guidelines
Sweet Briar College
October 22, 2018

Introduction

This guide is designed to provide information, tools and resources to help facilitate a successful search process. It is targeted towards search committee members and hiring managers; however, it can be used by anyone wishing to have an overview of the search process at Sweet Briar College.

In addition to the guidance provided in this document, the departmental HR partner is available to assist search committee members throughout the process.

Search committees support the College's goal of attracting and retaining top talented faculty and staff by helping to identify and select such talent. At Sweet Briar College, search committees are used during the recruitment phase to promote the selecting group's diversity of thought and improved decision-making, resulting in selection of the strongest possible candidates. Providing candidates the opportunity to meet with a range of representatives from the College also gives the candidate a deeper insight into the organizational culture of Sweet Briar.

Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

The list below provides definitions and, as applicable, further clarification regarding roles and responsibilities throughout the search process.

Term	Definition	Roles and Responsibilities
Applicant	Any person submitting an application for consideration for a position.	
Candidate	An applicant who has been selected for initial rounds of interviews/evaluations.	
Finalist	A candidate who has been selected for a final interview.	
Diversity Advocate	The diversity advocate may be a member of the committee but may also be someone from the Office of Human Resources.	The diversity advocate provides recruiting guidance, tools and resources to the search committee on leading practices for diversity and inclusion.
HR Partner	The HR partner is a member of the Office of Human Resources, typically the Senior HR Generalist.	The HR partner provides support and guidance to search committee chairs and committee members.
Hiring Manager	The hiring manager is the individual initiating and leading the search process. Generally, the position to which the selected candidate will report.	The hiring manager is responsible for chartering the search committee and ultimately responsible for the hiring decision.

Sweet Briar College – Office of Human Resources
 Search Committee Guidance

Search Committee	The search committee is the team of individuals selected to participate in the recruitment and selection process.	The role and authority of the search committee varies depending on the specific position being recruited.
Office of Human Resources	The College office that provides strategic support for the recruitment efforts conducted by all College divisions. The College’s office responsible for managing employee benefits, leave, employee relations and classification and compensation, amongst other responsibilities.	HR provides guidance and support to the search committee and hiring manager during the search process. HR provides information and tools/templates and advises the search committee on policy and compliance requirements. The Office of Human Resources is responsible for training hiring managers. The hiring manager, in turn and with assistance from the HR partner, ensures that the search committee understands and follows the procedures outlined in this document. HR is available to provide committee-specific training in the event that further training needs are recognized.
Charge	The charge is the search committee plan and expectations. The charge is developed by the hiring manager and communicated to the committee. The charge generally includes the responsibilities of the position, the skills and attributes of the successful candidate, the timeline for the search, the search budget and other factors.	

Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality protects the integrity of the search process, and search committee members are required to maintain the confidentiality of applicant/candidate names, committee discussions/deliberations and recommendations both during the search process and after the search process is complete. This protects the College as well as individuals under consideration who may not want their candidacy known to current employers or other parties.

At the beginning of each search, all search committee members should sign the Sweet Briar College Confidentiality Statement, which can be located on the Human Resources website under “Forms”.

The hiring manager is responsible for ensuring all confidential materials are collected from committee members and all relevant and required documentation is kept confidential. Once items are collected, they must be submitted to the Office of Human Resources for record keeping.

Committee Role and Selection

Overview

What is a search committee, and why use one?

At Sweet Briar, the term search committee is used to identify a team of individuals tasked with selecting candidates from a pool of applicants, using methods to evaluate candidates (including interviewing), and making a recommendation to the hiring manager and/or selecting which candidates should be offered employment at the College. There may be exceptions to utilizing the search committee to make a hiring decision, but those exceptions must be approved by the Office of Human Resources and the hiring manager.

Executive Search Firms

External executive search firms are occasionally used to assist in senior-level and executive searches. In cases where an external executive search firm is engaged by the College to assist in the recruiting process, the search firm may assume many of the responsibilities of the search committee as they lead the search on the College’s behalf, including identifying applicants, conducting outreach and serving as a liaison between Sweet Briar and the applicants, selecting candidates from the applicant pool, and leading the selection process. Approval for utilization of an external executive search firm must be approved by the Office of Human Resources in conjunction with the Vice President of Finance and Administration and/or the President of the College.

Committee Selection and Composition

The search committee should include a representative cross-section of individuals to bring diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences to the team. The size, composition and scope of the committee will vary based on the specific position under recruitment. The hiring manager will meet with the HR Partner to discuss size and scope of the search committee. Diversity of perspective should be a key objective when deciding who should serve on the committee.

Diversity may be achieved in a variety of ways:

- Department/organization
- Experience/technical expertise
- Position and position-level
- Gender
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Nationality

Diversity Advocates

The committee is encouraged to select and designate one individual as a diversity advocate for the committee. Hiring managers are asked to consult the Office of Human Resources for advice on the diversity advocate role – which is generally filled by a member of the committee but may be a representative of the Office of Human Resources. The functions of the diversity advocate are 1) to support the diversity goals of the College and search committee, 2) to address underrepresentation when applicable, and 3) to bring expertise and perspective on diversity to the search. Whether or not a diversity advocate is appointed, promoting a diverse and inclusive search process committed to the College’s diversity and inclusiveness goals and strategy should be the responsibility of all committee members.

Search Committee Responsibilities

The hiring manager should clearly define and explain the roles and responsibilities of each committee member and communicate all expectations related to the search process. The hiring manager, in conjunction with the HR partner, is responsible for leading the committee, executing the committee charge and facilitating the overall search process. A broad representation of responsibilities of the committee is included in the table below.

Hiring Manager	Search Committee Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as liaison with the committee • Schedule and facilitate meetings; ensure members understand the committee charge • Develop committee members’ assignments and delegate tasks • Work with the Office of Human Resources to develop and make available tools, templates and materials for conducting the search • Ensure that records and meeting minutes of committee meetings are maintained • Ensure interview and other evaluation materials are documented and submitted to HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help to identify potential applicants • Attend and participate fully in committee meetings • Review candidates’ resumes and application materials • Screen applicants according to the selected evaluation criteria and committee charge • Host candidates • Participate in the interview process • Maintain confidentiality about applicants, candidates and search committee proceedings • Perform other duties as assigned by the Hiring Manager or HR partner

Hiring Manager

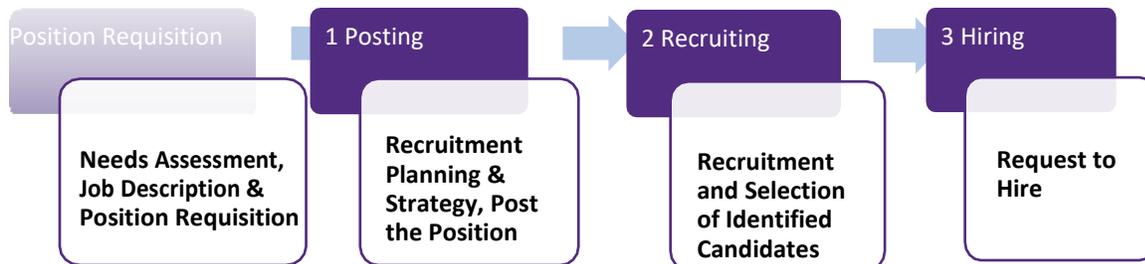
- Correspond with semifinalists and finalists
- Coordinate administrative and logistical support
- Manage the search budget (if applicable)
- Serve as lead host for candidates on campus
- Coordinate the efforts of committee members
- Perform the duties of a regular committee member
- Perform other duties as requested by the HR Partner

Training

The Office of Human Resources is responsible for training hiring managers. The hiring manager, in turn and with assistance from the HR partner, ensures that the search committee understands and follows the procedures outlined in this document. HR is available to provide committee-specific training in the event that further training needs are recognized.

Process

The key duties of the search committee occur in phases one through three of the hiring process.



Position Requisition

A needs assessment conducted by the hiring manager in conjunction with the HR partner should precede any consideration of hiring for a position. While the process of conducting a needs assessment for a faculty position differs from that of conducting a needs assessment for a staff hire, a thorough needs assessment identifies the department's and institution's immediate and future needs as they relate to the position. Generally, the needs assessment serves four important purposes:

1. Serves as the foundation of the business need to obtain approval for the position
2. Identifies job duties and responsibilities, facilitating the hiring manager's development of a comprehensive and well-written position description, reviewed by the HR partner
3. Provides the foundational piece for all other steps in the search process – from developing the search committee's charge to eliminating applicants who would not meet the position's

Position Description

Determine the position requirements and develop a comprehensive position description. The position description includes the responsibilities and duties required for the role, as well as preferred experience, knowledge, skills and/or abilities.

Position Classification

The appropriate position classification and FLSA status is based on the position responsibilities. The position classification helps to determine the title and pay and assists in the overall effort of attracting a sizeable pool of qualified applicants.

Posting

The posting phase encompasses the recruitment planning and strategy pieces of the process, including the steps taken by the organization from the point of crafting the position description to the point of obtaining institutional approval to recruit for the position. The majority of the duties represented in the recruitment planning and strategy phase are completed by the Office of Human Resources and/or the hiring manager; however, search committee members may be involved depending on the committee type and the position itself.

Recruiting

The recruitment strategy encompasses all work conducted in the development of a proactive plan for identifying the strongest possible candidates from the applicant pool.

Responsibility: Hiring Manager, Search Committee, Office of Human Resources

1. Provide Compensation Analysis

Compensation analysis is the process of 1) identifying the appropriate labor market from which to recruit and 2) identifying the availability of talent and how aggressively Sweet Briar will need to compete with respect to salaries.

2. Consider Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion considerations should be integrated throughout the search process. It should be determined up-front whether there are specific diversity/inclusion needs for the position, whether the position is underrepresented or whether a diversity advocate will be appointed to the committee.

3. Formulate a Recruitment Strategy

The objective of developing an effective recruitment strategy is to identify and attract a pool of qualified applicants. An effective recruitment strategy includes: where to recruit, the recruiting timeframe, who should be involved, position advertisement / marketing, and available resources and tools.

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection are arguably the most crucial responsibilities of the search committee. The search committee will utilize the provided tools and processes from the hiring manager and the HR partner to evaluate candidates, which allows for an objective and transparent process for the committee and a fair process for the applicants.

Communication

During the recruitment and selection phase, communication with applicants and candidates is extremely important. Applicants and candidates should be informed about their selection (or non-selection) and the status of their candidacy by the hiring manager in a timely and professional manner. All applicants and candidates should leave the process with a positive impression of how their candidacy was handled by the College, whether or not they were selected for the position. Leaving the process with a good impression may make strong candidates more inclined to pursue future opportunities with Sweet Briar in the future, or recommend other qualified candidates for positions.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria should be based on objective and observable/verifiable characteristics that allow each member of the committee to recognize a qualified candidate. The search committee should agree on and document these criteria prior to the start of the search. The criteria for evaluation varies with the position. Search criteria must be applied to all candidates consistently.

Typical evaluation methods that may be used by the search committee during selection include:

Written Application Materials

Written application materials such as resumes, curriculum vitae, reference letters, SBC application, cover letter and any other materials requested in the initial job posting.

Interviews

Interviews are a preferred form of screening applicants and may be conducted in multiple ways: phone, video, or in-person. Further, the format of the interview may vary from one-on-one and panel to open-forums. Interviews are one of most important tools for thoroughly evaluating a candidate.

Work Samples

Gaining work samples affords an additional level of screening that provides the committee with insight into how the candidate performs typical duties of the role. Representative work samples that may be requested include, but are not limited to: portfolios, publication examples, research philosophy, technical/standard tests, statement of work philosophy, live presentations or lectures.

Reference Checks

Reference checks generally come later in the process when preferred and final candidates have been identified; they are used to obtain a third-party perspective on the general character, work experience and accomplishments of the candidate.

Interview Evaluation Form and Candidate Ranking Matrix

During interviews, an interview evaluation form is used to help document and score how each candidate measures against the pre-established criteria. Further, the matrix can help when comparing candidates to each other in the process of finalizing candidate recommendations for the purpose of presenting a list to the hiring manager. By listing and documenting the objective criteria on which the candidates are being evaluated, the committee will have a clear, consistent, and documented case for why it selected the proposed finalists for the recommendation.

Request to Hire

Now that the committee has completed the evaluation and has deliberated as a group, the committee is ready to make a recommendation as to which candidates should be given an offer of employment. The tools established early in the process (standard evaluation methods / criteria and the evaluation matrix) will be used to help the committee narrow the pool to a list of finalists. The hiring manager will make the official hiring recommendation to the HR partner and then conduct reference checks for the candidate.

Employment Offer

Congratulations! You have identified a final candidate to which an offer will be made. At this point, there are several steps remaining to ensure successful completion of your candidate search.

Confirm Hiring Salary & Start Date

During the Request Phase of the hiring process, a salary analysis was conducted by the Office of Human Resources to provide a competitive salary range. Now that your candidate has been chosen, the salary offer should be within this competitive, approved range. The final salary amount is approved by HR and the VP of Finance and Administration during the offer letter approval process outlined below. Once this is approved, a verbal offer may be made to the candidate by the hiring manager. You will also discuss next viable start date, which must align with the beginning of a pay period unless an approved exception is granted.

Conduct Background Check

Offers of employment are contingent on successful background checks.

Submit Offer Letter

The offer of employment should be communicated to the employee via a formal written offer letter utilizing a College-approved offer letter template. Offer letters are sent electronically through our Applicant Tracking System in ADP (although in some cases a manual letter may still be sent).

Completion of Search Committee Work

Now that the employment offer has been accepted by the successful candidate, the committee can close out its work. This part of the process includes informing unsuccessful candidates of their status and ensuring record-keeping requirements have been fulfilled. The Office of Human Resources recommends that all candidates who were interviewed be notified that they were not chosen by way of a phone call from the hiring manager.

Records

The search committee's ability to maintain accurate records is important for several reasons:

- Records provide supporting documentation for why one candidate was chosen over another.
- Good record keeping can be used to present an objective case to the hiring manager of how the committee arrived at the hiring recommendation. It also supports the case for why certain applicants were not selected.
- The proper maintenance of search records meets compliance requirements of federal, state and College policies and regulations, which can prove invaluable to the College in the event of a legal challenge.

It is the responsibility of the hiring manager to collect all notes on candidates and the search from search committee members. All notes and documentation must be submitted to the HR partner.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Human Resources.