
POLICY MANUAL

Search and Screening Committees For Faculty and Academic Administrative Positions

North Georgia College & State University

1.0 Overview

Few other committees perform a task that is as vital to the overall strength of the university as search and screening committees. Formed for the purpose of recommending the selection of individuals who will serve as new faculty or academic administrators for NGCSU, these ad hoc committees are tasked with carefully reviewing application documentation, conducting candidate interviews, checking references and ultimately recommending individuals whom the committee believes best meet the position qualifications.

2.0 Committee Composition/Selection

The department head, in cases of faculty positions, will recommend to the Dean of the School the membership of a search and screening committee, comprising members of the department and at least one member from outside the department.

Search and screening committees are generally composed of from five to seven members although they can be larger. One individual is identified as the committee chair. Depending on the nature of the position to be filled, the selection process for search committees varies. Membership on search committees to fill faculty positions is determined by the department head with the approval of the dean of the school. At least one member of a faculty search committee shall be an individual with faculty rank from a department outside of the one where the open position exists.

In instances where an academic administrative position is to be filled, search committee members may be selected by the President, Vice President for Academic Affairs, or an academic dean.

3.0 Committee and Committee Chair Procedures/Responsibilities

Once a search committee has been formed, it is the responsibility of the committee chair to call the initial meeting. At that meeting, the committee should be charged by the appropriate university administrator as to its responsibilities. A representative of the Office of Human Resources should also brief the committee on human resources policies. In addition, the initial meeting is generally the setting in which the committee decides upon a schedule for reviewing applications and sets tentative deadlines for selecting a first "cut" of applications for further review and possible interviews.

As the committee begins its deliberations, conversations that could explicitly or implicitly violate federal and/or state laws regarding affirmative action or equal employment should be avoided. Guidance on this issue may be gleaned from Appendix I (Interview Question Guide). Generally, that which should not be asked a candidate at an interview must likewise not be discussed among committee members.

Frequently, it is the responsibility of the search committee to draft the position announcement. In such cases, the committee will necessarily dedicate time at the initial meeting (and perhaps the second meeting) to preparing the announcement. All position announcements must meet certain requirements to ensure that equal opportunity criteria are met.

The Office of Human Resources will notify all applicants that their letter of application and accompanying documents have been received and will be in addition to the request for Affirmative Action data.

3.0.1 Responsibilities of the Committee Chair

The search committee chair has several roles in the search process. Among them are the following:

- Drafting the position announcement (when necessary) for committee/university approval. (See section 4.0)
- Working with the Office of Human Resources to see that position announcements are publicized.
- Providing candidates who are to be interviewed with a packet of material about NGCSU and the position. (See section 3.0.4. Candidate Packets).
- Establishing meeting dates for the committee.
- Communicating regularly with committee members.
- Ensuring that university, Board of Regents, and affirmative action guidelines are followed throughout the process.
- Communicating with the Office of Human Resources so that procedures are followed and all files received by the advertised deadline for a position are reviewed.
- Ensuring that references on candidates are adequately checked.
- Establishing phone interviews with promising candidates.
- Arranging campus visits for candidates and ensuring that they are escorted to the appropriate offices during the visits.
- Providing candidates' resumes and a copy of the interview itinerary to all those on campus who will interview the candidates at least 24 hours in advance of the interviews.
- Completing appropriate university forms through the Office of Human Resources. Chairs should ensure that a completed *Employment Requisition Form* (#F5463) is on file before the search begins.

3.0.2 Advertising for the Position

Print advertising for faculty positions--e.g., *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Black Issues in Higher Education*, newspapers, etc.--is restricted to the title of the position to be filled, with reference to and address for the North Georgia College & State University web site (*Campus Resources to Human Resources to Position Announcements*). Any exceptions require the approval of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Position announcements should adhere to a prescribed format as follows:

- Introductory Statements
- Description of Duties
- Educational/Experiential Requirements
- Salary/Rank
- Employment Date
- Application Deadline
- Application Procedures

Announcements should be sent to the Office of Human Resources as a Word document, using the format outlined above.

The Office of Human Resources mails external position announcements for all full-time faculty positions and for some academic administrative positions to the Applicant Clearinghouse of the University System of Georgia, and to appropriate colleges and universities. In addition, advertisements for such positions usually should be placed in at least one major newspaper or professional publication. Advertisements must refer to and include the web site of NGCSU. Advertisement for other positions may be placed in appropriate local, regional or national media.

3.0.3 Screening Candidate Files

The review of candidate files is the first step taken by committee members toward selecting the individuals who will ultimately be recommended for the position. Review of applications should be accomplished promptly after the application deadline or published date for the beginning of the file review. The Office of Human Resources is responsible for receiving and filing all application material. Committee members should go to that office to pick up files for review. What follows are some points to consider as one reviews a candidate's file:

- Does the candidate meet the minimum requirements for the position as advertised? While further consideration can be given to a candidate who may not meet preferred qualifications, this is not the case where the candidate does not meet the required qualifications as advertised.
- Is the file complete? Did the candidate submit all the material as requested in the advertisement? A number of factors beyond the control of the candidate may have precluded the arrival of certain documentation. A phone call or message

from the committee chair to an otherwise promising candidate would not be out of order where the message or conversation only concerns missing documents.

- Are reference letters adequate insofar as their currency and source? Source relates to whether or not the individual who has written on behalf of the candidate has been in a position to know the candidate's abilities to do the job.

3.0.4 Candidate Packets

All candidates for academic positions who will be invited to campus for an interview are to receive an introductory letter (see Appendix II) on appropriate letterhead stationery and a packet of materials. It is the responsibility of the department to send this packet to the candidate in advance of the campus visit. In cases where the position is for department head or higher, the chair of the search committee should ensure that the packet is sent.

The packet should contain hard copies of the following documents, or if available electronically on the web (with the appropriate web site addresses):

- Web site information (www.ngcsu.edu)
- NGCSU undergraduate and graduate bulletins
- University brochures
- NGCSU Fact Book
- Faculty Senate Bylaws
- Policy governing pre-tenure, tenure and promotion, and post-tenure review
- Campus map
- Campus publications
- Departmental information
- Real estate and community information

3.0.5 Interviewing Candidates

Search committees are strongly encouraged to conduct telephone interviews with promising candidates as a means of further deciding upon those who should receive an invitation to visit the campus (see Section 5.0). The individual who has supervisory responsibility over the position should guide the search committee insofar as a maximum or minimum number of candidates to be invited to interview for the position. Reasonableness should be the touchstone in such decisions where cost and time involved are not overlooked. At a point in the search process to be determined by the committee (but not before the published application deadline), the best qualified candidates may be invited to campus for personal interviews.

The search committee chair, with guidance from the appropriate university administrator, shall establish an agenda for candidates selected for personal interviews. The nature of the position itself usually dictates which individuals will meet with and/or interview the candidate. Candidates for faculty positions will normally teach and/or

address students. Candidates for full-time faculty positions should also meet with as many members of the departmental faculty as possible.

The Office of Human Resources should be included on the agenda to provide information to the candidate about benefits and university policies.

The search committee should arrange to meet with the candidate at some point during the visit. It is common practice (but not required) that this meeting occur at the end of the visit. Committee members should refer to Appendix I for information as to the type of questions that can and cannot be asked of candidates.

4.0 Costs Associated with the Interview Process

Advertising expenses incurred during the search process for faculty and academic administrative positions are charged to the Office of Academic Affairs.

Should one or two committee members take a candidate to lunch or dinner, neither the candidate nor the search committee member should incur personal expense for the meal. Reimbursement will occur after completion of an NGCSU Foundation Payment Request Form is submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs. Breakfast meals are limited to \$8.00 per person, lunch \$10.00 per person and dinner, \$21.00 per person. Prudence should be exercised to ensure that these limits are not exceeded.

5.0 Confidentiality

Georgia's Open Records Act gives position candidates the right to inspect evaluation documents that are submitted as part of an application package. A document may be exempt from the Act when it is clearly identified as being a "confidential evaluation." Where personal evaluations are solicited about potential new employees, the person providing the reference should be informed of the candidate's right of access to the evaluation.

Comments to the potential reference might be as follows:

"We are considering Dr. _____ for a position on our faculty. She has listed you as a reference. We would like to invite you to submit a confidential evaluation of Dr. _____ based on your experience working with her. You should know that as a state institution, North Georgia College & State University must adhere to the Georgia Open Records Act. Thus, most documents except for those identified as 'confidential evaluations' are subject to disclosure upon request. If you prefer that the information you submit not be disclosed to the candidate, you should so indicate on the evaluation by including the term 'confidential evaluation' on it."

These guidelines are not limited to faculty positions; they apply to administrative and staff positions as well.

6.0 Notes

The chair of the search committee may wish to collect and compile the written objective notes on applicants taken by committee members at the conclusion of the search process. It is at the chair's discretion as to whether or not to collect such objective notes. Notes (if collected and compiled by the chair) should be placed in candidates' files and returned to the Office of Human Resources.

7.0 Disqualification of Candidates

Consistent with University System of Georgia regulations, no individual shall be considered for employment at North Georgia College & State University who has:

- Been convicted of a criminal drug offense within the last two years;
- Been convicted of a second or subsequent criminal drug conviction within the last five years;
- Made false statement of material fact on the employment application;
- Been or is a member of any organization that advocates the violent overthrow of the United States government;
- Been convicted of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude, except where pardoned.

Board of Regents policy also "no individual shall be employed in a department or unit which will result in the existence of a subordinate-superior relationship between such individuals and any relative of such individual through any line of authority. As used herein, 'line of authority' shall mean authority extending vertically through one or more organizational levels of supervision or management."

8.0 The Office of Human Resources and the Search Process

It is through the university's Office of Human Resources (HR) that position announcements and advertisements originate. Likewise, it is HR that receives and files application material. HR notifies the applicant by letter that her/his application and any enclosed documents have been received, and requests affirmative action data.

The HR office ensures that position announcements are placed in appropriate publications. As candidate's application documents are received, HR creates an applicant file and makes the file available to search committee members. Committee members may be asked to sign-out application files that are taken from the HR Office.

At the initial meeting of the search committee, a representative from HR should be present to review human resources policies and answer committee member questions about such matters.

9.0 Nomination Procedures

A recommendation to hire, which includes proposed rank, salary, credit toward tenure (if appropriate), the candidate's address, an attached resume, and all essential employment forms, will be submitted by the chair of the search committee to the direct supervisor of the position.

If the respective supervisor decides that an offer should be made, he/she should complete the pertinent sections of the *Recruitment Summary*, sign the form, and forward it to the appropriate administrator.

After all approval signatures are obtained on the *Recruitment Summary Form*, the appropriate supervisor verbally extends the offer to the selected applicant, followed by a written confirmation letter from the Vice President for Academic Affairs or the President in cases of vice presidential appointments.

If the appropriate supervisor believes that the selected applicant must be given an interim response before all approvals can be obtained, he/she may contact the applicant of choice and state the following:

“I am calling to let you know that I am recommending that you be offered the position of _____ at the rank of _____ for a nine- (twelve-) month salary of _____ beginning _____. An official offer is pending approval of the Dean, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the President.”

The above procedure does not constitute an official offer; it is simply a means to inform the candidate of interest and intent, while, at the same time, ensuring that no offer is made without appropriate approvals.

Once the applicant of choice has accepted the position offered, the remaining applicants' folders should be sorted/labeled by “interviewed” and “applied” and returned to the Office of Human Resources.

The Office of Human Resources notifies both those who have interviewed and those who have applied that the position has been filled. (If a department head wishes to notify those who have been interviewed, the Office of Human Resources should be informed immediately to prevent duplication.)

9.0.1 Hiring Forms

Three essential forms are to be completed in order to hire new faculty or academic administrators at North Georgia College & State University:

An *Employment Requisition Form* (#F5463), available in the Office of Materials Management, must be approved by the Department Head, Dean, Vice President (for Academic Affairs or Student Services), Vice President for Business and Finance, and Director of Human Resources **before** the position is advertised. A copy of the job description must be attached.

A *Recruitment Summary Form*, available in and returned to the Office of Human Resources, is to be completed for each full time position involving a search; a copy of the resume of each person interviewed and a copy of the position announcement must be attached.

A *Personnel Action Form* (#F5462), available in the Office of Materials Management, is to be completed by the employing supervisor and forwarded to the indicated administrators for approval.

10.0 Candidate Reimbursement

Candidates who are invited to the university for an interview receive reimbursement for travel expenses (air, automobile) to and from campus and for one night's hotel accommodations if an overnight stay is required as part of the interview process. Exceptions to the one-night lodging arrangement may be appropriate if a significantly reduced air fare could be obtained by staying more than one night.

However, all exceptions must be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs prior to making actual arrangements.

Candidates should be encouraged to use rental cars for transportation to and from the airport. A North Georgia College & State University *Travel Expense Statement* must be filed with the Office of Academic Affairs in order for a candidate to be reimbursed.

Appendix I

Interview Question Guide

Before candidates are interviewed, committee members should familiarize themselves with this guide. In every instance, questions must be job-related and necessary for determining the applicant's potential for employment at NGCSU.

Name

It is permissible to ask candidates if they have ever worked at NGCSU under a different name or to ask for a maiden name in order to check educational and/or employment history.

Age

Questions may not be asked that tend to identify applicants who are age 40 or older. It is likewise not permissible to ask candidates their ages or their dates of birth.

Citizenship

Questions may not be asked that seek to determine candidates' place of birth. However, it is permissible to ask applicants if they are legally authorized to work in the United States. Questions about one's visa status and whether or not the candidate intends to remain permanently in the United States are also permissible.

National Origin

Questions about what language is spoken in one's home or what one's mother tongue is are not permitted. However, it is permissible to ask candidates what language they speak, read or write fluently. In addition, it is permissible to ask candidates if they have special familiarity with any foreign country.

Race

No questions regarding one's race or color may be asked.

Sex

Candidates may not be asked questions regarding their plans for having children or whether someone is pregnant. It is also not permissible to ask candidates if they wish to be addressed as "Mrs.", "Miss", or "Ms."

Religion

No questions may be asked about someone's religious affiliation, denomination or church. It is also not permitted to ask about someone's religious holidays.

Marital Status/Relatives

Candidates may not be asked about their marital status, with whom they reside, nor about the ages of their children. It is permissible to ask the names of relatives who may be employed by NGCSU.

Education

Questions that seek to identify the national, racial or religious affiliation of schools attended are not permitted.

Physical Condition

Candidates may not be asked if they have any physical disabilities, what caused a disability, nor the prognosis of a disability. Candidates also may not be asked if they have had any recent serious illness.

It is permissible to ask candidates if they have any physical condition that may limit their ability to perform the job for which they have applied. Candidates may also be asked if they may need any special accommodations in order to perform the job for which they have applied. Questions can be asked as to how candidates would go about performing the job for which they have applied.

Organizations/Memberships

It is permissible to ask candidates about their affiliation with organizations. However, questions that might reveal one's race, creed, color, national origin or ancestry based on the name of the organization should not be asked.

Character

Candidates may not be asked if they have ever been arrested, but they may be asked if they have ever been convicted of a crime.

Work Schedule/Travel

No questions may be asked about the age of one's children or child care needs. However, it is permissible to ask candidates if any family, business, health or social obligations would prevent them from working weekends, working overtime or traveling. It is also permissible to ask candidates if reasons exist that would preclude them from consistently arriving for work on time and adhering to the NGCSU work schedule.

Relocation

Candidates may be asked if any family, business, health, or social obligations would preclude them from relocating. Candidates may also be asked if they would be willing to relocate. No questions may be asked regarding a spouse's attitude about relocating.

Appendix II Sample Letter

Dear (Candidate):

We are pleased that you will be visiting our campus. We look forward to your visit. Enclosed is a packet of materials to assist you as you familiarize yourself with the university and the surrounding community. The enclosed packet includes the following:

- Web site information
- NGCSU Undergraduate and/or Graduate Bulletin(s)
- University brochures
- NGCSU Fact Book
- Faculty Senate Bylaws
- Policy Governing Pre-Tenure Review, Tenure & Promotion, and Post-Tenure Review
- Campus map
- Campus publications
- Departmental information
- Real estate and community information

Please feel free to contact the Department, the School, or the Office of Academic Affairs if you have questions that need to be answered prior to your visit.

Best wishes to you. Have a safe trip to our campus.

Sincerely,