

Title/Subject: **SENIOR OFFICER SEARCH COMMITTEE GUIDELINES**

Applies to:  faculty  staff  students  student employees  visitors  contractors

Effective Date of This Revision: April 1, 2005

Contact for More Information: Human Resources or Faculty Personnel Services

Board Policy  Administrative Policy  Procedure  Guideline

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## INTRODUCTION

These requirements and guidelines have been developed to inform and to assist search committees in carrying out their responsibilities in a timely, orderly, professional and legal manner. General procedures for all search committees are outlined below. In addition to exercising sound judgment in the selection process, search committees must use prudent judgment regarding recruitment expenses, as they actively seek strong candidates.

It is extremely important that all searches be conducted to ensure each applicant receives a positive impression of CMU. To attract the interest of top candidates requires that we actively promote and share the positive elements of the University and surrounding community. Candidates are evaluating us at the same time we are evaluating them. To obtain marketing materials for CMU and the Mt. Pleasant community, contact Human Resources.

## DEFINITIONS

**Applicants:** An applicant is anyone who expresses an interest in a specific position by submitting an application, resume or vita.

**Candidates:** All applicants who are interviewed become candidates.

**Finalists:** The top candidates (typically 2-5) who are identified and asked to come to campus for extensive interviews are considered finalists.

## SELECTING A SEARCH COMMITTEE/USE OF A SEARCH FIRM

A search firm may be used to assist in the recruitment/screening of applicants for Senior Officer positions. When a hiring supervisor has decided to utilize the services of a search firm, he/she should work with Human Resources for assistance in selecting the search firm. Some firms have been pre-approved; other firms may be used following a bid process (see [Search Firm Policy](#)). The supervisor of the vacant position will determine the use and role of the search firm. Supervisors must work with Human Resources before entering into a contract with a search firm.

The supervisor of the vacant position will appoint the members of a search committee, including a chair who will work closely with the supervisor throughout the recruitment and selection process. The composition of the committee should represent the diversity of institutional culture and advance the university's commitment to the principles of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. Each committee member should play a major role in the recruitment, interviewing, screening and evaluation of applicants.

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The search committee chair will work with the hiring supervisor to determine a timeline to ensure that the search is carried out in a timely, orderly, professional and legal manner. **Faculty Personnel Services (FPS) will assist departments in the search process for all Senior Officers in the Academic Division and Human Resources (HR) will assist departments in all other Senior Officer searches.** The search committee chair will contact the Affirmative Action Office (AAO) and FPS or HR at the beginning of the process to conduct training for the search committee.

In an effort to minimize time spent on paperwork and increase the committee's productivity, a support individual may be appointed by the hiring supervisor to provide assistance to the search committee. This individual will assist and/or work with the search committee/firm in collecting resumes, maintaining an applicant log, preparing any required documents and handling correspondence with applicants. He/she will also be prepared to assist with meeting arrangements and committee activities which should ease the burden on search committee chairs and assure that all required contacts are made with applicants. Search committee chairs will play a central role in working with the staff in such communications.

For consistency and efficiency, the search committee chair and/or search firm should handle all inquiries regarding the search including any applicant or potential applicant's written or verbal request for information about the search process or timelines, as well as any inquiries from the press. A Unit Affirmative Action Coordinator has been assigned to every area within the University and can provide assistance to the search committee. For a listing of Unit Affirmative Action Coordinators, see [www.cmich.edu/aaeo/](http://www.cmich.edu/aaeo/).

## **POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT**

The supervisor of the senior officer position is responsible for the preparation of the job description. The search committee and/or search firm will use the job description developed by the supervisor as the basis for developing the advertisement. FPS or HR may also assist the search committee/firm with the development of the advertisement. The hiring supervisor must approve the advertisement and forward it to the Affirmative Action Officer for approval before the position is advertised, or otherwise announced. Generally senior officer positions are advertised nationally. Requests for internal searches, although rare, may be presented to the Affirmative Action Officer for approval.

The advertisement should include the title of the position, a description of the major responsibilities, a statement indicating that the position is at-will and serves at the pleasure of the President, minimum required qualifications and any desired qualifications, application deadline date, where to apply, and the AA/EO statement. In addition, a standardized statement describing CMU has been developed for advertisements. This statement has been designed to promote uniformity, consistency and accuracy in describing the university. It can be found under search information at [www.cmich.edu/aaeo/](http://www.cmich.edu/aaeo/). Use of this statement is highly recommended when advertising position vacancies. In the interest of conserving finances, paid advertisements may simply include a brief description of the job, a shortened AA/EO statement, and refer the reader to the CMU website for the full-text version of the vacancy notice.

The AAO will forward a copy of the approved advertisement with the assigned job number to the appropriate HR or FPS office, Public Relations and Marketing, as well as to the hiring supervisor. The appropriate office (HR or FPS) will place the advertisement on the CMU website. Public Relations and Marketing will place the approved advertisement in *InsideCMU*.

At the request of the search committee chair, HR will assist in placing advertisements for senior officer positions outside the Academic Division. The search committee is encouraged to forward copies of the approved advertisement to other relevant resources including individuals or institutions that can assist in attracting qualified applicants.

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Every effort should be made in the search process to utilize a wide variety of sources in soliciting applications from a diverse applicant pool. The AAO is responsible for advising units with respect to appropriate sources and techniques which constitute a genuine “good faith” effort to attract qualified minorities, women, veterans and others from under-represented groups. A list of numerous resources for targeting individuals and agencies is available in the AAO.

#### **RECEIPT OF RESUMES/ACKNOWLEDGMENT LETTERS**

The search committee chair or search firm will send a letter to each applicant acknowledging receipt of materials and notifying the applicant whether any further documentation is required. In accordance with affirmative action guidelines, an affirmative action card must be sent to all applicants; therefore, the card should be enclosed with each acknowledgement letter. Each applicant will be given the option to return the affirmative action card or complete the on-line card at [www.cmich.edu/aaeo/jobcard.asp](http://www.cmich.edu/aaeo/jobcard.asp). The job number shall be placed on the affirmative action card before it is sent to applicants. Sample letters to assist with standard correspondence are available in HR.

Confidentiality of the names of applicants and information developed about them and their employing institutions is necessary to attract high quality finalists, to avoid putting their current positions in jeopardy, and to protect Central Michigan University’s integrity. Confidentiality is extremely important until the final candidates are identified and invited to campus to meet with representative members of the university community. The search committee will be required to conduct its meetings and deliberations consistent with this commitment.

#### **SCREENING RESUMES**

Using the approved advertisement, the search committee/firm will assess every applicants’ qualifications to assure that all applicants are evaluated using the same criteria. The screening of applicants should eliminate from further consideration those individuals who clearly do not meet the minimum required qualifications set forth in the advertisement. Phone interviews may be conducted to assist in screening applicants without prior approval of the Affirmative Action Officer. As a professional courtesy, the search committee should honor all requests to refrain from contacting references until the candidate reaches the finalist stage.

If using a search firm, the search firm representative will meet with the search committee to present and discuss applicants likely to reach candidate status. Search committee members may present other applicants for further consideration.

#### **INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES**

Prior to interviewing, the search committee chair, along with the committee will formulate interview questions to be used in the interview process. The search committee chair will ensure that interview questions are specifically job related in order to surface all significant information, including verification of circumstances under which a candidate was ever terminated or asked to resign from a position.

The search committee chair, along with the appointed support staff, will also complete the first three pages of the senior officer activity record located on [www.cmich.edu/aaeo/](http://www.cmich.edu/aaeo/) that includes a list of all applicants, including a reason why each applicant is no longer being considered or why the applicant should be interviewed. The senior officer activity record and the interview questions must be forwarded to the Affirmative Action Officer for approval prior to video and/or face-to-face interviews. All resumes must accompany the activity record that is sent to the AAO for review. The AAO will notify the supervisor and FPS or HR of the approval status. Once approval is received, the committee can begin making arrangements for interviews. Rejection letters may be sent to applicants who clearly do not meet the minimum qualifications or will not be given additional consideration.

Any finalist(s) will be invited to campus for interviews with the search committee, representative members of the university community, and President, if appropriate. The search committee chair shall release a list of finalists to local media prior to on-campus interviews. All time spent with a candidate is considered part of the interview

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process including social functions and meals. The search committee chair should caution everyone who meets with the candidate in a social context to avoid asking personal questions that are not job related.

If the position has broad responsibility or will serve as a university executive officer, consideration should be made for public forums with comment cards for participants. Faculty, staff and students should be encouraged to attend the public forums. A member of the search committee must be present at all meetings to insure that no inappropriate questions are asked of the candidates. The President will be provided with materials summarizing feedback from the public forums for positions that report to the President. The President will, if deemed necessary, meet with the search committee to gather feedback on finalists.

For positions that report to the President, arrangements for all campus meetings with the finalists (except public forums) will be made by the President's staff, and all finalists will be scheduled to meet with the President's executive staff. Finalists will have a lunch or dinner at the President's residence in order to provide less formal interaction between the President and candidates. For all other positions it is the responsibility of the search committee chair to establish, in conjunction with the supervisor, a schedule of campus meetings.

All finalists must sign an Employment Verification Form during the interview stage, which verifies that the information on the resume is accurate, indicates that a criminal history check will be conducted and notifies the finalists that references will be checked.

#### **REFERENCE CHECKS**

Reference checks are required on the finalist, but the search committee/firm may use them throughout the interview process to help identify the finalist. As a professional courtesy, the search committee should honor all requests to refrain from contacting references until the candidate reaches the finalist stage. It is also recommended that finalists be informed when the committee is ready to begin checking references. If a finalist refuses to allow contact with a potential reference that the committee deems important, the finalist should be informed that this refusal limits the committee's ability to complete its evaluation and that the candidate may not receive full consideration.

To identify potential areas of concern, the search firm, chair and/or supervisor of the position must conduct reference checks on the finalist. Any responsibilities delegated to other members of the search committee will remain accountable to the search committee chair. The finalist's current supervisor, as well as three "off the list" references, will be contacted prior to any offer of employment.

The search committee chair and/or supervisor, with approval and funding from the hiring department, may consider a site visit to the finalist's place of current/former employment.

#### **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

The search committee chair will ensure that at least one internet-based search is conducted using any one of the several search engines available for this purpose. In addition, a search of the finalist's current employer's website must be conducted. The search may be used to confirm information given by the finalist, review publicity related to the finalist and assist in analyzing any other information that may be helpful in making the final hiring decision.

The search committee chair will work with staff in FPS or HR who will work with Library staff to conduct a LEXIS/NEXIS search. LEXIS/NEXIS provides authoritative legal, news, public records and business information online.

The chair of the search committee must be confident that a good-faith effort was made to collect all appropriate information from relevant sources (within legal guidelines) and will be encouraged to employ steps and sources beyond those recommended to gather important information.

The search committee chair will also work with FPS, HR or the search firm to ensure that a criminal history check is conducted on the finalist, in accordance with current policy.

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The chair will report the findings of all information to the hiring supervisor, committee, and the President as appropriate. In cases where information is identified for any finalist that is questionable, a final decision will be discussed with the President or his/her designee before an offer of employment is made.

### **SELECTION**

The search committee chair or designee will provide rationale for the selection of the recommended hire and a reason why each of the other finalists was not selected, and submit the justification to the Dean or VP and President for approval, before forwarding all the resumes and activity record to the Affirmative Action Officer. The Affirmative Action Officer will review the rationale and ascertain that the affirmative action process has been followed.

### **SALARY CALCULATION**

The hiring supervisor has the authority to determine the starting salary for Senior Officer positions within their division. FPS or HR may assist the hiring supervisor in determining an appropriate salary for the selected finalist. Consideration will be given to the candidate's education and overall relevant experience, current applicable external market data, and the experience and salary of internal employees in comparable positions.

### **BENEFITS**

Benefits are standard and no senior officer has the authority to offer benefits outside of those outlined in the Senior Officer Handbook. For the full terms of employment, refer to the Senior Officer Handbook at [www.hrs.cmich.edu/so-handbook.htm](http://www.hrs.cmich.edu/so-handbook.htm).

### **OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT**

Responsibility and authority to select and appoint the finalist for Senior Officer positions rests with the President, as outlined in Article III, Section 2 of the Board of Trustees Bylaws on Delegating Authority; therefore, all activity records **must** be approved by the President and the Affirmative Action Officer before an offer of employment can be made.

The hiring supervisor should be the person who extends the offer of employment, even when a search firm has been utilized. This will permit direct conversation about such important topics such as initial salary, start date, moving expenses, at-will status, and any and all other terms/conditions of employment.

Where academic tenure might be included in the offer of employment, the hiring supervisor must first coordinate with Faculty Personnel Services who will work with the academic department, the appropriate Dean, the Provost and the Board of Trustees to ensure that they are in agreement.

The amount of reimbursement for moving expenses is negotiable and generally does not exceed the amount of one gross paycheck, unless approved by the Vice President.

When the final selection has been approved and an offer is made and accepted, the hiring supervisor will notify the search committee and issue a press release. The search committee chair will notify the search firm, if applicable.

### **NOTIFICATION TO UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES**

After an offer of employment has been accepted, the search committee chair may send a letter to those who were interviewed, but not selected. Letters notifying the other candidates may be sent by the committee's support person or search firm to inform them that the search has been concluded and thank them for applying. Rejection letters may be sent earlier in the process to applicants who clearly do not meet the minimum qualification or will not be given

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additional consideration; this should be done after the Affirmative Action Officer reviews the resumes/activity record.

#### **APPOINTMENT LETTER**

The hiring supervisor must expeditiously complete the on-line transaction form and forward it to FPS or HR. FPS or HR will generate an official appointment letter. A draft of the appointment letter will be shared with the hiring supervisor prior to mailing the document to the new Senior Officer. The appointment letter will outline certain information such as start date, title, pay level, salary, moving expenses, at-will status, and other related information. HR is responsible for entering the applicable information into SAP for all Senior Officers, regardless of the division.

#### **RECORD RETENTION & PERSONNEL FILES**

After the completion of the hiring process, the hiring supervisor must keep the resumes and additional search materials for five years. The AAO will retain the activity record for a period of five years and is also responsible for maintaining applicant tracking information on all Senior Officer positions. HR maintains the official personnel file for all Senior Officers.

#### **ORIENTATION**

The Associate Vice President of Human Resources will meet with newly appointed Senior Officers for general orientation purposes. Separate orientations will be scheduled to cover benefits, retirement and diversity. The Provost and other VPs will provide other appropriate orientation to new Senior Officers.

***Central Michigan University reserves the right to make exceptions to, modify or eliminate this policy. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures and directives relative to the subject.***