

**California State University
Recruitment and Hiring Guidelines
Tenure-Track Faculty**

The California State University seeks to recruit, retain, and engage a highly talented and diverse faculty who will advance the CSU mission. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist campuses in their effort to recruit the best qualified candidates to faculty positions in the CSU while ensuring that the search process produces broad and diverse candidate pools and that all aspects of the process are non-discriminatory.

The recommendations that follow are intended as guidelines and are not intended to be prescriptive. It is expected that each campus will adapt these guidelines to their own needs and develop internal policies and practices for faculty searches. Campuses have a responsibility to provide training to individuals who will be involved with faculty searches, and should identify an individual or individuals with responsibility for monitoring the process. It is especially important that members of search committees comply with established campus policies and obtain permission before deviating from published processes.

The typical search process has three phases: pre-recruitment, recruitment, and screening and selection. The recommendations that follow address each of these phases.

Pre-Recruitment

The pre-recruitment phase includes formation of the search committee and development of the position announcement.

Formation of the search committee:

The search committee has primary responsibility for initial recruitment, candidate screening, and identification of a group of finalists for the faculty position. The Collective Bargaining Agreement between the CSU and the California Faculty Association establishes the following parameters for search committees in Article 12.22:

Recommendations regarding probationary appointments shall originate at the department or equivalent unit. Probationary appointment procedures shall include the following:

- a. Each department or equivalent unit shall elect a peer review committee of tenured employees for the purpose of reviewing and recommending individuals for probationary appointments. At the discretion of the president and upon request of the department these peer review committees may also include probationary employees.
- b. Each departmental peer review committee recommendation report shall be approved by a simple majority of the membership of that committee.

Recommendations:

- Departments must be aware of the Collective Bargaining Agreement and the expectation that search committees be elected by their peers. Each campus should have policies in place regarding election procedures, and should assure that they are followed.
- Departments should endeavor to create diverse search committees, where possible, to promote a broader perspective. Strategies to increase the available pool of faculty who might serve on a search committee could include nominating individuals for election from outside the department and allowing probationary faculty members to serve on search committees where permitted by campus policy.
- Members of search committees should be made aware of policies governing the search before beginning the recruitment, and should participate in training as appropriate.
- Members of search committees should be aware of potential sources of conflict of interest (for example, serving as a reference for a candidate as well as a member of the committee). In some cases, recusal may be the most appropriate action.
- The university should have policies in place to allow for the removal of a committee member who acts inappropriately.

Creation of the position announcement:

The position announcement forms the basis for advertisements of the position as well as for screening criteria. It is both a key recruitment tool and a mechanism for defining the pool of people who might apply. Considerable care and attention should therefore be given to developing the position announcement.

Recommendations:

- Be aware that the content of the position announcement must be honored; in particular, a search will be vulnerable to challenge if the individual ultimately selected does not meet the requirements established in the announcement. If the position announcement specifies that the doctorate is required for appointment, a candidate who cannot document completion of the doctorate by the beginning of the appointment cannot be appointed in that position. The department should decide in advance whether candidates who are “ABD” will be considered for appointment, and what terms for completion of the doctorate (*e.g.* required within six months of appointment, required before tenure) will be accepted. These terms should be included in the position announcement.
- Be aware of approaches that may broaden the pool of applicants: for example, avoiding narrow specialization requirements, allowing for some flexibility in the field of the doctorate or other terminal degree (*e.g.* allowing for “a closely related degree” in addition to specifying a discipline), advertising “open until filled” rather than using a cutoff date for applications.
- Consider the impact of the advertised rank. If the position announcement specifies the rank of Assistant Professor, applicants are more likely to be individuals looking for a first faculty position or currently in a probationary appointment (and a more experienced individual who applied could only be offered a position at the Assistant Professor rank.) Advertising at “open rank” would potentially attract more experienced applicants. Note that the required and preferred qualifications in the position announcement establish measurable criteria used in screening; therefore, consider how one might be able to determine whether the proposed criteria (*e.g.* “demonstrated leadership in nursing education”) had been met.

- Use particular caution in defining required versus preferred qualifications. Note that an overly restrictive list of required qualifications may unnecessarily limit the potential pool of applicants, and may remove some strong candidates from further consideration.
- Use the position announcement as an opportunity to highlight the mission of the CSU and the unique features of your campus, college or department.

Recruitment

Ideally, a successful recruitment and outreach effort will result in as broad, deep, and diverse a pool of applicants as possible, and the recruitment plan and strategies should be designed with that in mind. If a search fails because of an inadequate pool of candidates and a new search must be initiated, the recruitment and outreach strategies should be examined to see how they could be improved.

Recommendations:

- Each search should have a formal recruitment plan in place, approved by the university.
- The members of the search committee should understand university policies on recruitment, particularly as they relate to equity and affirmative action, either through training of all committee members or through the appointment of an equity and diversity representative on the committee who is responsible for educating the committee and ensuring that policies are followed.
- Allow adequate time for advertising. For a national search, at least 30 days should elapse between the announcement of the vacancy and the beginning of screening.
- Advertise as broadly as possible, including appropriate disciplinary publications and/or web sites and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* if possible. All CSU positions should be posted to the CSU Careers web site. It is also recommended that advertisements be placed in publications such as *Women in Higher Education*, *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*, and *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education* to reach as broad an audience as possible.
- In addition to traditional advertisements, departments should take a proactive approach to building the applicant pool. Examples include making phone calls and sending letters to minority-serving institutions and leading doctorate-producing institutions in the discipline announcing the position, using informal networks, and making contacts at professional meetings and in professional organizations.
- Note that the Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program periodically produces a directory of individuals about to complete the doctorate who have an interest in CSU faculty employment.
- Disciplinary conferences are effective venues for advertising the availability of faculty positions. In addition, some departments conduct preliminary interviews at conferences. It is important to maintain distinctions and not mix the two functions; if the conference is being used for recruitment purposes, the committee should not also be engaged in screening applicants at the conference. In addition, these activities require the same care with regard to equal opportunity.

Campuses should establish processes, if they do not already exist, for monitoring the search process and applicant pool during recruitment. Typically this is a responsibility of the campus EEO office or the office which oversees faculty searches (Faculty Affairs or Academic Personnel). The process should include a "pool approval" step, in which the appropriate administrator may either authorize screening to begin, extend the recruitment period for the purpose of attracting additional applications, or cancel the search if, in the

judgment of the administrator, the pool is insufficient in size and quality to produce a successful outcome.

- All applicants should be sent an Applicant Questionnaire to be returned to the Affirmative Action Officer. If the campus uses an online application process, distribution of the questionnaire should be built into that process.
- Some campuses have successfully developed systems to allow for on-line submission of applications and other materials by candidates. Other campuses should consider moving to on-line submission if possible.
- Campuses should require finalists (at minimum) to fill out an official application for employment.

Screening and selection

In the screening and selection process, the search committee narrows the pool of candidates down to a small group that the committee believes is best qualified for the position, and provides these top candidates with an opportunity to learn more about the campus and the department through the formal interview and campus visit.

The process typically begins with a review of the application materials submitted by each candidate, which usually include a letter of interest from the candidate, the CV, either letters of recommendation or a list of references, and supporting materials such as statements of research and teaching interests, publications, transcripts, and other materials that may have been identified. It is very important that committees openly discuss the potential for *unconscious bias* prior to screening and other forms of evaluation during the hiring process and that all decisions are clearly documented.

Typically, the first step of review is to identify any candidates who do not meet the minimum qualifications listed in the position announcement. Depending on the size of the applicant pool, the committee then takes steps to narrow the remaining set of applicants to a group of finalists. In many cases, the committee members separately rank the applications using criteria derived from the position announcement. These rankings are combined and discussed, after which the committee identifies either a semifinalist group or a finalist group. Semifinalists may be interviewed by telephone, Skype, or other conferencing tools prior to narrowing the pool to a group of finalists who will be invited to the campus for a formal interview with the committee, as well as a campus visit.

Recommendations

- The screening and selection process should be developed and articulated in advance, and approved by the appropriate administrator before screening begins.
- Screening criteria must be based on the stated qualifications in the position announcement.
- It is especially important that every applicant active at a given stage of the process receive the same treatment. Therefore:
 - The department should identify one person to be responsible for monitoring applications as they come in – maintaining a log of applications and communications with candidates, noting file completion, sending correspondence, etc.
 - All communications with candidates should be funneled through one person –

- typically the chair of the committee.
 - The search committee should develop a common set of questions specific to each stage of the process (*e.g.* telephone interviews, on-campus interviews) that will be asked of each candidate interviewed at that stage.
 - All members of the search committee should participate (although it is acceptable for a subcommittee to screen the applications for minimum qualifications.) If at all possible, the entire committee should be present at both telephone interviews and in-person interviews; if necessary, phone interviews may be conducted with a majority of the search committee members. If the department chooses to hold preliminary interviews at a disciplinary conference, it is best if the entire search committee attends, but if that is not possible, a majority of the committee should be present.
 - Even if a candidate is already known to committee members (for example, because the candidate has been working in the department), it is not permissible to skip steps in the process for that individual. Applications should be treated as confidential, with the exception of announcing finalists for the position who will visit the campus.
- Candidates should receive updates on the progress of the search, and in particular should be notified if they are no longer under consideration for the position.
 - Campus visits normally include other members of the department in addition to the search committee, as well as meetings with appropriate administrators. Broad participation is desirable; however, in soliciting input from colleagues following the interviews, be aware that not everyone will be able to attend all candidate visits. Keep that in mind when taking feedback from colleagues into account. It is essential that all members of the search committee be present at formal interview events (interview with committee, formal presentations.) If a committee member misses a candidate's visit, it may be necessary for the committee member to recuse him/herself from the final vote.
 - Remember that one significant purpose of the visit is to recruit the candidate. Take the opportunity to highlight the benefits of working for the CSU, such as the defined benefit pension system, as well as the assets of the campus, including its diversity, special programs and initiatives, distinctions, and so forth. The visit might include a tour of the campus as well as the area, a meeting with a representative from Benefits, and other activities that have no bearing on selection but serve to represent the campus as a desirable place to work. It is important to represent the campus as it is and to highlight its mission. In most cases, meal times can be used as opportunities for informal interactions between the candidate and search committee members or others from the department; at some point in the visit, make sure the candidate has the opportunity to receive candid answers to questions about working in the department, living in the area, and so forth. Remember, the committee is still responsible for avoiding illegal inquiries and for treating all finalists in a non-discriminatory manner. Committee members and others involved with the on-campus interview should be prepared to steer participants and candidates away from topics of conversation that might reveal a protected status.
 - At the point of making a final recommendation from the committee to the hiring authority, the committee should divide the finalists into "recommended" and "not recommended" categories, and provide an analysis of strengths and weaknesses. If the committee had a strong first choice, or if they viewed only one candidate as acceptable, that should be

conveyed. In some cases the Dean may request a ranked list; if that is the case, the committee should still analyze the strengths and weaknesses of all finalists.

- The committee may also make a recommendation on whether they believe service credit toward probation would be appropriate as part of an offer to a candidate.
- For each search, it is recommended that a designated individual (*e.g.* dean, department chair, search committee chair) be assigned the responsibility of checking references of finalists; if this is not possible, an alternate strategy to guard against bias by any committee member is to assign references to committee members such that no one committee member calls more than one reference of a particular candidate.
 - The campus should establish who will negotiate terms of appointment once the top candidate has been selected; under no circumstances should anyone who is not authorized to negotiate these terms make any offers or promises to a candidate. Matters that might be negotiated would include compensation, responsibilities of the position and other terms of appointment, service credit, moving expenses, and start-up funding—including workload reduction.
 - The CSU now requires that new employees, including new faculty, undergo a background check prior to being offered employment. This background check, which includes verification of degrees and employment history, must be completed prior to making a formal offer to a candidate.
 - If a portion of the candidate's job responsibilities will be in a role such as director of a program or department chair, the terms of appointment should include the duration of the special role; the review process, if any, associated with it, and; what would happen in terms of responsibilities and compensation were the individual to move out of the special role and into a full-time faculty position.

After the search is completed

After a search is completed, the campus has an opportunity to look back and evaluate the success of the search process, including the recruitment plan and strategies. Campuses are strongly encouraged to use such assessments to continuously improve their search strategies.