



Search Committee Handbook

***Support Available from Human Resources
For Senior Academic or Administrative Officers and
Faculty Searches***



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Background

Searches for Senior Academic or Administrative Officers at UNC Wilmington typically involve the appointment of a search committee, charged by the principal administrator responsible for the search, chaired by an institutional officer equivalent in rank to the position under recruitment, and supported by a secretary responsible for all administrative and logistical coordination who serves in a non-deliberative role.

Given the time and energy search committee members must devote to the actual screening, evaluation, personal reference checking, and consensus building needed for a successful search, the Office of Human Resources makes the following search committee support services available, on request. Search committee support is available in the aggregate, or senior officers may appoint staff within their own divisions to manage the search process, while requesting assistance from Human Resources in designated areas.

Secretary

Human Resources will appoint a member of the Employment & Compensation staff to serve as secretary to the search committee, on request. The role of secretary is entirely non-deliberative. Depending on the level of the position under recruitment (and other operating requirements), this may include the Employment Services Coordinator, the Director of Employment & Compensation, or the Director of Human Resources.

Application Management

Consensus™ accepts online job applications and then displays the applicants' materials to search committee members in a secure environment. Consensus™ provides a hyperlink from the job posting that allows a prospective applicant to immediately complete an application and submit it directly to the search committee members. The system provides an immediate email acknowledgement of receipt and also collects demographic data (which were previously obtained by a postcard mailed to the applicant.) Consensus™ also eliminates the need to maintain paper applications in a central file or to photocopy and distribute applications to search committee members.

The system administrator provides secure accounts and passwords to each search committee member. Consensus™ is accessible from any computer, on or off campus. Applications are assigned a control number and are listed in the order received to facilitate search committee members screening applications in multiple web-site visits, without having to re-trace previous steps in screening.

Candidate Information

Consensus™ displays summary information on candidates and provides a screen to rate the candidate and enter comments. The following information, as entered by the applicant, is displayed on screen:

- Candidate's Name, Address, and Contact Information
- Current and Two Previous Position Titles, Institutions, and Dates
- Three highest degrees and granting institution
- Other Professional Certifications or Credentials

Other information, which the applicants attach as files, includes:

- Letter of interest
- Curriculum Vitae/Resume
- List of Professional References

Information is displayed on screen in a manner to ensure an efficient review of the candidate's qualifications and credentials. The letter of interest, curriculum vitae, and references are viewed by clicking on a link to launch MS Word or Adobe Acrobat. Although these documents can be printed, online viewing substantially reduces the amount of printing required and also serves to ensure confidentiality of applicant materials.

A substantial amount of time on the part of search committee members is spent simply transcribing biographical or descriptive data on individual candidates to refresh the committee member's recollection when discussing candidates during committee meetings. A committee member using *Consensus™*, however, can easily print a one-page summary of the above information for use in discussions.

Candidate Review and Evaluation

Experience has shown that a highly efficient way to evaluate candidates is to use one of three non-numeric ratings in initial screenings:

"X"	Highly recommended for further consideration
"I"	Moderately recommended for further consideration
"O"	Not recommended for further consideration

Consensus™ facilitates this process by allowing search committee members to select the rating for the candidate and enter confidential comments and observations on the candidate's qualifications.

Consensus Building Worksheet

Consensus™ automatically collects the committee members’ ratings of each candidate and builds a worksheet that displays all ratings. This consensus building worksheet facilitates discussion during search committee meetings and promotes the most effective use of time by focusing attention on candidates the committee most needs to discuss. This process is described briefly below:

- During 1st round review, committee members record an overall "candidate impression" for each candidate using one of the following symbols.
 - “X” Highly Recommended
 - “/” Moderately Recommended
 - “O” Not Recommended

- Committee meetings are scheduled to review a specified number or grouping of candidates. Prior to each committee meeting, the committee members record their ratings, which are then collected by the Secretary of the Search Committee.

- The Secretary prepares a consensus building worksheet that includes each committee member’s evaluation of each candidate. The resulting grid is a simple graphic that immediately shows committee members their "overall" or "aggregate" impression of each candidate. A hypothetical grid is illustrated below, showing individual impressions of five candidates (1-5) by each of five committee members (AAA-EEE).

Impressions of Candidates

<u>Candidates</u>	<u>AAA</u>	<u>BBB</u>	<u>CCC</u>	<u>DDD</u>	<u>EEE</u>
Candidate 1	X	X	X	X	X
Candidate 2	O	/	/	/	O
Candidate 3	O	O	O	O	O
Candidate 4	O	O	O	X	X
Candidate 5	X	X	O	O	O

The effectiveness of using a consensus building worksheet is illustrated in the following observations. In a 1st round review, there would not be much need to use limited and valuable committee meeting time to discuss candidates 1 or 3 -- whom each committee member has perceived as either being "Highly Recommended" or a candidate who is "Not recommended."

How about candidates 2, 4, & 5?

- Candidate 2 has 60% positive impressions, but the impressions are not very strong.
- Candidates 4 and 5 each have 40% positive impressions, but note that the impressions are strong.

In typical "straw voting", the outcome is the same for candidates 1 and 5 -- who have very strong or very negative scores across the board. However, straw voting often eliminates candidates like 4 and 5, while retaining more "lukewarm" candidates who receive a large number of votes. This results in a sub-optimal outcome. It is preferable for the committee to spend its time together exploring what it is about candidates 4 and 5 that some committee members really like (even though this is a minority of the committee). This is the only means of finding the so-called "diamond in the rough" or "hidden pearl" who meets the screening criteria in a nontraditional way.

The consensus building worksheet is also used to facilitate discussion and promote consensus building. Committees should be urged to adopt consensus as their decision making process. This means that each voice is heard and each committee member can support the committee choice, even if the choice is not the 1st choice of each committee member. Key to consensus building is to identify individual committee concerns and hear them out. For example, in the 1st round, in particular, no "strong positives" are automatically eliminated even if there is only a single vote for the candidate. Rather, the Committee Chair might ask members AAA and BBB why they liked candidate 5. After having the opportunity to share the reasons they liked the candidate and experiencing feedback from other committee members, AAA & BBB are much more likely to support the committee's selection to retain other candidates, even if Candidate 5 is eliminated.

Consensus building draws its strength from exploring differences in perspective among committee members. Voting, by contrast, masks differences without exploring the reasons for those differences -- which may, in turn, lead to majority decision, which nonetheless does not enjoy the support of the entire committee.

Iterative Evaluations

Typically a "consensus building worksheet" is used only in the 1st or 2nd round screening -- depending on size of total applicant pool, and facilitates discussion of candidates while the committee focuses on applicant-submitted materials only. Large applicant pools, however, may require an iterative evaluation process. Consensus™ facilitates this by allowing the committee to move applicants into quarter-finalist and semi-finalist pools and to re-evaluate them against refined criteria.

Questions may be directed to Lori Preiss @ 962-3162 or preissl@uncw.edu or to Mark Steelman @ 962-3628 or steelmanm@uncw.edu.