

## **Inside the CoP Faculty Search Committee Process**

This article dives into a topic that every college or university touches: the faculty search process. Specifically, we'll be unpacking the Faculty Search Committee Guide, a comprehensive guide developed at the University of Georgia's College of Pharmacy—one that aims to create fairness, structure, and transparency in faculty hiring.

Faculty hiring doesn't always get into the spotlight, but it's one of the most consequential things a university does. A good hire shapes a program for decades. The guide stresses that the goal isn't just to fill a position, it's to do so fairly, consistently, and without bias. The University of Georgia requires that anyone involved in a search complete formal recruitment and hiring training before participating. It sets a shared baseline. Everyone understands the legal responsibilities, the expectations, and the commitment to fairness.

At the beginning of every search is the Charge Meeting. This is where the hiring authority outlines the purpose and priorities of the search. They emphasize three things:

- Active recruitment, not just waiting for applicants.
- Evidence-based evaluation, meaning using a rubric rooted in the position's criteria.
- Confidentiality, which protects candidates and the integrity of the process.

They also distribute a vital resource: the Interview Inquiry Guide. It outlines what questions are legally permissible and what must be avoided, things like marital status, religion, age, disabilities, and so on. There's a reminder that "you are always interviewing." Even casual hallway conversations count.

Once the committee is oriented, they either receive or help draft the position announcement. That announcement becomes the backbone of the entire search. It must clearly identify duties, qualifications, required degrees, and any deadlines. Committees must evaluate candidates strictly based on those published criteria. It's an accountability measure where no one gets evaluated on unwritten expectations.

One of the strengths of the guide is how intentional it is about active recruitment. Committees aren't supposed to sit back and wait. They're encouraged to:

- Identify nominees and subject-matter experts.
- Reach out using email templates and phone scripts.
- Share postings through social networks and professional organizations.
- Explore varied advertising venues.

It reframes recruitment as professional outreach—not poaching, not cold calling, but collegial engagement. And the guide even provides tools like a Prospective Candidate

Tracking spreadsheet. And importantly, outreach messages are meant to be gentle invitations, not pressure tactics.

When it comes to evaluating candidates, the guide is crystal clear: use a rubric. And not just any rubric—one matched directly to the position announcement. Committees create the rubric before reviewing applications. Every member scores candidates individually using the Individual Rubric, and then the group uses a Committee Rubric when they meet to discuss finalists. It's a safeguard meant to reduce bias, keep the conversation grounded in evidence, and ensure decisions are defensible.

After initial reviews, committees generate what's called a "long list." Members bring forward their top candidates, often around eight or ten names each. Then they use a tracker tool to tally which candidates appear most frequently. The guide emphasizes that tally counts shouldn't determine who moves forward; they simply spark discussion. The real decisions happen when the committee uses the rubric collectively to assess strengths and gaps.

When finalists are interviewed, the Interview Inquiry Guide becomes crucial again. Committees must avoid asking about:

- Family or marital status.
- Religion
- Medical history
- Political beliefs
- Or anything unrelated to the ability to perform the job

The guide reminds search committees that the interview isn't confined to a conference room—escorting a candidate to lunch or engaging in conversation during campus tours all count as part of the interview climate.

Once interviews are done, committee chairs compile everything:

- Summary rubrics
- Documentation of recruitment
- Action reasons for applicants who weren't chosen.

Then it all goes to the hiring authority. No candidate ranking—just strengths and concerns. The hiring authority makes the final decision.

The guide is thoughtful, thorough, and a model to elevate fairness in faculty hiring. The structure it provides ensures transparency, fairness, and deliberate decision-making—all essential in building strong academic communities.