

SUNY COBLESKILL

**GUIDELINES FOR THE
EMPLOYMENT OF
PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL**

November 5, 1997

PART I: INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

These guidelines provide the protocol for and information about the search and hiring procedures at SUNY Cobleskill. Their purpose is to assist in responding to affirmative action requirements based on State and Federal laws and regulations and University policy.

Applicability of Procedure

The following procedure for conducting a search applies to all professional staff vacancies at SUNY Cobleskill, including Management/Confidential. SUNY Cobleskill is strongly committed to Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation in its employment practices, programs, or activities.

Exceptions

- A. In unusual situations, the President may make a temporary appointment of up to one calendar or academic year. A full recruitment and selection process to fill the position on a permanent basis will then be conducted within that year.
- B. Should special circumstances warrant, a waiver of the search may be sought from the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee. That process is outlined below.
 1. It must first be determined that one of the following special circumstances exists:
 - **Retrenched Academic and Professional Employees:** Applications from retrenched SUNY employees entitled to special consideration must be acted upon first, in accordance with the UUP retrenchment article.
 - **Target of Opportunity:** A qualified minority or female may be appointed upon the recommendation of an appropriate committee and/or administrator.
 - **Reorganization:** The President may wish to organize existing staff into a pattern compatible with his/her administrative style or organizational needs.
 - **Staff Realignment:** Fiscal crises, personnel reductions, or major changes in institutional practices could create a need for changing roles and functions.
 2. The Search Coordinator must file a Search Waiver Request (Exhibit 7) along with the Personnel Action Request Form (Exhibit 3).
 3. The appropriate Vice President or the President must sign the Search Waiver Request before it is submitted to the Office of Human Resources.
 4. The Office of Human Resources will forward the request to the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee, for its recommendation, and then submit the recommendation to the President.
 5. The President will then inform all concerned parties of the final decision. If the request is approved, the vacancy is filled according to the terms in the Waiver Request; if denied, the position will be recruited as follows:

- Professional positions within the United University Professions must follow the Internal Career Advancement Program procedures (Exhibit 1) as well as the Bridge Program, if applicable (Exhibit 2).
- Management/Confidential positions may follow the Internal Career Advancement Program/Bridge Program **OR** an internal or external search will be conducted.

PART II: AFFIRMATIVE ACTION RESPONSIBILITIES

SUNY Cobleskill is strongly committed to Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation in its employment practices, programs, or activities. Accordingly, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is extended to all persons. The College promotes this concept through a positive and continuing Affirmative Action Plan which prescribes extra efforts to be put forth in recruiting women, minorities, and the disabled. The criteria for the selection of employees shall also reflect affirmative action expectations.

SUNY Cobleskill Search Coordinators, Search Committee Chairs, Search Committee Members, Office of Human Resources, Affirmative Action Officer, Vice Presidents, and the President, with the advice of the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee, are responsible for carrying out the following policies as outlined in the SUNY Cobleskill Affirmative Action Plan:

- A. Each year the Affirmative Action Officer will set goals and timetables for hiring women and minorities in accordance with federal regulations, and then will record these goals in the Utilization Analysis. Search Coordinators and Committees are expected to make extra efforts to attain these goals.
- B. It may require special efforts to meet these goals; therefore, Search Coordinators, as part of the Affirmative Action Search Plan, may ask the Office of Human Resources to provide special affirmative action recruiting to reach women and minority candidates.
- C. The Affirmative Action Officer, in Part I of the Search Process Report (Exhibit 5), will provide the Search Chair with the current information on the utilization of women and minority hiring applicable to the position in question.
- D. The Affirmative Action Officer will brief the Search Committee on the obligation of the College to make extra efforts to identify and consider minority and women applicants in areas lacking adequate representation of either group.
- E. Upon completion of the interview process, the Search Coordinator, together with the Affirmative Action Officer, will complete the Search Process Report. This report will cite the number of applicants for the position, specifying also the number of women and minorities. It will include the names of all who were interviewed. Should a woman or a minority not be hired in an area in which they were underrepresented, the Search Chair must attach a justification for the Committee's decision.
- F. The Affirmative Action Officer and the appropriate Vice President will sign the Compliance Review Statement on the Search Process Report (Exhibit 5) which stipulates that EEO/AA requirements have been met and the Affirmative Action Search Plan has been followed.
- G. The Affirmative Action Officer will maintain an Affirmative Action Skills Bank of qualified women, minority, and disabled applicants. Individuals in the Bank will be invited to apply when positions for which they qualify are vacant. Their files will remain active for at least twelve months.
- H. Should women and minorities be hired at a rate of less than 80 percent of other groups, the Affirmative Action Officer will establish and maintain applicant flow records in order to assess this adverse impact, as required by federal regulations.

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PART III: PROCEDURE FOR CONDUCTING A SEARCH

Should a position become available, approval to fill the position must be sought. A position may develop in one of the following ways:

- Letter of resignation received by President
- Notification of retirement received by President
- Letter of non-renewal sent by President
- Leave of absence granted by President
- Death or disability leave of employee
- Approval of new position

The search, whether internal or external, should be conducted according to the following protocol.

A. Gaining Approval to Fill Vacancy

1. **Academic and Professional Positions Within Academic Departments**

The Search Coordinator must first complete the Personnel Action Request (Exhibit 3). The academic department chair will normally be the Search Coordinator. The Search Committee and Search Chair will be selected at the discretion of the Search Coordinator. The completed form is forwarded to the Office of Human Resources.

This form ensures that the Office of Human Resources is aware of the position, title, projected date of hire, etcetera. It also allows the Affirmative Action Officer to approve the composition of the committee, and check the status of minorities and women in the specific department.

The request includes:

- The title of the vacant position/new position
- The department affected
- The name of the previous incumbent (if any), with last date of service
- The terms of the requested appointment: term or temporary, academic, calendar, or college year, salary range, beginning date
- The names of the Search Committee and Chair: Search Committee, usually 4-6 people,
 - a) shall include representatives from the department conducting the search
 - b) shall include at least one member from outside the department
 - c) shall include appropriate female and/or minority members

Note: The Search Coordinator, in consultation with the appropriate Vice President and/or President and the Office of Human Resources, will determine the salary range. Factors which may affect the salary are:

- Professional/academic rank schedule
- Comparable salaries at SUNY Cobleskill and the other Colleges of Agriculture and Technology
- The previous salary for the position
- Compliance with affirmative action goals and the Federal Equal Pay Act

The Search Coordinator must sign the form and submit it to the following individuals/offices to be signed, in the order stipulated below.

- Affirmative Action Officer

- Office of Human Resources
- Appropriate Vice President
- President

The Office of Human Resources will notify the Search Coordinator when the approval to fill form has been approved.

Note: Should circumstances preclude filling the position, the President and/or the appropriate Vice President will send a written explanation to the Search Coordinator.

2. **Management/Confidential and Non-Academic Professional Positions**

The Search Coordinator must first complete the Personnel Action Request (Exhibit 3). The President, a Vice President, or Director will normally act as the Search Coordinator. For searches for vice presidents and other positions reporting directly to the President, the President will serve as Search Coordinator. For a Vice President position, the chair and the search committee members will be selected and appointed by the President after consultation with Campus Governance. For all other positions, the Search Coordinator will discuss recommended names of the chair and search committee members with the President prior to completing the Personnel Action Request.

The completed form is then forwarded to the Office of Human Resources.

This form ensures that the Office of Human Resources is aware of the position, title, projected date of hire, etcetera.

The request includes:

- Title of the vacant position/new position
- The unit affected
- The name of the previous incumbent (if any), with last date of service
- The terms of the requested appointment: term or temporary, calendar or college year, salary range, beginning date

The committee, usually consisting of 4-6 people (may be larger for Vice President searches)

- a) shall include representatives from the unit conducting the search
- b) shall include at least one member from outside the unit
- c) shall include appropriate female and/or minority members

Note: The Search Coordinator, in consultation with the appropriate Vice President and/or President and the Office of Human Resources, will determine the salary range. Factors which may affect the salary are:

- Management/Confidential and Professional rank schedule
- Comparable salaries at SUNY Cobleskill and the other Colleges of Agriculture and Technology
- The previous salary for the position
- Compliance with affirmative action goals and the Federal Equal Pay Act

The Search Coordinator must then submit the form to the following individuals/offices to be signed, in the order stipulated below.

- Administrative head

- Affirmative Action Officer
- Office of Human Resources
- Appropriate Vice President
- President

The Office of Human Resources will notify the Search Coordinator when the approval to fill form has been approved.

B. Creating an Affirmative Action Search Plan

1. Once the Search has been approved, the Search Coordinator and the Search Committee will prepare an Affirmative Action Search Plan (Exhibit 4), which contains the following:
 - The position description
 - The advertising request
 - Special recruiting needs to reach target populations
 - Approval signatures
2. The Affirmative Action Officer will inform the Search Committee of the number of women and minorities in the position in question.
3. The Committee will review the position description for the purposes of advertising and interviewing. SUNY Cobleskill seeks to attract the most highly qualified candidates to fill all available positions.

The description of the qualifications and responsibilities for Academic positions must be in accordance with Article XI of The Policies of the Board of Trustees of the State University and campus guidelines for eligibility for rank as stated in The Faculty Handbook, Part VII. For Professional employees, the description must be in accordance with Article XI of the Policies of the Board of Trustees and the State University Professional Service Title Specifications.

4. The Committee must further ensure that the job description accurately represents the job identified and neither overstates nor understates the required qualifications, since the Affirmative Action Plan will be used both in advertising the position and developing the Candidate Rating Form (Exhibit 6).
5. The Committee will also explain if special recruiting is needed to target minority and women candidates and may suggest publications in the appropriate profession for advertisements.
6. The plan must be approved by the Search Coordinator, the appropriate Vice President, the Office of Human Resources, and the Affirmative Action Officer for conformance with affirmative action requirements and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

C. Advertising for the Position

1. The Office of Human Resources then begins the recruiting process, which includes advertising for all positions. The text of the advertisement must follow the guidelines set forth below.
 - Accurately reflect the approved position description and qualifications
 - Request names of three professional references with addresses and telephone numbers
 - Contain the salary range, or an appropriate statement
 - Indicate the application deadline as well as the anticipated date of employment
 - Reaffirm the College's commitment to equal opportunity employment and affirmative action
2. The Office will then place the advertisements according to recommendations made by the Search Committee. All professional positions (other than temporary) must remain open for at least thirty calendar days from the date the first advertisement appears.

Advertising is generally placed to draw local, regional, and national applicants. Should the Search Committee and/or the Affirmative Action Officer determine that special minority/women recruitment is warranted, the Office will target appropriate publications. Typical advertising sources may be:

- Bulletin Board near Human Resources Office
 - Oneonta Star
 - Albany Times Union
 - New York State Job Service/Statewide Job Bank
 - SUNY Central (for distribution to all campuses)
 - The Chronicle of Higher Education
 - Black Issues in Education
 - Minority and Female Recruitment Network
 - Sources on Affirmative Action Plan
 - Individuals on Affirmative Action Skills Bank
 - The Affirmative Action Register
3. The Office shall then inform the Search Chair in writing of the sources and dates of advertisements.

D. Preparing Applicant Files

1. The Office of Human Resources will set up a file for each applicant containing the following information:
 - The letter of application
 - Resume
 - Transcripts or unofficial copies, with official ones to follow
 - Application form (will request names, telephone numbers, and addresses of three supervisors, one of which must be a current supervisor) (Exhibit 10)
 - Search Committee must decide before position is posted if it requires letters of recommendation and/or placement files for all applicants or only for the finalists. If the latter, see F.5. If the former, the Office of Human Resources will request letters of reference for each applicant upon receipt of application.
2. Each applicant will be requested to supply voluntary affirmative action information. This information will be retained by the Office of Affirmative Action.

3. The Office will further create an "Applicant Log" on which they will record the names of all applicants who have applied before the closing date. This log will then be given to the Search Committee to ensure that all eligible applicants are considered and that a record of those interviewed is maintained.
4. The Office will inform all applicants of their file status as of the closing date.
5. Files will remain in the Office of Human Resources until the closing date.

E. Setting Up the Interview Process

1. The Search Coordinator will prepare a tentative working calendar for the Search Committee.
2. The Coordinator and the Search Committee will meet with a representative from the Office of Human Resources who will explain the process and review both the Guidelines for the Employment of Professional Personnel and The College and University Personnel Association Interview Guidelines. At this same meeting, the Committee and the Affirmative Action Officer will discuss whether or not special efforts must be taken to hire minorities or women and the relevant guidelines which apply in these cases.
3. The Search Committee will then create a Candidate Rating Form based on the position description and qualifications (Exhibit 6).
4. The Committee will discuss and agree upon general procedures to be used in the screening, interviewing, and final recommendation process.
5. They will then formulate reference questions. Using the Telephone Reference Check Form (Exhibit 8) as a guide, the Committee will agree on questions to be asked of all references.
6. The Office of Human Resources will provide the Committee with a telephone authorization code so that the Committee can conduct reference checks (Exhibit 8).

F. Screening Files and Determining Who Will Be Interviewed

1. Each search committee member will review all files, and complete a rating sheet for each candidate. Then the Committee will make an initial cut based upon these ratings.
2. The Affirmative Action Officer will review the list of finalists to ensure that all protected minorities have been fairly considered. This process will be repeated when the final list of candidates to be interviewed is prepared.
3. The Committee will provide names to the Office of Human Resources of candidates who do not qualify and must be notified.
4. The Committee will meet to develop a tentative list of candidates to interview.
5. The Committee will ask the Office of Human Resources to request letters of reference for the finalists, unless such letters were requested during the application process.
6. The Committee will conduct at least two telephone reference checks for each candidate-on the tentative list and complete Telephone Reference Check forms (Exhibit 8). A supervisor of the candidate must be one of those contacted.
7. Each Committee member will turn in all completed rating sheets at the end of the search process to the Office of Human Resources.

G. Interviewing

1. Once finalists have been chosen, telephone interviews may be conducted with finalists to limit the number of candidates invited for an interview. If there are compelling reasons why more than three candidates should be interviewed, permission must be requested from the President or the appropriate Vice President, and the Office of Human Resources.
2. The Search Chair and the Search Coordinator should then establish times to conduct the interview and invite the finalists to be interviewed.
3. The Coordinator and/or Chair must set up candidate interviews with the following:
 - The appropriate Vice President(s)
 - The Office of Human Resources
 - Any other supervisor who wishes to be part of the process
 - Appropriate campus groups
4. The President will meet with candidates for senior management positions.
5. For minority candidates, it might also be appropriate for the Chair and Coordinator to arrange a meeting with campus representatives of minority groups.
6. Using The College and University Personnel Association Interview Guidelines provided by the Office of Human Resources, the Search Committee will prepare a list of questions to be asked of all candidates. The Committee must avoid asking questions that could infringe upon the constitutionally-protected rights of the candidates.
7. When all interviews have been completed, the Committee will submit its recommendation(s) and Interview Rating Sheets to the Search Coordinator.

H. Recommending Candidates

1. When the Search Committee has agreed upon acceptable candidates:
 - a. The Search Committee, which serves as a recommending body, will rank the successful candidates; the Search Chair will write the Committee recommendations, citing the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate being recommended.
 - b. The Search Coordinator will review the Committee's recommendations and make any further reference checks deemed appropriate.
 - c. Should the Search Coordinator disagree with the Committee's recommendations, she/he will call a meeting to discuss differences. In this case, the Search Coordinator must send both recommendations forward.
 - d. The Search Coordinator will then sign the Search Process Report (Exhibit 5), and forward the credentials of the recommended candidate(s) to the Office of Human Resources.
 - e. The Search Coordinator and the Office of Human Resources will review the recommended candidate's employment packet to make certain it is complete. This packet will include:
 - Letter of application from candidate
 - SUNY Cobleskill application form
 - Resume and/or other credentials of candidate
 - Recommended salary and starting date
 - Letters of recommendation and results of telephone reference checks

- Official transcripts, or copies, (to be followed by official transcripts)
 - f. The Office of Human Resources notifies the Affirmative Action Officer that the Search Committee has agreed upon an acceptable candidate. The Affirmative Action Officer comes to the Office of Human Resources to review and approve the Search Process Report.
 - g. The Office of Human Resources forwards the packet to the appropriate Vice President, who will then consult with the President.
 - h. When the successful candidate is selected, a salary offer within the approved range will be established by the appropriate Vice President in consultation with the President, based on the candidate's education and experience. If the intended offer exceeds the approved range, the President and the Office of Human Resources must review and approve the requested salary before an offer is extended to the candidate.
 - i. The position and salary offer is usually made by the Search Coordinator, the appropriate Vice President, or the President. After the verbal offer is made to the candidate and a starting date is agreed upon, the President or the appropriate Vice President will advise the Office of Human Resources to prepare an appointment letter for the President's signature.
 - j. The appointment letter is then sent to the candidate, who will indicate acceptance by signing and returning a copy of the letter.
 - k. After receiving the signed letter, the Office of Human Resources will discuss orientation, completion of payroll records, and enrollment in fringe benefits programs with the candidate.
 - l. Using the completed Search Process Report (Exhibit 5) as the source, the Office of Human Resources will maintain records on all applicants.
 - m. The Office of Human Resources will send notification letters to the unsuccessful candidates in a timely manner.
2. When the Search Committee determines that no candidates are acceptable:
- a. The Search Chair will notify the Search Coordinator
 - b. The Search Coordinator will seek approval from the President to extend the search process by:
 - 1. Reviewing existing pool of candidates
 - 2. Readvertising position

Note: If the President does not accept any of the candidates, he/she may notify the Office of Human Resources to readvertise the position. The President has the final decision for approval of all recommendations.

I. **Retaining Search Records**

The College is required by Federal and State law to retain all search records in the event that a charge of discrimination is brought against the College. The Office of Human Resources must keep records of all candidates for the same position, both the successful and unsuccessful, following pertinent regulations. Included in these records should be:

- The Search Process Report
- Letters of application
- Application forms
- Resumes
- Reference checks
- Recommendations
- Transcripts
- Criteria sheets
- Search Committee correspondence
- Rejection letters
- Search statistics
- Any other relevant documentation