

## How to Tell Candidates They Did Not Get the Job

### **Rationale**

It is our goal to make candidates, who take the time to interview with SUNY Cobleskill, feel welcomed throughout the entire search process, including the notification process at the end of the search.

When it comes to notifying candidates who interviewed for a position that they were not selected as the final candidate, an emailed notice can seem cold and impersonal. Instead, it is encouraged that a member of the search committee or the hiring manager reach out to candidates with a personal phone call to inform them of the hiring manager's decision. Human Resources has provided a sample script for having this conversation and we would be happy to help you plan for making these calls.

### **What is the general framework for the call notifying a candidate that they were not selected?**

**Search Committee Member:** Hi [Candidate Name]. My name is [Search Committee Member's Name] from SUNY Cobleskill. We met last week [or applicable time] during your on campus interview. How are you today?

**Candidate:** It is a pleasure to hear from you. I'm well, thanks.

**Search Committee Member:** That is good to hear. I wanted to reach out to you personally to let you know that the hiring manager has made a decision regarding the search. Unfortunately, we did decide to hire another candidate, but we enjoyed meeting with you and getting to hear about your experience.

**Candidate:** That is disappointing to hear. Can you tell me why I was not selected?

**Search Committee Member:** [NOTE: The goal is to give a neutral, generic reason as to why the candidate was not selected; a reason that can be applied to all the candidates who have to be notified].

We interviewed a number of great applicants for this position. However, we could only select one person to fill it. You should be proud though. We had [total number] applicants for this position and we only brought [total number] candidates to campus for interviews.

[If Applicable] Please apply again in the future if there an open position that interests you.

[NOTE: Alternatively, if the candidate was clearly missing a key requirement, for example, a PhD, for a job that said a PhD is strongly preferred, and you are hiring someone with a PhD, you could tell the candidate that. Do NOT tell the candidate that they interviewed poorly or that they were not a "good fit".]

**Candidate:** I appreciate the phone call. I am disappointed but I am happy you took the time to reach out to me to let me know. Thank you for inviting me to campus. I will consider applying again in the future.

**Search Committee Member:** That is wonderful to hear. Take care and good luck!

**What if a candidate is particularly insistent on a reason why they were not hired?**

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**Search Committee Member:** We interviewed a number of great applicants for this position. However, we could only select one person to hire. We had [total number] applicants apply for this position and we only brought [total number] to campus for interviews. You should feel very good about making it this far in the process.

**Candidate:** But, please, tell me *why* I was not selected? There must be a reason.

**Search Committee Member:** [NOTE: The goal is to give a specific, job-related or qualification-related reason, as to why the candidate was not selected].

We were looking for a candidate that had 5 years of leadership experience in a previous position. We interviewed other candidates who had more extensive leadership experience.

OR

Preferred qualifications for the position was that the candidate have a PhD and 3 years of field research experience. While you did have a PhD, you did not have the exact type of field research experience that we were seeking and another candidate did have this experience.

[If the candidate pushes for additional information]

**Search Committee Member:** I am sorry. This is really all I can share. [If needed, recommend that they contact HR.] Thank you so much for interviewing with us.

**Candidate:** Ok, well, I appreciate the phone call. I am disappointed but I understand now. Thank you for inviting me to campus. I will consider applying again in the future.

**Search Committee Member:** That is wonderful to hear. Take care and good luck!