



OFFICE FOR ACCESS AND EQUITY

The Search Committee

Search Committees are designed to strengthen the pursuit of a highly qualified, diverse pool of candidates and serve in an advisory role to the hiring officer as the ultimate decision to hire rests therewith. The ideal size for a search committee is five to nine individuals. Smaller search committees may be appropriate for searches with a limited number of available applicants but may be no fewer than three individuals. Search committees with ten or more members are typically formed for executive-level positions. Search committees serve as an advisor to the Hiring Officer. Therefore, the Hiring Officer cannot serve on the search committee.

Additionally, the committee is responsible for:

- Maintaining confidentiality before, during, and after the search of all candidate information and deliberations
- Attending all committee meetings
- Reviewing and implementing all equal opportunity/affirmative action procedures
- Developing a recruitment plan to attract diverse candidates
- Participating in recruitment activities and good faith efforts
- Evaluating candidates in a fair and equitable manner
- Recommending the finalist(s) to the hiring officer

An important goal of the search committee is to recognize and put aside their own biases and to make good faith efforts to identify qualified ethnic minorities, women, veterans, and disabled individuals, as well as majority candidates. Search committees must remain cognizant of the unconscious bias that may occur while searching for candidates. Unconscious bias is the tendency to assign stereotypical characteristics of certain groups to our judgments about individual members of that group. To prevent unconscious bias during the evaluation stage, the committee should adhere to the following:

- Develop evaluation criteria prior to evaluating applicants
- Standardize the interview process
- Use inclusion rather than exclusion in the decision-making process

OAE offers a [mandatory workshop](#) that addresses the search process, issues of implicit bias and stereotypes, as well as other issues that can affect the fairness of a search. Attendees are permitted to serve on search committees for three years without retaking the training.

In addition to proper training, crucial to the success of any search is a serious commitment of time and effort by search committee members, its chair, and the unit served.