Introduction and Welcome

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for serving on a UF faculty search committee. Your role in completing the tasks set before you is central to our continued success in attaining this university's goals. Through the intellectual richness and broad diversity new faculty members bring to UF, we build a stronger community of researchers, teachers, students, staff and global citizens. Thank you for all you do. Everyone involved in the creation and production of this tutorial hopes you find it an informative resource and a pleasurable experience.

Feel free to contact me if you have questions about or suggestions for this tutorial. Have a successful search.

Best regards,

Kathleen Long, Ph.D.
Associate Provost, Faculty Development
Introduction and Welcome

Using vignettes of common situations, today's online tutorial is designed to assist you in serving on a faculty search committee by:

- Introducing best practices associated with the hiring process that are nondiscriminatory but yield a broadly diverse pool of applicants (traditional candidates as well as women, minorities and individuals from other under-served groups)
- Highlighting common pitfalls that violate fair and legal hiring practices
- Providing references to other resources

Please view the video or read the text of the following 14 questions and choose the best answer or answers.

If you're interested in exploring the topic in more detail, click on the "discussion" or "reference" buttons.
Scenario 1

UF faculty recruitment experts have identified a number of "good outreach practices" that are nondiscriminatory and that yield a broadly diverse pool of applicants—traditional candidates as well as women, minorities and individuals from other under-served groups.

Click on the triangle above to watch the video, then move to the next page by clicking on the blue arrow at the bottom right-hand corner of the screen to select the answer to the question posed.
Question 1
Which of the following have been used with success by some colleges or departments at the University of Florida? You may select more than one answer.

A) Before interviewing candidates, search committee members use criteria established to evaluate candidates’ skills and qualifications. Conversation which includes unsupported opinions and concepts of evaluation that have not been previously agreed upon is discouraged.
B) Search committee members construct a position description that thoughtfully opens possibilities for candidates with traditional as well as appropriate but not traditional backgrounds.
C) The committee advertises the position on a number of websites for professional associations which have a significant number of members from underserved groups, including women and minorities.
D) The college’s home page includes a “Jobs” subheading where all open positions are announced.
E) Search committee members target top programs at other institutions and send sourcing tools, such as job announcements, via personal letters to those department chairs.
F) Department faculty members take advertising materials to professional meetings and distribute position vacancy announcements to their professional list-serves.
G) Faculty members track and maintain contact with promising prospects and, when a search begins, personally notify such prospects of the opportunity.
H) All of the above
I) None of the above
Successful Strategies Employed at UF

All of the answers listed under Question 1 reflect successful strategies that have been used at UF. Self-awareness and equity of approach and treatment for all candidates can help create a more inclusive faculty hiring process:

- Prior to selecting candidates for interviews, principles for evaluating candidates should be established as broadly as possible to ensure quality as well as flexibility to consider traditional and nontraditional ways of meeting standards. This is to avoid unintentional favoritism or discrimination.
  - The search committee may wish to discuss whether steps will need to be taken to prevent unintentional bias, prejudice, or stereotyping.
  - Adding an outside, non-voting committee member charged to signal such occurrences might be useful.
  - Another option is for the unit's Equal Opportunity Officer or assigned Diversity Specialist to serve in this capacity.
- Information about successful strategies shared between departments, schools and with peer institutions can be invaluable.
- Determining where to place advertisements is as important as what language is used in the advertisement. Reputable publications such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* or those distributed by national discipline-based organizations can be counted on to actually reach intended audiences.
  - The benefits of placing advertisements in publications aimed at particular groups needed to address unfulfilled aspects of broadly defined diversity may be considered as well, but the reputation and reach of these special publications should be assessed carefully.
  - The growth of the Internet has introduced a large number of additional venues for placing advertisements. Human Resource Services established a centralized contract with The Chronicle of Higher Education (refer to “Outside Advertising” at http://www.hr.ufl.edu/managers/advertising.htm).
  - Some UF departments use home page announcements, sourcing letters, advertising materials, and prospecting communications (individual and program) to cast a wide net.
  - Making personal contacts and tracking prospects whether or not a search is ongoing are also important.
Scenario 2

DEAN OF THE COLLEGE: "I appreciate this faculty search committee coming in to meet today with me and the department chair of the hiring department. As you know, we need to discuss what we anticipate as the programmatic needs of the hiring department over the next 5 to 10 years. I'm sure we all want to avoid being short-sighted. We surely want to undertake the wisest approach we can during this cycle. Yes?"
Question 2

Which of the following are "inappropriate" practices to adopt for hiring? You may select more than one answer:

A) "I think the wisest approach would be for the search committee to find someone who closely resembles our deceased colleague Trina. It's Trina and her intellectual competencies we need to replace, so there can be no doubt about what we're looking for."

B) "I think we should stick with our unwritten rule to try to hire as many doctorates from Georgia Tech as possible. We've never been burned when we do that. So I think it would be wise to focus almost all our energy on Georgia Tech graduates or postdocs."

C) "Well, I thought we were going to put our internal candidate on the fast track. I'd rather hire a known quantity than an unknown one. We can do a really quick national search and then hire exactly who we know will fill the bill."

D) "Look, we do not have enough women or African Americans in our department, and I won't support another white man."

E) All of the above.
Discussion about Scenario 2—Preparing the Search Committee

Two cognitive errors (longing to clone and elitism) are illustrated here. These errors will undercut the implementation of long-term programmatic planning as well as the undertaking of a thorough and fair search process.

A longing to clone the deceased colleague is suggested in answer “a.” The exclusive focus on Georgia Tech in “b” suggests elitism and encourages the casting of a very narrow net. The committee member in “c” is proposing a fake search in order to hire an internal candidate. The committee member in “d” while making a comment about diversity, failed to recognize diversity is broader than women and African Americans. Shortcuts as illustrated by these responses should be avoided. They undermine the integrity of the search process.

The Hiring Authority (a term used here and throughout this tutorial to identify the Provost, Senior Vice President, Dean, Department Chair or Director to whom the search committee makes its recommendation) should issue a clear and precise charge to the search committee. Ambiguity in the charge, in the role of the search committee, or in the extent of its authority can create confusion that may delay the selection process at crucial points. The search committee will benefit from knowing how many finalists it is being asked to recommend and how the qualifications of those finalists are to be presented.

This committee should be charged to aid in writing an appropriately flexible position description and to pursue outreach adequate to building a broadly diverse pool—one that reflects all aspects of broadly defined diversity including racial, gender, geographic, expertise, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The committee should also be advised as to how and when it is to communicate with the Hiring Authority. If a designee is appointed to act on behalf of the Hiring Authority for various transitional duties, the search committee, its chair and the designee should be informed.
Scenario 3

SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR: "Let's spend this meeting (and a second one, if necessary) deciding on ground rules for guiding our work on this committee. You've been given a list of sample rules that other search committees on this campus sometimes use. We can add and take away from these rules - even add our own. It's important to depersonalize the process and have some general 'good practices' that we'll follow. Do you agree?"

"Yes, we certainly need to include one essential rule that will aid our sanity and conserve our time. The rule is this: Let's rank the candidates before they arrive for their job talks and interviews."

Click on the triangle above to watch the video, then move to the next page by clicking on the blue arrow at the bottom right-hand corner of the screen to select the answer to the question posed.
Question 3

How should the committee chair or a committee member respond to this suggested rule about ranking?

A) "I like the proposed new rule. We should rank candidates as soon as we can, so we can move away from the realm of subjectivity into the realm of objectivity. I agree with taking the approach that we rank soon and we rank often. Numbers are invaluable."

B) "Well, we bring in job candidates in order to get beyond their paper credentials and gather important information about them face-to-face. To do this we use interviews, interactions, and job talks. We shouldn't decide on our short list of finalists to be recommended to the hiring authority until we have as much evidence about the candidates as we can gather."

C) "I myself object to any ground rules. I think all of us on a daily basis try to be critical thinkers and evaluators. As you know, I am the only woman faculty member. I certainly would not be prejudiced against women or other non-traditional job candidates."

D) None of the above.
Discussion about Scenario 3—Preparing the Search Committee

Some appropriate ground rules are essential for a faculty search. They help keep the committee focused on gathering and interpreting evidence about the job candidates as opposed to dealing with some committee members' unsubstantiated opinions about the candidates and their credentials. With ground rules, each committee member's contributions and questions are protected against surprises and ad-hoc rules pulled out of the sky in order to unduly influence an outcome. In addition, rules help to keep the committee's work methodical. They usually slow down the deliberations so thoughtful considerations can be made. Being more careful and deliberate will enable committee members to recognize and rise above a number of cognitive errors and contaminants that can operate during evaluation processes.

Paper credentials of job candidates can be misleading. By interacting with job candidates in various venues on campus, search committee members can gather valuable real-time information and then sift through it, aided by their own personal and professional wisdom. The dean, too, should undertake this exercise.

Premature ranking - as suggested in - should be resisted by search committees. The superficial rush to rank candidates leads evaluators to stake out their claim (i.e., he's number one in my view) and close their minds to new evidence, and then defend their stated position to the death. The chair should head off committee members' preferences to rank and instead keep them engaged with their colleagues in higher-order thinking, sifting through and interpreting evidence, comparing, contrasting, and weighing the importance of the evidence. Rushing to rank easily leads to rushing to judgment.
Discussion about Scenario 3—Preparing the Search Committee

Although evaluation procedures vary, search committees may want to develop an evaluation matrix of strengths and weaknesses based on job-related criteria. Avoid numerical rankings. Numerical approaches to gaining search committee agreement often silence legitimate, substantive support for candidates who may otherwise rise to the top of consideration during courteous and open search committee discussion.
Scenario 4

DEAN: "You know that the university wants more women and minority faculty members, and we have to increase their representation in relevant departments. I expect you to make a concerted effort in this search to support this goal. I am going to hold this committee accountable."
Question 4

Which of the following responses are "bad" practices to adopt for recruiting and hiring?

A) SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR: "Okay, let's get out there and find some good women and minority candidates. We're not going to consider anyone until we have some women and African American candidates."

B) "We've made a list of the traditional journals, publications and societies where we can find good candidates. Are there other sources we should consider to make sure we reach qualified traditional candidates and qualified women, minorities and other candidates in under served groups?"

C) "We can ask candidates if they have experienced stereotyping or discrimination on any basis. Have they fought stereotyping and discrimination? If we are interested in understanding what skills candidates have developed from their experiences, we can ask how their experiences have affected their teaching, research and mentoring."

D) "We can ask all candidates who will be interviewed how their life experiences have helped them build multicultural skills, how those experiences have enriched their research and teaching or how have those experiences made them more supportive of diversity. We can even ask them to explain how their life experiences allowed them to enhance multicultural skills in the university community."
UF leadership and faculty have determined that we must increase the broad diversity of our faculty in order to accomplish our mission of providing excellent education to all of our students, conducting excellent research to increase knowledge and serving the nation's and state's needs for a well-qualified and broadly diverse citizenry, workforce and leadership. Our students must learn to live and work productively and creatively with people of many backgrounds and cultures, and our faculty and graduates must be able to identify and serve the needs of an increasingly global and diverse society. Broad diversity means all aspects of diversity, including, but not limited to, racial, gender, expertise, cultural, socioeconomic backgrounds and geographic diversity, among other attributes. We must attract and maintain faculty who, regardless of race or gender, have multicultural skills and experiences and apply these skills and experiences to their teaching, research and mentoring. The Hiring Authority should relate the university's desire for a more diverse faculty to the university's educational, research and service mission. Diversity is not a goal in itself - the goal is to offer an excellent education, conduct excellent research and serve the nation and state. We need a broadly diverse faculty to do this.

At the same time, we must diversify our faculty in legally sustainable ways, without improper discrimination. In addition to stating the goal and holding the search committee accountable, the Hiring Authority should provide some guidance on how to support diversity in a legally sustainable way.
Discussion about Scenario 4—Pro-Active Efforts to Identify Promising Candidates, continued

One good approach is to focus on adequate outreach efforts to build a broadly diverse applicant pool. Comment a, is not a good approach, but comment b is much better. Notice that the appropriate focus is not on whether the pool itself has women and minorities in it but rather on whether the outreach efforts were adequate. Look at the outreach efforts that were made, as well as the position description's articulation of traditional and appropriate nontraditional qualifications. Determine whether all possible outreach was made and whether the position description was appropriately flexible so that traditional and nontraditional candidates will be reached. Consider only as one data point the results obtained in the pool. If the pool does not reflect broad diversity, including women, minorities and others in underserved groups, as well as more traditional candidates, and all possible outreach has not been undertaken or the position description is unnecessarily rigid in its articulation of qualifications, then more outreach or a more suitable position description should be pursued. If all possible outreach has been undertaken and the job description is appropriately flexible, then the outreach and the position description are adequate, whether or not the pool is broadly diverse. In such event, there is likely to be a very major pipeline problem if women and minorities are not represented. More outreach work should be done to build a broadly diverse undergraduate and graduate student body in the relevant field (and also in K-12 education) to remedy the pipeline problem. Efforts also can be made to track prospects who support broad diversity and to notify those prospects personally of opportunities when they arise.
Discussion about Scenario 4—Pro-Active Efforts to Identify Promising Candidates, continued

As mentioned previously, candidates should bring multicultural skills and experience to their teaching, research and mentoring. Consider how each candidate has experienced his or her own race and gender and that of others and in what ways these experiences have affected approaches to teaching, research and mentoring. The suggestions offered in "c" and "d" are behavior-based questions aimed at understanding these experiences and skills. Do not make selections based on race or gender; do not focus on the candidate's race or gender per se. Do make selections that consider multicultural experiences and skills and how these experiences and skills will contribute to the university community and to teaching, research and mentoring. Do not assume that all individuals who are members of any particular race or gender will make the same contributions. Recognize that a person of any race or gender may be able to enhance multicultural skills and support diversity at the university based on his or her commitment, skills and life experiences.
Scenario 5

"I anticipate we will have an extremely competitive applicant pool for this position. In particular, I expect the majority of applicants will be from other countries. To be honest, I am not sure how I should approach foreign nationals. Do any of you have more insight in this area?"
Question 5

Which of the following responses DO NOT represent "good" practices when considering foreign nationals?

- A) "If we have reason to believe an applicant is a foreign national, we can only ask if he or she is authorized to work in the U.S. Whether the answer is 'yes' or 'no,' we should not inquire further about his or her status unless we are making an offer of employment."

- B) "If the university wants to sponsor permanent residence status for an employee through the Permanent Labor Certification process, we must make sure U.S. Department of Labor standards are met for recruitment. For instance, this position has a teaching component, so we must advertise it in the print version of a professional journal with national distribution—not just online."

- C) SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR: "I understand positions without a teaching component have more stringent recruitment standards, but I'm not sure about any of this. We need to be certain on these matters. I recommend we contact the International Center prior to advertising to ensure all recruiting requirements are addressed."

- D) "Because of the complicated process for recruiting foreign nationals, we should provide more weight to U.S. born applicants when considering our interview selections. This is true even if the foreign national is more qualified. This is more cost effective and less strenuous on our time."

- E) B, C, and D
Discussion about Scenario 5—Pro-Active Efforts to Identify Promising Candidates

UF attracts the best and the brightest faculty talent from around the globe. Applicant pools are diverse in terms of citizenship and geographic location. Consequently, members of search committees are often faced with hiring opportunities that include foreign nationals.

Answer selection “d” does not represent an acceptable recruiting practice. It is improper to weigh one candidate more favorably than another based on national origin, religion, gender or race. To avoid the error of such considerations and search decisions, it is imperative that committee members have a basic understanding of the recruitment standards for foreign nationals.

The Immigration and Nationality Act requires that certain foreign nationals obtain a permanent labor certification before submitting an immigrant petition. To determine when this is required and to confirm that a foreign national has permission to work in the open position, contact the university’s International Center (phone number below). If required, the Education and Training Administration (ETA), a division of the U.S. Department of Labor, issues this certification.
Discussion about Scenario 5—Pro-Active Efforts to Identify Promising Candidates, continued

Spouses and/or children of foreign national applicants usually can obtain employment authorization from the USCIS upon the candidate’s successful competition for a position. However, if the dependent of the foreign national is in H-4 status, then a change in status is necessary before the employment period begins. The foreign national employee may sponsor dependents for permanent resident status based on his or her university sponsored permanent resident status application.

If you should have any questions regarding recruitment of foreign nationals, please contact Recruitment and Staffing at (352) 392-2477.
Scenario 6

SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR "I suggest we find ways to make our draft job advertisement cast a 'wider net,' as the dean suggested. Instead of using the same old boiler-plate language we have been using from our department files, I think we should brainstorm. Anyone have a new idea for the job announcement?"
Question 6

Please identify the best choice offered by committee members that would help to create a wider net for candidate recruitment:

A) "We seek a doctorate with at least four years of successful scholarship, grantsmanship and teaching (or an equivalent track record)."

B) "We can ask all candidates to describe their previous mentoring or recruiting of minorities, women or members of other under-represented groups in light of the university's commitment to maximizing the educational benefits of a diverse student body and faculty."

C) "The university is responsive to the needs of dual-career couples. Shouldn't we mention this in the job announcement and provide a copy of the Dual Career Service Brochure to each candidate we plan to interview?"

D) All of the above.
Discussion about Scenario 6—Successful Strategies Employed at UF

Instead of setting forth a strict list of requirements (such as essential skills and minimum years of experience), a job advertisement can request equivalent skills and/or an equivalent track record. This move will dramatically widen the net and bring the search committee a greater variety of candidates.

Many departments throughout the country have begun including a sentence or two in their job announcements that reinforce their campuses’ inclusiveness and support of a broadly diverse learning community. Examples include: “We ask candidates to describe their experience with diversity issues, diverse students, and working in multicultural environments”; “We seek demonstrated success from candidates in working with diverse populations of students.”

Creating a broadly diverse pool of qualified candidates is one of the most important parts of every search. It is not unusual to hear the remark that the pool of minorities, women or members of other underserved groups in a specific discipline is meager or even nonexistent. Certain fields may not have large numbers of minorities, women and members of other underserved groups. This is the “pipeline” problem. However, this does not mean that qualified and broadly diverse candidates do not exist. Advertising only in traditional publications will reach a traditional audience. Although this advertising is important, experience demonstrates that advertising for broad diversity, including minorities, women and members of other underserved groups, takes additional effort and targeted advertising in addition to more traditional advertising is equally important as traditional advertising.
Discussion about Scenario 6—Successful Strategies Employed at UF, continued

Search committees should look for ways to publicize the position that will attract non-traditional candidates and to encourage their application by showing specific interest in their recruitment. Strategically placed advertisements may achieve this goal.

Finally, current job candidates – far more than in the past – want and insist on assistance for their spouse or significant other in finding meaningful employment. If that assistance from the hiring department and campus is not generously offered and reasonably effective, then the candidate will most likely walk away from the job offer. To be competitive, colleges and departments should not only be helpful to partners but also publicize their eagerness to help candidates’ partners through the Dual Career Services program.
Scenario 7

"In theory, I'm all for inviting promising candidates to apply. I just have no idea how to identify them and undertake a pro-active search. Since we are not using a search firm, how in the world are we going to do this?"
Question 7

Please choose the correct answer to this member's question:

A) "We have to contact our friends and colleagues throughout the country and ask them for personal nominations of such candidates."

B) "We can get acquainted with some assistant, associate and full professors at other schools and see if they're 'under-employed'-if so, maybe they'd be interested in knowing about new opportunities within our department."

C) "We can contact the Ford Diversify Fellowship Program and similar programs and ask them to circulate our position description to their Fellows' Listserv."

D) All of above.
Discussion about Scenario 7—Pro-active Efforts to Identify Promising Candidates

Techniques of pro-active outreach include: committee members making contacts, especially women and under-represented minorities, at professional conferences and inviting them to apply; asking faculty, friends, colleagues and graduate students to suggest candidates; bringing in possible candidates at times throughout the year to speak about their research and to become acquainted with the department although there is no open search; contacting fellowship programs and asking them to circulate the position description to their listservs. These are techniques recommended in a number of universities’ handbooks (see especially the University of Michigan’s Faculty Recruitment Handbook).

Establish a working relationship with departments and units at institutions with substantial numbers of minorities, women and members of other underserved groups. This will allow a host of mutually beneficial activities to be undertaken, such as collaborative research and exchanges of faculty and staff. Teaching for a semester, delivering a paper or simply making an informal visit to other universities will allow university staff to discuss position openings with the staff, faculty and students at these other institutions when the opportunity arises.
Discussion about Scenario 7—Pro-active Efforts to Identify Promising Candidates, continued

Hiring authorities may engage the services of an executive search firm when recruiting for a dean, vice president or other high-level leadership position or for certain faculty vacancies that traditionally are difficult to fill. There are many executive search firms that have a national presence; some of which have specialized skills to recruit for the academic sector. The use of an executive search firm should be pre-approved by the hiring authority and should supplement the normal search process required by the university. The costs associated with contracting an executive search firm are borne by the Hiring Authority.
Scenario 8

"As the search chair requested, I've been calling around to identify some promising candidates, especially women and minorities. I'm having some success. I've invited applications from five individuals, including two post docs in related fields, one recent doctorate and two assistant professors at other places.

All of them said that if I hadn't cordially contacted them, they would not have considered applying.

But here's my problem: Are we sure that this outreach or raiding or whatever you call what I'm doing is a valid approach for search committees to use?"
Question 8

Which is the correct response?

A) "Yes, in filling positions at the junior or senior level, it is fine to invite applications from prospects at other institutions. In the past, we in academia have done this mostly to identify traditional candidates at the junior or senior faculty and administrative levels. The only difference is that now we are making sure we identify and cultivate applications from women and minorities as well as those from traditional candidates."

B) "No way is this valid. We can't spend any extra time trying to identify who is what. And we certainly can't stack the deck. If we do that against white males, then it's reverse discrimination. If the deck comes back with nothing but white male applicants for us to consider, then so be it. This is the way a meritocracy works after all."

C) "Of course, it's valid, but I really don't see how most search committees can find a member willing to take the time to do this. Just putting an ad out there and waiting for applicants this is the only feasible way to proceed even if it's mere screening that's being done instead of genuine searching."

D) None of above.
Discussion about Scenario 8—Pro-active Efforts to Identify Promising Candidates

We must abandon business-as-usual attitudes and search more rigorously and innovatively for nontraditional job prospects. Otherwise, traditional candidates will be the only ones considered year after year—this is in effect a kind of monopoly. The goal is to make sure both traditional and nontraditional candidates know about opportunities and about the university’s openness to consider their applications thoughtfully. We are not seeking to keep out white males, rather we are seeking to include both white males and others who are currently underserved or excluded.

Several universities at their web sites, such as www.faculty.diversity.ucla.edu, list a number of databases and directories that will help search committees identify possible women and minority candidates. You will also find useful resources listed in the UF Faculty Recruitment Toolkit. In addition, Black Issues in Higher Education every year publishes a list of the top 100 degree-producing campuses that confer the greatest number of doctoral degrees to minorities, with breakdowns by academic fields. Pro-active search efforts are the responsibility of search committee members. While it is usually effective for one search committee member or one departmental member to be the designated scout—who identifies promising candidates year-round—there are certainly ways that all committee members can feasibly and efficiently help with search and outreach.
Scenario 9

Search committee members must be on guard so they do not unwittingly make what faculty diversity recruitment specialist Dr. JoAnn Moody calls "predictable cognitive errors and shortcuts" that contaminate search and other peer-review processes. These errors and shortcuts will result in the undervaluing of some candidates and the overvaluing of others.

Moreover, when the search or other evaluation process is rushed and decision makers are overloaded, then the contaminants dramatically multiply. Several cognitive errors and shortcuts are embedded in the following excerpt from this search committee's first round, candidate selection meeting.
Scenario 9, continued

SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR "Now, Ted, explain to me again why you want more writing samples from Vanessa (the only black woman candidate) but not from the other applicants."

COMMITTEE MEMBER 2: "Well, Mervin's Ph.D. is from Yale. That's really all I need to know about him. He's got to be golden and just perfect for our department."

COMMITTEE MEMBER 3: "Let's face it. We're talking about differences here that may cause non-traditional or uncomfortable challenges, and since we are, I think we should remove Stanley from the pool we're considering. He's from the Midwest and probably wouldn't be comfortable here."

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Question 9

Which answers below correctly describe what is happening within the committee members' discussion?

- A) Raising the bar for a candidate because of his or her under-represented minority group or gender status
- B) The exclusive focus on Yale in Jennifer's response suggests elitism or casting a very narrow net.
- C) Reasonable removal of a candidate from the pool, as demonstrated in the comments of the third committee member.
- D) A & B above.
- E) All of the above.
Discussion about Scenario 9—Successful Strategies Employed at UF

Most selection processes involve more than one screening. Generally, the first screening determines if candidates meet the minimum criteria for the position. Someone who meets the minimum criteria is not necessarily suitable for hiring. Subsequent screenings become increasingly qualitative and difficult. Ultimately, it is the hiring authority alone who decides suitability for hiring while the search committee functions in an advisory capacity.

Raising the bar for a candidate because of his or her under-represented minority group or gender status is a typical tendency manifested in evaluation processes. For instance, an analysis of the peer-review process at the Swedish Medical Research Council showed that women who had secured postdoctoral funding had to be 2.5 times more qualified than men who had received funding. The women had to have published three extra papers in Science or Nature or 20 extra papers in specialist journals (Wenneras and Wold). The exclusive focus on Yale in the second comment suggests elitism or casting a very narrow net. The committee member who made the third comment is proposing to remove an applicant from the process because of where the applicant lives, without considering the obvious: the applicant knew the location of the campus upon application. Shortcuts like this should be avoided. Such deception undermines the integrity of the search process.
Scenario 10

SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR "I'm pleased we've all agreed that during each interview, a few of us will assume the first role of asking questions while the other members take the second role of jotting notes and then taking the lead on securing more details or clarification from the candidate. When another applicant comes in, we will rotate so those who asked the questions before now take on the second role. This adds a bit of variety for us. After all, it's not only the candidates who can slip into brain strain during the interview process. Now, there's one more area that needs some of our attention. Can we include some behavior-based questions for our interviews?"
Question 10

Which of the following is a behavior-based question?

- A) "Why not ask each candidate to tell us about his or her research plans for the next five years?"
- B) "Everyone can recall for us a time in their teaching when they made a mistake. We can ask them to describe the steps they took to remedy it. How did those steps work for them and their students?"
- C) "We really should focus some of our questions on individual teaching philosophies. We can ask: How has your philosophy of teaching charged over the past five years?"
- D) None of the above.
Discussion about Scenario 10—Successful Strategies Employed at UF

To help gather relevant and reliable information on which to base judgments, questions are designed and utilized as communication tools. The kinds of questions you ask largely determine the kind of interview you get back. Some interview questions, such as question \( b \), may be behaviorally based, implying an examination of past or present behaviors. Such questions attempt to measure how a person is likely to behave in certain situations. Behavioral questions should be designed to help evaluate an applicant's ability to perform certain elements or key competencies deemed critical to the performance of the position.

The search committee should devise a group of core questions based on job-related criteria by which candidates are to be evaluated. These questions should be asked of all candidates, thereby allowing comparative judgments to be made while ensuring that crucial job-related information is obtained. Using questions developed ahead of time need not be unduly restrictive. Follow-up questions based on the responses will most likely vary with each candidate. Finally, it is sound to follow the same protocol with phone interviews (such interviews are sometimes used to collect information to aid in determining the list of finalists to be invited for campus interviews). Over the phone, allow one member to ask the questions while another takes notes. Then both members should review, refine and agree on the written record before reporting it to the entire search committee.
Question 11

Which of these is an appropriate question to use during job interviews?

- A) "Do you think you'll be happy since you're a single male and this is such a family-oriented town?"
- B) "Our campus has a new Dual Career Services Program. We think it's important that significant others and spouses of new faculty hires are assisted in finding meaningful employment. This is an important retention strategy that we extend to all new hires. Here's a brochure about the program. I hope you'll call me at your convenience if you're interested in learning more."
- C) "We also have Baby Gators, a child care facility which is available for faculty members' use. How important do you think this will be to your future career plans?"
- D) "Do you have children who might benefit from the campus's elegant new child care center?"
Discussion about Scenario 11—The Interview

A search committee should indeed make sure each candidate is informed about the University’s assistance to relocating partners seeking employment in the geographical area. A candidate, despite having a keen concern about assistance for a partner, may be hesitant to bring up the subject for fear the committee may feel imposed upon. By contrast, another candidate may be assertive and hold back his or her decision on the job offer until the relocating partner has a satisfactory job. In short, job assistance to the partner is a new and important challenge to UF and to campuses across the nation. Not to have effective assistance for relocating partners is to undermine the hiring department’s competitiveness in the job market.

The language in “b” is constructed carefully and leaves the door open for the candidate to seek more information. It would be inappropriate to ask bluntly: “Are you married, or do you have a same-sex partner?” Other inappropriate questions relate to the candidate’s religion, disability, age and other topics (see Appendix C in the Faculty Recruitment Toolkit for a summary of the subjects that must be either approached with care or totally avoided).
Scenario 12

SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR: "Would someone volunteer to call back two interviewees and get some clarification about a few of their answers to our questions? Looking at my notes, I see that I got sketchy answers sometimes. I'm sure that as a committee we may have felt rushed and may have forgotten to do as complete a job as we had wanted. In order to gather some information and insights, I'd like for someone to volunteer."
Question 12

Which of the following responses is correct?

A) "It won't be appropriate for us to call back these two candidates without calling back all the others, asking them the same questions and giving them the same chances to clarify."

B) "We can't call back anyone for additional clarification or information. The die is cast. We have to decide only on the information we've already assembled."

C) "It's appropriate and ethical for us to call back interviewees if we want a clarification to an answer they gave us that we duly recorded. How in the world can you do a competent job of interviewing in the really short amount of time allotted for each interview? There has to be a way to fill in information gaps."

D) None of the above.
Discussion about Scenario 12—The Interview

Search committees usually ask the same questions of each candidate and each candidate’s answers will be different. It is essential that the committee follows up if there is any confusion about a candidate’s answer. Deciding to reject or accept a candidate on the basis of incomplete and unclear notes should be avoided. Calling back interviewees when information is missing or unclear will take more time, but it is important for a careful and full evaluation of candidates.
Scenario 13

SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR: "Now that we have completed all of our credential reviews, telephone and face-to-face interviews and have finalized all references, we need to prepare our findings to be forwarded to the hiring authority."
Question 13

Which of the following responses is or are correct?

- A) "Well, I want to reiterate that Mervin's Ph.D. from Yale. He had to be the most perfect fit for our department. I think he should be our highest-ranked candidate."

- B) "I think Jeff and Vanessa should be ranked the lowest because we had to make follow-up telephone calls to clarify their credentials and information shared during their interviews. I considered the follow-up to be an inconvenience."

- C) "I think this would be a great time to review all of our candidates and prepare a ranked list for the hiring authority."

- D) "I view any summary as a waste of precious time. If this committee can't definitively rank our first, second and third choices by now, then we're in deep trouble. Let's send in the name of our first choice and say to the department chair, ‘Let us know if you want more details on this candidate.' We can reconstruct our deliberations only if it's necessary."

- E) A and B

- F) None of the above.
Discussion about Scenario 13—The Results of the Search

Behaviors and assumptions demonstrated in comments "a" and "b" should be avoided for reasons outlined throughout this tutorial. In addition, answer "b" suggests any need for follow-up is a bad reflection on the candidate. This is not necessarily true.

The comments made by committee members speaking in answers "c" and "d" should also be avoided. Recommendations for hiring consideration should be submitted with candidates unranked. Using the means and format requested by the hiring authority, highlight each candidate's strengths, weaknesses and likely contributions to institutional goals, students and the department. A list of names and basic information accompanied by an oral report to the hiring authority should be considered. Be mindful that any written documents, including recommendations created by the committee, fall under Florida's Public Records Law. A committee member's personal notes used to organize his or her thoughts and not distributed to other committee members or the hiring authority do not fall under this law. You will want to remain prudent in your commentary and rely primarily on the search committee chair's interview with the hiring authority to clarify or expand upon agreed assessments.
Scenario 14

SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR: "I'd like to say to every new hire: 'We have a professional development plan we've been creating for you. We want to increase the likelihood that you will thrive in this department.' Well, colleagues, should we do this?"
Question 14

Which response below represents a good practice?

- A) "Yes. Why not construct and then offer a custom-made plan only for the new hires who are minorities?"
- B) "Neither we nor our departmental colleagues should do hand holding for any new hires and build protective cocoons for them. If you bring up this plan to new hires, I predict you'll insult most of them. They're adults after all."
- C) "I certainly didn't get such a plan when I was being hired as a brand-new assistant professor. When I came here, I had to sink or swim. So why should we go to the extra trouble and coddle new hires in this day and age?"
- D) None of the above.
Discussion about Scenario 14—Retaining Faculty

Little is gained from a vigorous effort to achieve all aspects of faculty diversity by recruiting broadly, including minorities, women and members of other underserved groups, if that effort is followed by a failure to do what is necessary to retain broad diversity. Furthermore, the university’s values encompass recognizing and helping solve the unique problems faced by members of underserved groups in the university community.

A professional-development plan (including mentoring by specific colleagues) is a non-monetary benefit that should be offered to all new hires. The plan can increase the hiring department’s success, especially if a monetary bidding war for a candidate flares up between a UF department and a deep-pocket department at another campus. For some job candidates the offer of a development plan is a reassurance that their well-being is important to the hiring department. Sometimes this good practice is what tips a candidate to accept the job offer. Admittedly, not all new hires will be interested in a custom-made plan but all new hires should be offered one. It would be unwise to offer a plan to one candidate but not to others.
Discussion about Scenario 14—Retaining Faculty, continued

Mentoring cultures vary across campus. Some departments or colleges appoint mentoring teams of two to three senior faculty members who assist new arrivals as they become acclimated to their new positions and environments. Others have found success using less structured mentoring arrangements focused solely on tenure and promotion. Regardless of the structure of the mentoring situation, experienced members of the faculty can be valuable mentors and coaches for all junior faculty, including newly hired minorities, women and members of other underserved groups. They will understand and can discuss with new faculty the unique demands on their time, which they will confront in their area of specialization and in the Gainesville community. They will also understand how to balance those demands with teaching, research and service responsibilities. While such help and counsel are desirable for all new faculty members, it may be especially important to some minorities, women and members of other underserved groups who have not traditionally been part of academic life.
Discussion about Scenario 14—Retaining Faculty, continued

It is typical for search committees seeking a new department chair, dean or provost to serve as the retention committee during the first year of the new administrator’s term. Why? The search committee knows the new hire and also knows well the crosscurrents and challenges that the newcomer will probably encounter. Likewise, a faculty search committee is well positioned to help coach the new faculty member and his or her mentoring committee so that the first year is productive. In general, it is wise to "frontload" extra attentions on all new hires so they feel welcomed and know they are not being placed in a "weeding-out" or a "sink-or-swim" situation. Such a "sink-or-swim" situation is enormously wasteful because it increases the likelihood that the new hire will feel isolated, confused and dissatisfied. Retention of the new hire will capitalize on all the time and intelligence expended by the search committee and others to bring in a new faculty colleague.