

As a search committee member at the University of Florida, I acknowledge and understand that active and professional participation by search committee members is crucial to the success of the search. The success of our search process and the integrity of the university depend on searches being conducted in an impartial, transparent, and professional manner.

### **The Sunshine Law and Search Committee Guidelines**

Because a university search committee that screens or recommends candidates is subject to the Sunshine Law, the following requirements must be met.

- **Accessibility.** All search and screen committee meetings must be open to the public. This does not imply that the public has a right to participate in search and screen committee meetings; rather, the public may only listen and observe in a non-disruptive fashion. Discussions between two or more committee members about the business of the search must be heard in open meeting.
- **Notice.** Reasonable notice must be given before any committee meeting. The notice must give the time and place of the meeting and a brief agenda, if available.
- **Minutes.** Written minutes of all search and screen committee meetings must be promptly recorded and made available for public inspection. The Sunshine Law does not require audio or video recordings of meetings; however, once made, those recordings are public records and must be retained.
- **Public Records.** All documents related to the search are considered public record, with the exception of personal notes for recall purposes. All search records are required to be maintained for a period of 4 years.

### **Search Committee Member Responsibilities**

- **Commitment.** Each member of the search committee is expected to participate fully in all committee activities including recruitment, interviewing, screening, and evaluation of applicants. Recognize and set aside time needed to fully participate in the search effort.
- **Best Practices.** Use best practices in search and selection available in the [Faculty Search Committee Toolkit](#). The techniques outlined comply with relevant laws, rules, regulations, and contractual obligations, and align with the UF mission and vision as a diverse public land-grant, sea-grant, and space-grant research university.
- **Communication.** The chair of the search committee, or the chair's designee, shall be the spokesperson for the search committee. All correspondence, telephone contacts, and other direct contacts with the nominees and candidates prior to interviews will be handled by the committee chair or his/her designee.
- **Applicant Inquiries.** Unless directed, search committee members should refrain from independently conducting any type of background check or inquiry on an applicant including conducting any type of online search of applicants and asking people who may know an applicant for information or opinions about the applicant. Refrain from reviewing additional materials, communications, or information shared outside of the official vetting process.
- **Recognize Bias.** Recognize and avoid or counteract bias that can have an effect on the search process. We all have unconscious biases that we use to make sense of the world around us, but we are largely unaware of them. When we accept that we have unconscious cognitive biases, and commit to addressing them through self-awareness, committee discussions, and structural enhancements to the process, we reduce bias in the search process.
- **Conflicts of Interest.** Search committee members should disclose any conflicts of interest candidly and early on in order to avoid potential complication in later stages of the recruitment process.
- **Confidentiality.** Although searches and related materials are open to the public, confidentiality and discretion are important to the integrity of the search process and the reputation of the University of Florida. All public records requests should be forwarded to the [UF Public Records Center](#) for processing. Search committee members should maintain discretion, diligence, and care to protect applicant confidentiality including names of applicants and any identifying information relative to the applicant, the applicant's background, or current or former employers. Additionally, search committee members should not disclose committee discussions and deliberations.