Training Needs Assessment Summary Report
Selection, Interviewing and Hiring Best Practices & Skills for Hiring Managers

Presented to University Human Resources
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

February 27, 2015
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Attracting, recruiting and retaining a committed, diverse and qualified professional and scientific staff (P&S staff) is essential to achieving Iowa State University’s mission to “create, share and apply knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place.”1 With a strategic goal to become “a magnet for attracting outstanding faculty and staff who create, share and apply knowledge to improve the quality of life,” providing managers with a line of sight to institutional priorities for recruiting and hiring, along with support and best practices to attract the right talent, at the right time, in the right place is essential to achieving ISU’s institutional mission.

Talent management is an integrated and coordinated approach that begins with development of an accurate job description, and includes fair, legal and consistent practices for sourcing, attracting, selecting, hiring, and onboarding employees for success in their work and careers. This report examines current practices across the talent management continuum, and assesses the training needs required at each phase to alleviate the time-consuming challenges identified in The Iowa Board of Regents Business Case Discussion Document. The practices result in duplication of effort, increased time-to-fill, and administrative burdens placed on faculty and staff who hire P&S staff. The report highlighted:

- There are no limits placed on the number of search committee members;
- Coordinating search committee logistics and scheduling is labor intensive and extends the timeframe from post to hire;
- Application review is a manual process and does not leverage the pre-screening functionality offered by the applicant tracking system.2

ISU University Human Resources (UHR) and the HR-10 Steering Committee commissioned Mary McGuinness Consulting Group (MMCG) to better understand current P&S search process practices, and assess employee needs for training. Our approach included: a survey of hiring managers, 2 focus groups with HR Liaisons, and interviews.

Assessment results indicate a very high reliance on search committees and the absence of clear standards and guidelines, variable decentralized practices, and role confusion limit the university’s progress towards an integrated and coordinated approach to talent management, and work against university goals to attract outstanding P&S staff.

Inconsistent search committee practices and “grey areas” of accountability and authority expose the university to legal risks, and create significant obstacles to alleviating the time-consuming challenges identified in The Iowa Board of Regents Business Case Discussion Document.

Once policies and procedures are established, training and development will enable the Board of Regents’ mandate, communicate urgency and engage important stakeholders in:

- Learning the University’s context for P&S recruiting, hiring and diversity;
- Understanding the University’s strategy, standards, policies and processes for talent management;
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities of hiring managers, HR Liaisons, and UHR within the talent management framework;
- Developing and training hiring managers as partners in end-to-end process of recruiting and hiring.

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1 Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century, Integrating Basic Research, the Design of New Technologies, and Entrepreneurial Applications, The Iowa State University Strategic Plan 2010-2015 identifies strategic human resource goals aligned to the university’s mission and values.
2 The Iowa Board of Regents Business Cases Discussion Document – HR 10, SS 05, SS 08 (September 2014) lays out the current state challenges and recommends solutions to improve the professional & scientific search committee process.
DATA COLLECTED IN THE RESEARCH POINTS TO A VERY HIGH RELIANCE ON SEARCH COMMITTEES, INCONSISTENCIES IN KNOWLEDGE AND APPLICATION OF RECRUITING AND HIRING PRACTICES ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY, AND A NEED FOR CENTRALIZED RESOURCES AND TRAINING THAT ALIGN TO UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVES, LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND BEST PRACTICES IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.

SEARCH COMMITTEE USE

• 82% of survey respondents report using search committees for pay grades 30-34.

• 91% are using search committees for pay grades 35 and above.

SEARCH COMMITTEE SIZE

• Across all pay grades, the average search committee size is 3-5.

• Search committee size can exceed 10 members, especially at pay grades 38 and above.

FAILED SEARCHES

• 26% of hiring managers surveyed indicate that they have had a search fail in the past 12 months.

SEARCH PRACTICES

• Some departments have selection guidelines for P&S searches; however, 95% of hiring managers report that departmental guidelines do not exist.

• Search and hire practices vary from department to department; consistency and continuity is difficult to assess and monitor.

• Lack of role clarity, clear standards and training places a burden on the entire process, resulting in frustration, longer time to fill, and lost productivity.

• Search timelines are reported as too long. One result among many factors impacting timeline indicates that 44% of survey respondents wait to review applications at the end of the posting period.

TRAINING NEEDS

• 65% of hiring managers surveyed identify understanding ISU recruitment planning and hiring processes & procedures as a moderate to high training need.

• 63% of hiring managers surveyed identify understanding the role and responsibilities of a hiring manager as a moderate to high training need.

• Hiring managers, HR Liaisons and Search Committee members are key audiences for recruitment and hiring training.

• UHR and the university will benefit from developing communication strategies, along with training, that are responsive to stakeholder needs, leverage 2-way communication, and report progress toward shared objectives.

RISK MANAGEMENT

• 53% of hiring managers surveyed identify asking legally acceptable questions throughout the hiring process as a moderate to high training need.

• 58% of hiring managers identify negotiating and extending an employment offer as a moderate to high training need.
THIS REPORT

The following is a summary report that includes survey results of 198 hiring managers (42% response rate) and insights captured from HR Liaison focus groups and interviews with University administrators. It concludes with recommendations for how to best apply these findings to the development of training and resources that are aligned to an integrated talent management framework for the recruiting and hiring process.

In addition these findings offers valuable insights for action planning, and implementation of standards and practices that promote efficiency, increase expertise, and meet university goals to attract and retain top talent in professional and scientific staff positions at Iowa State University.
BACKGROUND

The Iowa Board of Regents Business Case Discussion Document reports a number of challenges associated with the current Professional and Scientific (P&S) search committee process. Many of the current practices are time-consuming: forming search committees with no limit placed on the number of members, coordinating search committee logistics and scheduling, and manually reviewing applicant resumes without utilizing the pre-screening functionality offered by the applicant tracking system.

Future state solutions include simplifying the search process, establishing comprehensive search committee guidelines, streamlining HR processes and offering recruiting training and services on based on best practices and strategies for a successful search.

Recommendations from this report will inform the development of training that will improve the search process and lead to increased productivity, decreased time-to-fill P&S positions, and an improved candidate experience.

OUR APPROACH

Recruitment and hiring processes in higher education span a continuum from determining position requirements, to hiring the most qualified and talent candidates from a diverse and broad pool of applicants, to onboarding employees for success. In a climate of ever-increasing resource constraints, staffing decisions impact productivity, efficiency and results.3

Hiring education administrators (hiring managers) find themselves at the intersection between understanding and communicating university policies and processes and holding primary accountability to departmental decision-making and performance. This requires having a good grasp and understanding of university values and culture, knowing the strategic challenges and opportunities the university faces, and achieving department objectives. Effective human resources management within the recruiting and hiring process is critical to gaining efficiencies, preserving the academic mission and hiring the most qualified candidates.

Talent management is an integrated and coordinated approach that begins with development of an accurate job description, and includes fair, legal and consistent practices for sourcing, attracting, selecting, hiring, and onboarding employees for success in their work and careers.

Having a framework for talent management is helpful to defining the steps and best practices to a successful search.

The image below represents an integrated talent management framework and identifies each step of the recruiting and hiring process:

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3 In the book, The Higher Education Manager’s Handbook: Effective Leadership and Management in Universities and Colleges Second Edition (Routledge, 2010), author Peter McAffery, former Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive at the University of Cumbria, contends that higher education administrators often cut corners in recruiting and selection because they tend to view themselves as the best judge of character and qualifications, oftentimes resulting in bad hires and “falling foul” to discrimination in the process.
To gauge the training and resource needs of hiring managers and key stakeholders engaged in the P&S search process at Iowa State University (ISU), we examined the current practices across the talent management framework at each step of the recruitment and hiring process. We then identified the knowledge, skills and abilities required at each phase to conduct an efficient and effective search and assessed the training needs.

Research methods included:

- Review of current ISU recruitment and hiring policies, procedures, website, training, and guiding documents benchmarked to recruitment, hiring and interviewing best practices;
- Survey development and distribution to 474 hiring managers and posting administrators across the University;
- Interviews with key stakeholders in Academic Affairs, Office of Equal Opportunity, University Human Resources and the Office of University Counsel;
- Focus group sessions with 17 Human Resource Liaisons.

**ISU P&S RECRUITMENT AND HIRING SURVEY**

The ISU P&S Recruitment and Hiring Survey was developed and designed in January 2015 with the guidance of the HR-10 Steering Committee. Survey results will be used to inform the University's response to the Iowa Board of Regents' TIER study regarding the use of search committees for P&S positions, to inform University standards and guide the development of training and resources to conduct effective and successful searches.

Hosted by the consulting firm, the survey was conducted electronically and sent to a sample of 474 of 970 faculty and staff who have responsibilities for recruiting and hiring of P&S staff (49%).

The survey launched on February 9 and closed on February 13. Communications included an announcement and reminders from Julie Nuter, associate vice president of University Human Resources (UHR).

198 surveys were completed for an overall response rate of 42%.

![Response Rate Chart](chart.png)
THE REPORT

This summary report includes survey results and insights captured from HR Liaison focus groups and interviews with University administrators. It concludes with recommendations for how to best apply these findings to the development of training and resources that are aligned to an integrated talent management framework for the recruiting and hiring process.

Report sections include:

- Survey Respondent Profile;
- Insights into current training needs at each step of the search process based on survey results, focus groups, and interviews;
- Challenges and Opportunities;
- Training content, design and delivery recommendations;
- Appendices: Survey Data.
SURVEY RESPONDENT PROFILE

Responses by Role

Survey respondents were asked to identify their role within the search process. Respondents could select from more than one role.

- 75% of respondents serve in a hiring manager role
- 61% of respondents serve as a search committee member
- 39% of respondents serve in the role of search committee chair
- 24% are posting administrators

**Respondents by Role (Q.2)**

*Self-reported, respondents could choose more than one role*

- Hiring Manager (n=149) 75%
- Search Committee Member (n=121) 61%
- Search Committee Chair (n=78) 39%
- Posting Admin (n=48) 24%
- Other (n=14) 7%

Responses by University Division

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their University division.

- 37% of respondents reside in Academic Affairs
- 35% reside in Business and Finance
- 18% reside in Student Affairs
- 15% reside in offices and units that report to the President

**Respondents by University Division (Q.1)**

- Academic Affairs (n=73)
- Business and Finance (n=35)
- Student Affairs (n=30)
- Offices and units reporting to the President (n=60)
Survey respondents were asked to identify how many P&S searches they initiated in the past twelve months.

- 61% of survey respondents indicate that they have conducted one or more searches in the past 12 months:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many P&amp;S searches have you initiated in the last 12 months? (Q.3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None  (n=62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2  (n=76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 5  (n=36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 9  (n=3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 or more  (n=5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not initiate P&amp;S searches  (n=16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• 44% of survey respondents indicate they have posted a P&S position on the ISU jobs website in the last 12 months:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count (n)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within the last 12 months</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years ago</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 to 4 years ago</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 years ago</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not post P&amp;S positions</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**INSIGHTS AT EACH STEP OF THE SEARCH PROCESS**

*Developing Position Descriptions*

> “Anything that can increase flexibility in hiring highly qualified candidates with regards to position descriptions and titles within the university system that will align with a salary commensurate with their knowledge and expertise would be helpful.”
> - Survey Respondent

> “The time it takes to have a job description approved or adjusted is unacceptable.”
> - Survey Respondent

When asked to identify the 3 practices most important to planning a successful P&S search (Q.6), the top three practices were:

1. **Ensure that position description accurately reflects job duties**
2. **Ensure the position description accurately reflects required qualifications, experience and skills**
3. **Review position description in light of current needs**

Many described the position description approval process as a series of “back and forth” transactions between their areas and HR that create bottlenecks, frustration and delays.

Hiring managers report that job position approvals can take anywhere from three days to four months. Survey respondents claim that the position description process is difficult and burdensome (open text responses).

Employees and managers do not appear to have a clear view or understanding of the employee compensation and reward philosophy, pay administration policy and procedures, and their connection to the job description. University administrators interviewed identify best practices for determining pay, setting pay for hire, promotion, transfer and recognition as a manager training need.

Survey respondents identified reviewing and writing accurate position descriptions as the most important practice associated with planning a P&S position search. In the survey, over 93% of respondents report applying best practices around position descriptions every time or almost every time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Almost every time</th>
<th>Every time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that position description accurately reflects required qualifications, experience and skills</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that position description accurately reflects job duties</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review position description in light of current needs</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, 69% indicate a moderate to high need for training in writing accurate position descriptions:

Currently UHR offers training on *Writing P&S Position Descriptions*. The training communicates the importance of an accurate job description as a basis for employment actions and compliance.

Revising current training to include an overview of university compensation and benefit philosophies, structures, and processes and what end-users of the process can expect in terms of guidance and service delivery (process steps, turnaround time, etc.) is recommended. The training should include best management practices for communicating pay and benefits, and administering pay changes in accordance with University policy and standards.
UHR’s Recruitment and Hiring web page outlines some of the steps to take when beginning recruitment planning. However, there are no comprehensive guidelines for managers on how to best plan a recruitment strategy and timeline, or how to assess historical recruitment approaches and the internal talent pool.

Survey respondents and HR Liaisons identified a need for consistent university guidelines, standards and tools for planning a successful search.

When asked if their units have selection guidelines for P&S positions in addition to ISU’s Hiring Authority Policy, 95% of respondents answered no. As a result, practices and manager resources vary from department to department.

HR Liaison focus groups shed light on the role that a Liaison may or may not play in the search process. Focus group participants offered that depending upon their expertise, interest and availability, they may play a “full service” role or little to no role in the process outside of ensuring that paperwork is moved through the system.

Nearly all of the HR Liaisons expressed a need for university standards and guidelines, role clarity and more university support for their role in the process. A small percentage of HR Liaisons (about 25%) indicated that they may offer hiring managers and search committee chairs a range of support that includes, but is not limited to, development of departmental guidelines and tools, facilitating development of a search strategy, providing training to a search committee and providing oversight of the logistics, administration, and candidate and search committee communication.

A majority of Liaisons (about 50%) expressed frustration with the lack of resources and support to guide them in their role. They explained that training was learning on-the-job through “trial and error,” and that they lacked confidence to serve as an HR subject matter expert.

On the other end of the spectrum, a small number of Liaisons (about 25%) were candid in their admission that they offered little to no support to hiring managers and search committees given other priorities and the demands of their workload.

Traditionally departments and colleges prefer to look internally for guidance on how to plan for a search and don’t perceive University Human Resources or the Office of Equal Opportunity as a resource for planning.
According to survey results, 40% of hiring managers rarely consult with the Office of Equal Opportunity when planning a search; 16% of hiring managers rarely consult with UHR for guidance with recruitment planning and strategy. Additionally, survey respondents may be uncertain of the advisory role that UHR and Liaisons play to recruitment planning:

![Bar chart showing the frequency of consulting with Office of Equal Opportunity and UHR](chart.png)

When asked to rate the need for training in areas related to recruitment planning:

- 55% of survey respondents identified developing a recruitment plan as a moderate to high training need.
- 65% of respondents identified understanding ISU recruitment planning and hiring processes and procedures as a moderate to high training need.
- 63% of respondents identified understanding the role and responsibilities of a hiring manager as a moderate to high training need:

![Bar chart showing the need for training](chart2.png)

Training needs include understanding the hiring manager role and accountabilities, learning elements of a fair and legal search, “issue spotting”—understanding the issues they may encounter along the way and where university resources are available to assist, assessing the internal talent pool, and developing a realistic timeline (see appendix Q.5). Liaisons and hiring managers alike could benefit from training that offers a framework and tools for developing a candidate profile and search strategy.
"I am concerned that we tend to hire people like us because we want a positive, collegial atmosphere. This has a lot of potential negative factors, particularly limiting the diversity of successful hires.”

- Survey Respondent

When asked to identify the 3 practices most important to attracting a qualified P&S applicant pool, the top three practices were (Q.9):

1. Develop an advertising and sourcing plan to reach broadest pool of applicants.
2. Leverage professional networks to identify qualified applicants.
3. Identify the key employee messages that create a positive impression of ISU to include in advertising.

University Human Resources and the Office of Equal Opportunity webpages provide information on the minimum advertising requirements for position types, and lists of websites where positions may be advertised (websites, newspapers, etc.).

There are no comprehensive university guidelines or training for advertising, budgeting, and diversity sourcing. Survey results indicate that there is inconsistency in how units apply best practices.

While some units are actively engaged in advertising and sourcing practices, others are not.

Survey responses indicate that knowledge and application of practices is inconsistent across units:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>I don’t know</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Almost every time</th>
<th>Every time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consult with UHR Recruitment for recommendations on external advertising options</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with the Office of Equal Opportunity for recommendations on external advertising options</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an advertising and sourcing budget</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that diverse/underutilized groups are targeted</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an advertising and sourcing plan to reach broadest pool of applicants</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the key employee messages that create a positive image of ISU to include in advertising</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Survey respondents report a wide range of advertising budgets:

- 43% spend no money on advertising
- 27% spend from $0 to $299
- 15% spend between $300 and $499
- 14% spend over $500:

Over 54% of survey respondents identify developing an advertising and sourcing plan as a moderate to high need:

HR Liaisons and hiring managers could benefit from access to specialized expertise in general sourcing and diversity sourcing. Improved tools and training aligned to university standards and best practices, along with coaching offered by HR Liaisons and/or HR recruiters will increase manager awareness, knowledge and importance in this area.

Additionally, if ISU wants to attract a diverse and broad pool of qualified applicants, recruiting and hiring strategies must include maximizing networks, internal advertising, and fee-free services along with making strategic investments in external advertising.
Assessing Applicants

“\textit{The number of search committees for lower level P&S positions is an incredible time drain... I think there should be some guidance of other options besides forming time consuming search committees to hire positions that are lower level.}”

- Survey Respondent

“Typically, my search committees are made up of individuals who care about finding a good candidate and are personally interested in the process.”

- Survey Respondent

**The Use of Search Committees**

82% of survey respondents are using search committees for pay grades 30-34

91% of survey respondents are using search committees for pay grades 35 and above

Currently search committees play a primary role in assessing, interviewing and evaluating applicants and candidate. Survey respondents, focus groups and interviewees commented that the process takes too long and that candidates sometimes drop out as a result.

**Search Committee Sizes**

There are no limits on search committee size; at pay grades 38 and above, search committee size can exceed 10 members. The average size for search committees across all pay grades is 3-5 members:

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Please indicate the typical committee size at each pay grade (Q.21)

*Respondents could choose more than one answer*

- Pay Grade 38 and above*
- Pay Grade 35-37
- Pay Grade 30-34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee Size: &gt;10 Members</th>
<th>Pay Grade 38 and above*</th>
<th>Pay Grade 35-37</th>
<th>Pay Grade 30-34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee Size: 6-10 Members</th>
<th>Pay Grade 38 and above*</th>
<th>Pay Grade 35-37</th>
<th>Pay Grade 30-34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee Size: 3-5 Members</th>
<th>Pay Grade 38 and above*</th>
<th>Pay Grade 35-37</th>
<th>Pay Grade 30-34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>78%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee Size: 1-2 Members</th>
<th>Pay Grade 38 and above*</th>
<th>Pay Grade 35-37</th>
<th>Pay Grade 30-34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO NOT Use a Search Committee</th>
<th>Pay Grade 38 and above*</th>
<th>Pay Grade 35-37</th>
<th>Pay Grade 30-34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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17
**Search Committee Activities**

68% (n=132) of survey respondents report having used a search committee for one or more P&S position searches in the last 12 months (Q.18). Those respondents report using search committees for a wide variety of recruitment and hiring activities, from the most frequent interviewing of candidates (n=129) to the least frequent assisting with developing an advertising and sourcing plan (n=31).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What recruitment and hiring activities do you ask search committee members to perform for P&amp;S searches? (Q.19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify applicants to interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommend final candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen and shortlist applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in ‘meet and greet’ evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist with determining recruitment strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in open forum evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in developing the position description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist in finalizing the posting announcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist with developing advertising and sourcing plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**P&S Application Review**

When asked who reviews P&S applications, survey respondents indicate that the supervisor, search committee chair, and search committee members may all be involved in application review. Others involved in applicant review include program coordinators, HR Liaisons, interview committees and HR Recruiters, who approve the applicant pool for interviews.

- 44% of survey respondents review applications at the end of the posting period.
- 30% review throughout the posting period and 6% review as time permits.
- 20% do some combination of all three.

**When do you typically review P&S applications? (Q.14)**

- At the end of the posting period: 44%
- Throughout the posting period: 30%
- As time permits: 6%
- It depends: 20%
When asked to identify the 3 practices most important to selecting qualified P&S candidates, the top three practices were (Q12):

1. Apply selection criteria to ensure that all applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently
2. Record applicant ratings based on required and preferred qualifications
3. Use the same interview questions with all candidates

“We have lost many good candidates because other colleges and universities move at lightening speed compared to us. We don’t even get a chance to interview them because of the time it takes to get approval to interview once we submit names.”

–Survey Respondent

- 98% of survey respondents record applicant ratings every time or almost every time.
- 97% of survey respondents assess resumes and applications for anomalies and gaps every time or almost every time.
- 98% of survey respondents apply selection criteria to ensure that all applicants are evaluated fairly and consistently.

Please indicate how often the following practices are part of your unit's current process (Q.11)
• 49% of respondents identify a moderate to high training need for managing effective search committees.
• 45% of survey respondents identify a moderate to high training need for evaluating resumes and applications.

HR Liaisons tell us that searches go well when there is strong coordination, communication and commitment among search committee members; however, HR Liaisons and hiring managers alike see benefits to partnering with UHR and HR Recruiters in the following areas:

• Developing applicant screening questions
• Standardizing candidate interview questions
• Implementing matrices or other tools for candidate assessment and evaluation
**Interviewing**

- Survey respondents report that their units consistently employ interviewing best practices.
- Over 90% of respondents say they use the same interviewers and the same legally acceptable interview questions with all candidates every time or almost every time.
- Slightly less frequently, they are ensuring that interviews are the same length for each candidate.
- 76% of respondents report training interviewers every time or almost every time.

---

**Please indicate how often the following practices are part of your unit's current process (Q.11)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Almost never</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Almost every time</th>
<th>Every time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that all interviews are equal in length</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that all interview questions are legally acceptable</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the same interview questions with all candidates</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the same interviewers with all candidates</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train and prepare all interviewers</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Of those who have conducted a search at pay grade 38 and above, over 50% also report using meetings with campus stakeholders and panel interviews to assess P&S candidates.
• Across the pay grades, P&S candidates commonly participate in group interviews with colleagues, one-on-one interviews with the supervisor and telephone screening interviews.
• Individual respondents add that they also assess specialized skills needed in a job role by asking candidates to give a presentation, respond to a writing prompt, or cook a meal (open text responses).
• 53% of survey respondents identify asking legally acceptable questions through the hiring process as a moderate to high training need
• 53% of survey respondents identify applying interviewing techniques and practices as a moderate to high training need:

![Rate the need for training in the following area: Interviewing Candidates (Q.29)](chart)

Given the University’s obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws that govern employment practices and affect the hiring process, it is strongly recommended that any employee involved in the interview and selection process understand the major federal laws that inform best practice (e.g. ADA, Civil Rights Act of 1991, Immigration and Control Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, etc.).

Survey responses indicate uneven application of best practices in interviewing and hiring. Hiring managers, in particular, should understand the risks and consequences associated with poor interviewing, selection and hiring practices when there is lack of continuity and disparate treatment of candidates throughout the interview process.

Hiring managers and search committees can benefit from learning best practices in higher education for evaluating candidates, communicating a positive image of the institution, presenting candidates with employee benefits and rewards, maintaining accurate records, ensuring that all applicants are treated fairly, and that the selection process and the interview are managed for consistency.
“It is uncomfortably rare that we have a competitive search where we have a hard time picking who we would like to hire.”
- Survey Respondent

When asked to identify the three practices most important to completing a successful P&S search, the top three practices were (Q.23):

1. Conduct reference checks with former employers to assess quality and suitability of candidate
2. Extend offer after formal approval from UHR
3. Notify unsuccessful candidates that they have not been selected for the position once the hire has been made.

- 74% of survey respondents indicate that they notify unsuccessful candidates that they have not been selected every time or almost every time.
- 63% of survey respondents indicate that they finalize all non-selected applicant statuses in PeopleAdmin 7 every time or almost every time.
- 95% of survey respondents indicate that they extend an offer after formal approval from HR every time to almost every time.
- 93% of survey respondents indicate that they conduct reference checks with former employers to assess quality and suitability of candidates every time to almost every time:

“We need more education and training for hiring managers. They need to know the answer to these questions:

- What is my responsibility?
- What steps do I need to take?
- Where are the resources that make it clear, are up-to-date, are easy to understand?”
- Interviewee

Please indicate how often the following practices are a part of your unit’s current process (Q.22)
Survey results in the chart below indicate that final authority for a hiring decision, regardless of grade level, depends upon the practices in a particular unit:

**Who makes the hiring decision for P&S positions? (Q.24)**

*Respondents could choose more than one response.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Method</th>
<th>Pay Grade 38 and above</th>
<th>Pay Grade 35-37</th>
<th>Pay Grade 30-34</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search committee chair independently makes the decision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor must seek additional approval</td>
<td></td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor independently makes the decision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor adopts search committee recommendation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey data indicates that while many are following best practices for extending offers and closing out a position, there is still a significant percentage who are unaware of important processes or who are applying a practice inconsistently. Interviews revealed some specific challenges associated with making hiring decisions for P&S positions:

- There have been incidences where “recruiting” occurs after a job offer has been made;
- The search committee process may undercut the authority of a manager to make independent hiring decisions;
- Search committee selection processes may not adequately assess the culture fit between manager and employee;
- Written recommendations for how to conduct reference checks are inconsistently applied and create exposure for the university;
- Using matrices for candidate and applicant assessment minimizes subjectivity.

**Failed Searches**

26% (n=51) of survey respondents indicated that they had a search fail in the past twelve months.
Survey respondents who indicated they had a P&S search fail in the last 12 months were asked to identify the reasons for the failed search(es). Across the pay grades, respondents (n=51) most frequently reported that searches failed because applicants did not demonstrate preferred qualification (n=34), did not meet required qualifications (n=31), or withdrew his/her application (n=24):

Please indicate why searches failed (Q.27)
* Respondents could choose more than one response

- Applicants did not demonstrate preferred qualifications (n=34)
- Applicants did not meet required qualifications (n=31)
- Selected candidate withdrew application (n=24)
- External advertising was not effective (n=15)
- Applicant pool lacked diversity (n=13)
- Recruitment timeline was too long (n=12)
- Recruitment timeline was too short (n=5)
• 58% of survey respondents identify negotiating and extending an employment offer as a moderate to high training need.
• 49% of survey respondents identify recording and documenting hiring decisions as a moderate to high training need.
• 45% of respondents evaluate conducting reference and background checks as a moderate to high training need.

Survey responses to questions about current practices and training needs indicate that hiring managers are aware of the gaps in consistency and knowledge and can benefit from best practice training in these areas.

Failed searches are an area for concern. While survey respondents attribute failed searches to a variety of factors, among them: a weak pool of qualified applicants, unrealistic search timelines, candidate withdrawal, and ineffective advertising, there is opportunity to further explore if failed searches may be a result of one or more of these factors in combination.

Accountability for the search process and final selection rests somewhere between the search committee and the manager. Developing policies and procedures for P&S search committee size and structure, and clearly defining manager and search committee responsibilities for the hiring decision should be the first priority before offering training in best practices for the discrete tasks of extending an offer, documenting hiring decisions and conducting reference checks.
“Once a candidate is hired I have a hard time remembering what is next. How to get the new hire into the benefits office, etc.”
- Survey Respondent

“Onboarding still needs to be improved. There is no consistency across the campus and each area has to develop its own system.”
- Survey Respondent

- 60% of survey respondents evaluate orienting and onboarding new employees as a moderate to high training need:

![Orienting and Onboarding (Q.29)](chart)

When asked to answer the question, what is the one thing that could be done to improve the candidate experience for potential ISU employees, three key themes emerged in the responses:

1. Improve the communication and partnership between UHR, departments and hiring managers so that employees receive standardized materials that showcase the ISU employee experience.
2. Create a user-friendly experience for applicants and candidates online and while on campus.
3. Shorten the timeline for conducting a search through streamlining processes and improving the candidate experience in the applicant tracking system.

Overall, survey respondents commented on the need to have timely and consistent processes for candidate communication throughout the hiring, interviewing and onboarding process. Employee onboarding and orientation, “still needs to be improved. There is no consistency across the campus and each area has to develop their own system,” says one survey respondent. Onboarding includes “waves of paperwork” from multiple university offices using different formats, (e.g. paper, electronic forms) which is confusing to the employee. In addition to a benefits orientation, UHR offers an employee orientation and attendance is optional.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

This study concludes that the absence of clear standards and guidelines, decentralized practices, and role confusion limit the university’s progress towards university goals to attract outstanding P&S staff. Furthermore, the reliance on search committees to administer and carry out search processes works against an integrated and coordinated approach to talent management.

Inconsistent search committee practices and “grey areas” of accountability and authority expose the university to legal risks, and create significant obstacles to alleviating the time-consuming challenges identified in The Iowa Board of Regents Business Case Discussion Document.

Key stakeholders in the process are, as one ISU employee put it, “disjointed and silo’d.” As a result, there is great variance in the perspectives and abilities of those involved in P&S searches. Individuals tend to focus on discrete tasks and departmental objectives, rather than on institutional improvements and strategy. This behavior is reinforced by key HR messages that are transactional in tone and content.

Many of the learning resources come in the form of checklists, “do’s and don’ts” and training and materials that drive compliance with system requirements and tasks. Resources reside in multiple locations online, and within different university offices, and are difficult to find. HR staff, HR Liaisons and Search Committees work in silos rather than in partnership to facilitate successful searches.

Training, along with a strategic communication plan, can set the tone and serve as a platform to focus attention on the importance of university priorities for recruiting and hiring diverse, talented and qualified P&S staff. Employee learning can move the organizational mindset from a focus on transactions to a focus on engagement and results.

Effective training should emphasize:

- The importance of talent to individual, team and institutional performance
- The purpose of recruiting and hiring to organizational and unit success
- Alignment of organizational goals, policies, standards, and procedures with best practices
- Clarity of function and roles at each step of the process
- The importance of collaboration and partnership to individual, team and organizational results
- Best Practice Models within Higher Education
- Individual skill development in best practices and ISU-specific knowledge

Communication strategies should consider leveraging regular two-way communication between HR Liaisons and recruiters that goes beyond “updates.” Examine and explore opportunities to share expertise, tools, lessons learned and new channels to report progress towards shared objectives.
TRAINING AUDIENCE, CONTENT, DESIGN AND DELIVERY RECOMMENDATIONS

Training Audience

The primary audience for training is hiring managers who hire and supervise P&S staff and who coordinate and direct the work of search committees. HR Liaisons and Search Committee members are a secondary, but no less important audience.

Currently search committees are charged with carrying out or supporting the Hiring Manager and HR Liaison in vital tasks. To the degree that they continue to have responsibilities for evaluating, interviewing, reference checking, and selecting hires, they should be viewed as a primary audience.

HR Liaisons are “local experts” and business partners to hiring managers and search committees. Opportunity exists to professionalize the HR Liaison role through training in university-specific policy, procedures and standards, and in best practices within the recruiting and hiring field.

The chart below outlines, in order, training priorities informed by survey results, focus group sessions and interviews with University administrators and key audiences for each content area based on best practice manager and institutional practices (CUPA-HR Interview Guide, 2010).

Content recommendations for compensation and classification and performance management reflect data captured through open-ended survey responses and individual interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Priorities (Content Areas)</th>
<th>KEY AUDIENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HR Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding ISU recruitment planning and hiring processes and procedures</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing accurate position descriptions</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the role and responsibilities of a hiring manager</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing effective search committees</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing a recruitment strategy and plan that defines needs and priorities for each open position and a realistic timeline</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying interviewing techniques and practices</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking legally acceptable questions throughout the hiring process</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiating and extending an employment offer</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating employment applications &amp; resumes</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating candidates</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting reference and background checks</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording and documenting hiring decisions</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orienting and onboarding new employees</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating compensation &amp; classification philosophy &amp; policy: pay and benefits, and administering pay changes in accordance with University policy and standards</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Management</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* To include, but not limited to Position Administrators, Program Coordinators, Department Assistants
Performance and Learning Objectives

Organizational performance objectives identify best outcomes for a training intervention. Metrics should be developed to monitor and assess the impact of training on institutional performance. University objectives for an effective recruiting, hiring and search training program should include:

• Sourcing and hiring the best possible candidate for a job opening as quickly as possible
• Partnering with University Human Resources and HR Liaisons to source the best candidates and ensure a smooth search process
• Communicating Iowa State University’s recruiting and hiring philosophy, employee brand, policies, and processes in terms that all stakeholders will understand
• Clarifying hiring manager responsibilities and accountabilities
• Clarifying HR liaisons responsibilities and accountabilities
• Clarifying search committee accountabilities
• Communicating UHR services and recruiter role
• Adhering to all laws that applying to recruitment and hiring practices
• Complying with University policies and practices

Learner objectives identify the best outcomes for employee learning. Evaluation should include measures for employee satisfaction, learning, application and organizational impact if possible. Learning outcomes for an effective recruiting, hiring and search training program should include:

• Describing and understanding University Policies and Practices Related to Hiring
• Adhering to key employment laws related to hiring
• Describing the role of diversity to hiring practices
• Writing job descriptions
• Partnering with University Human Resources and HR Liaisons to develop a staffing strategy plan and timeline
• When to use search committees, when to use a different format
• Communicating ISU’s employee brand, rewards and benefits
• Understanding the best outlets and methods for sourcing and advertising
• Identifying and hiring the best candidate as quickly as possible
• Using preferred selection techniques and tools (e.g. Screening Questions, Phone Interviews, Matrices, Face to Face Interviews)
• Objectively evaluating resumes and applications
• Using interviewing skills and techniques to probe for qualifications and job “fit” (Traditional, Behavioral, Situational, etc.)
• Conducting consistent and fair reference checks
• Extending and negotiating offers of employment consistent with University policy
• Notifying non-selected candidates
• Onboarding new employees into the University, department and role
• Facilitating new hire mentoring and coaching within the first six months of employment
Learner objectives are mapped to the talent management framework in the chart below:

### Instructional Methods and Materials

The ISU Supervisor Training Needs Assessment for P&S Staff Survey Results identifies instructor-led, coaching and small groups as preferred formats for training.

Given that the training audience is large, ISU should consider a hybrid approach that includes self-paced e-learning, online webinars, and classroom sessions dependent upon the content. Performance support in the form of job aids, desk reference guides and peer-to-peer learning/coaching could be designed to extend the learning and application beyond the classroom.

Finally, we strongly suggest exploring how UHR might partner with HR Liaisons to train-the-trainer or to conduct learning sessions as co-trainers. Strengthening the departmental and UHR relationship is a critical step to managing change and influencing new behaviors in the system. Establishing partnerships will begin to loosen silo’d thinking and habits and will eventually lead to improved relationships and continuous learning and improvement within the search process, and across the University.