TOWSON UNIVERSITY FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIAN HIRING PROCEDURES

Towson University is committed to a comprehensive program of affirmative action and fair hiring practices to ensure equal access, equity, and fairness in the employment of all academic faculty and staff without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a disabled or Vietnam-era veteran.

The following is a compendium of University policies and practices on faculty and librarian hiring. Towson University's Affirmative Action Plan requires documented personnel procedures and uniform practices to ensure the University's compliance with federal and state laws and the rules and regulations of Towson University and the University System of Maryland. The policies and practices have been arranged in chronological order to cover the various steps of the hiring process; the outline can therefore serve as a checklist to search committees as they go about their deliberations. At the conclusion of the academic year, an audit process will be implemented to evaluate the compliance of search activities as described herein.

Résumés will only be accepted from individuals when a full- or part-time faculty or professional librarian position has been identified as a vacancy through publication advertisements, i.e., The Chronicle of Higher Education, Faculty Forum, etc. Unsolicited résumés will not be accepted; therefore, individuals submitting unsolicited résumés will not be recognized as applicants.

1. Determination of Position to be Filled

   The exact position to be filled should be determined in consultation with the dean of the college -- the level (faculty rank) available, specialties, if any, to be taught, and specific qualifications necessary in order to fill the position.

   Most vacancies are known well in advance of the beginning of the academic year, providing ample time for advertising, screening, interviewing, and selection. Occasionally, a position becomes available or is still unfilled just before the start of a semester. When that occurs, a national search to fill the position permanently can be conducted if it is begun approximately two months before the start of the semester. This search may be modified because of publication deadlines to include only some of the usual media and contacts. However, national contacts (e.g., professional associations' lists of job-seekers or The Chronicle of Higher Education) must be used. If a position is vacant after July 10 or after December 10, usually it will be filled by temporary appointment(s) of either part-time or visiting faculty while the department conducts a full search to fill the position.

2. Selection of Search Committee

a. Larger departments should (and small departments may) select individuals from among their members to serve on a search committee. Departments may decide that all full-time tenure-track and tenured faculty participate in the search process. All such hiring committees must include female representation. Minority representation on search committees should be the norm to the extent possible. In the case where there is an absence of minority representation on a search committee, the search chair should work with the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity to ensure that minority candidates have an opportunity to meet with minority individuals during their campus visit.

b. When conducting a search for a department chair, selection of the search committee will normally be made by the dean of the college in consultation with the department faculty. The dean may place a chairperson from another department on the search committee. Final composition of the committee should reflect the discipline interests and minority and female representation to the extent possible.

c. If a department lacks minority or female faculty to serve on a search committee, such faculty from other departments can be appointed to serve as consultants to a search committee by mutual agreement of the department, the faculty member, and the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity. A list of the search committee members and their demographic data (gender, race) should be submitted to the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity in the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

d. Consultants serving on a search committee shall be voting members of the committee and will be active participants in all discussions and deliberations of the committee.

e. The role of the consultant includes assistance to the department in the screening of applications on a non-discriminatory basis, and participation in interviews.

f. General demographic data secured via an online voluntary applicant data collection system (see paragraph 9.) maintained by the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity will be available to the minority consultant and the chair of the search committee upon request.

g. Consultants need not serve on more search committees than they feel able. No consultant should feel constrained to accept any or all invitations to serve on search committees.

h. Service on search committees is regarded as service to the University. Members and consultants should report this service on their end-of-year reports and such service should be credited in the same way as other committee service to the University.

i. New members and consultants may receive orientation to the faculty hiring procedures and can call upon the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity and the dean of their college for clarification at any time during the hiring process.

j. The search committee chairperson will provide copies of the "Towson University Faculty and Professional Librarian Hiring Procedures" and other necessary materials to all search committee members.

3. Wording of the Position Vacancy Announcement (must be submitted on a Faculty Job Posting Form):

The position vacancy announcement should be worded as specifically as possible and should be prepared in consultation with the dean of the college, Associate Provost and the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity. The following information should be in the advertisement:

a. Faculty rank(s) and tenure status of the position.

b. Specialty, if any, required.

c. Primary duties of position: teaching load, level of courses to be taught, area(s) of specialty, non-teaching duties such as scholarship, service, special program duties.

d. Qualifications required or desirable (specify which), including degree status, experience, specialty, etc.

e. Date position will begin (month, year).

f. Some mention of salary (example: salary is commensurate with experience).

g. Materials to constitute application (letter of interest, curriculum vitae, official graduate transcripts, letters of references, etc.) along with the name and address of person to whom information should be mailed.

h. Closing date for applications. Whenever possible please use a firm closing date. When it is felt that a firm closing date will not work well, the following statement should be used "review of applications will begin on __date__."

i. Towson University's Equal Employment Opportunity statement "Towson University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and has a strong institutional commitment to diversity. Women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply." shall be used in every ad. The Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity will add the EEO statement if it has not been included.

j. The search committee chair shall invite the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity (ext. 42360) to meet with the search committee at this time to review Towson University's affirmative action procedures.

4. Approval of the Position Vacancy Announcement :

The Faculty Job Posting Form must be approved by the department chairperson, dean of the college, Provost, and the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

5. Advertising Faculty Position Vacancies

Regular tenure track or non-tenure track full-time faculty positions require "national" advertising. The position vacancy announcement should be circulated as widely as possible in professional or mass circulation media likely to reach all candidates, including minority, female, applicants with disabilities, and veterans.

Two or more outreach efforts are required and should be documented and reported to the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

a. Academic Affairs is responsible for placing a group ad in The Chronicle of Higher Education in October. Deadline for submission of ads to be placed in the group ad is the preceding September. Ads placed in local newspapers, professional journals, and individualized ads in The Chronicle of Higher Education are paid for by the department, and are reimbursable up to a combined maximum of $500 per search.

b. Departments are also encouraged to develop contacts with graduate institutions, historically/predominantly black colleges and universities, professional associations, and with minority and women's caucuses of professional associations as a source of applicants.

c. For one-year visiting and part-time positions, advertising may be "regional" and confined to the Baltimore-Washington area or other major cities. In unusual circumstances, a visiting position may be filled without being advertised if approved by the dean of the college, the Provost, and the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

6. Acknowledging Applications

All applications should be acknowledged by letter as they are received. Communications with applicants with disabilities should at all points be made in an accessible medium, i.e., Braille if needed. Affirmative action cards (available from the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity) must be enclosed with the acknowledgment letter.

7. Preliminary Screening of Applicants

Once the deadline for receipt of applications has passed, applicants should be screened initially only to eliminate those who do not meet the minimum qualifications for the position. These persons should be notified early that their qualifications do not meet minimum qualifications. A record of these applicants should be maintained by the department.

All applicants who are not eliminated in this preliminary screening shall be included in the applicant pool. In this initial review of the applicant pool, any other necessary information which was not supplied with the original application should be requested. A record of non-competitive applicants should be maintained by the department.

8. Completing the Applicant Pool

Step 8 is a review step only; its purpose is to assure that there are full informational records on each member of the applicant pool. No comparative assessments should be made until this survey review has been accomplished. However, once all information necessary has been requested, step 9 may be initiated. Nevertheless, step 9 may not be completed until a reasonable time has been allowed for the receipt of any additional information requested in step 7.

9. Screening of the Applicant Pool

The Search Committee may request general demographic information on the applicant pool at this time from the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity in the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity.

Once the applicant pool has been established, each bona fide application should be reviewed on its merit in relation to the advertised position and qualifications.

The screening process must be non-discriminatory. Departments should be cognizant of the hiring goals outlined in the University's Affirmative Action Plan.

Particularly when screening applications for a position at the junior ranks, the admittedly subjective factor of "potential" is one which must be considered. Search committees are encouraged to discuss broadly both the quantitative and qualitative factors which they perceive in the applications and upon which their assessments are based.

The screening procedure will result in some form of grouping of applications. The exact number and nature of the groupings, and their size, may vary depending upon the number of applicants in the applicant pool. Due to the diversity of departments and positions, no sharp guidelines can be given as to the number or size of groups within the pool. However, each search committee should feel free to consult the dean of the college and/or Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity for assistance and advice if they perceive a problem in the process of such grouping.

The ultimate result of the screening/grouping step will be the determination of an "interview pool" from within the "applicant pool." The interview pool consists of those applicants who the department wishes to bring on campus for an interview as set forth below.

NOTE: Some departments may wish to use preliminary interviews as part of the process of screening the applicant pool. In general, interviews at this step may not be used as the only interview of a candidate. Offers of employment cannot be made at such an interview.

10. Review of Screening and Permission to Interview

When the department has completed the screening of the applicant pool and has determined the interview pool from among the applicant pool, the department shall review the selection of the interview pool with the dean of the college.

No department may invite persons for interviews or conduct final interviews until they have received the approval of the dean of the college, Associate Provost and the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity and have conducted telephone reference checks. The dean and the Associate Provost will approve the interview pool on the basis that all appropriate procedures and qualification requirements have been addressed. The Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity will approve the interview pool on the basis that affirmative action guidelines have been followed.

11. Invitations to Interview

Once approval has been given to begin interviewing, each person in the interview pool shall be contacted to arrange a date for interview. Although the initial contact may be made by telephone, each person to be interviewed shall also be sent the following in writing:

a. A letter confirming the date and time of the interview and setting forth the type of oral presentation, if required, to be made. Such presentations might take the form of a guest lecture in a class, a seminar presented to faculty members, a demonstration, audition, or performance, as appropriate. An invitation to request a reasonable accommodation should be extended by inviting the applicant to contact the search committee chairperson to request the necessary accommodation.

b. Information regarding the reimbursement of candidate expenses. Receipts are required in order for candidates to be reimbursed for lodging other than the Burkshire, taxi, limousine, boarding passes are required for air and train transportation (including ticketless flights). Reimbursement for meals and auto mileage is limited to the current rate as approved by the State of Maryland and receipts are not required. Candidates must complete a Request for Candidate Reimbursement Form in order to secure reimbursement for their travel expenses.

12. Interviews

The search committee, including the consultants, should be present for all interviews

A core of similar questions should be asked of all candidates. It is advisable to agree upon this set of questions in advance of interviewing and to formulate them in writing. Obviously, follow-up questions and questions relating to the candidate's specific education and experience may also be asked.

Questions/inquiries regarding citizenship may NOT be made during the interview process. You may ask, “If you are selected for this position, are you eligible to work in the United States?” If an individual who is foreign-born is ultimately the one who is selected and accepts the offer of employment and Towson University wishes to assist the individual to obtain an H-1B1 Visa (Temporary Nonimmigrant Worker in a Specialty Occupation), the Director of the International Student and Scholar Office should be contacted to initiate the process.

The search committee chairperson should provide summary notes of the consensus of the committee for each applicant interviewed. This record should include the dates, place, and interviewers present and at least brief notes of the discussion itself. Notes may also be maintained of the candidate's presentation given in conjunction with the interview. A record of the race and gender of each interviewee must be kept (see section 16 below).

Priority ranking of the interview pool should NOT be made until all interviews have been completed.

Reasonable accommodations must be made for applicants with disabilities during their visit to campus and during the interview.

13. Review of Process and Offer of Position

After all interviews of the candidates in the interview pool have been completed, the department ranks by priority the members of the interview pool. Minority and female status generally should not be considered as factors in this ranking, unless the job group has identified inadequate minority or female representation (in light of their availability in the relevant job market). In this instance, if the qualifications of a candidate who is a member of an underrepresented group are equivalent to those of a majority candidate, the University will be disposed to offer the position to the former.

In the case of recommendations for appointment of a department chairperson, the search committee, after consulting with the department, shall recommend to the dean the top three candidates without reporting the specific ranking, who shall make the appointment to the chairpersonship in consultation with the Provost. It is also understood that the dean will consult with the department prior to making the appointment decision.

When a department has established a priority ranking of acceptable candidates, the department presents the list to the dean of the college, accompanied by an explanation of the ranking and a request to offer the position. If the dean is satisfied with the selection process, the position can be offered to the agreed-upon candidate. Offers of position shall be made only by the Provost or the President as appropriate. An official graduate transcript and letters of reference shall be required before an offer of appointment.

Should a department determine, as a result of the interviews, that it does not wish to make an offer of employment to any member of the interview pool, it shall consult the dean of the college and the Provost, presenting its reasons for wishing to reject all interviewees and its request either to conduct further interviews (interview alternates) or to cancel the search.

14. Letters of Rejection

a. Letters rejecting non-competitive applicants are dealt with in step 6.

b. Members of the applicant pool who are not chosen for the interview pool may, after stage 9 has been completed, be notified that interviews are being conducted and that they are not in the interview pool; however, they should not be notified of rejection at this stage.

c. No member of the interview pool or of the applicant pool should be notified of rejection until the position has been filled or until the decision has been made by the Provost not to fill the position.

d. All members of the applicant pool should be informed either that the University decided not to fill the position or that it was filled by a qualified candidate.

15. Letters of Offer of Position

Letters of offer of position shall be sent only by the Provost or the President.

If all candidates refuse or for some other reason the interview pool is exhausted, the department shall either request permission to conduct further interviews (presenting a new list from the interview pool) or request permission to leave the position unfilled until a "new" search can be conducted.

Steps 13, 14, and 15 involve initiatives of the Provost or the President. The presentation of requests or recommendations by departments at these stages does not imply the necessary concurrence of the Provost or President with such departmental recommendations or requests.

16. Record Keeping

At the completion of the search, Form #88-FP-Search, Faculty Search and Hiring Report Form, must be completed by the chairperson of the search committee. A signed copy of this affirmative action form will become part of the formal hiring documentation and filed in each faculty member's official personnel record located in the Office of the Provost. Additionally, the department must collect the following records and forward the entire search file to the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity:

a. List of the hiring committee (chairperson and consultants should be so designated on the list).

b. The position vacancy announcement.

c. List of places (both publications, web sites and agencies/institutions) to which the advertisement was submitted to include the two required outreach efforts.

d. The names of the non-competitive applicants (step 6).

e. The names of the members of the applicant pool (step 7).

f. The names of those interviewed and the composition of the interview pool (step 10).

g. Search committee chairperson summary notes (step 12).

h. Same as f and g if a second interview pool is constituted.

I. Copies of all letters to all applicants (if a form letter is used, copy of form letter with names to whom sent) and of all letters from all applicants.

The Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity will keep this information on file for four years.

GENERAL NOTE ON DEFINITIONS

At the conclusion of the search, the chairperson of the search committee reports summary information on the search and detailed information on the interviewees to the Special Assistant to the President for Diversity and Equal Opportunity on the Faculty Search and Hiring Report Form, Form #88-FP-Search.

In general, the foregoing document does not specify how departments constitute their search committee (method of selection or size of committee) but it does assume that search committees act on behalf of and with the approval of their departments. Thus it is assumed that at any stage at which information, requests, or recommendations are presented to the dean of the college or to the Provost, such action is taken either by direct departmental approval or by the department's general approval of the activities of the committee. The precise manner in which such a relationship is expressed is left to each department to decide.

Robert L. Caret

Dr. Robert L. Caret, President

8/15/06

Date