

## ON-CAMPUS VISITS AND INTERVIEWS

### Best Practice

- Connect final-round candidates with faculty who share similar background and interests.

Once the candidate shortlist has been approved, the search committee will be able to invite candidates to visit Columbia and interview with the department. These visits are opportunities for candidates and department faculty to learn about each other as potential colleagues. Candidates will ideally have positive experiences, be able to present themselves well, and gather all the information they need to determine whether the University would be a good fit for them. Some preparation will go a long way towards ensuring an optimal visit.

### Develop an Interview Schedule

1. The agenda for the candidate's time at Columbia should reflect department priorities in terms of research and teaching.
2. Ensure that there are different ways in which candidates may interact with faculty and students. Consider providing interviewees with opportunities to reveal their strengths through less formal events, such as question and answer sessions and "chalk talks," in addition to the traditional job presentation. Social gatherings with faculty will allow visitors to observe and learn about department culture. Candidates might also appreciate opportunities to interact with students with limited faculty involvement.
3. Allow the candidate input into determining the schedule. Before developing it, be sure to contact candidates about any accommodations that they may require, such as physical access needs or dietary restrictions. Providing information about the department and the University as well as about different topics, groups, and organizations related to the University will allow candidates to determine issues of interest that they could explore further during their visit to campus. At this time, it will also be useful to give candidates materials regarding family-friendly policies such as dual careers, maternity leave, and modified duties.
4. Include a guided tour of the Columbia campus.
5. Ensure that the schedule is not too tightly packed and that there is time for lunch and breaks. Candidates may appreciate free blocks of time between events.

### Inform Candidates of Agenda for the Visit

Candidates should know the schedule for their on-campus visit and receive clear expectations regarding any presentation or lecture that they are invited to give. Information about persons who will meet them should also be made available.

### Prepare Interviewers to Conduct Interviews

1. Provide them with the candidate's visit schedule, including times and locations of interviews.
2. Provide application materials submitted by the candidate.
3. Provide a reminder to present the strengths and advantages of Columbia University to all candidates.
4. Provide a list of interview questions to be asked of each candidate. By posing the same questions to each interviewee, each member of your committee will be able to collect comparable information from all candidates. These common questions may be best asked by a group of interviewers, as this allows for multiple perspectives on the same set of responses, resulting in a fair evaluation. Individual interviews with the candidate that follow can then be reserved for delving more deeply into specific topics of interest.
  - Candidates should be allowed to do most of the talking during the interview so that sufficient information may be gathered about each applicant.
  - If a group of people is interviewing a candidate together, decide beforehand how the questions will be divided among interviewers.
  - Be mindful that questions about diversity should not always be posed by the interviewer who is a woman or underrepresented minority. Guidelines for assessing a candidate's ability to contribute to and support diversity are included in the **Appendix**.
  - Pose questions that allow the interviewer to evaluate the ability of candidates to be respectful, fair, and cordial.
  - Provide interviewers with guidelines about what questions are not acceptable to ask. Refer to the **Appendix** for a full list.
5. Provide evaluation/rating worksheets and other feedback forms that are to be submitted to the search committee after the interview. Requiring interviewers to provide feedback on specific criteria will assure a fair assessment of candidates.

## Coordinate Visit to Campus

1. Provide a warm welcome to all candidates. Make sure department staff know of a candidate's arrival and are available to welcome them. A search committee member or department faculty member can escort the candidate to different events and interviews during the visit.
2. Have the candidate meet with the department chair and all department faculty, particularly faculty they may be interested in collaborating with, and persons of similar background and interests.
  - Ensure these interactions are positive and friendly, and that all who meet with candidates have information about their professional background.
  - Ensure women and underrepresented minority faculty meet with all candidates, not just women and underrepresented minority candidates.
3. Communicate that the department/University is a supportive and friendly place to work by sharing its policies on evaluation, promotion, and mentoring for junior faculty. A department with clear policies on these issues will appeal to candidates as a work environment that allows faculty to flourish.
4. Connect candidates with the Office of Work/Life. This can be a great resource for candidates who want to learn about benefits and resources (e.g., partner benefits, maternity leave, family leave) that are available to support them, and that they may prefer not to raise with their recruiting department. Make a point to connect all candidates to the Office of Work/Life, and offer to arrange meetings on their behalf. The Office of Work/Life website is a great starting point: <http://worklife.columbia.edu>.
5. Ensure that you do not make statements that presume a candidate's sexual orientation or gender identity, for example, assuming that a spouse/partner is male or female. If candidates do bring up their status, ensure that their partner/spouse is invited to recruitment activities as any other spouse would be, and if they express interest in meeting LGBT faculty or students to discuss School climate, arrange for such meetings.
6. If the candidate discloses a need for his or her partner to find a faculty or staff position in the same location, direct the candidate to resources for finding positions within Columbia or at a nearby institution. Metro New York & Southern Connecticut HERC (Higher Education Recruitment Consortium) is a helpful database and can be found at [http://www.hercjobs.org/metro\\_ny\\_southern\\_ct/](http://www.hercjobs.org/metro_ny_southern_ct/).

7. End the campus visit on a positive note. Ensure that the candidate's last interactions are with those who are enthusiastic about Columbia. Don't make a premature offer, but inform the candidate of a general timeline for the next steps in the hiring process.
8. Reimburse candidate for expenses soon after the end of the on-campus visit.

## Checking References

References provide a valuable complement to interviews, allowing search committee members to gain further understanding of candidates' professional accomplishments and approach. A consistent method of reviewing these references will contribute to a fair assessment of candidates.

Notify candidates that their references may be contacted. When interviewing references, be sure to only ask job-related questions. Questions that are not suitable to ask candidates are also not appropriate to ask of references. Please see the Guidelines for Interview Questions in the **Appendix**.

When considering references, be sure to account for gender bias. Recommenders generally describe women in more muted terms than men. While referees discuss men's research and titles, they may fail to mention these topics in recommendations for women. Women are also generally portrayed as teachers, while the men are seen as researchers.<sup>21</sup>

## A Note on Dual Careers

Research has shown that women are more likely than men to have partners who are also academics, and that concerns regarding the partner's career disproportionately affect recruitment and retention of women faculty.<sup>22-23</sup> Promptly responding to the dual career considerations of candidates is in the best interest of a department or institution that wishes to attract and retain top talent.

While search committees should not inquire into a candidate's family or marital status, if a candidate reveals that acceptance of an offer is conditional on his or her partner securing employment in the same location, connect the candidate with Columbia's Office of Work/Life. Information regarding faculty recruitment and relocation is available at <http://worklife.columbia.edu/faculty-recruitment-relocation>.

If spouses are also offered positions in Columbia, it is important that their recruitment is conducted in a way that respects the recruiting department's priorities. Consideration of the department's needs will help ensure that spouses that become faculty are appreciated for their academic credentials and feel welcome.

For more information about dual careers, their influence on recruitment, and strategies to accommodate them, a list of additional reading material is provided below.

- Recommendations on Partner Accommodation and Dual Career Appointments. American Association of University Professors, 2010. Available at <http://www.aaup.org/report/recommendations-partner-accommodation-and-dual-career-appointments>.
- McNeil, L. and M. Sher. "The Dual-Career-Couple Problem." *Physics Today*. College Park, MD: American Institute of Physics, 1999.
- Wolf-Wendel, Lisa E., Susan Twombly, and Suzanne Rice. "Dual-Career Couples: Keeping Them Together." *The Journal of Higher Education* 71, no. 3 (2000): 291-321.

## SELECTING CANDIDATE AND MAKING OFFER

### Selecting Finalists

After all interviews have been completed and references checked, the search committee should prepare its recommendations. Adhering to an agreed-upon process for discussing and voting on candidates will contribute to unbiased decision making that reflects the opinions of all members.

### Presenting Candidates

Once all candidates have been thoroughly evaluated, the search committee presents its final hiring recommendations to the dean, or other leadership responsible for hiring. Along with the final list of candidates, committees should include the criteria used to evaluate candidates as well as documentation showing the rationale behind the choices made. The rationale should contain the perspectives of all committee members rather than just the prevailing ones.

The final list of candidates should be as diverse as possible and should be accompanied by a statement outlining the efforts made to recruit women and underrepresented minorities.



- Change the status of the RAPS posting to indicate the selectee is ready for the appropriate vice president, dean, or director's approval.
- Vice president, dean, or director approves the nomination after reviewing the search.
- RAPS conducts an automated review of selectee for purposes of EOAA clearance.
- If the search clears, the hiring unit may make an offer to the candidate.
- If the search fails to clear, the hiring unit should contact the Office of EOAA to determine the next steps.

### Making the Offer

The search committee can communicate candidate priorities to the hiring authority during the crafting of the offer. It can also play a role in welcoming the candidate to the department; members, along with other department faculty, may make personal calls congratulating the candidate who is offered the position. The committee can also continue to be a resource for information about the advantages of working at Columbia.

### Negotiating the Offer

The transparency and fairness with which Columbia goes about negotiating the offer will build trust in the institution among new hires, result in successful recruitments, and have a positive impact on long-term retention. Since research demonstrates that women are less likely to advocate for themselves than men, consider mentioning to all candidates, particularly junior faculty, that negotiations are standard and expected, and that they may want to speak with members of their networks (i.e., mentors and peers at their home institutions) for guidance on how to negotiate effectively. Also consider sharing with candidates information about the topics that may be broached during negotiations.<sup>24-25</sup>

In negotiating the offer with the candidate, you may want to open the conversation as follows:

“We believe that successful, long-term recruitments begin with transparency and fairness, and we want you to know that negotiation over your offer is to be expected. Please reflect on what factors are important to you, and consider speaking to mentors and peers at your home institution to get a sense of what is typical in your field.”

Though different positions will have different topics that can be discussed during negotiations, here is a sample list:

- Salary
- Course release time
- Lab equipment
- Lab space
- Renovation of lab space
- Research assistance
- Clerical/administrative support
- Travel funds
- Discretionary funds
- Summer salary
- Moving expenses
- Assistance with partner/spouse position
- Other issues of concern to the candidate

A copy of this list is also available in the **Appendix** as a handout for you to share with candidates.

## Office of Work/Life

During negotiation and the general recruitment process, the Office of Work/Life can be a useful resource for questions that candidates may have. The office’s website (<http://worklife.columbia.edu/>) has information on dual career, relocation, housing, flexible work arrangements, child care, and other benefits.

## EVALUATING THE SEARCH

### Best Practice

- Conduct a post-search debrief to review how the process went for the search committee, chair, and hire, including discussion of any candidates who turned down offers and what might have been done to make their recruitments successful.

In every department and school, the search committee does Columbia a great service when it reflects upon the search it just led. By documenting and sharing lessons learned, future searches can better employ practices that will recruit top faculty to the University.

The following questions can help guide the committee’s evaluation of the search. This list is not exhaustive; the committee should feel free to include any other questions it feels are pertinent to evaluating the search.

1. Did the committee use the checklist of best practices in faculty recruiting?
2. What parts of the search process worked well?
3. What parts didn’t work well? How could they be improved?
4. Was the applicant pool diverse? Did it include women and underrepresented minorities?
  - Could the job description have been constructed in a way that would have brought in a broader pool of candidates?
  - Could the department have recruited more actively?
5. Were any promising candidates discovered during this search? If so, it will be helpful to keep these individuals on file for future searches.
6. How did finalists perceive the recruitment process? Interviews with members of this shortlist can yield valuable feedback.
  - Did candidates, especially those were women and/or underrepresented minority candidates, refuse an offer? If so, why? Consider interviewing these candidates and asking them their reasons for refusal.
  - Are there ways that the department can become more attractive to women and underrepresented minorities?

Once the search committee has considered these questions and documented its analysis, its report can be shared with the department chair, the dean, and the provost. These reports will be used to update this handbook and inform future searches.