

## **Search Process for College of Agricultural Sciences Unit Leaders**

2 September 2020

Unit leader positions (Department Heads and Branch Experiment Station Directors) in the College of Agricultural Sciences (CAS) are critical in ensuring that the college addresses all three of OSU's missions and in maintaining our national and international reputation as a leading Land Grant institution. Unit leaders are integral in developing and maintaining rapport with the college's diverse stakeholders and in stewarding relationships with potential donors and supporters. CAS unit leaders hire, mentor, and promote the development of successful faculty and staff and are expected to demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and learner/student success. As a consequence, hiring a new unit leader is a crucial decision for the college. These guidelines establish the college's process and expectations for unit leader searches that are conducted with the highest integrity and exceeds best-practice expectations for a search at OSU. These guidelines also establish a stakeholder involvement process that will be more comprehensive than processes the college has previously employed.

### **Search Process**

Each unit leader search will be conducted under the direct supervision of the Executive Associate Dean. The Executive Associate Dean will be responsible for developing the search committee and in ensuring that the search is conducted according to these guidelines. A unit leader from another CAS unit will serve as chair of the search committee and that person must be a trained Search Advocate. A Search Advocate from outside the unit, and preferably from outside the college, will be appointed to serve as the official Search Advocate for the search. Search committees typically will not have more than ten members. Other search committee members will be selected to represent diverse interests within the unit, and other interests at OSU where appropriate. Search committees are also expected to be diverse with respect to discipline, types of employees (tenure-track, professional faculty, and classified staff), gender and other backgrounds within the unit. Academic units search committees should also include a graduate student. All search committees will comply with OSU guidelines for search training and [search excellence](#).

Once the Executive Associate Dean has identified members of the search committee, the Dean will charge the committee (See Appendix A for draft language for charge) and will meet with the entire committee if possible, but at a minimum with the Chair and Search Advocate. The Dean will articulate his/her expectations for a search that meets the college's high standards, attracts a diverse candidate pool and his/her expectations for a report at the end of the search. The Executive Associate Dean will review the candidate pool at each stage (initial screening, initial short list, phone interviews [if appropriate] and on-campus interviewees) to check for diversity and inclusion considerations prior to proceeding to the next stage.

## **Search Committee Member Roles**

**Committee Chair:** Responsible for the oversight of the search process from the acceptance of the assignment from the Executive Associate Dean through to providing a report to the Executive Associate Dean with the strengths and weaknesses of each interviewed candidate.

**Committee support person:** Identified when the committee is created. This person assists the Chair with setting committee meeting times (rooms, video if needed, etc.), works with Dean's Office staff to coordinate meetings with the deans, acts as a liaison to the business center for advertising and interview permissions, helps setup travel, interview itineraries, etc. for the selected candidates. Also helps with making sure bills and reimbursements are paid, collects feedback on candidates for committee review, and other miscellaneous tasks that may arise. Typically, this individual is in an administrative role for the hiring Unit/Department. If there are two different interview locations, this person will help coordinate logistics for the secondary site visit (e.g., escorts from one location to another, catered lunches, etc.).

Note: Recruitment and interview costs for unit head positions (external searches) will be incurred by the unit and the college provides a \$7,000 budget change to provide cost support.

**Search Advocate:** Serves as a consultant and participates in advocating for the search process by helping the committee identify practices, which minimize the effects of unconscious and unintentional biases.

## **Search Committee Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the search committee are to:

1. Refine the draft position description and advertise the position. Application materials will include at least a letter of application addressing qualifications, curriculum vitae, a statement regarding diversity, equity and inclusion and minimum of three references. Other materials may be solicited depending on the position.
2. Actively solicit applications from a diverse candidate pool. The search committee will develop a plan for attracting a diverse candidate pool, and provide the diversity plan to the Executive Associate Dean at the onset of the search.
3. Solicit and transmit nominations of candidates to the Dean's office so we can follow-up with an invitation to apply. Search committee members should follow-up with a phone call to further encourage applications.
4. Review applications and select 2-4 candidates for on-campus interviews. Search committee will discuss the selection process with the Executive Associate Dean, including a description of how the diversity plan was carried out by the search committee. Phone interviews may be a necessary preliminary step.
5. Develop an interview schedule (See Appendix B for draft interview schedule) and conduct interviews. The interview should be a minimum of two days in length and should include the following components depending on the unit. The itinerary should be developed

referencing the CAS Hiring Instructions for Searches policy to aid with best practices. The meetings below are not arranged by priority, but by level of difficulty scheduling with the individual/group. The College suggests developing the itinerary in this order to reduce scheduling challenges:

- a. A meeting with the Dean and Executive Associate Dean.
  - b. A meeting with the CAS Associate Dean's group.
  - c. A stakeholder session with a broad invitation to stakeholders (including advisory board members or station advisory committee members) and either conference call or video conferencing capabilities. This is a Q&A session that does not require a presentation.
  - d. A meeting with other CAS unit leaders. This meeting could also include leadership across campus that may have interest in the position such as the Research Office, Graduate School, Agricultural Research Foundation, Ecampus, etc.
  - e. Meetings with the search committee at the beginning and possibly at end of the search.
  - f. A leadership forum in which the candidates explain their background and interest in the position and their vision for the unit. This session should be recorded for later viewing and broadcast to other locations for faculty and stakeholders. This is a question and answer forum and candidates should be told not to use more than half of their allotted time for their presentation.
  - g. A meeting with faculty of the unit and from the candidate's potential academic home(s) if different from the unit.
  - h. A meeting with other unit internal stakeholders depending on the unit (students, professional faculty, classified staff, etc.).
  - i. A meeting with CAS/OSU Foundation development team.
  - j. A meeting with the CAS Dean's Stakeholder Panel (coordinated with the Executive Assistant to the Dean)
  - k. A tour of facilities.
  - l. A tour of campus and community.
6. Solicit input on the candidates broadly from among faculty, students and other stakeholders. A Qualtrics survey is the most effective means of soliciting and assembling input from a broad array of people. The Dean's office staff will create and send the survey to the search committee support person for distribution with forum announcements and provide a final report of survey responses to the committee prior to the committee's candidate(s) debrief meeting. Input from the college's external stakeholders will be solicited by the Dean's office.
  7. Develop a list of the candidates' strengths and weakness, including a copy of all the input received from others and provide a written report for consideration by the Dean.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

Stakeholder engagement is an important part of a CAS unit leader search because we rely on our stakeholders to keep us abreast of on-going issues, needs, student training and other demands facing their industries. Likewise, we rely on our stakeholders to support the college

and our individual units during biennial legislative sessions and in assisting with the college's development activities. Our unit leaders are frequently the college's most common point of contact with our stakeholders.

These guidelines articulate a model of engagement with stakeholders for our unit leader searches. In the past, stakeholders were represented by one to three stakeholders serving on the search committee. Although we have hired good leaders with this model, the stakeholder engagement part of the process is frequently problematic for a number of reasons. First, many units serve multiple stakeholder groups, some of which have very different agendas, making the selection of one to three individuals representing diverse stakeholder groups challenging. Second, search committee service is a time intensive commitment and frequently stakeholders' schedules require them to miss committee meetings and parts of interviews, resulting in inconsistent input across candidates. Third, the prolonged search process, interview schedule and OSU search practices are often an enigma or source of frustration to stakeholders.

The CAS stakeholder engagement process for unit leader searches will be managed by the Dean's office in conjunction with and parallel to the search committee. The Dean will invite a panel of 6-12 stakeholders representing diverse interests to engage in the search process (See Appendix C for draft letter soliciting participation). The panel will be invited to comment on the draft position description before the search committee meets to review and refine it. This meeting will be conducted via a conference call with the Dean. The panel will be invited to participate in the interviews by: (1) attending the leadership forum, and (2) participating in a discussion between the panel and each candidate. Panel members may encourage others from their interest groups to participate in these two components. Finally, the Dean's office will solicit input from stakeholders via a conference call, a meeting with the Dean or by panelists contacting the Dean directly via phone, letter or email. The Executive Assistant to the Dean will be the point of contact for the stakeholder panel including scheduling all phone conferences, one on one meetings with the dean and distributing candidate interview information to panel members.

Appendix A. Draft memo from the Dean charging the unit leader search committee.

**To:** Committee members with Chair and Search Advocate identified in list

**From:** Alan Sams, Dean

**Subject:** [Unit Leader, Unit] Search Committee Charges

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the [Unit Leader, Unit] Search Committee. This is a critical leadership position for the college's teaching, research, and outreach missions. Timeline for the search includes advertising by \_\_\_\_\_ if possible with a full consideration closing date of \_\_\_\_\_ (or 2 months from opening), with interviews during \_\_\_\_\_. Charges for the committee are:

1. Refine the draft position description (attached) and advertise the position by \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Solicit applications from a diverse candidate pool. Increasing faculty diversity is an important goal for the college and this search represents a significant opportunity to accomplish this goal. The committee must make a special effort to reach out to underrepresented groups to encourage applications and should develop a plan for doing so. The Dean's office will send letters of invitation to candidates who have been nominated, but search committee members will need to make personal contacts. Lack of a diverse candidate pool may result in a failed search.
3. Review applications and select 2-4 candidates for interviews by \_\_\_\_\_. Discuss with the Executive Associate Dean the committee's actions in carrying out the diversity recruitment plan, and receive approval from the Executive Associate Dean to interview the selected candidates.
4. Develop an interview schedule and conduct interviews. The interview should be a minimum of two days in length and should include components identified by the CAS Unit Leader Search Guidelines.
5. Solicit input (via a Qualtrics survey) on the candidates broadly from among faculty, students and others who participated in the interviews. The Dean's office will create the survey for distribution by the committee support person. The Dean's office will solicit input from stakeholders separately.
6. Develop a list of the candidates' strengths and weakness, including copies of all the input you received, for consideration by the Dean.

I have attached a draft position description. You will need to develop a long and short version of the advertisement. Leighann Auer or Loretta Austin will be the CAS point of contact for this search and [unit administrative manager] will provide administrative support. Once again, thank you for your service on this important committee.

Appendix B. Draft interview schedule for CAS Unit Leader Search. Interviews for unit leaders are complex even for small units and become more complex depending on the size and operation of the unit. Search committees should also reference the CAS Hiring Instructions for Searches policy for best practices in developing an itinerary. All unit leader interviews will include an on-campus component and many unit leader interviews for on-campus units may also include a visit to off-campus facilities (experiment stations, research farms or research facilities). During group meetings, typically only one group is represented at a time.

- Day 1            Travel (*most candidates will rent a car at the airport*)  
Dinner with Search Committee Chair, members of Search Committee and or Faculty
- Day 2            Typical schedule for on-campus unit leader—*can be adjusted to better facilitate movement of candidate from meeting to meeting or on and off campus.*  
Breakfast with Search Committee (1.5-2 hrs.)  
Group meetings (Faculty, students, professional faculty, staff)  
Seminar prep (30 min)  
Seminar/forum (1 hr, 15 min)—*This will need to be broadcast to off/on-campus faculty and stakeholders and recorded. Recordings will be distributed for viewing after all candidate forums have concluded.*  
Lunch with a few faculty, students, or other interest group  
Group meetings (Faculty, students, professional faculty, staff, stakeholders)  
Associate Deans (45 minutes)  
Dean and Executive Associate Dean (1 hr.)  
Stakeholder Panel (1 hr.)—*This will need to be a conference call or broadcast to off/on-campus stakeholders.*  
Dinner with a few faculty or search committee members  
Social (*usually hosted by faculty member*)
- Day 3            Breakfast with a few faculty  
Group meetings (Faculty, students, professional faculty, staff)  
Meeting with other OSU Administrators with interest in the position (Research Office, Ag Research Foundation, Ecampus, etc.)  
Meeting with CAS Development Officers  
Lunch with CAS Unit Leaders (*may include unit leaders from other colleges as appropriate*)  
Meeting with HR to discuss benefits and personnel support  
Tour of campus, tour of facilities or travel to off-campus site  
Group meetings (Faculty, students, professional faculty, staff)  
Exit Interview with Search Committee  
Depart for airport or stay over another night (Dinner with a few Search Committee members or faculty)

Appendix C. Draft letter/email from the Dean inviting stakeholders to participate in a unit leader search.

**Subject:** [Unit Leader, Unit] Search Committee Charges

Dear \_\_\_\_\_;

I would like to invite you to participate on a stakeholder panel that will advise me on our search for the [Unit Leader for Unit]. This is a critical leadership position for the college's teaching, research, and outreach missions. Furthermore, our unit leaders are frequently the college's most common point of contact with you, our stakeholders. The panel will: (1) provide input on the draft position description, (2) participate in each candidates' leadership forum (in person, video conferencing or via a recorded video), (3) participate in a one-hour discussion with each candidate (in person, by conference call or video conferencing), and (4) provide feedback and recommendations on each candidate. This input can be provided via an online survey, a phone call or email. We also invite you to encourage other stakeholders from your industry to engage in parts 2-4.

In the past, the College invited one to three stakeholders to serve on search committees for Unit Leaders. These individuals were asked to engage in all aspects of a time-consuming and lengthy process, and provided input as members of a search committee composed largely of OSU faculty. For some of our larger units, it was difficult for the few individuals serving on the committee to represent the breadth of stakeholder interests. I am initiating a new process utilizing a stakeholder panel, that will involve a larger, more diverse group of stakeholders at key steps in the process to provide input directly to the Dean. I expect the panel to provide more and higher quality stakeholder input into the selection of unit leaders.

Please let me know if you are willing and interested to engage with the college in this important search.

Sincerely,