The Classified Employee Search and Selection Process Project Team has completed its work, and its recommendations are presented here.


Process: The team collected and examined data on the numbers and types of searches conducted and the amount of time required to complete searches. The team analyzed the existing process. The team researched and analyzed the reasons for searches, desirable AA/EEO results, legal and regulatory compliance (including provisions of collective bargaining agreements), position qualifications, testing, technology issues, processes for unclassified employees, and practices at other MnSCU universities. We surveyed newly hired classified employees, search committee members, and hiring supervisors. We analyzed the results of the surveys, which are attached as Appendices B and C.

Results: The team determined that the primary complaint about the classified search process was the average length of time from posting to hire (93 days in FY 2006). The number of steps in the process and the numbers of offices involved complicated the task of analyzing the process and identifying possible time-saving measures. Much of the documentation we needed was easily available, but we found that some required steps of the existing process were not documented. We found that delays occurred at almost every step of the process, that some delays were due to inadequate staffing in Human Resources and in the offices seeking to fill vacancies; some to required approvals; some to the nature of committees; some to misconceptions, misinformation, or incomplete information on the part of search participants; some to the constraints and limitations of State hiring systems, and some to the many steps of the process itself. These and other identified issues are outlined in the “Recommendations” section of this report.

Findings: The team suggests several measures to improve the process and shorten the time needed to complete it. Some are included in the recommendations, some were implemented during the course of our project, and some are listed here. We found that many steps in the existing process could be combined and/or completed concurrently. Simply re-writing the process to reflect concurrent activities could produce significant time savings. We also found that apportioning many of the tasks in the process across the university to supervisors, support staff, and committee members with little to no experience in completing them contributes to the length of the process. In addition to their own work and the work of the position they seek to fill, supervisors and committee members expressed dissatisfaction with the necessity to learn and complete additional tasks as part of the search process. The team recommends that Human Resources be provided with enough staff to support searches adequately and efficiently and that a
pool of classified staff be provided to cover vacant positions, leaves, emergencies, and special projects.

Recommendations:

Having reviewed feedback from participant surveys, interviewed principal players, and read and discussed relevant documentation, the project team recommends the following remedies for identified weaknesses in and/or issues with the current classified search process.

**Identified Issue:** Average duration of a classified search is 93 days. Good candidates are lost in the process. Work assigned to a vacant position is left undone or passed on to others. Others’ work is deferred.

**Recommendations:**

Set a goal of filling vacancies within six weeks of a position becoming vacant.

Require a timeline developed by Human Resources and the hiring supervisor at the initiation of every search. The timeline should include deadlines for each stage of a search for everyone involved. Hold decision-makers or their alternates responsible for meeting deadlines.

Clarify the factors that determine the length of the posting period.

Determine protected class disparity or lack thereof and the requirement for an external search as soon as possible.

Create generic EEOD and HR e-mail addresses or use a system like “Ask Us” for staff to use who are involved in searches.

Clump search activities into like groups; submit several pieces at once for necessary approvals (ex.: PEAR, search committee members, position description, request for internal search).

Consider using tracking software available to all participants in a particular search.

Ensure that EEO or Human Resources can respond to requests for approval within 4 hours.

Require only three people be involved in the normal search and selection process, including the supervisor.

Explore using search committees only at the interview stage. Give supervisors the option to screen to semi-finalist or finalist stage.

Provide timely information to active candidates about the process, the timeline, their place in the process, and the probable wage to be offered. E-mail
notifications would be fine. Send personal, professional regret letters as soon as practical.

**Identified Issue:** *Insufficient staffing of departments during searches results in MAPE, MSUAASF, IFO, and Excluded Managers' salaried time being used to complete ASFCME duties and participate in searches as well as doing Human Resources-related functions.*

**Recommendations:**

Provide sufficient staff for vacancies in departments during classified searches, leaves, or emergencies. The work group proposes a pool of classified staff which, if not covering absences, would support special projects.

Hire additional Human Resources staff to screen applicants to the semifinalist level (to preferred qualifications) in addition to the recently-established screening for minimum qualifications.

All search documentation and all correspondence with candidates should be handled by Human Resources.

Dedicate release time from current responsibilities for committee members or pay overtime as needed to fill vacancies quickly.

**Identified Issue:** *Perceived and/or real inconsistencies in the current process.* *Participants sometimes feel mistrusted or treated unfairly. Some decisions seem arbitrary.*

**Recommendations**

Simplify the process for clarity and ease of compliance. Make easy-to-follow flowcharts with expected timeframes available to both university personnel participating in the process and to candidates.

Update the process and post it on the public Web site.

Distribute clearly-written Affirmative Action requirements and guidelines distinguishing what is required and what is preferred in searches to all personnel. Provide a clear explanation of the university’s obligations to provide equal employment opportunity and affirmative action in the hiring process.

Clarify the option to use rating criteria based on qualitative descriptors as well as numbers.

Require MnSCU confidentiality video (currently available) for search committee and supervisor viewing prior to applicant review.

Provide a list of “Suggestions for a Successful Search” to supervisors and committee members.
Provide a list of “Tips for Reviewing Resumes” to supervisors and committee members.

Provide a list of pre-approved interview questions for candidates and references.

Compile annual time-to-hire statistics. Report to University community.

Identified Issue: Current DOER (MnSCU/Metropolitan State) application process yields many, many unqualified applicants. We waste a lot of time reviewing resumes.

Recommendations

Ask that the state system be changed to require that applicants apply to a specific vacancy, so their resumes can be automatically screened for minimum and preferred qualifications.

Identified Issue: The ties between qualifications and required tests have often been misunderstood. Supervisors do not always understand their options in determining qualifications which require testing. Testing space is inadequate.

Recommendations

Review of the minimum qualifications and required tests be completed by Human Resources and hiring supervisor before a search begins.

Remove required testing from Human Resources to make more easily accessible. Explore using outside providers or our testing center.

Do required testing before candidate interviews.

Identified Issue: Range minimum and maximum pay rates may mislead and/or disappoint candidates. Good finalists decline when they learn the real wages.

Communicate determiners for setting wages to applicants on the job posting with the ranges.