

SEARCH COMMITTEE PRELIMINARY INFORMATION – SUNSHINE LAW

Search committees' function

Search committees' function in an advisory role to the hiring authority by recommending one or more individuals for a position.

As such, you should not rank final candidates. Rather, you should plan to submit to the hiring authority a commentary documenting strengths, weaknesses and likely contributions of each recommended finalist.

The search committee chair will be in communication with the hiring authority.

Please remember the following

The **Florida Sunshine Law** is a series of laws designed to guarantee that the public has access to the public records of governmental bodies in Florida. The law was first enacted in 1995. The original statutes state:

The Florida Open Meetings Law (Fla. Stat. sec 286) governs the extent to which public meetings are open to the public.

The Florida Public Records Law (Fla. Stat. sec. 119) governs the inspection and copying of public records.

- In accordance with Florida's Open Meetings and Open Records Laws, the search committee meetings must be posted to the department website 3 days before the meeting takes place. (This requirement has already been given to the Search Chair via the Faculty Search Committee Process document.)
- All communications, including email communications, between search committee members are subject to Florida's Public Records Law.
- All meetings between search committee members, whether in person, via email, or telephone are subject to Open Meetings law requirements
 1. The best practice is for search committee members (2 or more people from the committee) not to communicate outside of the posted search committee times.
 2. Do not talk or email amongst yourselves, (even at dinner over the weekend). This is considered a meeting and must be posted.
- Search committees are required to retain brief minutes of their meetings, including the date, the names of committee members and invited guests present, and topics discussed
- Personal notes kept by an individual solely for his/her own use and not shared with others are NOT considered public record

Protecting the privacy of the candidate

- Do not communicate with other faculty, staff, or students about the search. If you are asked how the search is going just state, "I'm not at liberty to discuss", smile and continue about your day.
- When setting up screening meetings with candidates and search committee do not list the name of the candidate on the website.
- Contact the candidate directly to schedule screenings/interviews. Use the email address or personal phone number they supplied.
- Before the meeting begins (this included interviews) the chair or Admin support should remind the search committee members to keep the information confidential.
- Before requesting references notify the candidate.
- Note for Search Chair and Admin Support: If the requests are made via Interfolio the candidate will be the one requesting the anonymous references. This is the best process to follow.