TIAA-CREF institute

ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION

SEPTEMBER 2008

FINDING THE BEST TO LEAD HIGHER EDUCATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Identification and recruitment of effective senior administration is crucial to the ongoing success of a college or university and to the ongoing vitality of higher education in general. A truly successful search for senior-level leadership does not merely yield a final candidate who is hired, rather it produces a hire that turns out to be effective in the position and a good fit for the institution in the long-term. A previous *Advancing Higher Education* examined ways to make senior administrative positions more attractive to potential candidates, especially current faculty.[1] Based on our extensive experience with searches for senior academic administrators, we present in this paper a primer of factors to consider before, during, and after the search process. Issues examined include the selection, size and composition of the search committee; the development of a robust candidate pool, accounting for issues of diversity, consideration of external versus internal candidates, consideration of an acting for the permanent position, and whether to use an executive search firm; the development of an effective and efficient interview process, including the appropriate number of candidates to interview, scheduling and location of interviews, and the content and procedure of the interview itself; the appropriate number of finalists; necessary checks with both official references and off-list references; reaching a contractual agreement with the finalist and planning for the unexpected; and the importance of an effective orientation program for the new administrator hire.

1 See "Attracting and Developing the Next Generation of Senior Administrative Leadership" by Herman A. Berliner, TIAA-CREF Institute *Advancing Higher Education* (November 2007.)

INTRODUCTION

Almost all of us are regularly entertained by stories about individuals with super human powers whose ultra meek regular persona gives the very clear impression that they couldn't possibly be the super hero or heroine. Could Clark Kent really be Superman or Bruce Wayne, Batman? And we are equally entertained by these transformations when the person involved assumes an evil persona such as Dr. Jekyll turning into Mr. Hyde. But we are never amused when a search for a senior academic position turns out, in one way or another, very differently than anyone expected and hoped for. How can you best avoid or best minimize the chances of a key search having an undesirable conclusion?

We have been involved in many searches for senior administrators. Some of these searches have been successful in both the short term (yielding a final candidate who has been hired) and in the long term (producing a hire who has turned out to be successful in the position). Others have been less successful, either not producing a final hire for some reason or another (including not being able to come up with a good pool to interview, or a sufficient number of finalists), or not being able to come to terms on a mutually agreeable contract. At other times, even when the search concluded successfully and the finalist hired, the person ended up not being successful in the position for a variety of reasons, including not being a good fit for the institution/position or because the candidate and/or references were not truthful or forthcoming about the accomplishments, strengths, and weakness of the candidate during the hiring process. Additionally, we have approached our searches both with and without search firms and have used many different search firms over the years.

Based on this extensive experience plus the investment of substantial time in determining how the process should work, we have compiled the following primer of factors to consider before, during, and after the search process.

COMPOSITION OF SEARCH COMMITTEE AND SEARCH PROCESS

In any search for a senior academic administrator, a search committee can make a major positive difference in the success of the search from the initial steps necessary to attract a strong pool of candidates to the final steps which consist of forwarding the names of the finalists to the President, Provost, or other decision maker. As a key initial step, a committee can only be fully effective if it helps in the process of developing the candidate pool. Use of ads, email, snail mail, listservs, or a search consultant alone cannot gather a complete pool of candidates without a sustained effort on the part of the search committee. Very often, search committee members (especially faculty and academic administrators) have good contacts with the faculty, chairs, deans, and other good potential candidates at multiple colleges and universities. These potential candidates are often under the radar of search firms, or may not always be responsive to a search firm inquiry from a person they don't know. But they do respond to colleagues who therefore have the potential of being excellent recruiters for excellent candidates. The expectation that a search committee should not simply be reactive to a candidate pool as presented but rather help shape the pool is a key factor in facilitating a successful search.

This raises the question of whether or not it is advisable to hire an executive search firm to assist in the search process. There are some good reasons to use a search firm. An established and thorough search firm might be able to reach highly qualified, and in some cases nontraditional, potential candidates from an extensive list of contacts. Many of the individuals who are contacted (either directly or through a nominating process) might not be actively seeking a new position or would not consider responding to an open ad, but when a particular opportunity presents itself and they are approached and cultivated directly, they might consider applying. A search firm can also be helpful in preliminary data gathering and screening, thus enabling the search committee to function more efficiently.

But hiring a search firm does not guarantee that the best applicant pool will be developed. Very often the applicants, beyond those who have responded to open announcements and the university's own outreach, are on a revolving list of individuals who are presented by the search firm to many different institutions. It is also very important to ascertain, ideally before they are hired, whether the search firm is currently working with other institutions that might be considered peer or competing institutions. If they are, there is a real danger of an interchangeable pool of candidates especially if the search is focused in the same general area of administration. Even worse, is the possibility that a candidate identified by one institution is suggested by the search firm to another (competing or peer) institution. Search consultants also do not usually have an in-depth knowledge of the particular position nor of the culture and specific needs of the institution. Their success in developing a qualified applicant pool depends heavily on their ability to understand and reconcile the often competing information and needs that they might hear from the faculty, administration, and trustees of the institution in question.

Who should be on the search committee and how should the members of the committee be selected? There are myriad variations regarding the composition of the committee, beginning with a committee that is composed entirely of faculty; to a committee that is composed entirely of administrators; to a committee that is composed entirely of trustees; to every combination in-between with the added opportunity, when appropriate, to add student and alumni representation. There is also the opportunity to establish multiple committees with a system that funnels the input of one or more committees to a "higher level" committee which will then decide on the finalists. And with each of the combinations and variations, there are very clear benefits and very clear drawbacks.

As a starting point, let's take a committee composed of faculty, administrators, and trustees. Such a committee–especially if it includes trustee representation–is most appropriate for line positions at the level of dean or above. The benefits of a committee structured in this way are very clear beginning with a candidate facing a real life environment where different constituencies at times have very different priorities. A candidate who is meeting with a committee composed entirely of one constituency has the opportunity and perhaps the temptation to tailor (focus) answers more to the liking of that particular constituency. Put everyone together in a room and that opportunity is neutralized. Also, with different constituencies on the committee, there is an excellent opportunity presented for all involved to learn more about the needs, plans, goals, and ambitions of the other constituencies. Faculty and trustees benefit especially from a committee structured in this way since their contact with each other is often very limited.

But what are the benefits of having a committee where only one or two constituencies are represented? The greatest benefit is increased candor regarding the school, college, or university involved. But candor may not always be possible where all constituencies are represented. For example, if faculty believes the root cause of a school, college, or university moving in the wrong direction is an administration that is not up to the job, the faculty may be reluctant to bring all the facts to the search committee if representatives of that administration are also present. In a situation like this, would the faculty feel confident there wouldn't be repercussions? Or if financial constraints are more serious than commonly known, trustees may not want the graphic details presented to a much larger group and risk these facts becoming common knowledge (and possibly adversely impacting student admissions as well as faculty and administrator recruitment and retention). Their thrust may be finding the person who can deal effectively with this situation before the magnitude becomes more public. Or, if administrators feel the key issue for the next dean or provost is a lackluster faculty, how comfortable would they be in making their feelings known and backing up those feelings with data that confirms their point of view.

Interwoven with these concerns is the question of whether we should add either student or alumni representation or both. To some extent, it depends on the position involved and also depends on what happens next in the search process. If we are searching for a Dean of Students or Vice President for Student Affairs, it would likely be a mistake not to include a prominent voice for the students in the search committee. Students bring their needs, priorities, and concerns to such a search committee and their insights can be invaluable in helping to determine whether a candidate can meet those needs. Their involvement early on can also be very valuable in signaling whether the interaction between this candidate and the student constituency will meet the needs of all involved. None of us are well served by a student affairs administrator who can only communicate and interact successfully with faculty or administrators but is limited in his/her communication skills with students. Ideally, student inclusion also helps ensure consistent answers as well as the increased understanding of the needs of different constituencies. The downside in the inclusion of the student constituency is that it may limit or narrow the scope of the discussion among the other constituencies. There may be points that faculty or administrators or trustees, rightly or wrongly, are unwilling to express in front of a student constituency. The best response to this unwillingness and the best facilitator of student involvement is a tradition of meaningful student participation already present at the school or college in question. If students are already involved in governance and represented on important standing committees, there are powerful reasons (built on a track record) to incorporate their involvement on a student affairs related search committee as well as possibly on senior academic administrator search committees in general. If this formalized involvement isn't present, a search committee may not be the best place to begin. However, if students are not represented on the committee, there must be very substantial involvement (including interaction with the finalists and an opportunity to provide feedback) built into the process. For a position like this there is simply no alternative and for the search to be successful there is also no alternative.

Alumni representation also has a value but may be best included at a later stage. Clearly the President, Provost, Vice President, or Dean being searched for, is a person who is often expected to connect with alumni. Gaining additional insights on the longer term benefits of the education provided, generating additional resources for the college, or just having vocal supporters in the community are all very important. And yet, for many graduates, the time commitment necessary to participate in the entire process is more than can be reasonably expected. It should also be noted that the presence of graduates on the search committee may be another contributing factor to a climate where there is an absence of certain key issues being raised as part of the search committee discussion. Ultimately, if the result of the search committee's work is a pool of finalists consisting of the two or three best qualified candidates, there is still a very good opportunity that presents itself for alumni representatives to meet with these finalists and provide their important input before the final decision is made. In fact, the meeting with finalists should be as open as possible with as many important constituencies represented as possible, including staff and other stake holders in the community.

As all these decisions are being made regarding how a committee should be constituted, a guiding principle should be the furthering of collegiality and communication on a campus. For a university to work well, the faculty, administrators, and trustees should be on the same page and pursuing the same goals. And the input of the students and the alumni are also meaningful parts of this equation. A committee that is structured in such a way that it leaves out one or more of these constituencies does not maximize the opportunities for achieving this goal, and makes its realization more difficult. Yet, as noted above, there may at times be valid reasons for doing so at least in the moment. And once a procedure is set, since change doesn't always come easy in higher education (and since the procedure may have worked given the circumstances involved) it may unfortunately be somewhat difficult to modify that procedure. No one, however, should lose sight of the fact that the comprehensiveness of the search committee membership can help the success of the search and the success of the person selected.

How large should the search committee be? If the key constituencies identified above are all represented and if the representation is to be meaningful (more than one or two people from each constituency) we will likely have a committee of at least a dozen people (plus the students and alumni if they are included). This makes good sense. For faculty, even if we are only talking about a more narrowly defined search–the search for a dean rather than the provost, for example–there are likely to still be a number of different faculty constituencies that should be represented and those distinctions can follow disciplinary lines (with different goals and needs in different departments), junior/senior faculty member needs, research versus practice-oriented faculty, or some other distinction. Given these intra-group distinctions, faculty representation should likely be larger than either the administrative or the trustee representation. One possibility (of many) would be five faculty, four administrators, and three trustees.

Furthermore, at any meeting that is scheduled, there is the likelihood that a number of committee members will be unable to be present. This is especially likely in regard to trustees who usually come to a campus periodically rather than daily but it will also happen given the different teaching schedules of faculty as well as those meetings set for administrators where they must attend. A committee of less than 12 means there could be days where a constituency feels its voice and its impact have not been felt, which is not helpful in facilitating a well run search process. Being cognizant of everyone's time may help minimize this problem. When the committee is first meeting, a series of meeting times should be established–even if they are only potential meeting times–so that the committee members can plan ahead. And when interviewing candidates, if at all possible, multiple candidates should be interviewed in one sitting. It is usually much harder to schedule 10 meetings for 10 candidates rather than two meetings where five candidates are interviewed at each meeting. These initial interviews are typically one hour in length and therefore setting aside two or three days is prudent. The three or four finalists usually spend a full day (sometimes longer) on campus as they meet with a much broader and more diverse groups of individuals. Each of these constituencies is asked to provide input and feedback before a final decision is made.

At least four other questions typically arise when talking about the size of a committee and the scheduling of interviews. First, how many candidates should be interviewed in total, where should they be interviewed, who should chair the committee, and ultimately how many or how few candidates should be selected as the finalists for the position. In any pool, especially in a search that is widely publicized, there will be many more candidates than there are qualified candidates. And even in those candidates who are determined to be qualified, there will likely be substantial differences in qualifications. The committee needs to review each of the candidates in light of the qualifications deemed most critical and select those most qualified. In the dozens of senior academic administrator searches where we have been involved over the years there are inevitably a substantial number of candidates totally unqualified for the position they are applying for. Perhaps the classic example is the very recent college graduate (bachelor's level) applying for a Dean of Education position. The letter of application began in a most meaningful way: I have always wanted to work in higher education and dean would be a good place to start. Who can argue the logic? Another example is a recent law search where two students applied, neither had as yet completed the second year of law school, but both felt a deanship was good preparation for the real world. Supplementing the pool of candidates who are totally unqualified is often an even more substantial pool of applicants whose credentials and experiences are much less than the job requires. These candidates should not take a long time to review and both pools could easily be eliminated by the chair or other member of the committee. However, the key arguments for every search committee member having access to every application is first, the maximizing of the openness of the search and second, minimizing the chances that a highly qualified candidate is overlooked. Finally and thankfully, there is also the pool of candidates who are well qualified (some more so, others less so). In these cases, the committee should review each applicant very carefully and if a meaningful percentage of the committee recommends interviewing the person, the person should be interviewed. In a search where the goal is to find three outstanding finalists, it will often, in our experiences, require interviewing eight or more candidates to find these finalists. If the committee comes up with a dozen or more candidates to interview, perhaps the "meaningful percentage" of the committee required to make the cut needs to be revisited (or, in the best of all worlds, the pool of these top candidates is so stellar that every person in this pool should be interviewed). In any event, it is at this stage that extensive discussion among committee members is an important prerequisite to the search succeeding.

How search members are selected is also an important consideration. The respect for the search process and the respect for the person chosen are directly tied into the search committee member selection process. Clearly, the trustees serving will be determined by the president or by the trustees or by both; administrators will likely be determined by the president or by the provost or by both. For faculty, the selection process is more complex and the specific method of selection more critical. If there are distinct separate voices in a school or college, the committee structure should reflect those separate voices. If these voices exist by department, the search committee should be structured to reflect those differences; if the chairpersons of the departments involved are also a distinct voice, there should be a chairperson on the committee; and finally it is always healthy to have the committee reflect the senior/junior differences that exist on a faculty but it may be hard to incorporate this into the faculty membership. It is an added complication at the same time that the search is taking place to confront these and other issues regarding the committee membership. These issues are best addressed separate and apart from the search itself far before the need presents itself to activate the search process. And they are best addressed working through the regular governance process and gaining agreement well in advance from all involved in the process.

Confidentiality in a search process is a major concern, and the success, integrity, and protection of everyone involved in the search process demands that this confidentiality be uncompromised. But it certainly isn't easy to do so. First, there is the temptation to gather more information on candidates that look interesting even if there is no decision as yet regarding whether these interesting candidates will be interviewed (and being interviewed is still very different than being a finalist). For example, in a real life dean search, a committee member decided, on his own, to gather more information on a candidate in which there was some but not overwhelming interest. The candidate was serving at the time as an associate dean at a somewhat comparable school outside of the area but he had not told anyone–including his dean–of his interest in this other position. Once the committee member started information gathering with colleagues at the other school, this person's interest in the dean position became widely known and actually jeopardized the person's associate dean position. Candidates for a position have the right to expect–until they are clearly considered a serious candidate–that their candidacy remains confidential. Failing to have confidentiality in place, whether because of leaks or laws, could needlessly hurt good people, limit the candidate pool, and ultimately undercut the chances of selecting the best candidate.

Next, at times there may be a request by candidates (most likely internal candidates), or the temptation by committee members to share information on what the committee asks or what issues are covered or even how certain candidates answered questions or performed in their interview. What greater disservice can there be to the integrity of a search? A level playing field allows a candidate to achieve to her or his potential. Sharing of questions, answers, inside information may irreparably corrupt the process. And yet, we all know it takes place and many of us have witnessed it firsthand. A search committee needs to address confidentiality issues even before any candidates are solicited, and a zero tolerance policy on leaks should be agreed to by all involved.

APPLICANT POOL ISSUES

There are several additional issues that need to be addressed regarding outreach and composition of the applicant pool. The issue of adequate diversity in the applicant pool is an extremely important one, although it is often looked at rather narrowly, focusing primarily on whether or not there has been sufficient outreach in terms of ethnic, racial, and gender diversity. But diversity is a much broader concern and needs to also encompass such areas as disciplinary diversity (especially in units that contain a wide array of disciplines, often with competing or conflicting interests) and experience diversity (e.g., alternate paths to senior level administrator positions). It is only by casting as wide a net a possible and being creative in how to develop the applicant pool that the probability of the eventual success of the search is maximized.

And then there is the issue of internal versus external candidates. There are distinct advantages associated with being an inside candidate. The insider knows the institution, its culture, expectations, and pitfalls. She or he can hit the ground running with a much shorter learning curve. For the institution, the insider is someone who is known, for the most part, and thus there are fewer adjustments or surprises that might crop up if the individual is selected. However, there is also the danger that the insider is already committed to certain positions, processes, and ways of interacting and therefore might be less apt to view things in a new light or to try new ways of approaching things. In addition, it is sometimes difficult for an inside candidate who has made his or her way up through the ranks to be viewed by more senior individuals as someone who is no longer a neophyte and who can effectively lead the unit or institution.

An outside candidate can bring a fresh look at solutions and approaches to existing situations, interactions, and problems and doesn't come with some of the known baggage that internal candidates might have. On the other hand, the outside candidate usually does not know the culture and the needs of the institution as well as an insider might and therefore has a steeper and longer learning curve. Moreover, the institution doesn't really know the person, no matter how good the reference checking might have been.

A more specific question related to the internal versus external candidate issue is whether or not someone who is serving in the position on an acting or interim basis should be considered as a candidate for the permanent position. To begin with, there might be some wonderful internal candidates and the decision to select one as the interim administrator might have been because of the extensive background and capabilities of this individual, coupled with a temperament that suggested that the individual would succeed. A good interim administrator can define the position and really make it his or her own. This individual has the opportunity to demonstrate how he or she will perform in the position. However, it is also true that the dynamics of an interim position are not exactly the same as they will be on a more permanent basis. Often, an interim candidate finds him or herself in a care-taker position. This is sometimes due to the way the individual approaches the position, not wanting to take risks, rock the boat, or show one's true colors so as not to jeopardize the eventual candidacy. Other times, what might appear as inaction or ineffectiveness is due to time constraints (interim time too short to effectively make changes) or constraints of the position (the faculty might not be willing to entertain radical changes during an interim administrator's tenure).

In the final analysis, the search committee should not necessarily rule out either internal or external candidates, nor those who are in interim positions. In each case, it is important to contextualize each search depending on the position itself, the candidates involved, and the particular needs of the school, college, or university at that specific time in its history and future development. There are times when it is wiser to go with an external finalist, whereas at other times, needs might dictate that an internal candidate, and perhaps one who is serving in an interim capacity, is the most appropriate one for the position. It all comes down to a question of fit. In our experience the most successful interim candidates are those individuals who perform in their interim role as if it was the permanent position and who are not afraid to take chances, to make hard decisions, and to try new approaches, while at the same time understanding the dynamics of the job and the various constituencies that are involved.

INTERVIEW PROCESS

Once the candidate pool has been narrowed to those who are going to be interviewed, the committee must deal with the interview process itself, including the location of the initial interviews. Should the interviews take place on or off campus and what should be their length? Off-campus interviews might provide more confidentiality, especially in the initial phases of the search process. In addition, it is sometimes easier to schedule an off-campus interview when trustees are involved. That being said, there are many benefits to on-campus interviews, including the ability to more efficiently schedule the interviews around the competing schedules of faculty and administrators. On-campus interviews also provide candidates with the opportunity to see the campus and interact with students and others as they do their own research in trying to determine whether or not to pursue the position further.

With regards to the questions to be asked and how they are to be asked, it is important that the same issues be raised and questions asked of all candidates that are interviewed so that the search committee has the opportunity to assess and compare the responses and positions of all the candidates. That being said, there are several way to accomplish this, from scripted questions that are asked verbatim of all candidates to a list of issues that the search committee makes sure are addressed by everyone. Some institutions send the questions or the issues to the candidates in advance. Although of some value, this approach doesn't necessarily provide insight into how the individual can think on his or her feet.

Regardless of whether a search committee uses scripted questions or a list of issues and concerns that are to be addressed, it is vital that all the important questions/issues are raised with everyone. At the same time, it is also important that the search committee pursues certain lines of questions and answers and probes deeper into some topics that will only emerge if there is some flexibility in how the interview is conducted. It is also useful to have everyone involved in some fashion in the questioning so that the bulk of the questions are not asked by a single individual. Candidates sometimes tend to address the person who asked the question almost exclusively when they respond and this limits their interaction with other committee members.

REFERENCE CHECKING

If there is a search firm, it will have done much of the preliminary reference checking on the candidates chosen for the initial interviews and also conducted some more in-depth checking on the finalists. Although the importance of confidentiality and discreteness were raised earlier, once a person is a finalist, she or he needs to give the committee and the search consultant the go-ahead to check all references and also to go off-list. At this point in the process, the identity of the finalists becomes more known as meetings are scheduled with constituencies beyond the search committee and so it is difficult, if not impossible, to keep finalists' identity confidential. Once the identity of the individuals is known around the campus, it is highly likely that this information will also be known at their current job. Thus, finalists need to be prepared for and understand that their official references as well as others with whom they have worked or interacted with will most likely be contacted.

One should not underestimate the critical role that good reference checking plays. Reference letters in and of themselves are not enough. They are carefully crafted and often convey more about what they omit than what is actually contained in them. In addition, search committees sometimes tend to use letters of reference as Rorschach tests, reading into them what they want to, whether there is a reality to the conclusions or not. It is not unusual for different members of the search committee to parse the same sentence in a reference letter (or for that matter, an entry in a resume) in different ways and come away with different impressions of the individual. It is therefore vitally important that good reference checking be conducted, although there is no guarantee that one will find out all that there is a need to know about the finalist.

Reference checking needs to occur at various levels. Since a senior academic administrator will be interacting with many types of individuals and constituencies, it is important that input and feedback be solicited from peers, superiors, and subordinates that the finalist has worked with. It is also extremely important to probe responses. For example, a question about the accomplishments of the candidate in his or her current position might elicit a response that while the individual was Dean, the School did such and such. There are many ways to interpret such a response including attributing the success or accomplishment to the individual being discussed or despite him or her. This might simply be a way for the person giving the reference to provide a response without directly indicating that they are not too keen on the individual, and in fact might want to see that person depart from the current position. Probing such a response with additional questions, such as asking how much of the success was directly attributable to the individual, would be much more revealing.

END IN SIGHT?

Once the search committee has completed its responsibilities by recommending the finalists and once the finalist has been chosen, there is still more work to be done beginning with completing all the contractual arrangements necessary to convince the person selected to accept the position. In this process, tenure on appointment–especially for a senior academic position–is often a requirement. In such cases, since the tenure review needs to take place quickly, it is helpful to have preliminary conversations (including a detailed resume review) with the department, the chairperson, and any other individuals or committees involved in the tenure decision, prior to an offer being made. If tenure is not a requirement, we are most likely looking at a multi-year contract to gain the concurrence of the person selected. Here too, planning and preliminary conversations should take place before an offer is made so that the process can result in an agreement by all involved rather than an inability to reach a meeting of the minds. It is always best to cover as many details as possible while the candidate is still a finalist so once chosen the process can move forward expeditiously.

But what if the unexpected happens? What if the committee is only able to recommend one highly qualified candidate and the president involved has asked for three candidates but will under no condition accept less than two. Regardless of how good that one candidate is, in a matter as critical as a senior search, the president's (or provost's or trustees') right to choose between desirable alternatives is far more preferable than saying "no" to a candidate strongly desired by the committee. In reality, the decision maker may feel that a single finalist is not an excellent fit for the position; it is much more unlikely that this same feeling will extend to a finalist pool of three candidates (or even two). In setting up a protocol for a successful search, the right to make a choice between capable finalists should be preserved.

Or what happens when there is a pool of recommended finalists and one person drops out, one fizzles out, and the remaining candidate doesn't inspire confidence on the part of the person making the hiring decision. Choice has been preserved and as a result isn't there the obligation to pick the best of the three even though there are doubts? And doesn't the search committee have the right to expect that of three individuals who have received their seal of approval that at least one will be left standing at the end of the search process. At this point, if the president or other decision maker turns down the entire pool by turning down the last candidate, won't there be at least a somewhat negative reaction? You can assume the answer is yes, especially since the reason for the turndown(s) will likely only be described in the most general of terms. Imagine an answer such as "One person withdrew and I was not prepared to offer the position to any of the remaining two finalists." It is clearly problematic; however, under almost no condition should the decision maker select a person he or she feels cannot do what the job requires. It is far better to feel momentary discomfort and reopen the search than to put in place a person whose selection you could regret long term.

POST SCRIPT

Following the conclusion of a successful search, what is critical for the person selected–especially if we are talking about an external candidate from outside of the area–is an orientation process that helps facilitate success. Very often, the external person selected is expected to arrive and put all the pieces in place for his or her success. And that certainly will continue to happen. But leaving an orientation as a chance occurrence is to needlessly increase the risk that all the time invested in the search may end up not being sufficient to accomplish what everyone is hopeful will happen, namely the success of the senior academic administrator. Just as we spend more time orienting new students and orienting new faculty, we need to invest the time in orienting new deans and provosts. Meetings should be set up immediately with all the key individuals that this person will be expected to interact with. All of the technological keys to accessing critical information should be reviewed with the person ASAP. All the help in terms of daily needs should be offered–help in understanding the culture or cultures of a community; help in terms of school alternatives; help in finding a physician if requested. And clear signals from the person's new home institution should be that we are there to help and are very invested in the person's success. In effect, there needs to be a mentor–selected with care–assigned to the new senior administrator, a person who reaches out on a regular basis, who is available to help place an opportunity, or a conflict, or simply a conversation in a context. And the bottom line for all new senior administrators is to take your time, increase your understanding of the school or college involved and increase your base of support before you take major action on an issue or issues. There are times when there is no choice but to act quickly but much more often some additional time is available to facilitate a better informed discussion and decision process. A number of years ago, we were involved in the search for a dean of a professional school who, immediately after being selected without any advance notice and before starting, took a very strong philosophical position regarding how a department within the school should structure and orient their curriculum. The position expressed was the exact opposite of the approach that department operated under and the exact opposite of the orientation taken by the highly regarded person leading the program. The provost's office immediately got involved to try to calm the situation but the dean's effectiveness was somewhat compromised before even starting. There is no substitute for patience together with a comprehensive orientation.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Dr. Herman A. Berliner is in his 40th year at Hofstra University. He became provost at Hofstra University in 1990 after having served for almost one year as the acting provost. The provost and senior vice president for academic affairs is second in command to the president at the University. Dr. Berliner has oversight responsibilities for all the Colleges, Schools and academic programs of the University, as well as the Libraries, The Hofstra Cultural Center, the Hofstra Museum, and the Saltzman Community Services Center. In this capacity and at the president's request, he also serves as the chair of the University negotiating team in collective bargaining with faculty.

Dr. Berliner joined Hofstra University as an assistant professor of economics after having earned a Ph.D. in economics from the City University of New York Graduate School. He was awarded tenure in 1975, promoted to associate professor in 1978 and to professor in 1985. As a faculty member, Dr. Berliner has taught economics courses on both the graduate and undergraduate levels, and he has also served on a number of doctoral dissertation committees for the School of Education and Allied Human Services.

Dr. Berliner has served in a number of key administrative positions, including interim dean and dean of the School of Business (1980-82 and 1983-1989), associate provost and associate dean of faculties (1978-1983), acting dean of the School of Education (1983-1984), associate dean of University Advisement (1975-1976) and assistant provost (1976-1977).

Dr. Berliner's areas of specialty as an economist include the economics of higher education. He is presently a TIAA-CREF Institute Fellow and he has served as an associate editor of *The American Economist*.

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Dr. Liora Pedhazur Schmelkin is beginning her 30th year at Hofstra University. She became vice provost in 2003 and was promoted to senior vice provost in 2006 when she also became dean of graduate studies. Dr. Schmelkin joined Hofstra University as an assistant professor of educational research after having earned a Ph.D. in educational psychology from New York University. She was awarded tenure in 1985, at which time she was also promoted to associate professor. She was promoted to professor in 1990. She was appointed the Leo A. Guthart Distinguished Professor of Teaching Excellence in 1997. As a faculty member, Dr. Schmelkin taught graduate courses in statistics, measurement, and research methodology, and chaired numerous doctoral dissertation committees in educational research and in psychology.

Dr. Schmelkin served as director of the Center for Teaching and Scholarly Excellence (1991-2003); chair of the Counseling, Research, Special Education, and Rehabilitation Department (1988-1993), and Acting Affirmative Action Officer (1997-1998).

Dr. Schmelkin's areas of specialization include statistics, research design, and measurement; her current scholarly interests focus on the effective teaching of methodology courses, academic integrity, and faculty evaluation. Among her many publications, she has cowritten a text on *Measurement, Design, and Analysis: An Integrated Approach*. She is currently chair-elect of the GRE Board and is past president of Division 5 (Evaluation, Measure, & Statistics) of the American Psychological Association (APA), a past president of the Northeastern Educational Research Association, and past member of the Board of Scientific Affairs of APA.