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THE ETHICS OF RECRUITMENT AND FACULTY APPOINTMENT

A statement adopted by the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences in November, 1992.
Jointly adopted by the American Association of University Professors in June, 1993.

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PROLOGUE

The standards which follow are intended to apply to the recruitment and appointment of faculty members in most colleges and universities. These standards are directed to administrators and faculty members in the belief that they will promote the identification and selection of qualified candidates through a process which promotes candor and effective communication among those who are engaged in recruitment. The standards are offered not as rules to serve every situation, but with the expectation that they will provide a foundation for appropriate practices. The spirit of openness and shared responsibility which these standards are intended to convey are consistent with affirmative actions as well as other guiding principles in the recruitment of faculty.

I. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF A FACULTY POSITION

A. Prior to the announcement of a faculty vacancy, there should be agreement among all responsible parties on each major element of the position (e.g., rank, salary, and eligibility for tenure), how the position relates to the department's (or equivalent unit's) likely needs for the future, the expectations concerning the professional work of the faculty member(s) being recruited, and the resources that will be provided to help the faculty member(s) meet those expectations.

B. An institution that announces a search should be genuinely engaged in an open process of recruitment for that position. Descriptions of vacant positions should be published and distributed as widely as possible to reach all potential candidates. The procedure established for reviewing applicants and for selecting final candidates should be consistent with the institution's announced criteria and commitment to a fair and open search.

C. All announcements for faculty positions should be clear concerning rank, the length of the appointment, whether the position is with tenure or carries eligibility for tenure, whether the availability of the position is contingent upon funding or other conditions, teaching and research expectations, and requisite experience and credentials. Criteria and procedures for reappointment, promotion, and tenure at the institution, as well as other relevant information, should be made available to all interested candidates upon request.

D. Interested candidates should have at least thirty days from the first appearance of the announcement to submit their application.

II. CONFIDENTIALITY, INTERVIEWS, AND THE FINAL DECISION

A. Institutions should respect the confidentiality of candidates for faculty positions. The institution may contact references, including persons who are not identified by the candidate, but it should exercise discretion when doing so. An institution should not make public the names of candidates without having given the candidate the opportunity to withdraw from the search.

B. Those who participate in the interview should avoid any discriminatory treatment of candidates. All communications with the candidates concerning the position should be consistent with the information stated in the announcement for the position.

C. Candidates for faculty positions should disclose in a timely fashion conditions that might materially bear upon the institution's decision to offer the appointment (for example, requirements for research funds, unusual moving costs, a delayed starting date, or the intention to retain an affiliation at the institution with which the candidate is currently associated).

D. If candidates request information about the progress of the search and the status of their candidacy, they should be given the information.

E. The institution's decision about which candidate will be offered the position should be consistent with the criteria for the position and the duties as stated in the announcement of the vacancy. If the selection of the final candidates will be based on significant changes in the criteria for the position or the duties as stated in the original announcement, the institution should start a new search.

III. THE OFFER AND THE ACCEPTANCE

A. The institution may wish to provide informal notification to the successful candidate of its intention to offer an appointment, but the formal offer itself should be an unequivocal letter offering appointment signed by the responsible institutional officer. "Oral offers" and "oral acceptances" should not be considered binding, but communications between the successful candidate and those representing the institution should be frank and accurate, for significant decisions are likely to be based on these exchanges. The written offer of appointment should be given to the candidate within ten days of the institution's having conveyed an intention to make the offer; a candidate should be informed promptly if the offer is not to be forthcoming within ten days.

B. The terms of an offer to an individual should be consistent with the announcement of the position. Each of the following should be stated clearly in the letter offering an appointment: (a) the initial rank; (b) the length of the appointment; (c) conditions of renewal; (d) the salary and benefits; (e) the duties of the position; (f) as applicable, whether the appointment is with tenure, the amount of credit toward tenure for prior service, and the maximum length of the probationary period; (g) as applicable, the institution's "startup" commitments for the appointment (for example, equipment and laboratory space); (h) the date when the appointment begins and the date when the candidate is expected to report; (i) the date by which the candidate's response to the offer is expected, which should not be less than two weeks from receipt of the offer; and j) details of institutional policies and regulations that bear upon the appointment. Specific information on other relevant matters also should be conveyed in writing to the prospective appointee.

C. An offer of appointment to a faculty member serving at another institution should be made no later than May 1, consistent with the faculty member's obligation to resign, in order to accept other employment, no later than May 15. It is recognized that, in special cases, it might be appropriate to make an offer after May 1, but in such cases there should be an agreement by all concerned parties.

D. The acceptance of a position is a candidate's written affirmative and unconditional response sent by the candidate to the institution no later than the date stated in the offer of appointment. If the candidate wishes to accept the offer contingent upon conditions, those conditions should be specified and communicated promptly in writing to the institution which is offering the position.

E. If the candidate intends to retain an affiliation with his or her current institution, that circumstance should be brought promptly to the attention of the current institution and the recruiting institution.

F. Individuals who accept an appointment should arrive at the institution in sufficient time to prepare for their duties and to participate in orientation programs.