

# **Report of the Faculty Delegate Assembly Committee on Hiring Practice**

## **BACKGROUND**

This committee was organized in the spring of 2015 by FDA president Bernadette McCauley acting on behalf of the FDA Executive Committee after discussion at FDA general meetings revealed faculty concerns about the circumstances surrounding several recent hires, specifically the lessening of departmental autonomy in the hiring process. Committee members included John Wallach (Political Science) as chair, Stephen DeMeo (Education) Catherine Raisiguier (Women and Gender), Louise Sherby (Library), Trudy Smoke (English) and Bernadette McCauley as ex-officio. When Professor Wallach went on leave in the fall of 2015, Bernadette McCauley took over as committee chair.

## **PROCESS**

The committee assigned each member a group of chairs to contact individually and discuss the successes and failures in recent searches in the Schools of Arts and Science and Education; the process of the hire; interaction with the administration throughout the process. Of the 33 contacted, 15 chairs participated in the survey. Several chairs said they were not comfortable responding because of how their participation might be interpreted by the administration. Some chairs responded in writing and others preferred to meet in person.

The committee also issued a general call to faculty to contact the committee or FDA with concerns about hiring and several faculty members did so with the promise of confidentiality.

## **FINDINGS**

Interviews with the chairs revealed that while many chairs felt that their searches had the support of the administration for the hire, they emphasized the inefficiency of the administrative involvement during the process, and elaborated on the unnecessary problems/issues that the cumbersome process creates. Most noted CUNY First has complicated the process but also identified in-house problems and their frustration in attempting to work through them. Other comments addressed specific departmental irregularities and concerns about inappropriate administrative pressure.

These included:

- 1) The protracted schedule of approvals and allotment of funding were two items most often noted as problematic. Chairs reported numerous hold-ups along the line as they awaited authorization to hire and approvals for ads and emphasized that the general paper work required was very slowly processed and the information was not easily available at any step within the process. As a result, searches began at a disadvantage vis-à-vis hiring at other schools, and did not allow for interviewing at scheduled professional conferences. "Always confusing when searches will actually happen"  
"Takes so long to get approvals from different levels: Human Resources, Affirmative

Action, budget” “When ask what is going on, no one knows” “Inefficiency at almost all levels”

- 2) Insufficient funding and the lag in allocation of funding were cited as issues which kept departments from bringing in candidates and creating a timely schedule. In one case a chair paid for ads so as to get them in on time. “Not enough money to bring in outside NYC area” “We do not attempt to recruit from outside New York City”
- 3) Many chairs expressed concern over the lack of transparency in the allocation of lines and several felt their deans were not involved in the process. “Don’t ever find out why departments get lines all over campus-why is this secret?” “Retirements and resignations and no authority to replace” Most lines were replacements for retirements but not all retirement were replaced. New lines noted as difficult: “New lines are another story” Several lines were combined and some replaced as visiting lines. One chair reported a “target of opportunity” line.
- 4) Most searches were successful; several were not because candidates took another offer. Some chairs felt that good candidates were lost in the overall process because of the slowness of the hiring process. In one instance the administration went to a candidate with a lower offer after an offer had been made which, although resolved, was awkward. “Because of process here, difficult to follow up in a timely manner s lost some excellent candidates.” “Hard to compete with NYU and Columbia” “Great delays which in turn created a situation where candidates would accept other offers”
- 5) Several chairs reported serious complaints about administrative involvement and influence beyond the allocation of the line: a dean re-writing a departmental ad for a job description, another dean rejecting a department’s first choice for a position, administrative pressure on the direction of new hires with regard to field. “The Dean at the time heavily interfered with the process” “The Dean did not want the top ranked candidate and selected another candidate”

Faculty who individually contacted the FDA raised general issues and specific incidents in their own and other departments that they found to be serious violations of procedure. These issues included: (The comments are paraphrased.)

- 1) Faculty hires with waiver of CUNY search requirements. No one talks about them openly but we know they happen.
- 2) Instructors hired to teach specific courses teach courses at Roosevelt House and other honors programs. Who chooses these instructors and Directors? What academic status are they to have and who makes that decision? What role should departments have if they are hired with the title of Professor? Who designs and vets the courses they teach? Current procedures answer some but not all of these questions.
- 3) The role of departmental self-studies in identifying positions for new hires. How much weight do these evaluations play in a decision about a line?
- 4) Inappropriate administrative involvement. Ads rewritten without departmental permission, administrative disregard for the majority choice of a final candidate, inappropriate involvement in chair elections.

**5) Spousal hires. Is there a college policy on this?**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Bernadette McCauley**

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