

Faculty Searches with Candidates Who Are Current or Former Bates College Employees

Extra forethought and care are required when a faculty job search includes a candidate who is a current or former Bates employee (“internal candidates”) – e.g., a visiting faculty member on a one-year Bates contract applying for a newly advertised visiting or tenure-track position at Bates. All candidates should be evaluated professionally, and we also need to recognize that internal candidates are more invested in the Bates community than external candidates. The primary aim of these guidelines is to ensure that internal candidates are treated with the respect and professionalism that they deserve, and that all applicants – internal and external – are evaluated in a way that serves good decision-making.

Process-related Guidance for the Search Committee

Clear and professional communication

- Communication with an internal candidate about their candidacy / the search process should come from the chair of the search and should use the same degree of professionalism and formality as with external candidates.
- The search chair should communicate with the internal candidate early, to let them know the general search process and to outline any guidance or policies that are specific to internal candidates, including what job performance information may be considered by the committee.
- Generally, it is unwise to provide feedback to an unsuccessful candidate, whether internal or external, though the pressure to do so might be greater for an internal candidate. Feedback could be offered in a mentoring capacity, but only if such feedback is represented as the view of the person speaking with the candidate (i.e., individual opinion rather than the view of the search committee) and only if such feedback is not framed in comparison to other candidates (whether named or not).
- Remember the humanity of the internal candidate. They are a candidate, but they are first and foremost a person and a valued member of our community.

Recusal when warranted

- If a department/program member is a domestic partner of a candidate, whether internal or external, they should recuse themselves from the search process.

Insulating the internal candidate from the search process

- The search committee’s deliberations – including size of the pool, rankings, and assessments of candidates – are wholly confidential and should not be discussed outside of the committee either during or after the search.
- No aspect of the search should be discussed in the hallway or other public space.
- Deliberations about the search should be scheduled separately from regular department/program meetings, rather than asking an internal candidate to arrive late or leave early from a regular meeting.

- If students ask questions about the candidacy of an internal person, refer them to the search chair or simply tell them that we cannot discuss the status of candidates in a hiring process.
- An internal candidate should be advised not to attend the seminars of external candidates (though such attendance at a public presentation cannot be prohibited).
- When possible, consider sequencing the interviews so that the internal candidate goes first, to avoid having them hear about other presentations before giving their own.

Evaluating the internal candidate

- The search committee should not extend a “courtesy interview” to an internal candidate. Use the candidate evaluation rubric to make evidence-based assessments of all applicants, and then invite the top candidates for interviews without respect to whether they are internal or external.
- If external candidates are interviewing via Zoom rather than in person, the internal candidate should also interview via Zoom.
- The general focus of interview questions should not differ between internal and external candidates. While queries about research or creative work may vary based on a candidate’s area of expertise, the questions about teaching, service, and related topics should be behavioral or competency-based questions that remain consistent across candidates.

Candidates, whether internal or external, should not be asked about their status with respect to other searches. If a search committee member has such information because they are serving as a mentor or reference, that information should not be considered by the search committee in deliberation.

Job Performance Information that May be Considered

This section describes how the search committee should take into consideration the job performance of an internal candidate.

Some or all members of the search committee likely have direct or indirect information about the internal candidate's job performance during the time that they have been at Bates. Within the limits described below, such job performance information may be considered when evaluating the internal candidate against the same rubric that the search committee is using for all applicants. This practice should be explained to the internal candidate as part of the search chair’s initial conversation.

Relevant job performance information, which the search committee may consider, includes the following:

- Student evaluations of teaching.** The search committee may consider teaching evaluations, just as the Faculty Personnel Committee does when making decisions about tenure and promotion.

Direct **observations of the candidate's syllabi or assignments or other course materials**, either by member(s) of the search committee or by other faculty, as long as the information is captured in writing such that the reporting colleague is accountable for the information.

Observations of the candidate's teaching, but only if part of a structured evaluative process and only if the observation is undertaken by a member of the search committee or captured in writing by another Bates colleague, such that the reporting colleague was accountable for the information. Note that Bates does not currently have an evaluative process for visiting faculty that is sufficiently structured to meet these requirements.

Job performance information should be captured in writing and shared with the entire search committee rather than summarized and interpreted by a single gate-keeping individual such as the search chair. If members of the search committee have other evidence-based concerns about the job performance of an internal candidate, they should raise those with the Dean of Faculty (see below) rather than with the search committee.

The following information is not to be discussed or considered during a search committee's deliberations.

Direct observations of the candidate's teaching. No observation of teaching can be used to assess an internal candidate's job application if the observation is ad hoc, conducted for mentoring purposes, or conducted to better craft a recommendation letter in support of an external job application. However, this does not preclude asking all candidates to deliver a teaching demonstration as part of an interview.

Information not related to job performance. The search committee may not consider information they might possess about the internal candidate that is unrelated to job performance – e.g., political activities, status in other job searches, or family relationships to other members of the Bates community.

Additional Job Performance Information Known to the College

Although Bates strives for consistency in both the process and evaluative criteria applied to external and internal candidates, the college may have additional information about internal candidates by virtue of their prior or current employment, which can and should be considered. If the search committee identifies a candidate who is a current or former Bates employee, the search committee chair will alert the Dean of Faculty.

In a manner similar to an internal reference check, the Dean of Faculty will confer with the Director of Human Resources, the staff of the Dean of Faculty's office, and the Office of Title IX and Civil Rights Compliance to assess whether there are concerns, based upon reliable information, relating to a candidate's job performance, professionalism, or conduct; and whether such concerns are sufficiently serious or significant to preclude hire / rehire. The DOF will then communicate to the search chair the following: "Based on our internal reference check with the Director of Human Resources, the Dean of Faculty, and the Office of Title IX and Civil Rights Compliance, this candidate [IS / IS NOT] eligible for further consideration by the search committee."

This threshold determination of eligibility for hire / rehire will happen during the search committee's initial screening, prior to the approval of a list of candidates for remote interviews. The details underlying this eligibility determination comprise a private personnel matter and therefore will not be shared with the search committee. Consistent with Bates' obligation to retain scoring, ranking, and selection criteria and documentation concerning interview questions and evaluations, the DOF should document the basis for determining an internal candidate's eligibility for rehire and should retain this record in its files.

Process-related Guidance for the Internal Candidate

- It's best to avoid discussing the search with your students.
- As an internal candidate, you are advised not to attend job seminars of other candidates (though such attendance at a public presentation cannot be prohibited). If you do attend, you absolutely should refrain from asking questions or otherwise engaging with the other candidates at such presentations.
- You might find it more comfortable to work elsewhere on days that external candidates are interviewing, though there is certainly no expectation or requirement to do so.
- Trust the humanity of your colleagues. Even though it can be challenging to navigate the inherent awkwardness of a search with an internal candidate, they care about you as a person.