Policy and Procedures for the Recruitment of Deans

Last updated: 3 May 2010 Policy Assigned to: Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor

Overview

This policy was developed to reflect the dramatic changes to the University's general approach to the recruitment of staff implemented since the previous policy on the recruitment of deans was approved by Senate on 5 May 1997. It acknowledges that the local and international market for deans has become more competitive and is anticipated to continue to tighten. The new policy outlines a more contemporary, flexible and professional approach to the recruitment of a group of senior staff vital to the success of the University's mission. The new policy also addresses a number of problems that have arisen in relation to the existing policy, clarifies key issues for which the previous policy was silent and removes references to the redundant roles of College Principal and Director.

Scope

This policy applies to the recruitment of all deans.

Policy

The University believes that if it is to recruit deans of the highest possible quality in an increasingly competitive environment it needs to adopt a contemporary, flexible and professional approach. Any such approach must carefully balance the respective roles of the various parties with a genuine interest in the appointment of a dean, while acknowledging the rights and obligations of candidates. The University is also deeply committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity and, in particular, wishes to increase the participation of target groups in the University's senior management. It expects this commitment to be reflected in the implementation of the process for recruiting new deans.

Procedures

1. Initiation of the process

i. The Vice-Chancellor, on the advice of the Provost, will determine the appropriate time to commence the search for a deanship that has fallen vacant or is about to fall vacant. Where a replacement is sought for a dean who is not being appointed for a further term, this would usually be approximately 9 months prior to the end of their current term.

ii. The Provost will inform the Faculty concerned that the recruitment process has been initiated and will provide an overview of the process. The Provost will work with the Faculty Liaison Officer appointed by the Vice-Chancellor in ensuring the Faculty is kept informed of developments throughout the process, subject to the overriding obligations in relation to confidentiality.

2. Management oversight of the process

The Provost has management oversight of all stages of the recruitment process and is the primary point of contact for staff involved in it. A Recruitment Professional will be appointed to support and advise the Provost throughout the recruitment process. The Recruitment Professional will usually be a member of SydneyRecruitment and/or an external headhunter, as determined by the Provost. In the event of an external headhunter being appointed, the Provost will determine the scope of their role vis-à-vis staff of SydneyRecruitment so that their respective responsibilities are clear.

3. Appointment of a Faculty Liaison Officer

i. The Faculty Liaison Officer is expected to:

- lead the discussions within the faculty concerned regarding its nominees for the selection committee
- provide Faculty-specific information required for the preparation of the advertisement and information brochure for the position
- provide advice on potential candidates
- act as one of the points of contact for enquiries from prospective candidates
- keep the Faculty regularly informed on progress with the recruitment process
- provide feedback from the Faculty on any presentations made by shortlisted candidates

ii. The Vice-Chancellor will appoint a Faculty Liaison Officer after considering advice from the Faculty's management committee and any other appropriate senior members of the Faculty. This advice will normally by obtained by the Provost on the Vice-Chancellor's behalf.

iii. The Faculty Liaison Officer will normally be a senior member of the Faculty who is not an aspirant for the deanship. She or he should have a thorough understanding of the University's expectations of the role of the Dean and be in a position to provide impartial and sound advice regarding potential candidates.

iv. It is important that the Faculty Liaison Officer's role is kept separate and distinct from that of the selection committee members and, accordingly, she or he is not eligible for appointment to the selection committee.

4. Preparing the advertisement and information brochure for potential candidates

The Recruitment Professional works with the Provost and the Faculty Liaison Officer to:

- articulate the position requirements based on the University's role description for deans, which focus on management and academic leadership skills and include the requirement that deans actively contribute to the management of the broader University as members of the Senior Executive Group
- prepare draft documentation, including the advertisement and information brochure
- identify requirements for pre-employment checks and determine whether there may be any professional registration issues

5. Recruitment Strategy

i. The University is committed to identifying the best available candidates for all of its deanships. Accordingly, in all cases the University will actively source candidates, both internally and externally, and locally and internationally.

ii. Consistent with this, the Recruitment Professional will provide recommendations to the Provost on the:

- recruitment strategy for the position, including sourcing methods, costing and ways of identifying potential candidates from EEO target groups
- duration of the advertising period and closing date
- timeline for the recruitment process

iii. The budget for the costs associated with the implementation of the recruitment strategy (e.g. advertising, headhunter searches) is managed by the Provost's Office.

6. Approval to recruit

The Provost will brief the Vice-Chancellor and seek the Vice-Chancellor's approval to proceed with the search.

7. Selection committee

A. Membership and nomination of the selection committee

i. The Vice-Chancellor will nominate a selection committee which will comprise as a minimum the following:

Ex-officio
- Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- Provost
- Chair of the Academic Board or nominee

Members appointed by Senate
- three Faculty members (plus reserves) nominated by the Vice-Chancellor
- one member external to the University nominated by the Vice-Chancellor

ii. Alumni and external groups do not have an entitlement to membership of the selection committee, but may be invited by the Vice-Chancellor to participate on a voting or non-voting basis, subject to the approval of Senate.

B. Appointment of Faculty members of the selection committee

i. The Faculty concerned is required to submit to the Vice-Chancellor, through the Provost, the names of at least 6 members of Faculty who would be willing to serve as Faculty members of the selection committee. The provision of less than 6 nominations is only permissible if the Faculty is genuinely unable to identify sufficient members of Faculty willing to serve.

ii. The Faculty nominations must include both sexes, except where nominations are not received from both sexes, and it is highly desirable that they address the issue of appropriate discipline representation.

iii. Following the appointment of the Faculty Liaison Officer, all members Faculty will be invited to attend a meeting to agree on the process by which its recommendations for the selection committee will be determined. The meeting will be chaired by the Faculty Liaison Officer and will be serviced by the Faculty Secretary. Follow-up meetings may be required should the Faculty Liaison Officer deem this necessary. The outgoing Dean must not participate in any such meetings.

iv. To assist the Faculty in determining how to select its recommendations for the selection committee, the Faculty Liaison Officer will canvass the options, which include forwarding the names of all those wishing to be nominated without a vetting or voting process, delegating this responsibility to the Faculty Management Committee or the Standing Committee of Faculty, a postal vote or a show of hands. If the process involves voting, the returning officer will be the Faculty Secretary. In determining the process for selecting its nominees, the Faculty should be mindful of the value of appropriate discipline mix and of the requirement that both men and women be represented amongst the Faculty nominees.

v. Those wishing to be nominated should be mindful of the general obligations of members of the selection committee, as outlined in section 7.F.

vi. The Faculty Liaison Officer will advise the Provost of the names of the Faculty nominees. The Provost will brief the Vice-Chancellor, who will consider such matters as disciplinary representation, expertise and gender diversity before determining the names of the three Faculty members (and reserves) to be recommended to Senate for appointment to the selection committee.

C. Role of Faculty members of the selection committee

The three faculty members of the selection committee are expected to:

- canvass the views of staff on the desirable background, experience and qualities of prospective candidates
- work with the Faculty Liaison Officer to identify potential candidates in the light of the views of Faculty
- reflect upon the range of views within the Faculty before using their best judgment in shortlisting candidates
- reflect upon the range of views before using their best judgment in the final selection of a Dean

D. Approval of the selection committee

The Vice-Chancellor will submit her or his nominations for the selection committee to Senate for approval.

E. Notification

The members of the selection committee approved by Senate will be formally invited by the Provost to participate in the recruitment process.

F. Obligations of members of the selection committee

i. Members of the committee who have an apparent conflict of interest, such as a close personal relationship with any applicant, or any other personal interest in promoting or not promoting a particular applicant must declare this as soon as possible to the Provost, who will then brief the Vice-Chancellor.

ii. Following disclosure of a conflict of interest, the Vice-Chancellor will determine whether, in all the circumstances:

(a) the member has a material personal, financial or external interest that creates a conflict of interest;

(b) the conflict of interest has (or appears to have) the capacity to influence the member's conduct, whether or not it has actually done so; and

(c) if so, whether the conflict of interest can be eliminated or managed.

iii. The Vice-Chancellor may decide to exclude a member of the selection committee if she or he considers it necessary in order to avoid or manage a conflict of interest.

iv. All members of the selection committee have an obligation to observe confidentiality and must not disclose any aspect of its deliberations outside the committee. The Chair will determine what action is appropriate where a breach of confidentiality has occurred. This could include excluding a member of the committee from further participation in the recruitment process.

G. Replacement of selection committee members

i. Seeking a replacement for an approved member of the selection committee because of a lack of availability or some other reason shall be at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor.

ii. Where a Faculty member is to be replaced, the Vice-Chancellor, on the advice of the Provost, will determine who from amongst the reserve Faculty members should be the replacement.

iii. Where an external member is to be replaced, the Vice-Chancellor will seek the approval of Senate for the proposed replacement if this is feasible given the timing of the interviews for the position.

8. Screening and shortlisting of candidates

A. Screening

The Provost will work with the Recruitment Professional in screening candidates. This process will focus on identifying candidates who do not meet the selection criteria or who are not competitive given the field.

B. Shortlisting

i. The Chair (or nominee) will determine the method by which shortlisting takes place. The shortlist is developed by the full selection committee or a sub-committee determined by the Chair (or nominee).

ii. A shortlist is developed through an assessment of all applications and expressions of interest, and referee reports (if called beforehand) against the selection criteria.

iii. All members of the selection committee will participate in finalising the shortlist for interview. This is finalised either through a meeting of the selection committee organised by SydneyRecruitment or by email or some other form of communication.

iv. Candidates excluded at the shortlisting stage will be advised accordingly by the Recruitment Professional.

v. At any time during the shortlisting process, the full selection committee may consider and decide to invite applications or expressions of interest from persons who have not applied.

9. Referee Reports

A. Timing of referee report requests

i. Referee reports will normally be requested prior to shortlisting or only for the shortlisted candidates prior to the interviews. The decision on the appropriate timing is generally made by the Provost.

ii. The University acknowledges that some candidates will have particular concerns about confidentiality that will prevent the University from obtaining referee reports on them prior to interview. Should the selection committee wish to recommend such a candidate for appointment, referee reports would need to be obtained before such a recommendation could be considered by the Chair Appointments Committee.

B. Number and format of referee reports

Between 3 and 5 referee reports will normally be obtained. They will typically be requested and received in written format (electronic copies are acceptable). At the Provost's discretion, verbal referee reports may be obtained instead of or to supplement written versions.

C. Status of referees

It is preferred that referees are direct supervisors/managers from the candidate's most recent employment. Subordinates are not acceptable as referees. Candidates will be encouraged to give referees of international standing who can provide impartial evidence of their management skills, academic leadership abilities and scholarship.

10. Presentations to the Faculty

i. Candidates shortlisted for interview will normally be invited to make a presentation within the Faculty concerned prior to the interviews. The Provost, after seeking after advice from the Faculty Liaison Officer, will determine the audience and format for such presentations. For reasons of confidentiality in relation to particular candidates, it may be decided that the audience should be confined to say the Faculty's senior management team, rather than all members of Faculty. The presentations will be chaired by the Provost and shall be arranged by the Provost's Office in cooperation with the Faculty Manager.

ii. It is the responsibility of the Recruitment Professional to explain to candidates the possible implications making a presentation may have on the confidentiality of their candidacies.

iii. A shortlisted candidate, for reasons of confidentiality, timing etc, may not be in position to make such a presentation. This will not exclude them from being considered for appointment to the deanship, however the selection committee, at its discretion, may decide to reserve any decision on their application until after they have made such a presentation.

11. Interviews

i. Interviews are required for all deanships. They may be conducted in person or via videoconference or telephone.

ii. SydneyRecruitment is responsible for organising the interview meetings.

iii. The Provost's Office is responsible for organising the visits of any candidates from outside of Sydney and manages the budget for the costs associated with such visits. The Provost's Office may seek the assistance of the Faculty Manager in arranging for candidates to meet with particular Faculty staff prior to the interviews.

iv. The interview questions will normally be agreed to by the selection committee when it convenes to interview the shortlisted candidates. The interview questions will generally be based on the selection criteria. Additional questions may be asked to probe matters raised or to clarify issues emerging from the application or at the interview. Applicants will generally be given the opportunity at the end of their interview to present further relevant information.

v. After initially interviewing the shortlisted candidates, the Chair may determine that further interviews are required with some or all of the candidates. These interviews may be conducted by all available members of the selection committee or by an agreed sub-committee. Where a sub-committee is used, information and

impressions obtained from subsequent interviews will be relayed to all members of the selection committee prior to a decision being made.

vi. A range of other assessment techniques may also be used to form part of the selection process, as determined by the Chair.

12. Seeking further candidates

i. After interviewing the shortlisted candidates, the Chair may decide that it is desirable to seek additional candidates prior to making any decisions.

ii. Should suitable additional candidates be forthcoming, the Chair will determine the process by which their applications or expressions of interest will be considered by the selection committee, noting that a candidate cannot be recommended for appointment until after she or he has been interviewed.

13. Determining the recommendation

i. The selection committee considers and decides which, if any, applicants are to be recommended for appointment and, if there is more than one, their ranking.

ii. For a recommendation of appointment, a majority decision should be reached by the selection committee. Where a majority decision cannot be reached, the Chair may determine that the matter should nevertheless be forwarded to the Senate Chair Appointments Committee for a decision. In such cases, the views of all selection committee members will be recorded in the report submitted to the Senate Chair Appointments Committee.

14. Seeking the approval of the Senate Chair Appointments Committee

i. The Recruitment Professional is responsible for drafting the selection committee report. It shall be in the form approved by the Chair Appointments Committee. The draft report will be reviewed by the Provost and then forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor for approval.

ii. The selection committee report is submitted to the Senate Chair Appointments Committee for its consideration.

15. Notification of unsuccessful candidates

Unsuccessful candidates are notified of the outcome of their application by the Recruitment Professional immediately once this is has been established. Accordingly, this could be at various stages of the recruitment process.

16. Offer of appointment

i. Following approval, the successful candidate will be advised of the decision and formal negotiations will commence. These negotiations will be overseen by the Provost, who will conduct them through his office or through the Recruitment Professional. The objective of these negotiations will be to establish all the key terms and conditions of the University's offer so that no further negotiations will be required once these are formalised in writing in the University's official offer.

ii. In the event of an informal agreement being reached, the Vice-Chancellor will be briefed by the Provost and will determine the shape of the University's offer.

iii. The University's formal offer to the successful candidate is signed by the Vice-Chancellor and is communicated through the Vice-Chancellor's office.

17. Acceptance of offer

i. The Vice-Chancellor's Office will advise the Provost if and when the successful candidate formally accepts the University's offer.

ii. The Provost is responsible for managing the subsequent communication with the Faculty concerned and senior staff of the University.

18. Refusal of Offer

If it is not possible to reach an agreement or the formal offer is declined, the Provost will brief the Vice-

Chancellor, who will determine what action is appropriate. This could involve offering an appointment to a reserve candidate, initiating either a new full or limited search, or re-convening the selection committee for further discussion.

19. Identity, qualifications and work rights checking

Identity and qualifications are checked by SydneyRecruitment and, where possible, this is conducted prior to interview. An appointee must also have appropriate work rights (citizen or working visa status) before commencing employment. Proof of work rights are obtained and verified by the HRSC.

20. Pre-employment checks

Any necessary pre-employment checks (e.g. child protection legislation checks if applicable) are performed prior to commencement by the HRSC and SydneyRecruitment. Appointments are conditional upon the satisfactory outcome of any pre-employment checks.

21. Relocation and onboarding

i. SydneyRecruitment is responsible for establishing and implementing a protocol to manage the relocation and onboarding of new deans. SydneyRecruitment will work with the HRSC, particularly in cases involving applications for working visas and/or where living away from home allowances are sought.

ii. The budget for the costs associated with relocation and onboarding is managed by the Provost's Office.

Administration

1. Background

Suggested revisions to the existing policy were endorsed in principle by VCOM before being outlined a more formal proposal from the Provost was considered by SEG at its meeting on 10 December 2009. A draft policy was then developed by the Provost and it was reviewed by VCOM before being endorsed by SEG at its meeting on 1 April. Senate approved the new policy at its meeting on 3 May 2010.

2. Policies, procedures etc which are now superseded by this document and its attachments

Policy Document on the Appointment of a Dean, Director or College Principal (approved 5 May 1997)

Policy Document on the Appointment of a Dean, Director or College Principal - Attachment 1: Position Description (approved 5 May 1997)

Policy Document on the Appointment of a Dean, Director or College Principal - Attachment 2: Related Issues (approved 5 May 1997)

3. Management Responsibility

Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor

4. Implementation Responsibility

Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor