



To: Academic Department Chairs
From: Russell Johnson, Senior Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs
Stephanie Frost, Assistant Director of Faculty HR
Date: July 2, 2024
Re: AY2024-25 Faculty Search Guidelines

Hiring and retaining exceptional teacher-scholars is one of the most important activities we do together. Striving for inclusive excellence must be at the core of our efforts, in order to ensure that Colby is a stimulating, welcoming, and diverse environment. These guidelines follow the best practices for recruiting a diverse and excellent faculty. Our goal is to help you lead searches that will attract a strong and diverse candidate pool and enable you to successfully recruit diverse candidates. We affirm an expansive definition of the meaning of diversity, inclusion, and equity and we seek to realize it in the broadest terms; a variety of human differences inform our understanding of diversity, e.g., gender identity or expression, disability status, veteran status, sexual orientation, religion, economic status and educational background. As the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force argued in their report: *“Working collaboratively with people who are different from us makes us smarter, enhances our creativity, fosters innovation, and better prepares us to live and work in a global society”*. In short, to ensure that Colby continues as an intellectually robust institution it is imperative that we do all we can to attract the best possible colleagues.

To help streamline the flow of information related to faculty searches, please use **facultysearches@colby.edu** when submitting all search documentation for review/approval and for all search-related questions.

Please use the checklist on page 2 as a convenient reminder for all the steps involved in your search. As you complete each step, you can easily see what comes next. More detailed information related to each step can be found at the referenced page numbers.

Detailed below are the required steps for a faculty search.

1. ____ Submit Search Plan (including job ad) to **facultysearches@colby.edu** and obtain approval (pp. 3-5).
2. ____ Launch search through Interfolio and set up Interfolio access for search committee members. Send final version of posted job ad (with Interfolio link) to **facultysearches@colby.edu** (pp. 5-6).
3. ____ Post the job ad at the department-specific sites you identified in the Search Plan (p. 6).
4. ____ Hold meeting of the Search Committee with Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs to review search plan, procedures, and search criteria.
5. ____ Submit the evaluation criteria to **facultysearches@colby.edu** for review/approval (p. 7).
6. ____ Actively recruit to build a strong and diverse pool of candidates (p. 8).
7. ____ Search committee chair and one other committee member make initial evaluations of applicant pool based on meeting the minimum requirements (p. 9).
8. ____ Notify **facultysearches@colby.edu** of applicants remaining after initial evaluation. Department administrative assistant can determine the EEO makeup of the pool in Interfolio and should submit along with the list of qualified applicants.
9. ____ Chair notifies members of the search committee that it is time to begin reviewing candidates' applications on Interfolio and sets date to meet to establish a short list (p. 10).
10. ____ Entire committee meets to determine the short list of candidates who will receive further consideration. Submit short list to **facultysearches@colby.edu** with additional EEO information about the smaller pool (p. 11).
11. ____ Conduct initial (short) interviews with short list candidates (p. 12).
12. ____ Send list of proposed finalists (with CVs and cover letters) to **facultysearches@colby.edu** for approval before contacting candidates for on-campus interviews (p. 13).
13. ____ Contact **facultysearches@colby.edu** for permission to make an offer. Please submit your Offer Request as described on p. 14.
14. ____ After the hire has been finalized, inform other candidates that the search is completed (p. 14).

INITIATING A SEARCH: CREATING A SEARCH PLAN

Approval of an Academic Department's Search Plan is required before the commencement of a search and the placement of ads. There are three important components of developing the search plan: forming the search committee; drafting the position description; and choosing the venues for placing the ad.

Please submit the documentation below to **facultysearches@colby.edu** for review. You may not proceed to place the ad until you have received approval from the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs.

SEARCH PLAN TEMPLATE

- 1) Name and Date:
- 2) Academic Department:
- 3) Position Being Filled:
- 4) Search Committee Members, including outside member (indicate search committee chair, all titles, emails):
- 5) A complete list of all proposed ad placements for the position. Include the expected cost for each proposed ad placement. Colby is committed to a proactive policy of recruitment to increase the diversity of all applicant pools. List all ad placements, listservs, recruitment letters to graduate schools, and other means of disseminating the job ad for which the department/program wishes to seek approval/funding. When the search is nearing completion, it is expected that the department will provide the final list of ad placements/contacts.

Note: The Provost's office will place ads on seven websites: the Colby employment website, Chronicle of Higher Education, recruiters.insidehighered.com, HigherEdjobs.com, diversejobs.net, hispanicoutlook.com, and latinoshighered.com. All other ad placements are the responsibility of the department, and must be approved by the Provost's Office as part of the search plan before placement.

- 6) Describe your expected search schedule, including the timing for initial (short) interviews and the on-campus interviews for finalists.
- 7) Describe potential for involvement of this position with interdisciplinary departments (or any other departments), including plans to engage relevant faculty from those programs in the search process.
- 8) The job ad.

SEARCH COMMITTEE FORMATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Search committees play a critical role in shaping our faculty – they are stewards of our future. Individuals recommended for search committee membership should have good judgment and a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. They should represent different backgrounds, career stages, and areas of expertise. If there is a shortage of women and/or members of under-represented groups in your department, use the “outside member” as a way to broaden representation. At the same time, keep in mind that women and members of under-represented groups may face a greater burden of committee service.

Search committees consist of members of the department plus at least one faculty member who is not a member of the department. For searches where the position involves cross-program curricular concerns, please include in the search committee at least one faculty member from each of the relevant departments. The outside member participates in all search committee meetings and in the full process that leads to a decision.

Once the search committee member list is approved, it is the Search Chair's responsibility to solicit the outside member(s) and invite participation. If your department wishes to include staff members in the search process, please be sure that they are clear on their roles and responsibilities at the outset of the process.

A select group of students should meet finalists and all students can attend public presentations. Students may provide input to the search committee as desired by the department, and their input may be considered by the search committee members, however, students do not serve as members of faculty search committees.

Search committee responsibilities include:

- Review the ad before it is submitted as part of the search plan
- Prepare a list of criteria to which the committee can refer as they assess applications
- Actively reach out to find excellent candidates who can be encouraged to apply
- Review the applications
- Review appropriate and inappropriate interview questions before interviews
- Interview candidates and attend job talks and teaching presentations
- Help guide students in the search process
- Review EEO information throughout the course of the search to ensure that diversity present in the initial applicant pool is maintained through the later stages

WRITING A GOOD JOB AD

Define the position as broadly as possible, given your search authorization. In terms of technical specification, the ad must include the position requirements, rank, start date (fall 2025), fields and any other aspects of the job such as teaching first-year writing or labs. Clearly differentiate between requirements and preferences. In terms of field and/or area of expertise, make the ad as open as possible to draw a more diverse pool of candidates. One way to do this is to list qualifications as preferences rather than requirements. It is also helpful to allow some flexibility in what field a PhD must be in (you can say, for example, that “candidates must have a PhD in X or a closely related field”). Use rolling deadlines instead of firm deadlines for applications, because firm deadlines mean that legally you cannot consider an application that arrives one day after the deadline. Two examples of open or rolling deadlines are: “Review of applications will begin in early [month] and continue until the position is filled,” or “Applications received by [date] will receive full consideration.”

Include language in the job ad that signals an interest in candidates who contribute to the College’s diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities. For example, “The search committee is especially interested in candidates who, through their research, teaching, and/or service, will contribute to the diversity and excellence of the campus community.” Or, “Colby is interested in candidates who have a record of success advising and mentoring individuals from groups under-represented in higher education.” Or, “Colby is interested in candidates who have research interests in subjects that will contribute to the understanding of diversity and equity.” Review your ad and ask if the position description will draw candidates who are creative, imaginative and original. Is your ad appealing? Can you contextualize the position in a way that invites candidates to imagine joining your vibrant department/program?

For all academic faculty searches, the ad must specify the following materials to be submitted via Interfolio: cover letter, curriculum vitae, three confidential letters of recommendation*, and a statement of teaching philosophy and research interests *that demonstrates a commitment to equitable and inclusive teaching*. For tenure-track positions and for NTTC positions on the “professor” track, the ad must further request a representative sample of current scholarship, *e.g.*, recently published articles, portfolio of artistic work, or a sample of creative works in progress. Departments and programs may optionally request transcripts and/or official summaries of teaching evaluations. (Note: the request for a statement of research interests and for evidence of scholarship is optional [at the discretion of the search committee] for visiting faculty positions and for NTTC positions on the “lecturer” track). It is recommended to include a contact email address in the job ad, so that potential candidates who have questions about the position will know how to contact you.

Colby uses Interfolio to manage the application process. Each of your ads should contain a link to the Interfolio page for your ad. This link will be generated when your administrative assistant sends the approved ad to Interfolio. The final ad, with the new link pasted in, should be returned to the search committee chair and to facultysearches@colby.edu for posting.

*In lieu of requesting letters of recommendation from all applicants, search committees may elect to request “contact information for three references”. It will then be the responsibility of the committee to contact those references and obtain three confidential letters of recommendation for each finalist at that stage of the search.

PLACING THE AD

Once the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs has approved the wording and the format of the ad, notification will be sent to the search committee chair and the department administrative assistant, who can begin posting and circulating it to build the pool.

The Provost's office will place ads on seven websites: the Colby employment website, Chronicle of Higher Education, recruiters.insidehighered.com, HigherEdjobs.com, diversejobs.net, hispanicoutlook.com, and latinosinhighered.com. All ads placed by the department should be done in consultation with the Provost's office.

Required Nondiscrimination Policy Wording for All Ads:

Colby is a private, coeducational liberal arts college that admits students and makes personnel decisions on the basis of the individual's qualifications to contribute to Colby's educational objectives and institutional needs. The principle of not discriminating on the basis of race, color, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, caste, national or ethnic origin, marital status, genetic information, political beliefs, veteran or military status, parental status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, physical or mental disability unrelated to the job or course of study requirements is consistent with the mission of a liberal arts college and the law.

Please note that this language is pre-programmed into ads placed on Interfolio.

Interfolio will send an acknowledgment to applicants, following a standard template.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Once the ad has been placed on Interfolio and before the search committee starts to evaluate candidates, it is important for the committee to establish agreed-upon evaluation criteria.

Criteria should be chosen based on ability to predict the future success of the applicant. It is important to adhere to these criteria and in a standard form to minimize bias in the deliberation process.

Departments should strive to hire individuals who will enhance the strengths of the faculty. The search committee should discuss all criteria to make sure there is a common understanding. *We encourage you to create criteria that help the search committee members “think outside the box,” when evaluating candidates.* We are accustomed to evaluating candidates in terms that are familiar to us or comport with the ways we were trained, so developing such criteria may be challenging, but it’s important that we consider taking some risks while maintaining a commitment to excellence. *Evidence of an ability to teach and advise a diverse student body should be understood as a crucial component of a successful application.*

We offer the following list as a sampling of basic criteria (4-6 is optimal):

Ability to teach course(s) 1, 2, 3

Potential for (evidence of) excellence in teaching

Potential (demonstrated ability) to teach/mentor diverse students

Potential for (evidence of) research productivity and scholarly impact

Publications

Fit with department priorities

Please submit the criteria for your search to **facultysearches@colby.edu** for review/approval by the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs.

ACTIVE RECRUITMENT AND THE APPLICANT POOL

We are committed to a proactive policy of recruitment to increase the depth diversity of all applicant pools. Every effort must be made to diversify the applicant pool and the pool of finalists for your position. *We cannot overstate the importance of building the strongest and deepest possible applicant pool; we seek to hire the most qualified applicant from a diverse and talented pool.* The most successful searches involve well-organized department-wide efforts that extend beyond publishing an ad and evaluating responses to the ad. Our office stands ready to assist; ultimately, it is the responsibility of all members of the department to actively recruit a strong and diverse pool of applicants.

Placing job ads in both general-purpose venues such as the Chronicle of Higher Education and in discipline-specific venues is necessary but not sufficient for attracting the best candidates and the most diverse applicant pool. In some areas of the country small liberal arts colleges are less well known and are not always seen as desirable places for high-quality faculty. Dissertation advisers at many Research I universities do not think of small liberal arts colleges, even highly selective ones, as the top places for their students. In addition, prospective applicants may have concerns about Colby's location. To attract outstanding colleagues, we must face these challenges and take the initiative to build the strongest applicant pool possible. Please include the following steps as part of your recruitment strategy:

- Contact chairs of relevant departments, placement directors and directors of graduate study at universities producing the types of Ph.D. candidates we are interested in, including universities producing higher numbers of Ph.Ds. of color or candidates from other under-represented groups.
- Solicit nominations from others in the discipline who might be in a position to identify strong candidates.
- Make personal phone calls or send personal email messages as part of a strategic outreach to connections in the discipline.
- Make use of resources provided by your disciplinary professional societies.
- Look for and talk to promising potential candidates for current and future openings at conferences. From potential candidates, get contact information and tell them about Colby. If there is a current search, provide a copy of the ad.
- Send notifications of openings to graduate students or Ph.Ds. of color on lists compiled by field-specific professional associations.
- Send the ad to people you know at other colleges and universities and ask them to forward it to anyone who might be interested. Ask them if they know anyone who might be interested.
- Send the ad to alumni who are now in graduate school, asking them to forward to anyone who might be interested.
- Look through programs from recent conferences to find presenters on topics related to your opening, find them online and email the ad.
- Use our "Opportunity Hiring" initiative as a proactive tool. If, mid-search, the search committee becomes aware of, and wants to recruit, an available teacher-scholar, contact the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and ask if a shift to an opportunity hire might be approved.

The chair should look carefully at the department's web site to make sure that descriptions of all faculty members in the department are accurate. Candidates will look at our websites.

MAKING THE FIRST EVALUATION

The first evaluation eliminates from the applicant pool those candidates who don't meet the requirements (e.g., no Ph.D. when one is required; junior rank when the search is for a senior faculty member). This is completed immediately after the rolling deadline in the ad. The search committee chair and one other committee member make this determination; this step does not involve the entire search committee.

It is a good practice to notify candidates who do not meet the position's requirements as soon as the first evaluation has been completed. You may communicate via Interfolio. These letters/notes should be short and to the point. Please note the recommended use of the title "Dr." While not every applicant has completed the doctorate, use of this title does not require assumptions about gender.

For example:

Dear Dr. Applicant:

As chair of the search committee to fill the position in combinatorics that was advertised by the Colby College Department of Mathematics, I am writing to let you know that your application has been received and that members of the committee have reviewed it. I regret to inform you that we will not be pursuing your candidacy at this time. Thank you for applying to Colby College for a faculty position. I wish you the best in your job search.

Sincerely,

Search Committee chair

EEO INFORMATION

After the first evaluation is made, the committee chair provides a list of those remaining in the pool to **facultysearches@colby.edu**. Your department administrator should also provide a summary of the demographic makeup of the candidates who have responded to the EEO survey. This information allows the committee to determine the diversity of the applicant pool and to suggest whether further recruiting is required.

REVIEWING THE APPLICATIONS

After the first evaluation, the Search Committee Chair should notify committee members that they may commence reviewing applicants via Interfolio to select candidates for preliminary interviews.

As committee members read the applications, they should use the evaluation criteria that the committee has developed and agreed to. They should spend sufficient time reviewing applications (15-30 minutes per candidate) in order to decrease the likelihood of arriving at biased judgments. Typically, each candidate should be rated from 1 (weakest) to 5 (strongest) on each of the criteria, by each member of the search committee. These ratings can be recorded in Interfolio.

If the pool is small enough, all committee members read all applications. If the pool is large, applications may be grouped, but at least two members must read each application.

DEVELOPING THE SHORT-LIST AND INTERVIEWING

After all committee members have read the applications, the chair calls a meeting to decide which candidates move to the next stage of the search. All committee members must participate in this meeting. Once a short list has been developed, your department administrator should send the list, along with the EEO information about the smaller pool, to **facultysearches@colby.edu** for approval. Normally, the short list has approximately 10 to 20 applicants on it.

Search committees can minimize evaluation bias if they interview more than one woman and/or under-represented minority candidate. Research indicates that interviewers evaluate women and under-represented minorities more fairly when there is more than one in the interview pool. When there is only one woman or under-represented minority, that candidate is far less likely to succeed than women or minorities who are compared to a diverse pool of candidates, probably because of the heightened perceived salience of their race or gender.

Inside candidates

Consistent with Colby's commitment to equal opportunity, no special preferences can be accorded inside candidates. Search committees will have to decide in a particular case whether an inside candidate is sufficiently competitive within an application pool to be considered a finalist for the position. If so, they should be given the same kind of on-campus interview schedule that you are arranging for your other finalists. To ensure that insider status does not confer any unfair advantage, internal candidates should not be involved in any of the department's search activities, including the on-campus interviews and presentations of competing candidates. Department members (and more broadly, search committee members) must not write letters of recommendation for internal candidates for positions within their department (although faculty members are free to write recommendations for visiting faculty for positions outside the College). At the same time, understand how alienating and stressful it can be for an internal candidate to go about their professional duties in the department without any sense of where they stand. You can keep them apprised in a professional manner that does not compromise the integrity of the search process. If it becomes clear at any point, including at the initial screening of applicants, that the individual will no longer be considered for the position, they should be informed as soon as possible. "Courtesy interviews" are strongly discouraged; in the end these are more hurtful than helpful to the candidate.

For all academic faculty searches, if an applicant pool contains an internal candidate, you cannot refer to Colby course evaluations to assess teaching performance of the internal candidates unless you have requested summaries or other evidence of teaching evaluations from ALL candidates. All candidates must be assessed on the same information. Because at least the chair has probably already viewed teaching evaluations of the internal candidate, it is good practice to request evaluations from all applicants if you have an internal candidate.

SHORT LIST SCREENING INTERVIEWS

For all short list screening interviews, the committee should agree on a set of questions to ask each candidate.

SHORT LIST SCREENING INTERVIEWS AT AN ANNUAL MEETING

It is important to secure a gracious, neutral location for short list screening interviews at an annual meeting. Best practice should be a meeting room if you are at a national conference. Two members of the search committee should be present for all short list screening interviews. The number of candidates interviewed at annual meetings usually ranges from about 10 to 30.

SHORT-LIST SCREENING INTERVIEWS BY VIDEOCONFERENCE (ZOOM/SKYPE)

Ideally, all candidates would be interviewed in the same context: either in person or by videoconference. Conducting the short interviews by videoconference is preferred as it does not place on candidates the (often significant) burden and expense of needing to attend an annual conference.

It is important that as many committee members participate as possible. The minimum is two. Introductions should be made at the beginning of the call and each person who speaks should identify themselves by name. Videoconference interviews typically last 30 to 40 minutes.

Some search committees let the short list preliminary interview candidates know as soon as they are no longer being considered so that those candidates can move on with their job searches. Other departments prefer to wait and send rejection letters to all but the finalists at the end of the search. If you prefer the early option, here is a sample:

Dear Dr. Applicant:

I am writing in regard to your candidacy in our search for a tenure-track assistant professor of economics. We regret to inform you that other candidates were selected for our on-campus interviews. Our search yielded many exceptional and fully qualified candidates, and we had difficult decisions to make about the finalists.

My colleagues and I are pleased to have had this opportunity to review your credentials and we appreciate your interest in Colby College.

*Sincerely,
Chair, Department of Economics*

ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS FOR FINALISTS

For all faculty searches, the proposed finalists must be approved in advance by the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs. You must submit candidates' curricula vitae and cover letters via **facultysearches@colby.edu** so that we can review this information and give permission for you to invite them as finalists. For tenure-track and NTTC searches, normally three finalists are invited, but this can vary depending on the job market and other factors (e.g., if we are hiring in a highly competitive field, we may invite more than three finalists to help ensure that the search is successful). For visiting positions, typically two candidates are invited for finalist interviews.

On-campus finalist interviews are opportunities for candidates and department faculty to learn about each other as potential colleagues. Ideally, candidates will have positive experiences, be able to present themselves well and gather the information they need to determine if Colby will be a good fit.

Develop the interview schedule in advance. Consider whether it is beneficial to include staff colleagues or faculty colleagues outside the department. Potential new colleagues might want to meet people somewhat more broadly across campus. If the schedule doesn't allow the addition of individual or group meetings, think about broader invitations to the presentations. Before finalizing the schedule, make sure to contact candidates about any accommodations they might require, such as physical access needs. Ensure that the schedule is not so tightly packed that there is no time for breaks or prep time before job or teaching talks. Please arrange for someone to accompany the candidate when traveling to different offices and buildings for the scheduled meetings.

Finalists should receive the schedule in advance with clear instructions about any presentation they are asked to give. Finalists for tenure-track and NTTC positions should have a 30-minute meeting with the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs (Russell Johnson), and a 30-minute meeting with the Associate Provost and Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (Laura Renée Chandler). These meetings are not required for visiting faculty positions.

All interviewers on the schedule should be provided with a copy of the candidate's CV and the full schedule.

A select group of students should meet finalists and all students can attend public presentations. Students may provide input to the search committee as desired by the department/program, and their input may be considered by the search committee members. Students should be reminded to respect the confidentiality of all candidates.

For meals with candidates, the provost's office will cover expenses up to \$300 for each finalist. Costs above \$300 will need to be assigned to the budget of the recruiting department.

DOCUMENTING THE SEARCH

Maintaining a clear record of the deliberative process of the search committee, and of its interactions with candidates is very important. This should include the following:

- Maintain records of search committee meetings (ask a scribe to take notes).
- Maintain records of standard questions and protocols that were used for preliminary (Zoom or conference) interviews.
- Ensure that documentation captures rationales for search committee decisions and recommendations.
- Maintain full documentation of evaluation criteria and decisions based on those criteria.

MAKING AN OFFER

Before an offer can be made, the search committee chair must submit an Offer Request that includes the following:

1. The finalist to whom you would most like to make an offer. Please also indicate which other finalists you would be willing to hire (in case the first candidate declines Colby's offer or is otherwise unavailable).
2. The rationale for choosing a particular candidate(s) over the others on the finalist list. Please include a brief summary of the deliberative process used by the search committee to reach its recommendation.

Offers of employment may not be made until the Offer Request has been submitted to **facultysearches@colby.edu** and permission has been granted by the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs to proceed with the offer. Once approved, the search committee chair makes the offer to the candidate. Our strong preference is for offers to be made by telephone, with an email follow-up to provide the offer details in writing.

When the final candidate is hired – communicating with the other finalists

Departments should send out notification letters as soon as the offer has been accepted and finalized. For candidates selected as finalists who do not receive an offer, it is best for the committee chair to contact them by phone (preferable) or by email. Finalists should receive a more personal contact than a (group) rejection letter.

Dear Dr. Applicant:

I regret to inform you that we have selected another candidate for the faculty position in biology at Colby College. We received XX applications for this position. It has taken the

search committee some time to carefully evaluate each application, and we have now filled the position.

I would like to convey my appreciation to you for considering a position at Colby. I wish you luck in your job search.

*Sincerely,
Name
Search Committee Chair*

We are eager to help you and your colleagues in your search process; the appointment of new faculty is one of the most important tasks that we undertake during the year. Please let us know if you have any questions about this process, and please do not hesitate to contact us.

THE ETHICS OF COMMUNICATING WITH CANDIDATES

Making the position known, through advertising or professional networks, marks the beginning of communications with potential candidates. Ensuring that all department faculty and staff are courteous in exchanges with applicants is an important way to demonstrate our values of collegiality and respect. Responding promptly and with courtesy to all correspondence is important.

Women and under-represented minority candidates, like all candidates, wish to be evaluated for faculty positions on the basis of their scholarly credentials. Subtle or overt indications that other characteristics, such as gender and race, are being used to evaluate will not be appreciated and will cause your active recruiting efforts to backfire. Women candidates and candidates of color already realize that their gender or race may be a factor in your interest in their candidacy. It is absolutely critical that all contacts with all candidates focus on scholarship, teaching, and their potential academic role in the department and at the college.

INTERNATIONAL FACULTY MEMBERS

If a newly hired faculty member is not a US citizen or permanent resident, significant visa paperwork is typically involved well in advance of the start of their Colby appointment. Stephanie Frost (Assistant Director of Faculty HR) is the key person to work with on visa issues. Please contact her as soon as the hire is finalized, so the visa application process can begin without delay.