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Increasing the Efficiency and Shortening the Timeline for A&P Actions

Last November, Vice Dean Linda Boxer held a discussion with the School’s Executive Committee regarding a number of issues related to appointment and promotion processes. We carried a summary of her presentation in the December Communique.

On March 24, Vice Dean Boxer made another presentation to the School’s Executive Committee on the topic of “Increasing the Efficiency and Shortening the Timeline for New Appointments, Reappointments and Promotions.” This presentation operationalized many of the points that she had made in her November remarks. Her PowerPoint presentation is available here.

Those of you who have been working in faculty affairs for a while will know that many changes have taken place over the last few years. Together, we have come a long way from the days when on-time performance rates for reappointments and promotions were in the teens. Last year, that number was 88% due in no small part to improved management, renewed commitment and hard work at the departmental level. Our appreciation and thanks go out to all of you.

But there is still much work to be done in increasing efficiency around faculty appointments, reappointments and promotions, both by departments and by OAA. Toward that end, here is a summary of the changes that will go into effect on May 1 (a more detailed explanation of each change is provided below):

- Introduction of a Search Initiation Request Form that will collect all information in one place, including such newly requested details as the expected pool size, outreach plans to increase the size and diversity of the candidate pool, and plans for recusal of search committee members who have a mentoring or collaborative relationship with a known candidate.
 ✓ In searches conducted by institutes, transfer of the responsibility for compiling the referee grid (and peer set, if applicable) and assembling the long form to departments (previously, these duties were assigned to the institutes).

 ✓ For associate and full professor appointments, solicitation of all referee letters early in the process, that is, before submission of the search report or search waiver request.

 ✓ Long form streamlining to include shortened chair transmittal memoranda (one page) and Candidate’s Role (up to one page for scholarly activities, one paragraph each for teaching and clinical activities).

 ✓ Internal referee letters will be optional for all new appointments of external candidates.

 ✓ Two-month timeline for departmental completion of assistant professor appointments (currently, three months).

 ✓ Three-month timeline for departmental completion of associate and full professor appointments (currently five months).

 ✓ Compressed timelines will lead to rapid appointments, thereby eliminating the need for acting appointments.

 ✓ Beginning on September 1, six-month timelines for all reappointment and promotion actions (currently eight months).

### The Search Initiation Process

The Office of Academic Affairs will release a new Search Initiation Request Form on its website on May 1. This form will replace the institute director or department chair’s transmittal memorandum and the checklist and will organize all required information into a single document.

It will also attempt to address at the outset the following red flags in searches that are most frequently cited by School and University review committees and that have, on occasion, resulted in searches being declared invalid:

- **Expected pool size**

  Small applicant pools can prompt significant concerns regarding the validity of the search effort and/or the representation of the field itself on the Professoriate. This latter concern is particularly relevant to University Tenure Line appointments.
Departments and institutes will be asked to forecast the expected pool size for each search. Minimum thresholds will be provided as a guide, and if a search is expected to yield fewer applicants than that number, an explanation will need to be provided.

- **Description of specific outreach plans to increase the size and diversity of the candidate pool in addition to advertising and letter distribution**

Departments and institutes are expected to conduct outreach and networking activities that extend beyond advertising and distribution of solicitation letters regarding the availability of a position. Such activities might include direct contact with colleagues at other institutions who may have special insight into the applicant pool, including the identification of women, members of underrepresented minority groups and others who would bring diversity to the faculty; searching databases of award recipients or professional organization members; networking at conferences and professional meetings; and direct contact with potential candidates, even when it is assumed that they may not be “moveable.” All such efforts should be described in the Search Initiation Request form, and outcomes should be documented in the search report.

- **Identification of known candidates and search committee recusals**

Department chairs and institute directors should consult with members of the search committee to determine if there are any known candidates – either internal or external to Stanford – who are likely to apply for the position. Any such candidates must then be declared as part of the search initiation package, and an explanation must be provided as to how the known candidate came to be identified. Previously, the phrase “known candidate” referred to those who were likely to become a leading candidate for the position; this definition has now been expanded to include all candidates known by a member or members of the search committee.

Whenever possible, a search committee should be composed of members who have not served as a mentor to or collaborator with a known candidate. However, if this is infeasible, any committee member with a mentoring or collaborative connection to a known candidate should be recused from all discussions involving the candidate, from initial consideration of the applicant pool to selection of the definitive pool and candidate of choice. In addition, any search committee member who has a mentoring and collaborative relationship with a known candidate should not serve as chair of the search committee. A box must be checked on the Search Initiation Request Form to confirm this plan for recusal.

**Institute Searches**

The School of Medicine’s four Institutes of Medicine have been allocated billets for the purpose of recruiting faculty who will work in selected, complex, multi-disciplinary areas that transcend the domain of any single department. However, like all members of
Stanford’s Professoriate, such faculty have their primary appointments in academic departments. As a result, recruitment and appointment processes for Institute members are of necessity a joint effort between institutes and departments.

Prior to the second round of interviews, the search committee chair should contact the chair(s) of appropriate department(s) to determine if there is an interest in the candidate(s). If so, members of the department should be fully engaged in the second round of interviews and in the selection of the candidate of choice. Normally, the referee grid and the peer set, if applicable, should be developed by the home department in consultation with the institute director. The home department is responsible for assembling all sections of the long form. (Previously, this responsibility was usually held by institutes.)

**Early Solicitation of Full Referee Letter Sets for Associate and Full Professors**

In order to compress the overall timeline for associate and full professor appointments, *all referee letters* should be solicited early in the process, that is, before submission of the search report or search waiver request.

In order to assist with the decision of the final ranking of candidates, the department may decide to solicit external letters of evaluation for all of the candidates. In other cases, letters may only be sought on the candidate of choice. In either situation, the letters should be solicited in compliance with standard procedure (including approval from OAA) so that they are usable as evidence in the appointment long form. Occasionally, faculty members at other institutions do not want the early exposure generated by the solicitation of external referee and trainee letters. In such cases, departments should have a discussion with OAA.

Referee letters will continue to be submitted together with the search report and draft offer letter. A minimum of three letters should be received prior to submission of these materials, although it is expected that, due to early solicitation, more letters will have been received by this time.

**Long Form Streamlining**

We understand that there is continuing frustration with the bureaucratic aspects of the A&P processes. While any streamlining of the process must originate with the Provost’s Office, there are a few things that the School can do to lighten the burden of assembling long forms without sacrificing the quality of evidence or integrity of the review process. These include:

- **Department Chair’s Transmittal Memorandum**

  We recommend that the chair’s transmittal memorandum be brief (generally, one page) and avoid repeating information contained in other parts of the long form (e.g., Candidate’s Statement, Role of the Candidate, Evaluation of the Candidate, or quotes from referees). Instead, the memorandum should be a focused argument in favor of the action by the department chair that includes a succinct description of his or her
background and areas of focus as well as an explanation about why the work is important to the field and to the department. There should be a discussion of any significant negative evidence uncovered in the review process and, if applicable, how it is being addressed.

• Description of the Candidate’s Role

Scholarship – This section of the long form should be one page or less and should include an account of at least one specific work by the candidate and its impact or importance.

Teaching and Clinical Activities – Descriptions of the candidate’s teaching and, if applicable, clinical activities should be limited to one paragraph each.

• Internal Referee Letters Optional for All External Candidates

As announced in December, internal referee letters for new tenured associate and full professors are optional rather than required. Effective immediately, internal referee letters will be optional, not required, for any external candidate who is being considered for appointment.

New Departmental Timelines for Submission of Appointment Long Forms

In order to compress the length of time for new appointments, and to eliminate the need for acting appointments, new timelines are being set as follows:

Assistant Professor Actions – Final version of the long form is due in OAA within two months after the candidate has been identified (that is, from the date on which the search report [or search waiver request] and offer letter are approved. The current timeline is three months.

Associate and Full Professor Actions – Final version of the long form is due in OAA within three months after the candidate has been identified (that is, from the date on which the search report [or search waiver request], external referee letters and offer letter are approved). The current timeline is five months.

Note that the clock begins running with approval of the search report and offer letter (and, if applicable, external referee letters), not with the candidate’s acceptance of the offer.

In addition to eliminating the need for acting appointments, this brings us into closer alignment with the rest of the University where long forms are routinely assembled and reviewed as negotiations with the candidate continue apace.

We hope that the long form streamlining mentioned previously will assist departments in meeting these new deadlines. Also, many sections of the long form will already have been
assembled during the search, so that the generation of new material will be minimal. One of the slides in Dr. Boxer’s Executive Committee presentation highlights this point by identifying the few new sections that will need to be written.

These revised timelines will also encompass review of the new sections of the draft long form by the Office of Academic Affairs. Again, since minimal new material will have been generated, review of the draft long form by OAA will be prompt.

**Timelines for Review of Long Forms by the School and University**

Long forms submitted for new appointments will normally be reviewed by the School within one month, subject to review committee scheduling. The Provost’s Office has requested from two to three months for review of these actions.

New assistant professor appointments will take approximately six months, from approval of the search report and offer letter to approval by the University.

New associate and full professor appointments will take approximately seven months, from approval of the search report and offer letter to approval by the University.

**Acting Appointments**

As mentioned previously, with the shortened timeline for new appointments, acting appointments will no longer be granted.

**New Departmental Timelines for Submission of Reappointment and Promotion Long Forms**

Beginning on September 1, 2014, the new timeline for completion of reappointment and promotion long forms will be six months. Currently, the timeline is eight months. More detailed information will be forthcoming in a future Communique.

**Implementation and Guidance**

The Office of Academic Affairs stands ready to answer any questions you might have and to provide support and guidance as these changes are implemented. Toward that end, several brown bag luncheons will be held during April (see other sections of this Communique for details) and May. We hope to see you there.

We also encourage you to let Judith Cain know what other topics you would like to have featured as part of the brown bag series.

In the meantime, questions should be directed to Judith, Rebecca Robinson or Craig Spencer.
**Adjunct Clinical Faculty Chapter of the Handbook Gets Major Update**

An extensive revision of the School of Medicine Faculty Handbook Chapter 6 on Adjunct Clinical Faculty is now available for your information and reference. As you will see, it is patterned after chapters on the Professoriate and Clinical Educator Line, and we hope that this consistent format help you find relevant information efficiently.

Any questions should be directed to Lisa Joo, who took the lead in updating the chapter (thank you, Lisa). Kudos also go to Rebecca Robinson for formatting the new chapter.

**Upcoming Actions for Adjunct Clinical Faculty**

As a reminder, FAA’s should regularly check Fast|Fac to learn about any upcoming actions that require attention. Appointment, reappointment or promotion files must be submitted at least two months in advance of the anticipated end date. Requests for retroactive actions are discouraged. For any non-renewals due to terminations, resignations or deaths, please notify Lisa Joo.

**Brown Bag Lunch on How to Complete an Assistant Professor Appointment in Two Months**

OAA will sponsor a brown bag lunch on Tuesday, April 22, from noon to 1:00 p.m. in Alway M116 on the topic of “How to Complete an Assistant Professor Appointment in Two Months.” This session will be led by Kendall Yi, faculty affairs administrator in the Department of Radiology, who will share his experience in assembling the long form quickly after completion of the search. Please register for the session here. Due to space limitations, participation will be limited to ten registrants. The session may be repeated if interest is high.

**Brown Bag Lunch on the Identification of Known Candidates and Search Committee Recusals**

As mentioned earlier in this issue, a feature of the new Search Initiation Request Form will be the identification of known candidates as well as the specific plan for recusal of any search committee member who has or has had a mentoring or collaborative relationship with the candidate. In order to help navigate through this process, Rebecca Robinson will lead a brown bag discussion on Wednesday, April 30, from noon to 1:00 p.m. in Alway M116. Please register for the session here. Due to space limitations, participation will be limited to ten registrants. The session may be repeated if interest is high.
**Coming in May: Brown Bag Lunch on Early Solicitation of Full Referee Sets for Associate and Full Professors**

Craig Spencer will lead a brown bag lunch on “Early Solicitation of Full Referee Sets for Associate and Full Professors” in May. Details will be announced in the next Communique.

**Alway Building to be Closed on Friday**

The Alway building (as well as Grant, Lane and Edwards buildings) will be closed on Friday, April 4, as preparations begin for weekend work to service the original circuit breakers and ensure the overall safety and reliability of the electrical system.

While OAA staff will not be on site, we will all be working from home and will be available by email.