

Generally, the information missing on candidates was related to human relationship skills. Because the faculty strongly believed that excellent interpersonal relationships were critical to the success of a dean, the committee tried diligently to ferret out this information. Hegyvary and de Tornyay (1991) noted that:

Interestingly, the characteristics that impress deans' search committees and faculty tend to be conceptual and technical performance in relation to academic achievements and entrepreneurship'. However, this may be a paradoxical reason for choosing a dean, because the skills that may be most central to being a successful dean fall into the human realm. Conceptual and technical skills are essential, but their effective expression is based on skill in human relations (p. 42).

The candidates' conceptual and technical skills were easier to determine from vitae and written references than were human skills.

The following questions/statements were organized to obtain the general data needed through telephone interviews:

1. What was/is the faculty's general impression of [the applicant]?
2. Describe her leadership style.
3. What are her strengths?
4. What are her weaknesses?

Following these questions, specific questions in such areas as employment discrepancies and questions generated from written references were asked about particular candidates.

The chair then decided which references to call. Each candidate had five written references; two of those were chosen for verbal references. One person was chosen who would be expected to have access to information about the candidate's human skills, specifically relationships with faculty, and leadership style. The other reference was chosen based on specific information needed.

When each of the references was called, only one was contacted with the initial call. For all others, a message was left regarding the purpose of the call and appropriate times to call back. All of the references were cordial, helpful, and prompt in returning calls. Establishing the purpose for the call and a time schedule appeared important for securing the needed information.

Without exception, all the data needed were gathered and put into a format that had been developed by the committee. The report contained the candidate's name and position, reference's name and relationship to the candidate, responses to the four general questions, responses to specific questions, and closing comments. These comments were written almost verbatim to give committee members and the Provost the actual flavor of the conversation.

Selection of Candidates

The written reports of the telephone interviews were circulated to committee members prior to the final meeting, when the committee selected four candidates who best met the established criteria. The decisions on candidates' names to forward to the Provost were clear and unanimous. The Provost decided which candidates to bring to campus and ultimately whom to appoint as dean.

Campus Visits

Each candidate followed a similar schedule while on campus, which included transportation to and from airports and motels by faculty; meals with faculty; and meetings with the Provost, Chancellor, deans of other schools, and with the college faculty and selected community representatives with special interests in the School of Nursing. There were also efforts to sell the position, school, and university to the candidates. They toured the campus and city and were linked with faculty who had similar interests (research, clinical specialty, etc.) for

some functions. For the session with faculty and community members, each candidate took the initial 15 minutes to address the topic "Current Issues in Nursing and the Role of Nursing Education in Dealing With These Issues"; at least an hour of questions, answers, and discussion followed. All faculty, deans, and others who had an occasion to meet and hear the candidates gave written feedback to the Provost about the candidates. The Provost asked for strengths.. specific concerns, and other comments.

Summary

The committee had a strong sense of accomplishment when they submitted the names to the Provost. Both the process and the screening tool worked well for the search process.

References

- Hegyvary, S., & de Tornyay, R. (1991). Transitions in the deanship. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 7, 41-44.
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- Nichols, E., Bower, D., Collier, J., & Gray, R. (1989). Searching for a dean. *Nurse Educator*, 14, 9-13.