

Search and Screen Committee (SSC) Guidance – Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology**The formation and activity of the SSC should be done in accordance with all regulations of offices of Human Resources and Academic Planning at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.**

Relevant resources include:

(1) UW–Madison Search Handbook is available from Office of Human Resources online at: <http://wwwtest.ohr.wisc.edu/apo/sbkmain.html>

(2) Guide for search committee chairs:

<http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/SearchBook.pdf>

Task of the SSC

The task of the SSC is to assist in the search for and screening of applicants for faculty positions. At an early stage, these activities might include developing text for advertisement of the position and selecting and executing methods of advertisement. Once the application period is closed and there is a list of all applicants to be reviewed, SSC members review the applications and make the application materials available to other faculty members and solicit their comments. They can decide on their particular method(s) of ranking. The SSC is charged with presenting to the Executive Committee a short list of candidates (minimum 3) that they determine are most suited for the position and might be interviewed, and to answer questions from the Executive Committee about their process.

Formation of the SSC

The Department Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall select Chair(s) of the SSC. SSC Chair(s), in consultation with the Department Chair and the Executive Committee, shall select the other members of the SSC. During the selection process, due consideration should be given to whether members from outside the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology should be included on the SSC. A SSC is formally appointed by positive vote of the Executive Committee.

Obligation to recruit a diverse pool of applicants

SSC will follow all campus and College recommendations related to procedures and actions that foster a diverse pool of applicants. SSC Chair and, perhaps members, will consult with appropriate CALS and University units (e.g., CALS Human Resources) and relevant resources (including those listed above), and complete relevant training.

Use of “insider” information

SSC members are privy to information not generally available to the public or other members of the faculty. SSC members may not use that information for their personal or professional benefit, or make it available for the personal or professional benefit of any other individual or organization.

Conflicts of interest, confidentiality, etc.

Identifying potential conflicts of interest (COI) - SSC members should be aware of potential conflict situations that may arise during their work. It is important for all involved that COIs can be actual and perceived as both affect perception (most often) and practice (rarely) of the SSC's work. All SSC members should review the list of potentially biasing affiliations or relationships in the table below. Should any conflict arise at any time in the SSC's work, members should bring the matter to the attention of the SSC and the Dept. Chair¹.

Obligation to maintain the confidentiality of applications and applicants - The Department may receive applications and letters of recommendation in confidence. It is important that all those involved in the search and screen process (e.g., faculty members, SSC, Department Chair, support staff) protect the confidentiality of applicants and the contents of their applications. For this reason, those involved in the search must not copy, quote, or otherwise use or disclose to anyone, including your graduate students or post-doctoral or research associates, any material from any application you are asked to review. If you believe a person outside the department can make a substantial contribution to the review, please obtain permission from the SSC Chair *before* disclosing either the contents of the application/recommendation or the name of any applicant or recommender.

Table: Some common examples of outcomes when conflicts of interest are identified

PLEASE REVIEW THESE EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE CONFLICTS PERIODICALLY DURING YOUR TENURE ON THE SSC.

- Known family relationship such as spouse, child, sibling, or parent.
- *Business or professional partnership.*
- Past or present association as thesis advisor or thesis student.
- Collaboration on a project or on a book, article, report, or paper within the last 48 months.
- Interests of the following persons are to be treated as if they were yours: Any affiliation or relationship of your spouse, of your minor child, of a relative living in your immediate household or of anyone who is legally your partner that you are aware of that could be covered by any italicized items above
- Other relationship, such as close personal friendship, that you think might tend to affect your judgment or be seen as doing so by a reasonable person familiar with the relationship.

¹ The University of Wisconsin-Madison does not have written rules that address steps to be taken when COI are identified. The Secretary of the Faculty writes: *Regardless of the committee on which someone is serving, it is incumbent on that individual to determine whether their particular circumstance would constitute a conflict of interest that would affect her/his ability to make a balanced and unbiased decision on a matter before that group. It is always advisable for an individual who is aware of a personal circumstance that might raise a question about possible bias to bring the matter to the attention of the group for discussion. The individual can then gather perspectives from the other members and use that information to make an informed decision whether or not to refrain from participation, and if so how to implement that decision, whether by recusal, abstention or resignation from the committee. In the end however, it is the decision of the individual, not others, since removal of rights would constitute a disciplinary decision.*[David Musolf, April 1, 2011]