

A Communications department at a Research I institution is in the midst of the search for an assistant professor. The selection process has escalated long-standing tensions in the department. The outgoing chair, who has since left the country on sabbatical, appointed the search committee members and encouraged them to invite two students to advise their selection process. However, to appease a senior faculty member who was unhappy about the research area selected for the search, he allowed her to write the job description. During the selection process, disagreement over a particular candidate puts two senior faculty members at odds once again. The Junior faculty become polarized, based on their professional collaborations with their colleagues.

FACULTY

Dr. Ramón Herrera  
Dr. Janice Haggertz

CANDIDATE

Dr. Hugo Wallee

Dr. Ramón Herrera, a tenured Communications professor, was introduced to Dr. Hugo Wallee, an up-and-coming scholar who specializes in creating innovative tools to enhance communication between health services organizations and Native communities. He was impressed to learn that the Traduzca Institute, a public health institute that Dr. Wallee founded, had much success helping residents of his own Native tribe receive medical services that combine modern technologies with traditional healing practices. Dr. Herrera invited Dr. Wallee to campus for a seminar presentation, in hopes of recruiting him in the future. The talk was well-received by the standing-room-only audience.

When a tenure-track faculty position opened in the Communication and Culture sub-discipline, Dr. Wallee applied. Dr. Herrera recommended Dr. Wallee to the search committee, noting he possessed degrees in both Communications and Public Health. He highlighted the candidate's accomplishments as a scholar, an activist and a dynamic teacher with a collaborative pedagogical style. The search committee found Dr. Wallee to be a promising scholar and put him their short list.

Excitement about Dr. Wallee's candidacy for the new faculty position began to build among graduate students. Two graduate students were non-voting members of the search committee. They organized an evaluation of the short list candidates. In a group meeting, the students voted to recommend Dr. Wallee, documenting their endorsement in a letter to the faculty.

When the faculty met to vote on which of the final four candidates to hire, Dr. Janice Haggertz voiced her concerns with the search committee's process. Though she wrote the job description in the hopes of finding a transnational scholar specializing in intercultural communication, the majority of the candidates' research was US-based. She also complained about the students' involvement in the hiring process. "It's an insult," she proclaimed, "We're a Research I institution, not some community college." Finally, she opposed Dr. Wallee's candidacy. "Frankly," commented Dr. Haggertz, "I don't see what the big fuss is all about. I don't find Wallee's work rigorous or interesting. It has no theoretical orientation." Dr. Herrera, whose long-standing acrimonious relationship with Dr. Haggertz was well-known, retorted that her lack of interest in Dr. Wallee was a "thinly-veiled excuse for bigotry." He claimed that her insistence on hiring someone from outside the US conveniently excluded Native American, African American and Latino scholars. Dr. Wallee's seminar presentations had been well-

