Faculty Hiring in a Virtual Environment: Ideas, Tools, and Best Practices
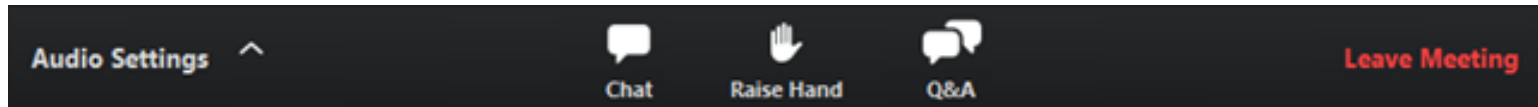
UW Office for Faculty Advancement
UW ADVANCE Center for Institutional Change

UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

Tech Check: Participation

Use CHAT for comments or to share ideas with other attendees

Ex: share your favorite thing about Zoom

| Audio Settings ^ | Chat | Raise Hand | Q&A | Leave Meeting |

Use Q&A to pose questions to Chad and Joyce

Ex: Can you say more about _____?

W

Overview

> Part 1: The hiring process in virtual spaces: general concepts and key questions

> Part 2: Running efficient and effective committee meetings online

> Part 3: Planning virtual "on campus" visits with final candidates

The Hiring Process in Virtual Spaces: General Concepts and Key Questions

General Concepts / Key Questions

What *can* be the same, and what *must* be different when hiring in online environments?

> Everybody is online -- and most likely working from home (and on laptops)

– No impromptu run-ins to chat about things

> Technology is now an active participant in your process

> Potential advantages and disadvantages of hiring online

> Fostering equity and inclusion in an online environment

W

General Concepts / Key Questions

Make what is currently *implicit* in your hiring process *explicit*.

> What are you trying to achieve at each stage in the hiring process?

> What should be reproduced from your "typical" process?

> What should be left behind or radically altered?

W

General Concepts / Key Questions

What are the *essential* components of your hiring process?

> Make intentional decisions about what is critical to your decision making.

> How will you collectively determine what is essential?

> What do you *not know* from the initial application materials that you *need to know* in order to move on to the next phase of selection?

W

Running Efficient and Effective Committee Meetings Online

Same/Different Online

Understanding diverse roles on any committee

> Committee chair / facilitator

> (NEW) Chat monitor (could be rotating role)

> Scribe / note-taker (could be rotating role)

> Appropriate roles for student members

> Appropriate roles for support staff

W

Same/Different Online

The importance of preparatory work prior to decision meetings

> What work is done by individuals outside of meetings?

> What work is done as a group together?

> Do you need to actively establish trust?

> Do you need to train any committee members?

> Does your unit understand the hiring process?

Prep time investments pay off later

W

Making the Implicit Explicit

Managing meetings in Zoom

> Set clear meeting agendas and goals
  – You may need a timer

> Establish committee norms and expectations

> Address issues of power up front

> Develop strategies for
  – Actively engaging committee members
  – Encouraging "sidebar" conversations
  – Inviting disagreement and feedback

W

Committee Meeting Essentials

Prior to assessing applications

> Reviewing the committee's charge

> Creating a clear assessment plan and timeline

> Affirming consensus on evaluation criteria (rubrics)

> Norming evaluation standards (rubrics)

- Evaluation scale

- Markers of excellence

- Markers of potential

> Review sample set?

W

Committee Meeting Essentials

During the assessment process

> Frequency of check-ins

> Encouraging active participation from all members

During decision-making

> Achieving consensus in virtual spaces

> Engaging leadership, the larger unit, and allies

– no impromptu run-ins to chat about things

Planning Virtual "On-Campus" Visits with Final Candidates

What *can* be the same?
What *must* be different?

Developing a comprehensive plan for the "visit"

> What is essential? What might be left behind?

> Realities of working from home and across multiple time zones

> To record or not to record, that is the question
  – Be mindful of the potential for records requests
  – Consider candidate's perspective

W

What *can* be the same?
What *must* be different?

If you have a large pool, consider a "tiered" structure for campus visits

> Tier 1: Large group (~10),
> each candidate has a 2-hour "visit"

> Tier 2: Smaller group (~5),
> each candidate has an additional 4-hour "visit"

> Tier 3: Finalists (~2),
> each candidate has an additional 4-hour "visit"

W

What *can* be the same?
What *must* be different?

Pacing of interviews, presentations, and meetings

> Inquisition-style interviewing vs. group conversation

> The importance of scheduling real breaks

> Behind-the-scenes roles

> Tech "breathing space" -- tech checks, back-up plans

Virtual "lunches," "dinners," other casual events

> What do you want to accomplish?

> Consider pressure on candidates' schedules

> Consider time zone differences

The "all important" job talk

Multiple models to consider for the virtual job talk

> Live-streamed presentation with immediate live Q & A

> Pre-recorded presentation with live Q & A

> Pre-recorded presentation live-streamed with live Q & A

> Pre-circulated paper, live brief overview with live Q & A

> Pre-circulated paper, brief pre-recorded presentation with live Q & A

The "all important" job talk

"Traditional" job talk (30 - 60 minutes) or

"Modified" job talk (15 - 20 minutes)?

> How much do you need to "see" to help you in your selection process?

> Templates for areas to address in briefer recorded talks
  – Completed vs. planned research
  – A theoretical issue vs. a case study or specific example

W

The "all important" job talk

Strategies for facilitating effective Q & A in virtual spaces

> Pre-screened questions

> Questions in real time: using the Chat function and assigning a Chat monitor

> Settings to manage audience activity (mute, remove, etc.)

W

Potential elements of "visits"

Prioritize based on decision-making needs

> Meetings with leadership (chair or director, dean, etc.)

> Meetings with faculty (clarity of purpose)

– 1:1 vs. group meetings

– Structured vs. unstructured meeting topics

– Meetings with specific committees (e.g., unit's Diversity Committee)

> Meetings with graduate students

W

Potential elements of "visits"

> Meetings with staff

> Meetings with campus allies, community partners, etc.

> "Touring" the unit and/or campus
– Should you make pre-recorded videos?
– UW level / Unit level / Individual

> "Casual" events

> "Safe spaces" for candidates to ask questions

W

Making what is *implicit* in your process *explicit*

Querying candidates before the "visit"

> Do they have adequate technology?

> What would they like to see or know?

> With whom would they like to meet?

If using pre-recorded talks, be explicit about what is and is not being evaluated

> Not important: lighting and occasional flubbed word

> Important: the scope of the talk or the precision of the analysis

W

Making what is *implicit* in your process *explicit*

Articulating strategies for

> helping candidates present their best selves

- – clear expectations for performance
- – reasonable demands on time

> helping our colleagues present their best selves

- – clear expectations for engagement
- – clear criteria for assessment

W

Advice from successful faculty candidates

Imagine the experience from the candidate's perspective.

> Reduce the number of meetings

– avoid making candidates repeat themselves over and over

> Reduce the length of meetings

– how much time is necessary?

> Schedule real breaks

– at least 30 minutes, preferably an hour or more

> Casual events and social opportunities are important

> A single "Zoom room" (link) helps with transitions

W

Final Thoughts

Reexamine norms/processes with a strategic, intentional, and simplifying lens

> Discover effective practices that could become norms in the non-virtual format

> Gain clarity on what is and what is not being evaluated

– Communicate this clearly with your unit and the candidates

> Guiding questions underlining all of this:

– What *can* be the same, and what *must* be different?

– How can we make the *implicit explicit*?

– What is truly *essential*?

Chadwick Allen

Associate Vice Provost
UW Office for Faculty Advancement
callen3@uw.edu

Joyce Yen

Director
UW ADVANCE Center for Institutional Change
joyceyen@uw.edu