MIT Libraries Search and Recruitment Principles

Overview

The purpose of the search process is to advance the Libraries’ mission by recruiting the best people for our staff. At the same time, the search process communicates our culture to current and prospective employees. For any given position, this involves balancing four distinct elements:

- The local unit – ensuring that the vacancy to be filled meets departmental needs
- The system as a whole – ensuring that the vacancy to be filled advances the Libraries’ long term strategic priorities
- The present – ensuring that the successful candidate is an excellent match against the qualifications required for this particular job
- The future – ensuring that the successful candidate possesses the talents and potential for making continuing contributions to the ongoing work of the organization

This process depends upon trust among all participants. Such trust is earned through open communication, mutual respect, and a shared understanding that transparency and confidentiality are both valuable and must be judiciously balanced. A spirit of mutual trust is demonstrated when all stakeholders adhere to the spirit of the following principles

Principles

- **Clarity**
  - The scope of the position’s responsibilities is carefully reviewed and clearly articulated.
  - The job description is both realistic and clear about required and desired qualifications.
  - The process is well articulated from the start. This includes identifying the various decision points and who is involved in which decisions.
  - The process of forming the search committee is understood.
  - The composition of the search committee is clearly described, not just by naming the individuals but also by identifying the roles or functions deemed essential to the committee’s membership (examples: “direct report,” “peer,” “collaborator”).
  - When deviating from established search norms, the reasons for doing so will be clearly communicated, to the extent possible given confidentiality considerations.

- **Organizational Commitment**
  - Prior to filling a position we will ensure that the necessary resources and support structures are in place to assure the success of the position and the staff involved.
  - Search committee members receive preparation and support.
  - The process should be objective and decision-makers should strive to avoid partiality and be sensitive to the appearance of partiality.
  - Staff are active partners in the recruitment and search process.
  - Staff share accountability for how they represent the MIT Libraries to candidates.
• All participants in the search process will protect the privacy of all candidates, and respect the need for confidentiality.

• Flexibility
  o For each position to be filled, a process is planned and implemented that is appropriate to the specific position.
  o For each search, the respective benefits of an inclusive process, timeliness, diversity, and confidentiality will be considered and balanced.
  o Recognizing that the Libraries’ staff encompasses a range of work cultures, each search procedure will be designed on a model most appropriate to the specific position to be filled, i.e. in addition to librarians and archivists, we also employ people with backgrounds in IT, marketing, development, etc.

• Trust
  o Expectations of the position, the person to be hired, and all stakeholders are clearly communicated.
  o Search committee members share accountability for their work.
  o Once the search committee begins its work, it may not be possible for them to share the rationale behind each decision. Committee members are responsible for honest, ethical behavior and all stakeholders are responsible for trusting their actions (even if they do not agree with some of them.)
  o During the process, decision-makers will communicate plans (and changes) to staff as clearly as confidentiality considerations allow.

• Diversity and Inclusion
  o Each search is an opportunity to contribute to the diversity of the Libraries’ staff.
  o We value diversity in all its dimensions; achieving racial and ethnic diversity is an especially high priority. Our recruitment practices should reflect this.
  o Each search process will seek to identify and avoid possible sources of unconscious bias.
  o Searches are as inclusive as possible; inclusivity may occur in various ways and at various points in the process. Colleagues and stakeholders’ input will be sought in ways that are most meaningful and appropriate for each specific vacancy.
  o Searches are an organizational learning opportunity, exposing our staff to an exchange of ideas and offering fresh perspectives. We will seek to design a process that will capture the types of organizational relationships the successful candidate will experience.

• Openness to ongoing process improvement
  o Feedback will be used to assess our process, and changes will be made based on what we learn.

N. Davis-Millis, R. Deadrick, G. McReynolds, J. Prevost, T. Rosko