Identify Top Candidates

(from Chapter 6 of Hiring Right: Conducting Successful Searches in Higher Education, by Sandra Hochel and Charmaine E. Wilson)

Tips for Writing Questions

Do:
• Have a set of standardized questions you ask of each candidate.
• Ask mostly behavioral questions.
• Know why you are asking each question.
• Ask only job related questions.
• Probe for full information.

Don't:
• Ask questions with obvious answers.
• Ask leading questions.
• Ask overused questions.
• Ask too many closed questions.
• Ask for personal information.

Sample Interview Questions

Quality of Past Work:

• What do you think were some of your greatest accomplishments in your last job? Greatest disappointments or frustrations?

• In what ways did you contribute to the success of your unit at your last job?

• Tell me about a time when you needed outside help and had to ask someone for assistance. What was the situation? How did you decide whom to consult?

• We contact applicants’ past employers. What do you think your past employers will say about your performance?

• Recall a time when you saw something that needed to be done in your organization and you stepped up and handled it.

• Recall a time when a coworker or supervisor criticized your work. What was the situation and how did you respond?
Ability to Work Well With Others:

- Tell me about your experience working on teams. (Probe for details because no one is going to say that they don't work well with others.)
- Tell us about a time when you helped out a colleague at work.
- When do you have difficulty communicating with others?
- Recall a time when you had to deal with a difficult coworker. What was the situation? How did you handle it? How was the relationship affected?
- What are some of the things you and your supervisor agreed about? Disagreed about?
- How do you feel your supervisor could have done an even better job?

Problem Solving and Decision-Making Skills:

- In your role as _________, what was the hardest decision you ever had to make?
- What are some things your department could do to be more successful? How would you go about implementing such improvements?
- Suppose you found that a student had plagiarized a small part of a final paper. What would you do?
- If you encountered this problem (describe a specific situation an employee might be expected to deal with), how would you handle it?
- If you could make one suggestion to higher administration at ____________ University, what would it be?
- Describe a difficult problem that you had to resolve in your last job. How did you handle it? What did you learn from it?

Ability to Set and Accomplish Goals:

- If you could select an ideal working environment (or job), what would it be like? What are some things you would most want to avoid? Why?
- What would you look forward to in the future if you joined us? What additional education and training do you think you would need to reach your goals?
- Tell me about an innovation you introduced in your current workplace. What was it? How did you get the change made?
• What aspect of your work do you consider most crucial?

• How do you promote integrity in your unit/classroom?

• No one is perfect. Tell us about a time you changed your work behavior because of feedback you received from a coworker or boss.

Ability to Manage Unit/Classroom:

• How have you successfully motivated employees/students?

• How have you created a climate conducive to productivity/learning?

• How have you met the individual needs of subordinates/students?

• Tell us about a situation where your subordinates/students taught you an important lesson.

• Recall a program/course you designed. Describe step by step what you did and how it turned out.

• Tell us about a time when you had to talk with a subordinate whose work was below average. What were the circumstances? How did you deal with it? What was the result?