



SELECTION COMMITTEE ORIENTATION

The District seeks to employ qualified persons with a broad range of backgrounds and abilities who have the knowledge and experience to work effectively in a diverse environment. The selection process is based on merit, and will extend to all candidates a fair, impartial examination of qualifications based on job-related criteria. **Each** member of the selection committee has the following responsibilities:

- Review the position announcement.
- Identify screening criteria based on the requirements and desirable skills and abilities detailed in the announcement.
- Develop job-related interview questions designed to seek information about the candidate's knowledge, skills, and abilities and to distinguish candidates who will best meet the needs of the students, the department/division, the College, and the District.
- Pursuant to Title 5, develop appropriate questions designed to assess candidates' "sensitivity to diversity" by giving meaningful consideration to the State minimum qualification to include sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, disability, and ethnic backgrounds of community college students.
- Determine whether to require candidates to perform a skills test or make a presentation in addition to the interview. This is highly recommended.
- Screen all applications to select candidates for interview.
- Develop an interview schedule.
- Interview all selected candidates.
- Recommend finalists to the appropriate hiring manager.
- Maintain permanent confidentiality of the entire screening process.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The San Mateo County Community College District is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to promoting diversity through its hiring processes. Equal employment opportunity means that all qualified individuals have a full and fair opportunity to compete for hiring and promotion and to enjoy the benefits of employment with the District. Ensuring equal employment opportunity also involves creating an environment that fosters cooperation, acceptance, democracy, and free expression of ideas and is welcoming to men and women, persons with disabilities, and individuals from all ethnic and other groups protected from discrimination.

The District's employment policy, as stated on every job announcement, reads:

The San Mateo County Community College District is an Equal Opportunity Employer that seeks to employ individuals who represent the rich diversity of cultures, language groups, and abilities of its surrounding communities.

It is based on the desire that:

- Everyone deserves the opportunity to participate fully within our educational community.
- Our workplace is enriched by the diversity of our workforce.
- People should be valued for their differences—not in spite of them.
- The candidates selected will be able to competently interact in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual community college environment.

The District’s Commitment to Diversity

A diverse workforce is diverse in many ways, including race and ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disability, culture, religion, immigrant status, marital status, parenting status, veteran status and more. Diversity makes the District more attractive to staff and students, engenders creative thinking and problem solving, and vitalizes the educational environment. Selection committee members should approach candidates with interest and curiosity and recognize that the interview process must reflect how the District expects colleagues to interact with each other and students within the college community.

There are five core values that inform the District’s commitment to diversity:

1. Workforce diversity services the educational mission of the California Community Colleges.
2. Diversity works in a merit based system; a commitment to diversity does not require—or even contemplate—lowering standards.
3. A commitment to diversity may mean reexamining how we define “qualified,” seeing job standards with fresh eyes, and being willing to eliminate traditional but out-dated requirements, and adding new requirements that appropriately value the skills, education and experience of a more diverse applicant pool.
4. Successfully diverse communities are inclusive in that they appreciate rather than merely tolerate differences.
5. Inclusive work environments increase creativity and improve problem solving.

Part of the District’s commitment to diversity includes a commitment to “cultural competence”, which refers to the skills and ability of individuals to act in a sensitive, inclusive and respectful manner in interactions with persons who are different from themselves. Pursuant to Title 5, Section 53024, meaningful consideration must be given to the extent to which applicants demonstrate a sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ethnic backgrounds of community college students. “Meaningful consideration” means that candidates shall be required to demonstrate sensitivity to diversity in ways relevant to the specific position.

Experience with diverse populations alone does not guarantee that the person is culturally competent. Just because a person has had students from x, y and z groups in their classes, this does not mean that the person understood or adapted to those students’ needs. The same holds true for traveling or living in other cultures, particularly for short-term stays. Culturally competent communicators tend to

acknowledge cultural differences in their answers and teaching demonstrations through the use of inclusive language, examples and teaching approaches.

The District does not designate or set aside particular positions to be filled by members of any group defined in terms of ethnic group identification, race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, disability, ancestry or sexual orientation, or engage in any other practice which would result in discriminatory or preferential treatment prohibited by state or federal law.

Non-Discrimination

Hiring decisions should be premised upon non-discriminatory criteria and procedures. Federal and State Anti-Discrimination laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of:

- Race
- Religious creed
- Color
- National origin
- Ancestry
- Gender Identity
- Genetic Information
- Physical/mental disability
- Marital status
- Sex
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Expression

Elimination of Bias

All applicants are to be judged without bias, either for or against. All applicants are to proceed through our process on their own merit. However, human nature causes us to be *unintentionally* influenced by subjective factors and other influences unrelated to an applicant's merit. When we become aware of how the subjective factors can influence us, we can take steps to counteract or eliminate them and focus on objective job related criteria. Once we are aware that subjective factors are influencing us, we can refocus from subjective to objective decision criteria. The following are some common biases that can be eliminated:

Confirmation Bias. This is a tendency for people to seek out information that supports a pre-conceived belief about the applicant that has been formed prior to the interview. In other words, interviewers look to confirm a possibly shallow impression they may have formed of the candidate pre-interview, as opposed to having a more open outlook on the candidate's abilities.

Keep an open mind.

Stereotyping. The interviewer can be influenced and form a generalized opinion by quick and superficial evaluations including level of attractiveness, race and gender.

Avoid snap judgments.

First Impression Negative or Positive. The interviewer may make certain judgments based upon either a positive or negative first impression that can then influence the entire interview. For example, candidate who has a very strong first impression will likely be evaluated more favorably even if it is unwarranted.

Wait at least 30 minutes into an interview before "deciding" for or against a candidate.

Intuition. Many interviewers place great weight on their intuition about candidate even though intuition is unreliable and susceptible to influences other than a candidate's merit.

Don't let your gut trick you.

You Are Just like Me. The interviewer may feel a bond with a candidate who shares personal characteristics such as a hobby or some other similarity such as children of a similar age. Be harder on these candidates in order to avoid being too "soft" on them.

You are not hiring someone to be your new best friend.

More Best Practices for Selecting the Right Candidate

Hire for talent over experience. Ensure length of experience, age required, etc. are essential and justifiable, for performance of the job and not set arbitrarily or based on stereotypes. Instead of merely focusing on each candidate's past employment history, take a deeper look to discover their unique skill-sets. Choose candidates who have worked in a variety of settings, are comfortable learning new things, actively engage with others, and are able to adapt well to new work environments. Smart people with raw talent can be trained to excel.

Look for lifelong learners and creative individuals. There are employees who do what they are assigned to, and then there are the movers and shakers. Look for the types of candidates who can inspire and motivate your current employees to greatness.

Confidentiality

In accepting the opportunity to serve on a selection committee, each committee member agrees to act in the best interest of the College and the District. All paperwork and deliberations are to be held in strictest confidence, before, during and after the selection is finally made. Each member agrees not to discuss or in any way release information to anyone (beyond the committee and hiring manager or Human Resources as necessary) regarding:

- The identity of the applicants;
- Written materials turned in by the applicant or evaluations made by the committee members about applicants;
- Discussions and deliberations by or about applicants or committee members during or following the interview process; and
- Any other information that relates to the search and selection process.
-

Committee members understand that the failure to maintain confidentiality will not only jeopardize the search and selection process but could also result in violation of Federal or State regulations and incur liability of behalf of the district. Each committee member agrees to call to the attention of the Vice Chancellor of Human Resources and Employee Relations any action which might be interpreted as a breach of confidentiality.

Breaches of confidentiality can result in discipline.

Review of Job Announcement for Applicant Screening

Prior to receiving any application materials from candidates, the Screening Committee shall review the "Requirements" and the "Desirable Skills and Abilities" that are stated on the job announcement and

determine criteria in screening the application materials. The Committee will also pre-determine the appropriate weighting of the criteria, the procedures for rating, the form that will be used, and the procedure that will be used to select candidates for subsequent steps in the process.

Internet Searches

The Office of Human Resources does not routinely conduct internet searches on candidates because of the well-known unreliability of information found on the internet. If you, however, choose to conduct your own research on the internet, you must share whatever information you find with the Office of Human Resources for verification prior to using that information in your evaluation of the candidate or sharing it with other members of the selection committee.

Interview Questions with Key Response Elements (KREs) & Skills Demonstrations

Interview questions and skill demonstrations will comply with current law; be based solely on bona fide, job-related knowledge, skills and abilities as stated in the job announcement; and will be appropriate to the subject matter. Each Screening Committee member shall evaluate the quality of the candidates' responses using the pre-determined set of Key Response Elements and rating system.

Interview questions and skill demonstrations must be job-related, based on the required knowledge, skills and abilities, unbiased, and should have the following characteristics:

- Questions are either direct to obtain information missing from the application or open ended in order to prompt full and complete responses from the candidate.
- Questions can be hypothetical to ascertain how an applicant would respond to a situation involving a specific set of variables. Hypothetical questions allow you to test the values and attitudes of applicants and help you to gauge organizational, communication, and decision-making skills.
- Follow up questions can request elaboration on information already provided (i.e. "Could you give me an example of what you mean by that?" or "I would like to hear more about that."). It is a common misconception that follow up questions are not proper because it means that applicants' interviews are not identical. However, the law does not require interviews to be identical nor do you have to impose such rigidity on the interview process to deflect claims of unequal treatment. As long as all applicants are given a fair opportunity to explain and elaborate on their answers, follow-up questions are permissible—and can be enormously helpful to assessing and comparing candidates. Selection committees need to give all candidates the opportunity to elaborate; and ensure that subtle biases do not make committees more relaxed and conversant with some candidates than others. At the same time, candidates with good interview skills will be more engaging and skillful at developing a dialogue. That is inherent to the interview process.
- Include pre-determined "Key Response Elements" (KREs) that can be used by the Screening Committee to evaluate the quality of the candidate's responses. "Key Response Elements" are lists of desired responses that the Screening Committee can listen for in order to guide their rating and documentation of candidate responses to each interview question. "KREs" are derived from the knowledge, skills and abilities being "tested" by each interview question.

The selection committee will conduct all interviews using predetermined interview questions. Questions should not be asked about an applicant's protected status. For example, asking an applicant

when he or she graduated (to determine skill level) has been interpreted to mean “how old are you?” and is thus improper. There are more appropriate ways to find out whether an applicant is conversant in the latest developments such as: “In the last 5 years we have seen an explosion of literature on _____. Have you had opportunities to become familiar with these developments or apply them in your work?”

Interview Process

The Office of Human Resources is available to assist the Selection Committee with scheduling interviews, meeting candidates, and proctoring skills demonstrations. The interview should be conducted in a comfortable location that is free from outside distractions and that ensures privacy for the participants.

The Selection Committee may choose to give each candidate interviewed a list of the questions (without KREs) to read as the questions are asked by the Selection Committee.

An interview rating form is used by each committee member for each candidate interviewed. The interview rating form will include all of the predetermined interview questions, including a list of the Key Response Elements (KREs).

The Selection Committee should be sure to offer applicants the opportunity to ask questions and clear up misunderstandings which may have arisen during the interview.

Finalists

At the conclusion of the interview process, the Selection Committee will meet to determine which candidates most meet the requirements of the position and best meet the needs of the students, the department/division, the College, and the District. The Selection Committee should only forward the names of candidates as finalists who in the opinion of the members could effectively perform the duties and responsibilities of the position. Finalists can be any number of candidates. There is no “rule of 3” or other number; however, it is desirable to have more than one finalist for the hiring manager to consider.

Finalists are forwarded unranked to the hiring manager, along with their original application packet and Committee rating sheets from each committee member. The Committee should list each finalist’s strengths, as well as other areas or topics that the hiring manager should pursue further during the final interview.

Notifications to Unsuccessful Applicants

Throughout the process, the Chair of the Selection Committee forwards to the Human Resources Office the names of applicants who have been eliminated from further review by the Selection Committee. To inform applicants in a timely manner, requests to send notifications should be forwarded following the paper screening process and following the interview process.

BOARD POLICY 2.20

Equal Employment Opportunity

1. The San Mateo County Community College District is committed to equal employment opportunity and full recognition of the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, language groups and abilities that are represented in its surrounding communities and student body. The Board believes that diversity in the academic environment fosters cultural awareness, mutual understanding and respect, and suitable role models for all students. The District shall demonstrate its commitment to the cultural competence¹ of its employees and students through policies, procedures, training programs, services and activities which promote diversity and mutual respect within the District work force and student body.
2. The San Mateo County Community College District is an equal opportunity employer that shall provide an educational and work environment in which no person is denied access to, or the benefits of, any program or activity of the District on the basis of ethnic group identification, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, or physical or mental ability. This includes District decisions about employment, retention, compensation, promotion, termination and/or other employment status.
3. The District shall monitor the success of equal opportunity in its recruitment, selection, retention and promotional policies and procedures by monitoring outcomes to assure no adverse impact against any person or group of individuals, due to ethnic group identification, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, or physical or mental ability.
4. The District complies with the spirit and law of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended by providing equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. The District shall make reasonable accommodations so that persons of all levels of ability enjoy equal access to all aspects of employment and education in our District, including but not limited to, educational services, selection procedures, retention and promotion. In order to prevent discrimination on the basis of disability, the District will allow an individual with a disability to use a service animal or miniature horse in District facilities and on District campuses in compliance with state and federal law.
5. The District will not tolerate discourteous, offensive or abusive conduct or language including jokes, slurs, derogatory comments, or behaviors or language regarding a person's ethnic group identification, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, or physical or medical condition relating to other employees, students or the public. This includes District decisions about employment, retention, compensation, promotion, termination and/or other employment status.

(Revised November 2011 – Click [here](#) for the most current version)

¹ “Cultural Competence” refers to the skills and ability of individuals to act in a sensitive, inclusive and respectful manner in interactions with persons who are different from themselves.