



**AMERICAN UNIVERSITY**  
W A S H I N G T O N , D C

## **American University Procedures for Dean and Vice Provost Searches**

These procedures apply to searches for the positions of academic unit deans, University Librarian, Deputy Provost and Dean of Faculty, Dean of Undergraduate Education and Vice Provost for Academic Student Services, Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies, Vice Provost for Research, and Vice Provost for Global and Immersive Studies.

The selection and appointment of a strong and diverse cadre of senior administrators is critical to the management and future direction of American University. It is thus in the university's interest that the search process for these administrative positions be thorough, widely understood, and (to the degree possible given concerns around confidentiality) inclusive of community input.

Customarily, a senior administrator search is national (and potentially international) in scope. For certain searches and at the discretion of the provost, a search firm will be engaged to support the work of the search committee and the provost.

In all senior academic administrator searches, the final decision on search committee membership and on selection of the senior administrator to be hired rests with the provost.

### **Search Committee Construction and the Selection of Members**

The purpose of the search committee for a senior administrative hire is not only to screen and evaluate candidates, but also to successfully represent American University to prospective candidates, the very best of whom are likely to already hold attractive positions of significant responsibility. Therefore, the committee should be deliberately composed of members with clear insight, strong judgment, and experience in the relevant aspects of academic and administrative life. They should be widely respected across the university community and be especially able to represent the university's ambitions and values.

Depending on the specific requirements of the posted position, the search committee will examine how the candidates exemplify visionary leadership, manage complex organizations, embody an institution's values, support faculty research and innovative teaching, foster inclusive excellence, prioritize student thriving, work well with others and under pressure, understand and manage complex budgets, handle controversy and conflict, practice shared governance, support institutional fundraising, and manage workload.

Search committees for senior administrative positions may range in size depending on the size and customs of the academic unit or office in question. While it may not be possible for the committee to include a representative from every teaching unit or constituency, the committee's members will be charged with anticipating and balancing the concerns of all those affected by the hire.

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee will periodically review search procedures and these procedures to ensure effective faculty consultation in the appointment of senior administrators. Likewise, the Vice President of Inclusive Excellence will periodically review these procedures to confirm that the university's commitment to inclusive excellence is manifest in all aspects of administrative searches.

*A. Search Committees for School Deans, the University Librarian, the Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies, and the Vice Provost for Global and Immersive Studies*

Each academic unit will establish procedures for electing up to five full-time faculty members as the unit's recommended representatives on the search committee for its new leader. Customarily, responsibility for this election falls to an existing academic committee, such as the unit's executive committee, faculty council, or faculty actions committee. This committee will present the provost with the names of five faculty members selected according to the unit's procedures within 14 calendar days following the announcement of a search. The provost will select three members of the search committee from that list, with at least one holding a term appointment. Similarly, full-time staff in the unit will have an opportunity to elect two of their own as recommended representatives through an election conducted by Staff Council leadership, or through other procedures the Staff Council leadership develops. The provost will select one member of the search committee from that list.

In consultation with the academic unit's leadership—including (as appropriate) its current dean, associate deans, faculty council chair, and senior staff—the provost will appoint a search committee chair and finalize the committee's membership, including additional tenure-line faculty, continuing appointment faculty (when appropriate), term faculty, and full-time staff. All community members engaged in the constitution of the search committee will work to ensure that the committee is sufficiently diverse and that the concerns of the primary segments of the university community are appropriately represented. The provost will typically appoint to the search committee a sitting dean or vice provost, together with an appropriate representative of the Office of Development and Alumni Relations. In the case of searches for Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies and Vice Provost for Global and Immersive Studies, the provost will appoint a sitting dean or vice provost, plus one or more representatives from relevant administrative units. The provost may also appoint a cabinet member, alumni, and/or student representatives.

*B. Search Committees for Deputy Provost and Dean of Faculty, Dean of Undergraduate Education and Vice Provost for Academic Student Services, and Vice Provost for Research*

For hires to senior administrator positions other than those covered in section A, the provost

will consult with representatives of key offices and groups—including the Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and/or affected university offices—to determine the most appropriate structure and makeup of the search committee. The Faculty Senate will provide the provost with the names of up to five faculty members willing to serve on the committee, from whom the provost will choose three, with at least one holding a term appointment. Similarly, the Staff Council will provide the provost with two names, from whom the provost will choose one. These recommendations should be made within 14 calendar days of the announcement of the search.

The provost will then finalize the membership of the search committee, adding additional full-time faculty and staff and appointing a chair. Broad familiarity with the work of the office that the new administrator will supervise should be a primary consideration in the appointment of committee members, both from Academic Affairs and other university divisions. It is no less important, however, that the committee be sufficiently diverse and that the concerns of affected faculty and staff across the university be well represented. The provost will also typically appoint to the search committee a sitting dean or vice provost and may appoint one or two student representatives, as appropriate to the purview of the position.

These procedures do not apply to searches for the positions of Vice Provost for Academic Administration and Vice Provost and Chief Online Officer, which are more administrative in nature. In those instances, the provost will consult with key stakeholders—including the president, members of the cabinet, select deans and vice provosts, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, and Staff Council—to identify strong candidates to serve on those search committees.

### **Search Committee Process and Responsibilities**

Once the search committee is formed, the provost will announce its membership to the university community. The provost will then convene the members of the committee and provide their charge, including an injunction to keep all committee deliberations and the identity of candidates strictly confidential. At the same meeting, or shortly thereafter, the committee will undergo inclusive hiring training in support of the university's Plan for Inclusive Excellence.

During the search, the committee's responsibilities will include contributing to development of a draft position description for review and approval by the provost, soliciting input from the AU community on the qualities required of the new leader, reviewing the candidate pool, identifying a pool of semi-finalists, interviewing the semi-finalists (who will also be interviewed by the provost), and making a recommendation to the provost on which candidates to advance to the finalist round.

During the finalist round, the candidates will typically meet with a broader group of stakeholders, including the president, members of the cabinet, deans, and vice provosts, select faculty and staff leaders, the unit's advisory council (as applicable), and representatives of the Board of Trustees. Based on the input from the stakeholder interviews, the committee will meet with the provost to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each of the finalists. At all

stages of the search, the identity of candidates and search committee deliberations will be kept strictly confidential.

For appointments with tenure, the provost will obtain a recommendation on tenure and rank from the senior faculty of the teaching unit in which the senior administrator will be appointed, in accordance with the *Faculty Manual*. Final selection and offer negotiation with the finalist(s) remain the responsibility of the provost. Final appointment and formal approval of tenure (as applicable) are the responsibility of the Board of Trustees.

### **Exceptions**

These are the customary procedures. In unusual circumstances, senior academic position searches may require a more expedited process, such as limiting the pool to internal candidates, which will be set by the provost in consultation with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, the established academic committee of the academic unit in question (as appropriate), and the president.