

Best Practices for Managing Power Dynamics in Deliberation in Hiring Committees

Why Is This Important?

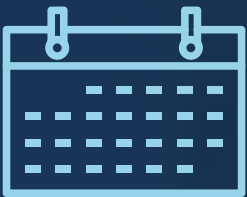
- Being able to manage the influence of power dynamics on decision-making is an important skill.
- Within a committee participants may hold differing levels of power, based on factors such as their roles, preferred communication styles, lived experiences, and length of time at UBC or in Canada. For example, a member of the committee may someday be in charge of evaluating another member(s).
- This can raise concerns about retaliation, for example, for disagreeing with other members of the committee. Moreover, power dynamics can stifle the open communication and sharing of different perspectives that are necessary for better decisions.
- Having conversations within the committee and following inclusive chairing practices can help to reduce the influence power dynamics have on decisions.

Acknowledge and reframe differences in power during the initial meetings

- Cultivate a collegial, warm environment in which diversity and a variety of perspectives are framed as a strength of the group.
- Remind the committee that they represent the interests of the department as a whole, and more broadly, the faculty or college and the university
- Solicit practices that might help members to speak up. For example, some people may want extra time to think or to be asked directly, “What are your thoughts?”
- Open meetings with ice-breaker activities that help members bond over non-committee topics
- Ensure that committee members are introduced to each other and can pronounce each other’s names.



Manage logistics so everyone can participate in decisions



- Communicate key dates so members of the committee can be adequately prepared for each meeting.
- Forecast an estimate of when each stage of the search will be complete.
- Schedule meetings during times that committee members can attend.
- Have an agenda for each meeting and stick to it so members can be prepared for the discussion and participate effectively
- Caution members against going on holiday during key times in the process.
- Ensure that everyone has enough time to go through the applications (especially if teaching duties are significant).

Have multiple, high-quality channels to receive input from the committee

- Especially in large committees, consider using an online survey or shared document to allow all committee members to provide input about a candidate.
- Structure the process so committee members first vet applications independently and then share their filled out rubrics (anonymized, if need be) with the entire committee to read prior to the deliberations meeting.
- Have members reflect on their levels of participation throughout the process, seeking a balance between both speaking and listening, so nobody is over- or under- contributing.
- Actively solicit counter-perspectives from the group.



Create supports to ensure that all voices are able to speak and be heard



- Match students, junior faculty, or less-experienced members with a “buddy” who can provide support, help them prepare, and explain what will happen at each step of the search
- Assign someone who is senior and versed in equity, diversity, and inclusion to serve as the “equity advisor” who can hold the chair accountable and who can (in addition to the chair) bring up concerns about equity in the search process.
- Help members to see equity as a collaborative effort; encourage them to amplify the perspectives of members who are part of historically marginalized groups or who hold less power.