

QUESTION:

Should all the trustees be on the search committee? We have been following most of the suggestions made at the recent workshop: creating a job description, posting the position, forming a search committee. We have formed a Search Committee of 3 board members and 1 staff member and 2 patrons with diverse backgrounds.

1. Is there a reason—other than coordinating additional schedules—that you advised **not** to have all trustees on the search committee? When the search committee was formed there was no debate over having the personnel committee members [trustees] act for the [trustee] board members on the search committee
2. Now that we are getting further into the process, other board members would like to be included. They are questioning the rationale behind not having all trustees as part of the search committee. What should be the role of the non-committee members? Observers at search committee meetings and first interviews or participants?

ANSWER:

As to the size of the Search Committee, there are two advantages to a smaller committee. Most important is the scheduling challenges. It's helpful to have all committee members participate consistently throughout, and that's just easier when the group is smaller. When you get to the interview process, it's also preferable and far more comfortable to have a smaller interview team (5 or 6 versus 10+). Also, "assigning" questions to each committee member to ask is good practice so that everyone can participate in the discussion. The candidate will be more comfortable and candid with a smaller audience.

You'll be bringing finalists back for an interview with the full board and any other groups you want to involve later in the process. If the full board is anxious to review all the resumes that come in, you can certainly make them available for review and comment. Search committees have found that the resumes and interviews quickly fell into three groups:

- clear front runners
- some with possibilities
- not qualified

If the front runners didn't pan out in the interviews or withdrew, then you have the second tier candidates.

Also, you should plan to have the Search Committee chair (a board member) report regularly to the full board on the progress. There's nothing "wrong" with having the full board in on the entire process; it's just more cumbersome, especially if you have a 7-member board or larger.