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Access to Job Candidates

CAUT recommends that academic staff associations negotiate provisions to ensure access to job candidates during the hiring process. Early contact with the association is an opportunity to provide candidates with information and support to help them through the selection process. It also fosters engagement in the association's activities as their career advances.

Association Renewal

Many academic staff associations have experienced and expressed concern about low participation in the association, especially by younger or new members. One strategy to promote association renewal is outreach to new members. This outreach can begin before the member is even appointed. Contact with the association during the hiring process provides candidates with an introduction to the association and its work, providing the potential new hire insight into their rights and obligations during the selection process and after an offer is accepted. An early, positive experience with the association can lead to increased involvement as the member's career continues.

Improved Starting Salaries

CAUT's *Policy Statement on Salary Structure* recommends that "academic staff salaries ... be paid in accordance with a salary grid, with clearly defined floors, ceilings, and criteria for placement on appointment"¹. Associations with grid structures can assist candidates by providing insight into how qualifications and previous experience are counted in determining the initial placement on the grid. In such cases, it is vital that the criteria for determining previous experience are applied consistently for all job candidates.

Salary structures at many institutions, however, are not based on a grid and do not have clear starting salaries. In such situations, job candidates must negotiate the best offer they can. For associations who have not yet negotiated a grid system, they can provide job candidates with information that can help them achieve a fair starting salary as well as information about various entitlements including but not limited to benefit and pension information, moving and housing expenses, research moneys and workload².

The Importance of Face-to-Face Discussions

Several associations provide information to potential new hires on their association's website or prepare pamphlets for job candidates³. While this is one important mechanism for reaching



out to potential new members, face-to-face discussions provide additional benefits to both the candidate and the association. Discussions with candidates may help the association identify any problems or inconsistencies in the hiring process, and flag potential inequities and anomalies. In addition, discussions with the job candidate about the criteria for promotion and tenure help to ensure that there are no additional criteria added to job offers and that new hires are better informed on what they should expect when faced with career decisions.

Current Language

Most agreements require the employer to provide a copy of the collective agreement with any letter of appointment. The language in the Queen's agreement clearly states the purpose of such a provision and further includes a requirement to provide contact information for the Association:

Offer and Acceptance

25.9.1

To enable candidates to obtain advice or assistance on terms and conditions of employment

(a) the advertisement required by Article 25.6.1 (b) and Article 25.10 shall provide that the academic staff at Queen's are governed by a collective agreement between QUFA and the University which is posted at <<http://www.queensu.ca/qufa>>; and

(b) any offer shall be accompanied by a copy of this Agreement, information on how the Association and its representatives can be contacted and any other materials which the Parties to this Agreement feel will be useful to a new Member.⁴

At Western, all short-listed candidates are provided with information on how to contact the association before their interview:

Appointments

5.12.2 *In advance of the interview date all short-listed candidates for Probationary and Tenured Appointments shall be provided with contact information about the Association's webpage.⁵*

Appended to York's agreement is a form letter which must be sent to successful candidates:

Appendix K: Form Letter to Short-listed Candidates

It is agreed that the Administration will inform all Chairs that they must send the following letter to candidates upon being advised that they are the successful candidate.

Dear X:

The York University Faculty Association is the certified bargaining agent of all persons holding appointments as full-time faculty members or full-time librarians employed by York University. The Association is responsible for negotiating the terms and conditions of employment of this group.

In addition to representing the interests of existing employees in this group, if it is requested, the Association will assist candidates who have been advised that they are the successful candidate in preparing to negotiate their potential contract. Assistance must be requested before the letter of appointment is signed.

If you require further information or any advice concerning the negotiation of the terms and conditions of your appointment, please do not hesitate to contact the Association at: 4700 Keele Street, Health, Nursing & Environmental Studies Building, Room 261, M3J 2R6; tel. 416 736 5236; email yufa@yorku.ca.

*Yours Sincerely,
President
York University Faculty Association*

Regina has language that provides both an opportunity for job candidates to contact the association in advance of accepting an offer as well as a mechanism to monitor employment offers so that anomalies can be identified and remedied:

Appointment Offer and Acceptance

14.9

Each academic staff member engaged by the University shall be sent an appointment letter setting forth the conditions of the appointment. The appointment letter shall indicate the URL (uniform resource locator) for the Faculty Association website, specify the conditions under which the member shall become eligible for benefits, and describe the benefits that are available.

An appointment shall not be deemed to have been accepted unless the academic staff member indicates acceptance in writing within the time limit specified in the appointment letter.

A copy of the appointment letter shall be forwarded to the Faculty Association immediately once the University receives notice that an appointment has been accepted. The Faculty Association shall also be notified of any subsequent changes to the terms of employment. Such notice shall be given in a timely manner and before the new terms of employment have been implemented.⁷

Brock has the most comprehensive collective agreement language on access to new hires. Every candidate has a scheduled opportunity to meet with the association during the interview process. Meetings are conducted by BUFA's Hiring Advice Committee, comprised of various faculty members, the Executive Director and the President. After advising in general about salary, office space, research funds, moving allowance, property search, and other items, the candidate is urged to seek direct and more specific counsel from the BUFA office should they be furnished with an offer. The meetings are scheduled by the interviewing department and BUFA requests that they occur before the candidate meets with the Dean.

Article 19.02

d. Candidates for probationary and tenured appointments shall be scheduled to visit the BUFA Office to meet with a representative of the Union prior to accepting an appointment.

Candidates for limited term appointments who visit the campus as part of the appointment process shall be scheduled to visit the BUFA Office to meet with a representative of the Union prior to accepting an appointment.

Candidates for limited term appointments who do not visit the campus as part of the appointment process shall have a telephone consultation scheduled with the BUFA office prior to accepting an appointment.⁸

Conclusion

Negotiated access to job candidates can benefit both the candidate and the academic staff association. It is important that job candidates do not underestimate the importance and permanence of decisions made early in their careers. For example, the decision to opt out of the pension plan early in one's career can have disastrous consequences later. Such decisions are also difficult to remedy. A provision that ensures access to job candidates also allows the association to monitor the hiring process and possibly prevent salary anomalies before they occur. Early, positive contact with potential new hires may lead to increased involvement in association activities throughout their careers.■

Endnotes

1. CAUT *Policy Statement on Salary Structure*, approved by the CAUT Council, May 2008.
2. Many institutions provide reduced course assignments to new hires to allow time for research projects to be established.
3. The Carleton University Academic Staff Association website has a section devoted to resources for job candidates (<http://www.caut.ca/cuasa/candidates.html>).
4. This Collective Agreement between Queen's University Faculty Association and Queen's University at Kingston (hereinafter called the University) 1 May 2008 to 30 April 2011.
5. Faculty Collective Agreement between The University of Western Ontario and The University of Western Ontario Faculty Association July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2010.
6. Collective Agreement between The York University Faculty Association and The Board of Governors of York University 1 May 2006 to 30 April 2009.
7. University of Regina 2005-2008 Collective Agreement (University of Regina Faculty Association representing the University of Regina Academic Staff Members).
8. Collective Agreement between Brock University and the Brock University Faculty Association (BUFA) July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2011.

