Operating Policy: Use of Social Media in the Recruitment and Selection of University Employees

Purpose of Policy: To provide guidelines for search committees' use of social media in the recruitment and selection of University employees.

Social Media and Employee Recruitment, Screening, and Selection

Blogs, social networks and web sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, Second Life and YouTube have become increasingly popular in the workplace, particularly for recruitment. Search committees and hiring units may use social media sites to learn about applicants; however, they should be concerned with the validity of using social media for the screening and selection of employees. That is, does the information found online about an applicant actually predict whether or not that person will do well on the job? Is the information used to make these decisions job-related? Is the information found online even true? Search committees and hiring units are prohibited from basing hiring decisions on anything but verifiable, job-related information. Further, as with all other selection activities, search committees need to be consistent and equitable in their use of social media.

Sites like LinkedIn, for example, can be an excellent tool through which a search committee and/or hiring unit can quickly and easily view information about a candidate's past work history, education, and other job-relevant activities. However, search committees and hiring units must tread carefully here, as protected information—such as race, age, disability, etc.—may also be available online, and accusations of discrimination may be made based on the perception that this personal information was used in the hiring decision.

1. Search committees and hiring units are prohibited from considering this type of personal information during the selection process.

2. Be transparent and honest about your identity. Search committees and hiring units should never use fake identities or engage in "pre-texting" to gain access to information on social networks.

If a search committee and/or hiring unit intends on using social media in the applicant screening process, you must refrain from investigating an individual until after the applicants' resumes and credentials have been reviewed and only when references are being checked. Further, only information attributable to a verified source may be considered.

Entities Affected by the Policy: All individuals (whether or not employed by or enrolled at the University), participating in the recruitment and selection of University employees are subject to this policy.

Lines of Authority:

Responsible Administrator and Office: Equal Opportunity Officer
Office for Institutional Equity and Compliance

Contact Person in that Office: Jana Estergard
**Distribution of Policy:** The policy will be incorporated into the existing search guidelines. In addition, the policy will be distributed to all hiring administrators and reviewed during search briefings.

**Effective Date:** October 1, 2010

New Policy/Procedure _X_  Revision to Existing Policy/Procedure ___

Initiated by: Office for Institutional Equity and Compliance

Approved by: President Cofer