

Executive Summary

St. Petersburg College

Review of Hiring Policies, Practices and Procedures

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 1, 2008, Practical Human Resources Solutions was retained by the St. Petersburg College Board of Trustees to review the hiring practices at St. Petersburg College (SPC). Ron Hamilton, chief consultant for Practical Human Resources Solutions (PHRS), conducted the review. This was comprised of two major tasks. The first task was to:

- review college hiring policies, procedures and practices,
- perform a 12-month hiring and selection practice audit to ascertain compliance with state and federal laws and,
- make recommendations to correct any problems identified from the audit, including suggestions on how to improve the hiring and selection practices and the perception of those practices, if necessary.

For the second task, PHRS was asked to review the circumstances in respect to the hiring of Violetta Sweet. PHRS was given the authority to contact and interview anyone to obtain the information necessary for completion of the assignment. PHRS was also given the latitude to follow up on any information obtained, regardless as to where it would lead, so that a thorough review could be conducted.

Mr. Hamilton began his onsite review October 6, 2008. He met with Syd McKenzie, JD, general counsel, Doug Duncan, vice president-administrative services, business services and information systems and Patty Jones, PHR, executive director of human resources and public affairs to cover the scope of the assignment. After the meeting Mr. Hamilton met with Mr. Duncan for additional background information as Mr. Duncan was previously the head of Human Resources (HR). After meeting with Mr. Duncan, Mr. Hamilton met with the Human Resources staff to gain an understanding of the college's hiring policies, practices and procedures. Ms. Jones was designated as the point person along with assistance from Cathy Ladewig, assistant director of human resources. They prepared a manual of hiring polices and procedures for Mr. Hamilton to review. This was very helpful.

Prior to beginning the college's hiring polices and procedures review, Mr. Hamilton studied the State Board of Education Administrative Rules as they relate to hiring (Chapter 6A-14 Community College). After the hiring policies and procedures review, he met with seven different HR employees about the practices and their involvement in those practices. The employees were informed that their answers to the questions would remain confidential so that they could be free to discuss any issue. Mr. Hamilton then met with Pamela S. Smith, MBA, CLA legal services coordinator and director equal access/equal opportunity (the EA/EO officer) to discuss her role in the hiring process and met with Mr. McKenzie to discuss some of the legal issues from an educational institution standpoint. Finally, Mr. Hamilton met with five hiring managers to discuss their role in the hiring process.

After gaining a thorough understanding of the hiring policies, practices and procedures, Mr. Hamilton audited the personnel files of 12 recently hired employees representing the Career, Administrative/Professional and Faculty position categories. Mr. Hamilton also reviewed the personnel and hiring records of 10 additional employees. These names had been brought to his

attention by two anonymous telephone calls and by a document received by the Board of Trustees attorney.

Mr. Hamilton then examined various audit and accreditation reports regarding hiring practices or issues. There were nine accrediting reports and/or audits reviewed: eight referred to faculty credentials and hiring and one to general hiring practices.

Regarding the hiring of Ms. Sweet, Mr. Hamilton reviewed the hiring file and her personnel file. He interviewed individually Karen Kaufman-White, PhD, provost, Anne Cooper, PhD, senior vice president, Ms. Jones, Mr. Duncan and Steve Johnson, grants coordinator. Mr. Hamilton also interviewed Carl M. Kuttler, JD, president with Mr. McKenzie in attendance. Ms. Sweet requested that she receive the questions in writing rather than through a face-to-face interview. Finally, Mr. Hamilton spoke to Dr. Kuttler about the overall hiring practices at SPC.

CURRENT HIRING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SPC has grown rapidly, especially over the past eight years, in the number of programs, campuses, students and people employed. Naturally, there would be a tremendous increase in hiring at the college. Current hiring practices at SPC are based on federal and state employment regulations, the State Board of Education Administration Rules Chapter 6A-14-Community Colleges, requirements by the appropriate accrediting body for faculty positions and the Board of Trustees Rules.

Hiring Practices Based on Position Category

There are hiring policies and procedures for each of the position categories. The categories are Budgeted Career Service (both hourly/non-exempt and exempt), Budgeted Administrative and Professional (A&P) (non-faculty), Budgeted Faculty, Non-budgeted Faculty (adjunct), and Other Personnel Services (OPS) (non-faculty, non-budgeted/temporary help). The hiring process can be characterized as a decentralized process in that much of the screening and almost all of the interviewing is conducted by hiring managers (department and campus) not HR. As a result of the tremendous growth in hiring over the past several years, SPC developed its own automated employment system to support the hiring process. This system allows applicants to view open positions, apply for open positions and check position status. The system also allows HR to conduct preliminary screening for minimum requirements, permits the EA/EO officer to review applicant pool diversity and allows the hiring manager (after EA/EO officer approval) to review applications and to arrange interviews. The system helps facilitate a high-volume, decentralized employment process.

The front end of the hiring process is similar for all positions with the exception of the adjunct and OPS positions. Budgeted Career Service, A&P and Faculty positions are posted on the website after an approval process.

There may or may not be additional advertising depending upon the type of position. Applicants, both internal and external, apply via the college website. The applications are prescreened by HR to ensure that the minimum qualifications are met. If there is any uncertainty, HR sends the application on through the process. The pool of applicants is then sent to the

EA/EO officer to determine whether or not the group is race and gender diverse. Once approved by the EA/EO officer, HR is notified and releases the pool of applicants to the hiring manager. At this stage, there are differences in procedures based on the category of position.

Budgeted Career Service Positions

For Budgeted Career Service, once the pool of applicants has been released by HR, the hiring manager conducts further screening to determine which applicants should be interviewed. The hiring manager then schedules and conducts the interviews. Some hiring managers use interview panels and others prefer one-on-one interviews. The final candidate is then interviewed by Nevis Herrington (a former HR department head) to ensure the candidate seems to be a fit, based on the interview and information available at that time. This is akin to an interview with HR as Mr. Herrington is a paid consultant.

After that, the hiring manager makes the final decision on which candidate to recommend for hire. From there, HR conducts due-diligence including but not limited to criminal background checks, reference checks, and verification of other credentials. (This is true of the A&P and Faculty positions as well.) If the candidate remains viable after such due-diligence, HR sends a summary of the recommendation via e-mail to the president, asking for final approval to extend the offer. If approved, HR makes the offer.

Budgeted Administrative and Professional Positions

For A&P positions, the pool of applicants is released by HR to the hiring manager after EA/EO approval. The hiring manager screens to determine which applicants should be interviewed, selects applicants to be interviewed, schedules and conducts the interview. In some instances, there is an interview team and in some A&P positions, there can be a search and screen committee. Once the hiring manager has a final recommended candidate, the recommendation is forwarded to HR. From there, HR conducts due-diligence including but not limited to criminal background checks, reference checks, and verification of academic/other credentials. If the candidate remains viable after such due-diligence, there is an interview arranged with the president. The president by practice interviews nearly all A&P finalists. The hiring manager then makes the hiring decision with input from the president. If approved, HR makes the offer.

Budgeted Faculty Positions

For Budgeted Faculty positions, the pool of applicants is released by HR to the hiring manager after EA/EO approval. Regular full-time (i.e., budgeted) Faculty positions are subject to a screening committee whose members are recommended by the hiring manager and reviewed/appointed by the president to ensure diversity. The screening committee reviews applications and each committee member independently develops a list of applicants they believe merit further consideration. The lists are forwarded to HR, which compiles the suggestions into one list and then forwards that list to the hiring manager (often a dean), who is not privy to which committee members recommended which person. These lists are for the hiring manager's consideration and are just one factor for the hiring manager to consider when deciding whom to interview; they are not considered a vote on candidates. The hiring manager calls together an interview committee that may or may not include members of the original screening committee.

- Following interviews, the hiring manager forwards a recommendation to HR. From there, HR conducts due-diligence including but not limited to criminal background checks, reference checks, and verification of academic/other credentials. If the candidate remains viable after such due-diligence there is an interview arranged with the president. The president by policy interviews nearly all faculty finalists. The hiring manager then makes the hiring decision with input from the president. If approved, HR makes the offer. It should be noted that Adjunct Faculty positions are posted and program chairs have access to these postings. There usually is not a search/screen committee for adjunct positions.

OPS/Adjunct and Acting/Interim Budgeted Positions

For OPS/Adjunct non-budgeted positions, there is no requirement that they be posted since these are temporary positions without benefits. Some managers choose to have the position posted because they may be looking for a unique skill. There is a request process and there is an individual in HR who handles OPS/Adjunct hiring exclusively.

For Acting/Interim budgeted positions, when a position is to be vacated two months or longer due to a resignation or request for leave of an employee or other reasons, the president can appoint a person on an acting basis and the individual may or may not meet the minimum requirements for education or experience. If the position becomes a regular budgeted position, the person in the acting position may apply. Acting positions are budgeted with benefits.

INVESTIGATION AND FINDINGS

The ratio of hires (in all categories) to the number of HR employees is large in comparison to other colleges and organizations. The hiring volume has increased over the past eight years resulting in the development of a "home grown" automated employment process. This system, developed by HR and the Web and Instructional Technology Service Group, appears to support the HR department well in the volume of applicants and hires. In fact, the system has such a good reputation that some other Florida colleges have implemented this system and many others are considering using it.*

As a result of having this system in place, procedures were implemented that facilitate the hiring process. This made the auditing process relatively easy since there are forms that capture each part of the hiring process. These forms are checked off at each major stage of the process and are kept in a hiring file.

Compliance Review

The procedures for all aspects of hiring appear to comply with all federal and state employment and anti-discrimination regulations, the State Board of Education Administration Rules Chapter 6A-14-Community Colleges and the Board of Trustees Rules. Potential issues

* SPC has offered the system to other community colleges without a fee. The cost to the other colleges would only come from internal system programming and implementation.

were identified with some of the Board of Trustee rules. These issues could cause the perception of "loopholes" in the hiring process (see recommendations).

In respect to the accrediting organizations, faculty hiring met or exceeded standards with the following organizations:

- Accrediting Commission, Inc.
- American Board of Funeral Service Education
- American Veterinary Medical Association
- Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education
- Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education
- Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (Orthotics and Prosthetics)
- Commission on Dental Accreditation
- National League for Nursing
- SACS

In addition, the State of Florida Auditor General's operational audit had only one recommendation regarding hiring, which had to do with fingerprinting requirements at one location. This has since been corrected.

Personnel File Review

For the hiring file audit, 12 files of individuals who had been hired over the past 12 months were randomly selected. The employees selected represented the Career Service, A&P, and Faculty categories and some that transitioned from an acting role to a full time position. All policies and procedures appeared to be followed. Each hiring file had the application, the procedural check-off form, interview notes and appropriate memos for the hire. The result of the audit indicated a very thorough following of procedures.

Additional Information Review

During the audit process, Mr. Hamilton received two anonymous phone calls at his office and was provided with a letter received by the board of trustees' attorney stating the names of eight individuals who the writer claimed were hired for political reasons or due to friendly relationships with the president. Mr. Hamilton met with the board attorney and Terrence Brett, trustee, to discuss whether or not these items fell into the scope of the review. It was decided that Mr. Hamilton would investigate the questions brought about by the phone calls and the letter to the board attorney.

One of the phone calls Mr. Hamilton received claimed that one of the individuals in HR was a godchild of the president and was placed into his/her job because of that relationship. Mr. Hamilton verified that the claim was totally unfounded. The other call was from an individual who provided the name of a person he/she claimed was working in a position that was never posted and that the individual was being paid outside of normal guidelines. Mr. Hamilton investigated and determined that the individual did in fact work for SPC for two months in an OPS position. This followed proper procedure as SPC policy states that OPS positions do not have to be posted. Mr. Hamilton also verified that the individual was paid within the normal guidelines for an OPS administrative and professional position. It is possible that the person who

called was unaware that the position was an OPS position because he/she was correct that it was not posted.

In respect to the eight names provided to the Board Attorney, one of them was the HR professional mentioned above. This claim had already been reviewed and determined to have no foundation. Mr. Hamilton then requested the hiring files of the seven other individuals to determine whether or not the positions were posted and to determine whether or not the individual met the minimum requirements for the position. Mr. Hamilton's review found that all of the positions were posted, the seven individuals were each in a pool with other candidates and all of them possessed the minimum requirements of the job, with the possible exception of one individual. This particular individual's degree may not have been the degree required (a matter of judgment) but he/she had a vast amount of experience for the position, which could take the place of the degree. Experience is often considered in lieu of a degree in many organizations. Regardless, proper procedure was followed because even if the degree or experience does not match the requirements, the policies state that "other comparable qualifications of a candidate may be considered by the president in lieu of those suggested in a position description..." (BOT Rule 6hx23-2-02). However, this Board of Trustees rule can be strengthened (see recommendations).

The audit found no violations of hiring policy or procedure in any of the eight hiring files.

HR Staff and Hiring Manager Comments during Review

From the interviews with the HR staff and the hiring managers, it appears that there is relatively high satisfaction with the automated system. There seems to be a good understanding that the decentralized approach to the hiring process is necessary because a centralized approach would be cost prohibitive. There were comments shared that SPC funding "is going to the right place -- academics." There were however, some findings that are worth noting and have helped form the recommendations for change noted later on in this document:

- None of the hiring managers interviewed for this review have had formal interview training. Although SPC offers this, the people conducting much of the interviewing have not taken advantage of it.
- Some of the HR staff and some of the hiring managers mentioned that more in-depth applicant screening at the front end would help with ensuring minimum qualifications.
- The president interviews nearly all A&P finalists and Faculty finalists. This is written policy for Faculty. There is a HR representative present during the interviews as well. Even so, this is an unusual practice based on the size of the organization. For the most part, hiring managers like it because it is "another set of eyes" to help ensure the college hires the right person. There were some comments that the president should not have to get as involved with positions at this level, however.
- There appears to be some vagueness with how hiring managers determine minimum qualifications. The term "other related administrative duties" is often interpreted differently.

- One comment shared was that hiring managers are being contacted by volumes of applicants to check application status. This individual believes that there should be a better way of communicating with applicants. Presently an applicant can check the system which will indicate the position is "open," "being reviewed" or "filled." Apparently there are numerous applicants that fall into middle category and it can be a while before the position status changes.

INTERVIEW WITH DR. KUTTLER

Prior to the interview with Dr. Kuttler about Violetta Sweet, a discussion took place about hiring at SPC. Dr. Kuttler believes that the decentralized hiring approach works well partly because he has a management team of 20 who get involved in the process. He is very proud that the SACS accreditation indicated that SPC hires "great" faculty.

Dr. Kuttler stated that much of SPC's success has to do with the way the organization hires employees. He believes that he should be as involved as he presently is with interviewing. Dr. Kuttler currently interviews nearly all finalist for the A&P and the Faculty positions. He has had a long standing philosophy of the need to "inspect what you expect." Dr. Kuttler mentioned that his colleague Dr. John Roueche, a nationally recognized authority in community college education, helped instill this in him.*

The benefit Dr. Kuttler sees in this process is that he knows the SPC culture and has good judgment as to who would fit best in the college system. Dr. Kuttler stated that he believes it is a motivating factor for the candidate to know that the president of the college wants to conduct an interview. When Mr. Hamilton mentioned the potential downside to this practice (see recommendation) Dr. Kuttler responded that he believes the benefits outweigh the negatives.

Dr. Kuttler also stated that he personally selects the members of the search and screen committees as he wants to ensure balance from a diversity and academic discipline standpoint. Dr. Kuttler mentioned that only about seven to 10 candidates were eliminated from the process over the past five years as a result of his interviewing.

Assuming that Mr. Hamilton may ask, Dr. Kuttler discussed the hiring of referrals by high-profile, well-known, community members or political leaders. He initiated the discussion because he wanted Mr. Hamilton to get a "real understanding of what happens as president of St. Petersburg College." Dr. Kuttler stated that he is often asked by well-known community members or politicians if there are positions available for friends or relatives. It is understandable since Dr. Kuttler is well-known himself, SPC is a large employer and the school offers community and government education.

Dr. Kuttler explained the referral hiring process he employs and in fact, went over the paperwork of at least 17 examples that he brought to the interview. He maintains a log of who called, who is being referred and what the status is. When he gets a call from a well-known

*At Dr. Kuttler's request, Mr. Hamilton spoke to Dr. Roueche by telephone. Dr. Roueche stated that a college president should interview for every tenured position and for most higher level Administrative positions. He indicated that he knew of some colleges where the president does similar interviewing as Dr. Kuttler.

individual, he always returns the call. These are people who may have been very helpful to the college in the past. Dr. Kuttler mentioned that because he is responsive it helps solidify the relationship even when the referral was not interviewed or hired. He said that he normally contacts referred individuals and if they are interested in working at the college, he refers them to the official application process. Of the 17 Dr. Kuttler mentioned, only one or two were actually hired. Several were never interviewed because they did not have the requisite qualifications. Dr. Kuttler stated that he does not hire anyone outside of the normal hiring process.

INVESTIGATION OF THE HIRING OF VIOLETTA SWEET

The audit of the hiring of Violetta Sweet for the position of director, international studies entailed reviewing Ms. Sweet's personnel and hiring files, examining the 65 applications received for the position and conducting interviews with Drs. Kuttler, White, and Cooper, as well as with Ms. Jones, Mr. Duncan and Mr. Johnson. Per her request, the interview with Ms. Sweet was conducted in writing. Additionally, the review entailed investigating the statements made by two individuals that confidentially contacted Mr. Hamilton.

Background

To begin his investigation, Mr. Hamilton reviewed an abundance of information and had numerous discussions regarding the background of the International Program at SPC. It became apparent that there was much work to be done in a very short period based on commitments the program had for the 2008 school year. When the director of the international program resigned in September 2007, there was great concern on how things were going to be accomplished. At the time, it was believed that there was more work completed than there actually was.

Dr. White, special assistant to the president at the time, had taken on the additional responsibility for supervising the international program. Upon the resignation of the director, she then had to become more actively involved in the running of the program. This caused the immediate need for help.

Investigation into the Application and Hiring of Ms. Sweet

Dr. Kuttler has known Ms. Sweet for several years but only saw her a few times in the past couple years. He saw Ms. Sweet in early September at a dinner for foreign students where she expressed interest in working at the college again. Dr. Kuttler knew there were no openings in Financial Aide where she worked previously, but he encouraged her to see the director of international programs. He stated that she worked for the college previously and was an excellent employee from all reports. Ms. Sweet completed an employment application in mid-September but not for any specific position. Later in September, she went to the former director to inquire about working in the international program. Around that time, Mr. Duncan mentioned to Ms. Jones that Ms. Sweet's name came up in a discussion with Dr. Kuttler. Ms. Jones wrongly assumed this was for the international program director position being vacated and wrote an email to Dr. Kuttler expressing concern that Ms. Sweet did not have the requisite qualifications. Ms. Jones was then informed that Ms. Sweet was being not considered for the position being vacated but for a lower level one (there was a lower level position on hold).

In October 2007, Ms. Sweet contacted Dr. Kuttler asking for help in arranging tours for a trip she was planning to Washington DC. Approximately one week later, Dr. Kuttler realized that the Community Colleges for International Development (CCID) Conference was taking place at the same time and that there may be important information to obtain in respect to SPC's international initiatives. Dr. Kuttler knew Ms. Sweet's background and asked her if she would represent SPC on a consulting basis and attend the conference on SPC's behalf. Dr. Kuttler informed Dr. White of Ms. Sweet's interest in the international program area.

Dr. White talked with Ms. Sweet about the conference before she traveled to Washington, DC. There was no discussion about working in International at this time. She asked Ms. Sweet to prepare a report of her findings. SPC agreed to remunerate Ms. Sweet \$500 a day for the two-day conference. Included in that \$1,000 fee was the writing of the report requested by Dr. White. Additionally, Ms. Sweet was to be reimbursed for her airline ticket change fee and for her hotel accommodations. The hotel room was booked with the president's credit card. This is a long standing practice at SPC. Dr. Kuttler is reimbursed when his card is used in this way.

After her return from Washington in mid November 2007, Ms. Sweet met with Dr. White to present her report. At that meeting, the acting position of director, international studies was discussed. Dr. White stated that Ms. Sweet's previous experience with SPC, her finance and accounting background and the report from the conference were factors in her decision to offer her the acting position. In addition, Dr. White spoke to Mr. Johnson, who also attended the conference, to assess her work style and demeanor at the conference.

Dr. White said she would have considered other candidates but there was no one else that she knew of who was available for the acting director position. Ms. Sweet began in the position of acting director, international studies on December 3, 2007. Dr. White asserted that Dr. Kuttler had no influence in her decision to hire Ms. Sweet and Dr. Kuttler stated that there was never a predetermination by him for Ms. Sweet to work in the international area.

Director of International Studies Position Posting

The director, international studies was posted as a regular position after budgets were finalized on May 2, 2008. Ms. Sweet applied for the position on May 14, 2008. During the posting period 65 people applied for the position. HR eliminated two of those applications as they clearly did not meet the position qualifications. The pool of applicants then went to EA/EO for review. After the pool was cleared by EA/EO, HR released the pool to Dr. White.

Dr. White and Dr. Cooper would be involved with the interviews. Dr. Cooper asked Dr. White to determine five candidates to be interviewed. Dr. White screened the applicant pool and selected five candidates, one of whom was Ms. Sweet.*

Dr. White observed that many of the applicants that appeared qualified were actually at a higher level than what the position required. Of the five candidates, one was not interviewed because she found another position; one was from Montana and it was determined there was no

* Mr. Hamilton also screened every application based on the job description and found 43 that were not qualified.

need for relocation (the candidate was informed), one was deemed not a good fit for the position, one was a good candidate but appeared to be a better fit for another international position, which he ultimately accepted and Ms. Sweet who was deemed the best candidate.

Dr. Kuttler recused himself from the interview and selection process because he knew Ms. Sweet. Ms. Sweet was offered the position and officially became director, international studies on July 1, 2008.

Findings

Throughout his investigation, Mr. Hamilton determined there were no violations of SPC hiring policies or procedures in respect to the hiring of Ms. Sweet. However, some of the "rules" and practices that currently exist did contribute to the perception of inequity in the process.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

The following recommendations are based on Mr. Hamilton's review of the SPC hiring practices, polices and procedures and the examination of the circumstances surrounding the hire of Ms. Sweet.

Recommendations

1. *Change the Board of Trustees rule regarding the usage of "acting" or "interim" positions and tighten controls so the rule cannot be construed as a backdoor into a position. The current rule states:*

"When a position is vacant or is expected to be vacant for at least two-months due to the resignation or request for leave of an employee or other reason, the president may recommend the appointment of a person on an acting basis, for as long as it is deemed appropriate by the president, who may or may not meet the education or experience requirements of the position."

SPC should consider posting all acting or interim positions for a specified period of time to ensure that there is opportunity for qualified internal and external candidates to apply for the position. Other considerations include:

- Allowing the possibility of acting/interim positions only for jobs that already exist, not newly created ones.
- Requiring that the manager requesting the acting/interim designation demonstrate that a concerted effort was made to fill the position in another way and to document the special circumstances that made the designation a requirement.
- Having the board approve the acting/interim position if the position reports to the president.

It is not unusual to have acting positions since this is a tool to help with unusual circumstances. However, the way that it is allowed by policy can at least be perceived as a way to get into a position where qualifications are questionable.

2. *Strengthen the Board of Trustees rule regarding the president having the ability to use position description requirements as hiring guidelines only.* The rule currently states:

“Qualifications listed in a position description are used as a guideline to hiring. Other comparable qualifications of a candidate may be considered by the president in lieu of those suggested in a position description.”

There are occasions when it is necessary to hire without the required educational background or experience level. The rule should include statements such as, “this will be considered only after a concerted effort to solicit qualified candidates” and “the candidate can uniquely contribute to the mission of the college or the strategic diversity initiatives.” By not having a stronger statement, it gives the appearance that the president can change requirements for any reason. There is no evidence that this has been an issue, but it can create the wrong impression.

3. *Change the practice of the president interviewing all finalists for A&P and Faculty positions.* It is a Board of Trustees rule for Faculty positions and a practice for A&P positions. The President should be involved with higher level management positions, such as Director and above, or what may be deemed appropriate.

It is recognized that there are benefits in having the Dr. Kuttler as involved in the hiring process as he is. Dr. Kuttler can help determine the right fit into the SPC culture and his involvement can be recruitment tool in demonstrating to candidates that the president feels that the position is very important to SPC. Also, many of the hiring managers interviewed believe that Dr. Kuttler’s involvement is a good “double check” on their recommendation. Although there are some colleges where the president is as involved as Dr. Kuttler, most colleges and most organizations the size of SPC or larger do not have the president as involved.

There are two reasons why this change is recommended. First, there can be a perception created that the president will hire for reasons other than whether or not the person is the best fit for the position or that people will be eliminated from the process for reasons that have nothing to do with the qualifications or ability to do the job. Dr. Kuttler’s high profile in the community can exacerbate this problem. While there is no evidence of this, the perception could be there. Secondly, hiring decisions in large organizations are not usually made or approved by the president or CEO beyond their direct reports and those being supervised by their direct reports. The president interviewing and selecting candidates below that level can have a negative effect in that managers may feel they lack the kind of autonomy needed to make good decisions.

4. *Require that hiring managers attend interviewing training.* The college offers interviewing training but none of the hiring managers interviewed have attended. Although many have learned on their own or from others there is a need for a more consistent approach. This training should include the legal aspects of interviewing to minimize the potential of discrimination litigation and should also cover resume screening for minimum requirements. If SPC wishes to continue with a decentralized hiring process, then those most responsible for applicant screening and hiring need to be fully educated and trained.
5. *Ensure that the job requirements on the job description are more specific and less vague.* For example, “related administrative experience” has different meanings to different

managers doing the screening. This is something that should be completed jointly by HR and the hiring manager.

Observations

The following observations were made by Mr. Hamilton during his review. They include considerations SPC may want to think about regarding its hiring processes and practices.

1. *The OPS positions do not need to be posted because of the immediacy of the need.* Some of the positions are posted and others are not. To the extent possible, SPC should consider posting all of the OPS positions so that employees do not get the impression that someone was hired without following the process. This does not mean the college should wait to hire the OPS employee. Rather, this just clarifies the classification of the hire.
2. *When full time faculty positions become available, a large percentage of the candidate pool is usually adjunct faculty.* SPC should consider having an internal search committee rule to have a certain percentage (30% or so) that are from the outside to better balance the pool. It almost appears that the only way to get a full time position is to become an adjunct first. This is not the intention of the hiring process.
3. *Some managers suggested that there should be more or better screening before they receive the applications.* SPC should consider having a more experienced person in HR conduct the initial screening. This would require dialogue between HR and the hiring managers to get a full understanding of the position requirements.
4. *The demographics of the SPC workforce (and around the U.S. in general) indicate that there will be more people exiting the workforce and less people entering the workforce with the necessary skills.* SPC might consider implementing a formal succession planning process to help identify future leaders. Right now, as is the case with many colleges, when a person in a high level position resigns or retires, there is no one prepared internally to replace that person. By having a succession planning process, SPC can identify high potential employees and develop them further so they are prepared to take on the higher level responsibility when the time comes. This way there will be a pipeline of talent available instead of undertaking a costly cross-country candidate search. It will also serve to increase employee satisfaction and motivation.
5. *Because of Dr. Kuttler's highly visible stature in the community, he needs to continue to ensure that the hiring process is beyond reproach.* Dr. Kuttler should continue to maintain his contact log. He might also consider partnering with HR so they have knowledge of the contact as well and can respond to any issues that may arise as a result of the contact.

CONCLUSION

In summary, SPC has experienced tremendous growth over the past several years, which has impacted the volume of hiring and the practices and procedures involved. The systems and processes in place appear to facilitate the higher volume of hiring very effectively. Judging by the accreditation reports, the quality of hiring appears to be high especially with Faculty. The hiring of Career Services employees appears to be enhanced by having Mr. Herrington involved

in the process. Administrative and Professional hiring is also effective but does not have a search/screen committee like Faculty (with the exception of some positions) nor does it have a person like Mr. Herrington involved in the process. All of the hiring is done on a decentralized basis, which makes sense based on the resources available and the number of different campus locations.

Although the hiring processes have changed over the past few years to accommodate the high volume, it appears that some of the policies, rules and practices have not. As a result, there is a misperception that there are loopholes in the hiring process. This misperception is also compounded by the fact that Dr. Kuttler is a very visible person in the community and his entrepreneurial style in the hiring process can be easily scrutinized.

This is what happened in the case of the hiring of Ms. Sweet. The hiring policies and practices should be changed so any misperceptions can be minimized. If some of the rules and practices can be changed as recommended, the hiring process will be that much more effective and successful.

PHRS thanks everyone involved in the interviewing process for their cooperation and especially is indebted to HR for providing support in completing the review.