

Confidentiality is the foundation of a credible search committee and trustworthy search process. A breach of confidentiality threatens a successful outcome in two ways. First, it may result in the immediate termination of the search, a serious loss of time and money and potentially viable candidates. Second, it may cause the most qualified candidates to withdraw from the search, because they hear false inaccurate information. In short, confidentiality is an absolute requirement to be understood and honored by everyone on the search team, from the first meeting until the conclusion of the search.

1. All discussions among committee members are confidential. The candidates or colleagues should not know who is on the search committee. Obviously after interviews the candidate will know but it should be kept confidential as long as possible.
2. Searches with internal candidates are difficult for all of those involved, and can result in feelings of resentment among colleagues or applicants. Some of this is inevitable, and the situation will be awkward. It is important to follow search procedures in an attempt to conduct a fair search.
3. Any communication received from candidates should be forwarded to HR. You really should not answer anything related to an open search. Internal candidates should undergo the same procedures as external candidates. We understand internal candidates are different in that you may see them in class or the hallway. But you should always follow the principle of equal treatment.
4. Every effort should be made to avoid discussing the search in hallways, classrooms, or any unclosed areas. Search business should not be discussed during normal departmental meetings. Informal communications with internal candidates or colleagues often lead to misunderstandings and hurt feelings.
5. Search committee members should not be discussing applicants or the search with anyone outside of the search committee. For example, if an applicant was referred by a faculty member and that faculty member asks you about the search, you should not share any information with them, good or bad. They should not know the status of the search or of the applicant. An appropriate response is, "I can't discuss an on-going search." If asked about an internal candidate by a colleague or the candidate themselves, it should not go beyond "I can't discuss the search." Refer them to HR.
6. Internal candidates should not be informed of their status, i.e. if they are not selected for an interview, until all candidates are notified. The point here is that if the internal candidate is a better fit for another position, you do not want them to know they did not make the cut in this position. If an external candidate is chosen, the internal candidates should not be informed before the offer has been made and accepted. It is not recommended to provide negative reasons to the unsuccessful candidate. Personal comments on the candidate's performance are acceptable, especially if they might benefit his or her performance in the future.