

From Preparation to Partnership

Best Practices for Supporting Searches in Higher Education

Kara Miller, University of Oregon

In collaboration with Jenny Carron, Boston University

February 25, 2026



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Why I'm Passionate



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Today's Focus

Effective search support

Practical tools you can use immediately

Moving from support > strategic partner

What You'll Gain From This Session



Clear roles and timelines



Communication tools



Candidate experience strategies



Confidence as a partner

**Have you supported a
search before?**



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The Challenge – Complex, High-Stakes, and Stressful



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The Opportunity – Culture Shaping, Reputation Building, and Career Forming



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From Support to Strategic Partner



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Old Model

Process Support

- Schedule meetings
- Send materials
- Track logistics

New Model

Strategic Partner

- Shape process
- Align stakeholders
- Protect equity & experience

What Partnership Looks Like

- We define expectations early
- We design communication plans
- We set the tone of the search

We don't just make searches happen, we make them successful.

Understanding the Search Lifecycle



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Search Lifecycle

Position Announced	Search chair appointed – Request to open position – RFP confirmed
Description & Charge	Draft & approval – Charge issued – Clarify committee input
Committee Formed	Membership finalized – Invites sent – Added to HR portal
Planning	Set logistics – Finalize position profile
Launch	Position posted – Shared on HR site
Review	Committee screening – P&T review
Visits	Interviews – Open forum – Stakeholder meetings
Feedback	Feedback forms – Committee recommendations
Offer	Provost decision – Offer letter – Hire announced

Position Announced



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Key Actions

- Provost appoints Search Chair
- Request to open position submitted
- Search firm RFP confirmed (if there is a search firm involved)

Your Strategic Role

Early Alignment and Clarity:

- Understand the RFP and contractual scope
- Initial meetings:
 - EA + Provost – leadership’s expectations
 - EA + Search Chair – establish working norms and communication styles
 - EA + Search Firm – confirm roles, escalation paths, and decision timelines

Level Up:

- Establish search firm and chair relationships early
- Serve as point of connection and process guide

Description & Charge



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Key Actions

- Position description drafted and refined
- Required reviews completed (HR, Provost, others as applicable)
- Provost issues the charge to the search committee

Your Strategic Role

Protect the process from **rollback**

Sequencing Matters:

- Reviews occur in the correct order
- Scope of committee input is clearly defined before sharing

Level Up:

- Act as the memory of the institution
 - You know who needs to see what, and in what order, based on past searches and institutional norms

Committee Formed



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Key Actions

- Committee membership finalized
- Invitations extended on behalf of the Provost or other leadership depending on search
- Committee entered into HR portal

Structural steps that give people access to materials, instructions and the information they need to participate fully.

Your Strategic Role

Setting the Committee Up for Success

- Support the Chair in intentional committee composition
- Coordinate with search firm on meetings and materials
- Align materials with institutional requirements
 - Manage the flow of information

Level Up:

- Clarify committee role, scope and expectations
- Manage information flow to enable work without overwhelm

Planning



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Key Actions

- Search firm, Chair, and staff align on logistics and timeline
- Position profile finalized and approved
 - This is the document candidates will see - it needs to be accurate and consistent with the position description.
- Committee meeting cadence established

Your Strategic Role

Alignment and Expectations:

- Coordinate meetings with the academic calendar
- Confirm messaging on finalist numbers and process milestones

Level Up:

- Ensure consistency between Chair, leadership and committee
- Anticipate misalignment and resolve it before it reaches the group

Launch



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Key Actions

- Position posted by search firm
- Listing shared via institutional HR channels

Your Strategic Role

Shift to Public Visibility:

- Search moves from internal planning to external scrutiny
- Decisions and responses become more visible and time-sensitive

Level Up:

- Maintain a clear decision pathway for questions and issues
 - Decision tree
 - Search Encyclopedia – single source of truth
- Serve as a trusted, confidential point of escalation

Review



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Key Actions

- Committee screening of candidates
- Promotion & Tenure review of finalists

This is where the search begins to move more quickly and decisions start to carry more weight.

Your Strategic Role

Critical Alignment Points:

- Timing of P&T review (before, during or after visits) if the position requires it
- Shared understanding among leadership, Chair and committee

Level Up:

- Surface sticking points early and force alignment
- Manage candidate materials and review logistics

Visits

What's the hardest part of a campus visit to manage?



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Key Actions

- Coordinate interview schedules and meetings
- Align Provost interview requirements
- Gather unit-specific needs and priorities

Kara's Tip:

- Keep communication clear and calm.

Your Strategic Role

Designing the Candidate Experience:

- Balance institutional consistency with unit customization

Level Up:

- Create a visit scaffold with non-negotiable meetings
 - President/Provost
 - Academic leadership team
 - Colloquium
 - Stakeholder groups
- Ensure equity across candidates while honoring unit voice

15 Wednesday	16 Thursday	17 Friday
COE Candidate A	COE Candidate A	
Breakfast on your own; travel to campus	Breakfast on your own; travel to campus	
Arrive to Campus, Kara will meet you in the	Arrive to Campus, Kara will meet you in the	
COE Candidate A: Kate McLaughlin Kara Miller	COE Candidate A: Evelyn Cho Kara Miller	
Break	Break	
COE Candidate A: Leslie Leve Kara Miller	COE Candidate A: Maureen Zalewski Kara M	
Break	Break	
COE Candidate A: Clinical Faculty - Katia Dur	COE Candidate A: Meeting w/ Assoc. Deans	
Lunch and Presentation Set Up	Potential: Meeting with Ariel Williamson Kar	
Presentation Kara Miller	COE Candidate A: Exit Meeting & Lunch w/ Sarah Kate Bearman Kara Miller	
Presentation Q&A Kara Miller		
Break		
COE Candidate A: Clinical Faculty - Kalani M.		
COE Candidate A: Laura Lee McIntyre Kara Miller		
Break		
COE Candidate A: COE Faculty Meeting Kara		
COE Candidate A: Search Committee Meeting Kara Miller		
Break		
COE Candidate A: Research Collaborators Ka		
Break and Travel to Hotel		
COE Candidate A: Dinner Kara Miller		

Campus Visits

Core Components:

- Interviews, colloquiums, and stakeholder meetings
- Structured and informal engagement opportunities

Elevate:

- 1:1 faculty escorts
- Coffee with the future EA

Ballmer Institute Interview Schedule

Candidate	
Date	
Hotel Accommodations	
Travel Agent Contact Information	
Transportation	
Campus Address	
Campus Contact	

Day One

Time	Activity	Room
8:00-8:45	Breakfast on your own; Travel to campus	
8:45-9:00	Arrive at campus @ 8:45 am	Kara will meet you in the lobby
9:00-9:45	Meeting	In person - 315H
9:45-10:00	Break	315J
10:00-10:30	Meeting	Virtual – 315J https://uoregon.zoom.us/j/96919452197?pwd=SL6AZgYrHEyUliCUzzQN1kxRdoBif3.1
10:30-10:45	Break	315J
10:45-11:15	Meeting	215F
11:15-12:00	Catered Lunch & Presentation Set-Up	315J & LLC 311
12:00-12:45	Presentation	LLC 311
12:45-1:15	Presentation Q & A	LLC 311
1:15-1:30	Break	315J

Campus Visits

- Intentional downtime between meetings
- Thoughtful transitions and campus navigation support
- Office landing space
- Consistent, well-planned meals and hosting

Campus Visits

Level Up:

- Design a welcoming, equitable and human-centered visit
- Anticipate candidate needs while managing institutional standards

Feedback



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Key Actions

- Feedback collected and summarized
- Committee develops recommendations for leadership

Your Strategic Role

Process Design:

- Confirm or create feedback tool (per RFP)
- Establish and communicate feedback timeline
- Use multiple channels to announce opportunities for input

Level Up:

- Advise leadership when additional engagement may be helpful
— or when space is needed

Offer



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Key Actions

- Provost decision finalized
- Offer letter process begins
- Hire Announced – internal and external

Your Strategic Role

Operational Coordination:

- Confirm HR steps and timeline with search firm/candidate
- Coordinate announcement plan with Marking and leadership
- Determine communication sequence: unit > campus > external

Level Up:

- Maintain finalist relationship from campus visits
- Act as a connector across HR, leadership, and communications
- Ensure smooth, professional transition from finalist to hire

Additional Tips



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Use your Social Capital



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Meet People in Person



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In Person Work is Key

War Room Approach

- Conduct focused, in person planning sessions when feasible.
- Ideally, have a co-lead: helpful if one person has institutional knowledge.

Reflection: What phase of a search is hardest at your institution?



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Key Takeaways



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Prepare
Early

Align
Constantly

Lead
Strategically

Questions?

Contact Information:
karamill@uoregon.edu



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