Chapter 32

What College Students Gained Serving on Hiring Committees for Student Job Openings:
From Initial Survey to Post-Graduation Transfer of Learning

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ABSTRACT

The value of student participation in hiring committees at the college level is the focus of this chapter. Students, identified as "selectors," participated in all aspects of hiring toward a "best" candidate. Student selectors, from two types of student employees within the structure of a university student union, and two hiring processes are assessed (referred to as student activities and facilities). A guided question-naire is used to investigate skill development gained, used, and eventually transferred to experiences after graduation. Two models frame the plan. Surveys and focus groups are based on Kirkpatrick's and Kirkpatrick's (2006) The Four Levels. The development of a systematic evaluation plan is based on Caffarella's (2002) Interactive Program Planning Model. Exploring the value of experiential learning in student employment settings is a key to the assessment approach. An appraisal of the student experi-ence, when environments are intentionally created to give students the chance to practice, use, and build skills in real life scenarios, had not been evidenced previously in a formal way. Furthermore, an inquiry of transfer of learning post-graduation is examined.

INTRODUCTION

Experiential learning is a key component of this college student union experience. The student activities and facilities work experiences offer students opportunities to manage budgets, make decisions that are impactful to the organization(s) and the university, and grow in leadership development and life skills. The student activities/facilities administrators strive to provide students with autonomy, and the ability to experience effects and consequences of decisions. Student roles in student activities, in particular, are structured in a way that empowers students to act while providing

advisement. The facilities hiring process is a staff driven process, versus student driven. Facilities hire using university (supervisory) non-student staff to oversee and make the final hiring decision. Facilities student employment positions are more service oriented. Examples of student positions in facilities are: set-up crew and technical crew(s) for events, student building managers, student information desk attendants, recycle center staff, and student office clerks.

Hiring committees are a common employment experience for both student activities and facilities students. Based on the assumptions of the administrators, the hypothesis used was, students who participate in search committees

as student "selectors" hiring other students, gain skills that would benefit these "selectors" post-college. This claim was investigated through an assessment plan. Assessment findings indicated that students experienced high rates of employment post-graduation and suggested selector experiences as a contributing factor.

The assessment results indicate that student selectors gained valuable skills to use in life after college. This is compelling evidence to lead this organization to further pursue exploration of additional co-curricular experiences of students within the student activities and facilities arena. Figure 1 shows the facilities application and hiring process.

Figure 1. Student facilities application and hiring process
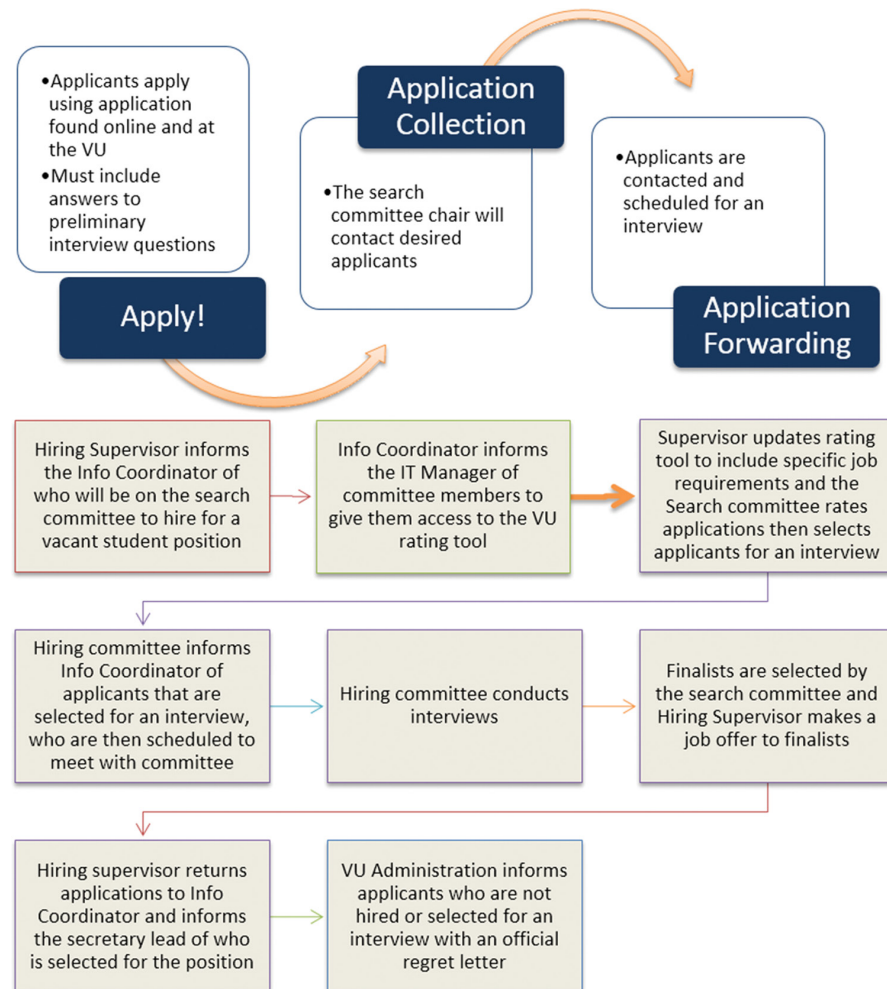
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