



SCREENING COMMITTEE ORIENTATION

The San Mateo County Community College District seeks employees who share a commitment to student success, equity and social justice. The successful candidate will be an equity-minded individual who is ready to collaborate with staff, faculty and administrators who is committed to closing equity gaps. An equity-minded individual is a person who already does *or has demonstrated the desire to*: (1) understand the accountability and critical dimensions of equity; (2) reframe race-based inequities as a problem of practice and views their elimination as an individual and collective responsibility; (3) encourage positive race-consciousness; (4) reflect on institutional and teaching practices and aims to make them more culturally responsive; and (5) strategically navigate resistance to equity efforts and aim to build buy-in among colleagues.

The District's "Students First" Strategic Plan is focused on "Student Success, Equity and Social Justice." We provide students with a rich and dynamic learning community that embraces differences, emphasizing collaboration and engaging students in and out of the classroom, encouraging them to realize their goals, and to become global citizens and socially responsible leaders.

The Screening Committee plays an important role in this commitment and will be screening for the next District employee. Each member of the Screening Committee will have the following roles and responsibilities:

- **Inclusiveness**: Each committee member is responsible for being inclusive of all candidates and avoiding stereotypes and bias. Being inclusive of cultural differences optimizes our effectiveness in achieving student success. Composition of committee should represent a range of ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds in order to ensure a variety of perspectives.
- **Confidentiality**: Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Committee members are acting as agents of the District when recruiting. Therefore, anything that goes on within the committee process is not to be discussed with anyone outside of the committee (that includes applicant names, screening results, interview questions, interview responses, committee discussions, etc.). Recruitment materials (application materials and screening/interviewing forms) should only be reviewed in private. If anyone outside of the committee inquires about anything of a confidential nature, inform them that you are a member of the screening committee and are not at liberty to discuss the recruitment with them. You may refer anyone with inquiries/questions to Human Resources.

Committee members understand that the failure to maintain confidentiality will not only jeopardize the search and selection process but could also result in violation of Federal or State regulations and incur liability of behalf of the District. Each committee member agrees to call to the attention of the Chief Human Resources Officer any action which might be interpreted as a breach of confidentiality.

- Objectivity: Decisions must be based on the screening and interviewing processes only; any past experience that you may have had with an applicant should not be taken into consideration. Applicants that you know from a past experience should be given the same opportunity to demonstrate their skills and abilities to you and should not be given any unfair advantage or disadvantage based on your prior experience with them. Any committee members who may have a potential conflict of interest must bring this to the attention of Human Resources.
- Outreach: As discipline experts, Human Resources looks to you as a committee to assist in ensuring that the pool for the recruitment that you are serving on is as qualified, sufficient, and diverse as possible. Spread the word about the availability of the position to your network of colleagues and provide suggestions for focusing advertising sources, if applicable.
- Participation: You have been chosen to serve on this committee because of your connection to/involvement with the recruitment. Your input is essential for the development of the job announcement, screening criteria, interview criteria and questions and selection of candidates for interview and recommendation of finalists. Committee members must be present at every committee meeting (including orientation, selection of screening criteria, selection of interview candidates and interview criteria and deliberation of finalists) to have the opportunity to give this input.
- Availability/Flexibility: It is assumed that there may be some scheduling conflicts when it comes to finalizing the timelines for each recruitment and involving each committee member. We encourage you to remain flexible in your participation of this process which can mean needing to reschedule previous commitments and/or arranging for class coverage for times that you might have been scheduled to teach.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Requirements

The San Mateo County Community College District is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to promoting a diverse, talented workforce capable of delivering and supporting a high quality student learning environment. Equal employment opportunity means that all qualified individuals have a full and fair opportunity to compete for hiring and promotion and to enjoy the benefits of employment with the District. In addition, a highly qualified, diverse applicant pool leads to the potential for outstanding hires that, in turn are natural recruitment vehicles for future searches as well as for attracting and supporting a diverse student population. Ensuring equal employment opportunity also involves creating an environment that fosters cooperation, acceptance, democracy, and free expression of ideas and is welcoming to persons with disabilities, and individuals from all ethnic and other groups protected from discrimination.

The District's employment policy, as stated on every job announcement, reads:

The San Mateo County Community College District is an Equal Opportunity Employer that seeks to employ individuals who represent the rich diversity of cultures, language groups, and abilities of its surrounding communities.

It is based on the desire that:

- Everyone deserves the opportunity to participate fully within our educational community.
- Our workplace is enriched by the diversity of our workforce.
- People should be valued for their differences—not in spite of them.
- The candidates selected will be able to competently interact in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual community college environment.

The District’s Commitment to Diversity

A diverse workforce is diverse in many ways, including race and ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disability, culture, religion, immigrant status, marital status, parenting status, veteran status and more. Diversity makes the District more attractive to staff and students, engenders creative thinking and problem solving, and vitalizes the educational environment. Screening committee members should approach candidates with interest and curiosity and recognize that the interview process must reflect how the District expects colleagues to interact with each other and students within the college community.

There are five core values that inform the District’s commitment to diversity:

1. Workforce diversity services the educational mission of the California Community Colleges.
2. Diversity works in a merit-based system; a commitment to diversity does not require—or even contemplate—lowering standards.
3. A commitment to diversity may mean reexamining how we define “qualified,” seeing job standards with fresh eyes, and being willing to eliminate traditional but out-dated requirements, and adding new requirements that appropriately value the skills, education and experience of a more diverse applicant pool.
4. Successfully diverse communities are inclusive in that they appreciate rather than merely tolerate differences.
5. Inclusive work environments increase creativity and improve problem solving.

Part of the District’s commitment to diversity includes a commitment to “cultural competence”, which refers to the skills and ability of individuals to act in a sensitive, inclusive and respectful manner in interactions with persons who are different from themselves. Pursuant to Title 5, Section 53024, meaningful consideration must be given to the extent to which applicants demonstrate a sensitivity to and understanding of the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ethnic backgrounds of community college students. “Meaningful consideration” means that candidates shall be required to demonstrate sensitivity to diversity in ways relevant to the specific position.

Experience with diverse populations alone does not guarantee that the person is culturally competent. Just because a person has had students from x, y and z groups in their classes, this does not mean that the person understood or adapted to those students’ needs. The same holds true for traveling or living in other cultures, particularly for short-term stays. Culturally competent

communicators tend to acknowledge cultural differences in their answers and teaching demonstrations through the use of inclusive language, examples and teaching approaches.

The District does not designate or set aside particular positions to be filled by members of any group defined in terms of ethnic group identification, race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, disability, ancestry or sexual orientation, or engage in any other practice which would result in discriminatory or preferential treatment prohibited by state or federal law.

Non-Discrimination

Hiring decisions should be premised upon non-discriminatory criteria and procedures. Federal and State Anti-Discrimination laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of:

- Race
- Religion
- Color
- National origin
- Ancestry
- Gender Identity
- Genetic Information
- Physical/mental disability
- Marital status
- Sex
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Expression

Elimination of Bias

All applicants are to be judged without bias, either for or against. All applicants are to proceed through our process on their own merit. However, human nature causes us to be *unintentionally* influenced by subjective factors and other influences unrelated to an applicant's merit. When we become aware of how the subjective factors can influence us, we can take steps to counteract or eliminate them and focus on objective job-related criteria. Once we are aware that subjective factors are influencing us, we can refocus from subjective to objective decision criteria. The following are some common biases that can be eliminated:

Confirmation Bias. This is a tendency for people to seek out information that supports a pre-conceived belief about the applicant that has been formed prior to the interview. In other words, interviewers look to confirm a possibly shallow impression they may have formed of the candidate pre-interview, as opposed to having a more open outlook on the candidate's abilities.

Keep an open mind.

Stereotyping. The interviewer can be influenced and form a generalized opinion by quick and superficial evaluations including level of attractiveness, race and gender.

Avoid snap judgments.

First Impression Negative or Positive. The interviewer may make certain judgments based upon either a positive or negative first impression that can then influence the entire interview. For example, candidate who has a very strong first impression will likely be evaluated more favorably even if it is unwarranted.

Wait at least 30 minutes into an interview before “deciding” for or against a candidate.

Intuition. Many interviewers place great weight on their intuition about candidate even though intuition is unreliable and susceptible to influences other than a candidate’s merit.

Don’t let your gut trick you.

You Are Just like Me. The interviewer may feel a bond with a candidate who shares personal characteristics such as a hobby or some other similarity such as children of a similar age. Be harder on these candidates in order to avoid being too “soft” on them.

You are not hiring someone to be your new best friend.

Role of the Committee Chair

Hiring managers are strongly encouraged to appoint a chair to the screening committee. If no chair is appointed, the screening committee will decide amongst themselves. The committee chair is responsible for the following:

1. Works with the committee to document the finalist(s) strengths as well as other areas or topics that the committee recommends for further pursuit for the hiring manager to take into consideration.
2. Works with the committee to document first-level interview rankings using the Excel spreadsheet provided by Human Resources to reflect the committee’s aggregate scores.
3. Collects the committee’s interview materials and submits to Human Resources at the conclusion of first-level interviews.
4. Serves as the alternate host on all Zoom meetings and facilitates remote interviews by controlling the room, including admittance from the waiting room and screen sharing. The Chair ensures that all committee members are present before allowing candidate(s) into the room.

Best Practices in Serving on Screening Committees

Committee Chairs in collaboration with Human Resources should ensure that all committee members have received the mandatory unconscious bias training, which will be valid for a period of 3-years. If a committee member has not completed the training, they cannot serve.

- At the outset, committees should develop a timeline for every recruitment and block off time in your calendars so that you can adhere to your timeline as the recruitment progresses. Also, think from the viewpoint of a potential candidate and optimize your timeline to attract and retain a rich and diverse applicant pool.
- Recruit broadly; develop a diverse and inclusive outreach strategy for your recruitment. And involve as many people as possible in your recruitment efforts. Word of mouth and professional networks often are critical sources for building an applicant pool.
- Finally, continue to dialogue on topics of diversity and bias. This enhances your knowledge and self-awareness, which will continue to contribute to your efficacy in the recruitment process.

Successful Recruiting Steps

Step 1: Defining job success

If you want to hire talent, first define the criteria.

This is done by the screening committee, including the supervising administrator.

1. Determine the most important job duties and performance expectations of the position (or pool). Some common criteria for job success include:
 - Discipline expertise or mastery of subject matter
 - Demonstrated teaching ability or potential
 - Commitment to student success, equity, and social justice
 - Sensitivity to, and understanding of, the diverse academic, socioeconomic, cultural, disability, and ethnic backgrounds of community college students
 - Ability to work as a team member or colleague
 - Leadership potential in the areas of teaching innovation, curriculum development, committee service, or community outreach
 - Commitment to the profession as evidenced by publication, field expertise, adjudication, performance, volunteer work, etc.
 - Experience with technology
2. Think about the needs of the department and plan for change, growth, and new directions. Does this position/pool need to complement existing strengths or provide specific expertise? What benefits could a candidate's demonstrated sensitivity to diversity bring to your department? Think about the future; do not simply replicate the past.
3. Identify the 3-4 main things you want the selected candidate(s) to accomplish in the first few years in this position/pool. For example, the department may need someone to build a program, improve student recruitment efforts, anchor a program, write innovative curriculum, or to move the department in global or multicultural directions.

Step 2: Recruiting qualified candidates

Treat the candidates as colleagues.

The search for candidates is coordinated by Human Resources with the help of the department and other networks.

1. Be proactive in helping Human Resources to identify suitable candidates. Use your own contacts, networks, and professional associations from which to solicit applications. Be inclusive in order to broaden the pool of qualified candidates as much as possible.
2. If anyone in the department is planning to attend a professional conference, take along job announcements and application materials to display or hand out. Contact Human Resources for materials and assistance.
3. If contacted by an applicant interested in the job, provide them with information and help them to connect with Human Resources to receive application materials and a job announcement.

4. Notify Human Resources of any special web sites, professional journals or other ways of advertising to applicants. Do this as soon as possible in order to meet any deadlines these publications have.
6. Represent the discipline and the college in a positive light to applicants. Give them a reason to choose to apply to San Mateo County Community College District.

Step 3: Screening the applications

Each member of the screening committee must screen all applications.

1. In order to be considered for screening, applicants must provide a complete application packet (determined by Human Resources) AND meet the minimum qualifications for the position or pool. Minimum qualifications for faculty positions are determined by the statewide Academic Senate. Candidates for faculty positions who are filing for equivalency do so because they do not automatically meet the State minimum qualifications. Candidates who need equivalency approval should be approved for equivalency (by the Academic Senate Equivalency Committee, Vice President of Instruction and the President) prior to being offered a position.
2. The Human Resources applicant tracking system screens applicants for minimum qualifications. For faculty positions, if an applicant does not possess the minimum qualifications, it is the applicant's responsibility to submit an *Equivalency Application* with their other application materials. This option is provided on the application.
3. Internet searches: The Office of Human Resources does not routinely conduct internet searches on candidates because of the well-known unreliability of information found on the internet. If you, however, choose to conduct your own research on the internet, you must share whatever information you find with the Office of Human Resources for verification prior to using that information in your evaluation of the candidate or sharing it with other members of the screening committee.

Step 4: Choosing applicants for interview

The entire screening committee will choose the candidates for interview.

1. Before the meeting, the total combined scores for each applicant entered in the applicant tracking system by each committee member will be compiled by Human Resources. The scores will be sorted in ascending order. Use the numerical scores to help determine which candidates to invite for interview. Look for a logical dividing point (a break in the scores) rather than choosing an arbitrary cut-off number.

Step 5: The Interview Questions

Interview questions and skill demonstrations will comply with current law; be based solely on bona fide, job-related knowledge, skills and abilities as stated in the job announcement; and will be appropriate to the subject matter. Each Screening Committee member shall evaluate the quality of the candidates' responses using the pre-determined set of Key Response Elements.

Interview questions and skill demonstrations must be job-related, based on the required knowledge, skills and abilities, unbiased, and should have the following characteristics:

1. Questions are open ended in order to prompt full and complete responses from the candidate.

2. Questions can be hypothetical to ascertain how an applicant would respond to a situation involving a specific set of variables. Hypothetical questions allow you to test the values and attitudes of applicants and help you to gauge organizational, communication, and decision-making skills.
3. Follow up questions can request elaboration on information already provided (i.e. “Could you give me an example of what you mean by that?” or “I would like to hear more about that.”). It is a common misconception that follow up questions are not proper because it means that applicants’ interviews are not identical. However, the law does not require interviews to be identical nor do you have to impose such rigidity on the interview process to deflect claims of unequal treatment. As long as all applicants are given a fair opportunity to explain and elaborate on their answers, follow-up questions are permissible—and can be enormously helpful to assessing and comparing candidates. Screening committees need to give all candidates the opportunity to elaborate; and ensure that subtle biases do not make committees more relaxed and conversant with some candidates than others. At the same time, candidates with good interview skills will be more engaging and skillful at developing a dialogue. That is inherent to the interview process.
4. Include pre-determined “Key Response Elements” (KREs) that can be used by the Screening Committee to evaluate the quality of the candidate’s responses. “Key Response Elements” are lists of desired responses that the Screening Committee can listen for in order to guide their rating and documentation of candidate responses to each interview question. “KREs” are derived from the knowledge, skills and abilities being “tested” by each interview question.
5. The screening committee will conduct all interviews using predetermined interview questions. Questions should not be asked about an applicant’s protected status. For example, asking an applicant when he or she graduated (to determine skill level) has been interpreted to mean “how old are you?” and is thus improper. There are more appropriate ways to find out whether an applicant is conversant in the latest developments such as: “In the last 5 years we have seen an explosion of literature on _____. Have you had opportunities to become familiar with these developments or apply them in your work?”

Step 6: The interview

First measure performance, then personality.

All members of the screening committee must be present for the interviews.

1. The Office of Human Resources is available to assist the Screening Committee with scheduling interviews, meeting candidates, and will collaborate with the Chair to identify proctor(s) and physical meeting spaces. The interview should be conducted in a comfortable location that is free from outside distractions and that ensures privacy for the participants.
2. The Screening Committee will provide each candidate interviewed a list of the questions (without KREs) 15 minutes prior to their interview to read as the questions are asked by the Screening Committee.

3. An interview rating form is used by each committee member for each candidate interviewed. The interview rating form will include all of the predetermined interview questions, including a list of the Key Response Elements (KREs).
4. Before your interviews begin, the committee should remind themselves of the ground rules and reach agreement on the following:
 - Who will ask which questions & who will be responsible for tracking time for the interview, if needed
 - How to define “consensus” (for example, everyone must agree on all finalists, majority must agree, etc.)
5. Assume the candidate is nervous, and don’t base your judgment on that. Try to make the candidate comfortable. Introduce each member of the committee and their job or title and provide candidates with a copy of the interview questions for their reference.
6. Create a compelling vision of the college. Give the candidate a brief overview of the position/pool and the college (remember, they are gathering impressions of the college from the hiring process). Inform candidates that they will have a chance to ask questions/provide additional information at the end of the interview.
7. Remain objective.
 - Don’t make a judgment based on a first impression, such as a handshake, appearance, style of dress or amiability.
 - Don’t exclude a candidate or “buy in” too soon.
 - Stay inquisitive throughout.
 - Focus on characteristics essential to the job.
8. Do NOT ask questions (including follow-up questions) related to any of the following:
 - Age or anything that can determine age.
 - Race, nationality, ethnicity, or related issues.
 - Clubs, social groups, or residence.
 - Children or family issues, marital status, now or in the future.
9. All candidates should be asked the same core questions. However, you may ask follow-up questions as described in Step 5.3.
10. If there is only one finalist, approval by the second level interviewer(s) is required prior to scheduling the second interview. Finalists will return for an interview with the appropriate administrator(s). The finalists for regular Faculty positions and some Management positions will be forwarded to the President for interview.
11. References will be checked only on the finalists (conducted by the supervising administrator). Hiring managers should provide advance notice to finalist(s) prior to commencement of the reference checking process. Job reference checks are NOT to be conducted by individual screening committee members. See Reference Checking Guide.

Finalists

At the conclusion of the interview process, the Screening Committee will meet to determine which candidates most meet the requirements of the position and best meet the needs of the students, the department/division, the College, and the District. The Screening Committee should only forward the names of candidates as finalists who in the opinion of the members could effectively perform the duties and responsibilities of the position. Finalists can be any number of candidates. There is no “rule of 3” or other number; however, it is desirable to have more than one finalist for the hiring manager to consider.

Finalists are forwarded unranked to the hiring manager, along with their original application packet, copy of first-level interview questions, skills demonstration/written exercise prompt, and list of each finalist’s strengths, as well as other areas or topics that the hiring manager should pursue further during the final interview.

Notifications to Unsuccessful Applicants

Throughout the process, the Chair of the Screening Committee forwards to the Human Resources Office the names of applicants who have been eliminated from further review by the Screening Committee. To inform applicants in a timely manner, requests to send notifications should be forwarded following the paper screening process and following the interview process.

BOARD POLICY 2.20

Equal Employment Opportunity

1. The San Mateo County Community College District is committed to equal employment opportunity and full recognition of the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, language groups and abilities that are represented in its surrounding communities and student body. The Board believes that diversity in the academic environment fosters cultural awareness, mutual understanding and respect, and suitable role models for all students. The District shall demonstrate its commitment to the cultural competence¹ of its employees and students through policies, procedures, training programs, services and activities which promote diversity and mutual respect within the District work force and student body.

The San Mateo County Community College District is an equal opportunity employer that shall provide an educational and work environment in which no person is denied access to, or the benefits of, any program or activity of the District on the basis of federal or state protected classes including, but not limited to: race; color; national origin, ancestry or citizenship status; religion or creed; age; marital status; sex and gender (including sexual orientation and identity; gender identity and gender expression); physical or mental disability; genetic information; medical condition; political activities or affiliations; military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence, assault or stalking; or because one is perceived to have one or more of the foregoing characteristics or associates with a person or group with one or more of these characteristics.

2. The District shall monitor the success of equal opportunity in its recruitment, selection, retention and promotional policies and procedures by monitoring outcomes to assure no adverse impact against any person or group of individuals, due to ethnic group identification, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, or physical or mental ability.
3. The District complies with the spirit and law of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended by providing equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. The District shall make reasonable accommodations so that persons of all levels of ability enjoy equal access to all aspects of employment and education in our District, including but not limited to, educational services, selection procedures, retention and promotion.

In order to prevent discrimination on the basis of disability, the District will allow an individual with a disability to use a service animal or miniature horse in District facilities and on District campuses in compliance with state and federal law.

4. The District will not tolerate discourteous, offensive or abusive conduct or language including jokes, slurs, derogatory comments, or behaviors or language regarding a person's ethnic group identification, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, race, color, or physical or medical condition relating to other employees, students or the public. This includes District decisions about employment, retention, compensation, promotion, termination and/or other employment status.

¹ "Cultural Competence" refers to the skills and ability of individuals to act in a sensitive, inclusive and respectful manner in interactions with persons who are different from themselves.