

Columbia University
Recruitment of Academic Personnel System (RAPS)
An Overview

Columbia University is implementing a new online system for academic recruitment called the Recruitment of Academic Personnel System or RAPS. RAPS has been customized using the same software module as Columbia's online administrative recruitment system, Jobs at Columbia (JAC), and will work in much the same way, although with modifications to accommodate the special needs of academic searches. RAPS will also serve as the University's system for affirmative action clearance and reporting.

The new system will be available for use on July 1, 2008 for units outside of the Medical Center. The target for introducing RAPS at the Medical Center is early fall.

RAPS will make the recruitment process easier to manage by consolidating all aspects of the search in one online location, allowing searches to move forward more quickly and greatly reducing the administrative work involved. Search approvals and affirmative action clearances of selectees will be done in RAPS with automatic e-mail communications generated by the system as these steps are completed. As the University's affirmative action system of record, RAPS will provide the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action with readily available data on academic hiring, thereby permitting it to refocus its analysis of the University's efforts to further diversity on outcomes rather than process.

RAPS will be accessible through Columbia's web page. Applicants will access the site through the Jobs link on the Columbia homepage or with a URL address or link that must be included in all outside online and print advertisements for academic positions at Columbia. University users who have been authorized to view information in the system will log in through *my.columbia.edu*. The hiring units themselves will control who may have access to applicant materials, with the oversight of the appropriate vice president, dean or director.

Once it is introduced, units will be expected to use RAPS to recruit their full-time academic officers. All full-time academic openings must be posted in RAPS even if they are filled through a waiver of normal search procedures. Applicants will submit their applications and supporting materials through the system. Units will record their decisions on each candidate in RAPS; the vice presidents, deans, and directors will approve the units' choices through the system; and the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action will use RAPS to give affirmative action clearance. Units that have their own on-line recruiting systems may continue to use them; however, they will still be expected to post their full-time academic positions in RAPS at the start of their searches; arrange for the transfer of information on their applicants into the system; and use RAPS to obtain academic authorization and affirmative action clearance for their candidates for appointment.

How RAPS Will Work:

- After receiving authorization to search, the hiring unit creates a posting on RAPS using a template that has been created from the information in its *Standard Search and Evaluation Procedures* (SSEP). Before it can use RAPS for the first time, a hiring unit

must obtain approval from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action for its SSEP. Information on how to prepare and submit the SSEP may be found in “SSEP Instructions” (attached file).

- Once the proposed posting is ready, the hiring unit electronically forwards it for review by the appropriate vice president, dean, or director. Once that individual has approved the position description, RAPS posts it on the Columbia web site and with the Metro New York Southern Connecticut Higher Education Research Consortium (MNYSC HERC). No further review is necessary before the search can begin. (This means that the hiring unit will no longer need the approval of the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action for its individual search plans.)
- RAPS informs the hiring unit once the position has been posted. At that point, the unit may open the search. While RAPS automatically posts positions on the Columbia and MNYSC HERC web sites, the hiring unit is responsible for placing advertisements in the other print and electronic venue(s) listed in the submission for the RAPS posting. All outside advertisements must include a URL for the posting in RAPS.
- Applicants apply online, submitting through RAPS a *curriculum vitae* and any other materials required by the hiring unit, such as writing samples. If a hiring unit would like the applicants to provide letters of reference, RAPS can electronically solicit these letters from any individuals identified by the applicant. In addition, applicants respond confidentially in RAPS to questions about their gender, race, and ethnicity. (Units no longer need to contact applicants asking them to do this.) This information is used for affirmative action purposes but is not available to the hiring unit. RAPS sends the applicants an e-mail message and confirmation number after they have successfully submitted their applications. The text of the e-mail is determined by the hiring unit.
- The hiring unit may give “guest” access to the applicant materials in RAPS for a particular opening to members of the search committee and any others who need to review them as part of the selection process. In addition, the vice president, dean or director has online access to the materials on all of their searches in the system. Authorized users may view the unit’s materials from any computer with internet access.
- The hiring unit tracks the status of applicants in RAPS. When a candidate has been chosen, it enters in RAPS an explanation of the reasons he or she was selected and ensures that there is a reason for non-selection for every other candidate, using standardized reasons contained in a drop-down menu in the system. The hiring unit then indicates in RAPS that the nominee is ready for approval by the appropriate vice president, dean, or director. The vice president, dean, or director reviews the search materials, authorizes the selection, and submits the selectee for affirmative action clearance; and all of this takes place online via RAPS. (No separate submission outside of RAPS is required to receive affirmative action clearance.)
- RAPS informs the hiring unit by e-mail when the nominee has been forwarded for affirmative action clearance by the appropriate vice president, dean or director. It sends the unit a second e-mail about the outcome of the affirmative action review once it is

completed. For searches that follow the unit's SSEP, the system communicates the affirmative action decision within twenty-four hours. Waivers are reviewed within five days.

RAPS Training:

- Suzanne Laizik, project coordinator for the implementation of RAPS, will be conducting hands-on RAPS training sessions with all system users. She can be reached at 212-854-9858 or at RAPS@columbia.edu with questions about RAPS or about the training schedule.
- Once the SSEP of a hiring unit has been approved by the EOAA office, Suzanne Laizik will set up the RAPS templates for that hiring unit. She will then contact the hiring unit to set up times to review the templates and for hands-on RAPS training. A comprehensive instruction manual will be available as a resource for units, especially valuable for those that do not do large numbers of searches in any given year.
- RAPS training will be taking place from May through August of 2008. Units needing to enter searches before they have received training may contact Suzanne Laizik for assistance. She can help them set up the posting in RAPS.