

May 14, 2021, 11am. Political Science Department faculty meeting

Per KU policy during COVID-19 restrictions, the meeting was conducted via a secure meeting room online.

**Present:** Don Haider-Markel, Nazli Avdan, Hannah Britton, Brittnee Carter, John Kennedy, Patrick Miller, Kevin Mullinix, Gary Reich, Robert Rohrschneider, Clay Webb, Mike Wuthrich, and Jack Zhang.

**Absent:** Mark Joslyn

The primary purpose of this meeting was to evaluate candidates for a joint 2-year Visiting Assistant Professor position housed in CREES and POLS. The position is funded by a CREES title grant. Also on the agenda, finalization of 2 priority searches for POLS to be submitted to CLAS.

The chair began the meeting with at 11am with a call to consider approval of the minutes from the September 19, 2021 meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and the motion passed in approval voting.

Professor Avdan and Carter were the primary representatives of POLS on the search committee. Professor Avdan discussed the search committees' assessments of the candidates.

The assessments are summarized in Professor Avdan's statement "As a search committee, we reached consensus on the following ranking: 1. Valery Dzutsati 2. Yelena Zabortseva 3. Turkhan Sadigov.....This ranking comes with the disclaimer that we have strong reservations about the second and third candidates, verging on them being deemed unacceptable."

Following about 40 minutes of discussion, including an explanation of why we did not have letters of recommendation for the candidates, faculty moved to provide a vote contingent receiving positive letters about the candidates.

Because voting occurred through a Qualtrics survey form, faculty were asked to provide a yes or no approval vote for each candidate and then rank each candidate, regardless of approval voting.

When tallied only Valery Dzutsati received approval by a voting majority and was ranked first. If his letters of recommendation are deemed positive, he will be offered the position. Should that offer fail the search will conclude without being filled.

At the 62 minute mark the chair asked whether anyone objected to continuing the meeting to finalize two priority hire positions for recommendation to CLAS.

After some discussion the following 2 positions were approved:

**(1) Assistant Professor: Enhancing Democracy: Political Attitudes and Behavior (open sub-field)**

Scholars who study public opinion and political participation focus on understanding ordinary individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and engagement with the political system. Our ideal candidate would have broad training and interest in political opinion and participation, have teaching and research interests in political involvement and have the potential to obtain external funding. We have faculty members from several sub-fields who have teaching and research interests in public opinion and political participation across sub-fields, including our Worcester chair in International Public Opinion and Survey Research. We hope to build on this existing strength by hiring a broadly trained individual who could make contributions to this core element of our discipline. Preference will be given to (1) research in areas contributing to the University's strategic initiative "Building Communities, Expanding Opportunities," such as inequality and representation, (2); "Sustaining the Planet, Powering the World," such as environmental or health issues, and (3) methodologically rigorous quantitative research that can contribute to the University's strategic theme "Harnessing information, multiplying knowledge." We would be especially interested in someone trained in political psychology and that could collaborate with our American politics and Comparative politics faculty as well as faculty from psychology, communications, sociology, economics, and the Center for Research Methods and Data Analysis.

**Rationale for Priority:**

- The study of public opinion and political participation is a centerpiece of political analysis and historically has some of the strongest theoretical and empirical traditions in the discipline. Currently the department has faculty members from several sub-fields who have teaching and research interests in public opinion and political participation across sub-fields, including our **Worcester chair in International Public Opinion and Survey Research**. We hope to build on this existing strength by hiring a broadly trained individual who could make contributions to this core element of our discipline.
- Student interest in this area has been very high. In addition some of our best placements of graduate students, in other Ph.D. programs and on the job market, have been in this area.
- This position should be structured to allow a search for the 'best athlete' within the broad area of public opinion/political participation, allowing us to consider individuals across a broad range of relevant specialties (collective action, protest activity, campaign involvement, voting and party identification, opinion formation and change, etc.).

Suggested Salary Range: \$68,000-\$75,000

Suggested Start-Up Package: \$15,000-\$25,000

## **(2) Identity Politics. Open Sub-Field**

Our external review in 2017 identified identity politics, including race, gender, and LGBT politics as one of our strengths. We would like to build on these strengths by conducting an open field search in identity politics open to all sub-fields in the discipline and possibly open to rank. The 2016 election reinvigorated interest in identity politics and researchers in this area have become a hot commodity. Preference will be given to (1) research in areas contributing to the University's strategic initiative "Building Communities, Expanding Opportunities," such as inequality and representation, (2); methodologically rigorous quantitative research that can contribute to the University's strategic theme "Harnessing information, multiplying knowledge." We would be especially interested in someone trained in political psychology and that could collaborate with our American politics, Comparative politics, and International Relations faculty as well as faculty from psychology, communications, sociology, economics, and the Center for Research Methods and Data Analysis.

### Rationale for Priority:

- Student interest in this area has been very high
- This position should be structured to allow a search for the 'best athlete'

Suggested Salary Range: \$68,000-\$75,000

Suggested Start-Up Package: \$15,000-\$25,000

The meeting was adjourned shortly after noon.