

Appendix M

Prayerfully Evaluating Candidates

One of the critical tasks that the call committee is charged with is prayerfully evaluating candidates. It is helpful to have a commonly understood and employed process across your call committee so that you can have consistent discussion and points of comparison. Creating and agreeing on a process and tools will enable the call committee to more easily reach consensus on the candidates to 1) ask to engage in the call process with you, 2) conduct phone or video interviews with, 3) invite to your campus for visits and in-person meetings and interviews, and 4) put forward as the recommended candidate(s) for the congregational vote. Following are some best practices when evaluating candidates.

Prayer is critical

From the first moment your call process starts, you and your call committee, along with your congregation, should be in earnest, consistent prayer, asking for the Holy Spirit's leading. Prayer is the first step at each stage of evaluating candidates, whether during individual study time or when the committee meets as a group. Continually bring forward to your congregation requests for prayer as you progress through the different evaluation stages.

Individual and Group Evaluation

Candidate evaluation includes each call committee member taking the time individually to pray, study information provided, and document impressions. Then, each member is prepared and able to speak to their findings when the call committee discusses candidates as a group. The combination of individual and group evaluation provides a practical and comprehensive perspective.

First Round: PIF/SET Evaluation

The first round of evaluations are based on the Personal Information Forms (PIFs) and the Self-Evaluation Tool (SETs) on pastors as provided by the District on the call list. The goal after reviewing this information is to agree on several candidates that seem to meet your profile criteria and that you want to contact about engaging with you in the call process.

Evaluation Criteria/System

Before beginning evaluation, discuss a system with the call committee that each committee member will use to study the PIF/SET information. For example, you may want to use a 1-5 rating scale for quality or thoroughness of responses in the SETs. One would indicate a very weak response, and a five would show an incisive, informative, and thorough response. Based on their applicability to your pastoral profile, there may be specific questions in the SET that you choose to use the rating system.

Another rating system would be an A-B-C model. Based on all the PIF and SET information provided, an A rating would indicate a candidate that meets or virtually meets all of your pastoral profile criteria and that you want to contact. B ratings would be for candidates meeting most requirements with a few areas of concern. Still, you'd like to get to learn more, and a C rating would indicate candidates who don't meet most of the criteria and for which there are several areas of concern and whom you would not contact.

Whatever system you agree upon, your ratings will help guide you to candidates the call committee feels should be contacted about engaging in your call process.

Second Round: Phone/Video Interviews

The second round of evaluations comes from phone or video interviews with the candidates who indicated they would engage in your call process. These interviews should be 60–90 minutes in length and conducted using the same method with all candidates. Before conducting interviews,

your call committee should develop and agree upon a set of questions to ask the candidate related to your pastoral profile, your mission and ministry, and your context. It's a good practice to assign different call committee members specific questions and then allow for follow-up questions from any call committee member.

Allow time after each interview for the call committee to discuss their impressions. Assign a notetaker to ensure your discussion is captured. These notes will be helpful as you complete interviews and discuss the candidates with whom you would like to move forward.

Once all of your phone/video interviews are complete, the call committee will need to discuss and decide which candidates and wives you would like to bring to your campus for visits. The number of candidates to bring onsite is up to you, but more than three is expensive and difficult to manage. You also may only have one candidate you feel is strong enough to meet face-to-face.

Ensure the candidates you select to visit are a strong fit for your pastoral profile. Provide information to the congregation on the candidates who will be visiting that aligns with the pastoral profile (see [Appendix I](#) for sample information.)

Third Round: On-site Visits

The third round of evaluations comes from your face-to-face experience with candidates during their visits. In addition to time spent in further interviews with your call committee, these visits should include time with church and school staff and leadership, meet-and-greets, community tours, and with the congregation during worship and in a Q&A forum. See [Appendix Q](#) for a sample agenda for on-site visits.

Once visits are complete, the call committee should meet soon after and decide which candidates to recommend to the congregation to vote upon for issuing a call. This may be one or two candidates. More than two is not recommended as it would likely be challenging to reach a clear majority vote.

Ask for assistance

If you have questions or would like guidance or input during the evaluation process, do not hesitate to contact your district president.