IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Interoffice Communication

DATE: September 3, 2014

TO: Administrative Officers

FROM: Julie Nuter
Associate Vice President, University Human Resources

Jonathan Wickert
Senior Vice President and Provost

RE: Contingent Employment Offers and Background Check Processing

University Human Resources (UHR) continues to evaluate employment processes as we implement the PeopleAdmin7 (PA7) Upgrade. One opportunity based on broad campus feedback is the need for more timely offers in a competitive faculty recruitment environment. Iowa State University is better positioned to secure our top faculty candidates with written offers of employment.

Currently, UHR Recruitment conducts the appropriate pre-employment checks for all positions covered by the Employment Verification and Background Check Policy. Over the last nine months, we have experienced an increase in requests for contingent offers for faculty hires. In cooperation with the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost and in anticipation of a second year of Presidential High-Impact Hires, we will implement contingent employment offers for tenure and tenure-track faculty hires.

Effective September 9, 2014, UHR Recruitment will begin approving tenure and tenure-track faculty hires contingent upon acceptable review of the completed background check. This will allow colleges to make employment offers pending the background check results. Employment references must be completed before requesting approval, and the hire is still required to be approved by the Provost's Office before making a contingent offer. The current process for submission of the hire packet still applies.   Standardized language will be incorporated into the Letter of Intent template to reflect that the offer is contingent. Guidance will also be provided in the very rare situation of a pre-employment background check that results in a potential adverse action.

Pre-employment background checks for hires covered by the [Employment Verification and Background Check Policy](#) will be ordered on the selected candidate for hire at the time the hiring request is submitted to UHR Recruitment. This eliminates the need for background check components to be processed at interview resulting in increased efficiencies for departments and UHR, and a positive applicant experience.

These changes reflect not only a move to improve faculty hiring but also deploying good HR practices. One focus we must ensure is the security of personal information. Our background check process requests a good deal of confidential information from the candidate. Many times, applicants are hesitant to do this until they are a finalist. The timeliness of the background check process continues to be dependent upon the applicant's response to the targeted background check email and providing all necessary information for it to be completed. We find an applicant has greater motivation to complete this process quickly when one knows he/she is the desired candidate for the position. Although exceptions can still be made under the Employment Verification and Background Check Policy, I am confident that hiring departments will feel a positive impact of the efficiencies resulting in these changes. Please share this information with the person(s) responsible for processing employment transactions in your unit.

Implementation and Next Steps
UHR will continue to work with College/Unit HR Liaisons regarding the processing of background check components including contingent employment offers. Information will be made available on the PeopleAdmin Project Website.

For more information
For more information about the pre-employment background checks and the PeopleAdmin upgrade, contact Kristi Darr, 515-294-3753 or kdarr@iastate.edu.

cc: Kevin Schalinske, President, Faculty Senate
        Amy Tehan, President, Professional & Scientific Council
        Human Resources Liaisons