

**APPROVAL OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY POLICY ON THE USE  
OF EXTERNAL SEARCH FIRMS, AS MANDATED BY STATE LAW**

**Summary:** The Northern Illinois University Law (110 ILCS 685/30-1, *et seq.*) was recently amended by Public Act 97-814 to add the following prohibition on the use of search firms:

Sec. 30-185. Search firm prohibition. Charges for the services of an external hiring search firm may not be paid from any source of funds, except (i) in the hiring of the President of the University or (ii) in the case of when the President of the University and the Board demonstrate a justifiable need for guidance from an individual or firm with specific expertise in the field of the hiring. The University shall implement a policy under this Section, including qualifying criteria, within 6 months after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 97th General Assembly.

The effective date to this amendment is January 1, 2013.

In compliance with this new legal mandate, the University has prepared a draft Northern Illinois University Policy on the use of External Search Firms, which provides a process and criteria for determining when the use of an external hiring search firm will be utilized in the hiring for positions at Northern Illinois University, other than the hiring of the President of the University. That draft is attached to this Board Item for the Board's consideration and action.

**Recommendation:** Per the provisions of Public Act 97-814, the University requests that the Board of Trustees approve the Northern Illinois University Policy on the use of External Search Firms and authorize its implementation for searches conducted by the University after the approval of this policy.

**NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY POLICY  
ON THE USE OF EXTERNAL HIRING SEARCH FIRMS**

Pursuant to the Northern Illinois University Law, as amended by Illinois Public Act 97-814, it is the policy of Northern Illinois University that charges for the services of an external hiring search firm may not be paid from any source of University funds, except:

- (1) In the hiring of the President of the University, or
- (2) In the case of when the Board of Trustees and the President demonstrate a justifiable need for guidance from an individual or firm with specific expertise in the field of hiring.

In furtherance of this authority, the President may implement this policy through the development of further guidelines and procedures for determining when the use of an external hiring search firm is justified. The Board and/or the President may delegate their respective responsibilities under this policy to appropriate University officials as deemed necessary.

Any NIU hiring department or entity that wishes to utilize the services of an external hiring search firm must make a request to the Office of the President for appropriate review under this policy before engaging the services of such search firm. In determining whether a request qualifies for the justified use of an external hiring search firm, the President will consider the following applicable criteria:

- The nature and scope of the position being filled (e.g., senior level versus non-senior level);
- The nature and scope of the search (e.g., nationwide versus local or regional);
- The University's goals and priorities surrounding the search;
- The availability of personnel, monetary resources and other University resources to dedicate to the search;
- An external search firm's ability to help recruit and screen candidates;
- An external search firm's ability to enhance the quality of a candidate pool;
- An external search firm's ability to help conduct and coordinate the logistics of a search;
- The expertise/specialization of an external search firm in conducting searches
- An external search firm's ability to bring fresh and new perspectives from outside of the University.

Northern Illinois University understands that the determination of whether a search is justified in using the services of an external hiring search firm depends upon the unique circumstances of the search being conducted. The President is not prohibited from considering other factors that may be deemed relevant and important for a search.

Upon completing a review, the President will determine whether justifiable need exists for the selection of an external hiring search firm and shall make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for final action on the matter at any regular or special meeting of the full Board of Trustees. In its consideration of the matter, the Board will consider the above-referenced applicable criteria, as well as any other factors that may be deemed relevant and important. The Board's decision will be final.

*Approved by the Board of Trustees of Northern Illinois University on May 23, 2013.*