Recruitment and Selection

Purpose of this tool kit

To assist employees in the Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support in the application of best practices when it comes to the recruitment and selection process.

Best practices in recruitment and selection include eight steps:

1. Planning
2. Job Analysis and writing a position description
3. Recruitment
4. Application Review
5. Interview and Selection
6. Reference Check
7. Hiring Decision
8. Onboarding

What is the cost of a poor recruitment and selection process? A poor recruitment and selection process increases the probability of a poor hire and this can have a significant impact on the organization financially and non-financially.

The financial cost of hiring a poor candidate extends beyond the costs involved in appointing the person. It also extends to the ongoing salary costs of the person and, where a probation period is not managed efficiently or where a position turns out to be quite different to the position that was advertised, possible legal costs.

A poor recruitment decision can also have a demoralizing effect on staff as their roles may be affected while time, money and effort are spent bringing the recruit up to standard, impacting the motivation to carry out their own roles and possibly the productivity of the department or Student Affairs.

Recruitment and selection is an important function because it is paramount to quality service delivery. Using Human Resources best practices can help predict the best person for a role.
Planning

Planning is the first step in the process. It involves holistically looking at the recruitment and selection process and includes scheduling activities, resources and time to support the process. A sample 90 day time-line is included in the appendix.

- Choose selection committee members wisely, they should have an interest in the position as well as a day to day job connection.
- Determine the ideal number of candidates you want to include in a phone pre-screening and for an on campus interview.
- If possible book time in advance to review applications and conduct phone and on campus interviews.

Good planning has a positive effect on the experience of all parties involved including the applicant.

Keep in mind:
A position description takes 4 to 5 days for approval once it reaches Salary Administration in Human Resources
A requisition takes 4 to 5 days for approval once it reaches Salary Administration in Human Resources
Positions should be posted a minimum of 7 days a maximum of 30

Job Analysis and Writing a Position Description

To successfully perform the role there are key knowledge, skills and expertise (KSE) an ideal candidate needs.
- Take a look at the current position description.
- If you have a comparable position in your office asks the expert to review the job description and rate the top skills and time spent on task.
- Refer to the Occupation Outlook Handbook or O*Net Online to assist with understanding KSE of new positions.

Ask yourself
- What are the minimum qualifications a candidate needs to perform in this role? (Although minimum qualifications are set by the state based on hiring rates http://hr.sc.edu/salaryadm/hiringrates.pdf) conducting a job analysis will help you determine if you need to reclassify your position.
- What additional qualification would a candidate need?
- What preferred qualification does the role need?

There are nuanced differences in each of those questions and answering each one will help you refine the KSE’s.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Qualification</th>
<th>Bachelor’s degree and 4 years’ experience in business, public administration or administrative services</th>
<th>Set by the state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional Qualifications</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree and 7 years’ experience in business, public administration or administrative services</td>
<td>Becomes the new minimum and anyone with less than a Bachelor’s degree and 7 years’ experience will not get through screening (you can always ask for more experience but never less. If you have a position that is difficult to fill you can work with the Employment Office to get comparable experience written for the positions. For example, Bachelors and 7 years’ experience may also include High School and 10 years’ experience BUT this can only be done through the Employment Office.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preferred Qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferred Qualifications</th>
<th>Master’s degree and 3 years’ experience in business, public administration or administrative services</th>
<th>Does not affect screening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Knowledge/Skills/Expertise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge/Skills/Expertise</th>
<th>Knowledge refers to facts and information, acquired by a person through experience or education which, if applied, makes adequate performance on the job possible.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skill refers to the ability, coming from one’s knowledge, practice, and aptitude to do something well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expertise refers to the proficiency level of knowledge and skill in a particular field. The power to perform an observable activity which have been evidenced through activities or behaviors that are similar to those required on the job, e.g., ability to plan and organize work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to communicate project design, progress, and completion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to act as a liaison between departments</td>
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</table>

Writing a position description, identifying selection criteria and using template questions for screening will all help with hiring an ideal candidate.

HR Professional Development offers a 3 hour course for Writing Effective Positions Descriptions, this course is part of LEAD 1 Supervisory essentials training but highly recommended for as a stand-alone training for anyone in your department that will be writing position descriptions (PD’s)

The purpose of a PD is to document job duties, inform the employee of job responsibilities, serve as a communication tool between the supervisor and the employee, provide a basis for EPMS planning stage, determine proper classification and compensation and serve as a basis for a job announcement.

**Recruitment**

The process of attracting appropriate and suitable candidates for your position. How are you going to identify a candidate pool?

*Ask yourself*

- Is my job description clear? It should be if you spend time writing the position description and identifying your selection criteria
- Will you post the position internally only or will you advertise externally? See the appendix for External Job Advertising Guidelines
- Have you considered nontraditional advertising such as LinkedIn or Twitter?

When reviewing an application creating a spread sheet like the example below with the list of top qualifications and ranking your applicants is a helpful way to review candidates.
A template can help ensure a fair assessment of candidates.

If you are not receiving quality applicants it is time to step back and consider recruitment. Did you market outside of USC? You may also revisit your selection criteria.

**BEST PRACTICE TIP:** Let candidates that you will not be interviewing know that you are looking in another directions.

### Interview and Selection

After you have reviewed your applicants you will have your top candidates who you will phone interview before you bring your top 3 to 4 to campus. Design your interview questions based on the selection criteria from your KSE’s. You can create a template to assist with scoring, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant Name</th>
<th>Question 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                | KSE – Ability to make clear decisions under pressure | Score:  
|                | Definition: The thought process of selecting a logical choice from the available options. |

When trying to make a good decision, a person must weigh the positives and negatives of each option, and consider all the alternatives. For effective decision making, a person must be able to forecast the outcome of each option as well, and based on all these items, determine which option is the best for that particular situation.

**Question:** Describe a time when you had to make a difficult decision in a high pressure situation. What was the setting, what did you do and what was the outcome?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Additional Notes:**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KSE –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Additional Notes:**

Scoring should be well defined:

- 0 = Not acceptable – Applicant did not demonstrate KSE being measured
- 1 = Less than acceptable – Applicant insufficiently demonstrated KSE
- 2 = Acceptable – Candidate showed sufficient evidence of KSE
- 3 = Above Average answer – Candidate demonstrated above average use of KSE
- 4 = Excellent – Candidate more than significantly demonstrated the KSE
• Questions should be fair and unbiased
• Observe equal opportunity laws by not including potentially discriminatory questions; A list of illegal questions is provided in the appendix
• Questions should be related to job success
• One additional question you must ask if you have an international candidate is: Do you need USC to sponsor work authorization now or any time in the future?

Reference Check

The Employment Office is responsible for verifying an applicant’s educational background or obtaining a criminal background check when requested by a hiring supervisor. The Division of Human Resources has the following guidelines posted for reference checks.
1. You should state during the interview with a job applicant that references will be checked. Also, don’t just rely on letters of reference or personal references provided by the job applicant.
2. A telephone reference check takes less time than a written reference check and usually more information is gained. Forms rarely uncover negative information. Employers hesitate to put into writing what they may say in a conversation.
3. The hiring supervisor should make the phone call because he or she is most familiar with the information received from the applicant and the responsibilities of the job. Supervisors should be prepared with a written list of questions to ask.
4. When calling an applicant’s reference: identify yourself immediately; tell the reference about the position for which the applicant is being considered.
5. To gain as much information as possible, let the person speak without interrupting. If the reference pauses in the conversation, it usually means he/she has other information and is hesitant to share this information. Get them to talk about everything that would be helpful, but only ask for information that will be used in your hiring decision.
6. Again, ask only job-related questions and document all answers. Avoid questions that can be answered “yes” or “no.”
7. The most important question to get answered is whether the previous employer would rehire the applicant you are considering. If you get no other response, try to get this question answered.
8. Avoid questions that screen out minorities, women and persons with disabilities, or will bias the reference in terms of age, gender or religion.

There are many personal questions you must avoid when conducting a reference check. If you have doubts as to whether you should ask a question, don’t. Questions you should avoid include:
• Does the applicant have any disabilities or health problems?
• Is the applicant married or have children?
• Has the applicant made child care arrangements?

The Division of HR also has a Telephone Reference Check Form that can be found at http://hr.sc.edu/forms/interview.pdf. This form should be retained for three years with your hiring records for the position.

Hiring Decision

The Office of Salary Administration has provided checklists to assist departments in preparing hiring documents for different categories of employment. The check list can be found at http://hr.sc.edu/salaryadmn/checklists.html.
Each PDF file is a checklist for actions that must be taken and forms that must be submitted to properly hire an individual into the position indicated. The checklist contains links to the required forms.

If you have questions about the checklist or any of the steps indicated for hiring of the various positions listed, please contact Alicia Bervine at 803-777-4989.

If you need to compete a Hire above minimum this must be done before other hiring paperwork can be processed. You will need to complete
- HR27
- Application
- Justification memo that address inequity concerns in the department

Guidelines set by HR are up to 5% for directly related education, experience, certifications and specific job related licenses. Roughly 2 to 3% if the experience is not directly related. Even though the form gives space for justification, it is always better to attach a more detailed memo.

Salary Administration will look at department averages as well as across USC and South Carolina.

BEST PRACTICE TIP: Inform candidates that you have interviewed; either by phone or on campus; that you made an offer to another candidate, an example is included in the appendix.

**Onboarding**

After effective recruitment and selection, one of the most important ways that organizations can improve the effectiveness of their talent management systems is through the strategic use of onboarding. Onboarding is the process of helping new hires adjust to social and performance aspects of their new jobs quickly and smoothly. This should always be a priority for departments.

University Orientation is designed to welcome new staff to the University and provide valuable information about working at Carolina. Including:
- How to get a Carolina Card.
- About reporting time using ITAMS, the holiday and pay schedule and annual and sick leave.
- How performance will be evaluated using the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS).
- How to receive support from University Technology Services.
- About working at Carolina and a few of the policies and practices that may affect the employee.
- How to identify training opportunities available through the Professional Development Office.

Onboarding has four distinct levels, the Four C’s:
- Compliance is the lowest level and includes teaching employees basic legal and policy-related rules and regulations.
- Clarification refers to ensuring that employees understand their new jobs and all related expectations.
- Culture is a broad category that includes providing employees with a sense of organizational norms—both formal and informal.
- Connection refers to the vital interpersonal relationships and information networks that new employees must establish.
Evaluating your selection process will help you identify areas where you can improve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Always (4)</th>
<th>Usually (3)</th>
<th>Sometimes (2)</th>
<th>Rarely (1)</th>
<th>Never (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you analysis your position description?</td>
<td></td>
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<td>How often do you involve a subject manner expert in your position</td>
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<td>description review?</td>
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<td>How often do you communicate your departments mission and values to the</td>
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<tr>
<td>candidates in the recruitment and selection process?</td>
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<td>How often do you used scoring when evaluating candidates?</td>
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<td>How often are structured behavioral interview questions used?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are the questions structured around job knowledge, skills and expertise?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do interview panel members score applicants independently?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often are selections decisions based on a numerical aggregation of</td>
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<tr>
<td>scores that the applicants received?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often are defined, structured reference checks used?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do you use a structured onboarding process?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often are probation periods monitored?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often is your recruitment process evaluated from internal feedback?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Scoring
37 and above: You have an efficient well managed interview and selection process. This toolkit can also be used to evaluate processes and measure improvement over a number of years through a periodic assessment.
25-37: You have a very good structure to your recruitment and selection process. Look at areas where you scored three or below and incorporate them into your recruitment and selection process.
13-24: The recruitment and selection process needs improvement, incorporating the best practices in this tool kit can help your process.
0-12: The best practices presented in this toolkit can help you tremendously, review them and meet with Alicia Bervine to help you reorganize your process.

Appendix
This 90-day sample timeline identifies typical components included in a recruitment plan and helps to keep the activities on track. It can be used to tailor any type of recruitment whether it be a classified service, professional or a management position. It is a tool that visually describes the steps involved in a recruitment effort.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Projected Begin</th>
<th>Through</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Actual Begin</th>
<th>Through</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Consultation</td>
<td>Day 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HR &amp; Hiring Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position Description Development</td>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Day 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>HR &amp; Hiring Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Ad Campaign Development</td>
<td>Day 3</td>
<td>Day 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Outreach/Networking Campaign</td>
<td>Day 10</td>
<td>Day 40</td>
<td></td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Screening</td>
<td>Day 10</td>
<td>Day 50</td>
<td>Determines Viability</td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candidate Assessment</td>
<td>Day 40</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Question Development</td>
<td>Day 10</td>
<td>Pre-Interview</td>
<td></td>
<td>HR &amp; Hiring Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-interview Client Consultation</td>
<td>Day 50</td>
<td>Candidate Review</td>
<td></td>
<td>HR &amp; Hiring Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Question Selection</td>
<td>Pre-Interview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule/Coordinate Interviews</td>
<td>Day 51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Round Interviews</td>
<td>Day 61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background/Reference Checks on Finalists</td>
<td>Day 62</td>
<td>Day 72</td>
<td>Requires 10 days</td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Finalists for Review</td>
<td>Day 73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Interviews</td>
<td>Day 74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer Position</td>
<td>Day 75</td>
<td></td>
<td>Allows for notice</td>
<td>Hiring Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send Regrets to Remaining Applicants</td>
<td>Day 76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Employee Starts</td>
<td>Day 90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Candidate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
External Job Advertising

Helpful Information:

- Positions should be posted on uscjobs before being sent out to any other sources.

- HR policy (HR 1.24, II-B, 2) states that departments may advertise in other sources with prior approval of the Employment Office.

- The Employment Office should be notified of where and what information is being advertised.

Job Advertisement Approval Checklist:

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Quicklink from the requisition (optional)
- Requisition #
- Make sure the USC website is included: http://hr.sc.edu/employ.html
- Make sure that the information on the ad is the same from the requisition.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>What Can’t I Ask?</th>
<th>What Can I Ask?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Age                     | How old are you?  
What year did you graduate?  
What is your birthday? | Are you over 18?  
Are you authorized to work in the United States?  
(Not necessary to ask this - this is verified with the I-9 at time of hire) |
| Citizen/National Origin | Are you a U.S. citizen?  
What is your native language?  
Where were you/your parents born? | What language(s) do you read/write fluently?  
(Only if required by the position) |
| Marital/Family Status   | Are you married?  
Do you plan to have a family?  
Do you have any children?  
What are your child care arrangements? | Would you be able and willing to travel as needed for the job?  
(Only if required by the position)  
This position requires occasional overtime (nights and/or weekends); would this present a problem?  
Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?  
Note: These questions should be asked of ALL applicants if applicable. |
| Affiliations            | What clubs or social organizations do you belong to? | List any professional or trade organizations you consider relevant to the position. |
| Personal                | How much do you weigh?  
How tall are you? | Are you able to lift a 50lb weight and carry it 10 yards, as this type of physical activity is part of the job?  
(Only when specifically required in main duties of the job, and LHR should be consulted) |
| Disabilities            | Do you have any disabilities?  
Do you have any medical conditions?  
How is your health?  
Do you need an accommodation to perform this job? | Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job, with or without an accommodation? |
| Arrest Record           | Have you ever been arrested? | (At the time of offer, LHR will advise the candidate that the offer is contingent on completion of a sufficient background check.) |
| Military Record         | If you were in the military, were you honorably discharged? | In what branch of the armed services did you serve?  
What type of training did you receive in the military? |
| Religion                | What religious holidays do you observe?  
Does your religion prohibit you from working any particular days? | (There are no legal questions related to this subject.) |
Sample Regret Letter
Did not make initial cut

Dear:

Thank you for your interest in the [position title] position at The University of South Carolina. The search committee has carefully reviewed your experience and background against our criteria. While your credentials and experience represent significant accomplishments, we found the qualifications of other applicants to more closely fit our needs at this time.

We wish you much success in your career search and thank you for your interest in The University of South Carolina.

Sincerely,

Optional paragraph for failed searches

An optional paragraph that could be used for failed searches instead of the first paragraph:

Thank you for your interest in the [position title] at The University of South Carolina. I am writing to inform you that we have designated this position as a failed search. Your application materials for this position will remain on file for a period of time, therefore, you need not apply to the new search.

Sample Regret Letter
Did not make initial cut, but don’t want to completely close the door

Dear:

Thank you for your interest in the [position title] position with The University of South Carolina. The search committee has reviewed your application materials and has carefully considered your qualifications. While your skills are certainly impressive, we have decided to pursue other candidates for the position who have more direct, relevant experience.

Your application materials will remain on file for a period of time. If the status of your application changes, we will contact you.

I encourage you to continue to apply for other Carolina positions for which you believe you are qualified. Again, thank you for your interest in employment with The University of South Carolina.

Sincerely,
Sample Regret Letter
Cut after phone interview

Dear:

The search committee would like to thank you for your interest in the position of [position title] at The University of South Carolina. We were pleased to have the opportunity to speak with you during our phone interview and to review your qualifications.

While your background and qualifications are strong, there are other candidates who more closely align with our needs at the present time.

Thank you for allowing us to consider you for this position. We wish you continued success in your career pursuits.

Sincerely,

Sample Regret Letter
Cut after on-campus interview

Dear:

The search committee enjoyed meeting you during your visit to our campus to interview for the position of [position title].

We have had a difficult challenge—choosing a final candidate from among the outstanding finalists, of which you were one. You were highly competitive and very well received. In the end, we selected another candidate who has accepted our offer. Although we regret that we are not able to offer you a position at this time, we encourage you to apply for future positions of interest to you at Carolina.

In the meantime, we wish you much success in your career endeavors.

Sincerely,

Optional paragraph for internal candidates

An optional paragraph that could be used for internal candidates instead of the last paragraph:

We appreciate your contributions to The University of South Carolina. As other positions become available, we hope that you will continue to pursue further professional opportunities at the University.
Optional paragraph for failed searches
An optional paragraph that could be used for failed searches instead of the last paragraph:

We appreciate your contributions to The University of South Carolina. As other positions become available, we hope that you will continue to pursue further professional opportunities at the University.

Sample Regret Letter
Alumni

Dear:

Thank you for your interest in the [position title] position at The University of South Carolina. The search committee has carefully reviewed your experience and background against the position criteria. While your credentials and experience represent significant accomplishments, we found the qualifications of other applicants to more closely fit our needs at this time.

Our faculty and staff include many Carolina alumni and we genuinely appreciate your interest and desire to join Carolina as a member of its staff. You are encouraged to become involved with exciting opportunities that will have a profound impact on Carolina's strength and future. As a graduate, you can support students, staff and faculty in numerous programs across the university, by joining My Carolina you can support our world-class institution while benefiting from a greater involvement with your alma mater. We want you to be a part of the big things we've got going on at My Carolina.

We wish you much success in your career search and encourage you to apply for future positions of interest to you at Carolina.

Sincerely,
Sample Regret Letter/No Interview
Student

Dear Student,

We have completed our interview process for the position of _______________ and have decided to hire another candidate for the job. We thank you for taking the time to apply for our position and appreciate your interest in our department.

If you are still looking for employment, I encourage you to contact the Career Center at 803-777-7280 or to visit their website at http://sc.edu/career/ and search JobMate their online job search resource to view current openings. The Career Center staff may also be able to assist you with your job search process. I wish you the best of luck.

Sample Regret Letter
Student

Dear Student,

We have completed our interview process for the position of _______________ and have decided to hire another candidate for the job. We thank you for taking the time to interview with us and appreciate your interest in our department.

If you are still looking for employment, I encourage you to contact the Career Center at 803-777-7280 or to visit their website at http://sc.edu/career/ and search JobMate their online job search resource to view current openings. The Career Center staff may also be able to assist you with your job search process. I wish you the best of luck.