

Protocol for the discussion and approval of appointments at Managing Committee meetings

Background

In the past, occasions have arisen where recommendations for School appointments, such as Director, Mellon Professor, Whitehead Professors, Director of the Gennadius Library, have been brought up for discussion and approval at the Managing Committee and candidates for these positions, being present at the meeting, have been subject to awkward and embarrassing moments. In these situations, candidates for the positions have been asked to leave during that part of the meeting where the appointments are discussed. This means that they are easily singled out as candidates as they exit the meeting room. An even more awkward moment has arisen where, after the discussion is over and a decision has been reached, the candidates are then told that they may re-enter the room. A successful candidate may then be greeted warmly, but unsuccessful candidates who enter the room are left to feel the discomfort of being ranked below the successful individual. Not only can this be embarrassing for candidates, and members of the Managing Committee, but it can lead to hesitancy in applying for other School positions, knowing that another awkward situation may arise. How can this be improved?

Proposal

1. Place such discussions and approvals of appointments as early on the Agenda of meetings as possible.
2. Ask all candidates not to attend the first part of the MC meeting at all, until such time as they are invited to enter, and wait to invite them until discussion of the appointment is over and a decision has been reached.
3. Choose a member of the appropriate Committee making the recommendation for appointment to be ready to inform candidates waiting outside the meeting about the decision. This can be done through a text message to candidates' cell phones, or by exiting the room and informing candidates in person.
4. Candidates for the position, whether successful or unsuccessful, can then decide for themselves whether to enter the meeting immediately, wait for an appropriate moment, or not attend at all. The decision to participate in the rest of the Managing Committee meeting is left up to the candidate.
5. In most instances, this protocol would only apply to candidates on the short-list for appointments. All other candidates should be informed at an earlier stage that they are not on the short list, and their names would not come up at the MC meeting. They could attend the MC meeting without worry of embarrassment.

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