



SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
SEARCH COMMITTEE HANDOUT

CORE COMPETENCIES	DESCRIPTION	SAMPLE BEHAVIORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	SEARCH COMMITTEE NOTES/COMMENTS	DRAFT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
ACCOUNTABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepts responsibility for consequences of own actions. • Takes initiative to perform job duties, fulfill responsibilities and meet performance goals. • Results driven; persists despite obstacles and setbacks. • Follows through on tasks and assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe a time when you learned a new task or responsibility on your own. What steps did you take to achieve this?</i> • <i>Tell me about a time when you had more to do than you could accomplish on an ongoing basis. How did you prioritize your work? What strategies did you use to keep up with the pace?</i> • <i>Tell me about a time when you did not perform to expectations.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>What did you do as a result?</i> ○ <i>What lessons did you learn? How did you apply that knowledge?</i> • <i>Tell me about a time you took proactive action to stop a potential problem. How did you ensure that the problem was averted? What was the result?</i> • <i>Describe a time when you had to overcome an obstacle to meet job expectations. How did you approach the situation, and what was the outcome?</i> 		
SERVICE FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops productive working relationships with co-workers, faculty, staff, administrators, and others such as independent contractors. • Identifies and meets the needs of students, student's families, guests and visitors, and University faculty and Staff, as appropriate. • Responds to requests for assistance of information in a timely manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe a situation when a customer/client made very high demands on you (i.e., time constraints, quality of work). How did you deal with the situation, and how did the customer/client respond?</i> • <i>Give me an example of a misunderstanding with a customer/client. What was the nature of the misunderstanding? How did you resolve it?</i> • <i>Describe methods you use to develop a relationship with a customer/client. Are they effective? Give me an example.</i> • <i>Define what customer service means to you.</i> • <i>Tell me about a time when you had to say no to a customer/client. What was their reaction? How did you respond to their concerns, and what was the outcome?</i> • <i>Describe a time when you went over and beyond your regular job responsibilities to meet the needs of a customer/client. Why did you do this? What was the customer/client's reaction?</i> 		
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT FOCUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies ineffective procedures and takes appropriate action to improve the effectiveness of such procedures. • Takes initiative to address and resolve problems. • Accepts additional responsibility in order to meet the changing needs of the workplace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Give me an example of a time when you were innovative.</i> • <i>Describe a time when you identified an ineffective procedure or process in the workplace. What actions did you take to improve these procedures? What was the outcome?</i> • <i>Tell me about a time when you took on additional responsibilities to meet the changing needs of your workplace.</i> • <i>Describe a situation where you conceived and implemented a new or improved way of meeting departmental needs and solving problems.</i> 		

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RESPECTFUL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts courteously and professionally in all interactions. Demonstrates cultural awareness and sensitivity in all interactions. Acts without bias in all interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you tell me about time when you needed to act professionally towards a colleague or customer even when the circumstances made it difficult? How challenging was it? Tell me about a time when you inadvertently disrespected a colleague. How did you handle the situation? What was the outcome? 		
COMMUNICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively communicates orally and in writing, that is, communications are well organized, clear and appropriate for the intended audience. Uses technology (such as voice mail, email and videoconferencing) effectively in communications. Requests clarification to ensure understanding of other's communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain some ways in which you have used technology (such as email, video conferencing, and webinars) in your day to day communications at work. Describe a time when you needed clarification regarding a colleague's communication. How did you go about resolving this issue? Tell me some ways which you communicate at work, both orally and in writing? Are you successful at getting your message communicated? How do you know? Describe a time when you had to give a presentation to an audience that disagreed with some of the information you were communicating. What was the audience's reaction? How did you respond to any disagreement or challenging comments? Describe your preferred communication style (i.e., email, person-to-person). Why do you favor this mode of communication? 		
CONTINUOUS LEARNER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deals constructively with own mistakes and failures. Adapts appropriately to new situations. Solicits performance feedback and takes appropriate action to correct deficiencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give me an example of a time when you've received constructive performance feedback. How did you respond? Tell me about a time when you made what you consider a mistake or bad decision on the job. How did you handle this situation? Describe a time when you encountered a situation at work that was new to you. What was your reaction? How did you alter your behavior in response to the unfamiliar circumstances? 		

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MANAGES PERFORMANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively communicates to staff the expectations for the performance of their job duties and responsibilities. On an on-going basis, monitors performance of staff and provides appropriate feedback. Conducts annual performance evaluations for staff in accordance with University policy and procedure. Delegates to staff the authority necessary to complete assignments. Adjusts staff job duties and responsibilities as necessary to accomplish the goals of the unit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tell me how you go about monitoring the performance of your team. What tools do you use to provide feedback? How do you determine if it's effective?</i> <i>Give me an example of a time when you had to conduct a difficult performance evaluation. What strategies or techniques did you use to give feedback? What was the outcome?</i> <i>Describe a time when you had to reassign staff duties because of conflicting work commitments. How did you go about this? What was the result?</i> <i>Give me an example of a time you had to explain performance expectations to an employee. What specifically did you do to ensure the information was clear?</i> <i>Tell me about a time when you delegated responsibility to a reluctant staff member. What did you do or say to motivate and/or reassure the individual? What was the result?</i> <i>How do you go about setting performance expectations for your team? How do you ensure alignment of the goals to a broader organizational vision? Please provide an example of a time when you did this.</i> 		
STAFF DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates commitment to staff learning and self-development. Create Individual Development Plans to develop needed staff competencies. Monitors implementation and progress of staff Individual development plans. Acknowledge & give credit to staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Walk me through a time, from start to finish, when you had to create a development plan for a difficult staff member. How did you identify areas that need development? How did you monitor the implementation and progress of the development plan?</i> <i>Tell me about a time when a staff member went above and beyond their responsibilities. As a supervisor, how did you acknowledge them and praise their efforts?</i> 		
TEAM LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively creates and leads project teams comprised of staff from all appropriate functional units. Recognizes and effectively uses differences in the experiences and perspectives of team members to achieve the team's project goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Give an example of when you led a cross functional project team. What roadblocks, if any, did you encounter? How did you resolve it?</i> <i>Describe a time when you built a team from scratch or took over and had to turn around a team? What steps did you take to build team rapport? How did you motivate the team? What was the outcome?</i> <i>Tell me about a time when you led a team consisting of individuals of varying levels of experience and expertise. How did you identify each member's strengths and weaknesses and assign tasks accordingly?</i> 		

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INNOVATION/ OPEN MINDEDNESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Champions new ideas and initiatives. Creates an environment that inspires and supports innovation. Challenges the status quo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tell me about a time when a member of your team suggested a new approach to a problem or task. How did you respond? What actions did you take to facilitate the implementation of this idea? What was the result?</i> <i>Tell me about your managerial philosophy with regard to new ideas from team members. What processes, if any, do you have in place that support creativity? Can you tell me about a time when these philosophies and processes supported a team member's idea?</i> <i>Give an example of a time when you disagreed with an organizational decision or process. Did you state your opinion? If so, how? What was the result?</i> 		
FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposes budgets that are consistent with the University's annual plan and financial goals. Identifies measures to increase revenues and/or reduce expenses, as appropriate. Monitors staff utilization of resources for compliance within parameters of unit's budget and University financial policies and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tell me about a time when you developed a budget that aligned with your organization's overall fiscal plan. How did you go about doing this?</i> <i>Give me an example of a time you were faced with the challenge of identifying ways to increase revenues and reduce expenses for your team's budget.</i> <i>Tell me how you go about ensuring that your team members stay within the given fiscal year's budget. Give me an example of a tool that you use to do this.</i> 		

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VISIONARY AND STRATEGIC THINKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes and communicates a vision and strategy for their area, in support of the University's mission, vision, and strategic plan. Aligns staff performance goals to the vision. Anticipates future needs and trends and pursues new opportunities within the context of the strategy. Prioritizes strategic opportunities. Identifies and works to remove obstacles to achieving strategic goals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Describe a previous organization's mission and vision for me. How did you go about ensuring that your team's vision and strategy aligned with the overall organizational mission?</i> <i>What do you do to align your staff's performance goals to your organization's vision? Can you describe specific steps you have taken in the past to guarantee this?</i> <i>How do you go about obtaining the needed information to identify the key issues and relationships relevant to developing and achieving a long term vision? Can you give me an example?</i> <i>Tell me about a time when you had to make a strategic decision. What factors impacted this decision? What was the outcome?</i> <i>How do you prioritize the strategic goals for your team? What process do you use to make these decisions? Please give me an example.</i> <i>Describe a time when you faced a roadblock while trying to achieve a strategic goal. How did you identify the roadblock, and what actions did you take to remove it?</i> <i>Describe a time when you had to create a new vision for the team. What did you do and what was the result of the process?</i> 		
INSPIRES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages staff/faculty to share and contribute to the University's vision and helps staff understand their role in achieving success. Gains trust and respect of others. Takes a leadership role in addressing & resolving hard issues. Creates a high level of staff enthusiasm, commitment, and a desire to excel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>How have you communicated an organization's vision to your staff? Tell me how you have clarified the staff's role in realizing the vision.</i> <i>What actions do you take to gain trust and respect from others? Give an example of a time you had to go the extra mile to gain the trust of a fellow employee. What did you do and what was the result?</i> <i>Describe how you have maintained a high level of staff enthusiasm and commitment during a stressful time.</i> <i>Give me an example of a time when you were faced with a difficult situation. How did you confront it, and what steps did you take to resolve the situation?</i> 		
CONTINUOUS LEARNER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively seeks feedback from others. Engages in self-reflection and assessment. Adapts behavior, as appropriate, to successfully meet situational needs to ensure success. Demonstrates commitment to learning and self-development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Tell me about a recent project you have completed. Did you seek feedback from others, and, if so, how did you go about it?</i> <i>Give me an example of a time when you assessed your own performance. What tools or thought processes did you use?</i> <i>Describe a time when you had to change a recent behavior in order to successfully complete a project or task. Was this difficult for you? If yes, how so?</i> <i>Tell me some ways in which you seek professional development opportunities. Can you describe some recent accomplishments?</i> 		

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COMMUNICATIONS AND INFLUENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides supportive and constructive communications that result in productive working relationships with others. Communicates in many venues, both orally and written, in a clear, organized, and effective manner. Adapts communications and influences strategy and style to ensure understanding and commitment. Engages in collaborative problem solving. Respects and maintains confidentiality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Give me an example of an incident when team members were having a difficult time working together. What steps did you take to help them resolve the issues and develop a productive working relationship?</i> <i>Tell me how you make sure that your communication, both written and oral, is clear, organized and effective. Give me an example of how you do this.</i> <i>How do you ensure that your communications are understood? Give me an example.</i> <i>How do you communicate the same material to a diverse audience or a variety of different audiences? Give me an example of time in which you were successful at accomplishing this.</i> <i>How do you respond to dissenters or those who disagree with your message or position? Please give an example of a situation where someone disagreed with you in front of others. What was the outcome?</i> <i>Describe a time when you needed to solve a problem as part of a team. How did you make sure that consensus was met, and the problem was solved?</i> <i>Give me an example of a time when confidential information was shared with you. How did you reassure the individual sharing the information that it would remain confidential?</i> 		
CHANGE LEADER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiates and leads change efforts that support the University's strategic plan. Understands the external demographic, cultural, and economic factors that create change for the University. Introduces new ideas, innovative solutions to problems, and challenges the status quo. Adjusts to changing priorities and shows flexibility when confronted with unexpected obstacles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Describe a time when you rethought a process and proposed a change that led to a process improvement. What did you do, and what was the impact of the change?</i> <i>What steps do you take to ensure that all external factors impacting the University are taken into consideration when implementing a process change? Please give an example.</i> <i>Describe a time when you initiated a change or process improvement in support of your organization's strategic plan. What obstacles were you faced with? Tell me the steps you took to guarantee that these roadblocks were overcome.</i> <i>Give me an example of a time when you faced a roadblock to the completion of a project. What steps did you take to change your priorities and ensure the project's completion?</i> 		

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DECISIVENESS AND RISK-TAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes difficult decisions and takes decisive action, including taking unpopular stands, when necessary. Confronts issues and problems in discussions with management. Trusts own judgment and exercises good judgment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe a time when you took a risk and proposed something that was considered to be innovative yet unpopular. What was the idea, and how did you get it accepted (or not)? What was the end result? Tell me about a time when you were faced with an organizational wide problem at work. How did you work with management to tackle this problem, and what was the result? Tell me about a situation where your judgment was tested by a colleague. How did you respond? 		
MANAGES EFFECTIVELY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximizes the use of the University's financial, capital, and staff assets. Maximizes staff productivity and effectiveness through performance management and feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe a time when you were tasked with a project with restricted funds. How did you go about identifying alternative organizational resources (financial and human capital) in order to successfully complete the task? Tell me about a time when you needed to give performance feedback to a team member to ensure successful completion of a project. What did you say? What was the outcome? Please describe a situation in which you were responsible for the achievement of a complex task. What actions did you take? How did you engage others in the work? What happened when things didn't go as planned (priorities changed, resources got tight, etc.)? What was it you did specifically that led to the successful (or not) achievement? 		
REPRESENTS WCSU TO THE EXTERNAL COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepts invitations to and presents at professional/higher education conferences. Provides leadership and guidance to the external community, as appropriate. Maintains a positive professional and leadership image to the external community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell me about a recent time when you presented at a professional organization or conference. How was it received? Tell me which, if any, professional organizations you are involved in and to what extent. Do you hold any leadership positions? Do you provide any pro bono work or serve on any local committees or work groups? Please describe. Do you enjoy this work? 		