

**Faculty Senate Meeting**  
**April 17, 2007**  
**Provost Jim Smith, Reporting**

A recent review of selected articles from the Chronicle of Higher Education indicates that universities are moving towards increased applicant verification and/or criminal background checks. As an added precaution in the hiring process, there is a national trend in higher education to require more stringent applicant verification of all employees including faculty. A number of universities that are conducting applicant verification are opting for criminal background checks of potential hires.

A survey of the University of North Carolina campuses indicates varied practices throughout the different universities. Most of the University of North Carolina campuses are conducting criminal background checks on some employees before finalizing their hire.

Legal advice from UNC-GA is that (at this time) there will not be a system policy on conducting criminal background checks on prospective hires but each campus should create consistent guidelines or policies. UNC-GA also states that if a campus does criminal background checks on prospective hires, and any group is exempt from the checks, there should be clear reasons for the exemptions.

At ECU, criminal background checks are conducted on all prospective SPA, CSS, and non-teaching EPA hires, but criminal background checks are not routinely conducted on prospective faculty hires. Certain faculty, such as clinical faculty, undergo a more extensive background check than the routine criminal background check.

We are recommending that finalist for faculty positions complete the *Faculty Applicant Verification Form of Continued Interest and Fitness Form* (See attachment). If the applicant answers "yes" to any of the questions or provides any questionable responses:

- a. additional information will be requested
- b. criminal background check may be requested if necessary.

Additional information would be shared with personnel committees (where permissible / legal) for further deliberation and recommendations.

This practice parallels the student process for criminal background checks, gives us better data than requiring criminal background checks on all potential faculty hires, gives us a signed statement that all relevant information has been disclosed, and includes all employees in a systematic review.

We also recommend that this *Faculty Applicant Verification Form of Continued Interest and Fitness Form* be appropriately modified for SPA, CSS, and non-teaching EPA prospective hires so that similar forms are completed by all prospective employees at ECU.