

A Note on Top 10 Reports

The Top 10 Report is a very important document in the search process. This written record not only elaborates the ranking of the top 10 candidates, but also establishes the qualities distinguishing the top 10 from the remainder of the pool. As such, this report has a standing that we may not ignore.

Consequently, effort and care need to be expended in the process of explaining the place of each candidate within the top 10, including those toward the bottom of that list. Special emphasis falls on the notes field in which search chairs make an argument explaining why the candidates are ranked as they are. As with any persuasive argument, pertinent details are critical. Therefore, we would encourage search chairs to avoid such clichés as “poor fit,” unless sufficient details followed to paint a much fuller picture. The same holds true for “poor interview.”

Last year saw some exceptionally substantive, helpful, and persuasive elaborations provided by departments and programs. In those instances, your colleagues’ comments in the “Notes” field typically ran between 100 and 250 words. We would provide examples from that group, but doing so would risk violating the confidentiality of searches. We recommend, though, that you follow their general example.