**Guide for 2020 Virtual**

**Local Officer Election Process**

This guide has been prepared to assist in conducting a virtual Local officer election process. It is important to honor the work and commitment of the students applying for Local office and to conduct a process that is fair and equitable for all candidates.

The actions described in this guide are suggestions based on experiences gathered from Locals. Each Local may need to adjust or modify the actions presented to fit unique needs or time periods.

**Conducting a Virtual Election Process**

It is important that SkillsUSA Advisors be informed as to how the virtual process will be conducted. Transparency is crucial to the integrity of the process.

Basic steps to a virtual election process are:

* Receive candidate applications.
* Appoint an interview committee to screen candidates and prepare a slate for delegate voting.
  + Committee should consist of SkillsUSA Partners and Alumni who are familiar with the operations of SkillsUSA and role of Local SkillsUSA Officers.
  + It is not recommended that the Local Director be a member of the interview committee. The Local Director should facilitate the process, but not enter discussions or slating of candidates.
  + Consider individuals who work in human relations and have experience in interviewing and candidate selection.
* Provide a virtual training for the interview committee to understand the requirements and skills needed for service as a Local SkillsUSA Officer.
  + Review the procedures for the virtual process.
  + Review the duties and responsibilities of Local SkillsUSA Officers.
  + Review the rubrics to be used for mutual understanding.
* Provide all officer applications to the interview committee prior to the virtual presentations so they can have time to prepare questions for the interviews.
  + Each interviewer should develop one or more questions based on the information provided in the application.
  + Discuss the interview questions to be used during the interview.
* Establish the day and time for candidates to virtually present their speeches and answer the questions posed by the interview committee.
* Provide copies of the rubrics for each candidate to be used by the interview committee during the virtual presentations (there are two options available for the candidate interview and one option for the candidate speech evaluation)
* Conduct the virtual day.
  + Have each candidate provide an introduction, present their speech and respond to interview questions.
* The interview committee should complete the rubrics and provide them to the facilitator for summary. The committee can continue to meet virtually right then, or schedule a later time to reconvene.
* Committee members can share scores at the conclusion of all presentations and discuss candidates to prepare the slate for delegate voting.
* Slate is presented to delegates for final vote.

**Interview Committee Ground Rules**

It is important to have a well-qualified interview committee. The number of individuals on the committee can vary, but should not be less than three people for diversity of opinion. Basic ground rules for operating the interview committee:

* Everyone is an equal on the committee and is entitled to their opinion.
* Everyone has a vote, and the majority rules.
* Confidentiality is essential throughout the process.
* All involved must protect the integrity of the scoring, the questions and the process.
* Each committee member must
  + Read each application
  + Complete the appropriate rubric for the speech
  + Complete the appropriate rubric for each interview question.
* It is recommended there is no reactions or discussion of individual candidates until after all presentations and interviews. A casual comment may influence another committee member’s opinion on a candidate.

**Important Framework Essential Elements for Local Officers**

This is not an exhaustive list, but it does define the basic expectations of Framework skills needed for service as a Local SkillsUSA Officer.

**Ability/Flexibility** – Embracing change and fostering creativity; being resilient

**Communication** – Sending and receiving clear messages through conversation, speaking, questioning, listening

**Integrity** – Doing the right thing in a reliable way

**Leadership** – Influencing the hearts, minds, and actions of others

**Planning, Organization, and Management** – Designing and implementing processes to complete projects and tasks at established standards of quality.

**Professional Development** – Engaging intentionally in learning experiences that contribute positively to my career path progression

**Professionalism** – Behaving in alignment with SkillsUSA standards to display a positive image.

**Responsibility** – Taking ownership one’s work performance, behavior and actions as a Local SkillsUSA Officer

**Self-Motivation** – Establishing a passion for life and career.

**Service Orientation** – Meeting the needs of internal and external customers in respectful and effective ways.

**Teamwork** – Working with others to achieve a common goal.

**Work Ethic** – Being committed to punctuality, meeting deadlines, and following established policies and procedures to meet the responsibilities of Local SkillsUSA Office

Remember some candidates might need the opportunity to learn and grow through effective coaching. Not all candidates will be proficient in all of these important skills but they must possess the foundation to learn and grow during their year of service.

**Interview Questions**

Here are some sample questions for each of the Framework Essential Elements:

**Ability/Flexibility**

* Tell me about a time when your best laid plans simply blew up. What did you do to fix the situation?
* One a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being very flexible, how would you rate yourself? Why?
* Give me an example of when you have had to overcome obstacles or roadblocks to accomplish a goal.

**Communication**

* Share a favorite story from when you were growing up.
* Tell me about a time you had to deal with another person who misunderstood something you said. How did you resolve the situation?
* Give me an example of when active listening was important? How do you focus on listening during a conversation or presentation?

**Integrity**

* Tell me about a time your integrity was challenged. What did you do?
* What impact does personal integrity have on the success of a team?
* What values guide your personal integrity?

**Leadership**

* Give me an example of how you have built trust on a team.
* Tell me about a time you successfully lead a team to accomplish a major project.
* What do you believe are the most important qualities of an ethical leader?

**Planning, Organization, and Management**

* Give me an example of when you planned an activity from start to finish. What steps did you take?
* How do you establish priorities for your work?
* What do system do you use to stay organized?

**Professional Development**

* Give me an example of when you learned a new skill by attending a workshop or conference.
* Tell me about a personal mentor in your life. What did this person help you do or help you learn about yourself?
* Tell me about a time you volunteered to lead or assist with a project so you could develop your own leadership skills.

**Professionalism**

* What does professionalism for a SkillsUSA Local Officer mean to you?
* What behaviors do you regularly demonstrate that define your professionalism?
* Give me an example of how you respected another person even though you disagreed, or it was an awkward situation.

**Responsibility**

* Tell me about a time you had multiple commitments. How did you decide on what to do and how to do it?
* Give me an example of when you had to admit that you made a mistake or were wrong.
* Have you ever been late with an assignment? How did you resolve the situation?

**Self-Motivation**

* What drives you to accomplish everything you do daily?
* Tell me about something that you learned not because it was assigned, but just because you wanted to know more.
* Tell me about two goals you have for yourself. What’s your plan for how you will attain those goals?

**Service Orientation**:

* Tell me about a time you went above and beyond expectations while working on a SkillsUSA project or activity.
* What does the Framework Skill of Service Orientation mean to you?
* Give me an example of when you demonstrated the skill of service orientation.

**Teamwork**

* Tell me about the best team you have ever had the opportunity to be a part of. What made the team so successful?
* What are the most important elements of effective teamwork?
* How do you honor the contributions of other on a team?

**Work Ethic**

* Tell me about a time you went above and beyond expectations while working on a SkillsUSA project or activity.

**Feedback from the Committee**

It is important to keep notes during the interview process regarding strengths and areas for improvement for each candidate. These are notes should be compiled and forwarded to the candidates later to assist in making this a sound educational activity. The Local Director or a volunteer committee member could summarize the notes and provide this helpful feedback to the candidates. It is important to highlight both areas of strength and those areas for potential growth.

**Interviewing Techniques**

Here are some interviewing techniques to help with this process or any interview scenario.

**Don’t ask a close-ended question**

* Questions should never be able to be answered with a yes/no unless there is a significant probe following the question.

**Use multi-level probing**

* Follow up questions should start with …
  + Tell me more about …
  + Why did you say …
  + What did you mean by …
  + How did you …

**Other techniques**

* The echo – repeat what was just said in the form of a question
* Compare and contrast – ask the candidates to compare/contrast two or more items or events
* The compliment – offer praise for something the candidate accomplished
* Use of examples – ask for an example to receive more information
* Self-disclosure – the interviewer discloses something about himself or herself to help the candidate feel more comfortable about a sensitive topic area

**Use your body language**

* Lean forward to put the candidate at ease
* Lean back to challenge the candidate or make them think you might be questioning the answer
* Use eye contact to your advantage
* Tilt your head to indicate you may not be buying what they are selling
* Open arms are welcoming, closed arms are challenging

**Hidden Themes**The real goal of an interview is to search for clues, symbols, and hidden themes that reveal how a person views him or herself and their confidence levels. The usual, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" will only scratch the surface of such issues.

One manager I worked with regularly asked interviewees how they react when someone cuts them off in traffic. What he's really asking for is how they respond under pressure, how they resolve conflict, and how they work with other people. It's amazing what he learns about candidates just by how they describe how they handle that driving situation.

Another person likes to have candidates tell him about their upbringing. He believes that how people describe their parents and siblings indicates how they see themselves - winners or loser, empowered or oppressed. Whatever questions you choose, your goal is to help people tell rich stories about their lives that reveal patterns of behavior and character traits.

**Less Talk, More Listening**Remember to allow the candidate to do most of the talking. As an interviewer, you are trying to find out about the candidate, not expound on your theories of the world. If you are talking to fill space or to hear yourself talk, it's time to be quiet. Focus on really listening to the candidate.

Listen for the words people use to describe their reactions and experiences. If every sentence they start with begins with "I did this." or "I told them that.", chances are you need to probe further for this person's view of teamwork. How diplomatic are they in describing teachers, family members or othr students? You want them to be straightforward, but you're also looking for some appreciation of the complexity of human behavior.

**Best Fit**In the end, interviews really come down to how well someone fits with your SkillsUSA program. Specific skills often be taught and knowledge gaps can be filled, but attitudes are much harder to change.

Everyone is a product of their upbringing and the corresponding beliefs, values, experiences and culture that go along with it. Your job is to find out as much as you can about the person in front of you and how they will complement our organization. Concentrate on those questions that highlight the core of a candidate's value systems. That will tell you far more than anything else.