

APPROVED

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
Presidential Search Committee Minutes
Thursday, December 7, 2023
10am
Presidents' Hall
Guglielmi Mazzaferro Center

Committee members present: Lindsay Carpenter Connors, Mario Delci, Jennifer Flanagan, Eric Gregoire, Meg Hoey, Carolyn Hughes, Kelli Lundgren, Jessica Murdoch(ex-officio), Adriana Padilla Salgado, Deborah Phillips, Elise Takehana, Jonathan Thompson, David Tiernan, Richard Toomey, Allison Turner

Absent: None

Others present: Laura Bayless, Matthew Bruun, Jay Bry, Ryan Crawford (WittKieffer), Stefan Dodd, Greg Duyck (WittKieffer), Michael Fiorentino (Board of Trustee Member), Jeffrey Wolfman

Proceedings

Welcome and introductions/appointment of Chair

Board of Trustee Chair, Deborah Phillips welcomed everyone and introduced Eric Gregoire as the Chair of the Presidential Search Committee.

Charge to the Search Committee

Board of Trustee Chair, Deborah Phillips read the charge to the committee, and transitioned the meeting to Eric Gregoire, Chair of the search committee.

Meeting called to order

Chair of the Presidential Search Committee, Eric Gregoire called the meeting to order at 10am.

Search Process Overview

Jessica Murdoch reviewed the Open Meeting Law, the EEO and hiring policies and the timeline of the search process. She explained that the search committee meetings are open to the public per the Open Meeting Law with the exception of an Executive Session. Executive Sessions are held to discuss applications and to screen resumes. Further, Ms. Murdoch discussed diversity within the search is important across campus and the search committee needs to be mindful of that during the application review.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Ryan Crawford (WittKieffer) informed the committee that as WittKieffer develops the leadership profile, FSU's commitment to diversity will be a priority. When the committee is writing the qualifications and questions, they should be inclusive and align with our goals.

Processes and Timeline

Greg Duyck (WittKieffer) gave a brief overview of WittKieffer's history and qualifications. He discussed the search process and timeline. Now we are in the startup phase with listening sessions being held with

many groups within the campus, which will help to deliver the leadership profile. Once the leadership profile is developed, it will be approved by the search committee and recommended to the Board of Trustees for their approval. WittKieffer is hopeful that we will get the profile out by the end of 2023 to targeted audiences within the US and internationally. Candidates will submit applications through January and February and will be evaluated by WittKieffer with the hopes of presenting a pool of candidates to the search committee by the end of February. Candidates will be broken up into three categories keeping the qualifications in mind. At the beginning of March, we should have a short list developed and invite those candidates to the airport interview in early March and from there invite finalists to campus by the end of March. The committee will then present the finalist information to the Board of Trustees and the Commissioner with the hopes to identify a successful candidate by April and have a new President on board July 1, 2024.

There was a brief discussion whether to hold the first round of interviews via Zoom or in person at the airport. The committee felt that in person interviews would be best as it is important to gauge interactions and really get a chance to see how the candidates relate in person.

Ms. Murdoch mentioned that a rubric will be created prior to the interviews which will align with our priorities, which everyone will have for review. This will help with the evaluation of the candidates and should be fairly consistent across the committee.

WittKieffer will send all candidate materials to the committee and a 3–4-hour meeting will be set up to discuss candidates and the committee will identify 8-10 for a first round interview. Once the first-round interviews have concluded, a meeting will be set up to discuss and choose 3-4 finalists that will be asked to campus. WittKieffer will perform education and employment verifications, do social checks and off list references, etc.

Mr. Gregoire then touched base on the importance of confidentiality and reminded the committee that they should not discuss any confidential information externally. Once finalists have been identified, it becomes public knowledge but all details should be kept in confidence until that time. He also reminded the committee that the confidentiality statement/acknowledgment was sent to all members and should be signed as soon as possible.

Ms. Phillips also reminded the committee that all correspondence regarding the search will be posted on the Presidential Search web page and that anyone asking about the search can be directed there.

Listening Session

Discussion of the Opportunity/Desired candidate qualifications, qualities and experiences

Committee members were asked about the attributes, personal and professional, that they are looking for in the next president.

Dr. Hoey talked about where she would like to see the university in 5 years; would like to shed the “baby boomer” structure and transfer to a younger generation. Someone that can develop our current vision and can articulate us as a smaller institution and adjust the campus to a smaller structure. Dr. Hoey feels we have lost the “why”; why are we here? Looking for a sense of leadership and sense of purpose and direction.

Dr. Takehana would like to see someone empathetic, vibrant and positive. Someone that is transparent, bold and willing to shake things up, make structural changes and make FSU a better place for all.

Allison Turner added that interaction with students and staff is important. She feels we are missing that aspect on campus now, especially student interaction. She would like to see someone that can relate to students, someone personable and who students can be comfortable approaching.

Lindsay Carpenter Connors added that she would like to see someone that recognizes students as the amazing, capable people they are, believe in students and be positive.

Adriana Padilla Salgado added that she would like the new president to understand the diversity on campus and work with the diverse groups. Also, someone that is active with students and forms connections with them.

Ms. Carolyn Hughes thinks understanding diversity on campus is key. Being community focused, interact with our neighbors, have a commanding presence that people respect. They should be beloved, approachable and think outside the box.

Mr. Jon Thompson agrees that community outreach is important and being visible in the community. Someone that is vulnerable, and doesn't think they are the smartest person in the room and leans on the expertise of others. Approachable, visible, down to earth and someone you can have a conversation with.

Richard Toomey said this is a great opportunity to reboot and remind everyone why we are here and their purpose here, inspire confidence in all, improve contributions from all members of the institution.

Mr. Gregoire asked the committee about personal attributes they would like in the new president.

Ms. Phillips would like a "glass half full" type of president. Someone that can manage a crisis without losing spirit/confidence.

Ms. Flanagan added they should be approachable and have the ability to bring FSU to a new level.

Mr. Toomey added humbleness, depend on others, exude confidence without arrogance.

Ms. Turner added be like a "salesman". The ability to talk to anyone and sell the school.

Additional attributes mentioned:

Genuine, someone that cares about FSU and lives and breathes it, transparent, recognize the value of the people around you, understand the value of other's input, teambuilder, realization that everyone has a role, utilize the team and lead as a team, self-aware, decisive, not afraid to be assertive as needed.

Opportunities and Challenges

Mr. Duyck asked the committee about opportunities and challenges.

The committee mentioned the following:

- Everyone on campus needs to be re-energized, faculty workload needs attention.

- Turnover, lean staffing, hiring freezes. Staff is feeling overwhelmed and stressed. Bring in some work life balance. Should understand and recognize how staff and faculty are feeling.

Mr. Gregoire let the committee know to reach out to WittKieffer with additional thoughts. He mentioned the listening sessions would continue the week of December 11 and that WittKieffer would be drafting a profile to share. Once that is shared, committee members should review and provide feedback promptly so that our timeline can be met.

Key meetings will be set up soon for an update meeting, selection meeting and airport meeting dates. Committee members should do their best to attend in person.

Mr. Gregoire then asked if there were any other questions, and there were none. He thanked the committee.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to be transacted, and upon motion duly made, seconded and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 12pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric A. Gregoire, Chairman of the Presidential Search
Committee
Board of Trustees