

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA FACULTY SENATE

Special Called Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Thursday August 19, 2021

This session was held in person at the Russell House Ballroom and online.

PRESIDING Chair Audrey Korsgaard

CHAIR AUDREY KORSGAARD called the meeting to order at 3:45pm EST.

CHAIR AUDREY KORSGAARD introduced the special called meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to obtain information about the presidential search.

TRUSTEE THAD WESTBROOK serves as vice chair of the Board of Trustees and the Chair of the search committee for the President's position. Mr. Westbrook spoke to the Faculty Senate in June 2021. This is an update. The search committee has been working over the past 12 weeks. They are listening to stakeholders. They have had over 6,000 responses to inquiries and held 27 meeting and/or listening sessions. They are taking these forms of information and incorporating it into a leadership profile. They are drafting the profile; it is not yet complete. The Search Committee (Committee) meets next Friday. They will be able to review in advance the leadership statement.

The Committee is embarking on a recruitment process, both those who want to apply and those who we think should be prompted to apply. They want not less than three candidates to interview. The Committee will be mindful of diversity and inclusion. They are engaged with Funk and Associates because they have broken the gender line in placing women at the presidents at R1 institutions. The new policies and bylaws are being used to include more faculty in the process as well as the system campus.

The Search Committee and Board of Trustees (BOT) want a leader who will guide the system as a whole. There will be another opportunity in September to have a town hall. There are other presidential searches going on. The Committee understands that the University needs to be aware of other presidential searches. The Committee is ahead of the other searches; they plan to obtain the highest quality pool possible.

MR. BILL FUNK thanked Faculty Senate for being here. This is the 7th meeting today. The purpose is to learn what members of the community want in a president. Over the past 35 years, Funk & Associates have conducted 430 presidential searches. Funk & Associates have worked for every SEC school except one. The company has recruited 2/3rd of all AAU presidents and 26 chancellor searches in the big 10. Funk & Associates are confident in being able to obtain a diverse pool for UofSC's presidential search.

Members of UofSC has a lot of interaction with colleagues nationwide. MR. FUNK encouraged us to ask our colleagues across the nation who would be a good president to consider. Share the name directly with Mr. Funk (it is available online) or with Mr. Westbrook. A follow up will be made with every recommendation.

During the listening sessions, each group was asked three basic questions:

1. What are the major challenges and opportunities this president will inherit?
2. What kind of person is best prepared to exploit those challenges and opportunities? Background, leadership, personality, etc.?
3. The search firm is the outreach agent. The best candidate may not be looking for new position. What do you perceive is the compelling reason for being at UofSC? What is attractive about Carolina?

Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to share other thoughts with the search committee. Comments that are received will be reviewed at the highest level.

SENATOR JOHN REGALBUTO (chemical engineering) asked the percentage of the candidates that are the reluctant candidates (i.e., they aren't looking for a job change but are invited).

MR. FUNK stated that at least 50%-65% at the Presidential level.

SENATOR CHRISTOPHER YENKEY (international business) stated that the UofSC search is a bit unique. He asked how the past search issues (e.g., undue influence on the selection) may impact the current search outcomes?

MR. FUNK stated that we need to explain what happened last time and the reforms made. Funk & Associates has a long history with UofSC. This search organization was instrumental in the search process of President Pastides and Joan Gables. Regarding political influence in a search, Funk & Associates walked away from a search that was highly political several years ago. The organization does not anticipate any political influence in this search.

SENATOR ABBAS TAVAKOLI asked for clarification about the process for diversity and inclusion.

MR. FUNK explained their company broke the color line and gender line in the president's position in 50 institutions alone. Rutgers, Indiana, and Texas A&M, University of Virginia, University of Louisville, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill are some examples. When Funk and Associates contact individuals, they know that the search company isn't just trying to make a quota. The organization is contacting them because we are very interested in them for the position. Funk and Associates will advertise in a variety of areas that also target diverse individuals. Once we get the pool, the search committee will be able to ask specific questions about their commitment to diversity and inclusion. Funk and Associates' track record demonstrates credibility in a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Mr. Funk reiterated that this isn't your only opportunity for input. The online portal is interactive. Faculty, staff, and students can call or email Funk & Associates with suggestions.

PARLIAMENTARIAN BILL SUDDUTH stated that he believes it is important to find someone who has the ability to build a new team. This university has a lot of leadership positions that need to be filled. This person needs to have a vision of where this university can go in the future. This person has the ability build the university from the ground up (his team). It is a unique opportunity. MR. FUNK agreed that this is a very attractive situation. The new president won't need to ask anyone to leave or step down. It is a very positive recruiting tool.

SENATOR STANISLAV MARKUS from Blackboard: Presidents like to have a voice in the university strategy, design, and execution. Will the Strategic Plan built under President Caslen be a "done deal" or can the new president rebuild the strategic plan?

TRUSTEE WESTBROOK stated that the new president will need to look at the plan and work with the university and the Board of Trustees, and then decide if changes to the Strategic Plan are required. The university doesn't know what awaits us as we are going through the second wave of the pandemic. It is highly likely that there will be an examination and some changes to the strategic plan. It is highly unlikely that the Board of Trustees (BOT) says "you can't change the strategic plan".

SENATOR MARKUS from Blackboard asked the about the Carolina Online initiative. Will that move forward?

TRUSTEE WESTBROOK stated that the Board of Trustees need to work with the new president regarding where we go forward.

SENATOR MARKUS from Blackboard asked about the key qualifications for the new president and has the drafting has begun?

TRUSTEE WESTBROOK stated that from the surveys, the committee is using the survey to build this information. Some of the information include being a visionary, someone who came up from the academy, and someone who can handle big budgets.

SENATOR MARKUS from Blackboard asked how is the committee working through the more than 6,000 responses to understand which qualification is better: hiring an academic versus a non-academic?

TRUSTEE WESTBROOK stated that there is conflicting feedback. This current presidential search committee is much larger than prior search committees. It is the committee's responsibility to put the statement together. The committee will go through a consensus process regarding what is perceived the community desires in the president. Presidential attributes are identified in the survey ranking.

PAST CHAIR MARK COOPER is on the search committee. This is your time to provide feedback on what you as a member of the UofSC community want in the next president.

SENATOR TAVAKOLI confirmed that being in the academy makes the process much smoother. He encouraged to weight this higher.

TRUSTEE WESTBROOK reminded the Senate that the policies have been rewritten to protect UofSC from undue political influence. This policy (1.19) was vetted from SACCOG. Any member of the committee who is being influenced is responsible for reporting this undue influence. If this committee member does not report the undue influence that person is subject to removal from the committee. The search committee is trained on the policy and is dedicated to adhering to the policy.

MR. FUNK commented that of the 430 searches the company has conducted, less than 1% have been non-traditional persons selected. When discussion of tenure, programmatic changes, and other areas are discussed, non-traditional persons (i.e., non-academics) have a significant learning curve as a university president. There have however been successes. Donna Shalala was recruited for the University of Miami and came out of the Clinton administration. Ms. Shalala was a chancellor, so she knew how a university environment worked.

SENATOR YENKEY asked if Mr. Funk knew about the campus climate survey that was conducted. He encouraged the search committee to review the results of the survey. Senator Yenkey stated that the university has a crisis of leadership and trust. It starts at the Board and goes down through the administration. The survey states that the workable environment is at the department level. Above that is serious trust levels, focused specifically on central administration and in relation to the BOT. Senator Yenkey stated that he desires a candidate (and ultimately a president) who is driven by science and objective knowledge and not politics. This person should also be a diplomat. To be driven by a focus on what is important at an R-1 university, values transparent knowledge, and a state government structure that governs ideology and controls appointments to the BOT. It is Senator Yenkey's opinion that the university is stuck in this loop. The university needs someone who can negotiate this environment. Please review the survey results.

SECRETARY MARIANNE BICKLE asked for characteristics in the next president. President Pastides and Provost Cutler can diffuse a situation. These two administrators don't take negative situations personally. Senator Bickle is assuming Funk and Associates and the search committee will choose three candidates that are best situated for the position. Senator Bickle desires a president who is able to diffuse the tension throughout the university. We have great faculty, campus, benefit. The tension is just a bit high. The next president should be able to take the tension down. Any discipline of the new president is acceptable. It is the Committee's responsibility to select the best three candidates; and Senator Bickle has faith that this committee will select the best three candidates.

SENATOR SCOTT TURNER asked how the committee will assess the value of scholarship.

MR. FUNK stated that this assessment will be through discussion, faculty representation, everyone will be involved. The committee will talk it through. The committee comes to a decision through consensus.

SENATOR MARK MINETT stated a President needs to be transparent and have a commitment to shared faculty governance.

MR. FUNK responded that his organization requests a CV and cover letter at the front end. All candidates state that they are in favor of shared governance and be collaborative. When calling references, Funk and Associate can identify those who are dictatorial, controlling, and autocratic. This is when faculty, staff, and students need to trust the process. The calling of references in the beginning and end of the process is very revealing. Funk and Associates need to dig deep.

SENATOR MIKE HARLEY stated that the people you investigate will be very high achieving. It is important to have someone who doesn't take themselves too seriously and has a sense of humor.

MR. FUNK stated that we put that in some of the announcements. This position is about the university, not the person. There are studies that demonstrate that in the beginning the leader makes decision reflect all about the university. If they are in the position too long, the decisions are based on their personal judgements.

SENATOR DEMETRIUS ABSHIRE asked for further discussion of diversity.

MR. FUNK will have access to password encrypted documents of all candidates. At the point the search firm thinks the pool is complete, the committee is asked to identify the top eight candidates. A discussion will be held including faculty, students, board members. Chair Thad Westbrook has a vetting process as does the search firm.

SENATOR MARKUS stated that we need someone who understands the university's key strengths and has sufficient acumen to build upon these strengths.

MR. FUNK stated the search firm doesn't conduct a preliminary cut of the candidates. It is a full committee process.

Good of the order

CHAIR KORSGAARD thanked the Senators for preparing for the upcoming semester. A dashboard will be available. It will include the vaccination rate of faculty, staff, and students. Please reach out to your colleagues and ask to upload your vaccination status.

The meeting ended at 4:45pm EST.