



Framingham

State University

President Search Committee

July 12, 2021

4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Alumni Room, McCarthy Center & Remote
MINUTES

Committee members in attendance: Kevin Foley*; David Baldwin*; Dara Barros; Bob Bonnevie; Anthony Hubbard*; Dana Neshe*, Wardell Powell; Nina Ricci*, Robin Robinson; Luis Rosero

Ex officio University members in attendance: Kim Dexter; Ann McDonald*
Executive search firm members: Lucy Leske and Philip Tang

Committee members absent: Nancy Budwig, Elena Quiroz-Livanis

The meeting convened at 4:00 p.m.

I. Chair Kevin Foley welcomed the committee members.

Introductions were made:

- Kevin Foley, search committee chair, alumnus, and Board of Trustees chair.
- Nina Ricci, executive assistant to the Vice President of the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, and alumna.
- Anthony Hubbard, Board of Trustees member and attorney.
- Ann McDonald, ex officio member of the committee, Chief of Staff, General Counsel and Secretary to the Board of Trustees.
- Dana Neshe, Board of Trustees member, and alumna
- David Baldwin, Associate Dean of Students.
- Lucy Leske, senior partner, WittKieffer
- Wardell Powell, Assistant Professor of Education
- Luis Rosero, Associate Professor of Economics
- Robin Robinson, Director of Educational Technology and Instruction Design
- Kim Dexter, ex officio member of the committee, Interim Assoc. Vice President, Human Resources, EEO and Affirmative Action
- Philip Tang, consultant, WittKieffer
- Robert (Bob) Bonnevie, Foundation Board member and psychologist
- Dara Barros, FSU student in her junior year.

II. Chair Foley spoke of the role of the search committee and his perspective on the search:

- This will be a very strategic hire, at a pivotal moment in the University's history.
- Asked the committee members to be prepared for the meetings.
- Every effort will be made for everyone to be heard.

* Notates in person attendance.

Review of the Charge

- Chair Foley will be available via email
- Lucy Leske clarified that the committee will recommend three to four candidates for the Board of Trustees who will then select and forward a final candidate recommendation to the Commissioner.

III. Procedural matters were reviewed by Lucy Leske:

- Code of ethics: a reminder was made to all of the tenor and highest professional standards that must be upheld by the committee members.
 - Asked the committee to treat each other with respect, and listen to the opinions of others.
 - Asked the members to review, sign and return the code of ethics form.
- Contact information: a listserv will be distributed, noting any communication via email are subject to public records access through the Commonwealth's Public Records Law or the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
 - Lucy Leske and Philip Tang will share phone numbers.

A request for clarification regarding information what information could be shared from the committee's deliberations led to the following guidance:

- Any information discussed in the public meeting may be shared
- Opinions of the materials or of individuals should not be discussed or shared.
- Any information discussed in an Executive Session of the public meeting may *not* be shared

IV. WittKieffer:

A global executive search firm, headquartered in Chicago, IL. The firm is responsible for conducting multiple presidential searches annually; Lucy Leske and Philip Tang limit themselves to a few each year.

Lucy Leske continued in defining the following:

- Search committee and search firm roles and responsibilities:
 - The search committee is ultimately responsible for decisions: how to evaluate candidates and what steps to take.
 - The firm will not provide candidate evaluations to the committee. The firm will provide factual information on the candidates to help the committee make decisions regarding which candidates to bring forth to the finalist pool.
- Search process and timeline: June 14, 2021 – January 2022
 - The goal is to make the final candidate recommendations to the Board of Trustees (BOT) in January 2022.
- Overview of constituent intake sessions – including survey for input and nominations
 - Campus-wide listening sessions will be scheduled soon.
 - August 1, the survey results will begin to be compiled.
- University/Presidential profile and Advertisement
 - With the information gathered through listening sessions and the survey, the University/Presidential Profile will be developed and eventually submitted to the Commissioner of the Department of Higher Education for his approval before its release.
 - The Profile will assist with the advertisement of the position; developing a candidate pool to include those with shared goals and objectives, who share a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Additional listening sessions will be scheduled for the fall to expand campus engagement with the University community and provide for continued input.
- Application sorting/*WorkZone* organization's internal document review portal.
 - Forthcoming meetings will include information on the review and interview processes.
 - *WorkZone* portal will be utilized by the committee members for review of applicant materials.
 - Executive session will be used to discuss individual candidates for selection.
 - Avoid any formal voting until the three finalist are selected. Rather, the group can elect for "informal polling" and consensus gathering prior to any formal votes.
 - At no point will there be a vote in the Executive Session.

Lucy Leske concluded by noting that she anticipates the selection of finalists to be completed by November.

- Announcements will be made to the public, the BOT will continue with the selection process from that point forward.
- The BOT may seek the committee's input, however the decision making role of the committee will then conclude, and the BOT will continue in conducting its own interviews and in preparation for the finalists to meet the rest of the University community.

Concern with the limited number of faculty and students on campus during the summer was brought forth by a committee member. To fully gather the community input required, it was asked if there was any flexibility in the dates for the listening sessions in order to obtain the maximum amount of input.

Lucy Leske responded in clarifying that while the purpose of the listening sessions are primarily to assist in the compilation of the president's job description, it serves a dual purpose in allowing the firm to listen to the campus community. With additional listening sessions to be scheduled in September, she assured the committee members that continued community input will be essential in understanding the interests and needs of the University, as well as to better understand the qualities they may seek in their next president.

Luis Rosero suggested that perhaps the faculty could schedule a listening session in tandem with their first faculty meeting, asking when the survey will be published.

Lucy Leske responded that the survey would be available the next day (July 13, 2021) and will remain open through September.

Further conversation ensued proposing additional cohorts for listening sessions to include:

- Students on campus for Orientation Leader training
- MCSA members
- AFSCME and APA union staff members
- Academic Deans (leadership) and Division of Graduate and Continuing Education
- Foundation and Alumni Board members
- Executive Staff members
- Board of Trustees members
- Open sessions for any member of the FSU community to participate in.

V. Affirmative action, legal issues and search committee best practices

Ann McDonald reviewed the Department of Higher Education Guidelines for a Presidential Search, public meeting and public records laws, concluding a review of affirmative action, diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives:

- Encouraged the committee members to thoroughly review the document: *Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, Guidelines and Procedures for the Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal of State University and Community College Presidents*.
- Open meeting law: agendas, minutes of meetings, and all documents used at the meetings will be posted on the FSU website to comply with open meeting law requirements.
- Public records law: all search committee documentation with the exception of certain personnel documents are subject to the law.
 - Additional training will be made available to Committee members and Ann will be available to answer any questions that any committee members have about compliance with these laws.
- Affirmative Action: there will be further conversation and training at the next meeting; WittKieffer will offer standards but Kim Dexter will also serve as a campus based resource for committee members.

Lucy Leske added, the committee will be working within FSU's guidelines and training that will address diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as acknowledge implicit and explicit bias.

- Conversations will be had addressing what diversity, equity, and inclusion means to the members and ways to combat unconscious bias.

Kim Dexter recommended in preparation to these challenging discussions to take the [Project Implicit](#) test. Noting it is a helpful self-assessment tool.

VI. Discussion of the opportunity

Anthony Hubbard suggested the committee take some time to get to know each other a bit more outside of this context (of the search committee).

Lucy Leske agreed that it's a process/technique she's used before. Spend 45 minutes doing this can be very helpful. Chair Foley recommended we include this activity in the next scheduled committee meeting.

VII. Communication plan

Lucy Leske emphasized, in order to avoid any misunderstandings or misinformation, that all and any official information regarding the search or outcomes of the meetings, should be communicated by the search committee chair. Should members of the community pose questions to the committee member(s) individually, the member(s) should redirect the question to the full search committee for a response.

The group revisited the "Discussion of Opportunity" offering additional input.

Lucy Leske, began by asking for committee members to share what they are looking for in the next president- not necessarily regarding professional experience, but aspirational characteristics. What is it about FSU that is inspiring, compelling, and would attract the kinds of candidates you seek?

Responses from the committee members included:

- One of the things that makes FSU a special place is that everyone on the campus is determined to service the students and work toward their success.
- The future president will have to address the issue of declining enrollment; how would the candidate going to approach this challenge?
- I'm not sure that the world understands how special and unique FSU is. We need a person who can put a voice to the narrative.
- FSU is a very purposeful institution. It changes people's lives in offering affordable higher education. Would want someone who understands and promotes that.
- Continued relations with the community outside of the campus and the greater Framingham community; investment and modeling of diversity equity and inclusion is essential.
- There is a breadth of opportunity at FSU. It is a very collaborative environment. Looking for leader that can talk to the community about what we have, but also look to the future to continue to improve and move the institution forward.
- There is a big focus on students. There are unique opportunities that the students have with an open collaborative community. Want the next president to have open communications with students; open dialog on how she/he plans on improving the campus diversity, equality and inclusion initiatives.
- Students are the foundation of FSU. The next president has to be able to listen to students and act upon what they suggest. FSU has a lot of staff members with a great deal of institutional history. Getting input on what has worked and hasn't from staff would be important.

Lucy Leske asked the committee for words that have been used to describe FSU; individual character of FSU and core values.

Responses include the following:

- The tagline FRAMily, resonates with the campus. You hear it from students, faculty, and staff, and it has a value. Ties in with what we aspire to.
- FSU is a small campus and with a family-like community. We are a community that respects each other. Connections are created easily with students and demonstrates the value of our mission.
- FSU has a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Collaboration is very important. The next president should be approachable and be able listen to various constituents; understand the value of the unions; someone who can work with the union to make the University even better than it is today.
- The quality of the education; state schools suffer from the notion that we are lesser, a huge misjudgment. FSU has lots of very successful alumni and faculty; having a president that can convey that message would be important. Students should feel good about the high quality of education they are receiving.
- Demonstrable ability to lead through change and to embrace the change.
- Change management- it will be important for leadership to help manage the University as it must address larger shift in higher education. These would include, challenges with enrollment, recognizing completion with other schools; the new challenges in the work environment, whether it is remote, hybrid, and on-campus.

Philip Tang asked the committee members if there are any particular characteristics sought in the next president.

Responses include:

- A philosophical approach; vision for higher education in the future
- Ability to work through adversity.
- Appreciation for what happens outside of the classroom. Understanding the importance of the total educational experience.
- A leader that is an innovator.
- An approachable collaborative innovator.

In summary Lucy Leske discussed the deliverables sought by the committee to include: addressing enrollment, as the financial model in higher education is being challenged; looking forward, and assessing what learning and teaching look like in the future; a relationship with the Board of Higher Education and Governor's Office.

- Many agreed that having a leader that advocates for public higher education is important.
- It is strategic that the president has a relationship with Legislators; very important that key legislative leaders can help tell the FSU story.

In closing, Chair Foley asked the committee members to continue to think about challenges and opportunities for the next president and what is important to FSU.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and approved. The meeting ended at 5:52 p.m.

Attachments

- Charge
- Code of Ethics
- WittKieffer Team Profile
- Survey – Draft
- Timeline – Draft
- BHE Guidelines