

Dickinson State University Presidential Search Committee

The Dickinson State University Presidential Search Committee met on December 3, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. CT.

Call to Order

Co-Chair Bye called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. CT.

DSU Presidential Search Committee members

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Danita Bye, Co-Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Dallis Mitchell |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Ty Orton, Co-Chair | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Thadd O'Donnell |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Carl Askins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Steve Perdue |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Liz Freedman | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. McKenzie Springer |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Holly Gruhlke | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Mark Gorenflo (<i>ex officio</i>) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dr. Bernell Hirning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chancellor Hagerott (<i>ex officio</i>) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. Vaune Johnson | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Chris Meek | |

Search Consultants/Guests

AGB Dr. Jim McCormick, Ms. Janice Fitzgerald **Attorney General** Ms. Meredith Larson, Ms. Rachel Sinness

Committee Introductions

Review [SBHE Policy 601.1](#) and [NDUS Procedure 601.1](#) – Presidential Searches

- a. Ms. Meredith Larson suggested that committee members read through both the policy and procedure and if there are any questions to reach out to her or Mr. Mark Gorenflo, NDUS Chief of Staff.

Review North Dakota Open Meetings/Open Records Law – Ms. Meredith Larson

- b. Open Records
 1. Open records include all records in the possession of a public entity, or its agent and it relates to public business. A record includes any recorded information of any kind, regardless of whether or not it's recorded, where it's stored, or reproduced. Records that are generally open include personnel files (job performance and evaluations), business-related emails, records on personal devices (home computers or personal cell phones), and contracts with a public entity, including all prices and costs.
 2. All records are open unless there is a law that specifically says the record is protected.
 3. At times there may be requests for information or an opinion. The only requirement is to provide records that exist; new records do not have to be created based.

4. Open records are broad in North Dakota and legal counsel, or the system office must be involved if a request is received.
- c. Applications for Public Employment - N.D.C.C. 44-04-18.27 states that if a public entity receives applications from three or more applicants who meet minimum qualifications for a vacant position, the public entity shall designate three or more of the qualified applicants as finalists for further consideration before the public entity may offer the position. If the entity does not want to consider any of the applicants, they do not need to name a finalist. Prior to naming finalists, applications are exempt. After finalists are designated, the records are public. The public entity shall comply with executive session laws to discuss exempt applications. If there are less than 3 applicants, the records are open.
 1. Mr. Mark Gorenflo asked if more than 3 finalists can be named and Ms. Larson stated yes, 3 is the minimum.
- d. Open Meetings
 1. An open meeting has 4 different elements – it must be a *quorum* (50% or more) of a *governing body* of a *public entity* discussion *public business*.
 2. Meetings can happen by conference call, on short notice, over video conference, at a restaurant, or anywhere else a quorum is present.
 3. There are two different types of open meetings – regular and special. Regular meetings are set by a yearly schedule and the agenda for each meeting should contain all topics known at the time the agenda is drafted but may contain catch-all items (i.e. “Committee Reports”). Members may discuss items not on the agenda at the meeting. Special meetings are added to the regular yearly schedule and members can only discuss items on the agenda and there can be no additions or catch-all items.
 4. Common violations of open meeting laws include using email or other communication methods where a quorum is involved to discuss public business, telephone straw polling, or serial meetings (a series of small gatherings which collectively constitute a quorum and public business is discussed). Regarding email, the best way to avoid violating the open meeting laws is to not reply all to the emails.
- e. Providing Notice of Meetings - The public must have notice of a meeting “at the same time as such governing body’s members are notified”. There are no specifics of time under statute that we are required to provide notice, and the System Office staff handles noticing the public meetings.
- f. Executive Sessions
 1. Executive sessions are an exception to an open meeting. The most common reason for an executive session is to discuss exempt or confidential records.
 2. The topics that will be discussed in the executive session must be announced in the open meeting. No motion is needed to enter an executive session to discuss confidential information; however, a motion is necessary to discuss exempt information.
 3. The executive session must be recorded and retained for 6 months.
 4. Final actions cannot take place in an executive session and must occur when the open meeting resumes.
- g. Minutes - Minutes must be taken during open meetings and must contain the names of members attending, date and time the meeting was called to order and adjourned, description of each motion made and whether it was seconded and by whom, results of each vote taken, and the vote of each member on every roll call vote. The

executive Secretary and SBHE Chair are legally responsible for minutes being taken and approved. The meeting minutes will be prepared by the System Office.

Charge to DSU Presidential Search Committee and Chancellor's Expectations – Chancellor Hagerott

- h. Chancellor Hagerott reviewed the charge to the DSU Presidential Search Committee members.

Report from Search Consultants – Dr. Jim McCormick and Ms. Janice Fitzgerald, AGB Search

- i. Listening sessions with campus constituents
 1. Ms. Fitzgerald shared that there were 11 scheduled listening sessions with community and business leaders, the Foundation board, staff and faculty, the President's cabinet, and students. AGB has gathered many ideas and thoughts that gave shape to the kind of leadership that DSU is expecting in its next president.
 2. AGB would like to conduct an additional listening session with the search committee members.
 3. Ms. Fitzgerald shared the following highlights from the listening sessions:
 - i. Many people are interested in seeing DSU increase its presence in both the state and the nation.
 - ii. New avenues of recruitment.
 - iii. A strong leader with soft skills and high emotional intelligence.
 - iv. An individual with experience in higher education leadership.
 - v. A unifier who will build bridges both on and off campus.
 - vi. A relationship builder who is committed to DSU and not looking to the future at another location.
 - vii. A leader who is a communicator and listener who understands the rich, robust economy in the area.
 - viii. A leader who tends to DSU's transition to a dual mission institution.
 - ix. A leader with a vision that will bring success to the future but who also pays attention to the history of DSU.
- j. Listening Session with Search Committee Members
 1. Ms. Vaune Johnson asked if there were any new criteria or concerns that the search consultants heard that they haven't in the past at DSU. Ms. Fitzgerald stated that the dual mission was a new topic. Dr. McCormick shared that they heard the new leader will need to be involved in the accrediting activities that are coming forward soon and it's important for that person to give leadership and support to that effort.
 2. Mr. Perdue asked what challenges were discussed in the listening sessions. Ms. Fitzgerald shared that most of the challenges discussed related to recruitment, the budget, and the dual mission.
 3. Ms. Johnson asked how we can not only hire the President but also recruit their family. Ms. Fitzgerald shared that as search consultants they ensure that applicants know what the campus is like, what the community is like, they discuss the school districts, healthcare etc. Additionally, Ms. Johnson asked if there is a community or campus leader that takes the families around and shows them the different areas of the community. Mr. Gorenflo shared that within the search timeline there are two occasions when the candidates come to campus. One visit will occur during the week of March 17th when they'll speak to constituents

and get interviewed by the committee in person. The second visit occurs during the March 27th meeting of the SBHE where the finalists are interviewed by the board. Mr. Gorenflo will work with the DSU Team to ensure that there is time to “sell” the candidates and their families on life at DSU and in Dickinson during the campus visits.

4. Ms. Fitzgerald requested additional feedback from students.
 - i. Mr. Carl Askins shared that it is important to have a president that will not use DSU as a steppingstone. Additionally, a president who supports the Blue Hawks and is personable with students is important.
 - ii. Ms. Dallis Mitchell shared that a president who is approachable and involved in the community is important.
5. Ms. Fitzgerald asked what the most difficult thing is the search committee thinks the search consultants should talk to candidates about.
 - i. Ms. Johnson stated that they should emphasize the importance and the value of the Dickinson community.
 - ii. Co-Chair Orton emphasized that this individual needs to be a good listener and someone that brings others together.
6. Dr. McCormick asked what credentials candidates should have as they heard a lot about preferring a terminal degree; however, there was a sense that it should be a preferred rather than a required qualification.
 - i. Dr. Freedman suggested that a master’s degree should be a requirement, with a terminal degree preferred.
 - ii. Mr. Gorenflo moved, Mr. O’Donnell seconded, that the qualification requirement for the next president of Dickinson State University would be a master’s degree required, and a terminal degree preferred.

Askins, Freedman, Gruhlke, Hirning, Johnson, Meek, Mitchell, O’Donnell, Perdue, Springer, Gorenflo, Bye, and Orton voted yes. Motion passed 13-0.

k. Advertising and communication plan

1. Ms. Fitzgerald shared that AGB is traditional in its form of communication, and they engage in a lot of word of mouth, telephone work, and Zoom work.
2. AGB recommends placing the approved electronic leadership advertisement in roughly a dozen locations including the American Association of Community Colleges, the Chronicle of Higher Education, Diverse Issues in Higher Education, Higher Ed Jobs, Hispanic Outlook, Inside Higher Education, LinkedIn, Tribal College Journal of American Indian Higher Education, Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education, and Women in Higher Education.
3. AGB recommends that individuals or organizations who have listservs, such as the Alumni Office, share out the advertisement as well.
4. Additionally, the advertisement will be shared with chief academic officers, chief student life officers, and deans of relevant programs.
 - i. Ms. Johnson asked how a dean of a relevant program is determined and if the plan is to reach down to the next level of leadership. Ms. Fitzgerald stated that AGB will reach out to Vice Presidents, Provosts, and more than likely Deans.

Review Proposed Search Process and Timeline – Mr. Mark Gorenflo

- l. Mr. Mark Gorenflo reviewed the search committee timeline with committee members.

- m. Mr. Gorenflo shared that the application deadline is February 7th and committee members will be able to access applicant materials starting on February 10th. Between February 10th and February 21st, committee members should review all applications. Guidance will be given to committee members as to how to review applicants. By the February 21st committee meeting, committee members should be in a position to identify the applicants that they wish to move forward to the next step.
- n. The third committee meeting will occur during the week of March 3rd when committee members will interview semifinalist candidates. The search committee will go into executive session during this meeting to identify candidates to bring to the campus the week of March 17th.
- o. The fourth and final search committee meeting will occur during the week of March 17th. Candidates will be on campus to meet with various constituency groups, and they will be interviewed by the search committee in person. Following the interviews the search committee will go into executive session to discuss which candidates will be recommended to the SBHE.
- p. On March 27th the finalists will be on campus during the SBHE meeting and will be interviewed by the board in person.

Media Inquiries

- q. Co-Chair Orton informed search committee members that if they receive any questions from the public or inquiries from the media to pass them along to himself, Co-Chair Bye, or Dr. Holly Gruhlke who is DSU's university relations lead.

Committee Questions

- r. No questions were expressed by search committee members.

Adjourn

Co-Chair Orton adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m. CT.

Approved February 21, 2025.