

Dickinson State University Presidential Search Committee

The Dickinson State University Presidential Search Committee met on March 24, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. CDT.

Call to Order

Co-Chair Bye called the meeting to order at 1:01 a.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 type="checkbox"/> Mr. Carl Askins | <input 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 type="checkbox"/> Ms. Vaune Johnson | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mr. Chris Meek | |

NDUS/Guests

NDUS Dr. Billie Jo Lorus, Ms. Caitlin Magilke, Ms. Sharon Schwartzbauer **AG** Ms. Meredith Larson
AGB Dr. Jim McCormick, Ms. Janice Fitzgerald

1. Approval of Agenda
And,

2. Approval of March 3, 2025, [Meeting Minutes](#)
Approval of March 5, 2025, [Meeting Minutes](#)
Approval of March 6, 2025, [Meeting Minutes](#)
Approval of March 7, 2025, [Meeting Minutes](#)

- a. Gruhlke moved, Hirning seconded, to approve the agenda and the March 3, 2025, March 5, 2025, March 6, 2025, and March 7, 2025, meeting minutes as presented.

Freedman, Gruhlke, Hirning, Meek, Mitchell, Springer, Bye, and Orton voted yes.
Motion passed 8-0.

3. Feedback from Campus Visits; Feedback from Committee Members; Results of Presentation Surveys; DSU Community Input
- a. Dr. Holly Gruhlke shared the survey results from the Open Forums that were conducted during the week of March 17-21, 2025. The survey questions were scored on a Likert Scale up to 60 points total.
- i. Dr. Jeff Borden scored 49 out of 60 with an average of 82% positivity rate. Dr. Borden scored 87% positivity for student first attitude; 87% positivity for prioritizing advancing technology framework and implementing best

practices; and demonstrated he has significant senior level executive leadership experience. The next highest scored categories were shared governance and his vision, recruitment, retention and enrollment management. Dr. Borden's lowest scored categories were the ability to inspire team building, being a team player, inspiring trust and credibility, and the ability to advocate for statewide partnership. The lowest scored category overall was the candidate's competency in budgeting, financial management, resource generation, fundraising, and identifying new external sources.

- ii. Dr. Jodi Washington scored 49 out of 60 with an average of 82% positivity rate. Dr. Washington scored high on the ability to generate a vision, the ability to be a team player, shared governance, and enrollment, recruitment or retention strategies. The candidate's weakest scored category was significant senior level higher ed executive experience.
 - iii. Dr. Carmen Simone scored 46 out of 60 with an average of 77% positivity rate. Dr. Simone scored highest on significant senior level executive leadership experience. Dr. Simone is also seen as having the ability to be a strong advocate and statewide partner working effectively with the State Board of Higher Education and scored high in shared governance. The next highest scored categories were financial management, resource generation, fundraising, identifying external sources, and student first attitude. Dr. Simone's lowest scored category was the ability to establish a bold vision and determination to make it a reality.
 - iv. Mr. Scott Molander scored 47 out of 60 points with a 79% positivity rate. Mr. Molander scored highest in budgeting, financial management, resource generation, fundraising, and identifying new external resources. Furthermore, Mr. Molander scored high in the ability to be a strong advocate in statewide partnerships, having a student first attitude, being able to interact with diverse constituencies, capacity to attract, retain, and develop talent, and the ability to establish a bold vision. Mr. Molander's lowest scored category was that he lacked senior level higher ed executive experience.
- b. Co-chair Orton stated that the survey responses and event participation did drop throughout the week. Dr. Borden received 55 survey responses; Mr. Molander received 28 survey responses; Dr. Washington received 62 survey responses; and Dr. Simone received 51 survey responses.
 - c. Co-chair Bye commented that Mr. Molander scored low on not having senior executive leadership including higher education; however, Mr. Molander does have significant senior leadership experience, perhaps in business versus higher education.
 - d. Dr. Freedman shared that she had received feedback from various staff and faculty on their concerns that Mr. Molander has a lack of higher education experience. Additionally, there were concerns that Mr. Molander did not have a detailed plan and throughout his presentation he referred to students as "kids." DSU has a diverse student body and Mr. Molander did not touch on different demographics such as older than average students, students with families, etc.
 - e. Mr. O'Donnell shared that he received feedback from staff and faculty that they are looking for a president that works well within the community, with the business world, and one that is able to effectively handle DSU's finances. Mr. Molander meets all of these criteria.

- f. Dr. Gruhlke stated that if different groups across campus were asked for feedback, they would provide strong and varying opinions for each candidate based on the constraints they are working within. However, we need to consider the bigger picture regarding what is necessary for the campus.
- g. Dr. Gruhlke shared that she had an opportunity to speak with Mr. Molander, Dr. Simone, and Dr. Washington and could see any of those candidates as being effective leaders and having the ability to help DSU move forward in a positive direction.
 - i. Co-chair Bye asked if Dr. Gruhlke had an opportunity to speak with Dr. Borden. Dr. Gruhlke stated that she did have the opportunity to speak with him and stated that he is an impressive candidate with a lot of consulting work and leadership experience at a very large institution; however, there have been perspectives shared across campus that when leaders come in from larger institutions to a smaller institution such as DSU, there are some challenges.
- h. President Hirning asked if the survey results were categorized by demographics such as faculty, staff, community, etc. Dr. Gruhlke shared that the respondents were not differentiated by demographics.
- i. Mr. O'Donnell asked if the State Board of Higher Education, because they did not attend the campus events, are basing their decision solely on the final interview on March 27th. Co-chair Bye stated that she wanted to attend the events but was discouraged from doing so and her best guess was because having SBHE members present could potentially change the engagement dynamic on campus. The feedback shared during this meeting will be important to share with other board members for the upcoming interviews. Mr. O'Donnell further shared his concerns that the SBHE will be making a decision after only spending a few hours with the candidates, as well as secondhand feedback. Mr. Mark Gorenflo shared with the committee that all board members have been given access to the 5 semifinalist interview recordings, as well as access to each of the open forum presentations. Mr. Gorenflo has heard from at least a couple of board members who have viewed these videos. Chancellor Hagerott commented that he also spoke with each candidate individually.

4. Final Committee Work

- a. Chancellor Hagerott thanked the committee for their time and hard work.
- b. President Hirning shared that all campus presidents are hoping to attend the SBHE meeting in Dickinson on March 27th; however, presidents were told that they may be called back to the House this week to testify on behalf of their campuses. There is no date or time set but there is a chance that campus presidents may be called at some point throughout the week.
- c. Co-chair Bye asked if there will be any follow-up meetings for the search committee. Mr. Gorenflo stated that the search committee's work was complete when finalists were determined, but it was important to have this final meeting to share campus feedback with the co-chairs that would be relayed to the SBHE.
- d. Co-chair Orton requested to discuss the process for the March 27th SBHE meeting. Mr. Gorenflo shared that the first order of business will be to interview each candidate. The chair and co-chair of the board have approved the list of questions to be asked and in what order. Once all interviews are complete, the board will go into executive session to deliberate on who they wish to make an offer to as the next president of DSU. Once there is a consensus on one candidate, the chair and Chancellor will approach that candidate with the

- offer. Assuming the candidate accepts, the SBHE will make a motion in open session that would appoint the successful candidate.
- e. President Hirning and Co-chair Bye thanked the committee, AGB consultants, and Mr. Gorenflo for their hard work and time put forth to this committee and search.
 - f. Co-chair Orton shared that if there are any comments or feedback that individuals would like to share prior to March 27th, please speak with him directly or provide a written statement.

Adjourn

Co-chair Orton adjourned the meeting at 1:47 p.m. CDT.

Approved April 4, 2025.