



Presidential Search Committee Meeting

Tuesday, March 16, 2021
8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Via Zoom

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Review and approval of Open Session minutes from March 3, 2021, meeting
3. Preparation for candidate interviews
4. Executive Session pursuant to Open Meeting Law, G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) #8.
 - a) Review and approval of Executive Session minutes from March 3, 2021, meeting
 - b) To consider applicants for employment or appointment by a preliminary screening committee
 - c) Discussion of additional candidates for consideration
5. Adjournment from Executive Session without reconvening in Open Session

Attachments

- Open Session Minutes from March 3, 2021 meeting – Draft
- Executive Session Minutes from March 3, 2021 meeting – Draft
- Interview Questions



BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Presidential Search Committee

March 3, 2021
Minutes

Meeting held virtually via Zoom

In accordance with Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker’s Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20 dated March 12, 2020.

A live stream of the open session of the meeting for public viewing also took place on YouTube.

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Dr. Robert Martin, Chair, Melissa Alvarado, Vice Chair, Dr. Claudia Ciano-Boyce, Junior Delgado, George Flevotomos, Dr. Brian Jennings, Ron’na J’Q Lytle, Dr. Juline Mills (entered at 2:39 PM), Thalita Neves, Thomas Simard, Stephen Taksar, Dr. Gloria Williams, and Dr. Jalisa Williams, ex officio resource to the committee.

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Lydia Martinez-Alvarez

Also participating remotely from the presidential search firm WittKieffer were Lucy Leske (entered at 4:56 PM), senior partner, Robert Luke, consultant, and Christine Pendleton, senior associate.

Trustee Robert Martin, chair of the committee, called the meeting to order at 2:35 PM and announced all committee members participating remotely as listed above (with the exception of Dr. Juline Mills and Ms. Lucy Leske from WittKieffer at this time).

It was announced that only the open session portion of the meeting was being livestreamed, and, as a result will be captured as recorded.

At 2:37 PM, **MOTION** made by Dr. Gloria Williams, seconded by Ron’na Lytle, to approve the open session portion of the minutes of the February 24, 2021 Presidential Search Committee meeting.

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|------------------------|----------------|
| Melissa Alvarado | Yes | Lydia Martinez-Alvarez | Not in meeting |
| Dr. Claudia Ciano-Boyce | Yes | Dr. Juline Mills | Not in meeting |
| Junior Delgado | Yes | Thalita Neves | Yes |
| George Flevotomos | Yes | Thomas Simard | Yes |
| Dr. Brian Jennings | Yes | Stephen Taksar | Yes |
| Ron’na J’Q Lytle | Yes | Dr. Gloria Williams | Yes |
| Motion passed unanimously. | | Dr. Robert Martin | Yes |

Dr. Juline Mills joined the meeting at 2:39 PM.

Review of selection process and discussion. Trustee Martin stated this meeting is critical in identifying candidates to interview. He proposed a process of starting with applicants in the no category, consisting of approximately 41 individuals, and giving committee members the opportunity to request any one of these candidates be moved to a maybe or yes discussion group which could then be discussed by the committee. Then review the candidates in the maybe category and allow committee members the opportunity to discuss and move anyone in that group to the yes category. With those two steps, there will be a pool of at least 12 candidates in the yes group. At that point, WittKieffer suggests doing an informal anonymous doodle poll for those yes candidates to determine a yes/no/maybe percentage to continue in the pool, which will give the committee a basis for further discussion of those candidates. At the end of today, we hope to have approximately 10 candidates identified to invite to semi-final interviews on March 16 and 17. This process will allow all committee members to advocate for any candidate. It was questioned whether the list in the no category would be discussed again. They will not be discussed unless a committee member requests a candidate be moved. It was also commented whether more structure was needed to advocate to move a candidate up. WittKieffer stated the committee has chosen well and is in a good position to build an excellent slate of candidates from the yes and maybe groups.

Planning and scheduling the Community Information Session. Committee members volunteered to present updates on certain topics at the information sessions which will be held on March 8 at noon and March 11 at 3 p.m. They were reminded that these are informational sessions, not official meetings, and to be careful not to debate or discuss anything to suggest deliberation.

Review of semi-finalist interview process. Feedback and edits to the draft interview questions should be sent to WittKieffer, with a list of those questions each committee member would like to ask. The interview questions will not be shared with the candidates or the public prior to the interviews. After a question is asked, anyone can ask follow up questions. A timekeeper will keep the interview going. Dr. Jalisa Williams will review and approve the final questions. Interview days will start with an open pre-meeting to discuss process and vote on the previous meeting minutes before the executive session. After the interviews, there will be a debrief at the end of the day. The goal is to identify 3-5 candidates.

Once semi-finalist interviews conclude, the finalist reference checks will take place on the preferred 3-5 candidates before invitations are extended for the “campus visit” interview. References are checked from people on and off the candidate’s reference list. It was stated that since Westfield is a unionized campus, it is very important to know how a candidate feels about unions. WittKieffer stated they could ask that question during all references, as well as other questions identified in the debrief sessions.

Executive Session. Trustee Martin stated the committee would be going into executive session for the purpose of discussing candidates for the position of president, pursuant to Open Meeting Law, G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) #8, as holding these discussions in an open session would have a detrimental effect on the University’s ability to attract qualified applicants. Once in executive session, the live stream will end. The committee will adjourn from executive session and not reconvene in open session.

At 3:27 PM, **MOTION** made by Thalita Neves, seconded by Dr. Brian Jennings, to enter into executive session.

There being no discussion, **ROLL CALL VOTE** taken:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|------------------------|----------------|
| Melissa Alvarado | Yes | Lydia Martinez-Alvarez | Not in meeting |
| Dr. Claudia Ciano-Boyce | Yes | Dr. Juline Mills | Yes |
| Junior Delgado | Yes | Thalita Neves | Yes |
| George Flevotomos | Yes | Thomas Simard | Yes |
| Dr. Brian Jennings | Yes | Stephen Taksar | Yes |
| Ron'na J'Q Lytle | Yes | Dr. Gloria Williams | Yes |
| Motion passed unanimously. | | Dr. Robert Martin | Yes |

The meeting entered executive session at 3:27 PM and did not reconvene in open session.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Open Session Minutes from February 24, 2021 meeting – Draft

Secretary's Certificate

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the approved minutes of the open session portion of the Westfield State University Presidential Search Committee meeting held on March 3, 2021.

Jean Beal, Secretary

Date