



## WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE GUIDE

*“The search process for a college and university president is an important institutional ritual, a significant ceremony in the life of an institution. The constitution of a search committee, the specification of the criteria sought, the selection of individuals to meet with the final candidates under consideration all are indications of “ownership” by the institution’s stakeholders (Brinbaum, 1988).”<sup>1</sup>*

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The aim of the Westfield State University Presidential Search Committee Guide is to “design and execute a leadership selection process that *bolsters* rather than *undermines* the institution’s strength” (Watkins-Hayes, 2015).<sup>2</sup> The effective recruitment of qualified candidates for the position of University President is vital to furthering the mission and vision of Westfield State University (WSU). As such, this Guide is designed to document a process that alleviates “working from memory,” and “past practice assumptions.” The document follows the *Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Guidelines and Procedures for the Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal of State University and Community College Presidents* (MBHE Guide), Westfield State University Office of Human Resources, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (OHRIDE), *Search Committee Guide*, and Westfield State University *Board of Trustees (BOT) Bylaws*.

**Westfield State University provides equal access to employment opportunities for all applicants, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, marital status, age, disability or veteran status in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and policies.**

The Westfield State University Presidential Search Committee Guide serves as a working document to ensure process transparency and the appropriate selection of top candidates who reflect the mission, vision, and values of the institution. The Westfield State University Presidential Search Committee Guide uses broadly the following seven steps from Nason and Axelrod (1980):

- (1) establishing the machinery of search and selection;
- (2) organizing the committee;
- (3) formulating the criteria;
- (4) selecting the pool of candidates;
- (5) screening candidates;
- (6) interviewing candidates; and
- (7) selecting top candidates for recommendation to WSU Board of Trustees.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Birnbaum, R. (1988). *How Colleges Work. The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988.

<sup>2</sup> Watkins-Hayes, C. (2015, November/December). The Pick and the Process: Leading a Presidential Search in the Digital Age. *Trusteeship Magazine*.

<sup>3</sup> Nason, J. & Axelrod, N. R. (1980). *Presidential Search: A Guide to the Process of Selecting & Appointing College & University Presidents*. Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. ERIC Number: ED238358.

The Westfield State University Presidential Search Committee Guide serves as a repository and a documented approach capturing WSU commitment to an effective, efficient and clear search process rooted in equity, consistency, and compliance with the rules and law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## **MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES**

The search process must reflect and reaffirm WSU mission, vision, and values.

**MISSION:** Westfield State University is a public institution offering accessible quality undergraduate and graduate programs in the liberal arts, sciences, and professional studies. Our welcoming community focuses on student engagement and success. We contribute to the economic, social, and cultural growth of the northeast region by developing the knowledge, skills, and character essential for students to become responsible leaders and engaged citizens.

**VISION:** Westfield State University strives to be the premier public comprehensive institution in the Northeast region through its commitment to student engagement and success.

**VALUES:** Westfield State University commits to values that strengthen a common bond among all members of our community. These values represent a commitment to others, a commitment to ourselves, and a commitment to a diverse learning environment where everyone is respected. Our values:

- **EMBRACE DIVERSITY:** We treat all members of our community with dignity and respect.
- **BUILD A STRONG COMMUNITY:** We are inclusive and ensure equity, supporting the personal development of all community members, and embracing multiple perspectives.
- **MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE AND INTEGRITY:** We maintain excellence and integrity in all that we do.
- **ENGAGE IN THE OUTSIDE COMMUNITY:** We support civic engagement in local, regional, and global initiatives.
- **COLLABORATE WITH EACH OTHER:** We make decisions in a transparent and collaborative manner.
- **PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION:** We commit to providing an accessible, affordable public higher education for all.

## **COMMUNICATION PROCESSES**

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 4] All communications from the Search Committee, including responses to media inquiries, shall be handled solely by the Chair of the Search Committee or his/her designated spokesperson. The Chair or his/her designee should issue periodic progress reports on the search to the college/university community and to the Commissioner.

The WSU Board of Trustees and the WSU Presidential Search Committee to ensure transparency and a successful search outcome uses the following communication process throughout the search and selection process to ensure that the Commissioner, campus community, and the local community and region is kept apprised via:

- Monthly updates to the Commissioner by the WSU Presidential Search Committee Chair
- Monthly communications to the campus community on progress by the WSU Presidential Search Committee Chair. All communications from the Search Committee to the campus community are approved by the Search Committee.
- Monthly communication to the BOT
- Maintain a website that details the search progress
- Announcement in the local media of the search
- Search Committee minutes

## **WSU PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE COMMUNICATION WORKSHEET**

COMMUNICATION TASK	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE (S)	DATE COMPLETED
Commission Update	Search Committee Chair	12-3-20	
Campus Community Update	Search Committee Chair or designee	Once a month until the search is completed for e.g.	8-25-20 9-10-20 12-18-21 3-1-21 3-8-21 3-11-21
Media Search Publication	WittKieffer/Committee		12-15-20
Website Launch	WSU MarkComm team	9-4-20	9-4-20
Search Committee Minutes publication	Search Committee Secretary	Within a week of being approved	10-2-20 for 8-27-20 minutes 10-19-20 for 9-30-20 minutes 11-5-20 for 10-14-20 minutes 11-24-20 for 10-28-20 minutes 12-7-20 for 11-18-20 minutes 3-1-21 for 12-2-20 minutes 3-1-21 for 1-29-21 minutes 3-10-21 for 2-24-21 minutes 3-16-21 for 3-3-21 minutes for 3-16-21 minutes for 3-17-21 minutes for 3-18-21 minutes

**NOTE:**

Where possible, any public communications about the search will be discussed/reviewed in the Search Committee. Unless otherwise arranged, the Chair of the committee will speak for/represent the committee to the public.

**MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC RECORDS LAW**

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 3] The committee must also be trained on the applicable provisions of the Public Records Law. A copy of the Public Records Law was provided to the committee in advance of its August 27, 2020 meeting and at that meeting the committee was trained on relevant portions of the law by Dr. Jalisa Williams.

**WSU BOARD OF TRUSTEES BYLAWS**

**ARTICLE I. Board Authority and Responsibilities**

**Section 1.** Statutory Duties and Responsibilities. The governance of Westfield State University is vested in the board of trustees. As such, but subject to the provisions of the General Laws and regulations of the Commonwealth, the board may do the following:

- A.** Periodically review the University’s mission and purposes.
- B.** Appoint the president, who shall be the University’s chief executive officer, and set appropriate terms of employment, including but not limited to compensation.
- C.** Support the president and annually assess his or her performance based on such goals and other criteria as the board may prescribe from time to time after consultation with the president.

**ARTICLE II. Officers of the University**

**Section 1.** President of the University. Subject to governing provisions of law, the president of the University shall be appointed by the board and shall serve at its pleasure. The president shall be the University’s chief executive officer and the chief adviser to and executive agent of the board of trustees and shall, for those purposes, assume such responsibilities and exercise such authorities as the board shall from time to time confer

on him or her. The president shall endeavor to attend the meetings of board committees and shall bring any matter before the board or any of its committees as may be required by these by laws or by any applicable policy or directive of the board or as he or she may deem appropriate.

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

See attached Code of Ethics, signed by all committee members.

**WSU PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH BUDGET**

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 3] The Board of Trustees must approve a budget for the Search Committee which typically includes the following, where applicable:

- administrative or other support staff hired by or assigned to the Search Committee;
- supplies, stationery, and postage;
- travel and lodging for out-of-state candidates;
- visits to the home campuses of candidates;
- executive search firm fees;
- background and reference checks; and other related expenses.

**SEARCH COMMITTEE COMPENSATION**

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 3] members of the Search Committee shall not be compensated for their service.

Members of the Search Committee may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses connected with the search that are:

- provided for in the budget, and
- approved in advance by the Chair of the Search Committee.

**WSU PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH INTITATION PROCESS**

Pursuant to *The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Guidelines and Procedures for the Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal of State University and Community College Presidents* [p. 1] the search for a new President of the institution begins with notification in writing, prior to the appointment of a search committee or the selection of an executive search firm, to the Commissioner by the Westfield State University Board of Trustees.

**WSU PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE SEARCH INITIATION WORKSHEET**

SEARCH INITIATION TASK (S)	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	TARGET DATE (S)	DATE COMPLETED
Notification to the Campus Community	Board of Trustees Chair		2-20-20
WSU Board of Trustees meeting to initiate the process	Approval of Committee members and Charge		8-21-20
Letter to the Commissioner	Board of Trustees Chair		Early April, 2020

**SELECTION AND COMPOSITION OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE**

The *Massachusetts Board of Higher Education Guidelines and Procedures for the Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal of State University and Community College Presidents* (hereafter referred to as the MBHE Guide, pages 2 -3), requires the following process:

- **Trustee Member Selection:** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a presidential search committee that includes a minimum of three Trustees.
- **Campus Community Members Selection:** at least one individual from each of the major campus constituencies (students, faculty, professional staff, non-unit staff and support staff).

- The process for selecting Search Committee members from campus constituencies shall be determined by the Board of Trustees based upon the MBHE Guide. The process was overseen by the Chair of the Board of Trustees and the appointed Chair of the Search Committee.
- The Board of Trustees shall provide an opportunity for any member of the college/university community to express interest in and be considered for appointment. At two Board of Trustees meetings, the Chair invited expressions of interest in serving on the Search Committee.
- **Commissioner Appointment:** one voting member shall be appointed by the Commissioner (see MBHE Guide, Page 2 for process details),
- **Other individuals:** including but not limited to alumni/ae, community representatives, and distinguished educators from other institutions, may be included on the Search Committee at the discretion of the Board of Trustees. In addition to faculty, administrators, staff, and students, the Board also chose to include representation from the Alumni, Foundation, and greater Westfield community.
- **Organizations:** If the Board wishes to solicit nominations from any organization, including any employee organization, it shall require that such organization submit at least two nominees for each available committee vacancy.
- **Non-voting member:** The institution's affirmative action officer shall serve as a non-voting member of the Search Committee; shall have access to all committee materials and candidate files; and shall be invited to attend all meetings, including any including any executive sessions, of the Search Committee or any subcommittee thereof.

#### TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE SEARCH COMMITTEE

The WSU Search Committee will be comprised of 14 members pursuant to MBHE Guide (page 2), *"The search committee should not normally exceed nine to thirteen voting members."*

#### WORKSHEET

COMMITTEE MEMBER	PROCESS	NAME
1. Trustee Member 1, Chair	BOT Meeting to request volunteers from the Board membership. One member selected to be Chair from the Trustee volunteers by the Board Chair. Voting process to affirm the committee membership follows the <i>WSU BOT Bylaws</i>	Dr. Robert Martin
2. Trustee Member 2	Volunteer request	Dr. Gloria Williams
3. Trustee Member 3	Volunteer request	Lydia Martinez-Alvarez
4. Student representative	Filled by the elected Student Trustee in consultation with SGA	Thalita Neves
5. Faculty Member 1	Appointed from among two nominees submitted by MSCA	Dr. Brian Jennings
6. Faculty Member 2	Appointed from among two nominees submitted by MSCA	Dr. Claudia Ciano-Boyce
7. Support Staff 1	Appointed from among two nominees submitted by AFSCME Units	Ron'na J'Q Lytle
8. Professional Staff 1	Appointed from among two nominees submitted by APA	Junior Delgado
9. Non-unit professional academic affairs	BOT Chair selects or seeks volunteer from campus community	Dr. Juline Mills
10. Non-unit professional – VP – Cabinet level	BOT Chair selects or seeks volunteer from campus community	Stephen Taksar

11. Alumni representation	Filled by the elected Alumni Trustee in consultation with the Alumni Association	Melissa Alvarado
12. Mass BHE/DHE representative	Commissioner appointment	Tom Simard
13. WSU Foundation representative	Filled following consultation with incoming Foundation Board	George Flevotomos
14. Greater Westfield Community representative	BOT Chair selected from names suggested by community leaders	Ali Salehi

There are fourteen members on the Search Committee. The Chair of the committee decided, and the committee agreed, that he would not vote so that all votes will be based on thirteen members to avoid a tie.

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

- WSU Affirmative Action Officer- Dr. Jalisa Williams
- Secretary – Jean Beal, the secretary of the WSU Board of Trustees, will assume and serve as secretary of the search. Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 3] the responsibilities of the secretary are as follows:
  - The secretary’s duties may include scheduling meetings and interviews; making travel arrangements for presidential candidates; maintaining committee files; preparing agendas, minutes and reports; and ensuring the committee’s compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

**DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

The Board shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure adequate diversity (i.e., gender, race, ethnicity) among members of the search committee. [MBHE Guide, p. 2]. There is gender and ethnic diversity represented in the Search Committee.

**SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR SELECTION**

The Chair of the Search Committee shall be appointed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees from among the Trustee members of the Search Committee (page 3). The Chair of the Search Committee was appointed at the very beginning of the process so that he could play a role in decisions about the selection and composition of the committee.

**SEARCH COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR SELECTION**

The Vice Chair of the Search Committee shall be appointed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Following WSU Board Bylaws, since the Search Committee is an official committee of the Board of Trustees, the Vice Chair will lead the Search Committee in the event that the Chair is unable to.

**ADDING MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE ONCE THE SEARCH PROCESS HAS BEGUN**

WSU Presidential Search Committee does not allow the addition of new members once the Search Committee members have been approved by the WSU Board of Trustees and the search process has begun.

**CHANGE IN COMMITTEE MEMBERS, DUE TO EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

In the event a committee member is unable for any reason to continue to serve on the committee, the same procedure for the initial selection of that member will be followed in replacing that member.

**EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM SELECTION AND GUIDE**

WSU adheres to MBHE Guide [p. 5] in its use of an Executive Search Firm.

**EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM SELECTION PROCESS**

Following MBHE Guide, the Board of Trustees solicited proposals from three qualified executive search firms based upon DHE recommendation, prequalification as vendors in Massachusetts state government, and

recent prior experience with presidential searches in Massachusetts Public Higher Education. These three firms made presentations at an open Board meeting, feedback was solicited and received from community members, and the Board subsequently voted in open meeting to select WittKieffer.

### **EXECUTIVE SEARCH FIRM DUTIES**

The selected Executive Search firm will carry out the following duties on behalf of WSU:

- Developing an institutional profile or other background materials on the institution.
- Preparing and placing advertisements.
- Identifying and soliciting applications from qualified candidates.
- Preparing and processing correspondence with candidates.
- Responding to candidate inquiries and information requests.
- Making travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-state candidates.
- Conducting background and reference checks on applicants.
- Other related services.
- The search firm shall initially sort all candidates into three separate groups of meeting and exceeding criteria, not meeting criteria, or meeting some but not all criteria set forth in the position description. The search firm will provide the sorted list to the Search Committee, but the committee will review all candidates and decide as a committee which candidates to move forward.

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 5] “In no case shall an executive search firm be delegated authority that is appropriately vested in Board of Trustees, or the search committee, as delegated by the Board of Trustees.”

### **THE WSU SEARCH COMMITTEE CHARGE**

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 6] The search committee shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Trustees, which has statutory authority to appoint the president of the institution, subject to approval of the Board of Higher Education. The Board of Trustees’ charge to the search committee should set forth the Trustees’ expectations, as well as the scope of the authority granted to the search committee.

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 6]:

- The committee shall oversee the entire presidential search process, including all correspondence with candidates, solicitation and acknowledgement of references, and other communications and reports.
- The committee shall screen and evaluate all applications, and shall select candidates for interviews.
- The search committee shall provide the Board of Trustees and the Commissioner the opportunity to review the applications of the pool of candidates selected for interviews by the search committee.
- The Board of Trustees and the Commissioner shall act with reasonable dispatch in conducting such a review, and shall have the authority to ask that additional candidates be sought before interviews proceed; the Commissioner will make every effort to complete his/her review within 48 hours of receiving the documents.

In addition, WSU Board of Trustees uses the following Search Committee Charge Development Process:

- The Charge of the WSU Presidential Search Committee will be developed and voted on by the WSU Board of Trustees.
- WSU Presidential Search Committee Chair will deliver the Charge to the Search Committee at its first meeting to begin the search process.
- The Charge must include the final deliverables by the Search Committee, including the final list and requirements on recommendation that is to be transmitted to the WSU Board of Trustees for deliberation and selection.

### **WSU CHARGE FOR 2020-2021 PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH**

See attached Search Committee Charge dated August 27, 2020.

## INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT AND LEADERSHIP DEFINITION

*“If a successful search is to be conducted, the search committee must have a clear sense of the sort of person for whom they are searching. The starting point of the search process, then, should be introspection concerning what the institution needs in order to reorganize strengths and to cope with weaknesses, both in terms of history and tradition, and future prospects and dilemmas. Without an institutional assessment and leadership definition, the search committee is also at a loss to know who will be the best choice for them. They run the risk of choosing someone totally inappropriate for their institution, someone whose attractiveness lies in the fact that his or her style differs (or mirrors) the departing president, or someone whose understanding of the college or university is too limited for effective leadership” (McLaughlin & Reisman in Nason & Axelrod, 1980).*

### INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 1] the WSU Search Committee’s first role is to conduct a “careful assessment of the institution’s current status and future goals. Included in this assessment is a review of how WSU will continue to meet “regional and statewide needs and goals” and WSU’s “capacity to function within an integrated system.” Toward this goal, the WSU Presidential Search will develop a list of Critical Success Factors. This assessment will inform the WSU Presidential Search Profile document.

### WSU INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

WSU CURRENT STATUS	
1. Financial	See WSU financial documents <a href="https://www.westfield.ma.edu/offices/administration-finance">https://www.westfield.ma.edu/offices/administration-finance</a>
2. Campus Culture	Identified through intake sessions and survey responses
3. Academic Profile	See Presidential Leadership Profile
4.	
FUTURE GOALS	
1. Implementation of Strategic Plan	See Strategic Plan <a href="http://www.westfield.ma.edu/about/strategic-plan">http://www.westfield.ma.edu/about/strategic-plan</a>
2.	
CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS	
1.	
2.	

### MINIMUM QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 2] all applicants for the position of President of Westfield State University shall: reflect the education and experience that represent the highest levels of qualifications for such positions. A well-documented history of organizational leadership and proven success in meeting specific performance goals and objectives is required.

Therefore, the minimum qualifications for the President of Westfield State University are as follows:

- **Education:** An earned doctorate (including but not limited to a Ph.D., J.D., or Ed.D.), coupled with substantial experience relevant to the segmental mission and needs of the institution. In exceptional circumstances, an earned master’s degree, coupled with substantial experience relevant to the segmental mission and needs of the institution, may satisfy minimum educational requirements.
- **Experience:** Substantial experience in a senior management position in higher education.
- **Other:** The Committee may also consider experience outside of higher education: substantial experience in a senior management position in a field outside higher education, where such experience is deemed relevant to, and provides a basis for judging, the candidate’s capability to serve as a college or university president.



**POSITION DESCRIPTION**

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 1] Based on this assessment, the Board of Trustees (or the search committee, if so delegated by the Board of Trustees) should develop a reasonably detailed position description and announcement, commonly known as the “presidential profile.” As such:

- WSU Board of Trustees charged the Search Committee with developing the presidential leadership profile, as stated in the Charge to the Committee.
- The Chair of the Search Committee will formulate a volunteer subgroup to develop the presidential profile for the search.
- WittKieffer will assist the Search Committee in preparing preliminary drafts for review, editing, revision and final approval.
- The search profile must be written in gender neutral language
- The search profile will contain the following information:
  - General description and history of WSU
  - A review of WSU strengths, opportunities, and challenges
  - WSU history, vision, mission, and values
  - Reference to the WSU strategic plan
  - Desired leadership characteristics
  - Required minimum qualifications
  - Leadership expertise required
  - Information about the State System
  - Reflect the future leadership WSU needs
  - Understanding of higher education
- The search profile must include the following statements:
  - WSU Diversity and Inclusion statement
  - WSU Board of Trustees applicable bylaws on terms of employment
- Review of profile by full Search Committee membership,
- Formal vote of approval by Search Committee
- The Chair of the Search Committee will apprise the Board of Trustees of the Leadership Profile.
- Search profile is sent to the Commissioner for review

**WORKSHEET**

<b>WSU PRESIDENTIAL PROFILE CHARACTERSTICS</b>
To be developed from the Leadership Profile

Once agreed and approved, committee members must take the time to become familiar with the required and preferred qualifications of the position.

**COMMISSIONER REVIEW**

- Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 1] - The Commissioner shall be provided a reasonable opportunity to review and comment upon the draft position description for a new president prior to its publication.
- Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 2] – The Commissioner shall act with reasonable dispatch and shall share his/her comments, along with his/her preliminary thoughts regarding essential terms of appointment and an appropriate salary range, with the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

**POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT**

- Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 2] Position description & announcement shall be placed in at least ONE major national publication serving the higher education marketplace. These recruitment outlets include, but not limited to:
  - The Chronicle of Higher Education
  - Inside Higher Education
  - Higheredjobs.com

- Pursuant to WSU, OHRIDE current process of encouraging the inclusion of a more diverse applicant pool, the position description and announcement shall be placed in ONE higher education market place forum that target candidates that self-identify as diverse, thus increasing the odds that the pool will include qualified diverse candidates. These recruitment outlets include, but not limited to:
  - Diverse Issues in Higher Education (formerly Black Issues in Higher Education)
  - The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education
  - Hispanic Outlook
  - The Insight into Diversity
  - Military Hire
  - National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
  - American Council on Education’s Women’s Network
  - American Association of University Women
  - U.S Department of Veterans Affairs
  - Joining Forces

## **SEARCH COMMITTEE MEETING STRUCTURE**

### **OPEN MEETING LAW**

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 3]: As a special committee of the Board of Trustees, the presidential search committee is a “governmental body” subject to the state’s Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25.

[p. 3] At the outset of the search process, the search committee must be fully trained on, and provided a copy of the Open Meeting Law.

#### **COMPLETION BOX:**

The Search Committee was provided a copy of, and trained on, the Open Meeting Law at its first meeting on August 27, 2020.

[p. 3] In accordance with the Open Meeting Law procedures established by the Attorney General’s Office, a notice of every search committee meeting must be posted on a website and a copy filed with the Secretary of State, at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. G.L. c. 30A, § 20; 940 CMR 29.03.

Website where notices are posted:

<http://www.westfield.ma.edu/presidential-search/committee-agendas-and-minutes>

Filings with Secretary of State:

August 25, 2020 at 12:23 PM  
 September 28, 2020 at 11:04 AM  
 October 9, 2020 at 4:30 PM  
 October 26, 2020 at 11:45 AM  
 November 16, 2020 at 9:39 AM  
 November 30, 2020 at 2:05 PM  
 January 27, 2021 at 9:39 AM  
 February 22, 2021 at 2:20 PM  
 March 1, 2021 at 1:59 PM  
 March 11, 2021 at 9:34 PM  
 March 12, 2021 at 4:23 PM

[p. 3] Accurate minutes must be kept and become a part of the public record. Except as provided under the Open Meeting Law, and as otherwise provided in the Attorney General’s regulations, interpretive guidance and

rulings on the law, search committee meetings must be open to the public, in order to ensure transparency of the presidential search process.

Website where minutes are posted:

<http://www.westfield.ma.edu/presidential-search/committee-agendas-and-minutes>

## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- The Search Committee shall meet regularly, at such dates and times, as decided by the Chair, to conduct the business of the committee.
- The Chair in consultation with the Executive Search Firm will provide a preliminary agenda with estimated times
- Additional meetings of the full committee may be held at the discretion of the Chair with appropriate notice per Open Meeting Law.

## **AGENDA**

- The Chair of the Search Committee shall set the agenda for full committee meetings.
- Agendas are prepared by the committee Chair in consultation with the WittKieffer consultants.
- Any member may request that an item be added to a meeting agenda, ideally by doing so one week in advance of the meeting by sending the request to the Search Committee Chair and copying the Secretary.

## **MINUTES**

- The Secretary shall keep minutes of all committee and subcommittee meetings that serve as permanent records. A record of all actions taken shall also be included.
- Following committee approval, minutes of committee meetings will be posted on the presidential search web site.
- Permanent records of meetings are subject to all rules and restrictions of Massachusetts Public Records laws.

## **DOCUMENT REPOSITORY**

- Unless confidential documents (candidate materials, reference materials, etc.) committee documents will generally be posted to the presidential search web site.

## **QUORUM**

- Quorum requires a minimum of eight members Quorum is required for official votes. Where the committee is required to take formal votes, it will follow *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION PROCEDURES**

- Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 4] Please note, however, that many candidates for a presidential position may agree to be considered only if they can be assured that their candidacy will remain confidential until they reach the final stages of the process. There is a strong public interest in ensuring that the Commonwealth can attract the best possible pool of qualified candidates for this important position. For these reasons, it is permissible for public bodies, such as a search committee, to meet in executive session to screen, discuss and interview applicants during the preliminary, screening stages of a search, subject to Open Meeting Law procedural requirements.
- Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 4] Since, however, this is an area of the Open Meeting Law subject to changing interpretation, the chair of the search committee is urged to consult the General Counsel of the Board of Higher Education or his/her designee before determining final procedures with respect to this point.
- The committee intends to go into executive session in the early stages to screen candidates before making a recommendation for campus interviews of final candidates. The meeting will start in open

session, the purpose of the executive session will be announced, followed by a roll call vote and the question to each member if they are alone in the room so that the conversation cannot be overheard. It will then be announced whether the meeting will return to an open session at the end of the meeting. The Chair of the committee will also contact the Attorney General's office on the process as suggested by the BHE Guidelines.

### **DECISION-MAKING**

- To the greatest extent possible, notwithstanding the bullet above, the committee will try to achieve consensus on all matters, at the very least assuring that everyone on the committee has had an opportunity to weigh in and effort is made, where possible, to accommodate these perspectives
- Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 5] A written record of the search committee's activities, proceedings, and decisions shall be maintained, including minutes from each meeting conducted by the search committee, whether held in open or executive session. This record shall include a summary of the steps taken to ensure affirmative action in the search and a statistical analysis of the applicant pool at each stage of the search process.

### **PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

In questions of parliamentary procedure, the committee shall refer to the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, in all cases to which they are applicable and not inconsistent with the rules of union contracts.

### **COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDANCE**

Search Committee members are expected to prioritize attendance at committee meetings and to make every effort to attend scheduled meetings. The Chair will talk with any member whose circumstances may make regular attendance difficult. The committee agreed that a member who was unable to attend an interview with one or more candidates would refrain from voting on that candidate or candidates.

### **MEETING PARTICIPATION BY DESIGNEE OR REPRESENTATIVE**

Search Committee member designees or representatives are not permitted to participate in Search Committee meetings or review confidential materials.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 4] Subject to the requirements of the state's Open Meeting and Public Record Laws, members of the search committee shall protect the confidentiality of the search process. The WSU Presidential Search Committee also uses the following confidentiality rules:

- The importance of confidentiality must be discussed at the first meeting of the Search Committee.
- See Code of Ethics dated August 27, 2020.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Disclose if you personally know a candidate who has applied for the position – *communicate in writing to the search chair indicating your ability to judge the candidate and the entire pool fairly... document will become part of the search materials*
- May not participate on a Search Committee in which a member of your immediate family is being considered (parent, child, sibling, spouse, spouse's parents, spouse's children and siblings)
- No discussion of applicants before during and after the search outside of the Search Committee meetings or formal discussions.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, DIVERSITY & AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

The Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Affirmative Action Plan was developed in a collaborative effort with the Massachusetts University system to provide Universities with a comprehensive plan to address. The primary purpose of this Plan is to inform the campuses of: (1) the Universities' prohibition of all forms of discrimination, discriminatory harassment, sexual violence, sexual and gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and retaliation; (2) the Universities' efforts to prevent such behaviors; and (3) the manner in

which the Universities will respond to such behaviors, including the prompt, impartial, fair and thorough investigation and resolution of complaints.

## **SUBCOMMITTEES**

- Subcommittees will be formed to fulfill the goals of WSU Presidential Search Committee.
  - Membership on subcommittees is limited to members of the Search Committee.
  - The Search Committee Chair may not serve as a subcommittee Chair.
  - The Search Committee Chair is an ex-officio, non-voting member of all subcommittees.
  - Final assignment into subcommittees will be determined by the Search Committee Chair.
  - Assignment into subcommittees should strive to represent the diversity of the full committee, as well as individual member strengths and interest.
  - Subcommittee meeting structure: Each subcommittee will designate a Chair and a note taker for minutes. The subcommittee Chair will call meetings as necessary. As with the Search Committee, subcommittees are bound by the Open Meeting Law with regard to notification and minutes.
  - Subcommittees will conform to agenda and minute requirements of the Search Committee.
  - Subcommittees are required to have a simple majority for quorum.
  - All subcommittee work will be reported to the Search Committee as the recommending body.

## **AMENDMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH GUIDE AND GUIDING FRAMEWORK**

Any of the provisions of this Search Guide may be amended upon a vote by a two-thirds (67%) majority of the committee. There must be sufficient notice to members regarding any meeting in which Search Guide changes will be discussed, normally, at least one week prior to the meeting; Search Guide amendments cannot be introduced as new business.

## **SCREENING CANDIDATES**

### **CANDIDATE MATERIALS**

- Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 4] Committee files and candidate application materials shall be kept in a secure area, and maintained consistent with Public Records Law requirements.
- Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 4] Access to these materials shall be restricted to the members of the search committee and such other individuals who, having a direct role in the search process, are specifically so authorized by the Chair.
- Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 4] To facilitate review by committee members, the chair may authorize the production of one or more duplicate copies of candidate application materials and/or secure electronic access.

### **APPLICANT POOL REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

- All nominations and applications will be sent to the search firm for acknowledgement, filing and preparation for confidential committee review. In consultation with the search firm, the committee will develop an initial application screening method and identify those candidates who meet the minimum qualifications.
- Letters should be sent to those who do not meet the minimum qualifications for the position as soon as practical.

### **INTERNAL CANDIDATES**

The Search Committee will apply the same process for candidate nomination, application and file review to internal candidates as to external candidates.

### **SEARCH CANDIDATE CONFIDENTIALITY**

See Code of Ethics. All candidates' names and materials will be kept confidential until such time as finalists are named. Only finalists' names and resumes/curricula vitae will be made public.

## **SEARCH PROCESS TRAINING ON EVALUATING CANDIDATES**

The process for evaluating candidates will be included in a Search Committee meeting agenda prior to the start of candidate file review and will be based on a common set of criteria that is published in the leadership profile.

## **CHOOSING CANDIDATES - SCREENING**

- The Search Committee will develop together the process for review and discussing candidate materials, for downselecting to a list of semifinalists, and for interviewing candidates.
- All internal applicants should be evaluated and advanced (or not) based on the same criteria as external applicants.

## **PROCESS FOR ADVANCING CANDIDATES**

Decisions about the process for advancing candidates in preliminary stages of the search will be made following a consensus model. The process for recommending candidates in the final stage will be discussed in committee.

## **CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET**

The Search Committee will use the attached Candidate Evaluation Rubric to guide them in reviewing candidate materials and evaluating qualifications.

## **INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES**

The WSU Presidential Search Committee offers interviews only to candidates who meet the minimum qualifications for the position and have bona fide skills and experience reasonably related to satisfactory performance in the position.

## **INTERVIEW QUESTION APPROVAL**

In consultation with the search firm and OHRIDE, the Search Committee will develop a list of common interview questions to ask all semi-finalist candidates.

## **SCHEDULING INTERVIEWS**

Links to the *Fringe Benefits Overview* and *Learn More About Our Community* will be included in applicant acknowledgement communications. All applicants are provided with a link to the Leadership Profile. Semi-finalists who are invited to interview are provided with a list of Search Committee members and their titles.

Finalists are provided with in-depth information including budget, financial statements, board minutes, strategic planning documents, and other information appropriate to prepare them for in-depth conversations with the campus community.

## **INTERVIEWING GUIDELINES**

- Each committee member takes detailed notes during the interview.
- Candidates are all asked the same interview questions; follow-up questions are based on their responses.

## **INTERVIEW BIAS TRAINING**

Consistent with WSU OHRIDE policies, all WSU Presidential Search Committee Members will undergo interview bias training including but not limited to a review of the following:

- Contrast Bias
- Order effect Bias
- Anchoring Bias
- Bandwagon Effect Bias
- Social Comparison Bias
- Premature Bias
- Representative bias

- Affinity Bias
- Intuition Bias
- Confirmation Bias

### **ATTENDANCE AT INTERVIEWS**

All members of the WSU Presidential Search Committee must be present at all candidate interviews, unless they receive express permission of the Chair to be excused.

### **RECOMMENDING CANDIDATES**

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 6] The committee shall interview candidates for the presidency and shall recommend to the Board of Trustees an unranked list of no less than three (3) and no more than five (5) qualified candidates.

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 6] Prior to making its recommendation, the search committee shall ensure that thorough reference and background checks are completed on all of the recommended finalists, and that the finalists understand that their appointment will be subject to a State Police Background check which will be facilitated by Department of Higher Education staff.

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 6] In making its recommendations, the search committee shall transmit to the Board of Trustees the resume and all other relevant application materials for each of the three to five recommended finalists.

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 6] The search committee may also, at its discretion, provide a summary of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of each candidate, but under no circumstances shall the committee rank order the candidates.

### **DELIBERATION**

Use all sources of information to determine finalist(s) (application, supporting materials, interviews and references, notes and rating forms); select the finalist(s).

- If the Search Committee decides to reconsider their choice based on the reference reports, then they should consider the next best candidate.

### **REFERENCE CHECK PROCESS AND REFERENCE QUESTIONS**

References will be conducted on finalists by the search firm which will provide written reports to WSU OHRIDE.

### **CANDIDATE RECOMMENDATION PROCESS**

Sample ideas at [https://www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc\\_id=573](https://www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc_id=573)

### **REOPENING A SEARCH**

Pursuant to MBHE Guide [p. 7] If the Board of Trustees rejects all candidates submitted by the search committee, the Trustees may 1) request that the search committee reevaluate the credentials of other candidates in the pool and submit the name(s) of any additional recommended candidate(s); 2) direct the existing search committee to reopen the search; or 3) appoint a new search committee to conduct a reopened search. The Trustees shall not, however, require the search committee to submit the name of any specific candidate; nor shall the Trustees vote to recommend the appointment of any individual whose name has not been duly submitted by the search committee.

## **POST SEARCH EVALUATION**

Once the search has been completed, the Search Committee intends to administer an evaluation to its members, all semi-finalists, and the selected candidate in order to understand how the process went and review the work of the search firm and consultants to determine what can be learned to improve future searches.