

**BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Presidential Search Committee Meeting
December 13, 2019
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Co-Chairs Shannon Davis and Jimmy Hazel; Denise Albanese, Simmi Bhuller, Horace Blackman, Terri Cofer Beirne, Tom Davis, Mehmood Kazmi, Camden Layton, Germaine Louis, Ignacia Moreno, Carolyn Moss, Jon Peterson, Lauren Reuscher, Edward Rice, Girum Urgessa, Bob Witeck, and Lisa Zuccari; and Secretary pro tem Cagle.

ABSENT: Carole Scott

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES: Sharon Cullen, Ron Forehand, Jan Greenwood, and Julie Holley.

I. Call to Order

Co-Chair Hazel called the meeting to order 8:02 a.m. and thanked the committee members for their attendance. He noted that Carole Scott would be absent.

II. Reappointment of Announcement Subcommittee of the Search Committee and Ratification of All Other Prior Actions

Co-Chair Hazel advised the Committee that because of the posting error previously discussed and out of an abundance of caution, the Committee needed to reappoint the Announcement Subcommittee that was appointed the previous week and also ratify other previous actions of the Committee. He called for a motion to approve the following members if the Search Committee be appointed as an Announcement Subcommittee of the Presidential Search Committee: Carolyn Moss, Carole Scott, Germaine Louis, and Edward Rice as Chair.

The motion was **MOVED** by Visitor Moreno and **SECONDED** by Rector Davis.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE

Co-Chair Hazel explained that the only responsibility of the Announcement Subcommittee would be to meet, pursuant to requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, to announce at the appropriate times that the Presidential Search Committee would be meeting at some undisclosed time and location within fifteen days of the announcement, for the sole purpose of interviewing candidates for presidency of the University.

Co-Chair Hazel called for a motion to ratify all actions taken at the previous two meetings of the Committee. It was **MOVED** by Visitor Rice and **SECONDED** by Visitor Witeck to ratify all action taken at the previous two meetings of the Committee.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE

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III. Approval of Minutes

Co-Chair Hazel called for any corrections to the minutes from the Presidential Search Committee Meeting of December 6, 2019.

Visitor Witeck **MOVED** approval of the minutes as presented. The motion was **SECONDED** by Germaine Louis. There were no additions or corrections to the minutes as presented.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE

IV. Co-Chairs Report

Co-Chair Hazel outlined the work that would need to be accomplished at the meeting. He noted the preferred number of candidates to be interviewed each day during the interview process. He encouraged the Committee to keep that number in mind during the review and discussion.

Co-Chair Hazel reported that during the Board of Visitors meeting the previous day (December 12, 2019) he apologized for the meeting notice mistake that was made. He apologized to the Committee members who were not in attendance at the Board of Visitors meeting. He noted the Board of Visitors meeting was well-attended and went smoothly.

Co-Chair Davis requested that the Committee have a conversation after Closed Session about the materials that were distributed at the last Committee meeting (Attachment 1) regarding the Faculty Senate's resolution to participate in the search process. She reported that the Board of Visitors did not take action the previous day on the faculty's participation in the search process. Discussion ensued regarding the Faculty Senate's resolution, the opportunity for the Search Committee to have adequate time to discuss options and ideas, timing of any involvement during the search process, and the expectation that the Committee would make a recommendation to the Board of Visitors regarding the participation of the faculty in the search process.

V. Closed Session

Co-Chair Davis **MOVED** that the Presidential Search Committee go into Closed Session pursuant to Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711. A.1 to discuss personnel matters including assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees or employees, and more specifically to discuss the evaluation of candidates for President of the University, which discussion may also involve evaluation and performance of departments or schools that will necessarily involve the discussion of specific employees; and Section 2.2-3711. A.8 for consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters, including the aforementioned issues, as

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well as other issues related to the presidential search. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Blackman.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE

Vice Rector Hazel announced that the Committee would reconvene in Open Session and take a roll call vote on certification that only public business matters lawfully exempted from Open Meeting requirements, and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the Presidential Search Committee. He further stated that any member of the Committee who believed that there was a departure from the requirements as stated above, should so state prior to the vote, indicating the substance of the departure that in his, or her, judgement, had taken place.

Roll call was taken with all present members responding in the affirmative.

Co-Chair Davis addressed the issue of the engagement of the faculty, and potentially the larger community, in the search process once the finalists are identified. She reviewed the background that resulted in the Faculty Senate's resolution and the faculty votes on the variety options (Attachment 1), noting the key issue of the statement in the Faculty Handbook which states the Presidential Search process "...must include opportunities for the General Faculty to meet with the candidates who are finalists for the presidency." Co-Chair Davis stated: "This is of great concern to the faculty because during the last search, the General Faculty, depending upon how you would think about it, was potentially engaged to meet with one candidate and that is the key issue here; they were invited to meet with one candidate. And it was a select group of individuals who were not necessarily representative of the full faculty."

Jan Greenwood, President and Partner of Greenwood/Asher and Associates, reported that the arrangement during the previous search was negotiated with the Faculty Senate at that time and was presented to the group as being an acceptable solution. Discussion ensued that included: the number of finalists that would satisfy the wording in the Faculty Handbook ; who meets the criteria of the General Faculty according to the Faculty Handbook; the Faculty Senate as a representative body of the Faculty Senate; the potential impact on the candidates of having open, public interaction in the search process; comments from the students and faculty during the Community Session to explore a process that is open; current practices in dean searches; maintaining the confidentiality of the candidates; the steps of the interview process and reference checking; keeping the candidates' identity confidential while exploring options that would give people an opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback from the candidates; the continued consternation from the previous search; balancing the needs of the

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general faculty and the candidates; the impact of an open search on the candidates' livelihoods and current jobs; the potential of losing good candidates; importance of maintaining the privacy of the candidates; and exploring creative options to address transparency while maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of the candidates.

Co-Chair Hazel advised that another meeting would be needed to address this issue. He asked the Committee members to review the options presented by the faculty and reach out to either Co-Chair Davis or him to share individual thoughts and ideas around this topic. There was concurrence that the additional meeting should take place after the first round of interviews. Discussion ensued that included the topic of transparency and the timeline of the next steps. Co-Chair Hazel advised that the Presidential Search Committee could make a recommendation to the Board of Visitors, but the final decision would be made by the Board of Visitors.

Ms. Terri Cofer Beirne stated that Search Committee of eighteen people was representative democracy, noting that all members were there not just representing themselves, but representing their colleagues from various boards and constituencies. She noted that she had received feedback from the Board of Trustees. Ms. Beirne reiterated her concern about the candidates' lives and careers, noting the classic conflict between personal privacy and the public's right to know. It was her opinion that subjecting candidates to something might disclose their identity to the broader public was not right. Co-Chair Hazel thanked her for her comments and noted that he hoped they would be able to find a pathway to address this issue.

Visitor Moreno thanked Jan Greenwood and Julie Holley for running a well-organized search with great candidates. Co-Chair Hazel concurred.

VI. Adjournment

With no other business matters to come before the Committee, Co-Chair Hazel adjourned the meeting at 1:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathy Cagle
Secretary pro tem

Attachment 1: Faculty Senate Statement on the Presidential Search Process (3 pages)

FACULTY SENATE STATEMENT ON THE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH PROCESS¹

With regard to the process of a search for a University president, the Faculty Handbook (Section 1.2.5) states, “The search and selection process must include opportunities for the General Faculty to meet with candidates who are finalists for the presidency.”

On November 6, 2019, the Faculty Senate passed a motion that calls for “...a public forum for each finalist where s/he is invited to give a presentation to include the General Faculty, as well as students and staff, followed by a question and answer period;” for “faculty, students and staff [to] be invited to submit feedback regarding each finalist to the search committee”; and for “this phase of the search ... [to] be of adequate duration to allow for the search committee’s consideration of such feedback.”²

In line with the Faculty Handbook and with this motion, the Faculty Senate views the following as viable methods for meaningfully engaging faculty input in the search process:

1. Multiple finalists should engage in the process of meeting with faculty.
2. Each finalist should have a live (synchronous) meeting with the faculty – this meeting can be held in person and/or remotely.
3. All faculty who participate in a meeting with a finalist should be given an opportunity to provide feedback to the search committee, which the search committee would then incorporate into their final report and recommendations to the BOV.
4. The meeting would be held in one of the following formats, listed in order of preference³:
 - a. Finalists meet with faculty in a completely open meeting
 - b. Faculty who participate in the meeting sign a ‘code of ethics’ similar to that used by the search committee, which includes a statement about respecting confidentiality of finalists.
 - c. Live meeting is held in some way that hides the identity of the finalist (e.g., in the style of a “chat room”)
5. The meeting would be open to one of the following groups of faculty, listed in order of preference⁴:
 - a. Meeting is open to all general faculty (with option to participate remotely)
 - b. Meeting is open to Faculty Senators only (in line with Section 1.3.1 of the Faculty Handbook that states, “The General Faculty delegates by Charter to the Faculty Senate the responsibility for shared academic governance at the university level.”)
 - c. Meeting is open to a set number of general faculty on a “first-come, first-serve” basis, with no option to participate remotely
6. The meeting will include a presentation to the faculty, followed by a Q&A session that is run in one of the following ways, listed in order of preference⁵:
 - a. Open Q&A session after the presentation, where any faculty can ask questions on a “first-come, first-serve” basis
 - b. Engage in a “question development” process, whereby a set of questions is selected and then asked by faculty representative(s) on the Search Committee (or another appropriate faculty representative)

¹ The motion to endorse this statement was passed by Faculty Senate ballot vote on 12/4/19, 22 – 18.

² See Appendix A for the full motion.

³ Order of preference determined by Faculty Senate ballot vote on 12/4/19. See Appendix B for specific vote tally.

⁴ Order of preference determined by Faculty Senate ballot vote on 12/4/19. See Appendix B for specific vote tally.

⁵ Order of preference determined by Faculty Senate ballot vote on 12/4/19. See Appendix B for specific vote tally.

**APPENDIX A
RESOLUTION ON PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH PROCESS⁶**

Whereas, the *George Mason University Faculty Handbook* (provision 1.2.5), states, “The Board of Visitors provides for participation on presidential search committees by faculty who are elected by the General Faculty;”

And, whereas the *George Mason University Faculty Handbook* states, “The search and selection process must include opportunities for the General Faculty to meet with candidates who are finalists for the presidency;”

And, whereas “The *George Mason University Faculty Handbook* defines and describes the conditions of full-time instructional, research, and clinical faculty employment; the structures and processes through which the faculty participates in institutional decision-making and governance;”

Now, therefore be it resolved that the George Mason University Faculty Senate calls for a search process consistent with the requirements of the Faculty Handbook to include a public forum for each finalist where s/he is invited to give a presentation to include the General Faculty as well as students and staff followed by a question and answer period;

And, be it further resolved that faculty, students and staff be invited to submit feedback regarding each finalist to the search committee;

And, be it further resolved that this phase of the search should be of adequate duration to allow for the search committee’s consideration of such feedback.

⁶ This motion was passed by Faculty Senate ballot vote on 11/6/19, 29-12.

**APPENDIX B
PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE – FACULTY MEETING OPTIONS BALLOT
VOTE TALLY**

Total Number of Ballots = 39⁷

Majority (50%) = 20

Open/Confidential Meeting:

	Top	2 nd	3 rd	Unacceptable
Meeting is completely open	20	6	6	5
Faculty participants sign code of ethics including maintaining confidentiality of finalists	14	8	3	11
Finalist identity is hidden (e.g., chat room)	4	9	5	19

Meeting Participants:

	Top	2 nd	3 rd	Unacceptable
All general faculty, with remote option to accommodate all who want to attend	23	2	4	7
All general faculty, on “first-come, first-serve” basis, with no remote option	0	14	4	16
Faculty Senators, as representative of general faculty (per FH Section 1.3.1)	13	6	7	11

Style of Q&A:

	Top	2 nd	Unacceptable
Open to faculty participants on “first-come, first-serve” basis	20	10	6
“Question development” process to arrive at set of questions, which are then asked by a faculty representative (e.g., one of the faculty representatives to the Search Committee)	17	10	11

⁷ Not all ballots had rankings for each option.