SUNY College at Old Westbury

Faculty Senate Meeting of November 1, 2019

**Presidential Search Process and the College Council**

Information compiled by Parliamentarian (Maureen Dolan)

**Background:**

During the Spring 2019 semester, the Faculty Senate held Special Meetings (April 5, April 12 and May 3) to provide information on SUNY Guidelines for Conducting a Presidential Search, and to undertake a fair and transparent process for nominations and election of six full-time faculty to the Presidential Search Committee.

The legal authority to appoint the president of a State-operated campus in SUNY is vested in the SUNY Board of Trustees by Section 355(2)(g) of the Education Law. The College Council of each such institution is given responsibility for recommending a candidate or candidates to the SUNY Board of Trustees by Section 356(3)(a) of the Education Law. According to Education Law, and the Policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees, and the Association of Council Members and College Trustees (ACT Handbook), the selection of a campus president is one of the core responsibilities of a College Council.

**Presidential Search Committee:** Per SUNY Guidelines for Presidential Search, unless otherwise agreed to by the Chancellor (or Chancellor’s representative) and the Council Chair, the Search Committee shall consist of:

* 4 members of the College Council (including the Chair)
* 6 members of the full-time teaching faculty of the campus
* 1 student and 1 alumni representative
* 1 academic dean and 1 professional or support staff member
* 1 campus-related foundation member
* 1 incumbent or retired SUNY president from another campus or a member of Chancellor’s senior staff
* The Chancellor’s liaison representative (non-voting)

In the shared governance traditions of the State University of New York, and consistent with the Authority of the Faculty established through the Policies of the Board of Trustees, it is worth noting that representatives of campus teaching faculty form the largest proportion of Presidential Search Committee members.

**Search Firm List:** Per SUNY Guidelines (pg. 3), the Chancellor (or the Chancellor’s representative) shall provide a list of nationally recognized organizations (e.g., search firms) with established expertise in academic recruitment and screening, as well as a commitment to developing diverse candidate pools, from which the Council Chair shall select one to assist in their search. The campus may elect to use a search firm not on this list with approval from the Chancellor (or the Chancellor’s representative).

**Some Questions:**

1. Was the campus provided with a list of nationally recognized search firms, as described in Guidelines?

* If No, did the campus request such a list?
* If Yes, why did the campus **issue RFP** for Search Firm instead of selecting from the list?

1. When did the College Council delegate to the campus the selection of a Search Firm?

* Was this decision voted upon by the Council? (Note: Minutes of 4/5/19 College Council meeting are not currently available online; the 10/4/19 Council meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum.)

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1. **When** was the RFP for Search Firm issued by the campus?

* **Who** was involved in writing and in vetting the RFP?

1. Who decided on **membership** of the college’s Search Firm Selection Committee?

(List of committee members: Arthur Angst, Lillian Colella, Michael Kinane, Pat Lettini, James Mwaura, Duncan Quarless, Claudia L. Marin Andrade)

1. Given that **6 faculty** were duly elected to the Presidential Search Committee at a Special Meeting of the Faculty Senate on May 3rd:

* What was the **rationale for not including** any of these 6 faculty as members of the Search Firm Selection Committee?

1. **What criteria** were used by Search Firm Selection Committee in reviewing potential search firms?
2. Has a Search Firm been selected?

* If yes, please identify.

1. Has a **new Chair** of College Council been identified?

* If so, please identify.

1. What is the status of **filling vacancies** on College Council?
2. Has the issue of College Council vacancies been recently raised with the **Governor**?

* If so, when and by whom?

1. **Who** has been involved in developing list of candidates for **Interim President** or **Officer in Charge**?
2. Have any of the faculty representatives elected to the Presidential Search Committee, or the campus governance leader, been **consulted** regarding candidates for Interim President or Officer in Charge?

---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**Role of** **College Councils:**

College Councils have statutory responsibilities under Education Law, and exercise an oversight role in matters that include planning and operations, administration, campus buildings, safety, residential life and student well-being. In addition to their leadership role in Presidential Searches, Councils are expected to develop strong relationships between their institution and local communities, and to promote campus and University interests.

Councils of some other SUNY campuses meet more frequently than the 4 per year minimum, and actively build connections between the Council and faculty, and between the Council and student/alumni. (In contrast, at the October 5, 2018 meeting of Old Westbury’s College Council, then-Chair Mario Mignone commented on the poor attendance and lack of involvement of some Council members. In addition to the Chair and student member, only one other Council member was in attendance that day; lack of Council engagement has been a longstanding issue.)