

## Presidential Search Preliminary Timeline and Process

### BACKGROUND

To help the Board set the course for the next presidential search, in May 2021, the Board Chair initiated a [retrospective review](#) of the 2019 presidential search process. The retrospective review provided trustees with an important opportunity to hear from faculty, staff, students and stakeholders, and consider what went well in the last search process and what might be done differently in the future.

Feedback was gathered through an online survey, as well as virtual workshops that included trustees, those who participated in the last search process, members of a Faculty Senate ad hoc committee on presidential searches and other participants. The primary theme of comments received in the online survey and workshops was the need in the next search process for more community engagement with finalists.

After reviewing and discussing the retrospective review at the May 21 meeting, the Board unanimously affirmed its intention to hold an open search for OSU's next president. The Board noted that this would include announcing finalists, providing an opportunity for community engagement with finalists, and soliciting feedback on finalists before the Board makes its final decision.

Following the meeting, the Board also received a [report with recommendations from the ad hoc Faculty Senate committee](#) regarding the next search presidential search.

To support development of the search timeline and process, Board Office staff also reviewed presidential and chancellor searches conducted within the last five years at very research intensive (Carnegie R1), land grant, Pac-12 public, and OSU's benchmark institutions, as well as at the university's College and University Professional (CUPA) comparator universities.

Of the 101 institutions reviewed, 59 had completed a search within the last five years. Of those 59, 11 were conducted as open searches in which the finalists were announced. The number of finalists announced ranged from two to eight, with the majority of open searches having four finalists.

### PRELIMINARY TIMELINE AND PROCESS

The development of a preliminary timeline and process considered the Association of Governing Boards' (AGB) recommended presidential search practices and the Board's [presidential search and selection guidelines](#), feedback gathered in the retrospective review and from the Faculty Senate ad hoc committee, and research on open searches at other institutions.

The process and timeline will be refined by the Board based on further Board discussion and input, and as the presidential search committee and search firm are in place.

<b>Timing</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Mid Oct – Nov 2021	Search firm selection committee formed and firm selected.
Mid Oct – Nov 2021	Search committee solicitation and announcement.
Late Nov – Late Dec 2021	Board, search committee and firm to conduct statewide listening sessions.  Creation of the leadership profile and selection criteria.
Late Dec – Mid Feb 2022	Position recruitment.
Late Feb – Mid Mar 2022	Candidate screening.
Late Mar – Early May 2022	Search Committee to review candidates.  Background checks and due diligence conducted.  Finalists determined and announced.  Finalists visit the university.
Late May 2022	Selection of a new president.
Jun 2022	Presidential transition begins.
Early to Mid Jul 2022	New president begins service at OSU, or as soon as possible thereafter.

**Selection of a Search Firm**

As proposed, the process begins with the formation of a search firm selection committee with members selected by the Board Chair. This committee will be led by a trustee and include representation from senior administrators, faculty, staff, and the student body along with key human resources staff and other staff knowledgeable about executive searches. This group would be charged with designing a solicitation, reviewing responses from executive search firms, and providing a recommendation to the Board Chair.

Based on feedback from trustees, the Faculty Senate ad hoc committee and others, the criteria for selecting a search firm should include experience with open searches for presidents and chancellors at similarly situated institutions and a track record of placing finalists and hires holding minoritized social identities.

**Due Diligence**

Based on feedback from the external review of the due diligence conducted during the last search, the pre-employment background investigation of candidates will be conducted through a process and/or an entity independent of the executive search firm.

In addition to the general media and public records search typically performed by universities in executive-level searches, the background check should employ the use of one or more skip-

tracing programs (e.g., CLEAR, TLO, IRB, etc.) in order to obtain a comprehensive report that includes, but is not limited to: media report, social network history report, employment history, residential history, corporation history, criminal history, driving record, and other records. These online software programs (e.g., CLEAR, Transunion TLO, IRB, Accurint, etc.) are primarily used by private investigators and law enforcement agencies and allow users to quickly filter through vast public and proprietary records to provide a comprehensive report of an individual. Due diligence will also include a search of federal, state, and county court filings associated with the candidate as an individual and associated corporations and non-profit organizations where the candidate was an executive or board member.

As noted by the external reviewer, open searches provide greater opportunity to seek a broad range of input about a candidate and to explore any flags arising in the background check. Using feedback from the reviewer, the search chair (or their delegate) will complete on- and off-list reference inquiries regarding finalists from a broad range of individuals (e.g., employee groups, student government leaders, etc.). The university will require candidates to sign an authorization form to allow the university to obtain information from human resources offices of current and past employers regarding any history of complaints, investigations, or disciplinary actions (e.g., Human Resources, Employee and Labor Relations, etc.). The university is also developing its own disclosure form, to be used instead of those used by search firms, regarding information of previous adverse employment actions.

### **Search Committee Composition and Charge**

Concurrent with the search firm selection process, the Board Chair will lead a process for selecting a presidential search committee. The committee will be chaired by a trustee and composed of trustees and representatives from the faculty, student body, staff, alumni, and the broader community. The committee will include a search advocate to help ensure an inclusive process that gives due consideration to all candidates. The committee also will include at least one president of another public university based in Oregon and the president, or their designee, of the OSU Foundation.

In considering the composition of the committee, the chair will seek to include a broad range of skills, backgrounds, and perspective on the committee; diversity of membership in terms of gender, race, ethnicity and other forms of diversity; and representation of all elements of the university's mission (teaching, research, and outreach).

To help ensure broad university representation, the chair will seek input from shared governance partners including the presidents of Faculty Senate, the Associated Students of Oregon State University (ASOSU), and Associated Students of Cascades Campus (ASCC), and university leaders.

The committee will be charged with:

1. Soliciting nominations and applications from a diverse group of well-qualified people.
2. Keeping the OSU community informed of the process and status of the search throughout the effort, while maintaining confidentiality with respect to applicants and the committee's internal deliberations.
3. Screening applications using the selection criteria in the leadership profile established by the Board as the basis for choice.
4. Providing input on the due diligence and background checks to be completed at each phase of the search effort and reviewing the materials gathered for each candidate.

5. Selecting and interviewing semifinalist candidates after consideration of due diligence materials gathered for each semifinalist.
6. Creating a summary of feedback identifying a group of finalists to consider for university visits.
7. Advising the committee chair and staff on the scheduling and format for university visits by finalists.
8. Summarizing community feedback on finalists.

### **Communication and Engagement**

Based on the search retrospective, feedback from the Faculty Senate ad hoc committee and, and reflections by the Board, communications using multiple approaches will be emphasized throughout the search process. This will include strategies used in the last search, such as a webpage detailing the process and key milestones, extensive listening sessions to inform the leadership profile, regular email updates from the Board to the university, and updates at Faculty Senate meetings.

Additionally, communication in the next search will focus on “reaching community and stakeholders where they are.” This includes trustees and search committee members reaching out to units across the university to provide updates and answer questions at meetings and hosting special sessions with shared governance groups and partners such as Faculty Senate, ASOSU, and ASCC, and the OSU Foundation, among others.

This combined approach will help ensure transparency of the process and broad community engagement and participation. Input from the community will help to inform development of the leadership profile for the position and identification of qualified candidates. The community will also provide input on the finalists visiting the university.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff propose that the Board accept the preliminary timeline and process, recognizing that the process will be refined by the Board based on further discussion and once the presidential search committee and search firm are in place.