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How was the community representation on the Presidential Search Committee determined?

Submitted by: Kathleen Comerford

2/20/2009

Question:

According to the Policy Manual of the BOR, Section 200: "The campus Presidential Search and Screen Committee shall be appointed by the Chancellor in consultation with the Board Chair. The voting membership of the campus Presidential Search and Screen Committee shall consist of three faculty representatives from the institution, at least one representative of the administrative staff, at least one student, and at least two representatives of the surrounding community (and region, as appropriate), including the institution's foundation and its alumni association and comprising up to one-third of the total voting membership of the committee."

The list of members on the Presidential Search Committee includes a representative of the Board of the Foundation who lives in Atlanta (Mrs. Caroline Harless), the chairman of a bank in Alpharetta (Mr. Don Howard), and a past president of the Georgia Southern Alumni Association (Mr. Mike Cummings), from Laurens County. This is surely a very loose interpretation of "at least two representatives of the surrounding community (and region, as appropriate), including the institution's foundation and its alumni association"; none of the above-mentioned individuals live in Statesboro or Bulloch County. On what basis were these three members chosen, and on what basis was local representation from "the surrounding community (and region)" determined *not* to include residents of the city and county in which the University is housed? Even accounting for the clause which allows for choosing representatives from "the institution's foundation and its alumni association," it is curious that the Committee does not include anyone from either the Foundation or the AA who live in Statesboro or Bulloch County.

Rationale:

The Senate and University as a whole are deeply affected by the composition of the Search Committee, and should be interested to know why the Board of Regents has interpreted its own policies in this manner.

Senate Response:

How was the community representation on the Presidential Search Committee determined? asked how the community representation on the Presidential Search Committee was determined. Vice Chancellor Susan Herbst's reply has been posted and says that while the community representatives currently do not live in the area, collectively they have strong ties to GSU as alumni and/or to the region via family connections and ownership of property. Other members of the committee are long term residents of Statesboro, and both campus and community participation will be encouraged via meetings and forums.

3/6/2009: At the request of the SEC, Presidential Search Committee Chair Trey Denton asked Vice-Chancellor Herbst to explain the "community" credentials of those representatives on the search committee, and her reply is below. Other elements of this

RFI were previously answered in the SEC response to an RFI by Debi Sabia. Debra Sabia's RFI 2/4/2009 Presidential Search Committee

1. How was the community representation on the Presidential Search Committee determined?

The spirit of our policy on presidential search committees is to ensure that presidential searches allow for the perspectives of the many constituents of our institutions to be part of the search process. We accomplish this in part by selecting committee members who bring these different perspectives to the table and in part by the way we set up the search process. Regarding the committee members noted in the RFI, Don Howard, Caroline Harless, and Mike Cummings, they collectively have strong connections to Georgia Southern and various business and personal investments in the region it serves. While they may not live full-time in Statesboro, they are alumni of Georgia Southern, they own property in the region, have extensive family connections there, and have a history of service to the University. Each one of them is committed to Georgia Southern and finding the best leadership for its future. I should also point out that there are other members of the search committee who have resided in Statesboro for many years and will bring their community perspective as well.

In addition to committee membership, we also encourage all community members to participate in as many aspects of the search process as possible. Community feedback is of the utmost importance and we envision several ways to invite community participation. We will be scheduling a special community meeting held in the evening in Statesboro that will be open to the entire community and we will be extending invitations to the community to attend the candidate interviews when the finalists come to campus. Regardless of the mechanism we use, it is our intent to include the community throughout the search process.