
From: Cramer, Aaron M.
Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 9:49 AM
To:
Subject: FW: Message from Senate Council on Final Steps for Associate Provost/Dean Search

From: Cramer, Aaron M.
Sent: Wednesday, April 14, 2021 4:36 PM
To: Capilouto, Eli I. <elic@uky.edu>
Cc: Blackwell, David W. <David.Blackwell@uky.edu>
Subject: Message from Senate Council on Final Steps for Associate Provost/Dean Search

Dear President Capilouto (cc: Provost Blackwell and the University Senate),

Senate Council had an emergency meeting on Tuesday, April 13 to discuss the Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Education and Dean of the Graduate School search. On behalf of the Senate Council, I am writing regarding the final steps of the process to identify a new associate provost/dean. By all accounts, the search committee performed its duties commendably and with all the gravitas and deliberation that such work demands. After such fruitful work from the committee, many faculty were dismayed to hear of the decision to depart from the usual practice of presenting multiple finalists to the campus community. While the presentation of a single finalist is superficially compliant with UK's regulations, many faculty members feel that such a decision does not reflect the spirit of collaboration that is inherent in shared governance. Senate Council's concerns are explicitly with the process, not the specific finalist.

It was only last semester when the Senate Council and many other faculty members expressed dismay at the appointment of an acting dean for the College of Arts and Sciences without faculty consultation. Regardless of the number of semifinalists in this present search process, the presentation of a single finalist to campus is naturally seen as a *fait accompli*, and many faculty members will decline to participate in a process that they reasonably view as having a preordained outcome. Of the most concern to Senate Council members is the appearance of a general pattern in administrative decision-making that faculty members are to be consulted only because of a regulatory requirement. The embodiment of shared governance is valuing the input and participation of diverse populations because they offer a valuable and different perspective on shared priorities. After the announcement of a single final candidate, Senate Council and many other faculty members across campus are uncertain about the extent to which senior administrators value the faculty role in shared governance. Announcing the intent to consider a single finalist from among seven qualified semifinalists is not aligned with the values in GR I of shared governance and a sense of community. Further, faculty have significantly less opportunity to demonstrate and apply personal and institutional responsibility and accountability (the sixth value enumerated in GR I) because promoting a single finalist does not truly allow the campus to participate meaningfully in the final steps of the search. It is not clear what the open forums are intended to accomplish at this point. Shared governance is a defining value of the University, but presenting a single candidate does not clearly signal that input from the campus community at large adds value to the decision-making.

During the meeting when Senate Council discussed these concerns, there was robust discussion among all those present. A variety of concerns were expressed about multiple aspects of the final phase of the search process; those present unanimously agreed that the presentation of a single finalist was inappropriate. There is a long history of University search committees providing multiple candidates for the campus community to interact with, so it is implausible to think that the campus community would welcome a single finalist, particularly for an internal search. While it appears that some of the conflict here results from a lack of common understanding of shared governance and its practical implementation at UK, Senate Council remains willing to work to restore a common framework that is consistent with the defining values of the University.

At the special Senate Council meeting on Tuesday, the Senate Council voted to ask that you refrain from making the final decision on the appointment of an Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Education and Dean of the Graduate School until additional candidates have been invited to participate publicly in the final round of the search. The Senate Council recognizes that, due to the way the search has evolved, it is possible that none of the capable semifinalists would consent to be considered publicly as a finalist. The Senate Council also asks that the feedback obtained through the public forums be provided to the search committee so that the committee may share its response to the feedback with you. Additionally, the Senate Council is taking this opportunity to state explicitly its expectation that future searches, including the ongoing Provost search, present multiple candidates for the campus to interact with to allow access to the “diverse expertise collectively available to the University in its faculty, administration, staff employees, and students” and allow us to “share the responsibility of attainment of the University’s goals” (GR I.E).

Sincerely,

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