



## **GUIDELINES FOR THE SELECTION OF PRESIDENTS**

(Approved by the Board of Regents, January 24, 1991; Revised July 13, 2001; Revised October 22, 2004, Revised February 22, 2019)

### **Purpose**

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish a general procedural framework for the search and selection of university presidents within the University System of Maryland (“USM” or “System”). The Board of Regents (“BOR” or the “Board”) deems it important that there be general consistency in the presidential search and selection process among the institutions of the System. It is recognized, however, that differences in institutional objectives, traditions, and cultures may require some institution-specific variation in search procedures within and consistent with these general guidelines.

### **Selection and Appointment of Presidents**

The final selection and appointment of a university president is, by law, the responsibility and prerogative of the Board of Regents. All other elements of the search process under these guidelines are designed to assist the Board in meeting that responsibility in a manner responsive to the leadership needs of the institution and the System.

To facilitate the recruitment of high caliber candidate pools, searches for USM presidents will be conducted as closed searches, meaning the identity of candidates will not be publicly disclosed during the search process. At the same time, a closed search process should be inclusive and reflect input from the campus and the community in which the campus resides, such that the selection of a president is a product of stakeholder engagement.

### **Presidential Search Process**

The Chancellor will launch the start of a president’s search by meeting with campus stakeholders to discuss the search and to invite nominations for members of the search committee. Thereafter, the Chancellor will appoint a search committee (see below for more information on the search committee composition and responsibilities), with Board review, including a member of the Board of Regents as the Chair of the search committee. The Chancellor may, but is not required to, employ an executive search firm to assist with the process. Once the committee has been established, the Chancellor will give the search committee its charge.

The search committee will develop for itself procedures that will govern the conduct of the search. It should, to the best of its ability, adhere to these guidelines.

The search committee and the executive search firm consultant(s), if applicable, will meet with campus constituents—in groups and individually – to ascertain criteria and skills desired in a new president. In consultation with and subject to the approval of the Chancellor, the search committee will develop a comprehensive leadership profile, which includes information about the campus and, more importantly,

includes a statement of professional qualifications and personal qualities sought in the individual to be selected as president.

The search committee will conduct an intensive and extensive proactive search for qualified candidates, using the search firm (if applicable) and its own contacts and soliciting the assistance of any and all appropriate individuals or organizations internal and external to the institution. Additionally, the committee will undertake major recruitment efforts to include advertising in key national publications and other means to disseminate information about the availability of the position.

The search committee will review and discuss candidate submissions, and then select and interview a group of semi-finalist candidates. Typically, the semi-finalist group includes 6-10 candidates, and the interviews are conducted as “airport interviews” over a period of two days. After these interviews and deliberation on the semi-finalists, the committee should identify three to four finalists from the semi-finalist pool for the Regent’s consideration.

Prior to submitting the list of finalists to the Chancellor, the search firm consultant(s) should conduct background and reference checks on each finalist. If a search firm was not utilized in the search process, then the committee must employ a professional reference checker to ensure thorough, consistent, and fair use of sources of references on candidates, including checking references other than those submitted by the candidates.

The committee should submit to the Chancellor the names of the finalists, unranked, together with all relevant information, and a written report of the Committee’s assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each finalist. Following receipt of the report of the search committee, the Chancellor will consult with the committee chair along with the search firm consultant(s) or the professional reference checker (if separate from the search service) and conduct any further reference checks that may be appropriate.

The Office of the Chancellor will arrange for interviews of the finalists by the Chancellor and the Regents. Additionally, the Chair of the search committee will personally brief the Regents and the Chancellor on the work and recommendations of the committee.

Following the interviews of the final candidates, the Regents will hear the recommendation of the Chancellor and either proceed to select the successful candidate or charge the committee to present other names.

Following the Regents’ selection, the Chancellor, in consultation with the Chair of the Board and with the advice of the Office of the Attorney General, will negotiate the terms of appointment, compensation, and other details with the successful candidate. Formal appointment by the Board of Regents and public announcement of the appointment will follow.

### **Search Committee**

The search committee will normally consist of 12-15 persons selected by the Chancellor from institutional constituent groups and/or individuals, including faculty, students, administrators, staff, alumni, foundation boards, boards of visitors, and, often, the community in which the institution is situated, in addition to the search committee Chair. The Committee will be composed of a balanced selection of individuals drawn from some or all of these groups. It is essential that the members of the

Committee see themselves and function not as representatives of particular special interest groups, but as members of a team dedicated to a single objective: the identification and recommendation of the strongest possible candidates for the presidency of the institution.

The Chancellor will designate a Chancellor's liaison to the search committee. The function of the Chancellor's liaison is to provide to the committee a direct and immediate source of informed advice as its work proceeds. The Chancellor's liaison is not a voting member of the committee.

### **Search Committee Staff Support**

The Office of the Chancellor will arrange staff support for the search committee. In most cases, the primary staff support for the committee will come from the committee's institution. USM Office staff will assist in such matters as: providing advice and assistance to the Chair of the search committee in handling committee documents and communications; providing assistance in preparing committee reports to the Chancellor; providing liaison between finalist candidates and the Chancellor and Regents in the final stages of the process; and maintaining the permanent records of the search.

### **Responsibilities of the Search Committee**

The primary responsibilities of the search committee are three-fold:

- 1. To develop a broad and deep pool of strong candidates, through a national and proactive search using all available means;**
- 2. To select from that pool, with care, deliberation, and thoroughness, a group of no fewer than three and (usually) no more than five finalist candidates to be recommended to the Regents, unranked.**
- 3. To adhere to a strict code of confidentiality.**

In meeting its primary responsibilities, the Committee will:

- Agree on a statement of professional qualifications and personal qualities sought in the individual to be selected as president, in consultation with and subject to the approval of the Chancellor.
- Review the evolving role of a university president in today's environment and develop a set of criteria that recognizes and encourages traditional academic candidates as well as non-traditional candidates.
- Ensure that the search is demonstrably conducted in a manner consistent with both the letter and the spirit of relevant equal opportunity and diversity policies and requirements.
- Screen candidates fairly and consistently, using evaluative criteria based on the professional qualifications and personal qualities sought.
- Maintain confidentiality during the entire process to protect the candidates, the integrity of the process, and the interests of the institution. Only the University System Office at the direction of the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee should disclose information about the status of the search.

### **Duration of Searches**

It is extremely important that a search be conducted expeditiously, in order to protect the candidate pool and the semi-finalist and finalist groups from erosion by competing searches at other institutions, and to impress upon candidates the seriousness and professionalism with which the search is

conducted. Every effort must be made to avoid the deleterious consequences that can accompany a lengthy search process. The Regents expect that a search for president should normally lead to the appointment of a president within six months following the initiation of the process with the first meeting of the search committee. This means that the work of the Committee should normally extend over no more than six to nine months. It is recognized that the nature of the academic calendar or other circumstances may in some cases compel extending the search period.

#### **Costs of the Search**

Costs of a search will normally be borne by the institution for which the search is conducted.