

Meeting of Faculty, sponsored by Faculty Congress

October 23, 2014

In attendance: Nancy Sharts-Hopko, Crystal Lucky, Amy Fleischer (members of Provost search committee), 35 faculty, at one point or another, were present for this 75 minute meeting

Purpose: to offer faculty members a chance to express their views on this important search and position

Below is a bare recording of questions asked, comments made, no attribution is given. At points a parenthetical remark is made by the recording secretary where deemed helpful.

Why wasn't the job description posted? This would have been quite simple to do! We all need to know whether this position is a "real" Provost.

There are worries that the job description not being posted sends a very bad message about what will come.

Why a provost now? This conversation started five years ago. Faculty Congress was very involved: conducting surveys, sifting through job descriptions, examining the history of provosts at other universities, meeting with Fr. Donohue. All of this got lost in the shuffle a few years ago, and now it is back and Fr. Donohue is moving forward.

Will the search be confined to external candidates? While we cannot exclude internal candidates, I prefer an external person, bringing fresh perspective, with no commitments to already existing structures and programs. [This sentiment was echoed by many in attendance.]

Where is the faculty input in drafting the job description? Is this a Provost in name only? A glorified VPAA? The Board of Trustees has approved a job description. The search committee has yet to see it.

A "real" Provost is second in line to the President. Is that what we're looking for? The Provost should be the chief operating officer, not just one of 6 Vice-presidents. He or she should also have budgetary control.

It doesn't look good that the job description hasn't been disclosed, but what would be the purpose of the search if the new position is not a "real" Provost, but simply another VPAA?

To what extent has the Carnegie reclassification driven the search for a Provost, is it required, even if in name only?

The model of Provost we choose will impact the quality of the candidates:

1. An Executive Vice President
2. Person with responsibility for academics and student life, chairing the budget committee ("real" provost")

3. VPAA with a new name

What do our peer or aspirational institutions do as far as provost? A member search the web and found the following:

Boston College:

Office of the provost and dean of faculties Subject to the direction of the President, the Provost and Dean of Faculties is responsible for the academic leadership of the faculty and the administration of all University academic activities.

The Deans of the University's eight schools, the Dean of Enrollment Management, and the university Librarian report to the Provost. The Provost's Office includes Vice Provosts for Faculties, Research, and Undergraduate Academic Affairs.

Georgetown:

Welcome. The provost at Georgetown is the chief academic officer of the main campus. The provost and his staff are responsible for the quality of the educational and research programs of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the McDonough School of Business, Georgetown College, the Walsh School of Foreign Service, the McCourt School of Public Policy, and the School for Continuing Studies. The office oversees admissions, financial aid, the registrar, research administration, and offices of student affairs.

An effective provost office serves the faculty and students of a university. The provost's office at Georgetown strives to be transparent in its activities and to seek early and frequent input from faculty, students, and staff. The provost's office has the obligation to build an environment in which faculty can perform their best scholarship and research and engage students through teaching and mentoring, as well as one in which students become prepared for a world in which ongoing learning will be a requisite for leadership.

I hope this site provides the information you seek. Please contact us if we can provide any additional information.

Notre Dame:

The University of Notre Dame seeks to be a preeminent research university with a distinctive Catholic character and an unsurpassed commitment to undergraduate and post-baccalaureate education, aims that provide the foundation for its academic mission.

As Notre Dame's chief academic officer, Provost Tom Burish is responsible for the stewardship of this mission, serving as the principal representative of the academy to both internal and external constituencies and leading strategic academic initiatives on

behalf of the University. Working with the associate provosts, the vice president for research, the deans, the University librarian, and other academic leaders, he seeks to cultivate a learning community that challenges and engages students, inspires leading research and scholarship, and appreciates all intellectual inquiry as a pursuit of truth.

The Office of the Provost is divided into five major functional areas—budget and planning, faculty affairs, graduate studies, undergraduate affairs, and internationalization—with an associate provost providing support in each.

What is the name of the search firm? Do we have references? The name of the search firm is Diversified Search. They are conducting the Library Director search, and by all accounts everyone is happy with their work.

It is important that the members of the search committee meet with candidates and/or finalists, in small groups or 1-1. The search firm often tries to keep everything light and happy, when it is critical for candidates to hear about the real challenges that they might face upon taking this position. To not create the 'space" for this to happen is a real disservice to the candidates.

Who actually runs the search? What is the role of the search committee? A reminder: the provost is appointed by the board of trustees.

Fr. Donohue has asked other faculty members to meet with the search firm this coming Tuesday.

What is the relationship between the search firm and the search committee? The search committee is responsible for identifying a candidate for the position. The search firm will, and already is, reaching out to ideal candidates to gauge their interest. They also handle all the logistics.

Does the search firm defer to the search committee? Yes, this is a committee decision.

It was suggested to Nancy Sharts-Hopko, the chair of the search committee, that she call the whole committee together before they meet on the 3rd of November, the first scheduled meeting for the search committee.

Once the finalists are here on campus, does anyone have thoughts as to how to get faculty voice into the process?

If there is going to be a faculty voice in this process, it should be before the search begins, in the developing of the job description!

The Provost must chair the budget committee.

Should the Faculty Congress tap our faculty now to see if they would prefer a particular model of Provost(see listing above)? The job description is set, so a model is probably embedded in the description. However, it is also possible that its wording is general enough that we can fill in the model as we proceed.

What qualities do we want in a Provost?

1. A strong scholar, or at least someone who understands/values the scholarly life.
2. Has established leadership experience in academia; the faculty at other institutions where the person has held leadership roles speak highly of him or her
3. If the university wants to retain its identity as founded in the liberal arts, then the provost should value that as well. The liberal arts shouldn't have to defend itself at this university.

The search firm is already putting together a list of potential candidates.

What is the vision for the future of the University? This seems a prior, more fundamental, question before thinking about qualities of the provost. What is the vision? What do we want the Provost to do?

We need to know the time line for this process. It was noted that this will be a priority item on the agenda for the first meeting.

What role should the faculty's elected representatives to play in this process? The Faculty Congress has established an ad hoc committee to study the implications of Carnegie reclassification on faculty members. The results of this work might be helpful to the search committee as in interviews candidates.

Faculty members should talk to the search committee member from their college. Each college is represented in this search. The question of confidentiality was raised; the committee needs to create guidelines to facilitate communication with the faculty at large while respecting the confidentiality of the candidates.

The committee should try to get more space to be able to share more information with colleagues. Need to get leeway at the beginning of the process in order to expand the restrictions.

The committee should RANK the final candidates, rather than just list them as acceptable.

Anything that doesn't compromise the identity of the candidates should be available to the whole university community, like the job description.

It is problematic that we don't even know what is in the job description? There is not much for us to talk about without knowledge of how the job is described, e.g. reporting lines, etc.

What has the search firm been asked to do?

The group expressed a vote of confidence in the chair of this search committee: Nancy Sharts-Hopko.

What if you don't have a clear idea of what kind of provost we will get?

Perhaps we don't want the Chief Financial Officer of the university to be a equal to the Provost as was outlined in the reporting model developed by the Faculty Congress five years ago. In that model three report to the President: Provost, dean of law school, chief financial officer.

What is the vision of a Provost? Has Fr. Donohue articulated a vision for the provost? What he has said in public is that he wants someone with whom he is comfortable. A problematic situation would be if the board of trustees favors one candidate and Fr. Donohue, another.

What is the vision? The strategic Plan. So whomever is the Provost must be completely on board with the strategic plan.

Will we just take the person that we get, or might we put off the search until we find the person we really want? The evidence from the library search is that this search firm is willing to start all over again if we are not happy with the final candidates.

Please remain engaged.

Notes taken by Edward Fierros and Mark Doorley

Prepared and submitted by Mark Doorley

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