

As I See It:

Setting an open course for next OSU presidential search

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- By: Rani Borkar, chairwoman of the Oregon State University Board of Trustees.

Oregon State University is unwavering in its commitment to serve the people of Oregon and to be a trusted and engaged statewide partner.

As chair of the OSU Board of Trustees, I know that the selection of the OSU president is not only the board's most important job, it also carries great importance for students, staff, faculty, alumni, Corvallis area community members and many other stakeholders. The board will soon undertake the selection of OSU's next leader, and in doing so we will remain focused on the principles and values of our university.

The university is in an excellent position with Becky Johnson as our interim president, and I know she will continue to make important contributions to the university and broader community.

The OSU Board of Trustees has turned its attention to the next presidential search. In doing so, it was important that we first took the time with the university community to assess what went well in the last search and what the board could do differently in the next search. We are grateful to all who engaged in the process of retrospection – those who provided feedback through our online survey and those that joined trustees in virtual workshops.

In our conversations with community members, we heard positive feedback about many components of the previous search process. Many said they appreciated the collaborative and inclusive town hall approach that the board used in 2019 to identify the characteristics and traits needed in a president. We also heard support for the board's intentional effort to convene a diverse and broadly representative search committee. Importantly, we also noted the talented and diverse pool of candidates we had at every stage of the search process.

We also identified opportunities for improvement. Through our discussions, the board heard suggestions for how it might communicate and engage more actively during the next search, and in the future.

In the recent workshops, trustees had engaging conversations with participants about the tradeoffs between maintaining candidate confidentiality through the entire process and making public the names of finalists and providing an opportunity for engagement with the university community. As it reviewed this feedback, trustees unanimously agreed that it is their intention in the next search to announce the names of finalist candidates, provide an opportunity for community engagement with finalists, and solicit feedback on finalists before the board makes its final decision.

While the board will continue into fall to lay out the process for the next search, we felt it was important to give this assurance to the community now as the board continues to gather input and information to help inform the next search. This includes the board's efforts to evaluate through an independent, external review the due diligence of the last search.

I am confident that these actions by the board will improve the process of OSU's next presidential search. As well, with community engagement, I trust that we will realize the

outcome of selecting a trusted leader who will continue to advance OSU's mission and be a valued member of the university community, as well as the local and Oregon community.



Rani Borkar

https://www.gazettetimes.com/news/local/as-i-see-it-setting-an-open-course-for-next-osu-presidential-search/article_293878ec-facd-5698-837c-c1e02e3ebd85.html