

# Guidelines for the Hiring and Appointment of Oregon State University President

Report developed by the Oregon State University Faculty Senate Presidential Search Ad Hoc Committee and submitted to the Faculty Senate for approval

## Executive Summary

The Presidential Search Ad Hoc Committee was created by the Faculty Senate with the charge “to produce guidelines for conducting open and transparent hiring and appointment processes for the President”.

Guided by the values of Oregon State University (OSU) and higher education for openness, inclusion, transparency, and shared governance, the guidelines this committee has adopted for the hiring and appointment of OSU President are:

1. The process must seek to establish and strengthen trust between OSU leadership—the new President and the Board of Trustees—and the OSU community of faculty<sup>1</sup>, staff, and students.
2. Broad input from the OSU community must be gathered and provided into the candidate selection criteria and search process, including adequate and diverse representation of OSU community members on the search committee itself.
3. The search committee must retain control of the search process. If a search firm is used, its role should be to facilitate, not control the search.
4. An engagement and communication plan must be developed to build trust, promote transparency, and increase the flow of accurate information to the OSU community throughout the search process, including with respect to how the candidate pool is evaluated and narrowed and how community input is utilized and applied at each step.
5. At least three finalists should visit OSU and meet with a broad cross-section of the community.

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<sup>1</sup> References to “faculty” throughout this document are intended to include academic and professional faculty.

## Guiding Principles

The committee was guided in its work by the values of Oregon State University (OSU) and higher education for openness, inclusion, transparency, and shared governance. Some of the documents consulted were: [OSU Mission Statement and Core Values](#); [OSU Board Principles and Core Values](#); [OSU Faculty Senate Principles of Shared Governance](#); [OSU Policy on Shared Governance with ASOSU](#); the [Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#) jointly formulated by the American Association of University Professors, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges; and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges [Board of Directors' Statement on Shared Governance](#). Many of these documents specifically mention the role of shared governance in the hiring and appointment of university presidents.

Shared governance is the means for achieving openness, inclusion, and transparency within the university community. As [OSU Faculty Senate Principles of Shared Governance](#) states, “The purpose of shared governance is to create a university community based on open communication, accountability, and mutual respect, for the sake of best advancing the institution's missions.” Moreover:

Shared governance requires a “full-cycle” approach in soliciting, formulating and making decisions on policy and procedure. For administrators, a full-cycle approach requires soliciting faculty input, weighing that input, arriving at decisions, and reporting back to the faculty on the rationale for those decisions. For faculty (in matters where faculty do not make the final decision), a full-cycle approach requires decision on process, form, and content of faculty input, and then requires effective communication between administrators and faculty.

The importance of shared governance is affirmed by [OSU Board of Trustees Principles and Core Values](#): “Through shared governance, we realize our commitment to the ideals of higher education.”

The principles informing implementation of shared governance in the hiring and appointment of OSU President are summarized by [Faculty Participation in the Selection, Evaluation, and Retention of Administrators](#):

... the numbers from each constituency should reflect both the primacy of faculty concern and the range of other groups, including students, that have legitimate claim to some involvement. Each group should select its own members to serve on the committee, and the rules governing the search should be arrived at jointly.

## Process

The OSU Faculty Senate created the Presidential Search Ad Hoc Committee by a [resolution adopted on April 8, 2021](#). The charge of the committee was “to produce guidelines for conducting open and transparent hiring and appointment processes for the President,” to be presented at the June 10, 2021 meeting of Faculty Senate. The members of the committee, elected on May 13, 2021, were: Belinda Batten (College of Engineering), Bradley Boovy (College of Liberal Arts), Allison Davis-White Eyes (Office of Institutional Diversity), Kevin Gable

(College of Science), Anne Gillies (Human Resources), Erika McCalpine (OSU-Cascades), Jan Medlock (Carlson College of Veterinary Medicine), Scott Vignos (Office of Institutional Diversity), and Luhui Whitebear (Student Affairs). The committee selected Erika McCalpine to be its chairperson.

The committee met on May 14, May 18, May 26, June 2, and June 4. The committee also participated in the OSU Trustees workshop Retrospective Review of the 2019 Presidential Search on May 26 and met with two Trustees on June 7 to discuss the coming presidential search.

To develop this report, the committee considered the processes used in [OSU's 2019 Presidential Search](#), OSU Trustees' [Retrospective Review of the 2019 Presidential Search Process](#), and established best practices from peer institutions and professional associations around the nation, including [Presidential Search Committee Checklist](#); [Faculty Participation in the Selection, Evaluation, and Retention of Administrators](#); [Presidential Search Best Practice Documents](#); and [A Complete Guide to Presidential Search for Universities and Colleges](#).

## Specific Guidelines for the Presidential Search

1. Search Committee
  - a. The committee must be representative of the OSU statewide community: faculty, classified employees, and students.
    - i. Because of “the primacy of faculty concern”, the number of faculty (excluding those with senior administrative appointments) should be at least equal to the number of Trustees on the committee.
  - b. Following the principles of shared governance, faculty, classified employees, and students must each select their own representatives using their own processes.
  - c. To promote communication under [Oregon Revised Statute 182.162–168](#) and [Executive Order 96-30](#) and in recognition of OSU's status as a land-grant institution, representatives from the Tribal communities should be included as stakeholder members of the committee.
  - d. The search committee should establish its own rules and processes for making its recommendations to the Trustees.
2. Search Firm
  - a. The search firm, if used, must facilitate the search process, not control it.
  - b. The work of the search firm should be limited to one or more of:
    - i. Developing an institutional profile or other background materials on the institution.
    - ii. Preparing and placing advertisements.
    - iii. Identifying and soliciting applications from qualified candidates.
    - iv. Preparing and processing correspondence with candidates.
    - v. Responding to candidate inquiries and information requests.
  - c. The search firm must have a track record of **placing** finalists and hires holding minoritized social identities, including individuals who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx/a/o, Asian, Tribal citizen, LBGQTQ+, and people with disabilities.

- d. The search firm must have a record of success with open searches at the executive level.
  - e. The search firm must ensure that each candidate who advances to the shortlist submits all required documents.
  - f. The search firm must report information and application materials with OSU to comply with federal affirmative action regulations.
3. Communication and Engagement with the OSU Community
- a. A robust communication and engagement strategy designed to build trust and create transparency must be shared with the OSU community before the search begins.
    - i. The strategy must be guided by principles of trust-building, transparency, and iterative decision making. The strategy must include full-cycle communication about how decisions were reached and how community input was utilized.
    - ii. The strategy must make clear the “milestones” at which communication and engagement will occur.
    - iii. The strategy must consider diverse modalities for communication and engagement.
      - 1. Modalities should not be limited to a website, but should include regular announcements and email communications, updates on timeline and process, public forums, social media, and other modalities. All communications should be timely, and announcements for joint sessions, listening sessions, public forums, and other opportunities for community feedback should be sent well in advance of those events, with reminder emails to follow. Stakeholders will have multiple options to gain information and knowledge regarding the process including: an updated website with agendas and minutes of previous meetings; electronic news updates sent to stakeholders; and various public forums where information is shared.
  - b. Key stakeholders should be identified as part of the communication and engagement strategy including:
    - i. College and Division representatives
    - ii. Faculty and faculty groups (e.g., Faculty Senate, UAOSU, Presidential commissions, employee affinity groups)
    - iii. Staff and staff groups (e.g., OSCU Staff Council, SEIU)
    - iv. Students and student groups (e.g., ASOSU, ASCC, student affinity groups, CGE)
    - v. Alumni
    - vi. Departments (e.g., CAPS, HSRC, SARC, DCE) and interdisciplinary groups (e.g., SHARP, CWESN) that provide student care and support
    - vii. Tribal partners
    - viii. External entities (e.g., community partners, volunteers)

- c. Regular special sessions of the Faculty Senate will be held to update the OSU community on information regarding the search that can be shared. Joint sessions should be considered with ASOSU, ASCC, classified employees, and other partners. Special sessions should include:
        - i. The presidential search committee chair
        - ii. Board of Trustees members
- 4. Candidate Engagement During Site Visits
  - a. At least three finalists should visit OSU and meet with a broad cross-section of the community. This is necessary for establishing how each candidate might work with campus, establish bona fides on openness and transparency, and allow the community to understand tradeoffs the Board faces in making a final selection.
  - b. Candidates should meet with the broad diversity of representative stakeholder groups identified in the engagement strategy (3.b. above).
  - c. Public forums open to the entire university community are needed.
    - i. To improve access and increase participation, the search committee should offer public forums both in person and by remote access, e.g. by Zoom. The search committee should endeavor to schedule public forums at times that demonstrate OSU's commitment to robust representation of various stakeholder groups, e.g. not during finals week, peak advising, breaks, holidays, etc.
  - d. Gathering and considering robust feedback on the candidates is critical.
    - i. A feedback instrument designed to elicit information about criteria the committee is seeking to evaluate should be designed and distributed, ideally in multiple modalities (paper, Qualtrics).
    - ii. The feedback instrument should request that respondents describe what the candidate said or did or what other information they used to form their judgment.
    - iii. Feedback should be tabulated and analyzed qualitatively by the search committee as part of the final report to the BoT. A summary of the feedback should be shared with the community.
- 5. Reference Checking
  - a. References must be checked by people outside of the search firm: an independent firm, the Faculty Senate leadership, the search committee, and other stakeholders.
  - b. Robust off-list reference checks including people at all levels of the candidate's current and previous organizations will be conducted and provided to the search committee.
  - c. The search committee must determine an equitable process to mediate biased and conflicting information about candidates.
- 6. Announcement of the Finalist
  - a. Thorough rationale addressing search criteria should be shared in writing with the larger OSU community when the hire is announced.

## Conclusion

The Oregon State University Faculty Senate Presidential Search Ad Hoc Committee appreciates the opportunity to provide these guidelines. The committee members do so in the spirit of collaboration and in service of OSU's commitment to shared governance. It is the hope of the members of this committee that the next Presidential search, integrating these guidelines and those of other stakeholders, will serve to engender trust and create stronger, more resilient relationships between the Board of Trustees, the new President, and OSU community members.