

SR 11-01 Resolution on CSU Policy regarding Presidential Searches

Resolved: That the Academic Senate of CSU Channel Islands urges the CSU Board of Trustees to retain the existing presidential search policy and current practice. In particular, we urge: 1) that the practice of meaningful campus visits that include a series of meetings and open forums with administrators, faculty, staff, students and community members continue, and that a policy regarding development of a mechanism for collecting feedback from campus constituencies be included; and 2) that the proposed practice of considering internal candidates and possibly hiring such a candidate before a position is advertised be eliminated; and be it further,

Resolved: That this resolution be distributed to Chancellor Reed, the CSU Board of Trustees, and the Academic Senate of the California State University.

Rationale: The Board of Trustees is considering changes to the current policy on presidential hiring practices and compensation. Historically, each semi-finalist for a presidential appointment has visited the campus at which he/she is a candidate. During these visits, targeted meetings with administrators, faculty, staff, and students, and open forums for the campus community have been held. The current policy specifies that these campus visits occur, while simultaneously reserving to the Trustees Committee for the Selection of a President and the Chancellor, in consultation with an Advisory Committee to the Trustees Committee for the Selection of the President, the responsibility of determining the nature of such visits. Flexibility is already built into the current policy, as it provides for deviations from these procedures “in rare instances and for compelling reasons.”

The loss of campus visits in the proposed policy would greatly diminish the role of the campus community in the presidential search process. It would eliminate the possibility of candidates meeting all members of the campus community, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community members. Furthermore, it is contrary to the fundamental principles of shared governance of the CSU system. Removing the campus visit component can only hinder the candidates in developing an understanding of the issues and challenges they might face should they be offered and accept the position.

The proposed practice of having a small elite group consider “...whether any internal CSU candidate(s) is/are a good fit for the position” prior to advertising the position eliminates the opportunity to screen a single pool of internal and external applicants and counters best practices in hiring. The odds that excellent candidates would be overlooked are too high to recommend this deviation from current practice.

Campus presidents are presented with a wide variety of difficult challenges. The California State University should take advantage of any opportunity to allow new presidents to build support in their respective communities. Arriving on campus without having the support and legitimacy provided by an inclusive, broadly defined search and a meaningful campus visit would put the chosen candidate at a significant disadvantage in leading a successful transition, and would diminish the potential for productive shared governance at that campus.

Approved by the CSU Channel Islands Academic Senate on Tuesday, September 13, 2011