

# **Academic Leadership for the Future**

## **A Guide to Dean Searches at the University of Notre Dame**

### **Overview**

The goal of this document is to clarify the decanal search process. The first section outlines a set of foundational principles that undergird such searches. The second section describes how University governance documents—particularly the revised version of the Academic Articles—delineate the search process. Section three describes the benefits of confidentiality in decanal search processes, including some benchmarking data of peer institutions. A final section highlights a few specific process improvements suggested by a faculty working group, which will contribute to increased transparency during a dean search.

### **Guiding Principles for Dean Searches**

A set of core principles undergird the University’s approach to identifying senior academic leaders.

- **Faculty and College/School Involvement** – When a new dean is to be appointed, as noted above, the College or School elects tenured faculty members and one student to serve on the search committee. The Provost may appoint up to two additional faculty members. To garner faculty input that is prolonged, deep, and informed, the University relies heavily on the search committee. This body is instrumental in outlining the needs, challenges, and opportunities of the College/School. At the outset of the search process, the search committee will provide opportunities for faculty, staff, and students—through open forums, individual meetings, small group meetings, or some combination of all of these or other venues—to express their views on the essential characteristics and desirable qualities in a new dean. Building upon that information, the search committee of the College/School develops a prospectus for the dean position, carefully articulating the characteristics and qualities of the ideal academic leader. Faculty appointed to the committee should be committed to not only offering their own input but serving as a voice for all faculty in the College/School.
  
- **Inclusive Excellence** – Anchored by Notre Dame President Father Jenkins’ and Provost Burish’s commitment to diversity and inclusion (see Appendix 1), special efforts are made to attract women and minorities to the candidate pool. The central premise of inclusive excellence holds that universities should intentionally integrate their diversity efforts into the core aspects of their institutions—such as their academic priorities, leadership, quality improvement initiatives, decision-making, day-to-day operations, and organizational cultures—in order to maximize success. Just as several departments, and all Colleges and Schools, have specified best practices for faculty hiring, the search

process for deans is attentive to diversity in all its forms. Data in the table below illustrate the commitment to inclusive excellence as manifested in the candidates selected as finalists and semi-finalists across the four most recent dean searches at the University (i.e., Arts and Letters, Law, Mendoza, Engineering).

	# of Finalists	Female	Male	Minority	# of Semi-Finalists	Female	Male	Minority
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>11</b>

- Proactive Searches that are International in Scope** – Searching for decanal leadership at top-tier research universities is a very competitive endeavor. Attracting and securing high-caliber talent demands that searches be international in scope and professionally led. One mechanism that Notre Dame routinely uses to aggressively pursue academic leaders on a global scale is the engagement of a search consultant. Search consultants serve numerous critical roles but chief among them are: a) collating and refining search committee input to develop an accurate and compelling position prospectus; b) identifying sources and prospective candidates, including prospective candidates who are not currently searching for a position; c) contacting prospective candidates to try to interest them in considering in the position; d) conducting research and due diligence on candidates; and e) facilitating the tasks of the search committee by coordinating interviews, meetings, and visits of position finalists.

**The Search Process as Described in the Academic Articles**

The Academic Articles set forth a clear process for the appointment of a dean. In particular, Article III (Section 5) of the Academic Articles recently approved by the Academic Council and the Board of Trustees describes the responsibilities of the Dean of a College and details the appointment process. Similarly, Article III (Section 6) describes the responsibilities of the Dean of a School and details the appointment process (see Appendix 2 for the relevant excerpts). The bulleted list below summarizes the key steps in the appointment process for college and school deans.

- The Provost advises a College of the pending appointment for new dean through College Council; the Provost advises a School of the pending appointment by informing all faculty.

- In the case of a College, the College Council elects five members from the tenured faculty of the College and one student; for a School, the regular faculty of the School elects four members from the tenured faculty of the School and one student.
- The Provost chairs the committee, and may appoint up to two additional regular faculty members; the Provost may assign a VP and Associate Provost as a non-voting member
- Before making recommendations, the committee shall consult extensively with faculty and students of the College or School.
- The committee receives and considers nominations, and makes recommendations to the Provost.
- The Provost reports recommendations of the committee to the President, along with a personal recommendation.
- The Dean is appointed by the President and is subject to formal review every five years.

### **Rationale for Confidentiality in Searches**

Securing a world-class academic leader depends on attracting the interest of a range of extraordinarily qualified candidates, including those currently holding administrative positions at other institutions. In most searches, the majority of the strongest prospective candidates are not looking for another position, and have no impetus to jeopardize their current roles by entering a search process. As a result, for many candidates, confidentiality throughout the search process is essential to secure their participation. For those who hold the positions of dean, provost, or president in particular, to publicly interview for positions at other universities can and often does jeopardize their position at their home institution. The rationale for confidentiality is described more fully below.

- Why is confidentiality valued in dean searches?
  - The collective goal is to attract and appoint the best qualified candidate for leadership roles at Notre Dame. The primary reason to hold confidential the identities of candidates for dean positions is to attract the most qualified, highest quality candidates to consider the role. Historically, confidentiality has played a vital role in bringing superb leaders to Notre Dame.
  - Candidates serving in administrative roles, particularly those who hold the position of dean, provost, or president, are very often concerned that making their names public may jeopardize their current positions and the important work that they are doing. This precludes their participation if a search is not confidential. In addition to their personal and professional reputations, candidates in significant leadership positions are reluctant to risk:
    - The impact on fundraising if they are currently courting donors or negotiating gifts and word of their candidacy were to get back to potential benefactors.

- The impact on recruiting if current faculty candidates were to hear that the person was on the market for a new position.
- A confidential search protects candidates who are not selected from being undermined in their current work, or disadvantaged in other opportunities at their institutions or other institutions.
- By keeping the search process confidential, an institution bolsters its ability to secure its chosen candidate, since the candidates' home institution cannot make a pre-emptive counter-offer if it is unaware of his/her candidacy.
- Employing a search consultant, which Notre Dame does for dean searches, guarantees a proactive approach to the search, wherein the consultant/firm will contact many potential candidates (most of whom are not actively looking for a new position). In the absence of confidentiality, a consultant can be far less effective in attracting the highest quality candidates to consider the role, since the potential pool is reduced to those looking for a new position.
- Review of the University's four most recent dean searches (i.e., Arts and Letters, Law, Mendoza, Engineering) provides evidence to support the assertion that the strongest candidates are likely to be surfaced by a confidential process in which candidates are nominated by others. Only select candidates who meet the rigorous criteria established by the search committees are invited to be finalists. Across these last four dean searches, there have been 15 finalists (three searches had four finalists; one had three). Of these finalists, all came to be in the pool through invitation and networking. Though several candidates self-identified and applied in response to the position advertisement, none of them, across all four searches, were selected for search committee interviews.
- Using a private, confidential search process is a regular practice among peer institutions. For example, the University's Office of General Counsel directly surveyed the search practices of the private institutions that are members of the American Association of Universities. Of the ten institutions that provided information, 80% utilize confidential search processes across their institutions (Boston University, Case Western University, Cornell, Rice, Tulane, University of Chicago, University of Pennsylvania, and Washington University in St. Louis).<sup>1</sup> Another of the ten (Duke University) utilizes confidential search processes in all but one school. Effectively, 90% of these institutions utilize confidential search processes. Only one of the ten responding institutions (USC) utilizes open searches. Moreover, an on-line review of publicly available information regarding AAU privates' search processes indicates that a number of other institutions utilize confidential searches.

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<sup>1</sup> Three of the eight institutions listed above utilize closed searches unless the candidates agree to an open search (Boston University, Cornell, and Tulane).

## Recommended Improvements to the Dean Search Process and Next Steps

The Faculty Senate approved a Resolution on Transparency of Dean Searches in November, 2018 (see Appendix 3). Shortly thereafter, Provost Burish convened a faculty working group to discuss the resolution and advise on strategies for how best to respond to the Faculty Senate Resolution. This document conveys that response and is unanimously supported by the members of that committee.<sup>2</sup>

Several suggestions contained in the Resolution have already been addressed in this document:

- In order to increase awareness, articulate the major principles that undergird dean searches at the University;
- In order to increase awareness, better describe and publicize the dean search process, including the various checkpoints where faculty input is critical; increase awareness that the search committee convenes multiple open forums, which offer any and all faculty, staff and students in the College/School the opportunity to be heard and share their views with the committee to inform the search;
- Provide a rationale for confidentiality in dean searches, stressing its vital importance for attracting the strongest candidate pool;
- Provide evidence of peer institutions' regular use of confidential search practices.

In addition to what has already been addressed, the working group suggested two new practices, both of which will be employed in the University's next search for an academic dean:

- Ensure that the dean's position prospectus is shared with the college/school's faculty before the search commences;
- The search committee should provide high-level process updates to the college/school faculty as the search progresses. The following key milestones in the process will be communicated:
  - The Provost sends an initial announcement that the search for dean of a college/school is underway and a search committee has been formed;
  - The search committee provides notice of how they will solicit comments from faculty, staff, and students regarding the ideal characteristics and qualities of the new dean, which will also include an invitation to convey their comments personally and confidentially to any committee member;
  - The search committee makes an announcement that the position search prospectus has been developed and shares it with the faculty, and issues a reminder that nominations for specific candidates are welcome from any faculty, staff member, or student;

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<sup>2</sup> Members of the Faculty Working Group are Annie Coleman, David Go, Jimmy Gurule, Sarah Mustillo, Eric Sims, and Joe Urbany.

- After the candidate pool is set, the search committee provides a general statement about its size and diversity;
- The search committee should convey when it is about to begin interviews and note that no new information will be available until a new dean is named.

## Appendix 1

### **A Guiding Commitment: Notre Dame Principles of Diversity and Inclusion**

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion arises from our aspirations about the community we want to be, the educational environment we hope to provide our students, and the moral character they will develop during their time with us. It goes to the heart of our mission, to who we are and to what we want to be.

#### **Respect the dignity of every person.**

We affirm the transcendent dignity and worth of every human person, from conception to natural death, regardless of race, nationality or ethnic group, religious tradition, gender, socioeconomic class, immigration status, sexual orientation, or anything else.

#### **Build a Notre Dame community in which all can flourish.**

Human beings are inescapably social, and the flourishing of each individual is possible only in a social context in which we each have responsibilities to others and others have reciprocal responsibilities to us. Together, we strive to realize the common good — that which enables any sort of community and its members to flourish individually and collectively.

#### **Live in solidarity with all, particularly the most vulnerable.**

We are called to live in solidarity with all people, which arises from recognizing that the well-being of each person is a concern for us all. We are all, in one way or another, our sister's and brother's keeper. Solidarity demands that we strive to overcome fragmentation and separation to see the deeper unity we share with all people.

*Originally articulated by University of Notre Dame President [Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.](#) at the [President's Annual Address to the Faculty](#) on September 20, 2016.*

## Appendix 2

### Full Text Excerpts from Academic Articles

#### Article III/Section 5/Deans of Colleges

The Dean is appointed by the President. When such an appointment is to be made, the Provost so advises the College of the pending appointment through the College Council. The Council then elects five members from the tenured faculty of the College and one student from the student members of the College Council to constitute a committee to facilitate the search. The committee is chaired by the Provost, who may appoint to the committee up to two additional members from the regular faculty of the University in order to ensure that a broad range of views and perspectives is represented on the committee. The Provost may assign a Vice President and Associate Provost to assist the committee as a non-voting member. The committee receives and considers nominations, including those received from the faculty of the College. Before making any recommendation to the Provost, the committee shall consult with the faculty and students of the College. The Provost then reports the recommendations of the committee to the President, along with a personal recommendation. In addition, the President receives nominations from appropriate sources, both within and without the University.

Except in extraordinary circumstances, the appointment is subject to formal review every five years. For the five-year review, a committee is constituted in the same way as the committee that considers the Dean's initial appointment. The Provost may, in his or her discretion, serve on that committee. The Provost names the Chair of the Review Committee from the elected members and may assign a Vice President and Associate Provost to assist the committee as a non-voting member. The Provost reports the recommendations of the committee to the President, along with a personal recommendation. The Provost shall also share the recommendations with the Dean and, in the case of the retention of the Dean, the Provost shall inform the faculty of the decision.

When the inaugural dean of a new College is to be appointed, the Provost appoints a committee with five members drawn from the tenured faculty of the University. If any members of the faculty have already been appointed to the new College, those faculty should be represented, to the extent possible, on the committee. The committee is chaired by the Provost. The Provost may assign a Vice President and Associate Provost to assist the committee as a non-voting member. The committee receives and considers nominations, including those received from the faculty of the College, to the extent applicable. The Provost reports the recommendations of the committee to the President, along with a personal recommendation. In addition, the President receives nominations from appropriate sources, both within and without the University.

### **Article III/Section 6/Deans of Schools**

The Dean is appointed by the President. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the appointment is subject to formal review every five years. When such an appointment is to be made or a review conducted, the Provost consults formally with all regular faculty members of the School. A committee comprised of four tenured faculty of the School elected by the regular faculty of the School shall be established to facilitate either a search or a review. One student shall also be elected to serve on the search or Review Committees. When a Dean is to be appointed, the Provost chairs the committee. In the case of an appointment or a review, the Provost may appoint to the committee up to two additional members from the regular faculty of the University in order to ensure that a broad range of views and perspectives is represented on the committee. The Provost may assign a Vice President and Associate Provost to assist the committee as a non-voting member. Before making any recommendation to the Provost, the committee shall consult with the faculty and students of the School. In appointment and review cases, the Provost gives the President a full account of all consultations with the faculty. The Provost reports the recommendations of the committee to the President, along with a personal recommendation. The Provost shall also share the recommendation with the Dean and, in the case of retention of the Dean, the Provost shall inform the faculty of the decision. Schools may provide for additional procedures to the extent they do not conflict with the procedures in these articles.

When the inaugural Dean of a new School is to be appointed, the Provost appoints a committee with five members drawn from the tenured faculty of the University. If any members of the faculty have already been appointed to the new School, those faculty should be represented, to the extent possible, on the committee. The committee is chaired by the Provost. The Provost may assign a Vice President and Associate Provost to assist the committee as a non-voting member. The committee receives and considers nominations, including those received from the faculty of the College, to the extent applicable. The Provost reports the recommendations of the committee to the President, along with a personal recommendation. In addition, the President receives nominations from appropriate sources, both within and without the University.

Ordinarily, the Dean of a School is guided in setting academic policy by consultation with other senior administrators and the faculty of the School.

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Resolution on Transparency of Dean Searches Approved by Faculty Senate November 6, 2018**

Developed by Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Deans Searches  
Annie G. Coleman, Chair, October 31, 2018

Given concern among the faculty regarding lack of transparency in the process by which the university hires new deans the committee offers the following resolution:

To further foster a community of trust and cooperation among faculty and the administration, to increase transparency of and faculty investment in the dean search process, and to maximize faculty support for newly hired deans, the Faculty Senate proposes the following changes to the dean search process, applicable to all future searches (not those currently underway):

1. The search committee and consultants should communicate to the faculty of the appropriate college early in the process to
  - a. Solicit faculty input on characteristics desired in the new dean,
  - b. Share the job description and prospectus they have developed,
  - c. Identify and explain the steps of the search process, and
  - d. Report demographic statistics of the resulting candidate pool (race, gender, Catholic identity, current position, administrative experience).
2. When the committee has narrowed the pool to the finalists, the candidates should be asked to make an open presentation to the faculty of the college regarding where they stand on issues designated as important to the faculty and what their goals and priorities are for the college.
3. Afterwards, the search committee should solicit feedback from the faculty and take that into consideration during their final deliberations