Minutes, Ordinary Meeting of the Faculty

February 22, 2018

5:00 PM in Alumni Hall

1. Call to Order, 5:05 PM

[Faculty Secretary Finch tried to capture the gist of what was said. The recordings were quite poor due to the unique acoustics of Alumni Hall. The recording is available upon request].

2. Statement from Speaker of the Faculty, Elizabeth Jurisich

Speaker Jurisich (member of Presidential Search Committee) introduced herself, then introduced the Board of Trustees members in attendance, as well as Presidential Search Committee members.

Present were David Hay (Chair, Board of Trustees and member of Presidential Search Committee), Renee Buyck Romberger (Board of Trustees member and Chair, Presidential Search Committee), Cherry Daniel (Board of Trustees member and member of Presidential Search Committee), Ricci Welch (Board of Trustees member and member of Presidential Search Committee), Godfrey Gibbison (Dean of School of Professional Studies and member of Presidential Search Committee), Demetria Clemons (Board of Trustees member and member of Presidential Search Committee), Henrietta Goulding (Board of Trustees member), and Craig Thornton, (Board of Trustees member).

There were approximately 57 faculty, staff, and interested others in attendance.

Speaker Jurisich thanked everyone for attending the meeting on short notice. Speaker Jurisich clarified that the meeting was not a listening session, but a meeting called by the Speaker to discuss the search process.

Speaker Jurisich read the Resolution passed by unanimous vote in the 13 February 2018 Faculty Senate meeting.

A Resolution to the Board of Trustees from the Faculty Senate

Whereas, the function of a Presidential Search Committee is to advise the Board of Trustees on the selection of a president;

Whereas, the Board cannot be properly advised without the direct input of stakeholders throughout the institution;

Whereas, the Presidential Search Committee now contains only two members who are not also Board members;
Whereas, a strong applicant pool and a successful presidential transition require a transparent and inclusive search process; therefore be it

Resolved that the Faculty Senate of the College of Charleston calls upon the Board of Trustees to add to its Presidential Search Committee additional representatives of the faculty, and representatives of staff, student body, and alumni and Foundation boards.

Speaker Jurisich explained that Chair David Hay and Search Committee chair Renee Romberger expressed a desire to speak directly with the faculty about the search process and the forming of the search committee.

Speaker Jurisich gave some guidelines for speaking.

Speaker Jurisich invited David Hay to speak.

3. Statement from Chair of the College of Charleston Board of Trustees and member of Presidential Search Committee, David Hay

Chairman Hay thanked everyone for attending and spoke of both faculty and Board members present as being deeply committed to the College. Hay said the Board accepted with sadness President McConnell’s resignation, and listed some of his accomplishments. Hay said the selection of a president is perhaps the greatest responsibility for the Board of Trustees. The search represents an opportunity for the institution and he wants to make the most of it.

Hay gave a brief biography of Renee Romberger, whom he asked to chair the Presidential Search Committee. He introduced the other members of the search committee, including those who could not be present.

Hay said he and Chair Romberger studied best practices as they determined the structure of the search committee, and spoke with other university boards in the state to learn of the things that worked well and the things that did not work well. A common thread of the best searches was input, and by focusing on input, he expressed hope that the College of Charleston presidential search could serve as a rallying point for the campus community and an affirmation of our shared core values.

Hay said as they were planning the structure of the search committee, they considered several different options, with varying sizes. One possibility that struck both Hay and Romberger as attractive for the College was a two-tiered structure: a smaller presidential search committee made up of trustees and faculty members, augmented by a much larger group of campus members who would facilitate wide-ranging listening sessions in order to solicit input from our many stakeholders. Romberger and Hay saw the two-tiered structure as offering the best of both worlds. Romberger and Hay wanted the search committee to spend significant time up front defining the present condition of the university and determining the challenges. Taking in the themes and feedback from each campus listening session, the Presidential Search Committee will be available to take temperature readings of the campus that will greatly inform the leadership profile. Hay said that the listening sessions are vital to the process. They want to hear stakeholder
thoughts regarding desired characteristics, criteria, and qualifications for the next president. Those listening sessions will allow the Presidential Search Committee to hear more fully from faculty, staff, students, donors, community members, and voluntary leaders of alumni. He emphasized that feedback from these constituent groups is critical to the Presidential Search Committee in shaping a leadership profile.

Hay spoke of the resolution passed by Faculty Senate regarding the composition of the Presidential Search Committee, that there is not enough representation of faculty and other campus groups. Hay said, "I hear you," and said they considered a number of different options, and learned many lessons from their previous presidential search, and will apply those lessons moving forward. He said many of those lessons were reaffirmed in conversations with other boards around the state regarding their recent presidential searches. They learned that a tighter, smaller search committee provides the best chance for protecting the search process’s integrity and confidentiality, which will help attract the strongest candidates possible. Hay said they want to have the best pool of candidates possible. He said all stakeholders and the institution deserves that. Hay said they are committed to keeping the Presidential Search Committee structure as it is. He is optimistic of the shared path forward.

Hay introduced Renee Romberger,

4. Statement from College of Charleston Board of Trustees member and Chair of Presidential Search Committee, Renee Romberger.

Romberger said it was an honor to serve on the Board. Romberger said they wanted to learn from the 2013-14 search committee process and recognized that there are hard feelings left from the last process, and they want to use this process to build relationships with the faculty, students, and staff.

Romberger said they are intentionally not hiring a search firm until the listening sessions are complete, because it's very important that the Board receive the messages from the listening sessions, instead of receiving a summary from a search firm. At least two search committee members will attend the listening sessions.

Romberger said there will be around 18 listening sessions.

Romberger said whether search committees are 8 or 10 or 20, you don't include everyone. She said what they search committee does not want to do is to break confidentiality and in the last search, they lost some candidates. She believes confidentiality is paramount.

She again emphasized that listening sessions are for hearing different viewpoints of faculty, staff, students, donors, and alumni.

Romberger described the search timeline [timeline is here: http://trustees.cofc.edu/presidential-search/timeline/index.php]. Reports will be generated and shared publicly from the listening sessions, keeping individual names of people confidential.
Romberger said if it takes longer, they will not rush the process.

**Speaker Jurisich** invited comments and questions.

5. **Question and Answer**

**Simon Lewis** (English Department and director of the African Studies program and the Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World (CLAW) program) said he had no doubt of the good intentions of the way the search committee is framed. As a member of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), Lewis expressed AAUP recommended best practices for presidential search committees as including faculty representation at a much higher level, and of faculty representation selected by the faculty. AAUP guidelines also specify that members of the administration should not be included in the search committee.

Lewis said that if the present search committee claims to have learned from the previous search, then something must be done to show that we have learned from the last presidential search. Stacking the search committee almost entirely of Board members does not show that. Lewis said he is not impugning that the search committee is not intending on doing a good job, but if we want to show that the search is different from the previous presidential search, then we need to show it.

Lewis asserted that candidates from around the country will look at the limited composition of the committee, and that will reduce the number and quality of candidates who apply.

Lewis hopes the Board will reconsider the composition of the search committee and add at least two faculty elected representatives.

**Chair of the Presidential Search Committee Romberger** responded that the Board has the responsibility and duty to elect the next president of the College. She said they value the input of the faculty, and recognize there are different compositions of search committee. They have looked most recently at Clemson and Converse for presidential search models. In researching different search committee models, they feel that keeping the search committee small will insure confidentiality and remains the best choice.

**Board of Trustees Chair David Hay** said he was asked last week if they would consider adding another faculty member, and they determined that doing so would just highlight the fact that there was no representation from the other constituent groups. He said that the Board feels that having a smaller group will encourage people to apply, knowing that confidentiality and integrity of the search will be assured.

**Patricia Williams Lessane** (Avery Research Center and Library) asked if the Board was committed to a small search committee, have they considered changing the composition of the committee? She said it was possible to have a search committee with less Board members, but more constituents, and still keep it small.
Williams Lessane said that while the Board and the search committee emphasizes that they are listening to constituent concerns, she has not seen that the resolution passed by Faculty Senate on 13 February 2018 has made a difference. Lessane Williams asked how much confidence we should have that the listening sessions will be effective in light of disregard shown to the resolution.

Romberger said that the committee knows they will have to earn the trust of everyone, and hopes by the end of the process they can accomplish this.

Adam Domby (History) said he was not at the College of Charleston for the previous presidential search, but he heard about it. He said when he applied for a job at the College, friends in the academic community referred to the College as "the one that doesn't listen to its search committee." Domby said he did not think confidentiality was the issue in the larger academic community, but the vote of no confidence in the Board of Trustees passed by Faculty Senate in 2013-14 was what people remembered and noted.


Domby said emphasizing the issue of confidentiality misses the larger point that qualified candidates may not bother to apply. Domby acknowledged, as emphasized by the Board of Trustees, that they have the authority and legislative mandate to select the next president. He said, "You have the authority and the legislative mandate. That makes it even more important to include more representation." Domby said to the outside world, the composition of the search committee is problematic, and will result in attracting less top-tier applicants.

Henrietta Golding (Board of Trustees) said she is not a member of the search committee, but said the search committee is going to continue to look until they get the best candidate.

David Hay pointed out that despite his reservations, Domby accepted a position at the College of Charleston.

Domby answered that he was in the unique position of being a Civil War historian, so accepting the position worked for him regardless.

Vince Benigni (Communication) advocated for representation from groups who feel like they are not part of the solution or part of the leadership. He strongly believes in including representation of staff members, many of whom work closely with faculty and with the community.

Christine Finnan (Sociology/Anthropology and Teacher Education) appreciated the idea of keeping the search committee small and the opportunities for listening sessions, but expressed worry about the listening part. Finnan teaches language and culture, and said when you listen it is through your own perspective. She said there is one person on the search committee who has the perspective of the faculty. Therefore, there is one person who is able to listen through the ears of faculty. Finnan said that the others on the search committee will hear the listening sessions
through the ears of their perspective, and that is not the same as the faculty perspective. Finnan said she is happy to go to the listening sessions, but she worries about who is listening.

**Romberger** said that there will be scribes at each listening session. Once the report is generated, it will circulate to the leaders who are faculty members to see if it is written in a way that makes sense. Romberger said to Finnan's point, maybe listening session notes need to be translated to "Trustee-ese" or something so that they make sure they are hearing what the different groups are saying.

Romberger said they can think through that process, to make sure what is intended is what is heard.

**William Bares** (Computer Science) is the Chair of the ad hoc Committee on Institutional Identity and Vision. Bares described the ad hoc senate committee formed before the president’s announcement to organize campus wide discussions of faculty and staff on the College’s identity and the shared vision for the future. Bares said in the responses to the online survey and the six discussions (involving close to 500 employees of the College), one thing that has been made clear is that faculty and staff emphatically desire a higher degree of shared governance and a greater level of campus-wide dialogue. Bares said the ad hoc committee believes that this evidence strongly supports the position of the senate in requesting a recomposition of the presidential search committee.

**Romberger** said that in addition to the listening sessions, the Presidential Search Committee has requested a report from the ad hoc Committee on Institutional Identity and Vision.

**Claire Curtis** (Political Science) asked about the decision made regarding the size of the search committee. She appreciated hearing how the committee described the decision as deliberative, and based on research and best practices. Curtis said it worried her that Romberger and Hay talked about reaching out to other Boards only in South Carolina. She said it makes the search somewhat parochial. Curtis said faculty and the Board likes to think of the College as something more than just a school in South Carolina; we are a world-class institution, but part of what that requires is a world class president. Curtis said it might be useful to contact Boards from outside the state of South Carolina. Curtis suggested contacting peer institutions, or aspirational peers [http://irp.cofc.edu/Peer-Institutions/index.php] who have conducted successful presidential searches. Curtis mentioned William and Mary, who just hired an excellent president.

**Romberger** said that was an interesting example, and said they looked at many searches and conducted a lot of research. She said there is no right or wrong answer and said she thinks a presidential search is situational. Romberger said they are trying to be responsive to the previous search for president, and to learn from that process, and she thinks they will learn from the listening sessions. The listening sessions will allow them to be inclusive, but still keep the search committee small to retain the integrity and confidentiality.

**Larry Krasnoff** (Philosophy) said he appreciates that the Board said they looked beyond institutions in South Carolina, but they first said they looked at other institutions only in South Carolina. He said what that means is that the Board considers the College to be more like other
institutions in South Carolina, and if we are only comparing ourselves to schools like Clemson and Converse, that is troubling.

Krasnoff suggested the Presidential Search Committee should be looking more closely at what the College is like. Krasnoff said that what South Carolina institutions have in common is political connections within the same state, and so the outcome of that is that the search committee is interested in politically connected candidates from South Carolina. He said confidentiality or not, that type of selection would produce backlash from the faculty.

Krasnoff said he was concerned that the listening sessions are being offered as substitutes for the kind of search committee that the institution is asking for. He said the resolution does not specify increasing faculty, but makes sure to include all constituents. Krasnoff said any search committee would still include listening sessions and public forums to discuss what constituents want in a president.

Krasnoff said that a closer match to the two-tiered process they describe would be to have the facilitator for each listening session meet as a group with the search committee. He said then the search committee would not be hearing general feedback, but would have to explain their decision to each constituency group in smaller groups. He described this as the advantage the model described in the resolution upholds. He said dialog with each constituent group is what is needed to properly advise the search committee. If the search committee is composed of Board of Trustees members, then it is really advising itself.

Krasnoff said the listening sessions will only be effective if they involve an actual conversation with the stakeholders in one to one fashion, and not just reading reports or general listening.

**Bob Mignone** (Mathematics) said as former Speaker of the Faculty, he totally supports shared governance, but wanted to offer a different viewpoint from his colleagues. He said that everyone on the search committee essentially has veto power. He said anytime someone is adamantly against someone in the pool, that person is no longer considered. He said good candidates could be struck due to one objection. He is open to a smaller committee if it means having one representative from the faculty chosen by the faculty or the Speaker of the Faculty.

**Iana Anguelova** (Mathematics) said the problem with a search committee composed mostly of Board members has drawbacks, as it is unlikely to reject their own suggestions.

**Jason Coy** (History) said the Board referenced lessons about the last presidential search process, but has heard only one lesson mentioned: breach of confidentiality. He asked what other lessons were learned?

**Romberger** said she was not on the last presidential search committee, and was fairly new to the Board of Trustees. She saw damaged relationships, donors who pulled their money, and people who cared deeply about the College hurt by the process. Romberger said she cares about the school and about faculty. She said we care about the same things, and need to talk with each other, and listen, to make sure we are doing the right thing for the school.
Jannette Finch (Library) asked about confidentiality and said she had already seen a list of possible candidates interested in the presidency listed in the Post and Courier.

Ricci Welch (Board member and Presidential Search Committee) said she knew there were candidates who withdrew from the presidential process in 2013-14 because they felt their information would be leaked. She said that no names of potential candidates have been discussed in the current search.

Romberger said that one of the rules for the present search committee is that no one member can meet individually with potential candidates. She also invited additional suggestions for rules of conduct for the search committee.

Todd Grantham (Philosophy) said that we were all aware of the breakdown in the relationship between the faculty and the Board after the last presidential search and said that this session does not make him feel any better. He said the session was billed as an opportunity to talk and it feels he is not being listened to. Grantham said that it does not feel like the Board and Presidential Search Committee has heard anything we have said. He said he feels like the rift is growing and if the listening sessions are like the one tonight, he is not going to encourage anyone to go.

Speaker Jurisich said that everyone should make their own decisions regarding the listening sessions, but encouraged participation.

Romberger said they will not be talking during the listening sessions and for tonight's session, members of the search committee and Board were asked by the Speaker to answer questions.

Stephen Short (Psychology) asked if a Board member or members could attend the listening sessions.

Speaker Jurisich made concluding remarks and appreciated the attendance and the shared conversation.

6. The meeting adjourned at 6:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jannette Finch
Faculty Secretary