

August 19, 2022

To the Washburn Community:

The Board of Regents met yesterday and I wanted to tell you about the actions we took.

Interim President

We reviewed and approved the agreement naming Marshall Meek as interim president. As you may remember, at our last meeting, the board authorized me to negotiate with a candidate. At yesterday's meeting, we reviewed the agreement in an executive session and then voted unanimously to approve it when we resumed the public meeting.

We are grateful to have such a capable leader willing to step into this key role as we continue the search for the next president. We have full faith that Marshall and the entire university team will keep the campus moving forward until the permanent president arrives. Marshall will begin his interim president duties when Dr. Farley transitions to his new role as president emeritus on October 1.

Search Committee

We also named three additional members to the search committee. After we reviewed the membership as a board, we realized that the addition of these individuals would help the committee better represent all of the constituencies on campus. The new members are:

- Dr. Bobbe Mansfield, associate dean for the School of Nursing
- Angela Valdivia, career services specialist in the Career Services Office
- Allison Sadler, student in the School of Law

This brings the total membership of the committee to 29. While this is a large group, it is important to the Board to be inclusive and have members that represent all aspects of the campus, as well as the Topeka community. All of the members understand the very important role they play and have generously agreed to dedicate the time needed to fulfill their duties faithfully and efficiently.

WittKieffer Presentation

Finally, we welcomed two of the lead representatives from WittKieffer – the search firm hired to help us navigate this process. Zach Smith, one of the managing partners, and Sandra Chu, a senior associate, explained the search process and the timeline. They plan to begin advertising and recruiting candidates the week after Labor Day. They expect their firm to reach out to 2,000 to 3,000 individuals in their database while also advertising the position in appropriate venues. They expect up to sixty formal applications but emphasized their focus is on delivering a high-quality pool of applicants and not any specific number of candidates. Finalist interviews will be early December with the search wrapped up before winter holidays. The start date will depend on when the finalist is able to appropriately transition from his or her current position.

WittKieffer facilitated a listening session with the board for the regents to give input about the key qualities and areas of focus expected of the new president. Each board member made comments and agreed that these are priorities for the next president:

- Focus on enrollment and any initiatives needed to grow the student body
- Make innovation in both course offerings and delivery a priority
- Maintain open lines of communication with everyone at Washburn – particularly faculty
- Understand and embrace the culture of Washburn University and Washburn Tech

- Recognize and strengthen the relationship between Washburn and the City of Topeka

Campus input

There is an upcoming open forum listening session on August 23 at 4 p.m. via Zoom. All members of the Washburn community are invited to attend and express their views about the values and priorities for the new president. This is designed to be a very open and frank discussion and we hope everyone will take this opportunity to share their thoughts.

If you are not able to attend or thoughts arise later, please send an email to: washburnpresident@wittkiewfer.com This goes directly to WittKieffer and they will use this input in developing the presidential profile.

Our next regularly scheduled board meeting is September 15. We don't anticipate any other board meetings prior to that date.

Go Ichabods!

Shelly Buhler, Chair
Washburn University Board of Regents