

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, BAKERSFIELD
ACADEMIC SENATE

OPEN AND TRANSPARENT CSU PRESIDENTIAL SEARCHES
RES 151601

EC

Resolved: That the California State University, Bakersfield Academic Senate calls for open and transparent search processes for the four CSU presidential searches in 2015-16, in which finalists' names are publicly announced and official campus visits for them are scheduled; and be it further

Resolved: That this resolution be distributed to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, the Chairs of the 2015-16 Trustees Committees for the Selection of the President (TCSPs), the Academic Senate CSU and campus senate chairs.

Rationale

In 2015-16, the California State University will conduct searches for new presidents at four campuses, Sonoma State University, San Jose State University, CSU Channel Islands and CSU Chico. CSU presidential searches are governed by the Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents. The Trustees Committee for the Selection of the President (TCSP) recommends final candidates to the Board. The campus Advisory Committee to the Trustees Committee for the Selection of the President (ACTCSP) participates in the search process, including interviews and deliberations that lead to the selection of a final candidate(s). On the one hand, the policy expresses a welcome "deep commitment" to consultation with campus and community representatives. On the other hand, rather than mandating an open search process, the policy provides that the Chancellor and the Chair of the TCSP together decide whether to schedule campus visits for presidential finalists.

The California State University, Bakersfield Academic Senate strongly urges that campus TCSPs conduct open and transparent search processes. Forgoing announcing finalists' names publicly and scheduling official campus visits for them would mean less transparent search processes and less confidence in the outcomes on the part of the university community and the public. The thoughts of CSU Sacramento's new president are instructive in this regard. In his Fall 2015 Address, President Robert S. Nelsen frankly expressed his dislike for the search process for new presidents. He spoke to the absence of an on-campus interview and who actually selects the president. In his words, "I hate that I didn't get the opportunity to meet all of you during the search and that I am only meeting you now. And I don't like it that you are only meeting me now and that the huge majority of you had no say in whom [sic] your next president would be."

(http://csus.edu/sacstatenews/Articles/2015/08/documents/FallAddress2015_AsPrepared.pdf)

Meaningful consultation means open campus visits where all members of the university community have the opportunity to meet finalists and ask them questions in a public forum. Such visits give the university and public insight into finalists' knowledge of the campus and their ability to unify and lead students, faculty, staff and administrators. They also give finalists insight into the university community they aspire to lead.

Approved by the Academic Senate on October 8, 2015
Sent to the President as information on October 9, 2015