WHEREAS it becomes necessary from time to time to select a new president, chancellor, or other higher administrative officer of the University of Illinois or of its various campuses; and

WHEREAS the selection of such officers is a matter of great significance in the life of the University, potentially affecting all of its activities; and

WHEREAS the faculty of the University has a long history of involvement and experience in the selection of its members and of administrative officers of the University at all levels; and

WHEREAS the knowledge, understanding and experience of the faculty of the University in all aspects of its mission are as crucial in the selection of its administrative leadership as they are in the selection of its membership; and

WHEREAS such involvement is deemed by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) to be a fundamental principle of sound university governance; and

WHEREAS the interests and perspectives of other significant elements of the University community affected by the choice of higher administrative officers also are deserving of being represented in their selection; and

WHEREAS these considerations have been acknowledged and taken into account on previous occasions in the constitution of committees formed to assist in the selection of such officers; and

WHEREAS these considerations have further been articulated in the 1991 “Report of Select Committee to Review Search Procedures for Major Administrative Positions,” incorporating a similar report submitted to a Special Meeting of the Board in 1978, accepted by the Board in March 1992, and unanimously approved by the Board at its July 2000 meeting; and

WHEREAS it is essential to the success of any such higher administrative officers that the process leading to their selection have legitimacy in the eyes of the faculty and campus communities affected; and
WHEREAS for all of the above reasons this legitimacy will depend upon the significant involvement of representatives of the faculty and other appropriate elements of the campus communities;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that due regard be given to the above considerations whenever University and campus higher administrative officers are to be selected, and that, in any such search, committees similar to those constituted on previous occasions to assist in presidential and chancellorial searches be formed in consultation with the appropriate University or campus bodies, and be closely involved in the search and selection process.
Report of Select Committee to Review Search Procedures for Major Administrative Positions

Introduction

In March 1991, at the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, President Ikenberry recommended to the Board that a special committee be formed to review the search procedures in place for the positions of President and Chancellor[1]. This action came at the conclusion of a search for a Chancellor for the Chicago campus, that had raised questions about communication and procedures, criteria, qualifications, and external influence. The President indicated at the meeting in March 1991, that he thought this "select committee" should be made up of a few Trustees, to be recommended by the President of the Board, some faculty members and some administrators. He stated that he would seek nominations for faculty membership from the University Senates Conference and that he would discuss recommendations for administrative representation with the two Chancellors.

At the Board's meeting in September 1991, President Ikenberry presented a list of individuals recommended for service on this committee (Appendix I). The Board approved this list and directed the President to proceed. On September 13, 1991, the President appointed individuals and issued the charge to this committee--The Select Committee to Review Search Procedures for Major Administrative Positions (Appendix II).

The first meeting of the Committee was held on October 2, 1991, at the Chicago campus. Michele M. Thompson, Secretary, Board of Trustees, and chair of the Committee convened the Committee and reviewed the charge to the Committee, noting that it was opportune to review the procedures for searching for major administrators, since the current procedures had been in place for more than ten years. At this meeting the Committee reviewed positive aspects of the current search procedures, i.e., each search begins with a review of what the campus or institution needs in a leader at that time; each search committee is widely representative of constituencies within the University; the process of canvassing for prospects is thorough and emphasizes identification of qualified women and minority applicants; and the search committee performs a service to the President and to the Trustees by reviewing hundreds of files of applicants and nominees as well as identifying qualified candidates. Following this discussion, the Committee also reviewed negative aspects of the current process, i.e., a search is always launched, even when an internal nominee might seem the most logical choice; the search process requires a time frame of eight to twelve months; sometimes there is too little communication with the Board during the search process; and there may be too few viable candidates for the final interviewing stages.

These topics formed the basis for further discussion by Committee members at the next meeting. At the second meeting which was held on November 6, 1991, in Urbana, the Committee described the efforts of various groups, such as the Urbana Senate, to ensure broad involvement of all relevant constituencies in the search process. The efforts of some past search committees were described and the Committee set about the task of answering several major questions regarding the University's procedures and criteria for selecting candidates for major administrative positions. Particular reference was made to the procedures followed in the search for a President in 1978. As these were reviewed, most aspects were seen as commendable, (Appendix III).

Consideration of Significant Issues in Conducting Searches for Major Administrative Positions

The following issues were raised by the Committee as matters for examination and clarification. A summary of the conclusions reached by the Committee follows each statement or question.

Since it was the search for a Chancellor that provided the impetus for the Committee's work on this topic, references concerning a search committee's procedures are written with a Chancellor search in
mind. The reader should know that in the search for a President, the search committee chair reports to the Board.

1. What guidelines should be added, if any, to extant procedures for major administrative searches?

Overall, the Committee concluded that a danger exists in detailing multiple specific guidelines for these searches, and that adequate precedents exist. Because the needs of the institution may vary somewhat from search to search, the Committee favored reserving formal guidelines to those basic principles of generic applicability to major positions, e.g., wide solicitation for nominees and applicants, advertisement of position in key publications, and the need for confidentiality. This flexible approach enables a search committee to adapt responsibly to current institutional needs without the hindrance of overly restrictive guidelines that may not be relevant to a particular search and enables the President and the Board to give specific guidance to search committees.

At the same time, the Committee believes that the guidelines should be strengthened to call for frequent and regular communication among the President, the search committee and the Board, so as to underscore the necessity of this component of the process. The Committee members agreed that the chair of the search committee or his or her designee must be available to meet with the Board at regular meetings. The position description, the evaluation criteria and the process in general should be reviewed and discussed with the Board. In this manner, questions from the Board and of the Board could be raised and answered and misunderstandings and mis-perceptions could be dispelled. It is essential that any problems be dealt with in their incipient stages. Further, any new guidelines germane to the particular search should be agreed upon by all parties. While the Committee agreed that communications should be characterized by openness with professional candor, it also stressed that the confidentiality required for a successful search must not be sacrificed.

2. What process is needed to assure more consultation at the initiation of a search, particularly with the Board, to review major needs of the institution?

The Committee advised that before a search is launched, and after consultation with appropriate faculty bodies, the President and the Board will review the major needs for the individual campus or for the institution as a whole. After the search committee is named, the President will share with them the views held by the President and the Board about the type of leader needed. The search committee will then prepare a position description that identifies the major needs of the campus or institution and defines the requisite qualifications for realizing those needs.

Following this, the search committee, the President and the Board will meet to review these documents and the search process as a whole.

The recommendation for increased communication between the search committee and the Board makes the role of the committee chair critical to the success of the consultative process, linking the internal institutional community with the Board. The chair serves as the conduit for the dialogue between the committee, the President and the Board.

3. How should the instruction to the search committee to develop a list of candidates of sufficient number be presented and ensured?

On this issue, the Committee recommended that the charge to the search committee stipulate identification of a defined number of final acceptable candidates for the position, preferably no less than four or more than six such names.

If less than four or more than six names are to be recommended to the President or to the Board, the committee will give reasons for the number being recommended.
4. Is it useful for Board members to serve on a search committee for the position of Chancellor or President?

The Committee suggested that as elected officials and as the final decision makers, the Board members should maintain a posture of objectivity sufficient to give each Trustee a full voice in the conduct of the search and the final decision. While the Board functions as an oversight body and as a reviewing power, the search committee performs the detailed tasks of identifying prospects and evaluating responses in the initial stage of collecting applications to the last stage of recommending a list of qualified candidates. After the list is recommended, the President of the University and all members of the Board must become actively involved, leading to a final decision. Through these dynamics the best of each group arises, each bringing a special perspective to the evaluative process.

Of course, the quality of review is conditioned upon the quality of information that is available to the reviewing body. Therefore, the Committee reiterated that full, candid and regular communication is crucial to the Board's effective and meaningful review.

5. Should search firms be used in searches for Chancellors and Presidents?

The Committee acknowledged that it may be useful to employ a search firm as an aid to the process of searching for candidates for the offices of Chancellor and President. In the case of a search for a Chancellor, the President, in consultation with the Board, the search committee, and other appropriate parties, is vested with the authority to decide on the use of such a firm and the scope of its involvement.

6. How long should a search for a Chancellor or President at the University of Illinois usually last?

The Committee agreed that it would be rare for a search at these levels to be completed in less than six months. However, such a search should be structured with the assumption that it will not exceed one year in length. In the event that it extends beyond one year from the date of the last published advertisement seeking applicants, the readvertisement of the position should be considered.

Although timeliness is important in filling a key position of leadership in the University, the Committee concurred that thoroughness should always outweigh brevity. If a search requires more time and effort to identify candidates, the time should be accorded and the effort expended.

7. Should representatives of external constituencies be involved in the search process?

The Committee noted that occasionally a representative of an external professional body had served on search committees for deans of professional schools or colleges. In each of these cases the professional qualifications of those persons were of value in identifying the best candidates. Where a search for Chancellor is concerned a choice among possible professional groups would be both awkward and difficult, given the many disciplines represented on each of the University's campuses.

The Committee also noted that it has been customary for external representatives to serve on presidential search committees and that these persons have been chosen by virtue of their positions in the University of Illinois Foundation or the Alumni Association. The Committee believes that practice is appropriate and beneficial, but that the participation of external persons with no formal connection to the University in either a Presidential or a Chancellorial search should be discouraged. The public interest is adequately represented by the elected members of the Board of Trustees.

8. Is a formal, nation-wide, search for a Chancellor or a President always necessary?
The Committee considered this question because it may well be that the individual with the best qualifications, and the most obvious candidate, may be an internal prospect. Several committee members believed that search procedures are competitive by design and are intended to identify the best person for the position. Sometimes this process becomes one of confirming the merit of an internal candidate by a legitimate body. Members also noted that this process not only serves to identify the best qualified candidates but also to assure legitimacy and “consent of the governed.” At the same time the thorough search process helps the institution define what it is and what its needs are at a particular time.

As McLaughlin and Reisman observe: “The best searches serve to legitimate the final choice of the search committee and trustees so that a new president can have a smooth entree to the presidency.”[2] The Committee agreed, noting that this statement can be extended to the role of Chancellor.

Recommendations

In conclusion, the Committee recommends that every search committee for a Chancellor or President ensure that the following requirements are met in the search process:

- An institutional review of the major needs of the campus or the University is conducted;
- Equal opportunity and affirmative action guidelines are carefully followed and minority and women candidates are sought out;
- An initial meeting with the search committee and the Board, (and the President of the University in the case of a Chancellor search), is held for the purpose of reviewing guidelines and special instructions for the search, as well as discussing the position description, the evaluation criteria for applicants, and the process in general.
- Strict confidentiality is observed by all associated with the search at all stages of the search.
- The Board receives reports from the chair of the search committee or a designee at each regularly scheduled meeting of the Board during the period of the search.
- Procedures are instituted that provide for the search committee to present from four to six candidates as finalists, or sufficient reasons to deviate from this.
- At any stage in the search process, the use of a search firm could be considered as a means for aiding the process.
- In the absence of extraordinary circumstances, the work of the search committee should be concluded within one year of its receipt of a charge from the President or the Board.
- The inclusion in the search process of individuals with no formal connection with the University is discouraged.

The Committee respectfully submits this report in fulfillment of the charge given it by President Ikenberry, September 13, 1991.
