

WESTERN NEBRASKA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Western Community College Area Board of Governors' Policy

TITLE: Selection and Hiring of the College President

DIVISION: Board of Governors

REFERENCE: Nebraska Statutes §85-9,169 and §85-1511
BP-720 Equal Opportunity Employer/Non-Discrimination
Nebraska Revised Statutes §§84-1408 through 84-1414

NUMBER: BP-119

APPROVAL/DATE: F. Lynne Klemke, President, WCCA Board of Governors
Date: October 5, 2022

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a process for the Western Community College Area Board of Governors to select and identify a President for Western Nebraska Community College.

Scope

This policy shall apply whenever there is a presidential vacancy at WNCC to facilitate the selection of a successful, capable, and effective chief executive officer.

Responsibility for the Appointment of the President

By Nebraska State Statute, the Board of Governors is vested with the authority to appoint the President of the College, and the selection of the President is one of the most important functions of the Board of Governors. The Board is deeply committed to and generally will employ a selection process that is inclusive of campus and community participation and input, but the ultimate decision and responsibility for the selection of a President rests with the Board. To this end, the Board retains the authority to make a direct appointment of its choice if warranted, as well as appoint an interim president if a search process fails to produce an acceptable candidate for the position or during the timeframe before, during, or after the search process and until a new president is on site and active in the position.

Criteria for the Selection of the President

The President of Western Nebraska Community College serves as the chief executive officer of the College, governing the institution through the authority delegated by the Board of Governors. The President is expected to provide visionary leadership for the College as well as direct its

day-to-day operations, including administering the College's educational and community service missions to best serve the WCCA service area; managing and planning the organization, its programs, and physical environment to ensure its effective and efficient operation; and ensuring the financial stability and sustainability of the institution.

When searching for a person to fulfill this responsibility, candidates will be considered with demonstrated success in the following:

- Defining a vision for an organization and leading the development and implementation of an effective strategic plan, including long-term goals with measurable outcomes and short-term responses to emergent issues.
- Selecting quality senior-level staff and possessing a management style that empowers those staff to manage their respective areas without fear of retribution.
- Providing a vision for the comprehensive academic mission of a community college, including degree, diploma, certificate, and skills training programs designed for academic transfer, career and technical education, workforce development, dual-credit and developmental education, and lifelong learning.
- Commitment to the highest quality educational and support programs for students of all ages, backgrounds, and needs.
- Ability to effectively interact with outside constituents and build relationships supporting the mission of the organization.
- Managing the financial and budgeting operations of a complex organization. Knowledge of the different budget models in higher education and their strengths and weaknesses. Experience working with all types of funding sources – public and private – and understanding the relationship between FTE production and the budget.
- Serving as a guardian of the public trust, ensuring legal and ethical compliance and adherence to accreditation and other regulatory standards.
- Knowledge of current and emerging topics in higher education, particularly those relevant to a community college, including, but not limited to, funding models, enrollment trends, student and employee expectations, instructional delivery technologies and methodologies, trends in marketing and communication, and advances and issues in information technology.
- Ability to provide strong executive leadership to ensure decisions are made in a timely and fair manner coupled with a commitment to shared governance and collaboration with faculty and staff. Promotion of an institutional environment that respects the personal integrity and professionalism of all employees and fosters mutual support and open communication.
- Strong, effective, and clear communication skills that focus on the process of listening and responding.
- Providing a climate that welcomes, celebrates, and promotes respect for all forms of diversity.

- Working with a governing board in an open and transparent manner.

It is strongly preferred that the selected candidate for the position possess a doctorate or other terminal degree. If not, candidates should have a demonstrated record of successful executive leadership, credentials, and/or expertise sufficient to warrant the respect and complete confidence of all College stakeholders.

Process for Filling a Presidential Vacancy

Preliminary Steps

The need to fill a presidential vacancy will be announced at a regular meeting of the Board of Governors. As soon as practical after it is known that a presidential vacancy will occur, the Board of Governors will convene to determine if a direct appointment will be made or if a search will be conducted.

CONDUCTING AN OPEN SEARCH

Should the Board decide to conduct an open search, the Board will first determine a timeline for filling the position, the need for an interim appointment, and a sufficient budget to conduct a thorough search. The selection process may be conducted internally or with the assistance of a search firm. A search firm may be retained to facilitate a comprehensive search or assist with specific parts of the search process, including but not limited to the development of the presidential profile, recruitment and review of applicants, coordination of the interview process, or to conduct reference checks. The decision to retain a search firm and the process by which one is selected requires authorization by the Board.

Announcing the Vacancy

The vacancy will be advertised nationally and in such a way as to generate a diverse pool of qualified candidates. The release of the announcement will be made to allow sufficient time for advertisement, screening of applications, interviews, and transition of the new president.

The Board may actively participate in the recruiting process by soliciting candidates for the position.

Should anyone from within the College wish to apply for the presidency, they must submit a formal application for the position prior to the closing date for the receipt of applications. The application of an internal candidate will be treated with the same level of confidentiality as external applicants.

Presidential Profile

The Board will oversee the development of a presidential profile that will include an overview of Western Nebraska Community College, including its mission, priorities, strengths, opportunities, and challenges; the responsibilities of the president; and the required and preferred qualifications for the position. A draft copy of the presidential profile will be made available to College stakeholders for feedback before finalization.

Search Advisory Committee

At the beginning of the search process, the Chair of the Board of Governors will appoint a Search Advisory Committee to assist the Board with the search process. The Search Advisory Committee, in accordance with generally accepted presidential search processes, should be diverse in its representation of college stakeholders. The Search Advisory Committee will be responsible for:

- evaluating applicants against the identified qualifications for the position,
- identifying and interviewing semi-finalists, and
- recommending finalists to the Board of Governors.

The Search Advisory Committee, in accordance with generally accepted presidential search processes, should be diverse in its representation of college stakeholders. The committee will include a representative or representatives of the Board of Governors, senior-level college administration, faculty, staff, student body, the Foundation Board, and the Panhandle community.

When appointing members of the community, the Board will consider a number of factors when making appointments to the committee, including, but not limited to, knowledge of the College and its operations, knowledge of higher education and the issues impacting the industry, business acumen, and connections within the community.

The composition of the Search Advisory Committee will be reviewed with each presidential search to ensure it meets the needs of the College at that time. Appendix A provides guidance for committee structure.

The chair or vice chair of the Board of Governors will serve as chair of the Search Advisory Committee.

The following individuals will serve as ex-officio members of the Search Advisory Board and to the Board for the duration of the search process. The Board may choose to seek additional assistance from others, inside or outside of the College, as necessary.

- Legal counsel to ensure compliance with all Board policies and state statutes affecting the search process and that no candidate is discriminated against or given preference in accordance with the College's non-discrimination policy.
- The Secretary to the Board or other appropriate executive support staff to provide support for the search and selection process.
- A representative of Human Resources to advise on best practices, contract, and benefits.

Application Review

The Search Advisory Committee will review all applications received for the position against the criteria identified in the presidential profile. The committee will identify and utilize whatever tool to best assist with the evaluative process.

The Search Advisory Committee will identify a pool of semifinalists for interviews with the committee and will be responsible for developing a series of interview questions appropriate for identifying the strengths and challenges of each semifinalist. These interviews may be conducted in person or remote, but they will remain confidential. Efforts to reduce travel and related expenses for this phase of the process should be considered.

Recommended Finalists for Consideration

Following the interviews of the semifinalists, the Search Advisory Committee will forward to the Board of Governors an unranked list of at least three individuals to be considered as finalists for the position. The list may include alternate names.

The Board will review the list and determine appropriate next steps including, but not limited to:

- Scheduling on campus interview with the candidates forwarded by the Search Advisory Committee.
- Select additional candidate/s for further consideration from the list of semifinalists interviewed by the committee.
- Request the Search Advisory Committee interview additional candidates not in the original pool.

Should the Search Advisory Committee choose not to forward any recommendations to the Board or if the Board determines that none of the candidates forwarded for consideration possess the qualifications necessary for the position, the Board can make the determination to close the search and re-open at a later date.

Interviews and Selection

The Board will publicly announce finalists invited to participate in on campus interviews. In addition to meeting with the Board of Governors, meetings will be scheduled for the finalists to meet with key stakeholders, and open forums will be scheduled so that all College constituencies have the opportunity to participate in the interview process. Participants in the stakeholder meetings and the open forums will be given the opportunity to provide feedback to the Board.

Comprehensive background and reference checks will be completed on each viable candidate. The Board may choose to conduct site visits of the candidates' prior campuses, and the Board will determine the composition of the visiting team, which will include one or more members of the Search Advisory Committee.

The Board will consider all evidence available in their deliberations of the final candidates. The candidate of choice must be approved by eight (8) members of the elected Board of Governors.

Should the Board determine that none of the candidates interviewed possess the qualifications necessary for the position, the Board can make the determination to close the search and re-open at a later date.

Confidentiality and Professionalism

To ensure the search process respects the professional needs of the applicants and is conducted with integrity, strict confidentiality must be maintained throughout the process by all members of Board of Governors, the Search Advisory Committee, and any staff assisting with the search process at any point in time. This includes not revealing any information concerning the identity of candidates, the contents of the Board's or committee's deliberations, or any other aspect of the process. Only the chair of the Board of Governors will act as spokesperson during and subsequent to the search process.

If there is a violation of confidentiality or if the behavior of a committee member is determined to have been unethical, unprofessional, disruptive to the conduct of business, or is determined to have ignored or failed to follow the procedures established for the process, the Chair of the Board of Governors may dismiss and replace any member of the Search Advisory Committee.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this policy, the Board will comply with the provisions of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act contained in Nebraska Revised Statutes §§ 84-1408 through 84-1414.

Revising this Policy

This Board Policy supersedes any prior WNCC policy, procedure, guideline, or handbook on this subject matter.

If statutory provisions, regulatory guidance, or court interpretations change or conflict with this Board Policy, the Board retains the right to revise accordingly and for the changes to take effect immediately.

Adoption Date and Board of Governors' Minutes Item Number: 2005

Revision Date and Board of Governors' Minutes Item Number:

Prior Policy Number:

845.0100.05 Selecting and Hiring the College President

Schedule for Review:

Divisions/Department Responsible for Review and Update: President's Office

Sponsoring Division/Department: Board of Governors

Repeal Date and Board of Governors' Item Number:

Cross Reference:

Procedure(s) for Policy: n/a

Related Policies/References:

APPENDIX A

Board of Governors' Guidance

Composition of Presidential Search Advisory Committee

At the time of each presidential search, the Board of Governors should assess the size and composition of the Search Advisory Committee to best meet the current needs of the College. The Board recommends consideration of the following when constructing the Search Advisory Committee.

Option 1

The Search Advisory Committee is composed of 12 individuals representing major stakeholders of the College.

- **Board of Governors** – Four (4) members of the Board of Governors, one of whom will be the chair or vice chair who will serve as chair of the committee.
- **Senior-Level Administrators** – One (1) senior-level administrator – executive vice president, vice president, associate/assistant vice president, dean, or associate/assistant dean – to be recommended by the President's Executive Planning Team.
- **Faculty** – Two (2) continuing faculty members to be recommended by the faculty.
- **Staff** – Two (2) staff representatives to be recommended by the staff.
- **Students** – One (1) student representative to be recommended by Cougar Council.
- **Foundation Board** – One (1) representative to be recommended by the Foundation Board.
- **Community Representatives** – One (1) representative from the Panhandle to be identified by the Board of Governors. The community representatives shall have a record of significant commitment to the College, and may include alumni or donors, but may not be elected officials or employees of the College.

The Board is encouraged to look beyond the local community in the appointments from the Foundation Board and community to ensure greater representation of the Panhandle.

Option 2

The Search Advisory Committee will include eight (8) individuals representing the following groups:

- **Board of Governors** – Four (4) members of the Board of Governors, one of whom will be the chair or vice chair who will serve as chair of the committee.
- **Senior-Level Administrators** – One (1) senior-level administrator – executive vice president, vice president, associate/assistant vice president, dean, or associate/assistant dean – to be recommended by the President's Executive Planning Team.

- **Faculty** – One (1) continuing faculty member to be recommended by the faculty.
- **Staff** – One (1) staff representative to be recommended by the staff.
- **Student** – One (1) student representative to be recommended by Cougar Council.

Ex-officio members of the Search Advisory Committee will be appointed as directed in BP-119.