

June 2, 2015

To the Regents of the University of Wisconsin

On behalf of the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, we oppose in strongest possible terms a specific provision in Resolution I.2.d now before the Board of Regents, a provision that fundamentally undermines not only the role of shared governance in future searches for top administrators but also the very integrity of the search process and its outcome.

According to the resolution's provisions, the System President, in consultation with the Board of Regents "may identify up to two additional candidates from the list of persons considered by the Search and Screen Committee."

There are several reasons why this proposal is strongly objectionable to the faculty of UW-Madison:

- It would permit the President or Regents to encourage individuals to apply who could be effectively guaranteed appearance on the list of finalists.
- It would weaken the quality of the applicant pool by undermining confidence in the integrity and fairness of the search process. The most qualified among potential applicants will be discouraged from putting themselves forward if it is known that candidates favored by the System President could be guaranteed a place among the finalists.
- It would compromise the very search process itself. Under current policies, search committees for Chancellor are constructed to represent the broadest possible constituency, and they undertake their work with extraordinary seriousness. It is unimaginable that they will approach their work with the same selfless commitment if they perceive a possibility, however slight, that a candidate favored by the administration could short-circuit the screening process and emerge ahead of the committee's own careful selections.
- In the eyes of the faculty and staff, any candidate actually appointed to a leadership position via this new process would automatically begin their tenure under a cloud, regardless of their qualifications. Their ability to mobilize faculty and staff behind their decisions would be impaired.

Recent statements from the President of the System and the incoming chair of the Board of Regents have emphasized their support for shared governance at the University of Wisconsin. Regrettably, the proposal that is now before the Board of Regents is completely incompatible with that support.

We further note that, prior to including the draft resolution in the meeting materials, comments were solicited from campus leaders on short notice over Memorial Day weekend. Despite the holiday, many went to considerable effort to respond with strong objections, especially to the above provision. Notwithstanding that input, no changes appear to have been made to the resolution as distributed.

In summary, we urge the Regents in the strongest possible terms to reject the proposal to permit up to two added finalists that have not been subject to rigorous evaluation by a search and screen committee.

Sincerely,

Mary Elizabeth Meyerand  
Chair UW-Madison University  
Committee

Thomas Broman  
UW-Madison Faculty  
Representative to UW System

Grant Petty  
President, Public  
Representation Organization of  
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