

## Themes and Trends from UW System Presidential Search Listening Sessions (as of January 8, 2020)

### *Priorities for the next President*

- Champion higher education in general, specifically the University of Wisconsin System, and the ability to regain the national prominence the system once held
- Move the Wisconsin Idea into the future and possibly outside the borders of Wisconsin. A leader with a global perspective could find ways to keep WI students in the system and broaden their horizons globally and could find ways to introduce the WI system to the international community in a broader way.
- Embrace the uniqueness of the institutions within the system while also finding ways to collaborate, act as one system, leverage resources when possible and get on the same page. Don't allow system and institutions to become homogenized.
- Work with the legislature and navigate politics while remaining neutral. The president must be seen as non-partisan.
- Balance the need for workforce development while also championing and promoting the idea of a liberal arts education.
- Build trust between the system and campuses and in particular with faculty staff and students. President should provide access to leadership at the system level to achieve results.
- Commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and an understanding of how to create pathways for diverse, under-represented and disadvantaged communities to find their way into the higher education system
- Recruit and retain faculty and students
- Advocate for students, their needs, their mental health
- Leader who allows institutions and leadership to make decisions that are right for their campus, while also offering guidance and holding institution leadership accountable for results
- Tuition freeze

### *Qualifications of the next President*

- Leader must have an appropriately collaborative and consultative style and be transparent.
- Understanding of how academic programs are built and a deep commitment to shared governance, respect for the role faculty and staff play and a participatory leadership style
- Strategic thinker with a vision for the future and ability to communicate vision, while also managing expectations of what can be achieved. Don't sell something that can't be delivered.
- Ability to weather the storm of changing demographics, enrollment declines and funding challenges without compromising academic standards
- Leader must understand the diversity of campuses; scales, geography, budgets, etc.
- Relation builder outside of the system: Legislature, K-12 partners, business owners, farmers, etc.
- Not afraid of change and in particular be willing to drive change; go back to being the innovative groundbreaking system they once were

NOTE: Lack of faculty, staff and student representation on search committee was mentioned in all sessions

**Themes and Trends from UW System Presidential Search Website Comments**  
(As of January 13, 2020)

***What are the key challenges and opportunities facing the UW System over the next five to ten years?***

- Major Themes
  - Advocate for the value of higher education; convincing the legislature of its importance to the state and ability to secure resources for the success of all system campuses. (FUNDING)
  - Addressing the challenge of declining enrollment and changing demographics in the state.
  - Climate change and sustainability. Commitment to supporting science in general and climate change research in particular and second by committing to find the resources necessary to make our UW campuses carbon neutral.
  - Commit to meet the challenges of equity, diversity and inclusion. Closing the achievement gap in the state and recruiting and retaining diverse staff, faculty and students. President must be able to inspire us to be more and more inclusive.
  - Addressing the system challenges as a whole. Find a way for all institutions to work together instead of competing against each other. Determine if system can and should be streamlined and if that will entail closing campuses. Bring efficiency within the UW IT system by sharing common needs with other UW school. Reducing the same or similar work by empowering shared services.
  - Increased costs of higher ed; access for middle- and lower-class families
  - Address the changing needs of higher education and the push for technology, access and integration
  - Frustration that the search committee did not include faculty and staff and that the president will need to navigate those relationships carefully when taking on the role
- Notable Themes
  - Faculty and staff morale and wages
  - On line education
  - Support research campuses which are major drivers of funding
  - Support of shared governance
  - Globalism

***What particular characteristics and attributes would help the successful candidate address these issues?***

- Servant leader with open mind and dynamic plan
- Leader who has personal, professional and lived experiences that relate and align with the needs of marginalized groups. Empathy and the ability to build/sustain trusting and transparent relationships.
- Successful change management leader who can build
- Leader who listens and is open and honest approach to all constituents
- Believe in the Wisconsin Idea

- An entrepreneurial mindset, problem-solving abilities, and excellent communication skills that can lead us to cross boundaries and think outside the "status quo" will be great assets to a person in this role.
- Ability to see multiple perspectives, navigate between partisanship, and assertively connect with a diverse population.
- Able to demonstrate vision and rally others around vision

***What specific role and specific priorities should we expect the new President to carry forward with respect to that future agenda?***

- The President should be the visionary who works to empower the university leaders to implement change
- Be a convener of experts, a listener and transparent communicator.
- Be an advocate for the university system and work collaboratively with the board of regents and shared governance groups.
- The president should be someone who values collaboration and working together to achieve common goals.
- Strong leadership and accountability
- The President should have a vision for what UW System and its institutions will look like, given the changing landscape of higher education.
- The President should prioritize retention as much as recruitment.
- Work with communities, making the benefits of the University system apparent through engagement and service.
- Equity and Inclusion
- Strive to achieve cohesiveness between all UW institutions
- President should have fiscal acumen and should secure funding

***What are the characteristics, skills, and experiences we should be seeking in the search for the new President? Which characteristics are required and which would be nice to have? Which are most important or essential?***

- Characteristics & Skills
  - o Values the importance of higher education
  - o Values shared governance
  - o Someone who surrounds themselves with diverse and competent people
  - o Listener
  - o Convener
  - o Collaborator
  - o Advocate
  - o Strategic thinker
  - o Excellent and authentic communicator
  - o Change agent
  - o Willingness to make the difficult decisions.
  - o Patience and persistence
  - o Data driven
  - o Values students
  - o Commitment to equity and inclusion

- Experiences
  - o Higher Ed: must have exposure to higher ed and, if possible, experience as a professional in higher ed (administrator or faculty). Understanding the key role of science and technology in the future of the university
  - o Research: Exposure to research and, if possible, a proven research record.
  - o Change Agent: must have experiences bringing about change in a complex organization and ability to right size if needed.
  - o Financial and business acumen

***What are the top three to five attributes of the UW System that should be exciting to candidates? More generally, why should candidates be excited about coming to UW System?***

- Wisconsin Idea
- World class campus that is highly ranked
- National leader in higher education
- Innovative and high caliber research
- Long history of innovation, academic excellence
- People care, are friendly and welcoming
- Down to earth community

***Additional comments***

- a. No faculty on the committee is a problem
- b. Morale is low because of severe budget cuts