

S.98-39

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Memorandum

*As amended
by Senate
Apr 6/98*

To: Senate
From: Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules
Date: March 18, 1998
Subject: Motion re Presidential Search Procedures

At the March 2, 1998 Senate meeting, a Notice of Motion was submitted by George Kirczenow for the next meeting of Senate. The following motion is presented to Senate for consideration.

Motion: "that Senate recommend ^{jointly} to the Board of Governors that the procedures for the recommendation and selection of candidates for president of SFU be reviewed and that a revised version be brought to Senate for discussion and approval at least twelve months before the next presidential search begins."
and the Board

Motion (as amended) failed

MOTION FOR THE APRIL 1998 MEETING OF SENATE:

That Senate recommend to the Board of Governors that the procedures for the recommendation and selection of candidates for president of SFU be reviewed and that a revised version be brought to Senate for discussion and approval at least twelve months before the next presidential search begins.

Rationale:

The presidential selection procedures that were approved in 1995 and have been in place since then were not followed by the Board during the recent appointment of President Blaney. While this appears to have been partly due to unusual circumstances, a reading of the terms of reference and composition of presidential search committees that are presently in effect reveals serious deficiencies that should be corrected. These include:

1. With the presently mandated total of 16 members, the presidential search committee is so large as to be unwieldy.
2. The academics on the committee (4 faculty, 2 deans and 1 vice president) are a minority of the committee's membership. This is inappropriate since the committee is charged with choosing a president who according to the University Act is supposed to "supervise and direct the academic work of the university," whereas a clear majority of the committee's members do not have the knowledge or experience needed to assess the academic leadership of the candidates being considered.
3. The same committee is charged with carrying out a review of the university's institutional needs and objectives. The majority of the committee's members do not have the knowledge or experience needed to do this well.
4. The same committee is supposed to develop selection criteria (for the presidential search) for submission to the Board for approval. The same criticism as in points 2 and 3 above applies here too.

Such a committee with such terms of reference is as likely as not to develop inappropriate criteria and procedures for the presidential search and to choose a less than satisfactory president. For example, in the past such a search committee chose to use a commercial headhunter in a presidential search, with dismal results.

Headhunters may seem like a good idea to the non-academic members of the search committee since they are commonly used to find heads for corporations. Increasingly head-hunting firms are seeing academic head-hunting as a potentially lucrative sideline -- see page B7 in the business section of the Feb. 9, 1998 issue of the Vancouver Sun. Some firms specialize in academic head-hunting. However even a headhunter that specializes in university administrators need not understand what makes SFU unique or what sort of a president would be best for this university. It also needs to be understood that a headhunter is a professional salesperson, in the business of promoting his/her own candidates for profit. A search committee (and especially one with a majority of non-academics) that employs a headhunter is therefore susceptible to being misdirected and choosing an unsuitable president for the university.

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

<u>Members</u>	<u>Conditions</u>	<u>Name</u>
Chair of the Board of Governors (or designate)	Chair	
Member, Board of Governors Member, Board of Governors	Appointed by the Chair, normally from OIC members	
Vice-President, or Associate Vice-President	Selected by the Vice-Presidents	
Dean Dean	Selected by the Deans after the faculty members have been elected	
Faculty Member Faculty Member Faculty Member	Elected by and from faculty members jointly with no more than one to be elected from any Faculty	
Undergraduate Student Undergraduate Student	Elected by and from undergraduate student body	
Graduate Student	Elected by and from Graduate Student body	
President, Faculty Association (or designate)		
President, Student Society (or designate)		
President, Alumni Association (or designate)		
Employee	Elected by and from full-time employees who are not faculty members	

The Board's Charge to the Committee

- (a) The Board will provide the Committee with a statement of the leadership qualities sought in the new President.
- (b) The Board will set the date by which it expects to receive recommendations from the Committee.
- (c) The Board will express a preference as to the number of candidates to be submitted.
- (d) The Board will instruct the Committee to rank the names and to provide relevant documentation to the Board.

Terms of Reference:

1. The Committee is empowered to search out candidates for the Presidency and make recommendations to the Board. The University community will be canvassed and everyone will be encouraged to assist in the recruiting of candidates. The search committee will screen all

- candidates and prepare a short list for presentation to the Board of Governors who will select the President.
2. The Committee will carry out a review of institutional needs and objectives.
 3. The Committee will submit an estimated budget for the search proceedings to the Board for approval.
 4. The Committee will develop selection criteria for submission to the Board for approval.
 5. The Committee will endeavour to present unanimous recommendations to the Board but, if it cannot do so, the recommendations should have the support of at least 11 members of the 16-member Committee.

Membership approved by the Board on Nov. 1, 1977 and approved by Senate with clarification Dec. 5, 1977. Terms of Reference (Operations) approved by the Board Dec. 6, 1977 and by Senate Jan. 9, 1978. Re-affirmed by the Board of Governors April 28, 1992. Revision to Membership, Charge and Terms of Reference approved by Senate Sept. 18, 1995.