

Where is USM's "Presidential Search Process"? A Second Look

A couple of days ago, we asked "[Where is USM's Presidential Search Process?](#) We noted USM is far from meeting its original schedule. It's stuck at step number 8 (out of a total 20 steps to completion) of its "Presidential Search Process."

We asked "What's going on with step 8? "SAC members independently review all candidate resumes." " We didn't mention that it took a mere couple of months to find a new football coach, who, by the way is paid more than USM's president. That seems a bit ridiculous, both with regard to the time to find a replacement and the pay differential. We may discuss that nonsensical set of circumstances later.

Let's get back to possible problems with the "Presidential Search Process." Too often, at USM, politics -- not merit -- controls decisions. So, if politics is again paramount in the "Presidential Search Process," what are the political details holding up "review" of potential candidates? Could it be that the local power-brokers who feed at the trough of the hundreds of millions USM spends need to be reassured that nothing will change? Like IHL member Doug Rouse who may be concerned that he and his partners will continue their [orthopedic medical practice](#) on the basis of a handshake, which apparently allows him to sidestep state law and ethics.

Such "security" takes time. Maybe a lot of time, depending how many are feeding at the trough. Agreements (probably unwritten for the most part) and reassurances need to be worked out. Signals need to be exchanged that no changes are in the offing from the "preferred candidate." That takes time. Keep in mind, politics does not require any grand conspiracy. We're talking about the *quid pro quo* dance that occurs when the participants know what needs to be done, and they have their say in the "Process." Of course, they will assure us, the public, that each of them has brought great integrity to the "Process." As we all know, in the world of political double speak, "integrity" means "I have honestly made sure that I have protected my interests."

Back to our "Search." We asked for and have received input to our previous question when we said: You, our readers, may suspect others who might be among the pool of candidates. (Remember we proposed Francis Lucas and Gordon Cannon as possible candidates.)

More help has arrived for the Board Search Committee. A reader offered Denis A. Weisenburg's name. As you know, he is USM's Provost. All provosts want to be presidents, don't they? After all, why stop at just being provost. Well, Denis, *apropos* of this report, are you willing to play ball with those who are feeding at the USM trough?



Presidential Search Process

1. Board President names Board Search Committee (BSC) members and BSC chair.

▶ **Board Search Committee**

- ▶ [Robin Robinson](#), Chair
- ▶ [Dr. Ford Dye](#)
- ▶ [Bob Owens](#)
- ▶ [Aubrey Patterson](#)
- ▶ [Christy Pickering](#)

▶ **More Information**

2. Search consultant (SC) is selected.

▶ **More Information**

3. Position description and advertisement is placed.

▶ **More Information**

4. Recommendations are received from various university and community constituency groups regarding names for the Search Advisory Committee (SAC).

▶ **Call for Nominations**

▶ **More Information**

5. SAC members and SAC chair are named, based on constituency group recommendations.

▶ **More Information**

6. Position nominations and applications are received.

▶ **More Information**

7. Campus listening sessions are held with constituency groups to hear what qualities and qualifications they would like to see in their next institutional executive officer (IEO).

▶ **Listening Session Minutes**

▶ **Video - Hattiesburg**

▶ **Video - Gulf Park**

▶ **More Information**

▶ **More Information**

Oops! Progress has stopped...

- 8.** SAC members independently review all candidate resumes.
- 9.** SAC members independently submit, unranked, recommendations of at least five candidates to the BSC.
- 10.** SAC self-selects a representative group of members, comprised of faculty, students, staff, and outside representatives, diverse in race and gender, to serve on Interview Search Advisory Committee (ISAC) to participate as requested by the Board throughout the remainder of the selection process.
- 11.** BSC decides on candidates for preliminary interviews from the names sent forward by the SAC members.
- 12.** First-round interviews are conducted.
- 13.** Reference contacts and background checks are conducted on candidates participating in the second round of interviews.
- 14.** Second-round interviews are conducted.
- 15.** BSC narrows field of candidates.
- 16.** Board of Trustees meets to hear candidate recommendations. Further candidate assessments are made by Board of Trustees.
- 17.** Board announces preferred candidate.
- 18.** Preferred candidate is brought to campus to engage in open interviews with various campus constituency groups, who are given the opportunity to provide feedback to the Board regarding the preferred candidate.
- 19.** Board receives preferred candidate feedback from constituency groups and decides if preferred candidate should be named IEO.
- 20.** Board announces either that the preferred candidate has been named IEO announcement or that search will continue.