

Subject: RE: Message from Binghamton University Faculty Senate leaders

Dear Professor Lee,

Over the past several years, it has become increasingly evident that potential candidates for high-profile institutions, predominantly research-intensive campuses and "flagships," are very reluctant to have their candidacy revealed. We have certainly seen evidence of this phenomenon with our searches in SUNY for presidents of our research centers. The breadth and quality of the pools is much different when the candidates are assured that the search will be representative (or closed) involving only a broadly-based search committee and college council rather than one that involves campus meetings and inevitable publicity. In fact, I spoke to this issue with members of the UFS last week at their plenary at Purchase; and I am well aware of the dilemma posed here between respecting the privacy needs of candidates and the intent to more actively engage stakeholders in the search process.

I certainly understand the central role of faculty and of faculty governance in the campus community. However, search committees also represent a number of other constituencies (administrators, professional staff, and students as well as college council members). Having a separate interview process for a purely faculty group would lead to requests by other constituencies as well.

The key to a successful search for our highest profile institutions is getting the representation on the search committee right and ensuring close communication during the development of the search profile that describes the qualities the campus desire in a new leader. We feel that the committee for the Binghamton University performed in a highly professional manner. They devoted many hours to the review of dozens of resumes and conducted multiple rounds of interviews to narrow the pool. We believe that all voices were heard and that the finalists were strongly supported by all constituencies represented on the committee.

We certainly appreciate your position, but do feel that the representational approach to this search was necessary to achieve the best possible result.

Regards,

Nancy L. Zimpher,
Chancellor

CC: Ken O'Brien, University Faculty Senate President
David K. Lavalley, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost