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March 14, 2018 Board of Trustees Letter by Mark Thresher

Mark Thresher

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES

March 14, 2018

Dear Faculty Assembly Executive Committee:

As you are likely aware, there have been mixed reactions to the presidential search update issued to all faculty and staff yesterday. Let me clarify that upon the advice of our search consultants from Witt/Kieffer, it has been the intent of the Board of Trustees to use a hybrid model for the presidential search process since it was launched last fall. Perhaps this should have been more widely shared.

According to Witt/Kieffer, of 35 presidential searches conducted for private institutions within the last year, 30 were closed to ensure a pool of highly qualified candidates. We were told that the majority of the eight semi-finalists for the Otterbein presidency would have withdrawn from consideration if their candidacy was not kept confidential. Clearly that would not be in the best interest of Otterbein.

We chose to use Otterbein's shared governance system to identify representatives from all three assemblies and student government to serve on the Search Committee so all voices are represented. Implying that faculty, staff, and students are not represented is simply not true. We worked through the assemblies to involve three additional faculty members and two additional staff members who are engaged in the finalist interviews. Students are being represented by their elected student leaders. We cannot afford to lose highly qualified candidates by revealing their candidacies. Although the presidential search conducted nine years ago was an open process, previous searches were not. Choosing the hybrid model was the best option for ensuring that faculty, staff, and student voices were represented.

Please feel free to share this letter with the faculty. Attached is a more recent article shared with us by Witt/Kieffer that might be useful in understanding the process we are using. The Board stands firm in its decision to use this model in the best interest of Otterbein University.

Sincerely,

Mark Thresher, Chair
Otterbein University Board of Trustees

Attachment

c: Otterbein University Board of Trustees
Otterbein University Cabinet