Resolution on CSU Policy regarding Presidential Searches

Resolved: That the Academic Senate of CSU Channel Islands urges the CSU Board of Trustees to retain the existing presidential search policy and current practice. In particular, we urge: 1) that the practice of meaningful campus visits that include a series of meetings and open forums with administrators, faculty, staff, students and community members continue, and that a policy regarding development of a mechanism for collecting feedback from campus constituencies be included; and 2) that the proposed practice of considering internal candidates and possibly hiring such a candidate before a position is advertised be eliminated; and be it further,

Resolved: That this resolution be distributed to Chancellor Reed, the CSU Board of Trustees, and the Academic Senate of the California State University.

Rationale: The Board of Trustees is considering changes to the current policy on presidential hiring practices and compensation. Historically, each semi-finalist for a presidential appointment has visited the campus at which he/she is a candidate. During these visits, targeted meetings with administrators, faculty, staff, and students, and open forums for the campus community have been held. The current policy specifies that these campus visits occur, while simultaneously reserving to the Trustees Committee for the Selection of a President and the Chancellor, in consultation with an Advisory Committee to the Trustees Committee for the Selection of the President, the responsibility of determining the nature of such visits. Flexibility is already built into the current policy, as it provides for deviations from these procedures “in rare instances and for compelling reasons.”

The loss of campus visits in the proposed policy would greatly diminish the role of the campus community in the presidential search process. It would eliminate the possibility of candidates meeting all members of the campus community, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community members. Furthermore, it is contrary to the fundamental principles of shared governance of the CSU system. Removing the campus visit component can only hinder the candidates in developing an understanding of the issues and challenges they might face should they be offered and accept the position.

The proposed practice of having a small elite group consider “...whether any internal CSU candidate(s) is/are a good fit for the position” prior to advertising the position eliminates the opportunity to screen a single pool of internal and external applicants and counters best practices in hiring. The odds that excellent candidates would be overlooked are too high to recommend this deviation from current practice.

Campus presidents are presented with a wide variety of difficult challenges. The California State University should take advantage of any opportunity to allow new presidents to build support in their respective communities. Arriving on campus without having the support and legitimacy provided by an inclusive, broadly defined search and a meaningful campus visit would put the chosen candidate at a significant disadvantage in leading a successful transition, and would diminish the potential for productive shared governance at that campus.
Calif ornia State University Dominguez Hills
Academic Senate Resolution
Action Item
Sense of the Senate
Resolution In Opposition to Proposed Revision to the CSU Presidential Selection Process
Exec 11-09
(MSP 09/07/11)

Resolved: That the Academic Senate of California State University Dominguez Hills oppose the proposed revision to the Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents that would eliminate campus visits by the final slate of candidates for a campus presidency; and be it further

Resolved: That this resolution be sent to the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, the Academic Senate CSU and all CSU Campus Senates.

Rationale:

The current Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents provides for campus visits by the final slate of candidates for a campus presidency. While not a formal part of the evaluation process, the visit is designed to encourage candidate interest in the position through engaging in dialogue with the campus community. At their September 2011 meeting, the Board of Trustees will consider a revision to the selection policy that would eliminate the requirement for a campus visit.*

Eliminating campus visits would greatly diminish the role of the campus community in the presidential search process and make it virtually impossible for campus constituencies to provide meaningful feedback to members of the Advisory Committee to the Trustees Committee for Selection of the President. In the absence of a campus visit, and with reliance solely upon the input of the Advisory Committee, the depth and breadth of consultation provided for in the current policy disappears.

Campus presidents are presented with a wide variety of difficult challenges. The California State University should take advantage of any opportunity to allow potential presidents to meet all members of the campus community, develop an understanding of the challenges they may face, and build support in their respective communities. Arriving on campus without having the support and legitimacy provided by such a process would put the chosen candidate at a significant disadvantage in building a successful transition.

*The current policy can be viewed here
http://www.calstate.edu/bot/agendas/Aug11/3_CURRENTPOLICYfortheSelectionofPresidents.pdf

*The proposed policy can be viewed here
http://www.calstate.edu/bot/agendas/Aug11/2_PROPOSEDNEWPOLICYforSelectionofPresidents.pdf

*Press release from the CSU:
RESOLUTION

CSUF Response to Proposed CSU Board of Trustees Presidential Selection Process
September 15, 2011

Resolved: The Academic Senate of California State University, Fullerton strongly reaffirms the current CSU policy of having formal campus visits with each of the finalists during the Presidential selection process.

Be It further Resolved: That this resolution be forwarded to the Cal State Fullerton campus employees, ASI Executive Staff and Board of Directors; CSUF Alumni Association Board of Directors; James Postma, Chair of the Academic Senate of the CSU; the CSU Board of Trustees, and Chancellor Reed.

Rationale: Both the finalists and the campus profit from exploring ideas, discussing priorities, and getting to know each other during these sessions. These visits help to ensure a good match and have been very beneficial to all parties in previous searches. The proposed Board of Trustee policy, as amended, now states that such visits would be optional. This is clearly not in the best interest of the campus or the finalists and undermines the likelihood of a president succeeding. As stated by the current Board of Trustee policy: "every effort should be made to shape the visit so that it generates a foundation for the new president's success on campus". Such a foundation for success also necessitates that a candidate become familiarized with the personality, infrastructure, and environment of the campus.

Source: Executive Committee

ASD 11-154 Resolution – CSUF
RESOLUTION ON SELECTION OF PRESIDENTS IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

WHEREAS The Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act provides that “the Legislature recognizes that joint decision-making and consultation between administration and faculty or academic employees is the long-accepted manner of governing institutions of higher learning and is essential to the performance of the educational missions of these institutions” [HEERA 3561(b)]; and

WHEREAS The current CSU Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents asserts that the “purpose of the campus visit is to encourage candidates to remain interested in pursuing the presidency by engaging in ideas with campus constituents groups and through promotion of the campus and the community” and that the campus visit “generates a foundation for the new president’s success on campus”; and

WHEREAS Each member campus of the California State University (CSU) system displays a unique culture and embodiment of shared governance, the understanding and appreciation of which requires immediate and first-hand experience; and

WHEREAS The engagement and support of faculty, staff and students is essential to the success of any president; and

WHEREAS Arriving on campus without the support and legitimacy provided in part by the process of campus visits would put the chosen candidate for president at a significant disadvantage in building a successful transition; and

WHEREAS Despite well-reasoned legislative mandates, best practice in higher education and its own long-standing practice, the CSU Board of Trustees is proposing the elimination of the campus visit for final candidates for CSU presidents, in direct opposition to its own stated goals in both the current and proposed policy to “generate confidence in the selection process and garner local support for the eventual appointee”;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED That the Academic Senate of California State University-Fresno oppose any elimination of the campus visit in the selection of presidents in the CSU and strongly urge the CSU Board of Trustees to continue past practice as articulated in its current policy.

(Adapted from the Resolution passed at San Francisco State University and CSU-Monterey Bay)

Passed by California State University, Fresno, Academic Senate, September 19, 2011
September 14, 2011

CSU Board of Trustees
CSU Office of the Chancellor
401 Golden Shore, 6th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

Dear Chair Carter,

The Executive Committee of the Humboldt State University Academic Senate unanimously supports the resolutions forwarded from our CSU colleagues regarding the proposed changes in the CSU Board of Trustees policy on selection of Presidents, and specifically regarding campus visits for Presidential candidates. Unfortunately, the timing of the Board of Trustees consideration of the policy and the HSU Academic Senate meeting schedule did not allow for a resolution from the entire Senate at this time, which is why this comes as a letter of support rather than a Senate resolution.

We agree with the resolutions from CSU Stanislaus, San Francisco State University, Sonoma State University, and San Diego State University. The lack of open campus involvement, including releasing the names of finalists jeopardizes the integrity of the selection process. In particular, we agree with the statement in the San Francisco State University resolution that the proposed change is in direct opposition to the CSU Board of Trustees stated goals to “generate confidence in the selection process and garner local support for the eventual appointee.”

Campus visits are important both for the university community to meet the candidates and draw conclusions about how well they fit the campus culture as well as for the candidates to get a sense of what the campuses are like. Such face-to-face visits help the Presidents get off to a good start. Importantly, they are also crucial to establishing a climate of shared governance.

Therefore, the Executive Committee of the Humboldt State University Academic Senate urges the CSU Board of Trustees to retain the current policy of requiring campus visits by the finalists in Presidential searches.

Respectfully,

Jay G. VerLinden
Academic Senate Chair
/mp

CC: Rollin Richmond, President
    Humboldt State University

    Robert Snyder, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
    Humboldt State University

    Jim Postma, Chair
    Academic Senate, CSU
Resolution on CSU President Searches

Resolved: That the Academic Senate of California State University, Long Beach urges the CSU Board of Trustees to continue the current presidential search policy and practice of having on-campus interviews for finalists as a part of the selection process for new Presidents, and be it further,

Resolved: That this resolution be distributed to Chancellor Reed, the CSU Board of Trustees via Chair Carter, and to Academic Senate of the California State University via Chair James Postma.

Rationale: The Board of Trustees is currently considering changes to the current policy on presidential compensation and hiring policies. Historically, presidential candidates have visited the campus for which they were candidates and have held targeted meetings with administrators, faculty, and staff and also held open forums for the campus community.

The loss of campus visits provided for in the proposed policy changes would greatly diminish the role of the campus community in the presidential search process and would eliminate the ability of candidates to meet members of the campus community, including administrators, faculty, staff, students and community members, thereby understanding the issues and challenges they might face in the role.

Campus presidents are presented with a wide variety of difficult challenges, and clearly the California State University should take advantage of any opportunity to allow new presidents to build support in their respective communities. Arriving on campus without having the support and legitimacy provided by such a process would put the chosen candidate at a significant disadvantage in building a successful transition.
California Maritime Academy
Executive Committee of the Academic Senate

Resolution Opposing Amendment of Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents

WHEREAS: The California State University Board of Trustees is proposing to amend the Policy for the Selection of Presidents to eliminate required campus visits for final candidates for CSU presidents, and

WHEREAS: The Executive Committee of the Academic Senate of the California Maritime Academy strongly oppose this amendment as an unwarranted hindrance to the role of faculty in shared governance; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California Maritime Academy urge the CSU Board of Trustees to continue the current presidential search policy requiring on-campus visits for finalists; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California Maritime Academy urge the CSU Board of Trustees to oppose any amendments to the presidential search policy which would eliminate or curtail campus visits as part of the search process; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Chair of the Academic Senate of the California Maritime Academy send copies of this resolution to the CSU Chancellor Reed, the CSU Board of Trustees, and to the Academic Senate of the CSU.

RATIONALE:
The Board of Trustees is currently considering changes to the Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents. Historically, presidential finalists have visited the campus for which they are candidates to meet with administrators, faculty, and staff and often held open forums with the campus community at large.

The current policy contains explicit language pertaining to these visits and explaining their value. The proposed policy makes no reference to the visits and eliminates any requirement for them.

The elimination of campus visits would greatly diminish the role of the campus community in the presidential search process. Furthermore, elimination of an opportunity to meet with campus administrators, faculty, staff, and students, would reduce the chances of understanding the issues and challenges that the incoming president might face.

Campus presidents are presented with many difficult challenges and the CSU should take advantage of opportunities to allow new presidents to build support in their campus communities. Arriving on campus without the support and legitimacy provided by the search process would put the chosen candidate at a significant disadvantage.

The current policy may be found:
www.calstate.edu/bot/agendas/Aug11/3_CURRENTPOLICYfortheSelectionofPresidents.pdf
The proposed policy may be found:
www.calstate.edu/bot/agendas/Aug11/2_PROPOSEDNEWPOLICYforSelectionofPresidents.pdf

Passed by the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate 14 September 2011.
RESOLUTION ON SELECTION OF PRESIDENTS IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

WHEREAS The Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act provides that “the Legislature recognizes that joint decision-making and consultation between administration and faculty or academic employees is the long-accepted manner of governing institutions of higher learning and is essential to the performance of the educational missions of these institutions” (HEERA 3561(b)); and

WHEREAS The current CSU Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents asserts that the “purpose of the campus visit is to encourage candidates to remain interested in pursuing the presidency by engaging in ideas with campus constituents groups and through promotion of the campus and the community” and that the campus visit “generates a foundation for the new president’s success on campus”; and

WHEREAS Each member campus of the California State University (CSU) system displays a unique culture and embodiment of shared governance, the understanding and appreciation of which requires immediate and first-hand experience; and

WHEREAS The engagement and support of faculty, staff and students is essential to the success of any president; and

WHEREAS Arriving on campus without the support and legitimacy provided in part by the process of campus visits would put the chosen candidate for president at a significant disadvantage in building a successful transition; and

WHEREAS Despite well-reasoned legislative mandates, best practice in higher education and its own long-standing practice, the CSU Board of Trustees is proposing the elimination of the campus visit for final candidates for CSU presidents, in direct opposition to its own stated goals in both the current and proposed policy to “generate confidence in the selection process and garner local support for the eventual appointee”;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED That the Academic Senate of California State University-Monterey Bay oppose any elimination of the campus visit in the selection of presidents in the CSU and strongly urge the CSU Board of Trustees to continue past practice as articulated in its current policy.

(Adapted from the Resolution passed at San Francisco State University)

Passed by CSU-Monterey Bay Academic Senate, September 12, 2011
RESOLUTION ON CSU PRESIDENT SEARCHES

Resolved: That the Faculty Senate at California State University, Sacramento urges the CSU Board of Trustees to continue the past presidential search policy and current practice of having on-campus visits for finalists as a part of the selection process for new Presidents, and be it further,

Resolved: That this resolution be distributed to Chancellor Reed, the CSU Board of Trustees via Chair Carter, and to Academic Senate of the California State University via Chair James Postma.

Rationale: The Board of Trustees is currently considering changes to the current policy on presidential compensation and hiring policies. Historically, presidential candidates have visited the campus for which they were candidates and have held targeted meetings with administrators, faculty and staff and also held open forums for the campus community. The loss of campus visits provided for in the proposed policy changes would greatly diminish the role of the campus community in the presidential search process and would eliminate the ability of candidates to meet all members of the campus community, including administrators, faculty, staff, students and community members, thereby understanding the issues and challenges they might face in the role. Campus presidents are presented with a wide variety of difficult challenges, and clearly the California State University should take advantage of any opportunity to allow new presidents to build support in their respective communities. Arriving on campus without having the support and legitimacy provided by such a process would put the chosen candidate at a significant disadvantage in building a successful transition.

Carried unanimously.
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO
FACULTY SENATE ENDORSEMENT AND SUPPORT OF:

Response to Proposed Changes to the Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents: Affirming the Importance of Campus Involvement and Transparency

1. RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) strongly advocate the preservation of campus visits by presidential candidates as a standard practice in the proposed revision of the Board of Trustees policy on this matter; and be it further

2. RESOLVED: That the ASCSU consider the option to omit such campus visits raises serious questions about transparency, questions that could undermine the efforts of the CSU to gain and maintain the public trust; and be it further

3. RESOLVED: That the ASCSU emphasize the value of presidential candidates’ official campus visits as important opportunities for the Board of Trustees Advisory Committee to have first hand evidence of a presidential candidate’s both interest in and ability to lead the campus and engage with the staff, faculty and students and community; and be it further

4. RESOLVED: That the ASCSU assert its view that while confidentiality is essential to the early stages of a presidential selection process, i.e., until such time as finalists have been identified, a campus visit does not constitute an inappropriate breach of confidentiality; and be it further

5. RESOLVED: That the ASCSU express related concerns about the proposed policy’s lack of clarity regarding (a) how, when, and if presidential vacancies are advertised and (b) the minimum number of candidates to be recommended to the Board of Trustees; and be it further

6. RESOLVED: That while the ASCSU strongly endorse consideration of candidates from within the CSU to fill key leadership positions—including that of campus president—the ASCSU also urge that the most qualified candidates be identified through wide-ranging searches, guaranteeing as diverse and experienced a pool as possible; toward that end, that the proposed practice of considering internal candidates and possibly hiring such candidates before a position is advertised be eliminated; and be it finally

7. RESOLVED: That the ASCSU distribute this resolution to the Trustees’ Special Committee on Presidential Selection and Compensation, Governor Jerry Brown, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, Chancellor Charles B. Reed, and other members of the Board of Trustees, campus Presidents, and campus Senate Chairs.

RATIONALE: This resolution addresses proposed revisions to the Policy for the Selection of Presidents. On August 25, 2011, the CSU announced that the Trustees’ Special Committee on Presidential Selection and Compensation recommended changes to the presidential selection process policy. A second revised policy (see Exhibit A) was posted with the Board of Trustees agenda on September 9, 2011. The revised policy will be considered by the Board at its September 20-21 meeting.

The ASCSU appreciate that the selection of the campus president is a significant responsibility for the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor, and we further
understand that multiple presidential vacancies are expected in the coming months. The ASCSU share the Board of Trustees' commitment to finding the best possible pool of candidates in the presidential selection process.

Of serious concern, however, is the proposed change to make official campus visits by presidential finalists optional. Although the proposed policy states a "deep commitment throughout the process to the principles of consultation with campus and community representatives," the elimination of the campus visit removes the most visible and public commitment to consultation and to transparency, which are essential elements in the tradition of collegial governance.

Given that successful campus presidents routinely interact with a diverse set of local constituents, including but not limited to students, staff, faculty, local campus administrators, alumni, business and community leaders, and donors, it seems inappropriate to deny prospective presidents an opportunity to meet with local groups prior to accepting an appointment. Arriving on campus without having the support and legitimacy provided by such a process would put the chosen candidate at a significant disadvantage in building a successful transition.

Although maintaining confidentiality is critical in the early stages of a search, the ASCSU maintain that the benefits of interactions between finalists and local constituents far outweigh any perceived risk of breaching confidentiality. The campus visit is an opportunity not only for candidates to present their best case for selection, but also an opportunity for them to learn more about the position and the campus so they can make an informed choice when or if an offer is made.

For every other leadership position on CSU campuses, the identities of both internal and external finalists are announced during the final stage, a risk they assume for the privilege of serving prominent leadership roles in public institutions. Eliminating the opportunity of finalists from engaging with the campus community would come at great expense to transparency in a time when public entities are under increased scrutiny and censure for making decisions behind closed doors. Moreover, the State Legislature and Governor Brown have recently emphasized the importance of transparency to public higher education institutions in California by enacting the Richard McKee Transparency Act of 2011 (SB 8).

Transparency concerns also affect other parts of the proposed policy and selection process, namely the lack of specificity regarding the announcement of the presidential vacancy and the minimum number of candidates to be recommended to the Trustees. "Casting a wide net" by posting opportunities for advancement is a critical component of the affirmative action plans required for each CSU campus, yet the proposed policy for presidential selection fails to specify that this is accomplished prior to consideration of internal candidates.

Although it is admirable for the CSU to seek to develop internal talent, failing to specify if, how, when, and where vacancies will be advertised decreases transparency and reduces the appearance—if not the actual implementation—of equal opportunity in hiring. Furthermore, lack of advertising prevents interested parties from assessing the quality and diversity of applicant pools for leadership positions in public institutions that highly value not only transparency, but also diversity, social justice, and shared governance. In addition, lack of specificity as to
the number of candidates to be recommended to the Trustees creates the potential for a further reduction in the diversity, depth, and breadth of the final candidate pool.

Beyond our response to proposed policy changes, the ASCSU respectfully request the Committee to consider two further points. First, care needs to be given to the timely announcement of finalists to ensure that campus communities have enough lead time to ensure the broadest participation to make the visit most valuable to the candidate and the campus. Furthermore, the ASCSU respectfully request that the Committee consider amending the final section, "Deviations from These Procedures," to include meeting with the Advisory Committee to the Trustees Committee for the Selection of the President (ACTCSP) prior to making its final decision in the rare and compelling instance when the Board departs from the list of candidates that the TCSP and ACTCSP had jointly recommended.

We note that Presidential Search Guidelines in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities demonstrates a clear commitment to the aforementioned concerns regarding equal opportunity/affirmative action as well as the number of finalists to be recommended. In the University of Wisconsin system, board policy specifies that the "search and screen" committee be composed of a majority of faculty. Also, the size of the constituency is taken into account in the Minnesota policy; given the large variations in campus size in the CSU, this seems pertinent. For example, the number of full-time faculty in fall 2009 ranged from 57 (Maritime) to 906 (San Diego) (CSU Statistical Abstracts, p. 313), yet the policy provides for a constant number of faculty to represent their constituency on the ACTCSP. Other constituencies, particularly students, will also vary considerably in size across campuses.

As further testament to the importance of official campus visits in the presidential selection process, please note that multiple campus Senates have passed resolutions endorsing the retention of official campus visits for presidential candidates. Resolutions passed at CSU Channel Islands, CSU Dominguez Hills, CSU Fullerton, CSU Long Beach, Maritime Academy, CSU Monterey Bay, CSU Sacramento, San Francisco State University, CSU San Marcos, San Diego State University, Sonoma State University, and CSU Stanislaus are attached, as well as a letter from the Executive Committee of Humboldt State University. Other campuses have resolutions in process.

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Endorsed and Supported by the CSUSB Faculty Senate

[Signature]
Jodie Uhman, Chair

[Signature]
Date

This endorsement will be distributed to the Chancellor, to the Board of Trustees, to the ASCSU, and to all campus senates.
Resolution on CSU President Searches

Resolved: That the University Senate of San Diego State University (SDSU) urge the CSU Board of Trustees to continue the current policy and practice for the selection of presidents, recently utilized successfully at SDSU, of having on-campus visits for finalists as a part of the selection process for new presidents, and be it further,

Resolved: That this resolution be distributed to Chancellor Reed, the CSU Board of Trustees, and the Academic Senate of the California State University.

Rationale: The Board of Trustees is currently considering changes to the policy on the selection of presidents. Historically, finalists in presidential searches have visited the campus for which they were candidates and have held targeted meetings with administrators, faculty and staff and also held open forums for the campus community. This process was followed at SDSU this past spring, resulting in the selection of President Hirshman.

The loss of campus visits by finalists provided for in the proposed policy changes would greatly diminish the role of the campus community in the presidential selection process by eliminating the ability of candidates to meet all members of the campus community, including administrators, faculty, staff, students and community members, who enhance candidates' understanding of the issues and challenges they might face in the role.

Campus presidents are presented with a wide variety of difficult challenges, and clearly the California State University should take advantage of any opportunity to allow new presidents to build support in their respective communities. Arriving on campus without having the support and legitimacy provided by such a process would put the chosen candidate at a significant disadvantage in building a successful transition.
PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON SELECTION OF PRESIDENTS IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

WHEREAS The Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act provides that “the Legislature recognizes that joint decision-making and consultation between administration and faculty or academic employees is the long-accepted manner of governing institutions of higher learning and is essential to the performance of the educational missions of these institutions” (HEERA 3561(b)); and

WHEREAS The current CSU Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents asserts that the “purpose of the campus visit is to encourage candidates to remain interested in pursuing the presidency by engaging in ideas with campus constituents groups and through promotion of the campus and the community” and that the campus visit “generates a foundation for the new president’s success on campus”; and

WHEREAS Each member campus of the California State University (CSU) system displays a unique culture and embodiment of shared governance, the understanding and appreciation of which requires immediate and first-hand experience; and

WHEREAS The engagement and support of faculty, staff and students is essential to the success of any president; and

WHEREAS Arriving on campus without the support and legitimacy provided in part by the process of campus visits would put the chosen candidate for president at a significant disadvantage in building a successful transition; and

WHEREAS Despite well-reasoned legislative mandates, best practice in higher education and its own long-standing practice, the CSU Board of Trustees is proposing the elimination of the campus visit for final candidates for CSU presidents, in direct opposition to its own stated goals in both the current and proposed policy to “generate confidence in the selection process and garner local support for the eventual appointee”;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED That the Academic Senate of San Francisco State University adamantly oppose any elimination of the campus visit in the selection of presidents in the CSU and strongly urge the CSU Board of Trustees to continue past practice as articulated in its current policy; and be it further

RESOLVED That the Academic Senate of San Francisco State University distribute copies of this Resolution to Chancellor Reed, to the CSU Board of Trustees via Chair Carter, and to the CSU Academic Senate via Chair Postma.
September 19, 2011

From: Rachel Fernflores
       Academic Senate Chair
       Cal Poly State University
       1 Grand Avenue
       San Luis Obispo, CA

To: Chancellor Reed
       California State University
       Office of the Chancellor
       401 Golden Shore
       Long Beach, CA

RE: Proposed Changes to Presidential Search Policy and Presidential Candidate Campus Visits

Dear Chancellor Reed:

I understand that the CSU Board of Trustees (BOT) is considering revising the policy on presidential searches such that presidential candidate campus visits would be optional, not mandatory, as part of the presidential search process. Unlike many of the CSU campuses, such as Long Beach, Stanislaus, San Marcos, and San Diego, the San Luis Obispo Cal Poly Academic Senate does not have time to consider a resolution regarding the CSU BOT discussion and decision on September 20th and 21st about the proposed change to the Presidential Search Policy and candidate campus visits. I have been approached by many faculty and staff members to say something about the proposed change. Consequently, while I cannot speak with the voice of the full Academic Senate, I am compelled to express my concerns, which echo what many Cal Poly colleagues have expressed to me.
I share with colleagues and Academic Senates at the many CSU institutions the concern that the proposed change opens the door to diminished shared governance and transparency between the Office of the Chancellor, prospective campus presidents, and the campuses. Furthermore, I share, too, the concerns expressed through the multiple CSU campus resolutions that electing to apply the proposed change making presidential candidate campus visits optional could deprive prospective presidents in the search phase of the opportunity to grasp campus issues in a meaningful way and begin important relationships with campus members and constituencies.

As you know, Cal Poly benefitted recently from presidential candidate visits, in spring of 2010 and again in the fall of 2010. Our first search was a failed search and our second resulted in the appointment of Dr. Jeffery Armstrong as President. While the candidates that came to campus during the first search were certainly worthy, it was not until we had the campus visits and campus feedback that we realized as a consultative search committee that the candidates we chose as finalists were not then the best fit for Cal Poly. It was only with the second group of candidates who came to campus, after a new search and a valuable interlude with our interim president, President Glidden, that the campus told us strongly and clearly that we had found people who would be a good fit for Cal Poly today.

The Cal Poly presidential candidate visits were both successful for several reasons. First, the campus gleaned with greater clarity than it could have what kinds of characteristics our president needs. Second, the campus visits helped to cement strong collegial relationships between members of the BOT who served on our presidential search committees and campus members on the committee and beyond. Cal Poly was proud to showcase our campus to the presidential candidates, but also to the BOT members who took the time to come to our campus while the candidates visited. Third, the visits were an example of a shared commitment to transparency between prospective candidates, the Office of the Chancellor, and the campuses.

I admit to having some difficulties imagining circumstances that would lead to a successful presidency, especially in these difficult times, for any candidate who chose to begin her tenure by privileging her own desire for anonymity over beginning a relationship with a campus through dialogue, openness, and transparency. Perhaps the reason for the proposed change is a fear that search committee members might leak the names of the candidates in the interim between interviews and campus visits? Unfortunately, there is always a risk that members of any committee will leak information during any point of the confidential phase. That risk is not addressed, though, by denying campuses the opportunity to meet prospective presidents. Committee members should not leak information during the confidential phase of a search, but it is difficult to see how failing to have campus visits renders inert committee members who would choose to violate this basic principle of participation. It is even conceivable that appointing a president without having the campus visits could lead to more leaks, not fewer, if committee members feel strongly about the lack of shared governance and transparency such an appointment would signal. In any event, if the intent of the proposed change is to address fear of leaks, it is unclear how it does so.
In closing, I hope that the proposed change to make the campus visits optional is not endorsed for the reasons I have set out. Additionally, I think the presidential campus visits are one of the many examples worth preserving of how the CSU is different from the UC system.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this memo.

Sincerely,

Rachel Fernflores, Ph.D.
Academic Senate Chair
Cal Poly State University
San Luis Obispo, CA
93401

E-mail: rfernflo@calpoly.edu
Phone: 805-756-2330

Copies:
Resolution on Selection of Presidents in The California State University

WHEREAS, The Higher Education Employer-Employee Relations Act provides that “the Legislature recognizes that joint decision-making and consultation between administration and faculty or academic employees is the long-accepted manner of governing institutions of higher learning and is essential to the performance of the educational missions of these institutions” [HEERA 3561(b)]; and

WHEREAS, The current CSU Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents asserts that the “purpose of the campus visit is to encourage candidates to remain interested in pursuing the presidency by engaging in ideas with campus constituents groups and through promotion of the campus and the community” and that the campus visit “generates a foundation for the new president’s success on campus”; and

WHEREAS, Each member campus of the California State University (CSU) system displays a unique culture and embodiment of shared governance, the understanding and appreciation of which requires immediate and first-hand experience; and

WHEREAS, The engagement and support of faculty, staff and students is essential to the success of any president; and

WHEREAS, Arriving on campus without the support and legitimacy provided in part by the process of campus visits would put the chosen candidate for president at a significant disadvantage in building a successful transition; and

WHEREAS, Despite well-reasoned legislative mandates, best practice in higher education and its own historical practice, the CSU Board of Trustees is proposing a change to the long-standing practice of campus visits for final candidates for CSU presidents, in direct opposition to its own stated goals in both the current and proposed policy to “generate confidence in the selection process and garner local support for the eventual appointee”; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Academic Senate of California State University San Marcos adamantly oppose the proposed change to the current practice of including a campus visit in the selection of presidents in the CSU and strongly urge the CSU Board of Trustees to continue past practice as articulated in its current policy; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Academic Senate of California State University San Marcos distribute copies of this Resolution to CSUSM Associated Students Inc., Chancellor Reed, to the CSU Board of Trustees, and to the CSU Academic Senate.

Adapted from the resolution passed by Academic Senate of San Francisco State University on September 6, 2011.
Resolution In Opposition to Proposed Revision to the CSU Presidential Selection Process

Resolved: That the Sonoma State University Academic Senate oppose the proposed revision to the Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents that would eliminate campus visits by the final slate of candidates for a campus presidency; and be it further

Resolved: That this resolution be sent to the Board of Trustees, the Chancellor, the Academic Senate CSU and all CSU Campus Senates.

Rationale

The current Board of Trustees Policy for the Selection of Presidents provides for campus visits by the final slate of candidates for a campus presidency. While not a formal part of the evaluation process, the visit is designed to encourage candidate interest in the position through engaging in dialogue with the campus community. At their September meeting, the Board of Trustees will consider a revision to the selection policy that would eliminate the requirement for a campus visit.*

Eliminating campus visits would greatly diminish the role of the campus community in the presidential search process and make it virtually impossible for campus constituencies to provide meaningful feedback to members of the Advisory Committee to the Trustees Committee for Selection of the President. In the absence of a campus visit, and with reliance solely upon the input of the Advisory Committee, the depth and breadth of consultation provided for in the current policy disappears.

Campus presidents are presented with a wide variety of difficult challenges. The California State University should take advantage of any opportunity to allow potential presidents to meet all members of the campus community, develop an understanding of the challenges they may face, and build support in their respective communities. Arriving on campus without having the support and legitimacy provided by such a process would put the chosen candidate at a significant disadvantage in building a successful transition.

*The current policy can be viewed here
http://www.calstate.edu/bot/agendas/Aug11/3_CURRENTPOLICYfortheSelectionofPresidents.pdf

*The proposed policy can be viewed here
http://www.calstate.edu/bot/agendas/Aug11/2_PROPOSEDNEWPOLICYforSelectionofPresidents.pdf

*Press release from the CSU:

Approved by the Senate 9/1/11
14/AS/11/SEC Resolution on President Searches
(Sense of the Senate)

Resolved: That the Academic Senate, California State University, Stanislaus urges the Board of Trustees [BoT] to continue the past presidential search policy and current practice of having on-campus interviews for finalists as a part of the selection process, and be it further,

Resolved: That this resolution be distributed to Chancellor Reed, the Board of Trustees via Chair Carter and to Academic Senate, California State University Chair Postma.

Rationale: The Board of Trustees is currently considering changes to extant policy on presidential compensation and hiring policies. Historically presidential candidates have visited the campus they were candidates at and held targeted meetings with administrators, faculty and staff and also held open forums for the campus community. The loss of campus visits ensconced in proposed policy changes would greatly diminish the role of the campus community in the presidential search process and would rob candidates of the ability to meet all members of the campus community, including administrators, faculty, staff, students and community members. Campus presidents are presented with a wide variety of difficult challenges, and clearly we should take advantage of any opportunity to allow those presidents to build support in their respective communities.