

Nov. 28, 2023

Good afternoon, the email below was just sent to the campus community

Dear YSU Community,

We want to address the concerns regarding transparency and inclusivity with the presidential search and to clarify the approach we undertook.

The first thing to note is that we started this process knowing that we had big shoes to fill with Jim Tressel stepping down. Our number one priority was to ensure that we find a strong leader to continue to build upon the successes of President Tressel. Specifically, leadership; fundraising; expanding regional recognition; and building relationships with students, the community, and government relations. With that in mind, we needed to conduct a search that would bring us the strongest candidates possible.

Search Process

- First, we sought input from the entire YSU community with over 600 stakeholders responding. Based on this input, we developed the [qualities and skills](#) essential to a successful president.
- Next, we enlisted the expertise of, a national search firm, [WittKiefer](#). ***The professionals at WittKiefer, one of the top five search firms in the country, remained steadfast in their counsel that we conduct a confidential search in order to attract the most qualified candidates.*** WittKiefer indicated that YSU's process was one of the most open confidential searches they have seen.
- This was a confidential search, **not** a closed or secret search as more than 20 campus constituents were included in the process.
- The decision to use a confidential search is not unique to YSU. Higher education has moved toward a confidential search with a broad but limited group of constituents as part of the process.
- This confidential approach was shared with the campus community. In August, we launched the [Presidential Search website](#) and sent an [email to the campus community](#) (Aug. 24, 2023) outlining the process and next steps, including our intentions to ensure the confidentiality of this search.

Hiring Process

- WittKiefer presented a slate of potential candidates to the Presidential Search Guidance committee, considering candidate credentials.
- The committee discussed and reviewed the slate of candidates, narrowing the pool of candidates.
- A first round of candidate interviews took place.
- The candidate pool was then narrowed again and finalists were identified. Finalists toured campus and the Pollock House (the president's residence).
- The finalists were interviewed by the full board of trustees (including student and global).
- Finalists were also interviewed by the constituency group, made up of four vice presidents; the provost and vice provost; the academic senate past and incoming chair; a dean; and leadership of police, human resources, and the YSU Foundation.
- The constituency group's feedback and comments were considered during the board's final deliberations.

November 16 - "Emergency Meeting"

- A special meeting was planned for Tuesday, November 21 when on Thursday, November 16 we learned that some candidates' information may have been made public. To ensure the integrity of the process and continued confidentiality of the candidates, we scheduled a meeting.
- Per the YSU Board of Trustees' bylaws, any meeting convened with less than 48 hours' notice is designated as an "Emergency Meeting." Since this meeting fell within that 48-hour window, it was necessary to classify it as such.

This process was thorough, followed the current best-practice advice from our search firm WittKiefer, and was conducted with the utmost integrity. We assure you that every step was taken with the best interests of YSU at heart.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Peterson, Chair of the Board of Trustees