

# AGENDA

ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH AND SCREEN COMMITTEE MEETING

**March 21, 2017**

EPICENTER- Collaborative Labs, ~~Beach Lab~~ Tropics Lab  
13805 – 58<sup>th</sup> Street N  
CLEARWATER, FLORIDA

4:00 PM

I. Call to Order

Terrence E. Brett  
Committee Chair

Mr. Brett called the meeting to order and thanked the guests, staff and committee members for attending. He announced that Dr. Andrea Kelly would be joining the meeting soon and that Mr. Bill McCloud would not be attending but he had sent in his candidate choices to Dr. Hockaday.

Committee members in attendance were: Mr. Terrence Brett, Chair; Dr. Jeff Hockaday, Consultant; Mr. Deveron Gibbons, Trustee; Dr. Andrea Kelly, Chair, College of Education; Dr. Albert Farr, Chair, Department of Communications; Ms. Alexis Deveaux, Student; Mr. Nathan Stonecipher, Trustee; Dr. Rich Mercadante, President, Faculty Governance Organization; Mr. Bob Fine, Former Trustee; Ms. Janette Hunt, Director of Budget & Compliance; Mr. Eric Gonzalez-Franco, Student; Mr. Ken Burke, Former Trustee; Ms. Jeanne Trimble, Chair, Career Service Employee Council.

II. Opening Comments

Mr. Brett

Mr. Brett thanked the Search and Selection Committee members. He told the Committee that the original plan was for Mr. Brett and Dr. Hockaday to review the initial applications and forward 20 or so candidates to the Committee. Mr. Brett and Dr. Hockaday invited Dr. Rich Mercadante to join in the initial review of all 52 received applications. Together, they reached consensus on 20 applicants to present to the Committee. He explained that, after two applicants withdrew, there were now 18 remaining applicants.

Mr. Brett reminded the Committee about the Sunshine Laws in Florida. He told them that they may not discuss any of the candidates with any other member of the Committee outside of the Committee meetings.

Mr. Gibbons added that everything the members of the Committee do reflects back on the College as a whole. He stressed that the Board wants a clean, fair and equitable process.

### III. Selection of the Presidential Semi-Finalists

Dr. Jeff Hockaday  
Search Consultant

Dr. Hockaday told the Committee members that there are many ways to handle this process, but that it was the desire of the Board to keep it as simple as possible. He stressed that a key piece of the chosen approach was that each Committee member would have an equally important opinion. He told the Committee that their vote could result in advancing anywhere from nine to twelve candidates if that is what the Committee decided to do. Each of the 18 candidates' names was written on a whiteboard at the front of the room in alphabetical order. Dr. Hockaday asked each Committee member to write a check mark next to the names of the candidates that they would like to advance to the semi-finalist group.

This is the result of the Committee members' vote:

Candidate Name	Check Marks
Frank Biafora	10
Ed Bonahue	11
Michael Calvert	9
Joseph Campbell	3
James Connolly	0
Douglas Fiore	5
Dennis Harkins	7
Gaby Hawatt	5
James Henningsen	11
James Klauber	5
Kirk Nooks	8
Jim Ostrow	4
Gregory Sedrick	2
Brian Van Horn	4
John Vassilliou	5
Stan Vittetoe	9
Jean Wihbey	8
Tonjua Williams	12

Mr. Gibbons moved to accept seven of the top nine candidates to advance to the semi-final list. After a brief debate, Mr. Burke moved to advance the top nine candidates. Mr. Stonecipher seconded the motion and the Committee voted unanimously to pass the motion to advance nine candidates. The following nine candidates were advanced to the next stage of the process: Frank Biafora, Ed Bonahue, Michael Calvert, Dennis Harkins, James Henningsen, Kirk Nooks, Stan Vittetoe, Jean Wihbey and Tonjua Williams.

Mr. Brett told the Committee that the next step would be for Ms. Deborah Boyle, Chief of Staff to the President, to inform these nine semi-finalists that they have

advanced in the process and that they should submit a video of their responses to three questions that were determined by the Committee. Mr. Brett said that the goal of the next meeting was to narrow the list of candidates down to between three and five finalists. The meeting will be held at the St.Pete/Gibbs Campus at the St. Petersburg Collegiate High School on April 6, 2017, at 4:00p.m.

Dr. Hockaday instructed the Committee members to review the videos and come to the next meeting with their three to five recommended finalists and that this process of check marks would be repeated.

Mr. Burke commented that, because of the Sunshine Laws, the Committee members do not have the opportunity to speak outside the meetings. He said he would welcome additional input that might convince him to change his mind on his selections. Dr. Farr agreed that he would welcome that conversation. Mr. Brett asked Dr. Hockaday how the Committee might incorporate discussion into the next meeting.

Dr. Hockaday responded that it might be dangerous to put the discussion into the meeting because the process was built on the belief that every individual member has an opinion and that if some other Committee member influences another, then it is no longer an individual's opinion. He said that if each Committee member does their best work, the best candidate will emerge.

Dr. Mercadante stated that when he was reviewing over 50 applications, he found it helpful to send the names to the faculty who immediately began to research the names on the list and raised red flags to him that he would have otherwise missed. He felt that getting other input might influence the Committee's decisions in a positive way.

Dr. Hockaday responded that he felt he was right about this process and that the information that Dr. Mercadante got on one candidate was totally incorrect and after Dr. Mercadante raised a question to Dr. Hockaday, the information was clarified.

Mr. Gibbons commented that Mr. Brett had engaged Dr. Hockaday to guide the Committee through the process and that he thought that the Committee should take Dr. Hockaday's advice. He asked the Committee to do their homework and come to the next meeting with their list. He stressed that there is a process and he did not want it to be challenged.

Dr. Mercadante said that Dr. Hockaday told him that he received bad information. Dr. Mercadante stated that the Committee meeting was the perfect forum to examine the evidence because he would not have known without the interaction. Dr. Hockaday responded that he had called Dr. Mercadante with the information and has the certified documents saying the information was incorrect.

Mr. Brett asked the Committee to bring this issue to a vote. Mr. Burke said that he felt the Committee did not need to vote on this. He stated that he had only looked at the information that was provided in the Committee's binder and suggested that when the three to five semi-finalists are determined that it would then be

appropriate to have further discussions. Mr. Fine added that since there are two sitting Board Trustees on the Committee, they might want to hear the other members' opinions.

Dr. Hockaday informed the Committee that there is an unwritten rule to not stir up the candidate's current situations by digging too deeply until the final stage is reached. He said that now that the list has been reduced to nine, it is time to start doing deeper research. He reassured the Committee that, after seeing the videos, they would have an easier time selecting finalists. Mr. Fine said he would like to have further discussion before the next vote.

Dr. Farr commented that by not having that discussion, it was bordering on irresponsibility. He said he would like to make a motion to have a discussion before deciding on the top three to five. He requested that the discussion be about the top nine candidates at the current meeting.

Mr. Brett asked for a second. Dr. Mercadante seconded the motion. Before voting, Mr. Gibbons asked Mr. Lang, Attorney to the Board of Trustees, if there were any harmful legal issues that might come from that discussion. Mr. Lang responded that there might be and Mr. Gibbons asked that the discussion be postponed until the next meeting so that Mr. Lang, Mr. Brett and Dr. Hockaday could agree on a framework for the discussion.

Dr. Farr amended his motion to continue the discussion about the nine remaining candidates at the next meeting. Mr. Burke said that he thought the Committee could address Mr. Gibbons' concern if the Committee members limit themselves to the materials and videos that are provided to them within the Committee. Mr. Gibbons agreed.

Dr. Mercadante raised his concern that the materials are marketing materials and some pertinent information might be excluded. Mr. Gibbons said that this process is not a witch hunt and asked Dr. Mercadante not to bully the Committee. He noted that the motion had been amended and asked for a vote. He added that the discussion would happen. Dr. Mercadante said he had no intention of bullying anyone but that his concern was that Dr. Hockaday would be the only one to get the information.

Mr. Gibbons stated that Dr. Mercadante was questioning the integrity of the Board and that Dr. Hockaday would let every Committee member know of any information that they would need to know.

Dr. Hockaday said he would not rock the boat for anyone who is not being considered as a candidate. He stated that he would research information on all of the remaining candidates and would call every Committee member individually to discuss them. He said it was private, legal and not advertised on the Internet. He said he would share the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate privately and individually.

Dr. Farr commented that the Board is doing the hiring and that it was not up to the Committee to vet the candidates because the Committee could be wrong.

Mr. Brett asked Dr. Farr to repeat his motion. Dr. Farr moved that before choosing the final three to five candidates that would be presented to the Board, the Committee would have a discussion before they vote at the next meeting. Dr. Mercadante seconded the motion.

Before voting, Mr. Stonecipher cautioned the group that each person's opinion is different and the Committee was trying to get a consensus based on a broad picture of each candidate. He said he was fine with moving forward with the language in place. He added that each Committee member's opinion is their vote and that it worked out well in today's meeting.

Ms. Hunt raised the concern that there would be a consensus on one or two opinions. She said that the process worked when Dr. Law was hired and that she trusted Dr. Hockaday's expertise. She said she was not comfortable with Committee members swaying others on the Committee to change their minds. Ms. Hunt stated that everyone's opinion should count and that if the Committee members do their due diligence, she felt they would have their three to five candidates.

Mr. Brett added that there were four final candidates when the Board selected the last president and that there was healthy discussion then. He asked for a vote on Dr. Farr's motion to have a discussion at the next meeting about the nine candidates before the Committee voted to select the top three to five finalists. Three members voted in favor, seven opposed the motion. The motion failed to pass.

## VI. Next Steps

Dr. Hockaday

Ms. Deveaux asked which questions would be answered by the candidates on the videos they would submit. Dr. Hockaday responded that the first question is, "Why do you want to be president of St. Petersburg College?" The second question is, "During your first 90 days as president, what would you be particularly interested in accomplishing?" The third question is, "Describe your leadership traits." Dr. Hockaday added that the video would tell each Committee member more about the candidates than anything else. He said the Committee members should ask themselves, "Would that person look right in front of the students, faculty or Board?" He assured the Committee members that the decision would be easier after viewing the videos.

Dr. Hockaday added that part of his job is to respond to any questions that any Committee member might have and that he would find the answers and report back to every Committee member.

Mr. Brett commented that the Committee had a good discussion. He added that it was nice the people felt so strongly about the process. Ms. Boyle informed the Committee members that the videos would be posted on the Search and Selection Committee site on April 5<sup>th</sup>.

V. Adjournment

Mr. Brett

Mr. Brett adjourned the meeting at 5:16p.m.

If any person wishes to appeal a decision made with respect to any matter considered by the Board at its meeting March 21, 2017 he or she will need a record of the proceedings. It is the obligation of such person to ensure a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, §286.0105, Florida Statutes.

Items summarized on the Agenda may not contain full information regarding the matter being considered. Further information regarding these items may be obtained by calling the Board Clerk at (727) 341-3241.

Date Advertised: March 13, 2017