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

CSUSB Faculty Senate

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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**

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 Jodie Ullman, Chair

September 21, 2011

Date

This endorsement will be distributed to the Chancellor, to the Board of Trustees, to the ASCSU, and to all campus senates.