

FSEC Meeting With Board of Regents, 11/19/09

In attendance:

<i>Paul Abegg (PA) (FSEC)</i>	<i>Nate Jensen (NJ) (Student Committee)</i>
<i>Jerry Atkin (JA) (BoR)</i>	<i>Munir Mahmud (MM) (FSEC)</i>
<i>Georgine Bills (GB) (FSEC)</i>	<i>Tom McNeilis (TM) (FSEC)</i>
<i>Deborah Connely (DCn)</i>	<i>Jed Pitcher (JP) (BoR)</i>
<i>Gary Cooper (GC) (FSEC)</i>	<i>Shane Prine (SP) (FSEC)</i>
<i>Dennis Cox (DCx) (Staff Assoc.)</i>	<i>Ed Reber (ER) (FSEC)</i>
<i>Jerry Harris (sec.) (JH) (FSEC)</i>	<i>Cory Reeves (CR) (Staff Assoc.)</i>
<i>Dianne Hirning (DH) (FSEC)</i>	<i>David Roos (DR)</i>
<i>Caroline Holm (CH) (Staff Assoc.)</i>	<i>Bill Sederberg (BS) (Commissioner's Office)</i>
<i>Chizu Jaret (CJ) (FSEC)</i>	<i>Claudia West (CW) (Staff Assoc.)</i>
<i>Randy Jasmine (RJ) (FSEC)</i>	<i>Dennis Wignall (DW) (FSEC)</i>
<i>Spencer Jenkins (SJ) (Commissioner's Office)</i>	<i>Jack Zenger (JZ) (BoR)</i>

(began with roundtable introductions)

JP: President Nadauld has been in his position here for 20 months. Our procedure at the Regents level requires that we do a fact-finding check on the efficiency of his leadership/administration – we are only listening today and will not make any decisions, but would like input from all on how he's doing. Before we start, I call on Commissioner Sederberg for opening comments.

BS: (introduction of self) Today we are here to assess from the perspective of a continuity of leadership issue – to maintain what we (in my office) feel as positive movement here in Dixie. What we hear is always quite upbeat & has good momentum, and how do we keep that up. After being president of two institutions & the one that brought the search process to UVU, I'm a big fan of search committees because they build credibility in a candidate when they come in. But there are other ways to select candidates, and someone that's been here 20 months...

JA: President Nadauld has some willingness to continue, and we want to know whether or not we need to start a search tomorrow or ask him to stay on longer.

DCx: The Staff Association has not made many remarks, so I think they're mostly satisfied with his performance; a few comments I've had have said that they want him out; most others were positive.

DW: There are two issues before us: (1) President Nadauld's leadership, and (2) the process of installing/retaining him. I just conducted a vote with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC): 13 voted, 1 declined, for retention and his leadership on our campus. But this was ONLY FSEC – this has not gone to the general faculty. The feeling along both those lines is that his leadership is excellent – enrollment growth, raises, proposals before the Regents for new programs, phenomenal growth, and President Nadauld has played a key role in all of this, no question. However, we have an issue with the process that put him into position and is keeping him here. Personally, my view is that a few faculty call him a “lame duck” (because he is interim) – my interpretation of that is that if we start a search, he becomes “lame duck” by default. He has indicated that he would like to remain for a short term period. In order to sustain continuity, growth, and what is best for the school in the short term, I feel strongly that he should stay. I don't care what label he has (“interim,” etc.) – what the search process does is take one or more years, plus time and money and the fact that program proposals before the Regents will be suspended, which will stunt growth – those are negatives for the campus. We are now flourishing and we all have high-level investment in that. I want the BoR to join us and keep this going.

JA: Clarification, please: interim vs. president is not our biggest issue today, but if we suspended the rules and appointed him without a search, we could do that, or just continue to label him as “interim.” “Search” and “permanent president” don't necessarily go together. Without a search, we could (1) not appoint him, or (2) appoint him. We don't need to do search to appoint him.

DW: One faculty member I have heard from felt that President Nadauld was having a problem being responsive to faculty needs because he's interim. But I don't agree – we're hiring, we got raises, so I think he's clearly been responsive to faculty needs and issues. Some faculty seem to be having a problem dissociating “interim” and the search process and have intertwined them and cannot evaluate them separately.

JZ: In your estimation, what proportion of the faculty have this position?

DW: I'm calling for a vote this weekend, but I anticipate that a strong majority will support his leadership. I haven't heard from any faculty that say he's *not* doing a good job, but there's a clear bifurcation between his work and the process.

RJ: In my department, all have supported his leadership but would like to see an immediate search. Part of the problem is that as far as the process goes, there are people that feel that the nature of this meeting today is “secret” and that it continues a process they're not happy with. So I agree with DW: no one has complained about President Nadauld, but many still want a search.

JZ: Immediately? Or in the future?

RJ: Immediately.

ER: My department thinks he should be a candidate in a search. We do need to have a sense of permanence and vision from someone that *intends* to be here. One of our concerns is that President

Nadauld has indicated that he'd only like to be here a couple more years, so a search would need to begin very soon.

JA: What about extending President Nadauld's term and starting a search in a year or so?

DW: You've described the confusion in the faculty! One of the reasons I'm calling for a vote is to give options of "search now," "search later," "have President Nadauld be involved in that or not" – I am still driven by success and what's best for the institution. A search now would mean upheaval and movement slows down as a result.

JZ: Have your colleagues understood that a search process puts things on hold – the time for a search, for a new person to get the lay of land, etc. – that needs to be balanced with [the alternatives].

RJ: Yes, I think they've taken that into account.

JA: I'm unclear – the minority wants a search *today*?

BS: Question: what would you be looking for in a search that is a weakness with President Nadauld?

RJ: What ER said: the desire for someone that has permanence, a long-term vision, etc.

DCn: We've had a lot of upheaval recently, and I'd hate to see more upheaval. If he's doing a good job, and we can continue his vision for a few more years, then I'm confident that my group would vote for that.

DR: My sense is that, for the first time, my area (recruiting, financial aid, etc.), we're really excited with our prospects and marketing the institution, and we now have lots of good stories to give prospective students. For example, we have the lowest international enrollment; I brought this to President Nadauld, we brainstormed about it on the spot, and now he has actions moving to resolve this – I think his vision is extraordinary, so I echo what's been said that if we can get him to stay, we'd be better off.

DH: Question: with accreditation coming up, how would having an interim or a search in progress impact that? Does it have a role in that?

BS: I think has a role but isn't a huge issue because presidents are always in flux across campuses. The accreditation team for Dixie now would see it as a plus for us to have more stability at the top only because we're in the transition stage from a two to a four year institution.

ER: I wonder if maybe some are feeling that at least there is the *response* to the need – a date set for when a search would happen – maybe that would help...?

BS: But we want to avoid the "lame duck" thing, because then games start to get played (not here, but I've seen it elsewhere) – it really hurts someone. I think that would be counterproductive.

ER: Is there the same effect if *he* (President Nadauld) says he doesn't want to be here for more than two more years?

BS: Yes, but only if he runs around announcing that, and he won't make that mistake!

DW: ER identified something here: the lack of information – that vacuum allows innuendo, gossip, etc. to arise, and then by repetition that becomes the way of seeing things. I'm troubled by this; the more open all of this is, the less we have to fear about that. The same thing happened with how the U of U affiliation was announced – it came as a big surprise all of a sudden.

JA: What can we do?

DW: Announce to the faculty that you're here, what you're here to do, what you're going to do, etc. – talk to all the representatives – they are the flow of information – the minute you hide from people, the gossip starts.

BS: But that's just not right! We are meeting with 70 people today, we've publicized it, etc. – the argument that this is a secret isn't true.

DW: When FSEC met with President Nadauld two weeks ago, he asked us as a preface to hold what he shared with us in confidence; one item was this meeting.

BS: But once I made one phone call, in this small town, word spread quickly.

GB: In retrospect, the delicacy part of his request may really have only been intended to apply to his plan to only be here for two years or so, not the rest of what we discussed in that meeting...

BS: I'm just defending our role as Regents.

DCn(?): Two things: (1) it would have been nice if, from our institution, an e-mail went out announcing this meeting – I only found out through an article in the Dixie Sun; and (2) I wanted to voice what DR said: I like the momentum that President Nadauld has going; it's dynamic, and he gets right to point when he talks – if he's going to be here for the next two years, maybe if we cemented him as president, rather than an interim, then he will be committed in *our* minds and we won't have as many concerns about what will happen in the future.

DCx: The Staff Association *did* announce this meeting to its members – our concern is about how President Nadauld *got* the job...but that's in the past, and we have to move forward, even though a very few people have said we need to do a search. We appreciate what he has done to help us to grow. (CH, DCx, CR excused.)

GC: One thing that's become apparent to me is that as a faculty body, we tend to voice our preferences as if we're the only ones that matter -- that needs to happen sometimes; I came here in President Nadauld's first year, and he's done a great job of bringing the community at large back around the college. It seemed like they were at odds with us, and now there's more of a community feeling (which has strong sense of ownership with the school) that they're more a part of the process again. President Nadauld has done a great job on that front; from that perspective, it makes us more a part of the community that is our mission.

DCn: Of all the people I've spoken with, I haven't heard one negative comment.

RJ: I've also had opportunity to serve as the athletic representative, and have therefore worked closely with President Nadauld – speaking for myself, what he has done to resolve long-standing problems in the athletic department has been outstanding – having gone through similar things at Weber, that has helped him be terrific here as well. This has all been behind the scenes and no one else has seen this, and there's still a long way to go, but he's got it going in right direction.

TM: Since President Nadauld has been here, retention among students has gone way up, and that's a real positive momentum we have going. My opinion is that we need to continue this; stopping could mean reverting to what we had before.

BS: I admit a bias since I've been interim before: what do you think his response would be if we went out there and told him we're going to do a search?

TM: He probably wouldn't go through it.

DCn: He said as much in his Dixie Sun interview.

PA: in visiting with faculty in and out of my department, the general consensus I have is that he's done a lot for this institution, but that previous presidents have played key parts too. What the faculty would like to know is that there *is* a plan and what that plan is, even if there's no timeline...we want to know that when President Nadauld is finished doing what he wants to do that there *will* be a proper search and that when that happens, faculty input will be sought.

JZ: Is there a faculty sense that faculty *hasn't* had input in past presidential searches?

PA: Not that I know of.

ER: As the most ancient person in here, I can say that there have been a few times when the top choice of a presidential search committee has not been followed, but once a person comes in and does good job, that resentment gets resolved. But there is an expectation that there *would* be a search.

DW: The sticking point is a date – if people know that President Nadauld will serve to some point and then will retire, that's not different than any other president! If we impose a date for a search...if instead we say that whenever he will step down, that's when the search will be performed.

JA & JZ: That's how we'd do it anyway, maybe we just need to state that.

BS: That's not difficult at all. We're also taking a look at our total policy structure to see what bits can be delegated. One of those is the role of the BoR in the selection of a president. But the BoR will always seek faculty input.

ER: I think we're talking about openness: even a letter we received (that staff did share amongst each other): the discussion in that meeting about economic circumstances...besides the procedure that

brought this installment, there was a sense that there was a promise of “interim-ness” – a year, next Aug., whatever – the perception is of a procedural lapse.

JZ: What advice would you give to the BoR at this moment?

DR: I’d say make him president and only do search when he’s ready to leave.

TM: I’d second that.

ER: If you bypass the search and just install him as president, everyone I’ve talked to would be resentful of that.

DR GB, others: I don’t think it would be “many.”

JZ: What do these “others” think we should do?

ER: I don’t know.

GB: I’m probably the newest one here, and I see a lot of angst about the way the past president was removed, but no one disagrees that President Nadauld has done a wonderful job that needs to go forward. I don’t think there’s a majority, *overriding* concern to start a search. But I understand why some people feel there should be.

DH: They put in their messages that he’s doing a good job, but that the search process wasn’t right – that’s where the animosity stems from.

DW: “Search” abrogates tension & anxiety about the previous event about the removal of our past president and the installation of President Nadauld. It gives faculty a sense that they’re part of governance. But if he’s doing a great job, a search is a moot point – maybe we’d end up with someone worse!

JZ: About a 40% chance, based on statistics!

DW: If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.

BS: You’re going to survey the faculty?

DW: Yes, this weekend, via SurveyMonkey – I’ll give faculty a link to the survey; they’ll vote, and the site will give me results, and I’ll publish them. I will ask questions like “Should a search be conducted now?” “Should a search be put off until President Nadauld steps down?” “Would you make a vote of confidence for him based on his performance to date?” I have seen nothing that suggests he would *not* continue in the vein he’s in now – he is committed and wants to see things through. For example, the affiliation thing: President Nadauld sits here with important experience about gaining university status (from Weber) – that’s an opportunity for us, and it seems to me that it’s easier than affiliation with the U of U, and he has the BoR support to go our own way to university status.

DR: This all reminds me of the health care debate and surveys done on all sides of that – the phrasing of questions is important – asking “are you in favor of a search” is different from “are you in favor of search *now*” or other things.

JZ: That’s what I was getting at.

DW: I will have to frame the questions correctly.

PA: I would recommend that we keep what is best for students and campus at the forefront of any BoR actions at this point.

ER: There was a strong statement from students about this in the Dixie Sun, in an editorial by newspaper staff, that called for the BoR to perform a search.

NJ: I think that the *principle* of a search makes sense, but the leadership of President Nadauld makes *more* sense. I’ve been here four yrs and saw the past president at work; most other students haven’t, but they *have* seen the results by President Nadauld. To be blinded by a process is damaging. If we introduce issues that delay our ability to have positive educational experience, positive faculty-student interactions, etc. impedes our experience at college. I saw that with the affiliation issue, with the mascot issue, with Caldwell leaving – students ask why they’re here and what they’re getting out of it. President Nadauld brings credibility to the institution in students’ eyes – he gives them hope. And that’s what we care about, really – having a good, positive education.

BS: Observation for all: when President Nadauld was selected (before my time), he came to an uncertain campus – he wasn’t sure how long he wanted to hang around (six months, a year, etc.), but he’s come to be a Dixie guy. So the issue has changed: many interims just manage for a while, but President Nadauld is not like that – starting a search would, in my opinion, be a step backward. Let me conclude with this: a lot of this is up to *this* campus – we (the BoR) like President Nadauld, but if the campus said no, then we’d listen to that. At the end of the day, the issue is: do we have someone good for academics?

JZ: So what’s important for us is the process question – we want your sense on that: which comes first in your minds?

RJ: They would all agree that the person and the process are equally important – but in response to your question, the campus clearly says that President Nadauld should stay.

ER: I think that’s my take, too – as I mentioned before, if the faculty had seen the letter we saw earlier about your wrestling with this decision, that would have been helpful.

DW: One last observation: a faculty member said to me that under the extremely difficult circumstances he came in under, President Nadauld could have come in and just been a maintenance guy sitting on his butt, but he’s been exactly the opposite – he jumped in, rolled up sleeves, and got to work.

BS: We encourage all to speak up and share your thoughts & feelings with us.

JP: We have other groups to meet with today, and we'll make comments about the results of all this in January.