

Minutes
Wednesday, Sept. 30, 2020, 5 p.m.
Called Meeting of the CJC Faculty Senate

Attending: Kim Walsh-Childers, Cynthia Barnett, Mary Ann Ferguson, Carma Bylund, Carla Fisher, Huan Chen, Churchill Roberts, Spiro Kiouis

Also attending: Joseph Glover, Debbie Treise, Harrison Hove, Lyndsey Harris, Jody Hedge, Moon Lee, Janice Krieger, Herb Lowe, Tom Kelleher, Patrick Ford, Moni Basu, Mira Lowe, Joanna Hernandez, Mike Weigold, Matt Sheehan, Juliana Fernandex, Mickey Nall, Lylly Rodriguez, Ted Bridis, Ann Christiano, Myiah Hutchens, Jay Hmielawski, Ben Johnson, Ted Spiker, Marcia DiStaso

Walsh-Childers called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. She explained that Senate members would be offered the chance to comment first, followed by anyone else in attendance. In addition, she asked speakers to keep their comments succinct and noted that those who had not spoken would be given priority over individuals who already had offered comments.

Ferguson moved to suspend Robert's Rules of Order for purposes of this discussion. Roberts seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by Senate members in attendance.

Walsh-Childers explained that a faculty member had raised concerns that one of dean finalist candidate Mindy Marques had recently been demoted from her position at the *Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald* in the wake of controversy over the inclusion in *El Nuevo Herald* of a pre-printed advertising insert, *Libre*, in which a columnist had, on several occasions, included comments viewed as racist and anti-Semitic. She stated that the purpose of the agenda was to discuss what action, if any, the Senate should take in regard to this candidate's continued inclusion in the search process.

Ferguson asked that the faculty member who had raised the concern to summarize those concerns for those in the meeting. Weigold said he was concerned that this year's search had been conducted very differently from the previous dean search in which Diane McFarlin was selected as dean. He noted that, during the previous search, six finalists had made campus visits, while this time, only three finalists had been named. One of those finalists had been involved in a controversy that had been covered in the national press. Weigold expressed concern that including Marques as a dean finalist could put UF in a negative light and that faculty should have input in the selection of someone who might well lead the college for the next 10 years.

Barnett said she understood the concern about the pool of finalists being small, especially if the controversy in Miami impacts one of the candidates. However, she noted that all four departments had input into the search because the department chairs were all members and said the committee had done an excellent job of putting forward a diverse pool of candidates.

She said that, as a member of the college's special faculty advisory committee to the search, she favored seeking input from faculty and students about any concerns they might have about Marques' situation.

Bylund said Marques should be asked explicitly to address her involvement in the *El Nuevo Herald* controversy. In addition, another issue raised about the pool of finalists was that all three came from journalism backgrounds and that none holds a Ph.D. in a communication-related field. As a faculty member working primarily at the graduate level and in research, she said, she did not see herself represented in the pool of finalists.

Fisher noted that the initial complaint about racist comments in *Libre* led to a further review that found multiple instances of racist content targeting multiple groups. The second issue, she said, is that none of the candidates has a research record and that all represent only one of the college's disciplines.

Ferguson said it would have been better to have had this discussion earlier in the search process.

Roberts asked Glover to explain whether having one of the three finalists removed from the search would lead to a failed search. Glover declined to comment at that point.

Barnett recommended that the Senate adopt the approach of moving forward with the three finalists and having the special advisory committee ask Marques to explicitly address the *Libre* controversy. Walsh-Childers noted that the search committee chair has been very accommodating about adding time for the special advisory committee to meet with each of the candidates.

Glover said there were only three finalists by his request because that is the normal procedure for dean searches; the previous search was abnormal in bringing in six finalists. In his experience, the raising of last-minute concerns about finalists is how searches collapse because it has the effect of making other candidates view the faculty as unhappy or vindictive. He argued that the college would have nothing to lose by having Marques come to campus to give the faculty the opportunity to question her about the controversy and any other issues. He also said the faculty had had ample opportunity previously to offer input about applicants' qualifications.

Roberts said he had no interest in sabotaging a particular candidate but thought the faculty needed to discuss the implications of the fact that Marques' involvement in the controversy would be a major part of any news coverage of her selection as dean, if she was to be selected.

Lowe asked Provost Glover whether UF has ever had a search at this level in which all of the finalists were candidates of color. Glover said he could not recall any. Lowe expressed concern that it would send a very negative message about UF and the CJC if the dean search produced

three finalists who were people of color and the faculty deemed none of them acceptable. He argued that the faculty should trust the search committee's decision-making wisdom.

Lee asked whether it could be an option to re-open the search to bring in other applicants who had been in the second tier but were not selected as finalists. Glover said that after the finalists were selected, all others in the top tier were notified that they had not been selected; none of them would be likely to agree to continue in the search after that notification.

Lee asked whether the search committee had considered ensuring that the finalists would be in a position to enhance the CJC's reputation in graduate education, given that the provost has identified UF's reputation in graduate education as a key factor in moving UF into the Top 5 of public universities. Glover said the college already had had that conversation during the previous dean search. Selecting McFarlin as dean required a leap of faith that she could promote the graduate program effectively, he said, and her record shows that it worked.

Krieger asked when during the process the faculty had been able to offer input on the candidates, noting that she had not been aware of any previous opportunity before this meeting.

Glover said the search committee meetings were all open and announced. During the previous dean search, he said, faculty were very involved in reviewing every single candidate.

Krieger said she believed the current search was closed. Glover said that was not true; a closed search would violate the law and that the search chair, Dean Reid, had assured him the meetings were open. Moving forward, Glover said, all faculty will be asked to complete forms providing feedback on their assessment of the finalists. Those evaluations will be tabulated and reported to him. Thus, he said, there is plenty of opportunity for input.

Hove said it was made extremely clear within the college that the search committee meetings were closed.

Glover said he needed to know who had told faculty the search was closed, but added that faculty in the College of Journalism & Communications know that searches are open.

Spiker said that during faculty meetings, when he updated journalism faculty on the search, he told faculty that the search committee was trying to balance the need for confidentiality, because some applicants wanted to remain anonymous, and openness. No one was ever told not to make a public records request for information about the candidates. DiStaso said that the search committee members checked all along to determine if there was information they could bring back to their faculty and were told they should not discuss anything with the faculty until the finalists were named.

Walsh-Childers noted that multiple faculty commenting in the meeting chat confirmed that they had not been notified about search committee meetings.

Glover said faculty believe the search process is their process, but it is not; it's his. He expressed astonishment that faculty did not attend search committee meetings even if they had to submit public records requests to do so. He added that he didn't have time to listen to everyone's unhappiness with the search outcome, so the question remaining was whether the faculty want to move forward with the search or not.

Walsh-Childers noted that the issue of process is separate from what the Senate should do going forward. She suggested the Senate ask the special advisory committee to gather feedback from faculty on all of the candidates, with particular attention to the issue of what happened at the *Miami Herald/El Nuevo Herald*, and include that feedback in their conversation with Glover.

Kiousis said he hoped all faculty would engage with the finalists in collegial, respectful and professional ways. Walsh-Childers said it goes without saying that faculty will conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner.

Ferguson moved to adjourn; Roberts seconded, and the motion was adopted unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.