**Frequently Asked Questions**

**April 12, 2019**

**General Questions**

1. Why is Clark College seeking a new college president?

After 15 years at the College, on January 18, 2019, President Knight announced his plans to retire at the end of the 2018-2019 contract year, August 31, 2019. “While this is a decision that my wife and I have been weighing for some time, I wanted to see the college through its accreditation process before informing trustees and Executive Cabinet,” Knight wrote in an email to college employees. “On behalf of the entire Board of Trustees, I want to thank President Knight for his exemplary service during his 13 years leading Clark College,” said Royce Pollard, chair of the Clark College Board of Trustees. “For more than a decade, he has provided stability and vision that has allowed the college to grow, adapt, and serve its community.” More information on President Knight’s announcement President Knight retirement announcement, and additional reactions from the Board of Trustees January 23 Board of Trustees minutes.

2. Who gets to decide on a new president?

The [Clark College Board of Trustees](http://www.clark.edu/about/governance/leadership/board/index.php) is responsible for the selection of Clark College’s new president. While the [Board of Trustees has asked vice chair Jacobsen and trustee Speer to lead the process](01.23.2019%20BOT%20Minutes.pdf), decisions made by the board will be done as a full board.

3. We don’t often hire college presidents; how does the Board of Trustees know how to do this?

Presidential searches are the most important work that Boards do. We are not the first college to have been through a presidential search in recent years. The Deputy-Executive Director for Human Resources at the [Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges](https://www.sbctc.edu/) conducted a [briefing](02.26.19%20SBCTC%20President%20Search%20briefing.pptx) for the Board on February 26 outlining the typical process and best practices from across the system. The Board has also interviewed peer Trustees from several other colleges who have conducted successful presidential searches in recent years. Clark’s Board of Trustees includes individuals with backgrounds in executive recruiting in higher ed, the non-profit sector, the public-sector, and business – at the local, regional and national level. Finally, the Board appreciates the professional support it receives from the Human Resources, Administrative Services, Office of Diversity and Equity, and Communications teams here at the College, and the Attorney General’s Office through our local representative – all backed by their peers across the state system.

4. How important will be diversity be in the selection process?

The Board of Trustees is working to a regularly reviewed set of shared values for this process. Top on the list is to ***“Incorporate social equity in every step of the process (position description, search pools, screening process, final selection, & onboarding) including training support for all who participate in the process.***” More information on this can be found in the presentation material of each of the Board’s Special Meetings found on the process timeline [timeline](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search/timeline.php).

5. Will you be using a search firm to help in the process?

Yes. A Request for Proposals [(RFP No. 02-2018/2019)](RFP%20No%2002_20182019_Executive%20Search_President.pdf) was issued on March 29 to identify qualified firms that meet the requirements for our search. The Board of Trustees anticipates making a selection in early May.

6. For such an important role as President, shouldn’t there be an opportunity for others to participate in this process?

Yes, absolutely. Clark College, more than just a community college, is the “community’s college”. The Board of Trustees is committed to conducting a search that incorporates social equity at each step, is transparent, is inclusive, and adheres to RCW and college policies for hiring at this level.

Various opportunities to participate are being established including:

* conducting board meetings associated with the search in public unless exempted under RCW, including time for public comment,
* providing specific opportunity for input on position descriptions by constituents both inside and outside the college,
* selecting a search firm that has demonstrated the ability to conduct successful searches in an environment of shared governance, with an equity lens,
* conducting the presidential search in alignment with college [610.025 Appointment Procedures for President](610.025%20policy.pdf) which includes participation in the screening process by a diverse group of internal and external stakeholders,
* including constituents and others in the selection process for interim President,
* conducting campus forums and other outreach at various steps in the process,
* providing up to date information on the [Presidential Search Page](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search/), and
* providing a dedicated email address presidentialsearch@clark.edu to submit comments or suggestions for additional FAQ’s.

7. What is the timeline for all of this to take place on?

Please see our regularly updated [timeline](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search/timeline.php) including past events and resources, and coming events associated with the search.

**Questions About Interim President**

1. I’ve heard that there will be an interim president?

Yes, the Board of Trustees will be selecting an interim president to serve between the time President Knight departs at the end of August 2019 and when a permanent president begins, just prior to the start of 2020-21 academic year.

2. Why will there be an interim president?

The President plays a vital role in the leadership of the college, both internally and externally. The interim President ensures continuity of that leadership during the transition.

3. Why not just hire the permanent President right away?

The normal hiring cycle for college presidents takes place along the timeline of the academic year. Conducting presidential searches during the academic year maximizes the opportunity to access a broad set of qualified candidates, and maximizes the opportunity for the internal and external college community to participate in various aspects of the search process. Having an interim president also reduces pressure to rush to a decision, enabling a thoughtful and intentional search to be conducted for the right leader for the next chapter of the college.

4. What will the interim president be responsible for?

A position description for interim President has been drafted by the Board of Trustees and is currently under review by several constituent groups of the college. The final description is anticipated to be approved by the Board in their April 24, 2019 meeting.

5. Will the interim president be considered for the permanent position?

No. A best practice for interim presidents is that they not be eligible for the permanent position. This allows a neutral/objective interim to focus on critical tasks of the office of the President during the transition, and eliminates any appearance of preference in the selection of permanent president.

6. What if I want to apply, or know someone who might want to apply?

All letters of interest and applications will be administered through the [search firm](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search/search/search-consultant.php) that we anticipate selection of in May of 2019.

**Questions About Permanent President**

1. What will the permanent President be responsible for?

A position description for President will be published in the fall of 2019 as part of our work with the search firm selected. As with the position description for the interim President, the Board of Trustees will be seeking input from internal and external constituencies before publishing this. Early thoughts from the Board of Trustees on attributes of a new President can be found March 1 board presentation.

2. What if I want to apply, or know someone who might want to apply?

All letters of interest and applications will be administered through the [search firm](http://www.clark.edu/presidential-search/search/search-consultant.php) that we anticipate selection of in May of 2019.

**coQuestions about The Search Firm**

1. What will the search firm do and how will the selection of a firm be made?

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