

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
*May 24, 2017*

**PRESENT:** Trustees Mattera (chair), Chisholm, DeSimone, Duperval (arr. 3:13 pm), Katzman, Lutts, Malcolm, Murphy, Scott, and Segal. Also participating at the meeting were Board Secretary Lynne Montague and Assistant Secretary Katie Sadowski. Present but not participating in the discussion, President Patricia Maguire Meservey.

**ABSENT:** Trustee Stringer

The provisions of General Laws, Chapter 30A, having been complied with and a quorum of the Board being present, the Board of Trustees of Salem State University held a special meeting in Marsh Hall, Room 210, Central Campus, Loring Avenue, Salem, Massachusetts, on May 24, 2017, with Paul Mattera, Chair, presiding.

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**I. CALL TO ORDER**

*Call to Order*

Chair Mattera called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm

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**II. PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH OVERVIEW & REVIEW OF PROCESS**

*Overview & Review of Process*

Chair Mattera provided a brief overview of how the Board meeting would proceed. First, he, Chair Mattera, would provide an overview of the search process. Second, Witt Kieffer search consultant Lucy Leske would provide an overview of the candidates' backgrounds and campus survey results. Third, there would be twenty minutes of open forum and individuals who previously signed up to make a statement would do so in the order provided by the Chair. Next, the Board would deliberate about the candidates and move to select the nominee to be submitted to and approved by the Board of Higher Education. Chair Mattera noted that the Open Meeting Law requires that all public bodies deliberate in open session. The chair asked if anyone was recording the meeting, they needed to identify that they were doing so.

Chair Mattera offered a summary of the presidential search process that had taken place in recent months. Presidential Search Committee Chair and Trustee Teresa Chisholm led the committee through an open and comprehensive process that began in January with the selection of Witt Kieffer as search consultant. He identified each of the committee members and the constituency that they represented. The committee met several times in January and February with the support of Witt Kieffer to conduct a listening tour with the campus community and to develop a prospectus. During the months of March and April, the committee met to review over 100 resumes and narrow the pool to 11 highly qualified, highly diverse candidates. This was the semi-finalist pool.

In late April the committee met over a two day period and reduced the pool to four finalists, with diverse characteristics. At that point, the work of the search committee was done. And the work of this board – the public work of this board - began.

Chair Mattera then invited Trustee Chisholm to offer any additions to his overview. Trustee Chisholm emphasized that during the first month of the search process the committee and search consultant met with campus constituencies and all had input into what the campus was seeking in the new president. The prospectus that was developed accurately reflects the views of the campus, and the committee used these criteria to select the semi- and finalist pools.

The three candidates (one finalist withdrew) each spent a day and a half on campus in a series of open forums and interviews designed to give the community a chance to meet the candidates, and the candidates learn more about the university. A confidential survey was developed to give voice to the community. Search consultant Lucy Leske will provide an overview of the survey results.

The campus visits included in-depth interviews with the Trustees and video conference type interviews with the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Secretary of Education. Anyone and everyone with an interest had an opportunity to meet and interact with the candidates.

Chair Mattera reiterated that the search has been an open and thorough process. He thanked Presidential Search Chair Chisholm for the enormous amount of excellent work she performed on behalf of the university. He extended his thank you to Presidential Search Committee Vice Chair and Trustee Robert Lutts and all of the committee members.

Chair Mattera then turned to Witt Kieffer search consultant Lucy Leske to present the finalists CVs and a summary of the campus survey results.

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### **III. REVIEW OF CANDIDATES & SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS**

Lucy Leske thanked the Board for the opportunity to assist with the presidential search. She then provided a brief summary of the three candidate’s bios. The first candidate, Dr. Deborah E. Bordelon is the provost and vice president for academic affairs at Governors State University in the suburbs of Chicago. She oversees all academic and student affairs units at the university and serves as the chief executive officer in the absence of the President. She had a significant role in the transition from a two- to four-year school; has worked in multiple universities; has four years of experience as a provost and has worked in union environments.

The second candidate John Keenan, JD, currently serves as general counsel and vice president for administration at Salem State University. A lifelong resident of Salem and former Massachusetts state representative, Mr. Keenan was one of the lead proponents in gaining “university” status for Salem State in 2010. He was also the lead sponsor of the bill providing sabbatical parity for all state university faculty. A proud product of the Salem Public Schools and first-generation-to-college, Mr. Keenan is a cum laude graduate of Harvard College, where he studied economics, and Suffolk University Law School, where he served as Lead Articles Editor on the Law Review.

Finally the last candidate, Anny Morrobel-Sosa, PhD, most recently served as provost and senior vice-president of academic affairs at Lehman College, City University of New York (CUNY). She developed CUNY’s first reverse-transfer program for the three CUNY institutions in the Bronx and then co-led the formalization of the program throughout the entire CUNY system. Lehman’s first

*Review of  
Candidates &  
Summary of  
Survey Results*

stand-alone doctoral program (Doctorate of Nursing Practice) was completed and approved under her tenure. As Dean of the College of Science at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), Dr. Morrobel-Sosa proposed and established the College Office of Undergraduate Research Initiatives (COURI), which was later expanded and renamed as the Campus Office of Undergraduate Research Initiatives.

Search consultant Leske then moved on to the survey results. All three candidates fared well on campus however Keenan and Morrobel-Sosa garnered more support so her survey report focused mainly on just these two candidates.

3:13 pm – Note Trustee Duperval arrived.

Search consultant Leske then provided a summary of the campus community survey feedback which was based off the key presidential priorities in the Salem State University Presidential Search Leadership Profile:

- Strategic Focus
- Academic Excellence and Student Success
- University Advancement
- Community and Team Building
- Modern, Safe, and Sustainable Campus Environment

Across the board Salem State University has three very strong candidates and none had any serious issues/concerns.

For strategic focus, Anny Morrobel-Sosa and John Keenan were both perceived as strong but have different styles/backgrounds. With university advancement, all three had prior fundraising experience. Morrobel-Sosa's has been with individuals and grants. Keenan's has been for political campaigns but also at Salem State. Each finalist was seen as committed to academic excellence. While Morrobel-Sosa has had longer experience in higher education, Keenan has learned much in his time at Salem State. Regarding team building, the campus community felt the strongest connections to Morrobel-Sosa and Keenan but their styles differed. All three finalists were qualified to support a modern, safe, and sustainable campus environment. Morrobel-Sosa had experience leading strategic planning and inclusion efforts. Morrobel-Sosa and Keenan stood out in their ability to connect to the campus community as well as with their personal qualities. Morrobel-Sosa was highlighted for leadership experience, management ability, intellect, and faculty connections. Keenan was lauded for his entrepreneurial style, ability to connect with an external community, and potential for relationship building into the future. Overall, Morrobel-Sosa and Keenan were well above average in their feedback from the campus community.

With no questions from the Board, Chair Mattera thanked Search Consultant Leske for her report and for her assistance.

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#### **IV. OPEN FORUM**

Chair Mattera announced the open forum portion of the meeting and welcomed individuals who had previously signed up to make statements. Public testimony proceeded for just over thirty minutes. Presenting statements were: one student; eight faculty; one staff member; and five "others" (community, elected officials, business, etc.)

\* \* \*

*Open Forum*

## V. BOARD DISCUSSION

The Board moved on to deliberations and the Trustees discussed each of the candidate's strengths and perceived limitations. They also reflected on how the candidates might address the university's impending challenges. There were some straw votes taken in the process.

The Board took a short break at 5:35 pm and reconvened at 5:40 pm.

The Board resumed its deliberations and discussed the Leadership Profile and the desired characteristics of the university's next president. Chair Mattera asked each of the Trustees to speak on their leanings regarding the candidates. After more discussion, Trustee Segal made a motion which was seconded by Trustee Lutts that:

**MOTION: The Salem State University Board of Trustees hereby votes to advance John Keenan for recommendation as president to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. We further authorize the Chair of the Board of Trustees to negotiate with the recommended candidate terms of appointment.**

Chair Mattera re-read the motion and asked if there was further discussion. After a few comments, Trustee Segal called the question. The motion was seconded by Trustee Lutts. Chair Mattera asked if there was any further discussion.

Trustee Scott offered that the Parliamentary Rules might allow the Board to adjourn and vote at another time. With the prior motion on the floor, it required a vote. On a voice vote, the motion to call the question was passed (eight yes; two no).

The Board then returned to the original motion that:

**VOTED: The Salem State University Board of Trustees hereby votes to advance John Keenan for recommendation as president to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. We further authorize the Chair of the Board of Trustees to negotiate with the recommended candidate terms of appointment.**

By hand vote:

Yea: 7

Nay: 3

**Motion passed**

Chair Mattera then asked for a motion to make the vote unanimous. With a motion duly made by Trustee Segal and seconded by Trustee Chisholm it was:

**VOTED: To make unanimous the vote to advance John Keenan for recommendation as president to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.**

Voice vote:

Nay: 3

Yea: N/A

**Motion failed**

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**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

*Adjournment*

There being no further business to come before the Board and on a motion duly made by Trustee Chisholm and seconded by Trustee Murphy, it was unanimously:

**VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 6:20 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Maguire Meservey  
President



Lynne Montague  
Secretary to the Board of Trustees