

Good morning. It's nice to see so many familiar faces.

I want to thank all of you for agreeing to serve on the Western Carolina University Chancellor search committee. This search is critical. We must find the right leader to carry Western forward and ensure its success.

Much of what we hope to accomplish as a University System—and as a state—depends on the talents and expertise of our chancellors. The pivotal work of our institutions- the students taught, the knowledge created, the communities impacted- this happens because of leadership and action on our campuses.

These are institutions built to meet the needs of North Carolina. They have evolved through the years with distinctive missions and identities.

Your work on this committee, to find the next leader of this distinct university, is foundational to our guiding purpose and all we hope to achieve.

My role is to make sure we're all working towards common goals, and that you have the resources to get the job done.

As you know, the Board of Governors unanimously adopted a visionary Strategic Plan one year ago.

It's a plan that focuses on affordability, access and student success. It's a roadmap for providing the prosperity and mobility that higher education offers to more students from diverse backgrounds. It's a call to adapt to the demands of a changing world and economy to ensure we are fulfilling our promise and mission to this state.

In changing times, these principles and goals serve as our guiding vision.

But a vision needs strong leaders to bring it to life. Leaders who can look closely at *how* we're going to get there, someone who can draw from lessons of the past and use them to brighten the future.

WCU's next leader must continue the good work happening in Cullowhee while driving forward with even bolder actions and with even greater focus.

It's an exciting moment for WCU as NC Promise gives the University an opportunity to make college accessible in a way never before possible.

We need a leader who can seize this moment with the passion and commitment to boldly lead this institution forward.

The next Chancellor will have big shoes to fill, but he or she will also have a model to emulate. Chancellor Belcher has been a fearless, transformative leader. Someone who united and inspired a community, driving those around him to be better than they thought they could be.

Selfless in his approach, he is a leader whose morals are as strong as his intellect, and we should look to his example as inspiration for the caliber of individual we need as his successor.

But Western's next leader will be different, he or she will bring their own strengths, their own background and will leave their own mark on this great university.

It takes strength to have a vision, and it takes courage to hold people accountable for achieving it. North Carolina is growing, and becoming more diverse. To meet the changing needs of our state, and speak to the aspirations of *all* our people, we need more of what Western Carolina has to offer.

WCU is an economic engine for Western North Carolina and is crucial in building an even brighter future for every North Carolinian in the West.

The community partnerships that define WCU make both the University, and the region stronger and more successful. Students win, the University wins, and North Carolinians win because of these deep ties.

In our new Chancellor, we need someone who can articulate the role of this University within the System, empower and support the campus community, make tough decisions, and lead, lead, lead.

I have no doubt we'll find the right choice—and I am excited to work with you to find that person.

Now let's talk a bit about how we will move forward. It is important that we each understand our role and how the process will work.

I. COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND OPERATION:

In forming the search committee, Board Chair Pat Kaemmerling has, with my consultation, selected a group that is broadly representative of the University family – including current and former Trustees, administrators, faculty, students, and alumni.

In addition, we have representation from the surrounding business and civic community, in a clear indication of the important role the community plays in determining Western Carolina's success.

During your search, there will be parts of your work and internal discussions that must be held in confidence. This is critical to the integrity of the overall search process.

I urge you to remember, because breaking confidentiality can seriously or even irreparably damage the search—and ultimately harm the institution and the prospective candidates.

When there is a need to engage with the media or other interested external groups, I urge you to allow your Search Committee Co-Chairs to serve as the spokespersons for the search committee.

This is vitally important to prevent misinformation and leaks.

II. SEARCH PROCESS

With regard to the law and the Code—the Committee is guided by all appropriate provisions of the law and The Code, and must carefully follow the requirements of the North Carolina Open Meeting Law and the provisions of the University Code and delegations to the Board of Trustees.

Lynn Duffy and Glenda Farrell from the System office will talk with you more about these matters today and throughout the process.

You must keep a detailed record of the work of the search committee. You'll need to maintain good records and documentation, including

keeping minutes, making arrangements for meetings and travel, and processing budget requisitions.

Your efforts will also be well served by the use of an experienced executive search consultant. Board Chair Kaemmerling and Vice Chair Bryant Kinney, have worked with my office to find the best search firm to meet our needs.

After a competitive RFP process, Buffkin/Baker has been chosen as the search consultant.

Mr. Jerry Baker has many years of experience in higher education and with the UNC system. His firm has a great track record of bringing us senior leaders, including 5 of our current Chancellors (Sartarelli, Everts, Bierman, Belcher, Woodson) and Mr. Baker is well acquainted with the Catamount culture, having worked on Chancellor Belcher's search 6 years ago and on interim Chancellor Alison Morrison-Shetlar's search as well. Jerry Baker joins us by phone today.

The search consultant will contribute to the identification and recruitment of strong candidates, and will provide "deep background" information to assist the search committee in narrowing the field of candidates.

But don't just leave it up to them, I urge you to encourage others to nominate potential candidates, as well.

The financial costs of the search process are a campus responsibility. All the resources you need will be made available to you, but we ask you to be disciplined stewards of the budget and expenses.

The goal of the search committee is to ***achieve a working consensus*** about all major aspects of the search process. I urge you to conduct public forums that allow input into the job specification from major constituencies, including students, faculty and staff, alumni, parents, and the community.

This is a key step in the process so that we hear from and involve our stakeholders. We want the new chancellor to have the respect and support of those he or she leads.

You may also want to conduct a survey to reach out to the Western Carolina community beyond this geographic region. This is a great way to seek input, particularly from alumni. You are encouraged to engage with campus and community stakeholders regarding critical institutional needs and priorities to be considered in identifying strong candidates.

This includes:

- Developing the leadership profile. This profile will guide you in identifying the criteria that will become the basis used to evaluating candidates. Take time to reflect on this task – it is important. We want the right “fit” with our new leader.
- Developing a search and advertisement strategy by following University guidelines to ensure an equal opportunity search.
- Deciding how you will narrow the pool of candidates. You will need to come up with a working list of candidates to be interviewed based on how they fit the needs of Western Carolina University and how they stack up against your leadership statement.

As I said earlier, in order to serve on this search committee, each of you must agree to honor the commitment to the confidentiality of closed session deliberations. Such an agreement from every person is essential to ensure an effective search.

Consideration of prospects, nominees and applicants must be done in a way that each member of this committee may speak candidly about a candidate's qualifications without fear that their views will be made known outside this committee.

You should keep the identity of those being considered confidential except with the permission of the candidate and at a time mutually agreed upon by the search committee and me. This may be very important to someone's career.

Finally, as I mentioned, Lynn Duffy, from Human Resources will be my liaison and will provide support services. Lynn has an extensive background in Leadership and Executive Search and will be available to you as a resource throughout the process.

III. SEARCH RESULTS

Once you identify the most highly qualified individuals, it will be the duty of the search consultant, in cooperation with the support staff of the search committee, to bring these individuals into the pool for consideration by the committee.

You should narrow the pool to three individuals. Three finalists, unranked, should be forwarded to your Board of Trustees, and then to me for review. I will then send my top candidate to the Board of Governors for consideration and approval.

Each of the three you send to the Board of Trustees should be individuals whom this committee believes can serve with distinction as chancellor of this campus.

This is an important choice. The next Chancellor for Western Carolina University must have some core characteristics in order to be successful. As I consider this selection, here are a few characteristics I will be looking for:

- A leader with unwavering integrity, the courage to always stand for what is right and do what is right, and a deep commitment to the value and importance of higher education;
- Someone who will be a partner to me, his or her fellow Chancellors, the Board of Trustees and Board of Governors, and the entire University community.
- Our strategic plan, entitled Higher Expectations, provides strategic imperatives for our institutions. It is critical that the new Chancellor shares our commitment to the objectives outlined in the plan and the details in Western Carolina's performance agreement signed by Chancellor Belcher last September (Sept. 21).
- We need someone who understands the mission of Western Carolina and who will value WCU's role within the UNC system;
- Someone who can build on and continue to grow the strong reputation of WCU, especially with the opportunities NC Promise provides;

- Someone with life experience, someone who knows firsthand how to manage and lead a complex organization – someone who understands shared leadership;
- Someone who leads with a transparent, inclusive, and collaborative style;
- Someone with tremendous people skills, who can effectively communicate with students, faculty and staff, alumni, parents, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Governors, donors, and the community;
- Someone who understands the vital role WCU plays in this region's economy, who will collaborate with the city of Cullowhee and the towns and counties of this region, and who will be a visible and active participant;
- Someone who will be a partner to the area's K-12 school systems, including Jackson county and its newly created lab school, as well as local community colleges and the other major institutions in this region;
- Someone who relates well to students and enjoys spending time with them;
- Someone who appreciates intercollegiate athletics, who understands the need to have the appropriate balance between academics and athletics; always prioritizing academics but also valuing the role athletics play in the college experience for students and alumni;

- And perhaps most importantly, someone who values staff and faculty and the critical role they play in the lives of students.
- Whether a candidate is from an academic background or not, keep an open mind. We need a great leader to take this institution forward.

Our goal is to have the selected candidate in place during the 2018-2019 academic year, but the committee should take the time to ensure they are forwarding candidates who they are confident can lead WCU in the years ahead.

It is more important to get the right person than to meet a time table. That said, we are hoping to have new Chancellor in place by August 1, 2018.

Your work is not done, however, with the selection of the new chancellor. Upon conclusion of the search and appointment of a chancellor, the members of the search committee will serve as emissaries to each of WCU's major constituencies and as advocates for the new chancellor.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve. And I look forward to working with you in the months and weeks to come.