

## THE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH 2002-03

Immediately following President Jamiene Studley's resignation announcement on October 23, 2002, the Nominations Committee of the Board of Trustees presented a list of trustees for the Presidential Search Committee (PSC) to the full Board, which was subsequently ratified by the Board. The eight trustees were Bill Dake, John Howley, Beverly Miller, Sara Schupf, Oscar Tang, Sue Thomas, Linda Toohey, and Janet Whitman. On November 8th, Gove Effinger (representing CFG) met with Sue Thomas and John Howley and on the basis of the principle of equal representation agreed upon a sixteen-person search committee to be comprised of eight trustees, four faculty, two administrative staff and two students. On the same date, John Howley was appointed chair of the search committee by Sue Thomas, Chair of the Board.

As in the previous search, the trustees acknowledged the right of the faculty to determine the process by which their representatives to the search committee would be selected. Consequently, it fell to CFG and CAPT to oversee faculty participation in the presidential search process. Convened on October 29th by CFG, the Committee of Committees drafted a proposal to establish the procedure for selecting the faculty representatives to the search committee. The proposal, which was ratified by the faculty at its November 1st meeting, stipulated the same procedure used in the 1997-98 search. As a result, CFG and CAPT oversaw a selection procedure that combined elective and appointed phases to ensure both a democratic voting process as well as an appropriate balance of disciplinary affiliation, experience, and gender. On November 12, nominations and expressions of willingness to serve were sent to all eligible faculty by CFG. Eight finalists were chosen and their names announced to the community. After extensive interviews by CAPT four faculty were selected: Carolyn Anderson (Theater), Terry Diggory (English), Mark Hofmann (Mathematics and Computer Science), and Jeff Segrave (Exercise Science, Dance, and Athletics). The same discretionary authority was granted to SGA and the administrative staff in the selection of their respective representatives. The two members of the administrative staff selected were Ann Henderson (Registrar) and Tracy Barlok (Advancement), and the two students selected by SGA were Rachael Beard '05 and Evan Flath '04.

While the faculty, administrative staff, and student representatives were being selected, three trustee members of the PSC (John Howley, Sue Thomas, and Janet Whitman), Gove Effinger (CFG Chair), and Elaine Rubenstein (Professor of Biology and member of an earlier PSC) conducted interviews with six search firms. Academic Search Consultation Service was chosen with Tobie van der Vorm, Senior Consultant, as liaison. Also Chris McGill was recommended by President's Staff and appointed by Sue Thomas as Administrative Coordinator to the search committee. The membership of the PSC was announced to the faculty at its December 6th, 2002, meeting and to the entire community via e-mail from Sue Thomas, Chair of the Board, on December 9th. The first full meeting of the PSC was held on December 12th, 2002, in New York City.

From the very beginning, the concerns of the faculty remained an important consideration in the conduct of the search process. The 1999 CFG Report and Recommendations on Presidential Searches was distributed to the PSC at its very first meeting and the Report remained an important point of reference throughout the search. As CFG subsequently wrote in its Annual Report (2002-03), "CFG wishes to acknowledge the wonderful guidance provided by the 1999 CFG Report and Recommendations on Presidential Searches during the whole process . . . The smoothness of this latest search has been due in part to the thoroughness of that document." Likewise, at its very first meeting, the PSC acknowledged the importance of faculty concerns as they were expressed in a series of resolutions that were passed at the Faculty Meeting of December 6th. At this meeting the faculty resolved: (1) that "the faculty urge the Presidential Search Committee in the strongest possible terms to bring more than one finalist in the presidential search to campus," (2) that "the faculty recommend to the Presidential Search Committee that all finalists in the presidential search possess the following qualifications, with special emphasis on

the first two: a record of successful, senior-level administrative experience, preferably at a liberal arts institution; a record of strong academic achievement; and a record of successful fundraising,” and (3) that “the faculty recommend to the Presidential Search Committee that if the committee is unable to build general support for one of the finalists, then the committee will continue the search until a candidate who can excite such general support is found.” These three recommendations remained a further important reference point throughout the PSC’s deliberations. Finally, in an effort to promote good communications, and in keeping with the 1999 CFG Report, the PSC, as it did in the previous search, established a web site available to all campus constituencies.

Throughout December, January, and February, the PSC variously worked on refining the Position Prospectus, soliciting nominations and applications through advertisements, mailings, letters, emails, and the search consultant, and communicating with various community constituencies. On December 16th, an open forum was hosted by CFG and CAPT with Sue Thomas, John Howley, and Tobie van der Vorm to discuss the search. Faculty and administrative professionals were invited to attend. During her visit to campus, Tobie van der Vorm, Search Consultant, met separately with CFG and CAPT, and with Jack Ling, Director of Diversity and Affirmative Action, to solicit information about appropriate web sites and sources that might help generate a diverse pool of candidates. Throughout January and February, seven Presidential Search Roundtables were held with alumni, parents, and friends (two such meetings were also held in March and one in April). Tracy Barlok and Ann Henderson held a meeting with Union and Support Staff on January 27th, 2003, and on February 6th with Administrative Professional Staff. For the duration of the search the four faculty representatives took turns reporting at each Faculty Meeting on the state of the search, including the number of nominations and applications and the ongoing timetable.

In keeping with the recommendation of the 1999 CFG Report and Recommendations on Presidential Searches that the PSC should “build into the process meetings between faculty representatives on the search committee and CAPT and establish a faculty liaison between the search committee and CFG,” the four faculty representatives met with CAPT throughout the search process and Jeff Segrave served as liaison with CFG, meeting with CFG on a regular basis. As CAPT also noted in its Annual Report (2002-03), CAPT was “regularly consulted and updated by John Howley, Chair of the PSC, as to the course of the search.”

On February 21st, 2003, the PSC met off campus in Saratoga Springs and began the process of screening applications. By this time, all members of the PSC had read the applications. This process continued throughout March so that by March 25 the field had been narrowed to nine candidates. After the March 10th meeting, a subcommittee was formed consisting of Terry Diggory, Ann Henderson, Jeff Segrave, and Linda Toohey to read all new applications and report viable candidates to the full committee. Also, during March, Sue Thomas, Chair of the Board, announced to the community the establishment of an Ad Hoc Transition Committee, comprised of trustees, faculty, and administrative staff, to help insure a successful transition in the President’s office.

On April 8-10th, 2003, the PSC met at an undisclosed neutral site to interview the nine semi-finalists, determining ultimately to bring two candidates to campus. Throughout this period, and in keeping with the 1999 CFG Report’s recommendation that the search committee report regularly to the community, John Howley, Chair of the PSC, updated the community via e-mail. Furthermore, on April 8, prior to the neutral site interviews with the nine semi-finalists, and in a continued spirit of openness, an open forum was held in Gannett with John Howley, Sue Thomas, and Tobie van der Vorm to inform the community on the status of the search and upcoming plans for campus visits.

John Howley announced the dates of two final candidates’ visits via e-mail on April 24th, 2003. On the next day, materials on the first candidate were distributed to the community (in the library, with department chairs and program directors, CITS, and to each member of President’s Staff). In

preparation for the on-campus visits by the two candidates Bret Ingerman, Director for the Center for Information Technologies, installed FuseTalk, a software program that permitted employees and students to have separate discussions about the candidates (only the PSC had access to both sites). On April 29th-May 1st, the first candidate, Dr. Philip A. Glotzbach, visited campus. Materials for the second candidate were distributed to the community on May 2nd, and on May 4th-6th, the second candidate, Dr. Elaine Maimon, visited campus. The itineraries for both candidates' visits are included in the full 2002-03 PSC Report. Although some faculty requested time on the itineraries for a faculty-only meeting with each candidate, time constraints did not permit this; however, each candidate attended an open community forum in which faculty participated. Faculty who wished specific concerns to be raised in a context other than an open forum were encouraged to communicate these concerns through one of the many faculty members who met with the candidates in smaller groups, or to request faculty representatives on the search committee to make sure the concerns were raised. After both campus visits had taken place, two open forums were held on May 7th (one for faculty only and one for the entire community) to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the two candidates. In addition, all members of the community were encouraged to submit confidential feedback to the search committee via a dedicated e-mail site.

The search committee did not follow the recommendation of the 1999 CFG Report to "schedule a meeting between the faculty representatives of the search committee and the faculty before the candidate's visit," as had been done in the previous search. This recommendation was not followed because the regular reports by the PSC faculty representatives to the Faculty Meeting had allowed ample opportunity for communication and because there was time pressure to schedule the candidates' visits before the end of the spring semester and the summer dispersal of faculty.

On May 8th, the PSC met in New York City to develop its recommendation to the Board of Trustees. It was also determined at this meeting that John Howley and Sue Thomas would visit the campus of the leading candidate during the following week in order to seek additional input on the candidacy. On May 20th, the PSC presented its recommendation to the Board and on the next day a formal announcement ceremony was held at the Bernhard Theater to celebrate the appointment of Dr. Philip Glotzbach as Skidmore's seventh President.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCHES**

The search resulting in the appointment of Philip A. Glotzbach as Skidmore's seventh President was very well conducted from the first. The determination of the Board of Trustees to have a transparent process inclusive of all sectors of the College community fostered a sense of confidence in the process that remained strong through all stages of the search. The Board of Trustees that will be responsible for the next presidential search would be wise to establish the same priorities of transparency and inclusiveness that characterized this search. Academic Search Consultation Service, the firm engaged to advise and assist the PSC, won the immediate confidence of the community thanks to a series of open meetings with its representative, Tobie van de Vorm. The frequent reports of the Presidential Search to CFG and CAPT ensured that the community remained up to date on the progress of the search. The finalists brought to campus received appropriate exposure over the course of their visits and campus constituencies availed themselves of the various opportunities for meeting the candidates and providing feedback about them. Again, future searches will only profit from this type of open communication and the generous invitation to participate that we experienced in this search.

The quality of the search informs the recommendations that follow, which have been gleaned from the report of the PSC and from the feedback about the search contributed by the various constituencies that make up Skidmore College. Not surprisingly, the majority of CFG's recommendations pertain to the final stages of the search, which is of course when the community moves from an expectant to a more involved role. Nevertheless, we do well to remind ourselves of processes used in securing representative

bodies in the early stages of the search. Accordingly, our first recommendations address the selection process for representation on the PSC. As noted in the PSC report, faculty representatives are chosen in two steps: a CFG-run election, followed by a final selection by CAPT. The names of those elected in the first step should be made public immediately. CAPT should also continue its policy of a personal conversation with each finalist as part of its selection process. Faculty comments in feedback and in informal discussion suggest that this two-tiered process is widely accepted and that it contributes to confidence in the faculty's representation in the search. We would also recommend that the means of selection for other constituencies of the community be published so that they can be better and more widely understood. This will also contribute to better sharing of information about the progress of the search in the community at large. It is both sensible and fair to expect that the quality of reporting the faculty experienced will be available to all members of the community.

Early in the process, members of the PSC established "on the road roundtables," where input of alumni and other stakeholders in Skidmore's future could be solicited, and where those stakeholders could be regularly apprised of the progress of the search. The success of these roundtables suggests that they should form a part of any future search.

Once the search reaches the point where candidates are invited to campus, the rhythm accelerates and sometimes planning suffers. It was the broadly shared conviction in feedback and general discussion that candidates should speak in the same venue and that the faculty should have a meeting to itself with each candidate. The reasons for both these recommendations are obvious: there should be no external factors that could in any way contribute to a sense that one candidate has had an advantage over another; and the faculty needs to see and hear a President in our equivalent of the well of the senate, for that space in Gannett is where the President appears before the faculty in the open conduct of our affairs. The fact that neither could be managed was unfortunate, and argues for more detailed planning for the final stages of the search. The meeting conducted by CFG for faculty discussion of the candidate also suffered from the time squeeze: the question of whether the administration should participate in that meeting needs to be settled well enough in advance so that confusion and unhappiness can be avoided.

CFG is also concerned that the inclusion of candidates' spouses in the open community meeting confuses the purpose of the meeting. There are few if any relevant questions that the community needs to ask of a candidate's spouse in a necessarily brief informational meeting. And it would be awkward were a candidate to be single or to come without a partner to the interview, when other candidates had been accompanied. Should a future search committee wish to include spouses in the process, we recommend that a better defined social gathering be arranged where interested parties could meet a candidate's partner.

The question of the number of finalists who would be brought to campus—a question that had carried over from the previous search—resulted in lengthy

discussions with Tobie van der Vorm and with John Howley and Sue Thomas. Their pledge to make every effort to present a choice to the community reflected their understanding of the desirability of allowing the community to participate meaningfully in the vetting of finalists. In the event, two candidates did come to campus and there was no residual concern expressed that additional finalists should have been invited. CFG recommends that future Presidential searches continue the practice of community exposure to more than one candidate.

Finally, as CAPT remains the faculty committee charged with the vetting of appointments, it is important that it continue to have direct interviews with the candidates, and that its recommendations or reactions be forwarded to the PSC in a timely fashion.

**It remains only for CFG to thank the PSC for an excellent process, and in particular our faculty colleagues on the committee—Carolyn Anderson, Terry Diggory, Mark Hofmann and Jeffrey Segrave—for their willingness to serve in this important capacity. The quality of their judgment and the strength of their commitment reflect the best of the faculty governance system.**

**April, 2005**

**CFG 2004-2005**

**Katie Hauser**

**Susan Kress**

**John Anzalone-Chair**

**Joanna Zangrando**

**Tim Burns**

**Tad Kuroda**