

Arkansas State University System  
Board of Trustees  
April 11, 2022

The Arkansas State University System Board of Trustees met on Monday, April 11, 2022, via Zoom. Christy Clark, Chair of the Board of Trustees, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. Board members present were Christy Clark, Price Gardner, Niel Crowson, Steve Eddington, Robert Rudolph, Paul Rowton, and Jerry Morgan.

Mrs. Clark: I am going to ask Dr. Welch to brief us on some items related to the resignation of Dr. Damphousse, and about the next steps involved in the search to replace him.

Dr. Welch: We have added four new trustees in the last 14 months or so. I thought it might be appropriate to walk through the search process that I envision. First of all, I would say that it is my intention to follow the same general process that we have on the Jonesboro campus, as well as on our other campuses. I think this is the tenth search for a campus leader that I've performed in my almost 11 years here at ASU. I believe that it is really important to move quickly. We've got a lot of different things on the radar screen right now at Jonesboro. We don't want to slow down that momentum, and so I'd like to move as quickly as we possibly can. Let me be very clear; we will take as long as we need to get the right hire. If I had to map out what would be the absolute perfect time to conduct a search, we would be about halfway through it right now. And we would probably be looking at trying to wrap it up in the next month to six weeks. Obviously, that is not possible, because of the timing of Dr. Damphousse's announcement, but I do believe that we still do have time in what I would call the "sweet spot" of being able to ensure that we are able to conduct the search, and that we are able to attract a quality candidate pool. I have already been contacted informally by a number of individuals who may potentially be interested in the position. Even though we haven't formally announced anything, obviously, when they see on social media that Dr. Damphousse is leaving, they begin to reach out and get their feelers out there. I've done nothing to try to reach out yet, because we are not quite to that step, but folks are asking, "Hey, when do you plan on doing the search?", "What's it going to look like?", and things of that nature. I started two weeks ago visiting with our campus Shared Governance groups, and particularly with their leadership, to talk about what a search might look like, how the setup might be, and what next

steps might be involved. I met with a broader group of leadership of the Staff Senate last week when they met, and I'm planning to meet with the Faculty Senate later on this week for further discussions. I took the position announcement that we used when we hired Dr. Damphousse, and I asked for that to be disseminated to the campus shared governance groups and for feedback to come back to me on things that we might want to change, things we might want to delete, things we might want to add, particularly as it relates to the specific types of characteristics we are seeking, or specific types of skill sets, or the types of initiatives that perhaps will be in front of us that we would want to make sure any candidates would possess in order to lead. I've begun to get feedback from different faculty and staff members which I greatly appreciate and the good news is that most of it is consistent. There is a desire to have more discussion and focus on the strategic plan that the University has completed and really trying to spell that out. We are working to do that. I've also begun the process of assembling a Chancellor Search Advisory Committee. You may recall that I always have a campus-based Chancellor Search Advisory Committee. I chair that committee, and that committee consists of faculty members, staff members, students, as well as community/alumni members to ensure that we have a broad perspective from individuals across the campus community. I am close to putting the finishing touches on those who I would like to ask to serve. I'm awaiting confirmation on a couple of people, but would like to get that committee appointed as quickly as possible because that group really serves as the lead in helping to finalize decisions as they relate to the process, the position announcement, things of that nature. I've also asked individuals on campus to begin assembling a search website, and all of the other underlying structural work that comes in. We always have a website with information about the University, much broader information than obviously what you are going to see in a position announcement. I've visited with Human Resources about what that process will look like, in terms of ensuring that we get an appropriate amount of information from each applicant who ultimately applies, so that we are in compliance with those HR functions. All of those things we have in process. Folks are working on getting together, so that when we are ready to launch the search, everything is ready to go. With regards to a timeline, I am hopeful I can get the committee announced as quickly as possible. I would like to post the position announcement, if at all possible, within about a week. I want to give a little more time for individuals who may still be planning to send me feedback to do so, and then to get that out to the public

and to the campus and make the announcement. These next things will be decisions I will make collaboratively with the search committee, but I would envision somewhere in the neighborhood of a six-week posting, maybe a little shorter than that. What I've found, over time, is you could leave a posting out there for six months, and really, it is not going to change your applicant pool much. Then, we would have initial committee interviews, whether those be by Zoom, or telephone, as decided by the committee, to narrow a longer list down to a smaller group of names. Ultimately, we will bring individuals to campus. Historically, that's been three or four, but again, that will be a committee decision and really will be dependent upon the applicant pool. One of the challenges of starting the search now is, that when you get into the summer months, you don't always have your full battery of individuals on campus. I would definitely work to design a process that has both in-person components, as well as virtual components. We will ensure that everyone, regardless of their location or inability to be on campus, would have access to opportunities to engage with candidates and to ask questions. Coming out of this pandemic, I think we are much more comfortable with that type of environment. I was heartened by the fact that every faculty member, with the exception of one, said they would be able to serve, even if it stretched into the summer months when they ordinarily would not be there. Then, once we brought candidates to campus, had the virtual interactions, had the in-person interactions, we would also have a feedback instrument that allowed everyone in the campus community to provide feedback on each candidate to the committee. Then I would meet with the committee the final time, and the committee would make recommendations to me and to the Board of Trustees with regards to individuals who they were comfortable with, that we would look at to ultimately be our next chancellor. The goal would be to announce a hire this summer. I think that is very doable. I have also been trying to look at every strategy possible here, including possible interim appointments. If we don't have a hire made by the time Dr. Damphousse leaves, we could have one interim chancellor put in place. Or, we could do multiple reassignments, where certain areas might go to different people on campus. We might even do some of that before Dr. Damphousse leaves. A lot of that would depend upon his schedule and how things look with regards to his position, as well. We will have to be fluid with that. I have begun to consider individuals that could fill those interim leadership positions, and I will keep you updated, and I will keep the campus updated, as we see how things progress. That is sort of the general process that I have envisioned.

Mrs. Clark: In light of Dr. Welch's comments, I would like to entertain a motion for us to retire into Executive Session to discuss possible interim leadership appointments during the transition, as a result of Dr. Damphousse's resignation.

Upon a motion by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Mr. Crowson, the Board voted to retire into Executive Session at 10:15 a.m.

Ayes: Clark, Gardner, Crowson, Eddington, Rudolph, Rowton, Morgan

Nays: None

The Board reconvened at 12:20 p.m.

Mrs. Clark: The Board took no action during Executive Session and did not vote or agree on individuals to be placed in any interim leadership positions.

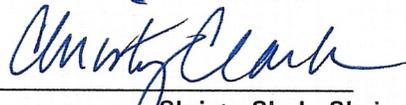
Dr. Welch: I thought it was important to get everybody on this Zoom meeting and have a chance to visit. My apologies for the technical glitches. As I told you before, I hope to move very quickly and get this going in terms of the search for the permanent replacement, and I will be getting information out to everyone in the coming days.

Upon a motion by Mr. Crowson, seconded by Mr. Eddington, the meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.

Ayes: Clark, Gardner, Crowson, Eddington, Rudolph, Rowton, Morgan

Nays: None

  
Niel Crowson, Secretary

  
Christy Clark, Chair