

Sent by email on September 9, 2019

Dear Ms. McCaffree,

On Friday afternoon, September 6, 2019, Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SOSU) faculty, staff, and students received notification that our president, Sean Burrage, will be leaving the university sometime in mid-October. On behalf of the SOSU Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), I am writing to request that faculty members from SOSU are included on the presidential search committee.

We recognize that in accordance with RUSO policy, “the board has sole responsibility for appointment of university presidents,” and that “any process leading to the selection of a university president is the responsibility and prerogative of the Board” (1.24.4). RUSO policy also states that “the Board may, at its discretion, involve faculty, students and other citizenry in the screening and nomination procedures in each situation as circumstances dictate” (1.24.4).

We respectfully request that the Board exercise its discretion and include SOSU faculty members on the presidential search committee.

In the 1966 [Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities](#), formulated jointly by the AAUP, the American Council on Education, and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges it states:

Joint effort of a most critical kind must be taken when an institution chooses a new president. The selection of a chief administrative officer should follow upon a cooperative search by the governing board and the faculty, taking into consideration the opinions of others who are appropriately interested. The president should be equally qualified to serve both as the executive officer of the governing board and as the chief academic officer of the institution and the faculty. The president’s dual role requires an ability to interpret to board and faculty the educational views and concepts of institutional government of the other. The president should have the confidence of the board and the faculty.

The Southeastern Oklahoma State University Chapter of the AAUP calls upon the RUSO Board to seek active faculty engagement in the selection of the next president of SOSU. Doing so would be in observance of the established norms of shared governance by involving faculty representatives in all stages of the search process.

This request is consistent with the RUSO statement that the Board “commits itself to provide leadership to the universities it governs which will: ensure the selection and retention of university presidents who will provide vision, management, dedication and guidance to the institutions they serve.” We sincerely believe that involving SOSU faculty in the selection of their president is the best way to honor that commitment.

I respectfully request that you forward this letter to Regents Winchester, Dunn, Carpenter, Parker, Reilly, McDermott, Ford, Fisher, and Hofmeister at your earliest convenience because time is of the essence.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Fridley
AAUP Chapter President
Southeastern Oklahoma State University

Email reply on September 9, 2019

Carolyn:

RUSO has a long-standing practice of including faculty, staff and students in the presidential search committee. Thanks for your message.

Sheridan