

Thank you, President Petersen.

As all of you are aware, the Search Committee has advanced the name of one finalist for further consideration – Jim Johnsen, the current President of the University of Alaska System.

The Committee was unanimous in its decision to advance Jim Johnsen as the sole finalist. We believe that Jim is an excellent candidate, with relevant experience, and outstanding personal attributes. We believe he matches the characteristics that we heard clearly expressed during the listening sessions that took place prior to the search and we believe that he would be a leader who will exemplify our approach of inclusive excellence. We believe that we are fortunate to have Jim as our finalist.

It goes without saying that there have been questions raised about the fact that we are only advancing one finalist.

I'd like to take a few minutes to walk through some of the process and reasoning that the committee went through in making this decision. This was a decision that we made with careful thought, discussion, and consideration.

After the listening sessions, our search firm began assembling a group of candidates – focusing on candidates who reflected what was shared in those sessions. Those candidates were supplemented with names of candidates who were nominated by others and some who self-nominated. We started with a large group of candidates.

We reviewed that large group of candidates to identify a smaller group of what we referred to as semifinalists. In making the decisions on semifinalists, we reviewed the group of candidates to broadly assess which individuals we thought could advance to the finalist stage. We did not set a specific number of people to advance – in other words, the semifinalists were not the “top ten” or “top fifteen” – they included all candidates we thought could be finalists, and only candidates we thought could be finalists.

We then took a similar approach to assessing the semifinalists – after extensive, multiple-day interview sessions and more consideration of each candidate, we reviewed the group of semifinalists to broadly assess which candidates we thought we might recommend to the Board of Regents as the next president of the system. After that process we identified a smaller number of candidates – more than one – who we would consider as finalists. The potential finalists included all those candidates who we thought could be recommended at the end of the process, and only those candidates we thought could be recommended at the end of the process. Jim Johnsen was the very clear favorite of the committee at that point.

Next, we began conducting reference checks on the potential finalists. Following the reference checks the committee was prepared to advance all of the names of the potential finalists as finalists. The names of all candidates had remained confidential to that point.

However, at that point each of the candidates, other than Jim Johnsen, chose not to move forward and not to be publicly identified. Their reasons included concerns that their ability to manage COVID pandemic

matters on their current campus would be jeopardized if they moved forward along with other factors.

So, the committee was left with one finalist – Jim Johnsen – who was also the unanimous preference of the committee.

At that point we found ourselves with three options, which I will briefly describe:

- First, we could have returned to the pool of semifinalists who were not selected as finalists and asked one or more to return to the search. We chose not to do that. Our view was that it would have been disingenuous, intended only to create the perception that there were multiple finalists after we had already made a decision on who we would consider recommending. We also felt that it would be very unfair to anybody we would be asking back into the process. We were unanimous in believing that it would simply be the wrong thing to do.
- Second, we could have restarted the entire search process. Doing so would have delayed any decision by a minimum of six months. We firmly believed that that would not be in the best interests of the UW System in light of the imperatives of our current situation and in light of the fact that the clear leading candidate remained as a finalist. We felt we needed to move forward. In addition, it is unlikely that we would have developed as strong a pool of candidates if we had started over. It is unlikely that anyone who participated in the first process would join a second search. As a result, we would likely lose all the candidates we had considered bringing forward as finalists, including the person who we were

unanimous in supporting – Jim Johnsen. In short, we did not feel that it would in any way be in the best interests of the UW System to take that action.

- Third, we could advance our sole finalist.
- So, in light of our discussion and analysis, and especially in light of the fact that we were, again, unanimous in finding Jim Johnsen to be a superlative candidate who we should put forward as a finalist, even as a sole finalist, we moved forward.

Let me be clear – while the Search Committee has put Jim Johnsen forward as a unanimous sole finalist, this is not the end of the process. We will conduct a series of extensive public interviews, Q&A sessions, and meetings on Tuesday June 9. The process for that date is not different from what was anticipated in the event we had multiple finalists – if anything it will be more robust.

We will collect feedback from University constituencies – and will review and consider it. Carefully. The Search Committee will meet again and determine whether to recommend Jim Johnsen to the Board of Regents, and then the Regents will make a final determination on whether to offer the position to him.

Let me close with this – and this is clearly an understatement - much of the past three months or so has been unprecedented and unanticipated. Those unanticipated events do not, however, change our very firm belief that as a committee we have identified an outstanding candidate who represents the attributes that our community values, and we very much look forward to the rest of you having the opportunity to meet him directly.

Thank you.

I am happy to answer any questions that my colleagues may have at this time.