

UW-Milwaukee University Committee
Comments on proposed revisions to Regent Policy Document 6-4
(Policy related to chancellor and other executive searches)
May 26, 2015

1. It is clear that a major purpose of the proposed changes is to diminish the role of faculty in these executive searches. Currently, the chancellor is regarded as a member of the faculty on most (if not all) UW-System campuses. Thus, chancellor hires are a faculty personnel matter, and an area of primary responsibility of the faculty under current Chapter 36 statutes. Therefore, with these proposed changes, the Board of Regents seems to be anticipating the removal/modification of Chapter 36 regarding faculty governance, and also acting unilaterally in this area prior to any work by the Shared Governance Task Force, which was appointed in March. Further, it is not clear what problems (if any) in the current system exist due to the current level of faculty responsibility, and how these will be addressed/mitigated by the proposed changes.
2. Since they are regarded as faculty, the person hired as chancellor is thus normally appointed to a “back-up” position as tenured faculty in an appropriate department, along with their limited administrative appointment. With these proposed changes, it may become more likely that a tenured faculty appointment will not be appropriate for some future chancellors, and may call into question their role in (and understanding of) academic procedures.
3. The changes reduce the size of the campus search committee, but still speak of the need to ensure that the campus search committee composition remain diverse and representative. This will be more difficult with a smaller committee.
4. The proposed ability of the System President/Regents to “add” up to two finalists from the candidate pool seems to compromise the integrity of the search process itself. The Regents already are the appointing authority, and further have full power to decide which candidates recommended by the campus search committee become finalists. If the Regents can now additionally select their own finalists from the pool, regardless of how these individuals are viewed by the campus search committee, then why would they be inclined to appoint anyone other than one of those added? This eventuality would completely undermine the efforts of the campus search committee. Such a possibility (which may not happen, but would be allowed within the proposed new rules) will reduce the likelihood that individuals will want to invest the time and effort to serve on a campus search committee whose work may be largely disregarded or futile.