

Dear Members,

You recently received an invitation from the Board of Governors to attend a presentation from the candidate selected by the Search Committee to be the new President of Saint Mary's University (Tuesday, January 27th, 4 pm: McNally Theatre Auditorium). In that same e-mail, the candidate was described as the 'new leadership' of the University. As many of you will know, the selection of this one candidate was the result of a closed search, something that is unprecedented at SMU when it comes to the appointment of Senior Academic Administrators. Many of you have expressed your concerns to the Executive about this departure from past practice, and we would like to take this opportunity to state our position about this search.

For the last 40 years, SMU has conducted open searches for the selection of Senior Academic Administrators. The Union negotiated, sometime ago, language in the Collective Agreement to ensure the active participation of the Academy in the selection of our administration (Article 7.3.1 acknowledges the right of faculty members and professional librarians to participate in the selection of senior academic administrators; Article 7.3.4 states that the Employer cannot introduce policies that are inconsistent with the provisions of the Collective Agreement; Article 15.3.10 provides for faculty members and professional librarians to meet with the candidates selected by the Search Committee).

Traditionally, this has not meant the participation of a few handpicked faculty or librarians on the Search Committee. Rather, we have met with three short-listed candidates. These candidates were asked to make presentations to the academic community and to answer questions from academic members. The candidates' CVs were made available for review in the Faculty Lounge, and all members of the academic community were invited to share their comments regarding the suitability of the candidates with the Search Committee.

Additionally, the Faculty Union was given the opportunity to meet separately with each candidate. This long tradition of collegial governance has been successful at SMU, and there is no reason it should not continue.

Recently, however, and without consultation, the Board of Governors changed its by-laws regarding the conduct of Presidential searches. These changes included instructions to the Search Committee to present only one candidate for the Presidency, in clear violation of the Collective Agreement. The Faculty Union raised this issue with the Board of Governors in October 2014. Unfortunately, they decided to ignore our concerns.

In effect, the right of the Academy to participate in the selection of its academic leaders has been eliminated by the Employer.

In our opinion, this is a grave violation of the traditions that have made Saint Mary's a national leader in the practice of collegial governance. For this reason, the Union filed a grievance against this search in November. The grievance was not resolved after the first stage of the grievance process (meeting with the Vice-President Academic and Research). We are currently in stage 2 of the grievance process (meeting with the President). If the matter is not resolved at stage 2, we will have to consider bringing it to arbitration. This is not an action that will be taken lightly.

On Tuesday, as President of the Executive, Marc Lamoureux will present this position to the SMU academic community after the candidate's presentation. Our intention is not to attack or demean the selected candidate. Our grievance is with the process, and our aim is to protect a tradition that gave us a significant voice in the selection of our academic leaders. We, the members of the Executive, strongly encourage you to attend the presentation and voice any concerns you may have to the Search Committee and the Board of Governors. We would hope to be respectful to the selected candidate whilst

remaining firm in our conviction that this ill-conceived search process is an egregious violation of our rights as members of the academic community of Saint Mary's University.

Marc Lamoureux  
SMUFU President