

**Statement from Council of Trustee, Chair L. Patrick Ross regarding Presidential Search Status
Campus Zoom Forum (12/15/2020)**

Thank you for joining us this evening.

First thank you to the search committee who has devoted an incredible amount of time to this search thus far. And thank you to my colleagues on the Council of Trustees who support this decision.

As you know we are in unprecedented times, and although because of confidentiality surrounding the search process, I can say very little about this search and I will not be able to say anything about the candidates, other than the interest from many highly qualified individuals has been overwhelming.

This evening, I want to share with you, in person, or at least virtually, the decision that I as Chair of the Council of Trustees, recommended to the Council of Trustees with the support of the search committee and Chancellor Greenstein.

We are adjusting the pace of concluding our search. Why you may ask? It is really quite simple. It is in a word or two, the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those of you who know me, know I am not someone who makes you guess what I am thinking. This is a pandemic related time adjustment. Period.

We need to extend the timeline for finishing the search because we believe within the spirit of shared governance and stakeholder input that the only way to bring candidates “to campus” is by bringing them on to campus in the most meaningful way we can. And bringing them onto campus has to be more than a virtual experience. It needs to be a meaningful opportunity for the candidates and the campus. We need to experience who they are and they need to do the same with us.

The candidates need to see what ESU has to offer. They need to attend the candidate forums with all of you there.

They need to see and meet the students.

They need to meet and talk to the faculty.

They need to see the great work that the staff here at ESU do and speak with them.

They need to meet and see the impact of our strong and proud alumni.

Quite frankly, we need the candidates to see what ESU truly is: a collection of great and talented students, faculty, staff and alumni.

The current COVID-19 mitigation world is not optimal for this. We are still Warriors and our employees and students continue to be amazing as we work through these difficult and challenging times. But because we have steady interim leadership, we have the luxury of being able to simply adjust our timeline to do this right, to get this right.

The presidential search committee (including many, if not all members, who are on this Zoom session) wants to sit with the candidates and make sure that the fit is right. We have an amazing slate of candidates and we need to ensure (just as they will choose us) that we choose them. Correctly.

A presidency is a 24/7 job. Fit matters and as we invest in a new president, we want to do all that we can to make sure we get this right. So when the search committee can gather again, face to face in safe and appropriate manner, we will be able to finish the hard work we have started.

We want real input, but want it safely. We want the next president of ESU to want to be our president as much as we all want them to be our president.

It is our sincere hope that by adjusting this timeline, all of you will have the opportunity to feel that you had a role in the search committee's work. Because when we come out on the other side of this pandemic, we will need a leader who is as Warrior-strong as we are!

Thank You.