

Memo

To: Susan Mattern-Parkes, Chair
University Council Executive Committee

From: John Morrow, President
UGA Chapter of the American Association of University Professors

Re: Concerns about recent hiring of high-level administrators without on-campus visits by candidates.

Date: February 23, 2007

The normal definition of a "national search" at the university level is when a committee composed of faculty and administrators does a nation-wide search, selects a set of finalists to bring to campus for interviews with administrators and presentations to faculty assemblies, then solicits the input of these various constituencies, and finally makes a recommendation of finalists to the president and provost. I was consequently surprised to learn that [REDACTED] has become [REDACTED] after a so-called national search that some committee must have conducted in secret, since no one I have approached seems to know anything about the search. If this is an example of some novel interpretation of shared governance on the part of the central administration, then we are well along the path to administrative dictatorship at UGA. It is especially problematic to have a [REDACTED] [REDACTED], which with research is the preserve of the faculty, appointed in a fashion that eliminates any general input from the faculty.

The president and provost certainly have the right to select administrators of their choosing, but the process should be open and transparent and should take account of general faculty input, and not merely that of a committee appointed by said administrators. Contrary to President Adams's assertion that the selection of someone already at UGA makes "a powerful statement about the caliber of our faculty and administration," (ABH, Friday, Jan. 26, 2007, p. A5), this process makes a mockery of the entire concept of a national search. It also constitutes a powerful statement about this administration's intention to short circuit any real faculty role in the selection of administrators whose roles necessitate that they have the confidence of the faculty in general and not merely that of some committee and the top administration. Such procedures lend themselves to the result that the administration becomes increasingly inbred with no infusion of new ideas from outside rather than being staffed by the best candidates that a true national search attracts, which, of course, is another rather ironic way to interpret President Adams's idea of "a powerful statement about the caliber" of our administration. Such a search procedure contrasts to the real competitive national searches that we conduct for faculty positions, which bring us top quality scholar-teachers. This most recent appointment, I believe, should leave the President's Faculty Advisory Committee in no doubt as to this administration's respect for shared governance with the faculty; it has little or none. Some queries and explanations should be in order.