

SRU trustees hire AGB Search to assist with presidential search

Feb. 15, 2017

SLIPPERY ROCK, Pa. – Jeff Smith, chair of the Slippery Rock University Presidential Search Committee, announced today that AGB Search has been retained as the agency of record to assist the University in finding a successor to SRU President Cheryl Norton.

Norton, who was appointed as the 16th - and first female - president of SRU in 2012, will retire from the University July 21, 2017.

Founded in 2010 by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, AGB Search focuses exclusively on higher education leadership, conducting executive searches for college and university presidents, chancellors, provosts, vice presidents, deans, university system heads and CEOs of coordinating boards and related foundations. The firm is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

“AGB has the kind of experienced consultants — including board, administrative and faculty perspectives — that gives them terrific insight and depth of understanding which is so critical as we move forward,” said Smith.

The firm was selected following a review of – and subsequent interviews with – a group of approved consultants provided by Pennsylvania’s State System of Higher Education.

JoAnn Gora, consultant and former president of Ball State University, and Jamie Ferrare, advisory consultant and founding managing principal at AGB Search, will provide agency leadership.

Gora will work directly with the Presidential Search Committee, lead meetings, interface with candidates and guide the PSC through all steps of the search.

She has 40 years of experience in higher education and has worked at every level of academic administration in both public and private universities. She has been responsible for developing collaborative and effective leadership teams that focus on strategic planning, fundraising, fiscal competence and communications and marketing. Prior to joining AGB Search, she was president of BSU for 10 years, chancellor of the University of Massachusetts-Boston for three years and provost and vice president of academic affairs at Old Dominion University for nine years. She served for nearly 20 years as a faculty member, dean and campus provost at Fairleigh Dickinson University.

Gora received her bachelor’s degree in political science from Vassar College. She completed her master’s and doctoral degrees at Rutgers University and did postdoctoral work at Harvard University.

Ferrare will assist in recruiting and vetting candidates, as well as providing additional support throughout the search.

Before joining AGB Search, he was a senior consultant and past president of a Washington, D.C., based search and consulting firm where he served for 10 years. Since 2000, he has led more than 100 searches for presidents, vice presidents and deans in public and private colleges and universities as well as church-affiliated schools and independent liberal arts and fine arts institutions.

Ferrare co-authored the book, "A Complete Guide to Presidential Search for Universities and Colleges" in 2013. The book focuses on best practices when conducting a presidential search and is geared for university and college trustees and presidential search committees.

He earned his bachelor's degree in education and his master's degree in reading and education from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. His doctoral degree in education policy and administration was earned from Iowa State University.

Smith said that in addition to securing the services of AGB Search, "the council of trustees Presidential Search sub-committee has prepared its recommendation for Search Committee membership. It will be presented to the SRU COT Feb. 22. Following COT approval, the search team recommendation will be forwarded to the Chancellor's office for final approval."

By policy, membership on the search committee, includes three trustees; a university executive; faculty, non-instructional employees; a student; an alumnus; and up to three others from within the University, including students, selected by the trustees, to assure appropriate involvement by constituency, gender, race, generation, etc. In addition, a liaison from the State System chancellor's staff and the president of another State System university serve on the committee as non-voting members.

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