

# Presidential Succession

## Policy Statement

A vacancy in the office of President of the University can come about by

Resignation or retirement of the incumbent at any time,  
non-reappointment at the end of a presidential term, or  
involuntary separation during a presidential term.

When a decision to create a vacancy in the office of President of the University has been finalized, the Board of Trustees must begin immediately to take action to fill the position and to provide for a smooth transition. A first meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board is called as soon as possible to address certain fundamental interlocking issues, such as

determine from an appraisal of the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats,

- leadership qualifications for the presidency,
- statement of presidential expectations,
- position announcement,
- whether an interim President of the University is needed,

advise the Chair of the Board, or his or her designees, as to how the search committee will be constructed, for example,

- a committee composed of trustees, the President of the Members of the Marywood University Corporation or another Member of the Corporation if she herself is an applicant, administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, and students,
- the number of committee members to be selected from each constituency,
- how a nomination list for committee membership might be compiled from which the Chair of the Board can appoint the committee,

instructions to be issued to the search committee, for example,

- understanding that election to the presidency rests with the Board of Trustees,
- how candidates are to be evaluated,
- manner in which recommendations are to be made to the Board of Trustees,
- need for confidentiality.

The presidential succession and transition will be comprehensively managed in five phases.

1. Private Announcement
2. Public Announcement
3. Search Phase
4. Professional Development of President-Elect
5. Official Transition

## **Procedures**

### **Phase I. Private Announcement**

1. In the case of **resignation or retirement of the incumbent**, a formal letter of resignation, including an effective date, should be sent to the Chair of the Board of Trustees, copied to the President of the Members of the Marywood University Corporation. A formal letter accepting the resignation should be sent in reply by the Chair of the Board.
2. In the case of **non-reappointment or involuntary separation of the incumbent**, a formal letter of notification, including an effective date, should be sent to the incumbent by the Chair of the Board of Trustees, copied to the President of the Members of the Marywood University Corporation. A formal letter accepting the Board's decision should be sent by the incumbent in reply.
3. In either case, a formal letter should be sent to the Members of the Marywood University Corporation by the Chair of the Board notifying them of the vacancy, including the effective date.

### **Phase II. Public Announcement**

In order to avoid rumor, a public announcement is made as soon as the decision to create the vacancy is formalized. The following should occur simultaneously to every extent possible:

1. previously prepared press release,
2. press conference including at the least the Chair of the Board and the President of the University,
3. individual and personal letters, or an announcement in a general letter, from the President of the University to current administrators, faculty, and staff,
4. letters from the President of the University to presidents of higher education institutions and other professionals,
5. notification to alumni in some format appropriate at the time.

### **Phase III. Search Phase**

Immediately following the first Executive Committee meeting, the Chair of the Board meets with the search committee to consider a process for a search to include all applicants.

A cover letter or other appropriate announcement, including an invitation for Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton, Pennsylvania ("IHM") and for outside candidates to submit cover letters of application with resumes to the Chair of the Board, or to the Chair of the Search Committee, if it is a different person. The letter includes a due date, perhaps six weeks later, with a statement to the effect that the position will remain open after that date if a candidate has not been selected from the initial applicants.

The letter should include:

Position announcement,  
Leadership qualifications for the presidency, and  
Statement of presidential expectations.

As soon as possible following the due date, the Search Committee will interview applicants and prepare a written, confidential report of its findings for the Chair of the Board.

If the committee has selected one or more duly qualified candidates from among the applicants, the Chair of the Board will submit the name(s) to the entire Board for vote. The vote is taken in executive session in order to preserve the confidential nature of the matter.

The Chair of the Board will submit the name of the elected person to the President of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton, Pennsylvania, requesting approval of the Members of the Marywood University Corporation.

A formal offer is presented to the elected person in the form of an employment agreement, including the effective date of employment as President of the University. A cover letter invites the person to meet with the Chair of the Board to clear up any matters the person might wish to discuss before signing the agreement. Once the employment agreement has been signed and given to the Chair of the Board, the person becomes the President of the University-Elect.

Letters of regret are sent immediately to the other applicants.

A press conference is held immediately to introduce the President of the University-Elect to the Marywood community and to the public.

#### **Phase IV. Professional Development of President of the University-Elect**

The President of the University-Elect should be provided with time and money to attend institutes, programs, etc., tailored for new presidents.

If possible, s/he should have at least four months for in-house orientation with the outgoing President.

#### **Phase V. Official Transition**

The official transition ceremony should be in private. It is simply a turning over of the keys to the office, the presidential residence, the presidential car, etc., on the pre-determined date the President-Elect becomes the President of the University. If desirable, there can be a luncheon including both “presidents” with the Chair of the Board and, perhaps, other invitees.

## **Related Policies**

Bylaws of the University  
Evaluation of Presidential Performance

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## **History of Policy Presidential Succession**

4/20/02 - Adopted by the Board of Trustees and placed in *Board of Trustees Manual*.

7/01/07 - Revision approved by the Board to provide for substitution on the search committee if the President of the Members of the Corporation is herself an applicant, and change of title of Phase 4 from Lay Search Phase to Extended Search Phase.

02/11/2023 - The Board of Trustees approved revisions to the policy resulting in only one search for the President.

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MARYWOOD UNIVERSITY  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL