

College of Architecture, Art, and Planning Dean Search – Update #5

To: AAP Faculty, Staff, Students, & Alumni
From: John Siliciano
Subject: Search for a new Dean of the College – FIFTH UPDATE
Date: April 28, 2008

I write to provide you with an update on the status of the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning Dean Search.

As I mentioned in the last update, the Search Committee has considered over 100 applications and nominations of potential dean candidates, and from that group the Committee identified a small number of individuals who were invited to preliminary screening interviews. Those interviews were completed several weeks ago, and the Committee has now decided to bring two of those individuals to campus for the final stage of the process. These visits are now scheduled for Thursday May 8th and Friday May 9th.

I want to outline the final interview process because it departs significantly from what Cornell has used in past dean searches. Over the last several years, it has become very clear that the highly public nature of the final stages of our searches was distinctly at odds with the quieter and more private processes used by almost all our peers and was, in fact, discouraging some very promising candidates from pursuing deanships at Cornell. As a result, the Provost determined that ongoing and future dean searches must be structured in a way that maximizes the chance for recruiting the best possible dean candidates while still allowing for an evaluative process with representative participation by all appropriate constituencies. After reviewing the search processes at our peer institutions, taking advice from the Search Consultants on best practices in the field, discussing the issue with the Search Committee, and ascertaining the degree of public exposure that the individual candidates that were of greatest interest to the Committee were willing to accept, we have settled on the following process for the AAP dean search, which will in all likelihood be extended to other dean searches at Cornell.

The on campus interview process will consist of the following meetings:

- * two meetings with representative panels of faculty members
- * a meeting with the Department Chairs and Interim Dean
- * a meeting with central and College Alumni Affairs & Development representatives
- * a meeting with the Provost
- * a meeting with a representative panel of staff members
- * a meeting with a representative panel of students
- * an exit meeting with the Search Committee

In addition, we will host a conference call between the candidates and a representative panel of alumni. All of the panels will be small in order to enhance the quality of the conversations with the candidates. We are working with the alumni, staff and student members of the committee to determine the best way for identifying individuals for these panels. The two faculty panels will mirror the composition of the search committee, with each panel comprised of a total of five faculty members, two from Architecture, two from CRP, and one from Art. The membership of these panels will be determined by the department, but I would first like to meet with each department very soon to discuss the process and hear any concerns. The members of all panels will be required to keep the identity of the candidates strictly confidential before, during and after the interviews and to that end, will need to sign a confidentiality

agreement, as has been done by the Search Committee. Following the on campus interviews, the Search Committee will solicit feedback from all panel members in order to formulate a recommendation to the Provost.

Although this process remains more open than the completely closed process used by some of our peers, I do appreciate that changes in the process may trigger anxieties. It is possible that some will take strong objection both to the use of representative panels rather than unrestricted participation and to the requirement that panel members maintain the confidentiality of the identities of the candidates. It is with regret that the Provost came to the conclusion that whatever advantages inhere in a completely open and very public process must be balanced by our need to attract the best possible candidates. There is, unfortunately, a pretty clear trade off between the two, and in the end, a process that allows the school to find the best possible leader is an aim that we all share.

Warm regards,

John

John Siliciano

Vice Provost

Chair, College of Architecture, Art & Planning Dean Search Committee

Cornell University

<http://www.cornell.edu/provost/searches/aap>