

# Presidential Search Is On...

## Finding a suitable candidate isn't an easy process

By Dana Flatekval  
Managing Editor

In order to keep the needs of the campus community in mind, Rider, along with Korn/Ferry International (KFI) held a series of open forums specifically for the search of the University's next president.

On Thursday, Sept. 12, various opportunities to speak to employees of the presidential consulting firm KFI were available for students, faculty and staff. During the informational forum and discussion, a checklist for the desirable criteria of the next president was given to present students. The people in attendance were asked to fill out the sheet by ranking the importance of each characteristic.

Characteristics included an accomplished academic record, extensive experience with collective bargaining, consensus-building skills, external outreach and commitment to students.

"Korn/Ferry International has significant experience at finding and placing top candidates at higher education institutions," said a representative of KFI, Dr. John Kuhnle.

For more than 30 years, the firm has been a leader in executive recruitment, conducting over 80,000 senior-level searches for clients worldwide.

KFI consultants approach each executive search with a consistent, five-step process, derived from more than 30 years of experience in recruiting senior-level candidates.

The first step is to define the "objectives and specifications," meaning to obtain the thoughts of the students' position on the responsibilities and personality of a University president, develop a search plan and understand the culture and business of the University, explained Kuhnle.

"We know these entities, the issues they face and the executives who have demonstrated the qualities needed to tackle them," said Kuhnle. "In order to best serve the community of Rider, we need to get your ideas to put together a more detailed report of what the students and the institution itself is all about."

A second step of the search process is to identify and assess the candidates, said Kuhnle. During this step candidates are chosen, screened and evaluated. The list of candidates is narrowed and background profiles are prepared.

Through the third process of interviews candidates are evaluated on their strengths and weaknesses. During this part, members of Rider's campus will

be able to meet with and speak to the candidates during another open forum.

"We want to raise the quality of the pool candidates by seeking out and talking to various people from all walks of life," said Kuhnle. "Through advertisements, personal outreach and database searches, we hope to find anyone in the academic community who is adequately fit for this position."

According to Kuhnle, the fourth step is to conduct finalist interviews and gather more feedback.

Finally, KFI conducts a follow up to ensure that the chosen person is making a smooth transition into the position.

"In order to ensure that everyone's needs are met, a search committee has been established which consists of alumni, CEO's who work in higher education, students and faculty," said Kuhnle.

The goal of KFI is to have the new president announced to campus by the end of the summer, said Kuhnle.

According to Paul Lang, chairman of the board of trustees and search committee, they will ensure the campus community is kept current on the progress of the president search.

"We will publish periodic updates in Rider Newswire and, at KFI's suggestion, we have added a section to the Rider web site dedicated to the president search," said Lang.

"Our next president will need wisdom, creativity, and enthusiastic support from the Rider community in guiding the University through the many challenges anticipated in American higher education over the next decade," said Lang.

According to Kuhnle, there is a wide, rich and diverse pool of a mixture of personality types, races, genders and commitments of candidates. KFI will pursue every candidate and make sure they are a substantial leader.

"Rider needs someone who is visible, accessible, willing to listen and make decisions and move on quickly," said Kuhnle. "If these needs are not met, the institution is failing. Anyone can be nominated, as well as faculty and staff within the University, said Kuhnle. Candidates' names are kept confidential until they come to campus to meet the community.

"Rider has many attractions to a prospective candidate," said Kuhnle. "The strides and momentum it's had along with the stability of its staff is an appeal of the University. Rider will need someone who can keep these attractions but also advance the institution."

### Desirable Criteria For Rider's Next President

#### How Would You Rank These Criteria (from 1 to 10?)

Send to: Monisha Kaplan  
Korn/Ferry International  
Presidential Plaza  
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Washington, D.C. 20006

- **Accomplished academic record** resulting from success in teaching, publishing research, scholarship, committee work, awards or other recognition.
- **Effective institutional spokesperson.** A person of stature able to represent Rider to higher education community, the State, and the general public by articulating clear vision and strategy designed to further the institutional mission.
- **Extensive experience with collective bargaining** and evidence of a commitment to developing productive relationships and results.
- **Tested abilities in fiscal management.** A leader whose skill set includes institutional budgeting and planning, analytic thinking, and financial acumen.
- **Consensus-building skills.** A leadership approach that prioritizes maximizing agreement among staff and departments before making decisions.
- **Demonstrated commitment to students'** interests, needs, and concerns.
- **External outreach.** A leader with a proven track record of developing significant resources on behalf of an organization through affective fundraising, community relations, corporate contacts, alumni relations, and political outreach.
- **Change-management skills.** A leadership approach that places a premium on decisiveness and the ability to reorganize or redirect an organization.
- **Comparable institutional experience.** A leader whose professional background reflects experience in organizations with characteristics similar to Rider's (small, private, liberal arts, northeastern).
- **Substantial leadership or administrative experience** derived from managing complex organizations within higher education, the private sector, the public sector, or some combination of the above.

This is a copy of the checklist of criteria that was distributed during a recent open forum regarding the ongoing presidential candidate search.

Below is the expected timeline that will be followed in the process.

#### Tentative Presidential Search Timeline

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| - Open meetings, on-campus meetings and research                         | <b>Mid-September</b>         |
| - Create and draft position description                                  | <b>Mid-September</b>         |
| - Position description reviewed and approved by board                    | <b>Early October</b>         |
| - Disseminate position description to candidates and complete recruiting | <b>October</b>               |
| - Off-site screening interviews  | <b>November/December</b>     |
| - Additional screening/referencing                                       | <b>December</b>              |
| - Select finalists   | <b>December/January</b>      |
| - Campus visits  | <b>Late January/February</b> |
| - Announcement   | <b>February</b>              |

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