

**Valley City State University
Presidential Search Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 26, 2026**

The Valley City State University Presidential Search Committee met Monday, January 26, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. at VCSU in Skoal Room, Memorial Student Center.

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m.

Members Present:

- ☒ Mr. DJ Campbell, Co-Chair
- ☒ Ms. Erica Buchholz, Co-Chair
- ☒ Mr. Corey Anderson
- ☒ Dr. Anthony Dutton
- ☒ Dr. Kerry Gregoryk
- ☒ Ms. Erin Heide
- ☒ Ms. Morgan Hopewell
- ☒ Mr. Josh Johnson
- ☒ Mr. Josh Kasowski
- ☒ Mr. Tyler Marthaler
- ☒ Ms. Mattilyn Nathan
- ☒ Dr. Emily Wicktor

Others Present:

- ☒ Assistant Attorney General Shaun McNamara
- ☒ Meredith Larson, NDUS Chief Operating Officer
- ☒ Jane Grinde, NDUS Chief Human Resources Officer
- ☒ Billie Jo Lorus, Director of Communications/Media Relations
- ☒ Eric Jensen, NDUS Director of Strategic Engagement
- ☒ Bethany Kadrmas, NDUS Executive Assistant to Commissioner & COO
- ☒ Jennifer Larson, VCSU Director for Human Resources
- ☒ Mark Potts, VCSU Director for Public Relations
- ☒ William Blunck, VCSU Network Administrator
- ☒ KaSaundra Peterson, VCSU Executive Assistant to the President
- ☒ Mike Meagher, Sagency
- ☒ Jon McTaggart, Sagency

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Co-Chair Campbell and Co-Chair Buchholz welcomed attendees and committee members introduced themselves.

2. Review SBHE [Policy 601.1](#) and NDUS [Procedure 601.1](#) – Presidential Searches

Ms. Larson summarized Policy 601.1: The committee's role is to identify at least three finalists for the State Board; the process and costs (advertising, travel, consultants) are covered by Valley City State University. Committee composition was explained, with representatives from required groups selected via nominations.

3. Review North Dakota Open Meetings/Open Records Law

Mr. McNamara outlined the legal framework for the committee, noting that all business must comply with open records and meetings laws. He clarified that candidate materials are confidential until the finalist stage and directed all records requests to the NDUS office. Regarding procedure, a quorum of six is required, and members must avoid "reply-all" emails or serial meetings to stay in compliance. While executive sessions are allowed for sensitive discussions, final actions must be public, and members are required to vote unless a direct conflict of interest exists.

4. Review Search Process and Timeline

Ms. Grinde outlined the draft timeline, which includes four committee meetings, the finalization of the job advertisement, and an application window closing in mid-March. The process will proceed through scoring, virtual interviews, and campus visits for semi-finalists, with the goal of forwarding final selections to the SBHE in May. The committee discussed the role of consultants and scoring rubrics, emphasizing the need for flexibility in the schedule. Additionally, it was noted that campus input has been gathered through various listening sessions and surveys.

5. Report from Co-Chairs on campus listening sessions

Co-Chair Campbell and Co-Chair Buchholz summarized feedback gathered from three listening sessions, a student senate visit, and a survey, identifying visibility and relationship-building as top priorities for the next president. The committee discussed minimum qualifications of a master's degree while noting that a doctorate and higher education experience are preferred but not mandatory. The committee discussed key leadership priorities include strategic planning, advocacy, and a commitment to shared governance, with a specific focus on integrating into the Valley City community and fostering diversity and inclusion.

6. Communications and Media Inquiries

Mr. Potts presented the draft campus profile website and communications plan, which serve as the primary resources for promoting VCSU to prospective candidates. He emphasized that the site is designed to be a comprehensive hub for the search process. To ensure consistent messaging, the committee was instructed to direct all media and open records inquiries to Mr. Potts, Ms. Larson, or the NDUS communications staff.

Role Clarity Session with Agency

7. Welcome and Context

- a. Overview of the role clarity process
- b. How this work connects to the search timeline, interview process, and candidate assessment

Mr. Meagher and Mr. McTaggart introduced Sagency's role clarity process, connecting it to the search timeline, interview process, and candidate assessment.

8. Review of Key Accountability Areas

- a. Confirm whether the eight identified accountability areas are "directionally correct"
- b. Discuss any areas that should be added, removed, or combined
- c. Ensure the areas comprehensively capture presidential responsibilities

The committee reviewed eight draft accountability areas for the presidential role, including strategic leadership and vision; student experience and program relevance; leadership, culture, and talent development; advocacy and place-based leadership; advancement, philanthropy, and external relations; system collaboration and governance; and financial stewardship and institutional sustainability.

The committee discussed whether areas were comprehensive and suggested refinements (e.g., distinguishing legislative advocacy from fundraising).

9. Refine Outputs and Measures

- a. Provide input on the example outputs and potential measures of success
- b. Identify any critical outputs or metrics that are missing
- c. Ensure measures are realistic, meaningful, and aligned with institutional priorities

The committee reviewed and provided input on example outputs and measures, emphasizing the need for close alignment with institutional priorities such as student retention, community engagement, and financial stewardship. Key suggestions for improvement included the addition of specific metrics for leadership development and the refinement of measures related to advocacy and fundraising to ensure clarity and accountability.

10. Force Ranking Exercise

- a. Individually and collectively rank the accountability areas in order of importance
- b. Discuss areas of alignment and divergence
- c. Build consensus on relative priorities for the President's focus

The committee discussed the importance of various accountability areas to build consensus on presidential priorities. Members explored areas of alignment and divergence, placing particular emphasis on strategic leadership, the student experience, and community integration as the core pillars for the incoming leader.

11. Next Steps and Homework

- a. Overview of the online job assessment tool
- b. Instructions for completing the assessment to create a combined job benchmark
- c. Timeline and expectations for completion

Sagency outlined the online job assessment tool for committee members, explaining that individual completions will inform the final combined job benchmark. Detailed instructions and a timeline for completion were provided, with the resulting outputs serving as a foundation for both candidate assessment and the subsequent interview process.

Gregoryk moved, Dutton seconded to proceed with Sagency's Phase II assessment for semi-finalist candidates.

Anderson, Dutton, Greogryk, Heide, Hopewell, Johnson, Kasowski, Marthaler, Nathan, Wicktor, Co-Chair Campbell, and Co-Chair Buchholz voted yes. Motion passed.

12. Closing Comments and Adjourn

During the closing comments, Ms. Larson and Ms. Grinde reviewed next steps, including committee members completing an online job assessment, reviewing the job advertisement draft, and participate in scheduling interviews via a Doodle poll.

The meeting adjourned at 3:09 p.m.