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**From:** Cramer, Aaron M.  
**Sent:** Friday, April 16, 2021 11:32 AM  
**To:**  
**Subject:** FW: Message from Senate Council on Final Steps for Associate Provost/Dean Search

**From:** Blackwell, David W. <[David.Blackwell@uky.edu](mailto:David.Blackwell@uky.edu)>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 16, 2021 11:14 AM  
**To:** Cramer, Aaron M. <[aaron.cramer@uky.edu](mailto:aaron.cramer@uky.edu)>  
**Cc:** Capilouto, Eli I. <[elic@uky.edu](mailto:elic@uky.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: Message from Senate Council on Final Steps for Associate Provost/Dean Search

Chair Cramer,

As President Capilouto has now responded to your message, I would like to share my thoughts as well.

First, I appreciate your recognition of the commendable job performed by the search committee for the Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Education. Indeed, as you implicitly acknowledge and what is actually the case, multiple candidates for this critical post were interviewed, considered and evaluated at length. Ultimately, I made the decision to put forward a single candidate – someone who has a stellar record as a faculty member, school director, and acting dean at this university over the course of a long academic career.

I made this decision having conducted the search process in full compliance with all relevant regulations, the principles of shared governance for all elements of the University community, and the highest integrity.

The search committee is broad and representative. Every member had a chance to speak, and I weighed their input carefully. Moreover, I would like to emphasize that it is not at all unusual for internal Dean searches under my leadership to result in sole finalists following a process in which many voices are heard and have input. I point to searches for the Deans of the College of Social Work, Rosenberg College of Law and the College of Dentistry as examples.

I intend to continue with my normal search process, which has yielded outstanding academic leaders during my time as Provost. We will conduct a full set of interviews and provide opportunities for the entire campus to weigh in on the finalist and for the finalist to hear what the priorities are for the office. As I normally do, I will ask the search committee to evaluate all of the input from the interview process and to give me input on the finalist.

Importantly, I'm sure you understand that because your questions concern an active search, I am not at liberty to discuss any additional details about this process. Accordingly, I am deeply concerned about your actions over the past week, which could easily be perceived as interference in an active search. In particular, that the search chairs and the finalist herself were directly contacted by you is extremely problematic. While you note that your concerns relate to the process not the person, these actions—whether intentional or not—nevertheless have spillover effects and potentially bias the campus against the finalist.

Further, as I am the hiring official for this position, I am happy to meet with you as we have done in the past to directly hear any concerns you may have.

I, like the President, am deeply committed to shared governance. Having served 32 years as a faculty member and academic leader, I deeply value and appreciate the role and perspective of the faculty and its elected leadership in shared governance. Thus, in the spirit of shared governance, I will appreciate you reaching out to me directly with your concerns and I will be happy to engage in a dialogue with you.

I am deeply committed to seeing this search through to its conclusion and filling this position with the best possible leader. I remain hopeful that the community rallies around the associate provost and dean, further recognizing the critical importance of this position at the University of Kentucky.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please reach out directly to me.

Regards,  
Dave



**David W. Blackwell**  
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**From:** Cramer, Aaron M. <[aaron.cramer@uky.edu](mailto:aaron.cramer@uky.edu)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 14, 2021 4:36 PM

**To:** Capilouto, Eli I. <[elic@uky.edu](mailto:elic@uky.edu)>

**Cc:** Blackwell, David W. <[David.Blackwell@uky.edu](mailto:David.Blackwell@uky.edu)>

**Subject:** Message from Senate Council on Final Steps for Associate Provost/Dean Search

Dear President Capilouto (cc: Provost Blackwell and the University Senate),

Senate Council had an emergency meeting on Tuesday, April 13 to discuss the Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Education and Dean of the Graduate School search. On behalf of the Senate Council, I am writing regarding the final steps of the process to identify a new associate provost/dean. By all accounts, the search committee performed its duties commendably and with all the gravitas and deliberation that such work demands. After such fruitful work from the committee, many faculty were dismayed to hear of the decision to depart from the usual practice of presenting multiple finalists to the campus community. While the presentation of a single finalist is superficially compliant with UK's regulations, many faculty members feel that such a decision does not reflect the spirit of collaboration that is inherent in shared governance. Senate Council's concerns are explicitly with the process, not the specific finalist.

It was only last semester when the Senate Council and many other faculty members expressed dismay at the appointment of an acting dean for the College of Arts and Sciences without faculty consultation. Regardless of the number of semifinalists in this present search process, the presentation of a single finalist to campus is naturally seen as a *fait accompli*, and many faculty members will decline to participate in a process that they reasonably view as having a preordained outcome. Of the most concern to Senate Council members is the appearance of a general pattern in administrative decision-making that faculty members are to be consulted only because of a regulatory requirement. The embodiment of shared governance is valuing the input and participation of diverse populations because they offer a valuable and different perspective on shared priorities. After the announcement of a single final candidate, Senate Council and many other faculty members across campus are uncertain about the extent to which senior administrators value the faculty role in shared governance. Announcing the intent to consider a single finalist from among seven qualified semifinalists is not aligned with the values in GR I of shared governance and a sense of community. Further, faculty have significantly less opportunity to demonstrate and apply personal and institutional responsibility and accountability (the sixth value enumerated in GR I) because promoting a single finalist does not truly allow the campus to participate meaningfully in the final steps of the search. It is not clear what the open forums are intended to accomplish at this point. Shared governance is a defining value of the University, but presenting a single candidate does not clearly signal that input from the campus community at large adds value to the decision-making.

During the meeting when Senate Council discussed these concerns, there was robust discussion among all those present. A variety of concerns were expressed about multiple aspects of the final phase of the search process; those present unanimously agreed that the presentation of a single finalist was inappropriate. There is a long history of University search committees providing multiple candidates for the campus community to interact with, so it is implausible to think that the campus community would welcome a single finalist, particularly for an internal search. While it appears that some of the conflict here results from a lack of common understanding of shared governance and its practical implementation at UK, Senate Council remains willing to work to restore a common framework that is consistent with the defining values of the University.

At the special Senate Council meeting on Tuesday, the Senate Council voted to ask that you refrain from making the final decision on the appointment of an Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Education and Dean of the Graduate School until additional candidates have been invited to participate publicly in the final round of the search. The Senate Council recognizes that, due to the way the search has evolved, it is possible that none of the capable semifinalists would consent to be considered publicly as a finalist. The Senate Council also asks that the feedback obtained through the public forums be provided to the search committee so that the committee may share its response to the feedback with you. Additionally, the Senate Council is taking this opportunity to state explicitly its expectation that future searches, including the ongoing Provost search, present multiple candidates for the campus to interact with to allow access to the "diverse expertise collectively available to the University in its faculty, administration, staff employees, and students" and allow us to "share the responsibility of attainment of the University's goals" (GR I.E).

Sincerely,

Aaron M. Cramer  
Chair, University Senate Council  
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University of Kentucky  
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