

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

NO.: BHE 22-35

BOARD DATE: February 1, 2022

FRAMINGHAM STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENT

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby approves the December 15, 2021 recommendation of the Framingham State University Board of Trustees recommending Dr. Nancy Niemi President of Framingham State University. Such appointment is effective on or about July 1, 2022, is subject to the successful and satisfactory completion of a State Police background check, and is subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment.

VOTED: Motion adopted by BHE 2/1/2022.

Authority: Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 15A, Sections 9(q) and 21

Contact: Constantia T. Papanikolaou, General Counsel

Background

The Board of Higher Education (BHE) is a coordinating board, with some governing authority, over the public higher education system. Among the BHE's governing functions are its statutory responsibilities to approve the appointment and removal of, and set the compensation for, the president of each state university and community college within the public higher education system. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§ 9(q) and 21.

In furtherance of these legislative requirements, and consistent with the BHE's responsibility to establish overall goals in order to achieve a well-coordinated, quality system of public higher education in the Commonwealth, to establish coordination between and among institutions, and to resolve conflicts of policies or operations, the BHE issued guidelines and procedures for the search, selection, appointment and removal of the chief executive officers at state universities and community colleges. M.G.L. c. 15A, §§ 9(c) and (u). [BHE Presidential Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal Guidelines \(2013\)](#). The BHE Presidential Guidelines establish minimum procedural expectations for Board of Trustees conducting presidential searches, delegate to the Commissioner the authority to act on behalf of the BHE as specified therein, and include several touchpoints between local Board of Trustee Chairs and the Commissioner to ensure that the Presidential search process is being conducted consistent with the BHE and the Commissioner's expectations.

The Framingham State University (FSU) Board of Trustees initiated the search process for the President of WSU shortly after President Javier Cevallos' March 24, 2021 announcement of his anticipated retirement. The FSU Board of Trustees conducted the search with the assistance of search consultants at WittKieffer. As required under state law and the BHE's implementing guidelines, the Commissioner appointed a voting member to the search committee, DHE Chief of Staff and Assistant Commissioner Elena Quiroz-Livanis, who participated in the development of the position profile, the selection and interviews of semi-finalist candidates, and the search committee decisions to recommend final candidates for public interviews. (The FSU Presidential Position Profile may be accessed through the following link: [Framingham State University Presidential Search Profile 2021](#)).

The following three finalists were selected for and participated in WSU Board of Trustee on-campus interviews during the first two weeks of December: Allia Carter, Ph.D.; Roxanne Gonzalez-Walker Ed.D.; and Nancy Niemi, Ph.D. Community surveys were posted on the FSU website to enable FSU community members to provide feedback to the FSU Board in advance of the Board's determination. During that time, the BHE was extended an opportunity to interview all candidates, as required by the BHE Presidential Guidelines. The Commissioner and the Secretary of Education, engaged in this procedural touchpoint and interviewed all candidates on behalf of the BHE.

On December 15, 2021²⁰²² the FSU Board of Trustees convened a special meeting to discuss the three final candidates and after deliberation voted to unanimously recommend Dr.

Nancy Niemi to the BHE for approval and appointment, subject to and in accordance with the attached Terms of Appointment. M.G.L. c. 15A, § 21.

The Commissioner has received and reviewed the FSU Board of Trustee's recommendation, along with all supporting materials, and has determined that the submittal is complete, and the search was conducted in alignment with the BHE Presidential Guidelines. Accordingly, the Commissioner is forwarding the recommendation to the BHE for consideration and formal action.

Attachments to BHE 22-35:

03a_Nancy Niemi Cover Letter

03b_Nancy Niemi Resume (CV)

03c_Letter from Framingham State Chair Foley to Commissioner Santiago

03d1_Framingham Presidential Search Process Summary

03d2_Framingham Search Demographics

03e_Terms of Appointment_Nancy Niemi