

SPECIAL MEETING

Conference Room, System Administration
5550 W. Flamingo Road, Suite C-1, Las Vegas
Monday, April 24, 2006

Members Present: Mrs. Dorothy S. Gallagher, Vice Chairman

Mrs. Thalia M. Dondero

Mrs. Linda C. Howard

Mr. James Dean Leavitt

Mr. Howard Rosenberg

Dr. Jack Lund Schofield

Mr. Steve Sisolak

Members Absent: Mr. Mark Alden

Dr. Stavros S. Anthony

Dr. Jill Derby

Mr. Douglas Roman Hill

Mr. Bret Whipple

Mr. Michael B. Wixom

Others Present: Mr. Daniel Klaich, Executive Vice Chancellor

Mrs. Mary Ellen McMullen, UNR Foundation

Dr. Stephen G. Wells

Vice Chairman Dorothy S. Gallagher called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m., with all members present except Regents Alden, Anthony, Derby, Hill, Whipple, and Wixom.

1. Information Only-Candidate Visit with Board of Regents - Dr. Stephen G. Wells, a finalist for the position of President of the University of Nevada, Reno, met with members of the Board of Regents.

Vice Chairman Gallagher explained this was a less formal agenda than the previous meeting.

Regent Howard asked Dr. Wells about his background before coming to DRI.

Dr. Wells said he was labeled as a non-traditionalist, which he found humorous, since 20 years of his life was represented as a tenured faculty member. He began his career at the University of New Mexico, where he spent 15 years. The University of California at Riverside was his second tenured position. He was committed and worked diligently with both the undergraduate and graduate levels in the core curriculum of the Geology department, which is now Earth & Planetary Sciences. He ultimately built a graduate program, which has sustained itself and has a national reputation. That process provided his first real introduction into fundraising. An endowed investment was made to the

1. Information Only-Candidate Visit with Board of Regents – (Cont'd.)

department and, even though he did not help secure that endowment, he was the chairman of the department and had to steward the entire process and work with that board on a regular basis. Dr. Wells left New Mexico and went to California to build and run the graduate program, with the stipulation that he would teach Introductory to Earth Sciences & Geography, which began with 13 students and grew to 120. He then had the opportunity to work with the cooperative extension at U.C. Riverside, which was tied to U.C. Davis, where he gained insights into their mission, especially from the agricultural and urban-rural interface.

Dr. Wells stated he had a fairly rich history, which culminated with approximately 35 graduate students, of

which the majority were Masters, and 13 were Ph.D.'s. One Masters and one Ph.D. came from UNR. He stated that he has had a long-term history and traditional academic process, with exposure to Los Alamos and Sandia National Lab. He added that being department chair was one of the toughest administrative positions on any campus.

Regent Leavitt asked Dr. Wells to list his advantages, aside from location and his present position at DRI. Dr. Wells felt a key advantage was familiarity with the state strategically. He has worked with the System office, the Board of Regents, the Chancellor, districts in Las Vegas, Reno and rural communities. He has ties with the legislators, as well as in W

bring it forward to be solved. Communication will never be effective when blind sided. It is best to hit problems straight on.

Vice Chairman Gallagher felt that communication was a two-way street. While it could be difficult to reach Regents, it was also important for Regents to communicate with the president when concerned about a particular issue. Dr. Wells said that related to the trust issue. Hopefully the Board will feel they have that trust and it will not be betrayed.

Regent Sisolak stated he had mixed feelings because Dr

Vice Chairman Gallagher observed that during Dr. Wells' previous evaluation the DRI faculty expressed concern that he would burn out because he worked too hard.

Regent Sisolak left the meeting.

Regent Leavitt entered the meeting.

Dr. Wells said he followed up with the recommendation and DRI now has an Executive Vice President of Research and Chief Science Officer serving as second in command. This restructure occurred approximately one month ago. It was planned during retreats and was unveiled at an all employee meeting, where presented it and notified the Chancellor.

Vice Chairman Gallagher observed that the provost model has not gone well at UNR. She asked Dr. Wells whether he would employ a provost as president. Dr. Wells saw no reason for changing that model. It was a complicated process and it was necessary to have someone on site watching at a level that the president cannot because of the external requirements. Dr. Wells would spend time meeting with the faculty senate, department chairs, deans, students, and governing bodies to keep his finger on the pulse because he could not be detached. It would probably be a slightly different type of model, one perhaps a little closer where the president and provost work as a team and appear very calmly together at forums. With something as complicated and dynamic as UNR, the provost model was needed there.

Vice Chairman Gallagher related that some people felt the job application should eliminate the provost position. The Committee did not change it, feeling that this would be the new president's decision. Dr. Wells said that was not dissimilar to the problem that he faced when he came to DRI where, at that time, people did not see value in the Vice President of Research and asked that the position be removed. He felt you there could not be a research institution without a Vice President of Research. It was a relatively new position, which had not been given authority, and finances were such that resources could not have been provided. When that changed, the authority and resources followed. He felt that everyone agreed that was probably the most important position other than the presidents on campus. There was opportunity to work with people to mentor them and have things work appropriately if everything was laid out in terms of expectations and roles. He liked the team effort and felt people should see they were communicating.

Regent Howard observed that Dr. Wells travels significantly in his current position, and asked how he would adjust to being in the office every day and not traveling as much. Dr. Wells said the reason he travels so much is because DRI is an international organization. If there was travel with UNR it would be a different type of travel to key foundations, donors, and not just within the confines of Nevada, but to alumni and other key people across the nation. It would be important for fundraising to have those contacts

1. Information Only-Candidate Visit with Board of Regents – (Cont'd.)

and interaction. That was part of the role of DRI's president. He would probably scale back significantly as president of UNR. If there were some need to travel, then it would be appropriate, but he did not foresee that type of travel schedule, especially internationally.

Regent Sisolak entered the meeting.

Regent Howard said she heard complaints about another president traveling too much. Dr. Wells said the president would be drawn out to make connections and leverage all types of opportunities. It was important to remember upon return to sit down and have a dialog with people. He has a faculty member at DRI who occasionally reminds him to have an all employee meeting.

Regent Leavitt said on the ballot this November, 2006, there will be a question regarding an elected versus an appointed Board and asked Dr. Wells his thoughts on this issue. Dr. Wells felt that one thing that would be important for this body to do was ascertain its effectiveness and lay out what has been accomplished over the past 10 to 15 years. The Board needs to identify what it has done for the betterment of the state. If the Board and the public agree and can articulate that, the question is answered. Dr. Wells felt he would like to see a mix of

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Regent Leavitt asked Dr. W

way you can build the trust and then move on to other things. Facing the legislature will also be primary. There may be a perception that the president did not care what was going on perception is interpreted as truth. Dr. Wells stated that every president works very hard, but when people do not know what the president is doing, that is when the trouble begins. They need to see what the president is doing. If people get behind the new president quickly, then the fundraising will follow.

Regent Rosenberg stated the faculty will support the new president and try to give all they can. The alumni needs attention, the foundation needs attention. It will be difficult to prioritize. Some people will be waiting for the first misstep. Balancing it will not be easy. Dr. Wells stated it would be a great challenge and hoped if he did misstep that he would be big enough to admit the error, work on problems, try to correct them, and let people know he understands. It all requires confidence and trust in the president.

Regent Leavitt said he wants a strong chancellor, a strong president, and a strong Board. He has been impressed that Dr. Wells has always been respectful and dignified in his speech. Regent Leavitt said if Dr. Wells was hired he would represent the presidency of the University Nevada, Reno. Presently, Dr. Wells is the figure head for the Desert Research Institute and Regent Leavitt hoped that he continued to always present himself in a manner in which the Board would be proud. Regent Leavitt hoped the same for the

1. Information Only-Candidate Visit with Board of Regents – (Cont'd.)

Board itself. Regent Leavitt said Dr. Wells has always exhibited himself with grace and dignity and hoped he would continue his relationships with the other presidents, the Chancellor and the Board. It said something that Dr. Wells was nominated by two presidents of the community colleges. Dr. Wells said he appreciated Regent Leavitt's comments, adding that he tried to be true to himself and hopefully he would do the same thing he did while at DRI and work with dignity and grace as before. In the end, what matters are the students.

2. Public Comment