

Seidel School Survey and Discussion: “Our Next Provost”

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Some Background Information: Previous Search Committees

~2019 (Hired Olmstead)	~2022 (Hired Couch)
<p>Co-chairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chrys Egan - Senate president ● Dane Foust - VP Student Affairs <p>Committee members</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amit Poddar - Perdue 2. Catherine Raley - Graduate student 3. Jayme Block - Foundations 4. Ken Kundell - IT 5. Kristen Walton - Fulton 6. Moushumi Chakraborty - Libraries 7. Sandy Pope - Seidel 8. SGA President - Student Steven Hetzler - Henson 9. Teri Herberger - Grants / grad studies 10. Timothy Robinson - Adjunct 11. Victoria Venable - CHHS 	<p>Co-chairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jason Curtin, Advancement ● Jennifer Martin, Senate president <p>Committee members</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vanice Antrum, Director of Multicultural Affairs 2. Leonard Arvi, Professor of Finance 3. Anita Brown, Associate Professor of Chemistry 4. Christina Camillo, Program Director and Assistant Professor of Medical Laboratory Science 5. Jennifer Cox, Associate Professor of Communication 6. Kelly Fiala, Dean of the College of Health and Human Services 7. Judith Franzak, Professor and Chair of Literacy Studies 8. Alexandra Grimm, Graduate Student 9. Candace Henry, Director of the Disability Resource Center 10. Allen Koehler, Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management 11. Dominique Lee, Undergraduate Student 12. Timothy Robinson, President of the Adjunct Faculty Caucus, Adjunct Faculty of History 13. Kristen Walton, Professor of History, Director of Nationally Competitive Fellowships Office

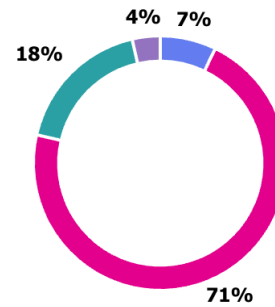
Q1: How should the search committee be structured? How large should it be? What fraction of it should be faculty?

Q1: Quantitative survey results

1. How large should the Provost Search Committee be?

[More details](#)

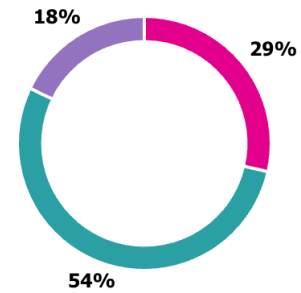
● 5–7 members	2
● 8–10 members	20
● 11–13 members	5
● More than 13	1
● Prefer not to say	0



2. What proportion of the committee should be faculty?

[More details](#)

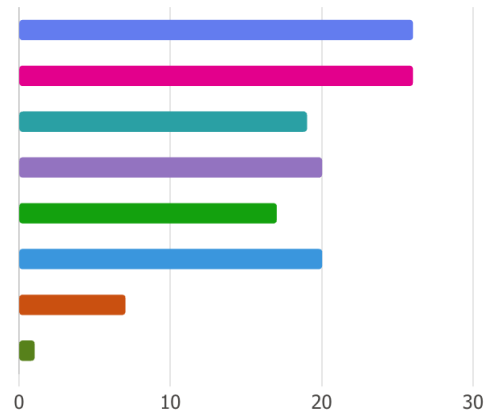
● Less than 50% faculty	0
● Around 50% faculty	8
● More than 50% faculty	15
● All or nearly all faculty	5
● Prefer not to say	0



3. Which groups should be represented on the search committee? (Select all that apply.)

[More details](#)

● Tenured faculty	26
● Tenure-track faculty	26
● Non-tenure-track faculty	19
● Staff	20
● Students	17
● Administrators	20
● External or community representatives	7
● Other	1



Q1: Short answer survey responses

Please share any additional thoughts about how the search committee should be structured.

- Nah
- Faculty representation should be considered across all schools/colleges on campus.
- The search committee should reflect institutional diversity
- I think it is critically important faculty have substantial representation and input on the committee. If the committee includes staff, students, administrators, and/or community representatives, their input should be considered secondary to that of faculty.
- Do not entrust the process to an external entity again. That is a proven failure.
- This is not an exercise for the President's Council or the "Extended President's Council". A single VP can chair the committee or it could even be a dean, but then no more President's Council members. Committee should be Faculty, Staff, Students. Do not hand-pick directors from special favorite HIP offices to serve of the committee. That did not work out last time either. Most importantly, the President needs to trust the committee and consider their recommendations with the greatest sobriety. This decision is not about the President choosing a candidate whom she trusts. It is about the President trusting her university. She needs to demonstrate some trust in her university -- that does NOT mean the President's Council. The committee should recommend a partner for the President that will help her to achieve her goals. Trust the committee.
- Provost is the head of the faculty, and the decision about a provost should be led by the faculty. Gather names from deans/unit heads following consultation with dept chairs and/or the entire unit faculty, or even a simple vote. Admin and staff should be included inasmuch as they have interactions with the Provost's Office, but it should not include admin or staff who report directly to that position. Students have no cause to be involved in this search; they can attend open sessions.
- No additional considerations
- The majority should be faculty [both tenured and non-tenured]; at least one SGA member should be included.
- The new Provost must be able to speak to supporting Black faculty, staff, and students. There is an overwhelming belief that this institution is not safe or supportive for faculty and staff of color. In many cases it is true. What track record does this new Provost have that speak to this concern? There is a federal government mission that is targeting Black people in institutions, and it is important that the new Provost will advocate loudly and boldly for this population.

- No need for students. Staff only if they work in areas adjacent to the Provost's Office, not directly reporting to that position. Admins the same.
- The focus should be on academics and thus there should be strong and diverse representation from academics.
- Academic staff (faculty and not) should have a greater say than administrative
- The search committee should be assigned a representative(s) from HR who will verify and confirm experiences listed on the candidate CV.
- The search committee should have a chair with experience in conducting a nationwide search for a leadership position.
- I feel that the same individuals are always selected to be on search committees for high ranking positions within the university. The committee should consist of a group diverse in not only the traditional dynamics but also in job and position categories. Many employees campus-wide don't feel like they are included in decisions that ultimately affect their job sustainability and experience.

Q1: Seidel Faculty and Staff Town Hall Discussion

- Faculty-led and broadly representative: The committee should be anchored by faculty leadership and reflect meaningful representation across units.
- Faculty majority with primary decision-making influence: Faculty should constitute the majority of the committee and hold central influence in candidate evaluation and recommendations.
- Optimal size: 10–13 members: Survey data suggest a preferred range of 8–10 (71%) with additional support for 11–13 (17%), indicating an effective working size of approximately 10–13 members.
- Intentional composition that builds trust: The committee should be diverse, thoughtfully selected, and internally driven to ensure credibility and confidence across campus stakeholders.
- Committee composition considerations: Student representation is not recommended at the search committee level; Inclusion of one Dean is appropriate to provide administrative perspective without over-weighting administrative influence.
- Clarity on committee authority: The role and influence of the committee must be clearly defined to ensure it is not merely advisory. There is concern that the process should not advance only candidates aligned as “yes” figures to the President.
- Transparent, credible, and well-managed process: The search must be conducted with clear communication, openness, and procedural integrity to rebuild and sustain faculty trust.
- Access to candidate materials: Candidate CVs should be made available to the campus community (or appropriate stakeholders) to support transparency and informed input.
- Robust reference checking practices: In addition to listed references, off-list reference checks are strongly encouraged to gain a fuller understanding of candidates.

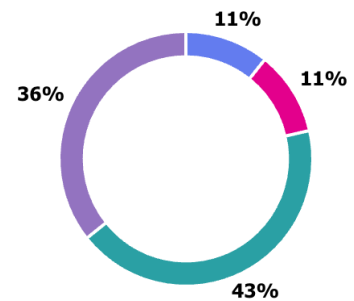
Q2: What qualifications should be necessary? For example, must the new Provost have been a department chair or a dean? Must the new Provost be a Full Professor, or would Associate Professor suffice?

Q2: Quantitative survey results

6. What academic rank should the new Provost hold?

[More details](#)

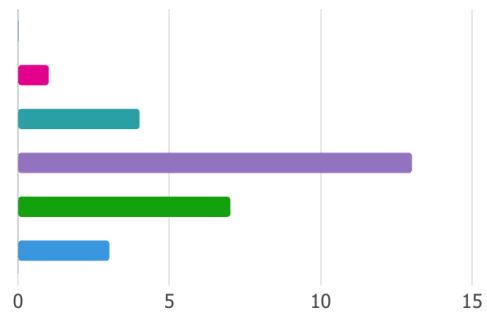
● Rank is not important	3
● Associate Professor is sufficient	3
● Full Professor preferred but not required	12
● Must be a tenured Full Professor	10
● Other	0



5. Which prior administrative experience should be required for a Provost candidate?(Select one)

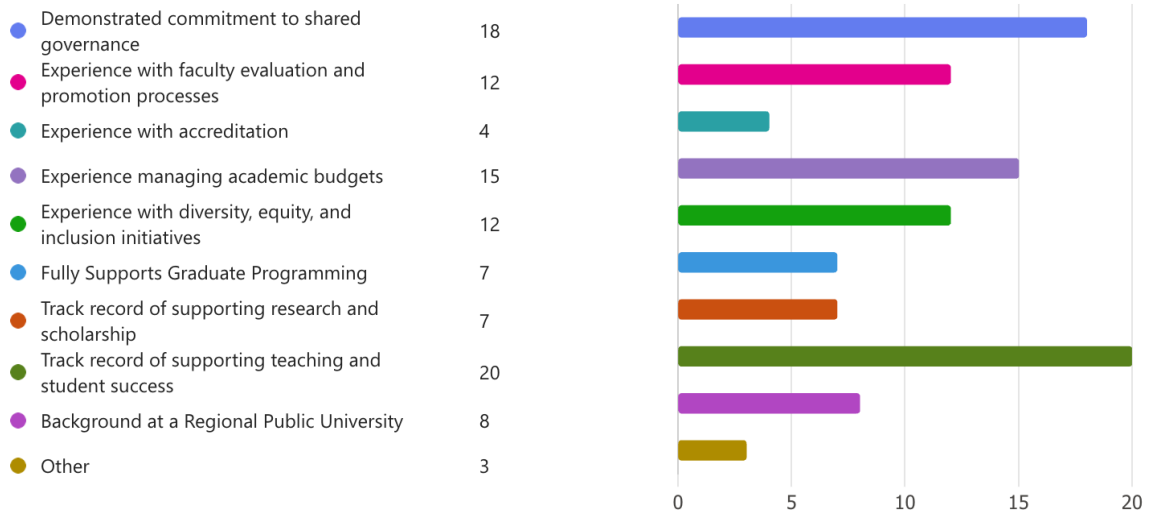
[More details](#)

● No specific administrative role required	0
● Department Chair experience is sufficient	1
● Associate Dean or equivalent leadership role	4
● Dean or equivalent academic leadership role	13
● Provost or equivalent chief academic leadership role	7
● Other	3



7. Which additional qualifications or experiences are important? (SELECT YOUR TOP THREE)

[More details](#)



Q2: Short answer survey responses

Please elaborate on any other qualifications you believe should be required or strongly preferred.

- Nope
- The ability to hold difficult conversations and advocate for the underrepresented.
- Because a provost directly interacts and supervises deans, they must have held a position higher than a department chair.
- Actually caring about the quality of instruction and not just continually looking for things to slash.
- Engage transparently with faculty senate and willingness/ability to teach a course every academic year (I believe all leadership at universities should).
- The president may want to run a corporate leadership model for the university but she needs a provost to sit on her President's Cabinet and represent the faculty and the deans. That person must have a collegial leadership style that trusts the advice she is getting from those closest to the decisions in academic affairs and will carry those ideas up to President's Council. The Provost must be a listener, be collaborative, and be discretionary in leadership style. The university cannot afford both a president and a provost with a top-down corporate leadership style.
- An elaboration on the above: I think we consistently say we want a demonstrated commitment to shared governance but do a poor job of articulating what that means. To me it means discrete examples of making decisions after convening input from across campus and articulating how that input was integrated into or excluded from the decision. It means explaining times and processes for disagreeing with others at a university about decision-making processes and outcomes.
 - Budgets are crucial -- how will the next provost argue for funding of instruction? One of the big questions that came out of the fall budget town halls was about what "counts" as instructional funding. We need someone who can cut through such questions and clearly explain what they do and do not mean by funding instruction.
 - We are and should remain a regional public. We are not an R2. We are not anything other than what we are. It would be nice to have leaders who can talk to the value of what we are, not what they think perhaps we might one day become.

- This person should understand and can demonstrate what "Leadership" means. These positions tend to get filled by people who look good on paper. But, they tend to struggle with the people side of things.
- The Provost should hold the rank of full professor and understand and reinforce the rigor of the tenure and promotion process.
- Full professor. We have too many associate professors in crucial leadership roles, and it creates legitimate concerns about their ability to function in relation to deans, the president, and other provosts.
 - Shared governance and budgeting at a regional public should be top priorities. We need someone who is familiar with and committed to the specific history and role of public regionals as supporters of economic AND democratic advancement.
- A strong record of understanding the value and important of shared governance and commitment to the primary role of academics in the mission of the university.
- A regional public university that began as a 'normal school' has an historical set of values and beliefs creating a 'family' atmosphere laser focused on student success.
- I think the candidate should have strong conflict resolution and employee experience skills, with an authentic track record of advocating for diversity, inclusion, and equity. They should also have a strong sense of ethics, compassion, and empathy.

Q2: Seidel Faculty and Staff Town Hall Discussion

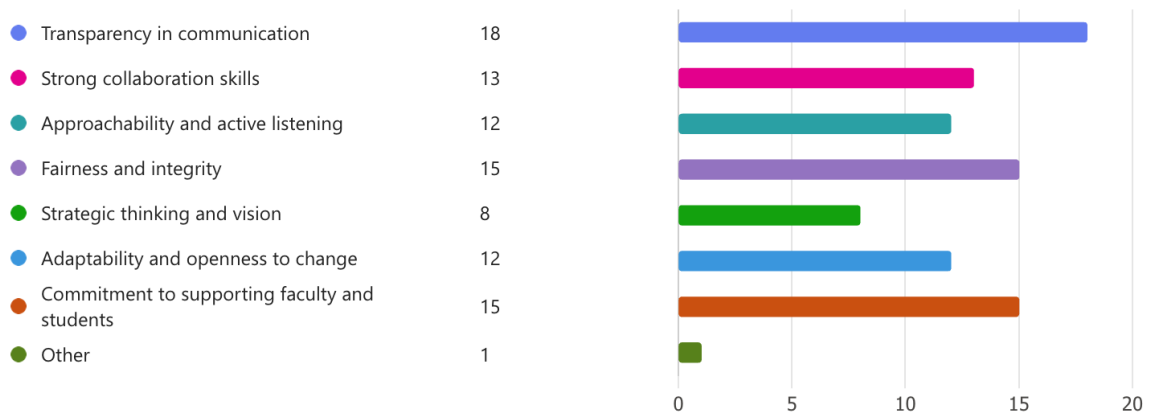
- Senior academic leadership experience required: Candidates should have substantial experience at or above the dean level (e.g., Provost, Associate Provost, or equivalent), reflecting readiness to supervise deans and lead complex academic systems. Experience as both department chair and dean is strongly valued.
- Full Professor with tenure strongly preferred: There is strong faculty sentiment that the Provost should hold the rank of Full Professor (tenured) to ensure credibility and authority in matters of tenure, promotion, and faculty leadership.
- Deep understanding of academic systems: Demonstrated expertise in tenure and promotion processes, faculty governance, curriculum oversight, and academic program leadership is essential.
- Meaningful and sustained teaching experience: Candidates should have a strong record of teaching, with a commitment to remaining connected to instruction and student learning.
- Proven leadership beyond title: While prior roles matter, greater emphasis is placed on demonstrated effectiveness in leading people, managing complexity, and improving academic quality.
- Experienced and authentic shared governance practitioner: Demonstrates a consistent pattern of transparent, faculty-engaged decision-making and respect for shared governance processes!!!!
- Collaborative and people-centered leadership style: Practices distributive leadership, active listening, and trust-building across faculty, staff, and administration.
- Track record of supporting teaching and learning: Evidence of advancing instructional quality, faculty development, and student success should be clearly demonstrated.
- Advocate for Graduate education: Candidates should value and elevate graduate education as a site of scholarship, research, and advanced learning, not solely as a workforce pipeline.
- AND THE ONE SENTIMENT THAT STOOD OUT CONSISTENTLY: Courageous and independent advocate: Willing to represent and defend academic priorities at the cabinet level, even when doing so requires principled disagreement.

Q3: What personal characteristics do faculty want the new Provost to have, and how can we tailor the search or the interviews to find out if the candidates embody those characteristics?

Q3: Quantitative survey results

9. Which personal characteristics are most important in the new Provost? (SELECT YOUR TOP THREE)

[More details](#)



Q3: Short answer survey responses

If you have specific suggestions for interview questions or activities that would help assess candidates' personal qualities, please share them here.

- Zilch
- Ask them how they define an effective academic program.
- How do you build trust with faculty when your predecessor eroded it? When was the last time you taught a college course? After researching SU, what would you say our top three priorities should be? What is one hesitation you had about applying for this job?
- Can you describe your leadership style? Do not worry about an example of experience. You want a candidate who is conscious of what leadership is in the abstract and can articulate their own leadership style. It is what the committee is listening for in the answer that is most important to this question. The committee wants to hear the words discretionary leadership, delegate, collaborative leadership, learning organization, distributive leadership, decisions made as close as possible to the activities, anything like that. In addition, the committee wants to hear the candidate volunteer that higher education is very diverse and what works at one institution often will not work at another. Local conditions, culture, history, and practice are of primary importance. If the candidate cannot come up with any of this language on their own without being prompted, that is a bright red flag. If you hear a lot of this language, put a star next to that candidate and ask the President to push on it in her one on one. The President needs a provost who listens to academic affairs for wisdom and carries that wisdom to the President's Council. The President does not need a provost who will take orders from her and try to impose those orders on academic affairs or who trusts their own experience at another institution to apply to Salisbury University.
- Transparency in communication is THE hallmark of shared governance; it is THE key feature that our current admin lacks or is unable to achieve.
 - I don't even have two other characteristics; the rest are either strategies to achieve transparency in communication (e.g., active listening) or something I simply cannot imagine a candidate not articulating (e.g., commitment to supporting...).
 - How do we assess a candidate's transparency in communication? We need to hear about times they effectively communicated bad news, AND times when they did not effectively communicate something and what they learned.
- none at this time

- Transparency times three. We need to know what decisions are being made and how they are decided. Holloway has become too akin to a 'black hole' where perhaps information goes in, but we rarely are included in the thinking that results in a decision. It's not that the provost has to agree with everything the faculty say or ask, but rather that we need opportunities for input earlier, and to know how that input is being processed.
- I suggest that you have the candidate meet with a variety of student groups and have the student groups rate each of the candidates using a rubric with an open-ended question.
- If the interview process is to include a tour of different departments, please encourage the candidate to engage with all levels of faculty, staff, and students, and not just those that are considered popular or higher echelon employees.
- Three responses:
 - Salisbury University is currently launching its 2026-2031 Strategic Plan. Can you describe a time you inherited a draft strategic vision and successfully moved it from 'paper' to 'practice' across multiple academic departments
 - Describe a situation where you had to make a difficult or unpopular budgetary decision. How did you communicate the rationale to the Faculty Senate and the broader campus to maintain trust?
 - Can you share an example of how you have identified and eliminated a systemic barrier to equity in the faculty promotion or tenure process at your previous institution?
 - Provosts must work closely with Student Affairs, Admissions, and Finance. Tell us about a time you led a cross-divisional initiative where you didn't have direct authority over all the stakeholders. How did you build consensus?

Q3: Seidel Faculty and Staff Town Hall Discussion

Preferred Characteristics

- Faculty-centered and academically grounded: Maintains a clear focus on teaching, learning, and academic quality, with leadership rooted in the core work of the faculty.
- Mission-driven and regionally grounded: Understands and embraces the identity of a teaching-focused, regional public university, aligning decisions with that mission.
- Deep commitment to shared governance: Actively engages faculty in decision-making, values their expertise, and demonstrates consistent, authentic participation in shared governance processes.
- Collaborative and listening-oriented leader: Seeks broad input, builds consensus, and fosters a culture of respect, inclusion, and collective problem-solving.
- People-centered and emotionally intelligent: Demonstrates empathy, strong interpersonal skills, and the ability to navigate conflict constructively while honoring diverse perspectives.
- Transparent and trustworthy communicator: Communicates openly and clearly, explains how decisions are made, and demonstrates how faculty input meaningfully informs outcomes.
- Strong, representative communication skills: Effectively represents faculty perspectives across the institution and communicates with clarity, credibility, and consistency.
- Clear advocate for instructional quality: Prioritizes excellence in teaching and learning and supports faculty development and student success.
- Demonstrated commitment to equity and inclusion: Actively advances equitable practices and supports underrepresented groups through both words and actions.
- Visionary yet practical leader: Articulates a clear, forward-looking vision for the university while grounding that vision in actionable and realistic strategies.

Assessing Candidates

- Prioritize evidence-based evaluation: Ensure that qualities listed in the position advertisement (e.g., fairness, transparency) are operationalized or are quantifiable.
- Evaluate beyond stated leadership style: Probe candidates' teaching philosophy and connection to instruction, not just administrative experience.

- Academic priorities, program quality, and self-awareness: Ask candidates to define what constitutes a high-quality academic program, identify Salisbury’s top priorities, reflect on their teaching experience, and offer a candid self-assessment (including areas of hesitation or growth).
- Leadership philosophy and institutional fit: Listen for a clear, nuanced articulation of leadership that is collaborative, distributive, and context-sensitive, avoiding overly top-down or “one-size-fits-all” approaches.
- Trust-building and shared governance: Explore how candidates would rebuild trust, engage Faculty Senate, and demonstrate authentic, action-oriented shared governance.
- Transparency and communication: Probe how candidates communicate decisions, especially difficult ones, and how they meaningfully incorporate and explain faculty input in their decision-making processes.
- Equity, collaboration, and execution capacity: Assess the ability to advance equity initiatives, lead across divisions without direct authority, and translate strategic vision into effective implementation.
- Differentiate leadership style intentionally: Seek candidates who bring complementary strengths and perspectives, rather than replicating existing executive leadership styles.
- Incorporate a teaching demonstration: Consider asking finalists to teach a class or engage directly with students to reinforce the institution’s teaching mission.
- Other Ideas related to on campus candidates:
 - Targeted letters of recommendation: Request letters that explicitly address key areas (e.g., leadership effectiveness, commitment to shared governance, equity leadership) rather than generic endorsements.
 - Structured expectations across interview stages: Clearly communicate what candidates should address at each level of the process to ensure depth, consistency, and comparability.
 - Interactive Provost presentation format: Move beyond a traditional presentation by incorporating dialogue; For example, engaging faculty in a facilitated conversation or problem-solving session.
 - Early-stage “mini listening tour”: Include opportunities for candidates to listen to faculty, staff, and students early in the process and reflect back what they are hearing.
 - Open forum and community engagement: Host a reception or open session that allows broader campus participation, providing insight into candidates’ interpersonal style and responsiveness.

Additional Survey Question: Please share any other thoughts, concerns, or recommendations regarding the Provost search process.

- It is not beneficial to have so much turnover in administration. We need to consider retention.
- I'm concerned the provost position top candidate has already been identified. This process needs to be open and transparent.
- Faculty trust in Holloway Hall is at an all time low. A lot is riding on the results of this process.
- I know we need a provost. I am worried however about how "top heavy" this university has become over the last 5ish years. It seems like we keep expanding our numbers of highly paid administrators and we are moving away from our core goal of educating students. How does an incoming Provost justify their salary when there are so many needs in other areas?
- The President's Council should be the last to know anything about this decision-making process. They can find out after Deans' Council and after Faculty Senate. The President should use this process to model trust in her university -- not the executive team that she hired -- the entire university.
- Make sure we share CVs for people who cannot attend open sessions.
- In advance of the last search, president Lepre held an open session with faculty to discuss qualities we thought important. Too many of those in the zoom room focused on the importance of a close affinity between president and provost. Of course I want them to be able to work together, but it is far more important that we have someone accomplished enough and confident enough in their decision-making to stand against other administrators when needed. That extends to the collection, use, and explanation of faculty input before decisions are made.
- I have little faith that faculty and academics will have a significant impact on this search. Confidence is low.
- The candidate needs to understand and embrace the concept that the organization exists to promote student and faculty growth and development through learning. The candidate needs to see the organization as the students at the top of the organizational chart and the president and provost at the bottom of the organizational chart supporting all facets of SU.

Seidel Faculty and Staff Town Hall Discussion: Consistent Themes Throughout

- “I think this search is not just about selecting a Provost. I think it is a defining moment for shared governance, institutional trust, and the future identity of the university.”
- Will Salisbury University function as a shared governance academic institution or continue drifting toward a centralized administrative model?
- An urgency to rebuild trust and credibility: Faculty confidence is low; this search is seen as pivotal to restoring trust in leadership.
- A demand for a transparent, open process. Concerns were expressed about pre-selected candidates.
- Skepticism of administrative growth: Worry about a “top-heavy” structure; expectation that the Provost prioritizes academic needs over administrative expansion.
- Need for independent, courageous leadership: The Provost must be able to challenge leadership when necessary and advocate for faculty and academic priorities.
- Focus on mission-centered leadership: Emphasis that the university exists for student and faculty learning, with leadership serving, not directing, the academic core.

Additional Discussion: Early & Elementary Childhood Education Dept Meeting

What do faculty want in a new provost?

- Held a full professor position at previous institution
- Demonstrate how they might hold their direct reports accountable
- Demonstrate accountability measures and/or systems
- Advocate for academics
- Be present
- Be communicative
- Be available
- Had Provost or Associate Provost experience(s)
- Had department chair experience(s)
- Had administrative experience(s)