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Background

Respondents -- all of them affiliated with Academic Affairs -- were asked to focus on three questions:

- characteristics of an "ideal" candidate.
- key academic matters that an Interim Provost might address next year.
- whom they might recommend as Interim Provost.

The survey also called for respondents to indicate their role: probationary faculty, tenured faculty, staff, administrators.

All four questions were optional -- no forced responses.

I seeded the first item (*characteristics*) by providing the list we generated at the SEC meeting:

- be internal to SDSU
- be a current or former Associate Dean, Dean, Associate Vice President or Vice President
- have both academic and administrative experience
- be familiar with operations within Academic Affairs
- be a thoughtful communicator
- be dedicated to transparency and shared governance
- be dedicated to building and sustaining a positive campus climate
- be a strong advocate for Academic Affairs

The total recipient pool was 1,403 -- deducting for the four bounce-backs, and we had fewer than five "blank" forms. So--accounting for all that, we ended up with a response rate of about 20% (283).

Of the 1,403 in the respondent pool ...

- 651 (46%) were staff (nearly all union represented),
- 15 (1%) were administrators who normally would not participate in balloting, and
- 741 (53%) were faculty -- both tenured and probationary--including Deans and Associate Deans who (in terms of the Senate, are considered faculty).

Of the 283 respondents, 260 indicated their role; thus only 8% opted out of that item. Of that group:

- 23% were staff
- 60% were tenured faculty
- 12% were probationary faculty
- 5% were administrators

The Senate doesn't have direct access to faculty lists; we request that information from Faculty Advancement (FA). We don't routinely ask FA to distinguish between tenured and probationary faculty because it isn't a factor in Senate balloting. However, it's a fact that SDSU tenured faculty far outnumber those who are probationary -- so not surprisingly, we had a higher response rate

from the tenured side. Personally, I think some probationary faculty are leery of sharing their opinions -- even if their confidentiality is assured -- but that is my conjecture only.

Organizing themes

The challenge of open-ended analysis is that people don't use the same language to express shared sentiments; the reverse is true as well -- that they use the same words to express very different things. Thus, it was best to generate overarching themes rather than "assign" themes to each response (and I also would have needed considerably time to get all that done; qualitative analysis is quite laborious).

In generating themes, a limited number of responses were discounted because they were ...

- totally off-topic,
- generic,
- personal gripe, or
- repetitive (duplicating the *characteristics* list we initially provided).

The nuances were a challenge to capture -- but over my 30 years of evaluation practice, I've learned not to over-interpret or over-infer. Written comments just can't be viewed in the same light as back-and-forth conversation generated via focus groups.

I believe there is *much more* to be done with this information -- especially as we move toward the formal search for a replacement. I'm sure President de la Torre will be interested in taking a very close look at it once she comes on-board in late June.

Below, then, are the themes that emerged from reviewing the *characteristics* question; the aren't presented in any particular order. Again -- to make it to this list, the comment had to go beyond the SEC-generated list provided as reference within the survey.

- Is fair and transparent
- Offers no preferential treatment (to people or programs)
- Cares about research and graduate programs; promotes a culture of scholarly achievement
- Is knowledgeable about curriculum (at all levels, including GE)
- Cares about teaching excellence
- Is keen on hiring and retaining top talent, and values the input that search committees provide
- Promotes data-driven decision-making
- Is committed to service (to the University and its people)
- Supports career development --faculty and staff
- Models values core to the University (scholarship, equity, diversity and inclusion, community-engagement, etc.)
- Is committed to building a welcoming climate for women faculty and faculty of color
- Is committed to fundraising
- Is a good manager/organizer, committed to reducing inefficiencies/redundancies
- Is able to transcend political and interpersonal issues
- Listens respectfully; is consultative and eager to hear diverse opinions/viewpoints

- Promotes faculty collaboration within and across units
- Makes him/herself available; is accessible and responsive
- Has solid financial/budgetary understanding; is AA knowledgeable
- Is knowledgeable about collective bargaining
- Is committed to curricular excellence; has high academic expectations
- Is committed to students as key stakeholders, and advocates for enriched learning experiences (study abroad, for example)
- Is committed to academic freedom
- Appreciates staff
- Is committed to a successful start for President de la Torre
- Is dedicated to soliciting input around and then prioritizing AA goals/objectives
- Advocates for diversity and inclusion; is committed to retaining our Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) status
- Advocates for faculty advancement/professional development
- Is a consistent decision-maker
- Is constantly learning -- and familiar with trends in higher education

Below are the themes for the second question -- *what the Interim Provost might focus on next year*; they also aren't ranked. As you'll see, there's some overlap with the *characteristics* question; as important, not all are issues an interim might tackle (at least in my view).

- To continue the effort to make SDSU a Top 50 institution -- but also commit to revisiting the teaching / research balance
- To focus on graduate education (doctoral programs; graduate fellowships)
- To break down the silos, within and across units
- To address what appears to be RTP irregularities and inconsistencies; to modernize the process
- To strengthen the Office of Faculty Advancement
- To improve consultation with faculty on issues small and large
- To work consultatively to implement EO 1100 and 1110
- To ensure sufficient faculty input into GE Reform
- To provide improved working space -- especially for for depts/faculty with large FTES and/or external funding; to reward teaching and research excellence
- To seriously re-examine budget/funding models as well as deployment of academic resources
- To ensure student success initiatives are directed at all students -- not just "special" groups
- To build commitment for SDSU West
- To better support tenure-track faculty
- To create a culture of study (re-envision study spaces for students; have the library more directly involved)
- To re-embrace student-centered teaching approaches
- To better integrate lecturers and retired faculty into our institutional fabric
- To refresh the curriculum and the processes by which courses are approved ... and show a renewed respect for the Arts/Humanities

- To refresh our faculty recruitment processes
- To examine what seems like administrative bloat
- To create strategic goals for AA that realistically reflect the teaching/research/service triad
- To revisit implementation of high-impact practices that appear to disadvantage some students
- To commit to a new (modern) student data management system and other advanced technologies; to move forward with recommendations from last's year technology audit
- To commit to resolving wage and other perceived inequalities (staff and faculty)
- To commit to the Imperial Valley campus, the border region, and an international presence
- To commit to mentoring new Chairs/Directors and Assoc Deans/Deans -- and build leadership capacity