



312 Administration Building  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Canada R3T 2N2  
Fax 204-474-7511

UNIVERSITY  
OF MANITOBA

## Board of Governors

February 5, 2019

Members of the Senate  
University of Manitoba  
C/O Dr. David Barnard, Chair of Senate

Dear members of the Senate:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Governors in response to Senate's recommendation regarding the presidential search process that was approved at your January 9, 2019 meeting. The Board considered your recommendation at its January 29, 2019 meeting. I wish to acknowledge your recommendation, and the depth of Senate's views regarding the presidential search process, which were fully conveyed to the Board by Dr. Barnard in his capacity as Chair of Senate. After careful consideration, the Board voted to confirm the confidential search process as approved by the Board in September of 2018. We believe that it is through this type of process that we will be able to attract the highest caliber of candidates for President. The Board also asked that I write to share the reasons for its decision.

Hearing the voices of members of the academy and the whole University community in the presidential search process is important and will be achieved both through the membership of the search committee and the extensive community consultation phase of the search.

The Board of Governors established a committee that is broadly representative of the university community. The Presidential Search Committee includes members from Senate and the Board of Governors, including students, faculty members, support staff and Board members. The Board also expanded the membership of the Committee to include two additional Indigenous voices and I am pleased to advise that Dr. Catherine Cook, of the Max Rady College of Medicine and Dr. Frank Deer of the Faculty of Education have agreed to join the Committee. Nine of the seventeen members of the committee hold academic appointments at the University. The Committee members represent a diversity of experiences and will work closely together throughout the search process to find the President who will best lead the University into the future.

The Search Committee will begin meeting later this week, and, as it begins its work, it will be engaging in a broad community consultation over the February-March period. The consultation phase will allow all members of the university and wider community to share their views on the challenges and opportunities facing the University and its next President and to identify the qualities that the committee should seek in candidates. The views of the community are essential and will inform the development of the position profile briefing documents which will be important tools in the search process and will be made available to the University community.

The consultation period will include open forums on the Fort Garry and Bannatyne Campuses, a number of meetings with stakeholders and members of the university community, and a consultation session with members of Senate following the March 6 Senate meeting. I hope

that you will participate and share your views. There is also an opportunity for individuals to provide their views in writing via the presidential search website. More information on these consultations will be distributed in the days to come. I would ask that you encourage the active participation of your colleagues in this process.

In considering Senate's recommendation, I consulted with Dr. Gordon Lobay, partner at Perrett Laver, the executive search consultant who is working with the University of Manitoba on the presidential search. He reinforced the rationale for a confidential search, indicating:

*"The advantage of a confidential process is that candidates can put their names forward for consideration without fear that they will be made public and that their current institutions will find out they are exploring the position until such time that they wish to reveal it themselves (for instance, when the successful candidate accepts an offer). This allows a stronger pool of potential candidates for a position.*

*The reason for this approach is that the vast majority of relevant candidates will hold similarly high-level positions in other universities such as sitting Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Deans of major faculties. In these positions, individuals have significant responsibility handling tenure and promotion cases, working with donors on major gifts, running fundraising campaigns, leading on preparations for major research funding grants, finance, government engagement, making strategic hires across the faculty and administration, etc. This is all notwithstanding peoples' personal lives and everything that goes into moving families, children, and partner's and/or spouse's careers. Furthermore, given the history of confidential searches in the sector, potential candidates for Canadian university presidencies would expect a confidential process and would be particularly hesitant to come forward as candidates when compared to other countries. For these reasons, the pool of candidates for an open process would suffer considerably."*

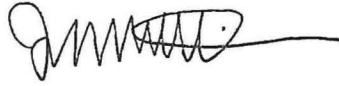
The Board of Governors approved the Presidential Search process recognizing that the process of searching for Presidents at Canadian universities is distinct from searches for positions such as deans and heads of departments. A confidential search is the nearly universal practice for presidential searches at Canadian universities – the primary pool from which the university will be both seeking candidates and competing for candidates. A review of the presidential search processes at the 13 English-speaking U-15 institutions in December, 2018 found that all 13 institutions used a confidential search at the Presidential level. Confidential processes been used for all previous presidential and vice-presidential searches at the University of Manitoba. Prospective candidates will expect a confidential process. Because of the risks for candidates at this level in their home institutions and communities, not having a confidential search will likely cause a reduction in the size and quality of the candidate pool as prospective candidates will not let their names stand in an open search. By way of examples, three recent presidential searches in Canada (Queen's, Western and Brandon) were all confidential searches and all resulted in sitting presidents from other institutions being recruited and appointed.

The Board considered the advantages of a confidential search, recognizing that the Board has a fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of the University. With respect to a presidential search, the best interests of the University lie in a process that enables the recruitment of the strongest and most diverse possible candidate pool. Professional advice, and the practice at most Canadian universities indicate that this will be best achieved by means of a confidential search combined with a robust community consultation process.



On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank Senate for expressing its views and for the essential role each of you play in the governance of the University. I look forward to hearing from you and your colleagues through the consultation phase, and commit to providing updates to Senate on the search process as it unfolds.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Lieberman', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeff Lieberman, Chair,  
Board of Governors