



Summary Report: OHSU's Next President

Presidential Search Committee Chair Susan King and Jim Carlson, Presidential Search Committee Vice Chair and Vice Chair of the OHSU Board of Directors, conducted a series of listening sessions with various groups of interested parties – both internal and external to OHSU – to assess the attributes the community is looking for in OHSU's next president. After speaking with more than 500 people through nearly 50 individual and group sessions and reviewing 208 survey responses, the following is a summary of the common themes expressed about the desired qualities for OHSU's next president.

1. Leadership and Vision

- The next president must provide **stability and predictability** to the institution.
- They should have a **clear strategic vision** that aligns OHSU's missions – education, research, and health care – while addressing **the complexity of a growing academic health system** and staying true to OHSU's core values.
- The president must be a **strong, inspirational leader** who can unify diverse departments and **drive institutional change** beyond traditional health care models.
- A **broad understanding of health care** beyond that of academic health centers is important, including **community, preventive, public and population health initiatives**.

"A leader who has a bold vision and is brave enough to make hard decisions to move us forward."

2. Communication, Visibility, Transparency and Trust

- The president should be an **excellent communicator** with the ability to clearly articulate and garner support for a strategic vision.
- There is a desire for the president to be **accessible** and **visible** on campus, **engaging** with employees and students across all levels and areas of the university.
- There is a trust deficit within the institution, and the next leader must rebuild confidence by engaging employees, faculty, students and community partners **openly** and at all levels.
- Transparency in decision-making, clear communication and a **willingness to listen to diverse perspectives** are essential.

"Strong interpersonal and communication skills and a willingness to lead with transparency and visibility."

3. Institutional Growth and Operational Integrity

- The leader must **balance operational efficiency with academic excellence**, ensuring that education and research are not sidelined in favor of clinical focus.
- **Financial acumen is crucial**, particularly in navigating OHSU's complex funding streams, managing the integration of Legacy Health, navigating fiscal challenges and securing philanthropic and state support.
- They should **streamline bureaucracy and improve infrastructure**, making the institution more efficient. That includes delegating to subject matter experts and empowering the executive vice presidents, while also holding them accountable.
- Experience managing **large, complex organizations** and effective **change management** will be required to successfully handle the merger with Legacy.

"This is an existential time for OHSU. We need someone who can manage different cultures and stitch two large and complex organizations together."

4. Inclusivity and Belonging

- **Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB)** is vital, with an expectation that the leader will actively support underrepresented groups.
- The university's role in **statewide health care and education** should be emphasized, ensuring OHSU serves all of Oregon, not just Portland.
- Dedication to addressing **health care disparities**, advocating for marginalized and underserved populations, and understanding the importance of both rural and urban health care environments.

"Someone who embodies our commitment to respect for all and DEIB."

5. Tripartite Mission Focus and Alignment

- Members stress the importance of **aligning research, education and health care** under a cohesive strategy rather than treating them as separate silos.
- OHSU's **research mission needs strong support**, ensuring that discoveries are integrated into clinical practice.
- There is a strong desire for a president who values and **prioritizes the student experience**, ensuring students feel heard and supported in a large institution.

"Without research and education, we're just another hospital."

6. Workforce and Organizational Culture

- The new leader should **prioritize employee well-being**, acknowledging the burnout among faculty, health care providers and administrative staff.
- **Collaboration between central services (finance, legal, HR) and operational leadership** must be improved to ensure smooth institutional functioning.

- Demonstrated capability of leading **cultural change** and fostering **collaboration** among diverse teams.
- The president should **value public service and the workforce**, ensuring that OHSU's mission remains patient- and community-centered rather than purely profit-driven.
- Must demonstrate an understanding of OHSU's **unique role** in the state as Oregon's **only academic health center**, and experience in **largely unionized** environments.

"We need a president with the ability to make a large organization feel small."

7. Donor Relations, External Relationships and Public Engagement

- It is critical that the president be effective in **developing relationships** with donors in support of the OHSU Foundation's philanthropic efforts.
- The president must **effectively advocate for OHSU at the state and national levels**, fostering strong relationships with policymakers, community groups and partner institutions.
- They should **articulate OHSU's public mission** to secure financial and legislative support while maintaining the university's autonomy and values.

"The next president should be willing to invest time to build relationships with people both internally and externally to OHSU."

8. Desired Background and Characteristics

- Opinions varied on whether the next president should have an M.D. or Ph.D., with experience that aligns with a traditional academic health center leadership position. Some advocated for thinking "outside the box" and broadening the search to seek non-traditional candidates who have the experience and knowledge needed to navigate the current challenges and opportunities. Others felt experience as a clinician is necessary to understand the full scope of the role of academic health center president. Regardless, **experience leading a large, complex organization** is necessary.
- **Experience in academic medicine, public health or higher education** is highly preferred.
- **Effective and inspirational communicator.**
- **A track record of leading through change, innovation and financial stewardship** is crucial.
- They must **embody integrity, accountability, humility and resilience**, particularly in the face of political and financial challenges.

"Consider person over pedigree." "Be an acknowledged clinical and administrative leader with a national reputation."