



Roxbury Community College

Presidential Search Process Summary

May 2024

August 2023, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Steven Tompkins, notified the Commissioner of Higher Education, Dr. Noe Ortega, of the Board's intent to conduct a Presidential Search. Chair Tompkins initiated the Presidential Search using the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education *Guidelines and Procedures for the Search, Selection, Appointment and Removal of State University and Community College Presidents*, dated June 2013.

The College appointed Interim Executive Vice President and Special Assistant to the Interim President Marta T. Rosa to support the presidential search process and Valerie Thornhill-Hudson, Senior Executive Assistant to the Interim President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees, to serve as secretary to the Search Committee. In addition, Executive Director of Human Resources Reginald Nichols was appointed as a non-voting committee member to serve as the affirmative action officer.

The College issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for executive search firms in early September 2023. Mid-September 2023, the Board of Trustees Presidential Search Committee Chair Sheriece M. Perry and her Co-Chair, RCC Foundation Member, Judge Leslie Harris, interviewed representatives from Academic Search; Polly Group; and Isaacson, Miller.

The Board of Trustees voted on September 19, 2023, to select Isaacson, Miller as the executive search firm to assist with the presidential search. The College notified Isaacson, Miller of its selection on October 20, 2023.

The Board of Trustees appointed a 13-member Presidential Search Committee on September 19, 2023. Trustee Sheriece Perry was appointed to Chair the Search Committee. Trustee Israul 'Izzy' Marrero, and Student Trustee, Kiara Rosario also served on the Search Committee. The Search Committee also included: Dr. Jose Luis Santos, Sr. Deputy Commissioner and Special Advisor appointed by the DHE Commissioner; Dr. Tariana V. Little, RCC Alum; Michael Rubin and Rev. Mary Margaret Earl, Roxbury Community members; James Anderson, RCC SGA President; John McColgan, MCCC-Faculty representative; Brooke Huynh, MCCC-Professional Staff representative; Sophia Sannon, Acting Steward-AFSCME Unit 1 representative; Lisa Carter, RCC Associate Dean Student Life.

Brooke Huynh resigned from the Search Committee in February 2024 and the union nominated Ralph Holley as her replacement on March 2024.

Isaacson, Miller conducted a pre-search study convening open listening sessions for internal and external constituencies the week of November 13, 2023. Information obtained from meetings held during the pre-search listening sessions was used to create an Executive Search Profile. Participants in the meetings discussed what they perceived as both the challenges facing the College and opportunities available to the College in the next five to ten years; relatedly, they discussed what they believed were the professional and personal qualifications required to successfully address those challenges and take advantage of those opportunities.

The RCC Presidential Search Committee held its first meeting on October 27, 2023. The search consultant discussed key dates that the Committee needed to establish, such as the candidate application due date; the meeting to select semifinalists; and a two-day meeting to interview semifinalists and identify three to five of the semifinalists to recommend (unranked) to the Board of Trustees as finalists. The finalists would be invited to visit the RCC campus to meet with members of the College community and interview with the Board of Trustees.

Attorney Gina Yarbrough, Counsel for the Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges, attended the October 27, 2023, Search Committee meeting and conducted training for the Committee on the Open Meetings Law and applicable provisions of the Public Records Law. In addition, the Executive Director of Human Resources, Reginald Nichols, reviewed Affirmative Action and DEI principles. The presidential search website was organized and launched on October 4, 2023, once the executive presidential profile was approved, to ensure that members of the Committee, search timeline, critical meeting dates and process were accessible by internal and external audiences.

Upon the approval from the Board of Trustees and Commissioner of Higher Education of the Executive Search Profile, advertisements were then placed in various national online publications, such as The Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Ed, and Higher Ed Jobs. In addition to placing ads, the consultant sent letters to hundreds of community college senior level administrators and presidents, advising them of the opportunity and asking for nominations. The consultants made phone calls to those nominated and selected individuals listed in the Isaacson, Miller proprietary database or listed in the Higher Education Directory.

To attract a diverse candidate pool, ads were placed in online publications that specifically targeted women and individuals from underrepresented groups. Further, strategies to generate a diverse pool of applicants included advertising in the local community papers such as the Bay State Banner, as well as in Diverse Jobs and Hispanic Outlook.

Isaacson, Miller conducted preliminary due diligence on candidates (including candidate interviews and publicity screening) and shared this information at the March 20, 2024, public Search Committee meeting. At this meeting, the Committee went into Executive Session and selected eight semifinalists. The Commissioner and the Board of Trustees were given the opportunity to review semifinalist application materials before interviews were scheduled for April 2, and April 3. The consultant then began conducting reference interviews on these eight semifinalists. On April 2, 2024, one semifinalist withdrew from the search.

After the semi-finalist interviews, the Search Committee recommended four candidates as finalists, pending successful clearance after detailed due diligence conducted by Isaacson, Miller that included background checks (criminal, civil, credit, driving, and degree verification). In addition, Isaacson, Miller interviewed references for each finalist and conducted a detailed publicity screening on each finalist.

On April 8, 2024, one finalist candidate withdrew from the search. The presidential search webpage was updated to include each candidate's CV, on-campus visit schedule, photo and survey to collect community feedback.

The Board of Trustees announced the four following finalists on April 12, 2024: Joel Frater, Jonathan K. Jefferson, Tyjaun A. Lee, and Tammy Robinson. Each finalist visited the College for one and a half days during a period of three weeks beginning on April 22, 2024, and ending May 2, 2024. The candidates met with various constituent groups, conducted a facilitated campus tour, presented in an open community forum their vision for the future of the College, and participated in a teleconference interview with the DHE Commissioner and Secretary of Education as well as a teleconference meeting with the Interim President. Participants in the constituent group meetings completed evaluation forms on each of the candidates. The evaluation forms were subsequently summarized by Isaacson, Miller and shared with Trustee Chair Tompkins. Additionally, as part of the finalists' visit, the Board of Trustees interviewed each finalist in an open meeting.

On May 14, 2024, the Board of Trustees held a Special Meeting in-person to discuss the final candidates and decide on their nominee. The Trustees voted unanimously to recommend Dr. Jonathan K. Jefferson as their nominee for RCC's 18th President.