Presidential Search - Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who decides who the next President will be?

The process to determine the University’s President is outlined in the McMaster University Act, 1976. Both the Senate and the Board of Governors are involved in the selection process. Each of the governing bodies appoints 5 members of the Committee for Recommending a President (See Path to a New President Infographic). The Search Committee makes its recommendation for a candidate to the Senate which then nominates a candidate for Board of Governor approval.

2. Who makes up the current Search Committee?

Both the Senate and the Board of Governors voted on their delegates in December, 2018. The Committee’s first meeting was held at the end of January 2019. The Committee membership can be found here Committee to Recommend a President Membership.

3. How can I be involved in the process?

Hearing from members of the McMaster community along with the broader community is an important part of the process. A full consultation program will be organized by the Committee and will be promoted across the University. This will include open forums to be held early in the process. Faculty, students, staff and alumni are encouraged to participate. The Committee wants to hear what people think are the attributes and experiences the next president should possess to meet the unique needs of McMaster at this time, to discuss the McMaster strengths that can be built upon, and the role they see the President playing to help achieve this.

4. In addition to the open forums, are there other ways I can have input or ask a question?

The Committee welcomes input throughout the process. The best way to reach the Committee is by email inputcrp@mcmaster.ca. This is also the most effective way to ask a question while the search is underway.

5. How is the Committee ensuring its work is inclusive?

The Search Committee is committed to making sure that the process to recommend a President incorporates equity and inclusion best practices. The Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion is an advisor to the Committee, and will attend all Committee meetings and interviews. Every Committee member has received equity, diversity and inclusion training delivered by the AVP, Equity and Inclusion. The Chair and Committee members will reflect on equity and inclusion best practices through the entire search process, with guidance from the AVP, Equity and Inclusion, whose counsel will be essential to the Chair and all Committee deliberations. The selection of the search company best equipped to support the Committee in this process, was on the basis of several qualifications including a strong record on incorporating equity and inclusion principles and practices.
6. Why is a search company hired?

The search company is chosen by the Committee to assist and bring expertise to the process. It will help to develop the position description, create and execute the strategy to encourage highly qualified candidates to apply, assist the Committee in developing the interview process and developing a list of candidates for interviews, assist with reference checks and any other supports that will help the Committee in its work.

7. How are candidates identified?

McMaster is a leading Canadian university and is also ranked amongst the top 100 universities in the world. Given its standing and reputation, the search for a new President will span both national and international boundaries. The position will be promoted and advertised through a variety of higher education and other networks. The Search Committee is focussed on attracting the most talented candidates from a broad diversity of potential applicants for this position. The search firm will work with the Committee, and through various networks, to generate a diverse pool of qualified candidates from which to invite candidates for an interview.

8. Why is the process confidential?

All of the advice the Committee has received is that a confidential search is the best way to recruit the strongest candidates and to keep those candidates interested in the position during the search process. The Search Committee is committed to keeping the university community updated, as much as possible, through the process, and confidentiality will be an important part of its ability to successfully complete its work.

9. What is the timeline for the search?

Each search is different. Typically, the search process for a new President can take up to a year to complete. The community consultation process will be undertaken late this winter and into the early spring. This input will be used to help develop the position description. The search company will then begin the recruitment, and when a strong field of candidates is developed, the Committee will determine a short-list of candidates for interviewing. The timing at that stage is determined by the results of the interviews, reference checks, and discussions with a potential candidate before a recommendation is brought forward to the Senate and the Board of Governors.