



NEWS:

MEDGAR EVERS PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH
AND CONSTRUCTION PROCEED

The City University of New York

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Office of University Relations

For Immediate Release

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New York, December 21 -- James P. Murphy, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York, yesterday announced the appointment of a 12-member search committee for a permanent president of Medgar Evers College. Acting President Denis M. Paul has been responsible for the administration of the College since July 19, 1982, following the resignation of former president Richard Trent.

Trustees named to the search committee are: Sylvia Bloom, Chair; Joaquin Rivera, Vice Chair; Robert Polk and James A. Cavanagh. Chairperson Murphy, who will serve on the committee ex officio, also authorized the selection of three faculty members, two students, one alumnus and one member of the Medgar Evers Community Advisory Council.

Rhonda Vanzant, president of the student government association, Norris Cuffie, a night student, and William Howard, chairman of the Community Advisory Council of Medgar Evers College, have been designated to represent the students and the surrounding community respectively. Faculty members of the committee are expected to be elected at a meeting of the faculty organization on January 5. The Medgar Evers Alumni Association will propose an alumni representative.

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Chairperson Murphy said the committee will follow the same guidelines which have governed all presidential searches since 1979. Expressing the Board's sense of urgency, he added, "I hope that after the requisite screening and interviewing, and the required visits to the campus, three or four outstanding candidates with their evaluations can be promptly recommended to the Chancellor so that a new president can be named to assume office in September 1983."

"The appointment of the search committee, coming at the same time that plans for a new campus are again moving forward, is a good sign that this important college will soon be coming into its own," said City University Chancellor Joseph S. Murphy.

The Federal Bankruptcy Court's recent approval of the settlement between the New York State Dormitory Authority and Lombard-Wall Inc. has cleared the way for the sale of the community college bond issue before the end of the year. Site acquisition and design for a new campus for Medgar Evers College, already approved by the City University Board of Trustees and the City University Construction Fund, will proceed in January.

The entire city block bounded by Bedford Avenue, Montgomery Street, Franklin Avenue and Crown Street in central Brooklyn has been selected, and Design Architect Harry Simmons has been appointed.

Chairperson Murphy's statement on the appointment of the Medgar Evers presidential search committee is attached.

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I am happy to announce the establishment of a Search Committee for the identification, screening and recommendation of candidates for the presidency of Medgar Evers College.

I have appointed the following Trustees as Trustee Members of the Search Committee:

Hon. Sylvia Bloom, Chairperson
Hon. Joaquin Rivera, Vice-Chairperson
Hon. James A. Cavanagh
Hon. Robert L. Polk
Hon. James P. Murphy, ex officio

Pursuant to the Guidelines developed and approved by the Board Committee on Central Administration in 1979 and meticulously followed in all the recent presidential searches, I have authorized the selection, from the college, of seven additional members: three faculty, two students, one alumnus and one member from the Medgar Evers Community Council.

On Tuesday, December 14, Professor Hilton White, Chairman of the Medgar Evers Faculty Organization, was asked to convene a meeting to select three Faculty Members for the Search Committee. I have been advised that after comprehensive debate on December 16, the Faculty Organization deferred the actual selection of its three members, pending a further meeting on December 23 to decide on criteria for their selection. The actual selection will be voted at a faculty organization meeting now called for January 5. The President of the Student Government Association, Rhonda Vanzant, will serve as one of the two Student Members of the Search Committee. In order to ensure evening student representation, I have asked Ms. Vanzant to recommend a nominee for the second student spot. I am approving her recommendation of Mr. Norris Cuffie, an evening student and student government official at Medgar Evers College.

The Medgar Evers Alumni Association will be consulted on the designation of an alumni representative. One place on the Committee is thus being reserved for the representative of the Alumni Association.

In special consideration of the unique relationship between Medgar Evers and its surrounding community and public constituency, I have agreed, in consultation with Chancellor Murphy, to designate as a Member of the Search Committee the Chairman of the Community Council of Medgar Evers College, Mr. William Howard. The Medgar Evers Community Council, which is broadly representative of the surrounding community, and of the City, has been intimately involved with the oversight and operation of the college from its inception. We took this fact into consideration in designating Mr. Howard as a Special Member of the Search Committee.

Thus the Search Committee is hereby constituted to consist of 12 members. Five of the 12 are Trustees.

At its first meeting, I will present a formal charge to the Committee. The basic processes of this Committee, however, will

be those set forth in the Search Guidelines to which reference has already been made.

In the Chairperson's charge to the Search Committee I will express the Board's sense of urgency that the Committee organize itself and proceed without delay to advertise, seek and search for the best and most highly qualified individuals who can be considered available and interested in serving in this most important presidency.

I hope that after the requisite screening and interviewing, and the required visits to the campus, three or four outstanding candidates, with their evaluations, can be promptly recommended to the Chancellor so that a new President can be named to assume office in September 1983.

It will be the primary assumption of my charge to the Committee that Medgar Evers College needs and deserves the best president that a nationwide search can produce. Medgar Evers College has been in existence for 11 years. I consider this college to be one of the most important units in our system. Its future will help to spell out and determine the future of The City University itself. Medgar Evers College, although unique in its mission (as every other CUNY unit is unique in its mission) is identical with every other CUNY unit in its accountability, under the State Education Law, to the Board of Trustees of The City University, through the Chancellor, and thereafter to the State Regents, and to the City and State legislators and executive officers who are charged by State law to fund and oversee the operations of the college and of the University.

The process for the selection of a new president is necessarily the same for each of the colleges of The City University system, and will be the same for Medgar Evers College as it was for Hunter College and Brooklyn College and The City College. This process is based on the presidential searches which have taken place since the creation of The City University in 1961. That process has been developed to provide maximum input, in the course of the process, from faculty, students, alumni and community, thus aiding the Chancellor and the Board in the discharge of their legal responsibility for the selection of a president. The detailed description of that process is to be found in the Guidelines for Presidential Searches.

It is, of course, a fixed and legally-mandated responsibility of the Chancellor and the Board to join in making the actual selection of the president. The function of the Search Committee is to conduct the preliminary work leading up to this selection -- to make a search, to screen all possibilities, and arrange for the assembly of input from all interested groups and persons, for final referral of individual candidates and their evaluations to the Chancellor, in accordance with the Search Committee Guidelines.

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Courtesy O. J. A.