

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
April 29, 2019
Robert and Joyce Cene Lecture Hall
John Elliot Center for Architecture and Environmental Design

Board Members Present

Margot James Copeland
Todd Davidson
Ralph Della Ratta, Chair
Robert Frost
Nick Kollar
Donald Mason
Jessica Peck
Stephen Perry
Shawn Riley
Catherine Ross

KSU President's Cabinet Present

Beverly Warren, President
Alfreda Brown
Karen Clarke
Todd Diacon
Shay Little
Joel Nielsen
Mark Polatajko
John Rathje
Charlene Reed, University Secretary
Nathan Ritchey
Willis Walker

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Board Chair Ralph Della Ratta called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. in the Robert and Joyce Cene Lecture Hall in the John Elliot Center for Architecture and Environmental Design. Secretary of the Board Margot Copeland called the roll, and a quorum was present.

PROOF OF NOTICE

Chair Della Ratta stated that public notification was given pursuant to state law and university policy.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

Chair Della Ratta thanked everyone for being present on this historic day in the life of Kent State University. He noted that it was especially appropriate that the trustees, senior administration and the university community have gathered in this magnificent Elliot Center for Architecture and Environmental Design, which not only reflects Kent State's rising academic trajectory but also the vital linkage between town and gown.

Chair Della Ratta asked whether there were any additions or corrections to the agenda? Hearing none, the agenda for the Board's special meeting was adopted by general consent.

Chair Della Ratta then stated that today Kent State has reached a very proud and important moment in its history. He thanked all of the members of the university community and the public

who took the time to share their thoughts and aspirations for Kent State. It was wonderful to see the deep commitment and belief in Kent State's strategic direction and future. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, he expressed appreciation to members of the Presidential Search Committee for their dedicated service. He then asked the search committee members in attendance to stand and be recognized. Chair Della Ratta noted that the committee's process was very inclusive and rigorous and has produced an outstanding outcome that would be formalized later in the agenda. He continued to say that all owe a special debt of gratitude to Trustee Shawn Riley who gave so generously his time and counsel in leading the presidential search. Chair Della Ratta then called on Trustee Riley to discuss the search process.

Trustee Riley thanked Chair Della Ratta and continued, reviewing the process for the identification and selection of Kent State University's next president. In December 2018, the board appointed a 16-person search committee that he was honored to chair. According to Trustee Riley, the make-up of the search committee reflected the board's desire to make the search as inclusive a process as possible. The committee's 16 members included representatives of the faculty, the administration, the Board of Trustees, the student body, alumni, the Kent and Northeast Ohio communities, and the Kent State University Foundation. He noted that the search committee members met with various groups across campus in efforts to learn what the various constituencies on campus sought for the university's next president. A nationally regarded search firm was hired to assist the committee, he said. The consultants quickly utilized the information gathered and the expertise sought to develop a position profile that helped the committee engage prospects and ultimately settle upon their selection. Trustee Riley shared that over the past four months, the committee members have had a number of conference calls and meetings, with some lasting all day. The committee members represented a commitment to a process and to the goal of finding the best person to be Kent State's next president. Trustee Riley then echoed Chair Della Ratta's expression of gratitude to the members of the search committee for their hard work and for the great result they achieved. He then stated it was his privilege and great honor and pleasure to introduce the next president of Kent State University, Dr. Todd Diacon and his wife, Moema.

Trustee Riley then informed Chair Della Ratta that he would like to present the resolution for the board's consideration, but before doing so, would make some remarks regarding the selection of Dr. Diacon. He noted that he was asked the previous day how the search committee and the Board of Trustees selected Dr. Diacon. Trustee Riley shared his response that there were a host of reasons for their decision, but the four that he believes are most important are; first, Dr. Diacon is clearly qualified for the position. He suggested that trustees take a look at the CV that they had with them today to see the broad range of Dr. Diacon's experience and expertise. His experience as a writer, academic and administrator set him apart from other potential candidates. He is literally qualified to be Kent State University's next president, he noted. Trustee Riley stated that the second reason is that Dr. Diacon has made it clear that he puts students first. The feedback the committee received from the university community early in the process made it clear that our next president would have to embrace that core element of Kent State University. Dr. Diacon not only embraces it, he lives it. Trustee Riley went on to say that third, Dr. Diacon has played a significant role in the development of the university's plans and is in a great position to continue the path Kent State is on while doing so with his own unique leadership style and skills. He finished by observing that Dr. Diacon is a good person and a great leader.

Trustee Riley had the good fortune to discuss Dr. Diacon's candidacy with his references as well as others who were hoping he would put his name in the running, and they confirmed that Dr. Diacon is a demanding but caring boss and a leader others will follow and want to follow. With that, Trustee Riley presented for the board's consideration a resolution appointing Dr. Todd Diacon as Kent State University's next president.

Resolution 2019-15

APPOINTMENT OF TODD DIACON AS PRESIDENT OF KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

WHEREAS, on October 23, 2018, Dr. Beverly J. Warren announced her intention to depart the position of President of Kent State University on June 30, 2019, after five years of highly successful leadership; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees launched a national search for Dr. Warren's successor, who would become the 13th president of the university; and

WHEREAS, the Board created a 16-member Presidential Search Committee that, with the assistance of the search firm Russell Reynolds & Associates, was charged with the recruitment of highly qualified and diverse individuals who best embody the preferred characteristics of Kent State's president at this time and for its future; and

WHEREAS, as a result of this inclusive process and its own due diligence and deliberation, the Board of Trustees came to the unanimous nomination of Dr. Todd Diacon, who has 30 years of higher education leadership experience and currently serves as executive vice president and provost of Kent State University; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Kent State University Board of Trustees hereby approves the appointment of Dr. Todd Diacon as the 13th President of Kent State University, effective July 1, 2019, at a base salary of \$475,000, and other agreed-upon terms and conditions of employment to be specified in an employment contract.

Trustee Riley reported that an employment agreement was negotiated successfully, which Dr. Diacon signed on Friday, April 24. He then recommended passage of the resolution.

ACTION: Trustee Frost moved, seconded by Trustee Copeland. that the resolution be approved. There were no objections. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Della Ratta then said he was proud to recognize President-elect Dr. Todd Diacon. He then asked Dr. Diacon to stand and be recognized. Chair Della Ratta was then pleased to recognize his wife, Moema Furtado, who is well known in her own right as an accomplished artist and international partnership specialist. Chair Della Ratta observed how gratifying it was when the

university searched the nation for a worthy successor to President Beverly Warren, the best person for the job was one of our own. He said he is confident that as one who has contributed so substantively to the advancement of Kent State for the past seven years, Dr. Diacon will be the right person at the right time to continue Kent State's remarkable momentum. Chair Della Ratta then noted that certainly, one of the reasons for the success of this search has been the exemplary leadership of President Warren. The momentum that Kent State enjoys today is due in large part to Beverly's Warren's vision and leadership, he commented.

Chair Della Ratta then asked President Warren to make a few brief remarks.

President Warren welcomed everyone to the dawn of a new era where we begin the passing of the torch to the next leader of Kent State University. She remarked that she could not be more pleased that the Board of Trustees and the Presidential Search Committee indeed found just the right leader right in front of us. Over the last seven years, Provost Diacon has been the leader and supporter of a students first priority at Kent State. President Warren noted Kent State has seen record retention and graduation rates, but most importantly what we have seen from Provost Diacon is his unwavering support of students and dedication to helping them discover their purpose. He has worked so very hard in supporting students in and out of classrooms, in areas of student research, theatre and musical performance, and his Provost Leadership Academy in which he brings in new freshmen who learn early on the importance of good leadership and their responsibility of commitment to fostering a great place like Kent State University. President Warren further noted that as a Latin American scholar, the Provost certainly understands the importance of supporting talented faculty. The university's reputation is founded on the scholarship, research, teaching, learning and service of an outstanding faculty that make up the academy. She said Dr. Diacon has been a champion of staff and he is vital in the role of supporting staff and making Kent State a great place to work and live. She shared staff members are most often responsible for the first impressions of the caring community at the university. President Warren stated that Provost Diacon has been an outstanding partner and wise counsel to her over the last five years and she is tremendously grateful for his caring leadership, his commitment to excellence, his countless hours invested into the support of students, faculty, and staff and his quirky sense of humor even in difficult times.

She thanked Chair Della Ratta for his wise counsel and support in the search process, Trustee Riley for his amazing leadership of the Presidential Search Committee, remarking that it was not an easy task and that he rose to the occasion. She further expressed that she was grateful for his leadership and inclusive style in this process. President Warren thanked trustees Addicott and Davidson for being members of the search committee and for giving so much of their time to get Kent State to this moment. She then expressed appreciation to the members of the Presidential Search Committee for their commitment to this important process and to the university. She also noted there was no one better to ensure a smooth and successful operation of the search process than Vice President and University Secretary Char Reed and Associate Chief of Staff Heather Link. Perhaps most importantly, she wanted to thank the Kent State University community for its incredible dedication to our collective work and to being a students first university, which certainty laid the foundation to find a leader who will embrace that same commitment. The belief in our strength as a one university campus system has also led us to serve our communities well. President Warren observed that in the coming academic year in which Kent State will honor the

50th commemoration of May 4th, the university has found just the right leader who understands its role as the wounded healer. She continued that Kent State has the responsibility to share the lessons learned from that tragic day of the importance of civil dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts wherever they may arise. She remembered clearly the exhilaration she felt when she was named the 12th president of Kent State, and the honor that was being bestowed upon her and becoming a member of this outstanding community. Dr. Diacon has the advantage of already knowing this community and knowing how fortunate he will be to serve as president, she said. He will see that Kent State's upward trajectory will continue and she wished him all the best. She continued that Dr. Diacon will bring about new ideas, new discoveries, new ways of being and doing, and she has all the faith and confidence in the work he will continue and the ways in which he will serve this community well.

President-elect Diacon thanked President Warren for those inspiring words and said every member of the Board of Trustees acts on those words. President Warren then asked Dr. Diacon to come forward and share his thoughts.

Dr. Diacon remarked that he felt so many emotions – certainly pride, gratitude, happiness but also humility and a great sense of responsibility. He said he certainly does not take lightly the responsibility of being the leader of Kent State. Given that the time was limited, he thought he would do three things with his remarks. He wanted to discuss why Kent State, why he came to Kent State, and why he loves Kent State, say a few thank you's and then tell two quick stories that he thinks show the transformative the power of higher education.

Dr. Diacon shared that seven years ago, he was attracted to Kent State by the depth and breadth of its academic programs. He was so very impressed that Kent State University, in addition to having the usual kinds of programs found on a college campus, has what it is deemed one of the world's leading fashion design and merchandising programs, which you don't see often in universities. Kent State also has one of the nation's largest and best flight training programs. President-elect Diacon commented that whenever he flies and travels through airports, he always wears a Kent State aviation hat. Frequently, pilots will come up to him and say hello and let him know that Kent State students and graduates are out there doing great things. Dr. Diacon noted that on Friday night he attended one of the theatre productions and two things were especially notable. The work was written and directed by visiting director Ron West, a Kent State graduate. Aside from being a marvelous and marvelously funny play, it featured three freshmen in the leading roles. This served as a reminder of one of the things he enjoys most at Kent State - watching theatre students come in as freshmen, leave as seniors, and then make their way in the theatre world. On Saturday Moema and he had an opportunity to attend our fashion show, which he thought was spectacular. The quality of the production, which was run entirely by students, along with the fashions of the designers were so impressive. He noted that Moema and he had the chance Sunday to attend the athletic department's honors banquet, which recognized the impressive academic accomplishments of our student-athletes. He mentioned to them that one of the most impressive things about the achievements of student-athletes was their ability to engage in time management, their coachability and their ability to devote many hours to both their athletic and academic pursuits. In a nutshell, this past weekend encapsulated what is so great about Kent State University.

He then provided a series of thank-you's to the members of the President's Cabinet and most of all to his wife Moema. He observed that higher education institutions have in the past and currently exist in many forms from large public universities to small private universities. He noted that one thing present in all those permutations of higher education past and present is the presence of students and professors. He began by thanking our students for making Kent State the vibrant place that it is, and he wanted to thank our students for entrusting us with their futures. Please know that we follow your progress, we admire your work and we celebrate your accomplishments, he commented. To the faculty, Dr. Diacon simply wanted to say that while there are many publics within a university, faculty are the heart of the university, and he expressed his true admiration and support for all their endeavors. In the modern university with its departments, programs and schools, he thanked staff for often being the frontline people that students and a new faculty member will meet. He said he appreciates all of the work that staff do for Kent State University. He then gave a special shout-out to the academic affairs leadership and the staff who were present. He thanked them for keeping him on the straight and narrow, and he remarked that they were responsible for the university's remarkable success in increasing retention and graduation rates – the deans, department chairs, and senior and associate provosts. It takes a team to make that kind of success, he continued. Dr. Diacon went on to note that seven years ago, President Lester Lefton explained to him why Kent State University was a great place to be. As he toured the downtown construction that was underway at that time, Dr. Diacon talked about how as deputy chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Amherst, he had been entrusted to work with the town of Amherst to build something like Kent. What Kent State was doing at that moment, they had failed completely at UMass. Dr. Diacon commented that he was very impressed by the ability of President Lefton and town leadership, including city manager David Ruller who was in attendance at the board meeting, to accomplish something that is now taken for granted. That was very difficult to do. He then thanked Dr. Lefton for bringing him to Kent State, noting that Dr. Lefton had a singular ability to craft elegant solutions to vexing problems.

Dr. Diacon then thanked President Bev Warren, continuing that in his mind her singular legacy is the strategic plan that it is actually in place and followed, as opposed to being in a notebook on a shelf. President Warren's work and success in helping the university community craft that guiding statement is one of the reasons why he wants to be president of Kent State, he said.

Dr. Diacon concluded with two stories he believes highlight the transformative power of higher education. The first story involved his family histories on both his mother's side and his father's side, which highlight that transformative power in very different ways. On his mother's side of the family, for nearly 200 years, the family has been earning college degrees. Because his mother was ill for much of his life, he is grateful to three strong women who took care of him and really raised him: his grandmother Evelyn Cox Hoch and her sisters, Mary Idell Cox and Bernice Martin. Those three women all earned college degrees in and around World War I when very few women were earning college degrees. The other day he was looking at a family history that his grandmother had written about his Great Uncle Howard, their older brother, who actually dropped out of college to earn money to pay for his three sisters to go to college, and that was before and during World War I. It was an extraordinary achievement and really highlights that transformative power of higher education. Dr. Diacon then shared that his father, James Lewis Diacon, grew up in Waynoka, Oklahoma. It was a dusty rattlesnake-infested town on the

Oklahoma border and his grandparents were dirt poor. His grandfather was a gas station attendant and when he died in 1929, his family was in such poverty that his grandmother began taking in other people's washing. Dr. Diacon said his father taught him how to iron very well, because that was one of his jobs growing up. He observed that his family still possesses his father's shoeshine box, another way in which he supported his family. In December 1941 just a week after Pearl Harbor when he was 17 years of age, his father obtained his mother's permission to join the U.S. Navy. He spent the next years as a landing craft pilot. He saw action in North Africa, the landing at Anzio in Italy, and then he was transferred to the Pacific where he served as a landing craft pilot in the major invasions in the Pacific Islands. Dr. Diacon commented that his father was honorably discharged from the Navy at the end of the war at the ripe old age of 21 years. It was really his father's salary as a sailor that helped lift his grandmother out of the Great Depression and out of poverty. His father, then armed with a GI bill (which reminds us of the importance of massive and sustained public support for public education), graduated in six years with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and a medical degree from the University of Oklahoma. He then made his way into life as a physician, thereby demonstrating someone from utter poverty could be lifted by the transformative power of higher education.

Dr. Diacon remarked that while his first story came from the dusty plains of Oklahoma, his second and concluding story about the transformative power of higher education came from Independence, Ohio, about three weeks ago. It came during his interview with trustees at the College of Podiatric Medicine. When it came time in the interview for him to ask questions, Dr. Diacon asked why they serve as trustees at Kent State University. Trustees do not receive a dime for their service and all are very successful, including our student trustees, he noted. Dr. Diacon said he was especially moved by the stories he heard about how our trustees were transformed by higher education, how many of them also experienced the kind of social mobility – what he calls the engine of democracy – in their own lives and now want to give back to Kent State. He expressed for that reason, it gave him special pride, joy and happiness to become the 13th president of Kent State University. He stated that he looked forward to working with all of the trustees and thanked them for the opportunity.

Chair Della Ratta then thanked Dr. Diacon for his insightful comments and said the trustees look forward to working with him in the years ahead. Chair Della Ratta congratulated Moema Furtado upon this milestone moment for their family. Trustee Riley then presented Dr. Diacon and his wife with mementos to mark the day.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Della Ratta announced that the next regular business meeting of the board was scheduled for Thursday, May 9, 2019 at the Kent Campus. He then asked for a motion to adjourn.

On motion duly made and approved, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 a.m.