

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

August 26, 2025

Delivered via email

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kevin Guskiewicz, Ph.D.
President

FROM: John Aerni-Flessner, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Vice Chairperson of the Steering Committee

SUBJECT: Search for the Vice President for Research and Innovation



**Office of
Academic
Governance**

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The Steering Committee and Faculty Senate were asked for feedback on the search procedures for the Vice President of Research and Innovation. The Faculty Senate provided advice in the form of comments on the memo sent on 1 August 2025. The Steering Committee provided both advice and consent—approval via a vote—on the recommendations for the memo and the proposed job description. Further, Steering recommended a template for the composition of the search committee. That recommendation is included at the end of this memo. The comments below, therefore, are those that have been endorsed by the Steering Committee.

Memo on the Vice-President for Research and Innovation search:

- Suggestions from Faculty Senate included: Putting on the committee “faculty with strong research backgrounds”; Having faculty with “experience leading a research center or serving on [a] national council”; Appointing “our most deeply knowledgeable researchers and innovators” as well as “research-supporting staff” from across campus.
- There was a strong call from Senators to represent the breadth of research across campus, including ensuring that disciplines were represented beyond the grant-funded STEM fields.

- There was a suggestion that our industry/community partners who engage with the research enterprise might be considered in the composition of the committee.
- There was also a suggestion that the search committee should include some people with management and regulatory experience.

Proposed Job Description:

- It was noted that there is nothing in the job description yet that describes the attributes desired in candidates.
- The first paragraph should also include language about supporting undergraduate research on campus
- Under “responsibilities” there was a suggestion to include language about this person overseeing the process of encouraging faculty honorifics/national honors/state and federal leadership, in alignment with our strategic plan.
- The “Office of Regulatory Affairs” in paragraph four has been renamed the “Office of Research Regulatory Support.”
- The last paragraph of the job description which listed all of the other responsibilities of the position seemed to be lacking in detail, especially for external candidates. This was especially important in light of the fact that these offices under the VPRI are the ways in which most faculty at MSU interact with the VPRI.

Steering Committee Recommendations for Hiring Committee:

In order to ensure adequate voice on the committee, the recommendation of the faculty members of Steering is that the committee be comprised of these members:

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|----------------------------------|---|
| • Tenure System Faculty: | 4 |
| • Non-Tenure Track Faculty: | 2 |
| • Academic Specialists: | 2 |
| • Post-doctoral Research Fellow: | 1 |
| • Graduate Student (COGS): | 1 |
| • Undergraduate Student (ASMSU): | 1 |
| • Dean: | 1 |
| • Support Staff: | 1 |
| • Academic Governance Rep: | 1 |

In addition to the numbers listed above, there are other considerations for these positions.

- Tenure-system faculty on the committee should come from a wide variety of fields and not only the grant-funded sciences and engineering since research comes in a wide variety of forms and looks very different across campus. There was a suggestion that the Arts/Humanities need to be represented on this committee.
 - At least one faculty member with experience as a graduate director should be on the committee
- Non-tenure track faculty should have a UNTF representative as well as a fixed term/health professions faculty to ensure representation of the diversity of non-tenure track research faculty on campus.
- The academic specialists should be individuals with research-oriented contracts.
- With the post-doc/graduate students/undergrad reps, the suggestion was to try to balance out the mix of majors/fields.
- The Support Staff position should be filled by someone who is involved in pre/post-award operations and/or regulatory affairs
- The Governance Representative should come from either the At-Large Members (ALMs) or from the Steering Committee so that governance can be easily kept in the loop and for the breadth of experience these individuals have in their university-wide service.

cc: Mike Zeig, Teresa Cuellar