



Cornell University Student Assembly

Memo

To: Kent Fuchs
From: Student Assembly Diversity Affairs Coalition
cc: Ronald Seeber
Date: March 11, 2013
Re: Search for the New Dean of Arts & Sciences

The members of the Student Assembly Diversity Affairs Coalition urge the Search Committee to provide a venue for student input during this search. This could be in the form of an open luncheon or forum where students can openly question the candidates and learn more about their previous experiences. This feedback should be taken into account when making the final hiring decision. The venue for feedback should not occur at a time when students are not likely to be on-campus, such as the week of Spring Break.

It is important that students be given the opportunity to interact with candidates for the position. The College of Arts & Sciences is home to a vast and vibrant student body that has a variety of needs. The decisions that the new Dean makes will ultimately affect students. In the last few years, many students have witnessed the consolidation of departments and felt the effects of budget cuts on departments like Theater, Film, & Dance and various language programs. There must be a venue for candidates to see students first-hand and glean a sense of what the various communities in the college need and desire.

The precedent for student input in these processes has already been set in many different units of the University. When Residential Programs looks to hire new RHDs, they make it a point to include students in the interview process and allow them to give written feedback about candidates. During the search to fill the position left vacant by Dr. Trey Waller in the College of Engineering, students were granted the opportunity to have a meal with candidates and provide opinions afterward. Additionally, the Department of City & Regional Planning always includes both graduate and undergraduate representatives on their faculty search committees.

In order to continue to promote inclusion and active engagement of students from different backgrounds, it is important that there be an opportunity for student input during this search. The Student Assembly Diversity Affairs Coalition is prepared to assist the Provost and the Search Committee with achieving this goal.