



Dear Chancellor Matos Rodríguez and the Board of Trustees,

We write concerning the upcoming search for a new Graduate Center president. The last presidential search ended in the appointment of an executive with no CUNY experience or institutional knowledge. Before she announced her resignation a week after last semester's orientation, Robin Garrell had alienated multiple groups at the college – faculty, staff, students, the PSC, the Graduate Council, and Doctoral and Graduate Student Council – and was incapable of effectively communicating the needs of the college. We believe that result was at least partially predictable from the manner in which the search was conducted.

Prior to the Board of Trustees' revision of search policies, CUNY presidential searches used to be conducted with more transparency and openness. Finalists' visits to college campuses were opportunities for public discussion and feedback among community members. Since the changing of policy regarding confidential visits, however, presidential searches have become more closed and akin to the top-down corporate model. This contravenes recommendations by the American Association of University Professors, and has, as mentioned, produced negative effects for the leadership of the GC.

To restore community confidence in the GC's administration, we urge the Board of Trustees to reverse its policy regarding confidential searches. We believe the following steps are necessary to ensure a successful presidential search:

- The search committee must include members from the professional staff, chosen in a similar manner to those from the faculty.
- As the search proceeds, there must be broad community involvement. Candidates should be informed that there will be no waiver of the Board of Trustees [policies](#) requiring meeting with the Graduate Center community before any final selection is proposed to the Board of Trustees. In addition, the search committee should encourage candidates to attend community events. Meetings with finalists must not be subject to Non-Disclosure Agreements.
- One of the primary requirements of an effective president is to establish a cooperative working relationship with the union, which represents the vast majority of Graduate Center workers, upholds negotiated contractual procedures, and plays an important role in securing Graduate Center funding. It would be appropriate for candidates to meet with

the PSC's Graduate Center chapter to familiarize themselves with issues they are likely to face if they are appointed.

The Graduate Center should be the jewel in the crown of the CUNY system. Yet in less than a decade, the Graduate Center will have had four presidents and three interim presidents. Recent administrative changes have severely damaged the confidence of faculty, staff and students in the institution. We believe that the policy of openness and communication that we have outlined will result in a more successful search and a stronger Graduate Center.

Signed,

Graduate Center PSC Executive Committee and Graduate Center PSC Stewards