

Question Time

During the January 2020 senate meeting when the DEI 1.2 Action Planning Team was presented as new business, we had a long discussion during which many senators raised a wide range of concerns about the proposed DEI search. Among the many concerns raised were the inability of PFW to run high level searches in a fair, equitable, and transparent manner. None of the concerns raised were adequately addressed by the administration. The resolution failed on a voice vote. A few months later, we received an email triumphantly announcing the start of the search for the DEI position, basically dismissing the legitimacy of the concerns raised by senators in January. What little information that the campus community has had about the search has reaffirmed for many of us the concerns raised in January. We received an invitation to open forums, with less than 24 hours notice before the first one, which also happens to be the forum for the only woman candidate. For some reason, the recordings of all the forums won't be available until Monday and the deadline to submit feedback is on Tuesday. One of the finalists for the position is a person who was instrumental in pushing through the creation of the very position for which he is now a finalist. The committee includes people who report or will report to this individual. The open forum for the internal candidate is held last, giving that person access to the kinds of questions that are being asked and the way that the other candidates answered questions, before their own forum. Can the administration discuss how the lack (or perception of lack) of fairness and ethics in the way the search is being carried out will make it possible for the person who gets the job to be able to promote equity on this campus? Given the importance of this position and the need for buy in from the university community for this person to be successful, isn't it particularly important to avoid even appearance of impropriety?

A. Livschiz