

Board of Trustees Chooses New Centralia College President

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Bob Mohrbacher

Bob Mohrbacher accepted the position of president at Centralia College on Wednesday night. He will begin in his role on July 1.

The top candidate for Centralia College president accepted the job via speaker phone at the board of trustees meeting on Wednesday night. His acceptance was met by a frenzy of applause as the board unanimously approved him to be the new leader of the college. Bob Mohrbacher will begin in his role on July 1. He was one of three finalists for the position.

"I'm delighted to hear that. I absolutely do," he said after being offered the position. Currently, Mohrbacher is the vice president of instruction and student services at Big Bend Community College.

He has a PhD in education and community college leadership from Oregon State University, a master's degree in creative writing from George Mason University, and a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Washington.

"This really was a very collaborative effort and I'm very proud this was done in house," said Centralia College Board of Trustees Chairwoman Joanne Schwartz.

The college had 40 candidates for the position. That number was later narrowed down to 10 by a campus community screening committee. From there, the vice presidents and the board of trustees selected the top three candidates.

The finalists toured the college last week and hosted a series of forums for community members, staff and students.

Overall, 127 comments were submitted back to the board. Each was evaluated before a final decision was made.

"I think we are all feeling very pleased with the process and the fact we ended up with three

really terrific candidates," Schwartz said.

Mohrbacher will begin his employment on July 1 pending the approval of his contract. Since the discussion on the contract is ongoing, no information was released on the terms.

The other two candidates were Derek Brandes, the vice president of instruction at Green River College, and Virginia Tomlinson, the vice president of instruction at Columbia Basin College in Pasco.

Board members said all three candidates were highly qualified for the position, but the decision came down to who would be the best administrative fit.

"If you have three people who are qualified to do the job then you are looking for who would fit into our family the best," board member Stuart Halsan said.

The search for a new president at the college began after the termination of Robert Frost in December of last year. He had served in the role since July 1, 2014.

Former president James Walton, who preceded Frost, stepped into the role of interim president shortly after Frost was fired. Walton will remain the interim president until after commencement ceremonies.

"This was hard," Walton said of the search. "These really were three great candidates."

Now, with a new leader pinpointed for the new school year, the board is ready for what is to come.

"We'll definitely be able to have someone that will lead us into the future and fit well with our campus community," Halsan said.