

Spelman Johnson's Proposal for Fitchburg State University

President

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Leadership Search for
Education and Social Impact

Get to Know Spelman Johnson

Our History

Founded in 1991, Spelman Johnson is a woman-owned executive search firm with the singular focus of identifying and recruiting talent for organizations and institutions that impact the social fabric and change lives. From higher education, to secondary schools, to member-based advocacy associations, and mission-driven organizations, we have recruited and placed over 2,000 outstanding leaders. With 32 years of spearheading searches across multiple professional fields, we are connected to a pipeline of talent that allows us to build a broad, deep, and diverse pool on behalf of our clients. Spelman Johnson is committed to supporting the access of diverse professionals at all levels of leadership and respected for our ability to match outstanding leaders with outstanding organizations.

Spelman Johnson provides exemplary search and consulting services to institutions and organizations based on three key principles:

Ethics

Communication

Service

We strive for clear and direct communication with clients and candidates. We endeavor to make the best use of available resources in facilitating the smooth and efficient delivery of services, operations, and processes. We believe that every client and every candidate should expect nothing less than honest and ethical efforts on their behalf, at every juncture of the search process. Our practice focuses on senior leadership roles such as president, provost, vice president, dean, and director in cabinet-level administrative areas, including academic affairs, diversity and inclusion, student affairs, enrollment, finance and administration, marketing and communication, and athletics.

Clients Call Us:

collaborative partners

expert practitioners

proven advocates

ethically driven

honest and thorough analysts

industry influencers

innovative firm

measured risk-takers

thought leaders

trusted advisers

Our Commitment to Diversity

At Spelman Johnson, our dedication to excellence in executive search is inseparable from our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our team of consultants is diverse and culturally skilled and viewed by clients as trusted advisers, thought leaders, and proven experts in helping institutions and organizations build diverse leadership teams. We work with clients to anticipate, identify, and combat explicit and unconscious bias in the search process and work toward ensuring that no individual or group is discriminated against on the basis of a protected status, such as race, color, religion, national origin, citizenship, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, or qualified veteran status. We devote considerable time and resources in partnering with professional groups, associations, and leadership development institutes to expand the pipeline of people of color and women leaders in higher education.

Spelman Johnson's philosophy on recruiting senior leaders includes an effort to create a dynamic in which both our clients and executive-level applicants are involved in the search process in a manner that is attentive, professional, and engaging. Through targeted outreach to our network of over 8,600 diversity, equity, and inclusion professionals in independent schools, higher education, and non-profit organizations—as well as confidential nomination processes—Spelman Johnson encourages professionals who might be interested in exploring a position to contact us directly for detailed information about the context and priorities for the search.

Since its founding, Spelman Johnson has been committed to supporting the development of professionals of under-represented groups and to creating networks that allow us to recruit broad, deep, and diverse pools of applicants that reflect the diversity of our clients' populations. To that end, Spelman Johnson is deeply involved nationally and regionally with organizations and institutes that support and advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion at the highest levels. Our long-standing engagement with these organizations uniquely positions Spelman Johnson with the reputation and network that serve to promote our searches and afford us ready access to individuals eager to nominate and/or recommend qualified candidates.

Our placements are evidence of our success. Across the placements that occurred in 2022:

40%

persons of color

50%

women



Experience

Recruiting Your Next Leader

Searching for a university president is a complex and challenging endeavor requiring a breadth of understanding of the unique skill sets required of this critical leadership role. Spelman Johnson tailors each presidential search to institutional needs, opportunities, challenges, mission, and vision.

In a highly competitive, socially active, and crisis-laden era, the role of the university president is multifaceted and requires a range of expertise to be successful. Effective leaders possess administrative, financial, advocacy, communication, fundraising, academic, relationship-building, and strategic planning skills. As there is no longer a single path to the college presidency, Spelman Johnson focuses on drawing candidates from various senior leadership positions within education.

2,000⁺

The number of successful searches Spelman Johnson has conducted in our 32-year history.

200⁺

The number of successful searches Spelman Johnson has conducted for positions that provide a pipeline to presidential appointments, such as provosts, vice presidents, and deans.

12,000⁺

The number of senior and executive level administration professionals in our proprietary database.

Memberships

ACE Executive Roundtable

National Association of Executive Recruiters

Council of Independent Colleges

Presidential and Chancellor Searches

Metropolitan Community College

Metropolitan Community College, Penn Valley

Montserrat College of Art

Mount Marty University

Naropa University

Oklahoma City University

Prescott College

University of Central Oklahoma

Vermont Law & Graduate School

Spelman Johnson's Search Process

Spelman Johnson will partner and consult closely with the search committee and hiring authorities to identify, assess, select, and appoint the very best possible candidate for the institution. We manage a comprehensive search that allows our clients to focus their efforts on the evaluation of the most qualified candidates. We develop a search strategy that addresses our client's specific needs and we serve as advisers during all phases of the process, which typically includes five phases: laying the groundwork, building the candidate pool, assessing candidates, selecting and vetting finalists, and appointing the new leader.

Phase 1 Laying the Groundwork

We begin each search by learning about the institution and the priorities for the new leader. We speak with stakeholders and conduct a thorough analysis of the institution and the position to develop a collaborative relationship with our clients, promote a shared understanding of the role, and lay the groundwork for a successful search. We use all of the information gained in this initial phase to craft informative and compelling documents, including a comprehensive position specification that goes well beyond a standard job description.

Phase 2 Building the Candidate Pool

Recruiting an outstanding leader requires a broad, deep, and diverse candidate pool. We build strong candidate pools by implementing a customized marketing plan that outlines both passive and active recruitment strategies. During this phase, we advertise the position broadly, activate our professional networks, contact prospects identified through extensive research, and personally respond to all inquiries, nominations, and referrals.

Phase 3 Assessing and Evaluating Candidates

Spelman Johnson's assessment of candidates goes far beyond screening application materials. We hold in-depth conversations with qualified applicants and advance only the most promising candidates. We gather a significant amount of information through our vetting process and the use of a supplemental questionnaire that Spelman Johnson develops for each search. For each search we conduct, Spelman Johnson sets up password-protected online access to candidate application materials for the exclusive use of the search committee. After the candidate slate is ready for review by the search committee or other representatives, Spelman Johnson releases candidate files to clients via a secure portal.

Phase 4

Selecting and Vetting Candidates

Spelman Johnson consultants meet with the search committee or other representatives to review candidates and identify a short list of semifinalists. We assist our clients with structuring this review and the first round of interviews, which typically includes a set of core questions designed to assess candidates on attributes and qualifications defined by the institution. We also assist clients in planning second-round interviews and in-person and virtual visits. Spelman Johnson conducts due diligence on behalf of our clients, including social media and internet investigations, extensive on- and off-list reference checks, an optional leadership assessment, and a comprehensive background check conducted under the auspices of the Fair Credit Reporting Act. Background checks include employment and degree verification, further social media checks, and investigations of criminal records and civil litigation, among other investigations.

Phase 5

Appointing the New Leader

During this final phase, we provide decision support to assist the institution in making the final selection. While we are prohibited by law from asking candidates about their salary, we confirm the institution's target salary range and share with our clients any salary or compensation concerns voluntarily disclosed by candidates. We also provide information on competitive market salaries and compensation packages for the particular sector. After an offer has been made and accepted, we close out the search, notify unsuccessful candidates and other parties of the outcome, and assist with a public announcement of the appointment. We can, upon request, support a well-planned and executed transition and onboarding process.

Search Timeline

While we will create a customized timeline for the institution that is reflective of the agreed-upon deliverables and desired start date, the following sample timeline is intended to provide a general outline of the process for the purposes of this proposal. Should Spelman Johnson be selected as the preferred search firm, a more comprehensive and personalized timeline will be devised in conjunction with the specific needs of the institution and the search committee.

Month 1

Spelman Johnson reviews the search strategy, process, and timeline with the hiring authority, search committee, and other key individuals involved in the institution's search process.

Virtual and/or in-person meetings are conducted with the search committee, key individuals, and groups to:

- Discuss the search strategy and process.
- Finalize the search timeline.
- Discuss the challenges, opportunities, and objectives for the role.
- Determine the background, attributes, and qualifications of the ideal candidate.

Spelman Johnson drafts search documents for review and approval by the institution, including the following:

- Summary Report of Constituent Meetings
- Position Announcement
- Marketing Plan
- Position Specification
- Search Timeline

The institution approves all documents listed above, including formal acceptance and sign-off on the Marketing Plan with associated expenses.

Month 2

With approved documents in hand, Spelman Johnson launches the search and begins actioning the Marketing Plan; direct outreach and cultivation of candidates continues for 30-40 days.

Search committee meets as necessary to conduct anti-bias training and to devise rubric, survey, or other review methods by which candidates will be assessed.

Direct outreach and cultivation of candidates continues.

Initial review of application materials begins.



Month 3

Search consultant conducts introductory interviews with top candidates, collects supplemental questionnaires and additional information from candidates, and shares confidential candidate files with the search committee.

Search committee meets with the consultant to review the slate of candidates and decides on which candidates to advance to the semi-finalist stage.

Search committee conducts confidential virtual interviews, or in-person off-site interviews, with candidates and selects finalists.

The institution arranges on-site or virtual meetings for the finalists with appropriate constituencies and a second round of candidate interviews with the search committee; client collects constituent feedback via survey or other means.

Spelman Johnson facilitates scheduling of the finalists and assists, as needed, in coordinating travel logistics.

Spelman Johnson conducts extensive reference checks for finalists and reports findings to the hiring authority.

Hiring authority reviews all available information on the finalists and selects preferred candidate, extends employment offer, and negotiates start date and other details. Spelman Johnson conducts an extensive background check on the selected candidate and submits results to hiring authority.

Spelman Johnson consultants support transition, as appropriate.

Pricing and Guarantees

Search Fee

Salary Range (Based on First Year Compensation)	Fixed Search Fee	Fee For Indirect Expenses
\$200,001-\$300,000	\$75,000	\$4,000
\$300,001 and above	\$90,000	\$4,000

Direct expenses related to the search are not included in the fixed search fee. Direct expenses include advertising undertaken by Spelman Johnson, travel, and background investigations.

Guarantees & Policies

Search Conclusion Guarantee

Spelman Johnson will work with the institution until a successful hire is made or the search concludes in another fashion as negotiated by the institution and Spelman Johnson.

Retention Guarantee

Should the successful candidate voluntarily withdraw or be terminated within 12 months from the date of the contract, Spelman Johnson will redo the search for a replacement. We will waive our fee and bill only for expenses and the one-time administrative charge associated with reopening the search. This guarantee assumes certain conditions that are detailed in the Spelman Johnson contract. The client must notify Spelman Johnson within 60 days of the departure of the hired candidate should they wish to retain Spelman Johnson under the conditions of this guarantee.

Off-Limits Policy

Spelman Johnson values and appreciates the relationship we have with our clients and will never jeopardize that relationship by recruiting our placements. In accordance with the ethics of the executive search industry, Spelman Johnson makes an agreement with each client that clearly states the period during which we will not recruit professionals from the institution or other internal areas as requested.

Mission Statement

Spelman Johnson, founded in 1991, provides search and consulting services in partnership with education, advocacy associations, and social impact organizations. Our mission is to provide exceptional, ethical service to our clients in the search and consulting processes—identifying and recruiting talented leaders for our client organizations.

Highlights of Our Practice

Policies to Ensure Personalized, Professional Service

With an administrative team that includes marketing, logistics, technical support, and research, a Spelman Johnson search consultant with relevant leadership experience will lead your search. We may limit the number of active searches handled by each consultant to ensure that they are available to the client and the candidates from start to finish throughout the search process. We provide advice as needed on search committee composition, interview questions and structure, salary, and on-boarding. The Spelman Johnson search consultant provides anti-bias and equity training and works with the search committee to develop appropriate evaluation rubrics. Through regular communication and personal contact, the consultant listens to client needs and learns its organizational culture, enabling Spelman Johnson to develop a tailored recruitment plan. Our search consultants build relationships with candidates, working hard to understand their motivations, strengths, challenges, and goals while also providing detailed information about the needs and challenges of the position. Spelman Johnson's consultants serve as a bridge between our clients and candidates, enabling us to ensure the alignment of the successful candidate with our client's needs and culture. These policies and practices promise a high degree of personal service and satisfaction for both clients and candidates.

Ethics

In accordance with the ethics of the executive search industry, Spelman Johnson makes an agreement with each client that clearly states the period during which we will not recruit professionals from the client organization or other internal areas as requested. Spelman Johnson is a member of the National Association of Executive Recruiters (NAER) and follows its Code of Ethics (naer.org). Our firm is also a member of the American Council on Education (ACE) Executive Search Roundtable (acenet.edu) and the Network of Nonprofit Search Consultants (nmsc.org).



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