

## DiStefano stresses importance of hiring right Colorado's next AD

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Longmont Times-Call

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BOULDER -- Colorado Chancellor Phil DiStefano met with the entire athletic director search committee for the first time Thursday afternoon on campus and emphasized how important hiring the right person to be the sixth full-time AD in school history is to the school.

Interim athletic director Ceal Barry, the committee chair, said DiStefano gave the committee some basic marching orders. He wants the committee to cast a wide net, be thorough, prepared and confidential throughout the process.

"We can't protect what a candidate might do, but we can certainly protect what we might do and have integrity in what we're going to do," Barry said. "It's important that we remain confidential, focused and patient if necessary.

"He stressed how important a hire this is for the university, that this is the most important that we have going on right now."

Barry said the time line for hiring a replacement for Mike Bohn, who was forced out in late-May after eight years on the job and the department deeply in debt, remains late-summer. The committee did not make a decision Thursday about whether to use a consulting firm to help with the search. Barry said CU could hire a firm at some point but it is not ready to do so yet.

It might not need to hire a firm to help identify candidates, but one could be used to help in the interview process. Barry said the committee begins its work with a large number of resumes and profiles to review from potential candidates who have contacted the school about the opening either on their own or through a third party.

Barry said the CU athletic director job is attractive to many because of the reputation of the school and the location. She said the fact that CU is now in the Pac-12 Conference has enhanced the appeal of the job even further because of the prestige of the conference.

Barry characterized those who have contacted the school as "a wide variety" of individuals from varying backgrounds and professions. It is not a list of college athletics lifers.

Barry has been a part of multiple searches over her three decades at the school and admitted there have been times when search committees haven't played much of a role in identifying and hiring candidates. She said she believes DiStefano wants this search to be modeled after the men's basketball search three years ago when Bohn hired Tad Boyle from Northern Colorado.

Barry called that search process "non-traditional."

"To actually have candidates come in and sit down in front of the search committee and not know who you're going to hire," Barry said explaining the characterization.

At the time, some fans carped that Bohn hadn't cast a wide enough net and simply drove to Greeley to hire one of his old buddies from his days as a student at the University of Kansas. However, Barry called the search that produced Boyle as being the most successful in which she has been involved.

When that process began, Boyle was widely considered the third-best candidate behind former CU assistant Steve McClain and former Denver Nuggets assistant and Metro State head coach Mike Dunlap. Barry said Boyle earned the CU job by wowing the committee during the interview process.

From the outset, DiStefano has emphasized that he intends to hire a candidate that can build on Bohn's historic fundraising achievements with the hopes that the next AD might even double them in the coming years.

Barry said identifying candidates who can succeed in significantly raising the bar with donors isn't just about looking at what they have done elsewhere.

"I think you have to look at their record for sure, but I don't think you can base everything on their track record," Barry said. "I certainly think we'd be foolish not to look at the track record of candidates on fundraising or just revenue generation in general.

"You have to look at where was the organization prior to their arrival and what was the progression throughout their tenure? I think it's very similar to looking at a coach. What was the record when they got there and what was the record three years later, five years later, seven years later, nine years later? Yes, you have to look at that, but there is the human side of things, too. What's not in black and white? When you meet someone face to face, your general feel. We're all in the people business. And how do you feel when you meet that person? Do you feel good about it? Because at the end of the day, it's a relationship business."

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*@KyleRingo*