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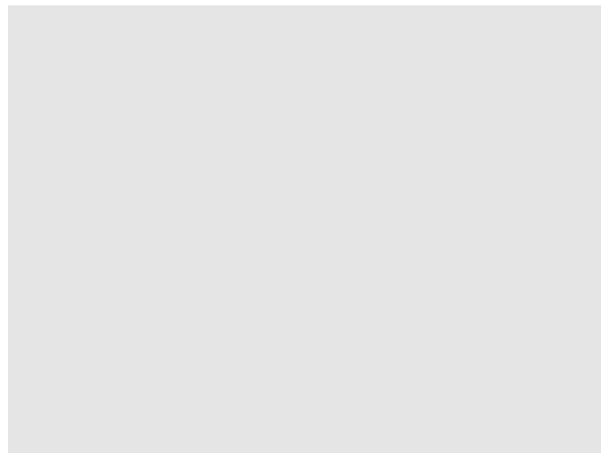
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WKU's School of Media still searching for new director

By AARON MUDD amudd@bgdailynews.com Aug 10, 2019



Larry Snyder

Submitted

After three failed attempts, the search for a permanent director of Western Kentucky University's School of Media is gearing up again and will start next month.

In a recent memo to WKU President Timothy Caboni and the university's Board of Regents, Potter College of Arts and Letters Dean Larry Snyder called the search for a permanent director "the most pressing issue facing the school," which houses WKU's journalism, photojournalism, film and broadcasting programs.

Since July 2017, the school has been led by an interim director and national searches in fall 2016, fall 2017 and spring 2018 failed to find a replacement. The search was put on hold last academic year as the university underwent a comprehensive review of its academic offerings.

“It’s tough to find someone who can fit the build,” Snyder told the Daily News, pointing to several factors that have frustrated the searches.

The searches have failed to find a candidate with the right skill set, Snyder said, adding that the ideal candidate must have the right academic credentials and industry experience. He also blamed a tight labor market and said the university hasn’t been able to offer a salary that’s competitive enough, which will change going forward, he said.

Additionally, there’s been a “lack of coherent vision for the school,” Snyder said. In recent years, the school has seen its public relations and advertising programs move to WKU’s Department of Communication. It recently attempted to pivot and showcase all of its academic offerings by dropping its former name: the School of Journalism and Broadcasting.

In an interview, Caboni also credited the “disparity” in the school’s program offerings.

“To be candid, it was a broad swath of communication, and when you have multiple disciplinary or field of study perspectives, coming to a consensus can be really tough, and as an outsider, if you look at that environment that might not be a place where you want to go because it’s risky professionally,” Caboni said.

Caboni added that moving public relations and advertising to the Department of Communication and focusing on media specifically will help draw the right leader for the school.

“I think this year, we’re going to have a higher likelihood of attracting someone who sees the opportunity to elevate that school,” he said. “It was too broad before.”



With the new focus, Snyder said he's more confident a search can succeed this time around, and the School of Media will also be assisted by a professional search firm. Snyder declined to name the firm.

"The search firm will actually go out and beat the bushes for us," he said.

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Snyder said the search will be headed up by a committee of five or six people that includes School of Media faculty representatives. The committee will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the finalists, and submit a report to Snyder, who will then use that information to recommend a hire, he said.

Snyder said the group planned to meet Friday and is drafting an advertisement for the position.

"We should have this wrapped up by the end of the fall semester," he said.

Aaron Mudd

Education reporter. Covers education and related issues, focusing primarily on the Bowling Green and Warren County public school districts and Western Kentucky University.

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