

UdeM will restart governor search after candidates list was leaked

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Université de Moncton PHOTO: TIMES & TRANSCRIPT ARCHIVE

L'Université de Moncton announced on Monday that it will begin a second selection process next spring to hire a new rector.

The decision was made during a special meeting of the board of governors, following what the university called a “breach of confidence” that jeopardized the process.

The selection committee will be composed of new members.

Earlier, the university said it will file a complaint against a national broadcaster after it published a leaked list of the 10 candidates for the position.

In a statement posted to its website, UdeM called the breach “a deplorable situation that is causing tremendous damage to the university’s reputation and the selection process.”

In a second statement, the university said it was submitting a complaint over the matter to the ombudsman of Radio-Canada, which published the list.

UdeM is seeking to fill the position of rector, the senior official on the board of governors, which is responsible for policy and decision-making. Jacques Paul Couturier has served as interim rector and vice-chancellor since Jan. 29 when Raymond Thériège stepped down to take on the role of Canada’s official languages commissioner.

The university had narrowed the list of applicants for the position to 10 people, and a leaked list of those names was obtained and published by Radio-Canada earlier this month.

Denis Robichaud, news director for Radio-Canada in Moncton, said last week his office was not aware of a complaint made to the ombudsman.

The office of the ombudsman of Radio-Canada in Toronto said Monday morning a complaint had not yet been received.

Edith Doucet, president of the council of governors, said the complaint was sent later Monday.

Mathieu Lang, president of the Association of Librarians and Professors of l'Université de Moncton, called the leak "shocking."

"The replacement of the post of rector is a turning point every time," he said in French. "It's a new direction. It's the person who has his hand on the rudder."

Lang, a professor of education, believes the breach of confidentiality also represents a breach of UdeM's credibility.

"Université de Moncton is said to be the most important institution in Acadia. When we know that more and more of our politicians, our lawyers, our doctors, our artists are passing through l'Université de Moncton, we can not afford to taint the process of choosing our captain."

"We are very disappointed with this leak," added Alexandre Cédric Doucet, president of the UdeM students' union, in French. "We condemn the breach of confidentiality that has been made by this person or persons. I think that at the end of the line, the students are the real losers in this case."

George Raine, a human resources expert with Montanta in Moncton, said disclosure of the list may be a deterrent to people applying for jobs at the university.

"It can create difficulties and embarrassment for those ultimately unsuccessful," he said in a phone interview.

Pierre Battah, a human resources consultant and former headhunter for high-profile positions, said the list of applicants for a high-profile university position usually becomes public when it is shortened to two or three names.

"I think in academia, it's a process that's always very different from any other senior executive process, because at some point it becomes public," he said.

The consultant believes the leak could have less impact on candidates from an academic background than those from the private sector.

"Academic culture makes it maybe less problematic," Battah said in French. "In the private sector ... there would be a stain on the organization and the recruiter, potentially."

Lang said he is worried about the next planned job competition, that for the vice-president of education and research. Incumbent André Samson has announced he will not run again after the end of his five-year term in 2019.

"I wonder who in Canada will be interested in applying if he does not have the assurance that his name will not appear in the media. It taints the image [of the university], and it breaks the bond of trust that people can

have," said Lang.