



Ambrose doesn't make cut

- By [JORDAN BLUM](#)
- Advocate Capitol News Bureau
- Published: Apr 4, 2008 - Page: 1B - UPDATED: 12:05 a.m.

Southern University interim Chancellor Margaret Ambrose is noticeably absent from a list of 16 semifinalists for the job released Thursday.

Public interviews will run from Monday through Thursday after the chancellor search committee developed the list during multiple closed door meetings.

Southern University System President Ralph Slaughter repeatedly said the search would be open.

Slaughter, who also is the search committee chairman, argued the search is "transparent" because the interviews will be conducted publicly.

Contending that he had to "respect the process," Slaughter said Ambrose simply did not rank as high on a scoring system to compare the system.

Slaughter and committee Co-chairman Matthew Butler, of The Shaw Group, refused to explain the scoring process, except to say it compared aspects such as administrative experience, scholarly publishing and fundraising.

Ambrose, who has worked at Southern for 35 years, refused to comment Thursday. She became interim chancellor last year after former Chancellor Ed Jackson stepped down.

Former Southern President Dolores Spikes, who nominated Ambrose, said she believes Slaughter had Ambrose eliminated early because they have not always seen eye-to-eye.

The Southern Board of Supervisors could still overrule Slaughter's recommendation for chancellor, Spikes noted.

Southern board member Johnny Anderson of Baton Rouge also noted the board will have the “final say.”

Anderson, a vocal Ambrose supporter, said it is a “very reasonable” question to ask why she did not make the list.

Anderson said he hopes Ambrose’s lack of a doctoral degree was not used against her. All 16 semifinalists have doctorates.

Slaughter and Butler, however, said they are “excited” they have such a strong group of provosts and vice president to choose among.

“What you see represents the committee,” said Slaughter, who said he let the rest of the committee do all the work. “I’m just proud of their work.”

Butler said they decided to interview 16 people because the committee members were so impressed with the quality of applicants and did not want to leave any top people out.

Butler said he believes the committee will name three to five finalists by the end of April, so a new chancellor can be hired possibly in May.

Jim Brandt, the executive director of the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, said he is concerned the committee’s recent closed meeting may have violated state public meetings laws because no public notice was provided.

“Once again, the public is denied the opportunity to see how the process has evolved,” Brandt said.

Slaughter said the committee is not a public entity and does not have to follow open meetings laws. If the Board of Supervisors had appointed the committee then it would be public, Slaughter said.

Brandt disagreed, arguing that who does the appointing does not matter.

“It’s still a public entity doing public business,” Brandt said.