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Furman University

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Presidential search continues; Center for Sustainability named for Shi

David Shi's decision to retire from the presidency of Furman at the close of the 2009-10 academic year presents the university with a challenge to identify and select the right person to build on the accomplishments of Furman's 10th president and his predecessors.

A 16-member search committee consisting of trustees, former members of the board, students, faculty, staff and alumni has been meeting since early summer to discuss the ideal characteristics that Furman's next president should have. The group has held several campus forums to gather opinions from faculty, staff and students, and has contracted with Susan Resneck Pierce, a former college president who now works with Academic Search, Inc., to serve as a special consultant.

Kathleen McKinney, chair of the board of trustees and a member of the search committee, says that there has been tremendous interest in the position. "It is no surprise that the response to the search announcement has been extraordinarily positive, both in terms of the number and quality of interested candidates and nominations," she says. "Furman is an exceptional school, and in the tradition of past Furman presidents, David Shi has built on strength and left the university in position to move to yet another level of excellence.

"We are looking for qualified candidates in an effort to find the best person to continue Furman's momentum and expand its reputation as a leading liberal arts institution."

Shi, a 1973 Furman graduate, succeeded John E. Johns as president in 1994. During his presidency he has propelled the university to the national forefront in such areas as engaged learning, campus sustainability and environmental stewardship.

According to McKinney, the committee is in the process of examining all applications to narrow the list of candidates and determine who it would like to interview. Although no timeline has been established, she says it is possible that a new president could be named by the first of the year.

Furman has developed a Web page that provides information and updates about the presidential search. Visit www.furman.edu/newpresident for the latest news.

While the quest for Furman's next president goes on, the executive committee of the board of trustees has voted to name the university's Center for Sustainability in honor of Shi.



McKinney says that the decision is "a fitting tribute in that it recognizes the many initiatives David has championed during his time at Furman. These include enhancing the university's national reputation, developing stronger ties to the local community, renewing the campus infrastructure and promoting the concept of engaged learning — as well as recognizing his exceptional leadership in the area of sustainability in higher education."

Shi's name will grace the new academic center located in Cliffs Cottage (pictured), the *Southern Living* sustainable home that was retrofitted this fall to provide space for the university's sustainability initiatives.

The David E. Shi Center for Sustainability will coordinate Furman's academic, co-curricular and community outreach activities related to sustainability, which focuses on ensuring that the resources and opportunities of this generation are available in the future through conservation and stewardship of the environment.

The Cliffs Cottage was *Southern Living* magazine's first "green" showcase home. Built in 2008, it was open for public tours through August and serves as a model of environmentally responsible design, sustainable building techniques and materials, and energy-saving systems.

For more on the university's sustainability efforts, visit www.furman.edu/sustain. To honor David Shi's retirement by supporting the Center for Sustainability, contact susan.brady@furman.edu, (864) 294-3693. Photo by Jeremy Fleming.