



Thursday, October 20, 2022

Brian Lamb, Chair  
Florida Board of Governors  
State University System of Florida  
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1614  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

Dear Chair Lamb,

At its meeting on September 15, 2022, the University of West Florida Board of Trustees unanimously approved the attached "President's Employment Agreement," which extends Dr. Martha D. Saunders' contractual term for a one-year period commencing on January 1, 2023, through and including December 31, 2023, on the terms and conditions described therein. In support of this decision, I am very pleased to provide the following summary of accomplishments by Dr. Saunders, who has served as president of the University of West Florida since January 1, 2017.

Dr. Saunders' leadership is guided by intentional actions, deliberate decisions and measurable goals with proven positive outcomes. As president, Dr. Saunders reached an important milestone this past year when the Florida State University System Board of Governors unanimously approved of the University's new five-year strategic plan. The plan aims to strengthen UWF's culture of inclusion and civility, and advance its commitment to research and community engagement while positioning the University as a catalyst for economic growth.

Dr. Saunders has remained steadfast in her commitment to providing an education that is student-centered and focused. The University continues to lead the state in percentage of bachelor's graduates employed, recognized in this year's Florida Board of Governors performance metrics. More than 72% of UWF bachelor's graduates are employed or furthering their education one year after graduation. This is the third consecutive year UWF leads the Florida State University System in this metric. UWF also excelled in Metric 4, which measures the graduation rates of first-time-in-college, four-year students. UWF improved by 11 percentage points from last year. This was the result of a focus placed on developing long-term strategies to ensure students' success every step of the way in their academic journey and after they graduate.

This past year, the University had record enrollment and recognition through rankings, grants and awards. The University has received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from INSIGHT into Diversity magazine five times under Dr. Saunders' leadership and was named a "Great College to Work For" in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. The University was also recognized with a 2022-2023 Top Ten Military Friendly® School designation in the large public category, ranking No. 4, the highest spot on the list in UWF's history.

UWF's campus master plan, approved by the Board of Trustees, will allow the University campus infrastructure to grow along with enrollment over the next ten years. For the first time in school history, UWF Football is playing its entire home schedule at Pen Air Field on the UWF Pensacola campus, enhancing student life and providing a traditional collegiate experience for students, alumni, faculty, staff, donors, fans and the community.

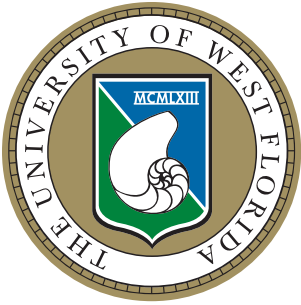
The following 2022 University highlights are the results of Dr. Saunders' vision in action.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- The College of Education and Professional Studies launched the newly formed School of Education over the summer. The school was developed to concert and optimize the variety of learning opportunities and career pathways available to students.
- UWF began offering a new Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree in Human Resources Management in Fall 2022.
- Enhanced partnership with Pensacola State College to guarantee admission to UWF from PSC through degree program maps.

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### SCHOLARSHIP, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

- Dr. James Arruda, professor in the UWF Department of Psychology, signed a consulting and licensing agreement with California-based company, BIOPAC Systems Inc., to collaborate on the development of a device that could be instrumental in the early detection of Alzheimer's.
- UWF was named among 84 institutions across the country selected to join U.S. Cyber Command's new Academic Engagement Network, known as CYBERCOM, to support efforts in areas such as future workforce, applied cyber research, applied analytics and other strategic issues.
- UWF was re-designated as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity (NCAE-C) by the National Security Agency and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

### COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

- The UWF College of Business hired retired U.S. Navy Capt. Tim Kinsella, former commander for Naval Air Station Pensacola, to create and direct its newly formed Center for Leadership. Kinsella is charged with building University-industry linkages for the Center as well as creating leadership development programs for the University and community.
- The Pensacola Museum of Art has again achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, the highest national recognition afforded to the nation's museums.
- UWF hosted the Women in Leadership Conference 2022. More than 30 women speakers from across the state shared their expertise to 430 in-person attendees and more than 300 tuning in virtually.

Additionally, Dr. Saunders was the recipient of multiple honors, including being named one of Florida's 500 Most Influential Leaders by Florida Trend in 2020, 2021 and 2022. She continues to be an active member of the Northwest Florida community, serving on various community boards and organizations, including hosting the 2022 Northwest Florida Heart Challenge in support of the American Heart Association. She is sought out for interviews and presentations as a thought leader in higher education. Dr. Saunders is active on social media, providing frequent updates to her followers, as well as publishing viewpoints in local media on a variety of topics that impact the community.

Under Dr. Saunders' leadership, UWF has become much more than an institution of higher education. It is a central hub for the Northwest Florida region, with the resources, expertise and initiative needed to drive educational, cultural and economic partnerships that make an impact far beyond our campuses. Dr. Saunders is a visionary for the future of UWF. She has wisdom and experience that drives her vision of what the University can be. She has the ability to put strategies in motion for desired outcomes and measurable results.

Florida law, namely Section 1001.706(6)(a), Florida Statutes, entrusts to the Board of Governors confirmation of the reappointment of a university president by the university's board of trustees. Accordingly, on behalf of the UWF Board of Trustees, I respectfully request that the Board of Governors confirm Dr. Saunders' reappointment for a one-year period commencing January 1, 2023, through and including December 31, 2023, on the terms and conditions described in the approved employment agreement.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Lewis  
Chair  
University of West Florida Board of Trustees

Cc: Dr. Martha D. Saunders