UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA Summary of the Presidential Search Process

CONDUCTED FOR THE FLORIDA BOARD OF GOVERNORS

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

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SECTION 1 Letter from UF Board of Trustees to BOG Chair



LETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Honorable Brian Lamb, Chair Florida Board of Governors 325 W. Gaines Street, Suite 1614 Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: Confirmation of University of Florida President-Elect, Dr. Santa J. Ono

Dear Chair Lamb,

On behalf of the University of Florida ("UF") Board of Trustees, it is my pleasure to present Dr. Santa J. Ono to the Board of Governors for confirmation as the University of Florida's 14th President. This request is made following the UF Board of Trustees' unanimous selection of Dr. Ono as President-elect at its May 27, 2025 meeting, and pursuant to Board of Governors Regulation 1.001(5)(d) and in accordance with the requirements set forth in Board of Governors Regulation 1.002.

Dr. Ono is the sole finalist selected unanimously by the 15-member Presidential Search Committee for recommendation to the UF Board of Trustees. The Search Committee outlined their reasons for recommending Dr. Ono as the sole finalist in the Op-Ed that is included in this packet. We appreciate the hard work and dedication of the Search Committee, including that of Governor Charlie Lydecker who represented the Board of Governors on the Committee. In addition to serving as a Search Committee member, Governor Lydecker served on the Committee's working group on compensation and provided tremendous value and insight throughout the search process.

When we began our search for the next UF President, I charged the Search Committee with finding a leader who can take what UF has done over the last ten years and bring it to the next level. I recognize that was not an easy task based on what UF has already achieved. We have one of the most comprehensive academic health programs in the country and one of the top academic health care systems and hospitals in the southeast. We also have one of the nation's most comprehensive agriculture and natural resources programs with a presence in each of Florida's 67 counties. Our partnership with Nvidia and UF's artificial intelligence initiative represents a signature moment in UF's history, uniquely positioning UF to become the higher education leader in artificial intelligence. UF Scripps remains one of the world's premier biomedical research enterprises and is regarded as one of the most influential institutions in the world.

When you combine these and other accomplishments with establishing a new campus in downtown Jacksonville, a world class athletics program, a top fundraising program, one of the highest alumni participation rates in the country, and unwavering support from the State of Florida, finding someone who can take UF to even greater heights was admittedly a challenge. However, I am absolutely certain

that, in Dr. Ono, we have found someone who is more than capable of doing just that.

As demonstrated by his Biography and CV, both of which are included in this packet, Dr. Ono has a highly distinguished academic career, including positions as:

- President of the University of Michigan (Overall UM budget of \$14.9 billion, compared to overall UF budget of \$10.4 billion);
- Chair of the University of Michigan Health Board (UM Health budget of \$8.4 billion, compared to UF Health budget of \$6 billion);
- Chair of the Council of Presidents of the Association of Public & Land Grant Universities;
- Member of the Board of the American Council on Education; and
- Chair of Fulbright Canada.

Just some of his accomplishments prior to the University of Michigan include:

- Earning degrees from the University of Chicago and McGill University;
- Serving as President and Vice Chancellor of the University of British Columbia;
- Serving as President of the University of Cincinnati; and
- Serving as Senior Vice Provost at Emory University.

In addition to a brilliant career in higher education administration, Dr. Ono taught at Johns Hopkins, Harvard and University College London where he was and continues to be a world-renowned vision researcher recognized for pioneering work on the immune system and eye disease. He is also an elected member of the following prestigious academies and associations:

- The National Academy of Medicine
- The American Academy of Arts & Sciences
- The American Association for the Advancement of Science
- The National Academy of Inventors
- The Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, and
- The Royal Society of Chemistry

In addition to all of these achievements, everywhere Dr. Ono has been he has demonstrated a remarkable ability to connect with students, faculty, administrators, staff and other stakeholders. He excels at consensus building and effortlessly inspiring and energizing everyone with whom he comes into contact. He is also widely recognized for his ability to cultivate philanthropic partnerships and lead ambitious fundraising efforts. At the same time, he has also demonstrated the courage to take steps necessary to protect speech, campus operations and safety from those who do not share his free expression and civil discourse values.

In Dr. Ono's May 8, 2025 Op-Ed, which we have included in this packet, Dr. Ono has very clearly explained his position on Florida's higher education reforms and actions, including those related to DEI and antisemitism. In the Op-Ed, Dr. Ono affirms that:

I believe in Florida's vision for higher education. I understand its priorities, and I support them. I will execute this vision with clarity, consistency and integrity. I put my name forward

for this position because I agree with the state leadership's vision and values for public higher education. My alignment is rooted in principles—like the renewed emphasis on merit, the strengthening of civics and foundational learning, and the belief that our universities should prepare students not just for careers, but for informed citizenship in a free society.

Dr. Ono reiterated and further explained his position in his opening comments to the Board of Trustees, included in the addendum of this packet, and in response to direct and thorough questioning by the Trustees. Video of his interview can be found <u>here.</u>

He will not bring DEI to UF, he will ensure UF is a safe place for all students, including Jewish students, he will not engage in or allow others to expend public or private funds on DEI or political or social activism, he will comply with and enforce the law of this state, including its education reform laws, he will carry on UF's practice of rigorous post-tenure review, rewarding high performing faculty and removing unsatisfactory faculty and he will do all of this while bringing the undeniable experience and knowledge gained from serving as president of the University of Michigan – a preeminent, R1 flagship university that is a member of the American Association of Universities and has a nearly \$15 billion enterprise-wide budget.

In Dr. Ono, we have found someone whose record overwhelmingly meets and exceeds UF's demanding qualifications for president. Therefore, I ask the Board of Governors, at its June 3, 2025 meeting, to consider and confirm the appointment of Dr. Santa J. Ono as the 14th President of the University of Florida. In compliance with the requirements of the Board of Governors Regulations 1.001 and 1.002, I have enclosed additional information for your reference and review.

Sincerely,

In Kalya

Morteza "Mori" Hosseini Chairman of the Board of Trustees University of Florida



TAMPA BAY TIMES

Why I think confidentiality helped UF secure a top president

By UF Presidential Search Committee May 6, 2025

The University of Florida has never been stronger — and our commitment to becoming the nation's top public university has never been clearer. As we enter our next chapter, bold leadership is essential to sustaining the extraordinary momentum that defines Gator Nation. That's why the University of Florida Presidential Search Committee has unanimously recommended Dr. Santa J. Ono as UF's sole public finalist to become our 14th president.

This transition comes at a time of rapid transformation in higher education. From artificial intelligence to increasing competition for talent to the evolving role of public institutions, leading a top university today requires vision, courage, and the ability to bring people together around a shared purpose.

At the outset of this search process, we understood the importance of listening. We began by holding 10 listening sessions — with students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, administration, and members of the Gainesville community — to hear firsthand what qualities the UF community wanted in its next leader. These conversations shaped our priorities and decision-making.

Our 15-member Presidential Search Committee — each of whom has signed onto this op-ed — reflects the breadth and depth of the UF community. The committee includes 10 alumni, seven major donors, four respected faculty leaders and a student leader. It also comprises leaders from across Florida and the country in fields such as public service, agriculture, healthcare, law, insurance, transportation, real estate, and land development. This wide range of perspectives informed every step of the process and reflects the statewide and national impact of the University of Florida.

Our committee worked diligently for nearly five months — conducting a comprehensive and thoughtful process. While thorough, the search was also efficient and focused, driven by the urgency of continuing UF's remarkable trajectory without delay. Throughout, we remained guided by the feedback we received from the university community.

One of the most consequential decisions we faced was how to design the search process itself. The regulations of the University System of the State of Florida typically require presidential search committees to recommend two or more finalists, and for many universities across the state, that model makes sense. But the regulations also allow flexibility in cases of exceptional circumstances where selecting multiple finalists is infeasible — and this was one of those cases.

This search attracted a broad and impressive pool of candidates from across the landscape of higher education — including, notably, multiple sitting presidents of major research universities. That alone is a powerful reflection of UF's rising national stature and the appeal of this opportunity. But every one of those sitting presidents made it clear: they would only participate if the process guaranteed confidentiality and their name would not be released publicly unless they were the sole finalist.

This isn't just reasonable — it's standard practice at top research universities. Sitting presidents face significant consequences at their current institutions if they are publicly identified as unsuccessful candidates in another search. That risk understandably deters many of the most experienced and qualified leaders from entering open, multi-finalist processes.

By contrast, leaders serving as provosts or deans — while also highly qualified — are typically viewed as pursuing a natural next step in their careers, and their candidacies are often publicly supported by their home institutions. That distinction is why many leading universities structure their searches accordingly.

The facts bear this out. Over the past three years, 32 presidential searches have been conducted by member institutions of the Association of American Universities (AAU) — widely considered the most prestigious organization of leading research institutions in North America, of which UF is a member. Thirty of those 32 searches resulted in a sole public finalist or an internal appointment. Of the two that named more than one public finalist, only one included a sitting president — and that individual was not from a major research university.

Among 32 recent searches conducted by non-AAU research universities, 20 also resulted in a sole public finalist. Of the 12 that named multiple finalists, only three included a sitting president from a major research university — and none included more than one sitting president from a major research university.

In total, across 64 searches by major research universities over the last three years, not one has publicly named more than one sitting president of a major research university as a finalist.

This context informed our decision. It became clear during our process that the most competitive candidates — including multiple sitting presidents — would not continue if the University of Florida were to name more than one finalist publicly.

Confidentiality enabled us to engage that top-tier field. And it brought us Dr. Ono — the sitting president of the University of Michigan, one of the most respected public universities in the world. He is not only an accomplished scholar and administrator — he is the kind of visionary leader the University of Florida needs at this moment in its history.

We believe Florida's law rightly allows for discretion in exceptional cases. This was one of those moments. The University of Florida is in a position unlike any other in the country — a top public university with extraordinary momentum, located in one of the most dynamic and influential states in America, and with unmatched support from our state government. We needed to match that stature with a search process capable of attracting a leader of Dr. Ono's caliber.

We are proud of the outcome. And we are confident that, with Dr. Ono, the University of Florida is poised to reach even greater heights in teaching, research, and service to our state, our nation, and the world.

Rahul Patel is the chair of the UF Presidential Search Committee, the vice chair of the UF Board of Trustees, and a partner in the law firm of King & Spalding. Members of the UF Presidential Search Committee include Charles Allison, Douglas Band, John Brinkman, Timothy Cerio, Shakira Henderson, Charles Lydecker, Sarah Lynne, Duane Mitchell, Michael Okun, Marsha Powers, Jon Pritchett, Robert Stilley, Karen Unger and Patrick Zalupski.

This op-ed was originally posted by the Tampa Bay Times.

INSIDE HIGHER ED

Why I Chose the University of Florida Santa J. Ono explains why he's pursuing the University of Florida presidency.

By Santa J. Ono May 8, 2025

The University of Florida is already one of the nation's premier public universities. But it has the potential to be the very best. That belief—in UF's momentum, its mission and its future—is what led me to pursue the extraordinary opportunity of the UF presidency.

Over the past several weeks, I've had the chance to spend meaningful time with the university's leadership. I believe deeply in their vision: ambitious, anchored in a culture of excellence and laser focused on student success. The passion I've seen for this institution—including during my visit to campus earlier this week to meet its students, faculty and administrators—is infectious, and the alignment between the Board of Trustees, the Board of Governors, the governor and the Legislature is rare in higher education. This alignment signals seriousness of purpose, and it tells me that Florida is building something truly exceptional. I'm excited to be part of that.

I believe in Florida's vision for higher education. I understand its priorities, and I support them. I will execute this vision with clarity, consistency and integrity. I put my name forward for this position because I agree with the state leadership's vision and values for public higher education. My alignment is rooted in principles—like the renewed emphasis on merit, the strengthening of civics and foundational learning, and the belief that our universities should prepare students not just for careers, but for informed citizenship in a free society.

Public universities have a responsibility to remain grounded in academic excellence, intellectual diversity and student achievement. That means rejecting ideological capture, upholding the rule of law and creating a culture where rigorous thinking and open dialogue flourish. I share that commitment.

Like many, I supported what I believed to be the original intent of DEI — ensuring equal opportunity and fairness for every student. That's something on which most everyone agrees. But over time, I saw how DEI became something else—more about ideology, division and bureaucracy, not student success. That's why, as president of the University of Michigan, I made the decision to eliminate centralized DEI offices and redirect resources toward academic support and merit-based achievement. It wasn't universally popular, but it was necessary. I stood by it—and I'll bring that same clarity of purpose to UF.

The future of higher education depends on a clear mission, a culture of merit and accountability, and a deep commitment to preparing students to thrive in the real world. That means strengthening partnerships with businesses, supporting agriculture and innovation, and ensuring each student—regardless of background—has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

I also understand the challenges of leadership in today's academic environment. During my tenure leading other public universities, I declined to politicize the institutions or publicly oppose national political figures. I did this because I believe universities must serve as platforms for learning, not partisanship or ideological activism.

Combating antisemitism has been a priority throughout my career. I've worked closely with Jewish students, faculty and community leaders to ensure that campuses are places of respect, safety and inclusion for all. I know that the University of Florida has been a national leader in this regard —setting a gold standard in standing firmly against antisemitism and hate. That standard will not change under my leadership. I will continue to ensure that UF is a place where Jewish students feel fully supported, and where all forms of hatred and discrimination are confronted clearly and without hesitation.

Finally, peaceful protest has a place in campus life. But the University of Florida is not a place for disruption, intimidation or lawlessness. If I am approved, UF will remain a campus where all students are safe, where differing views can be heard and where the rule of law is respected.

This is an exciting moment for Florida and for the University of Florida. I'm honored to be a part of it. And I'm ready to get to work.

Santa J. Ono has been recommended as the sole finalist to be the 14th president of the University of Florida. He formerly served as the president of the University of Michigan.

This op-ed was originally posted by Inside Higher Ed.



Search Committee Profiles





MR. RAHUL PATEL Search Committee Chair, UF Trustee

Rahul Patel was born in London, England and lived there for 13 years before immigrating to the United States with his family. Mr. Patel and his wife Swati, a University of Florida alumna, live in Atlanta, Georgia and have two daughters.

Mr. Patel is a partner in the law firm of King & Spalding where he has been a mergers & acquisitions lawyer for over

25 years. King & Spalding is an international law firm with over 1400 lawyers in 25 offices around the world. Mr. Patel is co-head of the firm's Private Equity / M&A Group and was elected by the firm's partnership to serve a second term on its Policy Committee, which serves as the firm's world-wide governing and management committee. Mr. Patel is ranked by Chambers Global, Chambers U.S.A., and Chambers Asia-Pacific as a leading M&A lawyer.

Mr. Patel received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1994 and law degree in 1997 both from the University of Florida where he was inducted into the university's Hall of Fame upon graduation. He has served on the UF Board of Trustees since 2015 and currently serves as the Board's Vice Chair. He is the past President of the University of Florida National Alumni Association, the past President of the University of Florida College of Law Alumni Council and is a member of the Executive Board of the University of Florida Foundation. Mr. Patel was one of three University of Florida Law School alumni given the inaugural Outstanding Young Alumnus Award. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of Crawford & Company (NYSE) and a member of the Board of Trustees of The Westminster Schools



MR. CHARLES ALLISON UF Alumnus and IFAS Representative

Mr. Allison is the owner and manager of Wild Goose Farms. Wild Goose Farms is a 1st generation farming company that was established growing citrus in Central Florida in the late 1990's. The company diversified into cattle, hay, blueberries and seedless tangerines starting in 2005 and avocados in California in 2006. Diversification into pistachios and citrus

in California occurred in 2018 and Deep Roots, a containerized tree nursery, was started in 2020. Today, their farms total over 1,300 acres and employ 20 full time workers and 160 seasonal workers.

Prior to farming full time, Mr. Allison was employed by Prudential Financial as Managing Director for their Agricultural Investments division. Prior to joining Prudential, he was an Economist and Manager of Business Analysis for A. Duda and Sons, and a Research Assistant with the University of Florida.

A graduate of the University of Florida, Mr. Allison holds both Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees in Food and Resource Economics. Mr. Allison was awarded the 2011 "College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Alumni and Friends Award of Distinction" for his service to the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. He is a graduate of the IFAS Wedgworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources and has also been a member of the Food and Resource Economics Advisory Board.

Mr. Allison currently serves as a Board Member for A. Duda & Sons, Inc. and IMG Enterprises. He also serves on the Board of the Florida Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association and UF's Florida Foundation Seed Producers, Inc. He is active with various philanthropic endeavors through the Allison Family Fund, a Foundation he and his wife Vesna founded in 2008. Chuck and his wife have three children.



MR. DOUGLAS "DOUG" BAND UF Foundation National Board Member

Douglas Band began his tenure in the White House as an intern during the Clinton presidency. He was later appointed by former President Bill Clinton as a special assistant to the president, making him one of the youngest deputy assistants ever to serve in that capacity.

Band went on to become Clinton's chief advisor from 2002

until 2012 and was the key architect of Clinton's post-presidency. He created and built the Clinton Global Initiative, which develops and implements solutions to pressing challenges around the world such as improving health systems and investing in clean energy or water. To date, CGI has raised \$69 billion for 2,100 philanthropic initiatives around the world and impacted over 435 million people in 180 countries.

Throughout his career, Band has been involved in various negotiations to free Americans held around the world and has advised several heads of state, governors and mayors with transitioning out of public life. He is now advising companies on a larger scale in New York as the co-founder and president of the global advisory firm Teneo Holdings.

Band has served on the University of Florida Foundation's national board, nominating committee, board of directors and the student affairs development advisory board.

A native of Sarasota, Florida, Band earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida. He earned a master's degree from Georgetown University's graduate school and a Juris Doctor degree from Georgetown University Law Center.



MR. JOHN BRINKMAN UF Student Representative, UF Student Body President

John Brinkman is a graduate student currently pursuing a Master of Science in Management, and he completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Florida, triple majoring in Economics, Political Science, and Philosophy. He grew up in Jacksonville, Florida.

Before being elected Student Body President, he held many roles in Student Government, such as Senate President, Judiciary Chairman, Budget & Appropriations Vice-Chairman, and Junior Class President. Besides his roles in Student Government, he also served as Vice President of External Affairs for Florida Blue Key and has held many roles working directly with university faculty and staff.

John has long been a longtime advocate for the student body and is honored to represent over 60,000 Gators. He is currently serving as the Student Body President for the 2024-2025 term.



MR. TIMOTHY CERIO UF Alumnus

Timothy M. Cerio is the President/CEO and Executive Director of Citizens Property Insurance Corporation. Tim is responsible for overseeing all operations of the company and serves as liaison to the Citizens Board of Governors. With more than 28 years of experience in the public and private sectors, Tim brings a wealth of expertise to Citizens. Appointed in June 2021 as General Counsel and Chief

Legal Officer, Tim provided critical leadership as Citizens responded to new legislative requirements to stabilize the Florida property insurance market and return Citizens to its role as Florida's insurer of last resort.

Prior to joining Citizens, Tim practiced with the GrayRobinson law firm, focusing on government investigations, regulatory and health care law, and administrative law. He previously served as General Counsel to Florida Governor Rick Scott. As General Counsel, Tim was the chief legal advisor to the Governor and legal liaison for the Executive Office of the Governor to all state and local agencies.

Tim currently serves on the Board of Governors of the State University System of Florida. In June 2021, Governor Ron DeSantis appointed him to the Florida Supreme Court Judicial Nominating Commission. Additionally, Tim was a member of the 2017-2018 Florida Constitution Revision Commission, which convenes every 20 years to review Florida's constitution and propose amendments for voter consideration. Tim is also a member of the Board of Directors of the James Madison Institute, Florida's premiere think tank dedicated to promoting economic opportunity for all Floridians.

Tim earned his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Florida (UF) in 1990. He graduated from the UF College of Law with honors in 1995 and was a member of the Florida Law Review. Tim has served as president of both the University of Florida Alumni Association and the UF College of Law Alumni Council, and he currently serves as Chairman of the Florida Blue Key Alumni Advisory Board.



DR. SHAKIRA HENDERSON Dean, College of Nursing

Dr. Shakira L. I. Henderson is a distinguished healthcare executive, nurse scientist, and academic leader with over 20 years of experience shaping the future of nursing education, practice, research, healthcare operations, and health policy. She serves as the Dean of the College of Nursing at the University of Florida (UF) and the System Chief Nurse Executive for UF Health, making her the inaugural leader

to hold both roles simultaneously. Before joining UF, Dr. Henderson held a tripartite role as Assistant Vice-Chancellor at the University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), Clinical Research Integration Officer for UNC-CH School of Medicine, and System VP Research Operations for UNC Health.

Born and raised on a small Caribbean Island, Dr. Henderson developed a deep appreciation for academics and lifelong learning. This drive led her to pursue a diverse educational background, including dual doctoral degree -PhD in Nursing, Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP), Master of Science in Neonatal Nurse Practitioner with a sub-specialization in nursing education, Master of Public Health (MPH), Master of Science in Anatomy, and a Global Executive MBA from Brown University & IE Business School. She is also a certified neonatal nurse (RNC-NIC) and an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC). She also holds undergraduate degrees in nursing, biological sciences and chemistry with a minor in microbiology. A respected educator, Dr. Henderson has served as faculty for multiple nursing, business, healthcare administration, and clinical research graduate programs across the United States and internationally.

She has held numerous leadership positions, including President of the National Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses, and serves on various state, national, and federal boards. Dr. Henderson is a sought-after speaker at various conferences, events, and podcasts on nursing, healthcare, and leadership innovation. She has also received over 50 awards across local, regional, national, and international levels in areas such as nursing excellence, clinical research innovation, maternal-child health advocacy, and healthcare leadership.



MR. CHARLES "CHARLIE" LYDECKER Florida Board of Governors

Mr. Charles H. Lydecker is chairperson and CEO of Foundation Risk Partners (FRP), a company he co-founded in 2017. Ranked as one of the top 20 largest commercial insurance operations in the United States, FRP has more than 120 locations across the country and is headquartered in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Mr. Lydecker is a 1985 graduate of American University with

degrees in political science and business administration. He attended college on a full athletic scholarship as a member of the swim team. Professionally, Mr. Lydecker also earned the Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter, Certified Insurance Counselor and Associates in Management designations.

Charlie is a member of the board of trustees of American University in Washington, D.C. He is on the board of the NASCAR Foundation, Halifax Hospital Foundation, The Florida Chamber of Commerce and chairperson of the Volusia/Flagler YMCA. Charlie served two terms as vice chairperson of the Florida Ethics Commission, is a past chairperson of the Florida Housing Finance Corporation, past chairperson of the Florida Birth Related Neurological Injury Compensation Association, past vice chairperson of the Florida Self-Insurers Guarantee Association and an executive board member of the Florida State Fair Authority. He is fundraising chairperson for the YMCA of Volusia/Flagler Counties, past chairperson of Futures Public Education Foundation, the United Way of Volusia/Flagler counties, and the Boy Scouts of America in Daytona Beach. He twice served as chairperson of the Daytona Beach/Halifax Area Chamber of Commerce and is an alumnus of Leadership Florida and Leadership Daytona Beach.

He has been recognized with numerous awards for his years of community and public service. Mr. Lydecker was recognized in 1995 by Florida Trend magazine as one of Florida's Emerging Top 20 State Leaders, and Mr. Lydecker was presented the key to the City of Daytona Beach by the mayor and honored by the dedication in his name of Charleston Place Apartments in the City of Holly Hill for his leadership in creating affordable housing for local residents. Additionally, Mr. Lydecker received the Ryan Lochte Service above Self Award; and the Ormond Beach City Commission and the Volusia County Council honored Mr. Lydecker with a proclamation naming a day in his honor for years of achievement and community service. He received the Heroism Award from the Boy Scouts of America and he's been inducted into New York's Smith Point National Lifeguard Champions Hall of Fame and has three U.S. Masters Swimming World records.



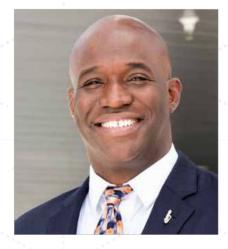
DR. SARAH LYNNE

UF Faculty Representative, Faculty Senate Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences

Sarah D. Lynne is an Associate Professor in the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences (FYCS), College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS), Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), at the University of Florida (UF).

She is a Double Gator, having earned both her Master's and Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Florida. During her postdoctoral fellowship at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, she gained expertise in evidence-based strategies to promote well-being and prevent risky behavior among young people. She also worked as a Society for Research in Child Development Policy Fellow providing her with a unique perspective on science policy communication and partnerships. A primary goal of her research, teaching, outreach, and leadership is to promote health and well-being and reduce risk of negative outcomes. She does this by understanding how the context in which we are born, grow, learn, work, and live impacts people, relationships, families, and communities.

Dr. Lynne is the Chair of the University of Florida Faculty Senate, having served as a UF Faculty Senator and Chair of the Welfare Council of the UF Faculty Senate. She served as chair or member of five University-wide committees focused on issues related to academic freedom, faculty excellence, and the educational mission of the university. She has demonstrated a clear commitment to leadership activities aimed at enhancing her department, the college, the university, and her professional societies which was recognized by her award of a fellowship in the SEC Academic Leadership Development Program. She has led the development of graduate education programs and served as interim graduate coordinator in her department. She led initiatives in her college aimed at increasing the capacity and engagement of faculty in artificial intelligence and human sciences. She served as chair or member of committees across three international professional societies related to science policy and ethics and is a member of the Board of Directors for the Society for Prevention Research. Dr. Lynne is honored to have the opportunity to serve as a member of the University of Florida Presidential Search Committee.



DR. DUANE MITCHELL

UF Faculty Representative, Phyllis Kottler Friedman Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery and Director of the UF Clinical Translational Science Institute

Duane A. Mitchell, M.D., Ph.D. is the Phyllis Kottler Friedman Professor in the Department of Neurosurgery. He serves as UF Assistant Vice President for Research, Associate Dean for

Clinical and Translational Sciences at the UF College of Medicine, and Director of the UF Clinical Translational Science Institute (CTSI). Dr. Mitchell also serves as the Co-Director of the Preston A. Wells, Jr. Center for Brain Tumor Therapy at UF Health. He graduated from the Medical Scientist Training Program (MD/PhD) at Duke University Medical Center and completed post-graduate training in pathology and neuro-oncology research prior to joining the faculty at Duke in 2005 as an Assistant Professor. During his tenure at Duke, Dr. Mitchell served as the Director of Preclinical Research at the Preston Robert Tisch Brain Tumor Center and as the Associate Director of the Duke Brain Tumor Immunotherapy Program. In 2013, Dr. Mitchell was recruited to the University of Florida and leads a comprehensive neuro-oncology program focused on translational brain tumor research within the Preston A. Wells, Jr. Center for Brain Tumor Therapy.

In collaboration with the center's founder and Co-Director, Dr. William A. Friedman, the Wells Brain Tumor Center has grown to one of the largest brain tumor centers in the United States, with over 100 full-time employees dedicated to brain tumor research and clinical care and drawing patients from over 45 states and internationally for novel brain tumor treatments. Dr. Mitchell is a leading expert in the development of innovative immunotherapy treatments for adults and children with malignant brain tumors. He has pioneered many novel brain tumor immunotherapies that have been translated into first-in-human clinical trials and multi-center phase 2 studies.

Dr. Mitchell has received numerous awards and recognition for his work, including a 2016 Top 10 Clinical Research Achievement Award from the Clinical Research Forum in Washington, D.C., induction into the American Society for Clinical Investigation in 2019, and induction into the Academy of Science, Engineering, and Mathematics of Florida in 2020. Dr. Mitchell has received over \$40 million in research awards as principal investigator and has been continuously funded by the NIH for his cancer research since 2009. His research has been supported by the NIH, Department of Defense, and numerous private foundations, and he is inventor on over 25 patents for novel cancer therapeutics.



DR. MICHAEL OKUN

UF Faculty Representative, Professor, Department of Neurology and Director, Norman Fixel Institute for Neurological Disease

Michael S. Okun obtained his M.D. co-founded the movement disorders program at the University of Florida in 2002. He is the former Chair of Neurology and currently one of only 5 faculty to ever hold the rank and honor of Distinguished Professor at

the College of Medicine. He is the Executive Director and co-founder of the Norman Fixel Institute for Neurological Diseases at the University of Florida Health. Dr. Okun has served as the National Medical Director and most recently as the Medical Advisor for the Parkinson's Foundation since 2006 as well as Medical Advisor to Tyler's Hope for a Dystonia Cure. He has been supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health, the Smallwood Foundation, the Tourette Association of America, the Parkinson Alliance, the Bachmann-Strauss Foundation, the Parkinson's Foundation, and the Michael J. Fox Foundation.

Dr. Okun has an active research career and has been an integral part of some of the pioneering studies exploring the cognitive, behavioral, and mood effects of DBS and brain stimulation, and since 2005 his laboratory has been working to uncover the electrical brain signals associated with human tic. He has partnered with Drs Ayse Gunduz and Kelly Foote to develop first generation closed loop adaptive deep brain stimulation approaches for many disorders. He and his group have contributed data to support the FDA approval of several device related approaches now used to treat human disease. Dr. Okun holds the Adelaide Lackner Professorship in Neurology and has published over 500 peer reviewed articles.

He is a poet (Lessons From the Bedside, 1995) and his book, Parkinson's Treatment: 10 Secrets to a Happier Life was translated into over 20 languages. His most recent co-authored books include Ending Parkinson's Disease: A Prescription for Action, and Living with Parkinson's Disease. Dr. Okun was recognized in a 2015 White House ceremony by the Obama administration as a Champion of Change for Parkinson's Disease.



MS. MARSHA POWERS UF Trustee

Marsha D. Powers recently retired from Tenet Healthcare Corporation where she served as the company's Chief Strategy Officer. She previously served as the CEO of Tenet's Eastern Division, Coastal Region. She was responsible for directing the strategy and operations for 17 acute care hospitals, 5 freestanding emergency rooms, 7 mental health

facilities, 2 Level 1 Trauma Centers, 7 rehab centers, 10 outpatient surgery centers and 25 outpatient centers in South Florida, Massachusetts and South Carolina.

A veteran health care executive, Powers has over four decades of experience, including operational responsibility for large and diverse hospital networks.

Prior to joining Tenet, Powers served as a division president of Triad Hospitals, Inc., where she oversaw the operations of 11 hospitals, two ambulatory surgery centers and a physician management organization in Mississippi, New Mexico, Nevada, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia. She also helped develop two new hospitals and three replacement hospitals and completed four major hospital expansions.

Before working at Triad, Powers served as President of Quorum Health Service's Southeast Region. Her responsibilities included overseeing eight hospitals and three physician practice groups.

Powers holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Sweet Briar College in Virginia, and a master's degree in business administration, specializing in health and hospital administration, from the University of Florida. She is a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives and previously served on the board of governors of the Federation of American Hospitals where she received the "Corris Boyd Leadership Award" for her "outstanding leadership, knowledge, experience, energy, wisdom and integrity instrumental in promoting awareness, changing behaviors and empowering others." In 2018, Powers was named by Becker's Hospital Review as one of "100 Great Leaders in Healthcare" and in 2019 as one of the "Women Leaders of Hospitals and Health Systems to Know".



MR. JON PRITCHETT Chair, UF Foundation Executive Board

Jon W. Pritchett is the President, CEO, and Founder of Nextran Truck Centers, one of the most respected heavyduty truck dealership organizations in the United States. Founded in 1993, Nextran has grown under Jon's leadership to a network of 31 full-service dealerships strategically located along major highways across the U.S. Nextran

specializes in the sales and service of premium medium and heavy-duty truck brands, including Mack Trucks, Volvo Trucks, and Isuzu Trucks. The company is also recognized as the world's top-selling Mack Truck dealer and has received the prestigious Mack Trucks North American Dealer of the Year award in 1999, 2002, 2015, 2019, and 2023.

Jon also serves as the President of Pritchett Trucking, a regional truckload carrier based in Lake Butler, Florida. With a fleet of over 300 power units operating throughout the southeastern United States, Pritchett Trucking is known for its strong commitment to safety and efficiency.

Beyond his leadership roles in the trucking industry, Jon is an active contributor to various professional and civic organizations. He serves on the University of Florida Foundation's Executive Board, where he has held multiple leadership roles, and is currently serving as Chairman. He is a member of the Gator Boosters Board of Directors and served as its President from 2018 to 2019. Jon also serves on the Mack Trucks National Distribution Council and represents Mack Trucks on the American Truck Dealers Association Board. His past leadership roles include Chairman of the Florida Trucking Association and director positions with CNB National Bank and The South Financial Group.

In 2018, Jon and his wife, Kelly, launched a philanthropic initiative within Nextran with a mission of improving the wellness of children and families. Through corporate giving and matching programs, Nextran partners with inspiring organizations to make a meaningful impact in the local communities where Nextran employees live and work. The family's philanthropic focus extends to healthcare and education. Jon and Kelly reside in Gainesville, Florida, where they have raised their two daughters, Alexandra and Christina. Together, they are deeply committed to giving back to their community and championing initiatives that create lasting change.



MR. ROBERT "BOB" STILLEY UF Alumnus

Robert "Bob" Stilley has served as President and Chief Executive Officer of HeartCare Imaging, Inc. since its inception in 1998 bringing over thirty years of experience in the Diagnostic Imaging and Cardiology Industries to HCI.

Through his leadership, HCI has become a leader in providing diagnostic imaging and consulting services to

many of the Nation's leading universities, physician providers, and rural hospitals. HCI has been awarded 'Best Places to Work in Healthcare' by Modern Healthcare from 2017 - 2024. HCI ranked #5 in the Modern Healthcare 2024 ranking of 'Best Places to Work in Healthcare'.

In prior tenure, Bob was an original partner in Summit World Trade. Mr. Stilley was with Summit from 1986 to 1998 and was instrumental in Summit's successful joint ventures with Hitachi Medical Systems of Japan and SMV of Buc, France. These joint venture companies revolutionized the diagnostic imaging marketplace through the introduction of products like 'Open' MRI. His tenure at Summit included roles as Vice President and President of various Summit Companies.

Mr. Stilley is a member of the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology, the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Medicine and a founding member of the Society of Cardiovascular Computed Technology.

Mr. Stilley is the most recent Past-Chair and presently serves as the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees for Jupiter Medical Center and Jupiter Health in Jupiter, FL. Bob received the Trustee of the Year award in 2017 from the Florida Hospital Association for his outstanding Board work on behalf of Jupiter Medical Center. Mr. Stilley also serves on the University of Florida Health Corporation Board. Bob served on the Florida Atlantic University Board of Trustees from 2006 – 2021. During his tenure on the FAU Board, he served as Board Chair, Vice Chair, and Chair of various board committees. Bob was awarded the FAU Presidential Service Award and Talon Award in recognition of his contributions to FAU's success. Bob is a Lector and Eucharistic Minister at St. Jude Catholic Church in Tequesta, FL. He received his degree in Business Administration from the University of Florida.



MS. KAREN UNGER UF Alumnus

Karen Unger began her career in politics after her graduation from the University of Florida College of Liberal Arts and Sciences over three decades ago. Unger served as Director of Friends and Family for the 2016 Jeb Bush Presidential Campaign. Prior to that role, Unger served as Director of Voter Engagement for Governor Bush's Leadership Political

Action Committee, Right to Rise. She previously served as a Senior Advisor for Mayor Rudy Giuliani's Presidential Committee in 2008.

Unger served as Campaign Manager for Governor Bush's successful 2002 Re-election Campaign, making him the first Republican governor in Florida's history to be elected to a second term in office. Prior to the 2002 election cycle, Unger worked in Governor Bush's administration, serving as Director of Appointments, Director of External Affairs, and Deputy Chief of Staff.

Before moving to Tallahassee from South Florida, Unger was a Field Director for Bush's victorious 1998 gubernatorial campaign. She also served as Campaign Manager for U.S. Congressman E. Clay Shaw, Jr. Unger previously worked in Congressman Shaw's Federal District Office and was Finance Director in his 1994 campaign.

Unger serves as President-elect of Gator Boosters, Inc. and on the University of Florida Foundation Executive Board. She previously served as President of the University of Florida Alumni Association and as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Maclay School. Unger is a member of the Miami-Dade and Broward Board of the American Jewish Committee.

Unger and her husband, Jason, split time between Miami and Tallahassee. They have two children, Olivia and Griffin, who are current college students.



MR. PATRICK ZALUPSKI UF Trustee

Mr. Zalupski is the Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer of Dream Finders Homes and has served as Chairman of the Board of Directors since January 2021 upon completion of an IPO (Nasdaq: "DFH"). He has served as the CEO of the primary operating subsidiary, Dream Finders Homes LLC since forming the company in

December 2008, and as the Chief Executive Officer and a member of the board of managers of DFH LLC since its formation in 2014. He is responsible for our overall operations and management and is heavily involved in the origination, underwriting and structuring of all investment activities. Under Mr. Zalupski's leadership, DFH has grown from closing 27 homes in Jacksonville, Florida during its inaugural year in 2009 to establishing operations in markets across the state of Texas and the Southeast, Mid-Atlantic and Mountain Regions of the United States and closing over 15,300 homes since inception through the end of 2021.

Prior to founding DFH LLC, Mr. Zalupski was a Financial Auditor for FedEx Corporation's Internal Audit Department in Memphis, Tennessee and worked in the real estate sales and construction industry as Managing Partner of Bay Street Condominiums, LLC from 2006 to 2008.

He has served on the investment committee of DF Capital Management, LLC ("DF Capital"), an investment manager focused on investments in land banks and land development joint ventures to deliver finished lots to DFH and other homebuilders for the construction of new homes, since April 2018 and on the board of directors for DFH's mortgage banking joint venture, Jet Home Loans, LLC, since December 2017.



SECTION 3 Charge to the Presidential Search

Committee

UF



CHARGE TO THE PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE, BOARD CHAIR MORI HOSSEINI

The University of Florida Presidential Search Advisory Committee is appointed to serve in an advisory role to the University of Florida Board of Trustees, which shall select the 14th President of the University of Florida. Rahul Patel is serving as Chair of the Committee.

The President of the University of Florida is one of the most influential and impactful positions in all of public higher education and in the State of Florida. In 2021, for the first time, the University of Florida was ranked a Top 5 public university in the country by US News & World Report. The opportunity to serve as the next President of the University of Florida represents an opportunity to lead Florida's flagship university in its quest to be firmly and consistently recognized among the most prominent and influential public and private universities in the country. The next president will promote UF's core values and build upon the following qualities which distinguish UF among today's leading public research universities:

1. Florida is now the third most populous and one of the fastest growing states in the country. With new interest in its urban centers from corporate leaders across a wide range of industries, Florida is a national leader well positioned to enter a new era of influence.

2. UF has great momentum as a university. In 2017, pursuant to the US News & World Report, UF was the 14th ranked public university in the country. Today, UF is ranked 7th among the nation's top public research universities by U.S. News & World Report.

3. UF has one of the most comprehensive academic health programs in the country, which includes six academic health colleges. UF also has one of the top academic health care systems and hospitals in the southeast, consistently ranked among the top health systems in Florida.

4. In keeping with its land grant mission, UF has one of the nation's most comprehensive agriculture and natural resources programs with a presence in each of Florida's 67 counties. IFAS is a significant thought leader and driver of the Florida's \$130 billion agriculture community, which is one of the significant components of Florida's economy and a key component of the nation's food supply.

5. UF's partnership with NVIDIA, one of the leading computing and artificial intelligence companies in the world, and UF's Artificial Intelligence initiative represents a signature moment in UF's history, uniquely positioning UF to become the higher education leader in Artificial Intelligence facilitating interdisciplinary collaboration among, for example, faculty within the adjacent colleges of journalism, engineering and medicine.



6. UF acquired Scripps Florida, one of the world's premier biomedical research enterprises and regarded as one of the most influential institutions in the world for its impact on innovation and addressing the world's most pressing health concerns. In addition, UF is establishing a campus in downtown Jacksonville offering advanced workforce-oriented graduate and professional degree programs and related research efforts in the areas of business, engineering, law and medicine.

7. A world class athletics program. UF is the only program in the country among the top 10 in each of the last 40 national all-sports standings.

8. The UF Foundation's fundraising program is ranked among the top public universities in the nation. The recent Go Greater campaign exceed its \$3B working goal with a finish of over \$4B+ in the fall of 2022. Additionally, UF has one of the highest alumni participation rates in the country for public institutions.

9. UF was an early adopter of leveraging technology for on-line education and ranks #2 in the country for on-line learning.

10. UF has experienced unwavering support from the state of Florida, which has endorsed UF's drive to become one of the nation's very best public research universities, including supporting those efforts with hundreds of millions of dollars in additional funding.

The Search Committee, assisted by SP&A Executive Search, is charged to undertake the following:

SEARCH CRITERIA: Develop and recommend to the University of Florida Board of Trustees for its approval, the search criteria and job description for the next President. The search criteria and job description shall reflect the University's vision of its next leader. The criteria shall be qualified as "desired," and shall be unranked to allow each member of the Committee and each Trustee to judge how to weigh and apply the criteria, individually and overall. The criteria should reflect the University's official status as Florida's foremost preeminent public research university and the University Board-endorsed goal to be consistently ranked among the top-5 public AAU research universities. The criteria and job description should also reflect qualifications of a leader with the ability to effectively position the University of Florida to achieve its strategic priorities and who has the stature and vision to translate the value generated by the university over the last decade into elevating UF's national and global reputation. Consistent with the principles of shared governance, the search criteria should be developed with outreach to a broad range of UF stakeholders, including faculty, students, staff, community leaders, alumni, donors, boosters, business leaders, and a listserv of over 200,000 addresses of the UF campus and extended community.

The next President of the University of Florida must have the experience, accomplishments, vision and reputation to lead the University of Florida to build upon its top-tier position. **RECRUITMENT AND OUTREACH:** Recruit and actively solicit nominations and applications from a diverse group of well-qualified persons, as measured against the search criteria. Ensure that appropriate information about the university and the presidency is provided to candidates at each stage of the screening process.

ASSESSMENT: Assess the qualifications of applicants for the position of UF President against the search criteria, determine those highly qualified applicants to be interviewed by the Search Committee, and conduct interviews of those applicants and determine those applicants who are most highly qualified under the search criteria.

RECOMMENDATION: Recommend to the Board of Trustees for its interview, consideration, and engagement with UF Stakeholders a small and unranked number of the most highly qualified candidates consistent with Board of Governors Regulation 1.002.

COMMUNICATIONS: Conduct a search process that is transparent, including frequent communication with UF stakeholders to keep them apprised of the progress of the search and opportunities for input and engagement, while balancing an appropriate level of confidentiality consistent with the laws of the State of Florida and the regulations of the Board of Governors.

COMPLIANCE: Take other action required by and conduct the search in compliance with the laws of the State of Florida, including Section 1004.098, Florida Statutes, and the regulations of the Board of Governors, including Board of Governors Regulation 1.002.

The Board of Trustees extends its gratitude to the members of the Search Committee for accepting this assignment.



SECTION 4 Qualifications & Criteria





INTRODUCTION

The President of the University of Florida is one of the most influential and impactful positions in all of public higher education and in the State of Florida. In 2021, for the first time, the University of Florida was ranked a Top 5 public university in the country by US News & World Report. The opportunity to serve as the next President of the University of Florida represents an opportunity to lead Florida's flagship university in its quest to be firmly and consistently recognized among the most prominent and influential public and private universities in the country.

The following criteria are not prioritized in any order and have been established based upon broad consultation with advisory groups of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and friends of the University. While a candidate may not demonstrate excellence in every one of these areas, a successful applicant will meet many of these attributes.

ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A. The President should be a distinguished scholar.

B. An educator of national stature with demonstrated intellectual leadership, and with internationally recognized research or scholarly achievements who will continue to advance the academic distinction of the University of Florida.

C. While academic experience (professional and administrative) at a research university or comparable setting is strongly desired, exceptional candidates who have earned a doctoral degree from an accredited university and who have also demonstrated a high degree of national or international scholarly and administrative success outside of academia will also be considered.

D. A passion for and commitment to the academic values and culture of the University of Florida and the capacity to communicate the University's mission and needs clearly and persuasively to all external and internal constituencies.

E. Highly respected by the academic community both within and outside of the University of Florida. Often, these accomplishments are represented by the following: terminal degree in their academic field, member of national academy or institute, or fellow of a major academic society.

F. Demonstrated commitment to and support for excellence in teaching, research, and service and a willingness to champion interdisciplinary collaboration and genuine innovation in these areas.

G. Demonstrated commitment to fostering an environment that embraces academic freedom.

H. An appreciation and respect for the University's academic disciplines and a demonstrated record of support for scholarly work and academic excellence.



LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

General

A. As the leader of a large, complex public institution, the ability and commitment to work in collaboration with the Board of Trustees in developing an ambitious and comprehensive vision for the University and creating the strategies necessary to guide its successful implementation.

B. Ability and commitment to accelerate the University's upward trajectory and international prominence, including the ability, fortitude, and strategic vision to take the University to the highest level with demonstrated leadership and emphasis on increasing quality across the University.

C. Commitment, vision, entrepreneurial skills, and the ability to foster growth of the University's research enterprise and the infrastructure to support it, ensuring its quality and competitiveness, as well as its contribution to economic development and scientific discovery. The University of Florida strives to be the internationally recognized leader among research universities in creating new knowledge and technologies.

D. Knowledge of the national trends in higher education that impact top tier research universities coupled with the experience necessary to effectively address them and position the University for success.

E. Commitment to the various initiatives set forth in the charge from the Chair of the Board of Trustees, including: growing stature of the State of Florida, UF Health, IFAS, Artificial

Intelligence Initiative, the Hamilton Institute/School, Jacksonville Campus, expansion of South Florida master's program, On-Line Initiative, Athletics, the next Capital Campaign and other initiatives designed to push UF ahead of the curve with regard to advances in higher education.

F. A transparent, inclusive, and approachable leadership style that embraces building connections with the campus community through visibility and accessibility coupled with the ability and courage to make difficult decisions in a timely manner.

G. Demonstrated success at working effectively and in partnership with the Board of Trustees in establishing short- and long-term goals, implementing action items, and developing strategies for promoting UF's mission and vision.

H. Ability and commitment to anticipate skills required by students for a changing work force and evolve the curriculum and student experience to meet those needs.

I. Ability and commitment to identify new and emerging research and academic innovations and opportunities, support their growth, and establish partnerships with private sector and governmental agencies to fully realize their potential.

J. An appreciation for the various metrics that inform and impact the University's external rankings and performance measures established by the Florida Board of Governors and UF Board of Trustees. The ability and commitment to maintain and advance UF's current success in the US News and World Report rankings.

K. Demonstrated success at developing a positive, productive, and highly engaged relationship with political, business, and community leaders from across the state and from all sectors and political affiliations and possess the sophistication necessary to leverage these relationships for the benefit of the University.

L. As the highest-ranking official of a major public university, the President must be aware of the numerous external factors impacting the University and focus on promoting the University and its achievements and take great care not to use the University of Florida or the position as a platform to advocate for personal political viewpoints.

M. An appreciation for UF's land-grant mission, as defined in the Morrill Land-Grant Acts of 1862, in advancing the excellence and stature of the University. A commitment to the mission's contributions to education, research, and extension of public service for the benefit of the state, the nation, and the world.



Student / Faculty / Staff Experience

A. i. Passion for students and belief in the power of education to change lives.

B. ii. Experience working with academic and non-academic units to enhance all aspects of the student experience, and the desire and ability to interact with undergraduates, graduate and professional students, and postdoctoral scholars.

C. iii. Possess a genuine interest in and concern for all aspects of the faculty and staff experience and the ability to effectively interact with both.

D. iv. Driven to compete for faculty and staff talent and implement fiscal, administrative, academic and operational measures designed to recruit and retain top faculty and staff.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

A. Demonstrated success at inspiring trust and confidence among all internal and external constituents. Possess a high EQ and an effective communication style that would be embraced by a broad spectrum of university stakeholders.

B. Ability and commitment to serve as a partner to the Board of Trustees to develop the University's priorities and strategic plan, leading the university to successfully carry out that plan in a manner consistent with a top ranked public university.

C. Commitment to working collaboratively with the Florida Board of Governors and elected leaders to advance university priorities. A track record serving as a relationship builder who is authentic, ethical, and humble.

D. Demonstrated strong commitment to faculty shared governance as it relates to academic standards, policies, and rewards. Appreciate the integral role faculty play in decision-making processes that affect the academic and working environment of the University.

E. Experience serving as a passionate advocate for a university or organization and the capacity to establish fruitful relationships with members of the legislative and executive branches as well as donors, alumni, and other individuals who may be in a position to promote the University's agenda and interests.

F. Commitment to the University's role as a contributor on the local, state, national and international levels and recognition of the University as a partner with the communities in which it serves.



OPERATIONAL ACUMEN

General

- A. Demonstrated success in leading a large, complex unit or university, preferably at the R-1 and AAU level, including administrative experience.
- B. Experience serving in a senior-level leadership role in a complex organization in government, business, or the nonprofit sector.
- C. An established history of leading and managing institutional change while achieving long- and short-term strategic objectives that advance the mission and goals of a complex organization. Experience leading an institution during times of uncertainty, crisis, innovation, and shifting expectations.
- D. Demonstrated success at developing high-performing leadership teams and to cultivate environments with a shared sense of mission and culture that encourages entrepreneurism, innovation, strategic risk-taking, and collaboration.
- E. Commitment to and demonstrated success in the recruitment and retention of exceptional faculty and staff coupled with a track record for mentoring faculty and staff and investing in their professional development such that they are well positioned to excel in their respective fields and contribute to the University's academic community at the highest level.
- F. The ability and commitment to set clear expectations, priorities, and performance metrics that align with the vision of the University of Florida Board of Trustees and inspire faculty and staff to achieve success.

Compliance with State Law and Board of Governors and University Board of Trustees Regulations, Policies and Governance Standards

- A. A commitment to ensuring that the University fulfills its mission consistent with the requirements set forth by the state, the Board of Governors, and the University Board of Trustees including requirements related to foreign influence, prohibited expenditures and post-tenure review.
- B. Dedication to promoting open and free expression on campus while swiftly and effectively eliminating unlawful actions that are harmful or threatening to persons or property or cause disruption to the University's operations.

Fiscal

- A. A high level of sophistication and understanding of the fiscal issues impacting institutions of higher education, particularly at public research universities, including an astute understanding of university finances.
- B. Experience with complex budgetary matters, managing and allocating resources effectively, and large-scale budgetary decision-making.
- C. Ability to serve as an effective steward of UF's financial resources and assets and adhere to the UF Board of Trustees' policies, regulations, and governance standards.
- D. Experience in identifying and developing new revenue streams from public, private, and governmental sources.

Advancement / Fundraising

- A. An accomplished fundraiser with the capacity to cultivate a broad range of stakeholders including donors, alumni, and friends of the University.
- B. Demonstrated success in fundraising from public and private sources and working with key stakeholders to engage them with the institution and willingness to place that activity high on their agenda.

Health Systems

- A. Vision and awareness of emerging issues that could potentially impact the success of the University's academic health affairs endeavor within the nation and State's changing health care environment.
- B. The ability and desire to oversee a complex, inter-related system of the University health sciences center, affiliated teaching hospitals throughout Florida, and over 140 primary care and specialty practices.
- C. The drive, ambition, and knowledge necessary to develop and implement the strategies necessary to continue to advance UF Health's already stellar rankings for excellence in the State and country while fortifying its long-term financial stability and growth.
- D. Capacity and commitment to engage with health system leaders to mitigate risk, lead innovation, and continue to improve the delivery of health care services in the State of Florida.

Athletics

- A. An appreciation for the significant role of intercollegiate athletics in the life of the University community, and enthusiasm for fostering the program's integrity, competitiveness, compliance, and accountability.
- B. The ability and commitment to balance the complex needs of an intercollegiate athletics program and integrate that with the priorities linked to fulfilling the institution's teaching, research, and service missions.
- C. A passion for UF's athletic programs and a deep appreciation for their role in promoting and representing the UF brand nationally and internationally.
- D. Dedicated to embracing a complex and evolving collegiate athletics landscape and the initiatives necessary to successfully adjust to hese changes.
- E. Commitment to enhance and update UF's athletics facilities in an effort to provide world-class venues and fields for students to compete and fans to experience.





SECTION 5 Prospectus & Advertisement

Prospectus available for download on UF Presidential Search website - use this link.



UNPRECEDENTED MOMENTUM UNPARALLELED IMPACT

THE LEADER, THE OPPORTUNITY, AND THE MOMENT

- The president of the University of Florida is one of the most influential and impactful positions in all of public higher education and in the state of Florida.
- In 2021, for the first time, the University of Florida was ranked a Top 5 public university in the country by U.S. News & World Report.
- The opportunity to serve as the next president of the University of Florida represents an opportunity to lead Florida's flagship university in its quest to be firmly and consistently recognized among the most prominent and influential public and private universities in the country.





CLASS OF 2028 BY THE NUMBERS 74,800+ Applicants 7,700+ Confirmed

- 4.59 Average GPA
 - 1391 Average SAT
 - **31** Average ACT



UNRIVALED SCOPE & SCALE

The University of Florida is a truly dynamic institution — widely considered to be among the world's most comprehensive universities. It is one of only six institutions in the country with colleges of law, medicine, agriculture, and veterinary medicine on one central campus and one of only 17 in the nation to boast land-, sea-, and space-grant status.

Thanks to its extraordinary depth and breadth, Florida's flagship university is uniquely positioned to lead interdisciplinary collaborations and boundary-breaking research efforts that are shaping a better future for the state, the nation, and the world. Guided by a shared passion for the greater good, the Gator Nation is a diverse and expansive community with a proven trajectory of excellence across academics, research, outreach, health, athletics, and more.

MISSION

The university is committed to equipping students with the skills, opportunities, and experiences to lead and influence the next generation and beyond. With a cutting-edge curriculum centered on broad-based, inclusive public education, leading research, and public service, UF stimulates a remarkable intellectual vitality and cultivates innovation that can be translated for economic, cultural, and societal benefit.



UF has rapidly ascended the public university rankings, going from #14 in 2017 to #7 today and ranking #5 in 2021 and 2022.



POINTS OF PRIDE

LOCATED IN THE STATE OF

FLORIDA: Florida is now the third most populous and one of the fastest growing states in the country. With new interest in its urban centers from corporate leaders across a wide range of industries, Florida is a national leader well positioned to enter a new era of influence.

> ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

INITIATIVE: Partnership with NVIDIA, one of the leading computing and artificial intelligence companies in the world, and UF's Artificial Intelligence initiative represents a signature moment in UF's history, uniquely positioning UF to become the higher education leader in artificial intelligence. UF's AI supercomputer, HiPerGator, is the fastest in higher education and ensures that Gators work on the cutting edge of innovation.

WORLD-CLASS HEALTH SYSTEM:

One of the top academic health care systems and hospitals in the Southeast, consistently ranked among the top two health systems in Florida. One of the most comprehensive academic health programs in the country, including six academic health colleges.

- RESEARCH: \$1.27 billion in research expenditures.
- ONLINE INITIATIVE: Ranked the #2 university in the country for online learning.

> INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

(IFAS): One of the nation's most comprehensive agriculture and natural resources programs with a presence in each of Florida's 67 counties. Significant thought leader and driver of Florida's \$130 billion agriculture community, which is one of the significant components of Florida's economy and a key component of the nation's food supply.

- ATHLETICS: Only program in NCAA Division I athletics to finish within the Top 10 in the standings in each of the last 40 all-sports standings. The Gators are one of only two programs to capture a national championship in each of the previous 15 complete seasons and have won 27 national titles during that time.
- FUNDRAISING: UF raised approximately \$500 million in fiscal year 2024. The university's fundraising momentum continues to grow following the conclusion of the \$4.65 billion Go Greater campaign in December 2022, which was one of the most successful in the history of public higher education. Over the last six years, annual giving to UF has met or exceeded \$500 million, optimally positioning the university and its 14th president for the next capital campaign.

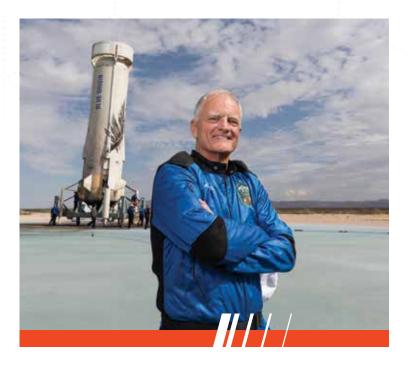
GOVERNOR AND STATE

Unwavering support from the state of Florida, which has endorsed UF's drive to become one of the nation's very best public research universities, including supporting those efforts with hundreds of millions of dollars in additional funding.

- SCRIPPS: UF acquired Scripps Florida, one of the world's premier biomedical research enterprises and regarded as one of the most influential institutions in the world for its impact on innovation and addressing the world's most pressing health concerns.
- HAMILTON CENTER: Building on the strong backing from the state of Florida, the Hamilton Center has attracted the attention and support of donors around the country. In just two years, with a mission to promote scholarship and shape leaders for a free society, the Hamilton Center has hired more than 47 faculty and made UF one of the very top universities in the nation for fields including diplomatic and military history, the American founding, political theory, and early Modern Europe.

> JACKSONVILLE GRADUATE

CAMPUS: UF is moving forward with plans to build a graduate campus in Jacksonville. Master's degree programs, slated to begin in fall 2026, include engineering management, computer science, biomedical and health sciences, the study of law, and architecture. SPACE: As part of its goal of advancing America's global leadership, UF recently established the Astraeus Space Institute, which gathers a constellation of academic stars at UF for collaborative research. The institute is enhancing existing relationships with NASA, the Kennedy Space Center, Space Florida, the Space Life Sciences Laboratory, and the International Space Station National Laboratory. In August, UF scientist Rob Ferl became the first NASA-funded university researcher to conduct his own experiments in space during a sub-orbital mission on Blue Origin's New Shepard rocket.





The University of Florida has been a member of the AAU since 1985



POSITION SUMMARY

The university president is the chief executive officer of the University of Florida. Subject to appropriate accountability to and governance of the University of Florida Board of Trustees (the "Board"), the president is responsible for all operations of the university: overall leadership and management of the institution; its academic, research, healthcare, and land-grant enterprise; fundraising; intercollegiate athletics; the development of strategic plans; fiscal and budgetary plans; and the allocation of resources. The president also has oversight responsibilities for the university's private affiliated organizations including a foundation, research foundation, agricultural research entities, investment management company, development corporation, hospitals and health care entities, alumni association, and athletic association, among others. In this role, the president will advance the university's academic, research, and outreach efforts to maintain and enhance the strength of UF's programs and offerings and ensure that student services and support are provided to create appropriate learning environments.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

ENHANCE AND ADVANCE THE VISION FOR THE UNIVERSITY:

In partnership with UF's faculty, staff, students, and other key stakeholder groups, the next president will be presented with the tremendous opportunity to advance the university's vision for the future that builds upon UF's successes and continued upward trajectory. The president must bring high levels of enthusiasm and passion for the university's work in serving the state of Florida and an ability to inspire excitement in the development and subsequent realization of this bold vision for the future.

STRENGTHENING THE UNIVERSITY'S LAND-GRANT MISSION:

As UF's most ardent champion, the president will bring to the position a resonance with and understanding of its landgrant mission and a deep commitment to advancing the University's endeavors in teaching, research, service, and economic development.

BUILDING NEW AND STRENGTHENING EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS:

UF's president serves as an active and visible member within and outside the campus community and will build new and strengthen existing relationships that will create mutually beneficial alliances across the state of Florida.

SUPPORTING UF'S FACULTY AND STAFF:

UF possesses a strong history and tradition of creating effective and welcoming teaching and learning environments for its students. To maintain the university's strength in this area, the next president must be dedicated to leading efforts to recruit, develop, and retain talented and high-quality faculty and staff in a highly competitive and rapidly evolving environment.

> INCREASING UF'S NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROMINENCE:

UF's president will be an integral figure in leading the university's ongoing efforts to promote its unique programs, strengths, and contributions to increase the university's reputation both nationally and internationally.

ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE:

The University of Florida enrolls over 60,000 highachieving student, almost 80 percent coming from within the state. UF's next president will lead the state's flagship university — a desirable student destination thanks to its abiding commitment to supporting the growth, development, and success of every Gator.



The National Academies of SCIENCES • ENGINEERING • MEDICINE

The university faculty, which numbers over 6,600, has 61 funded Eminent Scholar Chair positions, 91 elected members of the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences, and 39 elections to the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine.



QUALITIES & CHARACTERISTICS



The President of the University of Florida is one of the most influential and impactful positions in all of public higher education and in the State of Florida. In 2021, for the first time, the University of Florida was ranked a Top 5 public university in the country by US News & World Report. The opportunity to serve as the next President of the University of Florida represents an opportunity to lead Florida's flagship university in its quest to be firmly and consistently recognized among the most prominent and influential public and private universities in the country.

The following criteria are not prioritized in any order and have been established based upon broad consultation with advisory groups of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and friends of the University. While a candidate may not demonstrate excellence in every one of these areas, a successful applicant will meet many of these attributes.

ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- > The President should be a distinguished scholar.
- An educator of national stature with demonstrated intellectual leadership, and with internationally recognized research or scholarly achievements who will continue to advance the academic distinction of the University of Florida.
- While academic experience (professional and administrative) at a research university or comparable setting is strongly desired, exceptional candidates who have earned a doctoral degree from an accredited university and who have also demonstrated a high degree of national or international scholarly and administrative success outside of academia will also be considered.
- A passion for and commitment to the academic values and culture of the University of Florida and the capacity to communicate the University's mission and needs clearly and persuasively to all external and internal constituencies.
- Highly respected by the academic community both within and outside of the University of Florida. Often, these

accomplishments are represented by the following: terminal degree in their academic field, member of national academy or institute, or fellow of a major academic society.

- Demonstrated commitment to and support for excellence in teaching, research, and service and a willingness to champion interdisciplinary collaboration and genuine innovation in these areas.
- Demonstrated commitment to fostering an environment that embraces academic freedom.
- An appreciation and respect for the University's academic disciplines and a demonstrated record of support for scholarly work and academic excellence.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

GENERAL

As the leader of a large, complex public institution, the ability and commitment to work in collaboration with the Board of Trustees in developing an ambitious and comprehensive vision for the University and creating the strategies necessary to guide its successful implementation.

- Ability and commitment to accelerate the University's upward trajectory and international prominence, including the ability, fortitude, and strategic vision to take the University to the highest level with demonstrated leadership and emphasis on increasing quality across the University.
- Commitment, vision, entrepreneurial skills, and the ability to foster growth of the University's research enterprise and the infrastructure to support it, ensuring its quality and competitiveness, as well as its contribution to economic development and scientific discovery. The University of Florida strives to be the internationally recognized leader among research universities in creating new knowledge and technologies.
- Knowledge of the national trends in higher education that impact top tier research universities coupled with the experience necessary to effectively address them and position the University for success.

- Commitment to the various initiatives set forth in the charge from the Chair of the Board of Trustees, including: growing stature of the State of Florida, UF Health, IFAS, Artificial Intelligence Initiative, the Hamilton Institute/School, Jacksonville Campus, expansion of South Florida master's program, On-Line Initiative, Athletics, the next Capital Campaign and other initiatives designed to push UF ahead of the curve with regard to advances in higher education.
- A transparent, inclusive, and approachable leadership style that embraces building connections with the campus community through visibility and accessibility coupled with the ability and courage to make difficult decisions in a timely manner.
- Demonstrated success at working effectively and in partnership with the Board of Trustees in establishing shortand long-term goals, implementing action items, and developing strategies for promoting UF's mission and vision.
- Ability and commitment to anticipate skills required by students for a changing work force and evolve the curriculum and student experience to meet those needs.
- Ability and commitment to identify new and emerging research and academic innovations and opportunities, support their growth, and establish partnerships with private sector and

governmental agencies to fully realize their potential.

- An appreciation for the various metrics that inform and impact the University's external rankings and performance measures established by the Florida Board of Governors and UF Board of Trustees. The ability and commitment to maintain and advance UF's current success in the US News and World Report rankings.
- Demonstrated success at developing a positive, productive, and highly engaged relationship with political, business, and community leaders from across the state and from all sectors and political affiliations and possess the sophistication necessary to leverage these relationships for the benefit of the University.
- As the highest-ranking official of a major public university, the President must be aware of the numerous external factors impacting the University and focus on promoting the University and its achievements and take great care not to use the University of Florida or the position as a platform to advocate for personal political viewpoints.
- An appreciation for UF's land-grant mission, as defined in the Morrill Land-Grant Acts of 1862, in advancing the excellence and stature of the University. A commitment to the mission's contributions to education,

research, and extension of public service for the benefit of the state, the nation, and the world.

STUDENT / FACULTY / STAFF EXPERIENCE

- Passion for students and belief in the power of education to change lives.
- Experience working with academic and non-academic units to enhance all aspects of the student experience, and the desire and ability to interact with undergraduates, graduate and professional students, and postdoctoral scholars.
- Possess a genuine interest in and concern for all aspects of the faculty and staff experience and the ability to effectively interact with both.
- Driven to compete for faculty and staff talent and implement fiscal, administrative, academic and operational measures designed to recruit and retain top faculty and staff.





COLLABORATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

- Demonstrated success at inspiring trust and confidence among all internal and external constituents. Possess a high EQ and an effective communication style that would be embraced by a broad spectrum of university stakeholders.
- Ability and commitment to serve as a partner to the Board of Trustees to develop the University's priorities and strategic plan, leading the university to successfully carry out that plan in a manner consistent with a top ranked public university.
- Commitment to working collaboratively with the Florida Board of Governors and elected leaders to advance university priorities. A track record serving as a relationship builder who is authentic, ethical, and humble.
- Demonstrated strong commitment to faculty shared governance as it relates to academic standards, policies, and rewards. Appreciate the integral role faculty play in decision-making processes that affect the academic and working environment of the University.

- Experience serving as a passionate advocate for a university or organization and the capacity to establish fruitful relationships with members of the legislative and executive branches as well as donors, alumni, and other individuals who may be in a position to promote the University's agenda and interests.
- Commitment to the University's role as a contributor on the local, state, national and international levels and recognition of the University as a partner with the communities in which it serves.

OPERATIONAL ACUMEN

GENERAL

- Demonstrated success in leading a large, complex unit or university, preferably at the R-1 and AAU level, including administrative experience.
- Experience serving in a seniorlevel leadership role in a complex organization in government, business, or the nonprofit sector.

- An established history of leading and managing institutional change while achieving long- and short-term strategic objectives that advance the mission and goals of a complex organization. Experience leading an institution during times of uncertainty, crisis, innovation, and shifting expectations.
- Demonstrated success at developing high-performing leadership teams and to cultivate environments with a shared sense of mission and culture that encourages entrepreneurism, innovation, strategic risk-taking, and collaboration.
- Commitment to and demonstrated success in the recruitment and retention of exceptional faculty and staff coupled with a track record for mentoring faculty and staff and investing in their professional development such that they are well positioned to excel in their respective fields and contribute to the University's academic community at the highest level.
 - The ability and commitment to set clear expectations, priorities, and performance metrics that align with the vision of the University of Florida



Board of Trustees and inspire faculty and staff to achieve success.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATE LAW AND BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE STANDARDS

- A commitment to ensuring that the University fulfills its mission consistent with the requirements set forth by the state, the Board of Governors, and the University Board of Trustees including requirements related to foreign influence, prohibited expenditures and post-tenure review.
- Dedication to promoting open and free expression on campus while swiftly and effectively eliminating unlawful actions that are harmful or threatening to persons or property or cause disruption to the University's operations.

FISCAL

- A high level of sophistication and understanding of the fiscal issues impacting institutions of higher education, particularly at public research universities, including an astute understanding of university finances.
- Experience with complex budgetary matters, managing and allocating resources effectively, and large-scale budgetary decision-making.
- Ability to serve as an effective steward of UF's financial resources and assets and adhere to the UF Board of Trustees' policies, regulations, and governance standards.
- Experience in identifying and developing new revenue streams from public, private, and governmental sources.

ADVANCEMENT / FUNDRAISING

An accomplished fundraiser with the capacity to cultivate a broad range of stakeholders including donors, alumni, and friends of the University. Demonstrated success in fundraising from public and private sources and working with key stakeholders to engage them with the institution and willingness to place that activity high on their agenda.

HEALTH SYSTEMS

- Vision and awareness of emerging issues that could potentially impact the success of the University's academic health affairs endeavor within the nation and State's changing health care environment.
- The ability and desire to oversee a complex, inter-related system of the University health sciences center, affiliated teaching hospitals throughout Florida, and over 140 primary care and specialty practices.
- The drive, ambition, and knowledge necessary to develop and implement the strategies necessary to continue to advance UF Health's already stellar rankings for excellence in the State and country while fortifying its long-term financial stability and growth.
- Capacity and commitment to engage with health system leaders to mitigate risk, lead innovation, and continue to improve the delivery of health care services in the State of Florida.

ATHLETICS

- An appreciation for the significant role of intercollegiate athletics in the life of the University community, and enthusiasm for fostering the program's integrity, competitiveness, compliance, and accountability.
- The ability and commitment to balance the complex needs of an intercollegiate athletics program and integrate that with the priorities linked to fulfilling the institution's teaching, research, and service missions.
- A passion for UF's athletic programs and a deep appreciation for their role in promoting and representing the UF brand nationally and internationally.
- Dedicated to embracing a complex and evolving collegiate athletics landscape and the initiatives necessary to successfully adjust to these changes.
- Commitment to enhance and update UF's athletics facilities in an effort to provide world-class venues and fields for students to compete and fans to experience.



APPLICATION & NOMINATION PROCESS

The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications immediately and will continue to accept applications and nominations until the position is filled. Applications should include a current curriculum vitae and a letter of interest describing relevant experience and interest in the position. Submission of materials via email is strongly encouraged. Nomination letters should include the name and contact information of the nominee.

In accordance with the state of Florida's open records laws, documents and information related to applicants will be held in confidence with only the finalists' identities and materials made public. Application materials should be submitted to:



Alberto Pimentel, Managing Partner Will Gates, Partner Sal Venegas Jr., Partner

SP&A Executive Search 6512 Painter Avenue Whittier, CA 90601

Email: apsearch@spaexec.com Refer to code "UF-President" in subject line



THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IS AN EOUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The university is committed to non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status in all aspects of employment including recruitment, hiring, promotions, transfers, discipline, terminations, wage and salary administration, benefits, and training.



SECTION 6 Description of Search Process



DESCRIPTION OF SEARCH PROCESS

The University of Florida's presidential search process began with the announcement of the Presidential Search Advisory Committee (Search Committee) on October 29, 2024, and the subsequent selection of SP&A Executive Search as the search consultant to the University of Florida Board of Trustees (UFBOT).

In January 2025, the Search Committee hosted 10 listening sessions with UF stakeholders, including faculty, students, administrators, staff, alumni and community members. The Search Committee also published an online survey. Through the listening sessions and survey, the Search Committee sought feedback from stakeholders regarding their preferred professional and personal qualities for the next UF president. Hundreds of individuals attended the listening sessions and responded to the survey.

Based on this feedback, the Search Committee's qualifications and marketing working groups developed a qualifications document and designed a marketing plan, that included the presidential prospectus and an advertisement. The Search Committee's compensation working group partnered with Mercer to perform an executive compensation analysis and establish a recommended compensation range. Following the Search Committee's approval of the qualifications document, marketing plan and compensation range, they were recommended to and approved by the UFBOT on February 25, 2025.

These documents were then utilized by the search consultant to advertise the position and discuss it with potential prospects. The search consultant spoke to hundreds of potential prospects and the Chair of the Search Committee spoke individually to nearly twenty prospects. With the help of the search consultant, the Search Committee vetted prospects and ultimately identified multiple candidates to be interviewed.

After completing these interviews, the Search Committee reached a consensus that Dr. Santa J. Ono was the most qualified and competitive finalist. Because Dr. Ono and all the other sitting president candidates involved in the search made it clear that they would only participate if the process was confidential and their name would only be publicly released if they were the sole finalist, the Search Committee determined that it would be infeasible to have more than one finalist. Accordingly, the Search Committee recommended Dr. Ono as the sole finalist for consideration by the UFBOT.

Dr. Ono was announced as the sole finalist on May 4, 2025. The University hosted on-campus forums on May 6, 2025 where faculty, students, administrators and staff could hear from Dr. Ono regarding himself, his vision for UF and his answers to questions submitted by UF stakeholders. On May 27, 2025, the UFBOT interviewed Dr. Ono and vote unanimously to approve his appointment as President-elect. On June 3, 2025, the Board of Governors will interview Dr. Ono and vote on confirmation of his appointment as UF President.



SECTION 7 Biography & Curriculum Vitae





BIOGRAPHY SANTA JEREMY ONO, PH.D. FRSC FCAHS

Santa J. Ono, was unanimously recommended by the Presidential Search Advisory Committee as the sole finalist in the University of Florida's search for its 14th President.

Ono is the immediate past president of the University of Michigan and immediate past chair of the University of Michigan Health Board and brings a distinguished record of leadership in academia and public health across the United States and Canada. He is a world-renowned vision researcher and is recognized for pioneering work on the immune system and eye disease. He chairs Fulbright Canada and is an honorary Chairperson of the Japan

America Society of Michigan and Southwestern Ontario. He is a member of the United States-Japan Foundation Board of Trustees, the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation, the Grow Michigan Together Council and the Michigan Academic Development Commission.

Ono is the Chair of the Council of Presidents of the Association of Public & Land Grant Universities (APLU) and serves on the Boards of the American Council on Education (ACE), the Council on Competitiveness and Internet2.

He joined the University of Michigan from the University of British Columbia, where he served as president and vice chancellor. He was Chair of the U15 Group of Canadian Universities and the Research Universities of British Columbia (RUCBC) and served as Advisor to the Premier on Innovation and Technology. Prior to UBC, he was president and provost of the University of Cincinnati and served on the Board of the Ohio Third Frontier, the state's technology-based economic development program.

Ono served as senior vice provost and deputy to the provost at Emory University. He taught at Johns Hopkins, Harvard, and University College London. He earned his B.A. in biological sciences from the University of Chicago in 1984, and a Ph.D. (with Honors) in experimental medicine from McGill University in 1991. He was inducted into Sigma Xi.

As a scholar he served for many years on review panels for the National Institutes of Health and the Wellcome Trust and has advised biotech and pharmaceutical companies and governments on science and scientific policy. He served on the editorial boards of the Journal of Biological Chemistry, the Journal of Immunology and the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

Ono has been recognized with awards such as the Helen Hay Whitney Fellowship, the American Diabetes Association Career Award, Arthritis Foundation Investigator Award, Roche Award and the Pharmacia International Award in Allergy Research.

He has been elected to the National Academy of Medicine, American Academy of Arts & Sciences, American Association for the Advancement of Science, National Academy of Inventors, the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences and the Royal Society of Chemistry. He has been awarded multiple honorary doctorates and was inducted into the Johns Hopkins University Society of Scholars.



CURRICULUM VITAE SANTA JEREMY ONO, PH.D. FRSC FCAHS

EDUCATION

McGill University

Ph.D. (Dean's Honour List), Experimental Medicine, 1984-1988, Ph.D. Awarded 1991 Activities and Societies: McGill Graduate Students Society, Canadian Federation of Biological Science

The University of Chicago

BA, Biological Sciences, 1980-1984 Activities and Societies: President, Mead House Council - Residence Hall Association; Intramural Soccer; Undergraduate Research - Kovler Viral Oncology Labs

EXPERIENCE

President

The University of Michigan 2022 –

The University of Michigan, founded in 1817 and located in Ann Arbor, is one of the top public research universities in the U.S., with a \$14.9 billion operating budget and a \$19.2 billion endowment. It enrolls over 52,000 students and employs more than 8,400 faculty. Ranked #3 among public universities by U.S. News, it conducts nearly \$2 billion in annual research. The university has 250 faculty members in the National Academies and counts 10 Nobel Laureates among its alumni and faculty.

President & Vice-Chancellor

The University of British Columbia

2016 - 2022

Chief Executive Officer of this comprehensive research intensive university and Academic Health Center. UBC is a global centre for research and teaching, consistently ranked among the 35 best universities in the world and among the top 7 public universities in North America by THE, AWRU and US News. UBC enrolls over 65,000 students on two major campuses (Vancouver and Okanagan), has a \$13.5 billion economic impact and a \$2.6 billion annual operating budget.

Chief Advisor on Innovation, British Columbia

2017 – 2019 Reporting to the Premier, charged with creating an Innovation Network for BC.

President

The University of Cincinnati

2012 - 2016

Chief Executive Officer of this comprehensive research 1 university and Academic Health Center. UC enrolls over 44,000 students on 5 sites, employs over 16,000 individuals and has a faculty of 5,600. The annual budget for the university is \$1.2 billion for academic operations and \$1.3 billion for the health system. UC has an economic impact of over \$5 billion per annum. The National Science Foundation and Lombardi Report rank UC among the nation's top 25 public research universities. 26 programs rank in the top 10 and 51 programs in the top 50 in US News & World Report. US News & World Report's first global ranking places it in the top 200 global universities.

Sr. Vice President for Academic Affairs & University Provost

The University of Cincinnati

2010 – August 2012

Chief Academic Officer of this research 1 university. Oversight of all educational and research activities of the university's 13 colleges and its Academic Health Center and \$1.1 billion budget. \$1.5 billion healthcare budget. Led university strategic plan implementation, created first Academic Master Plan, launched new \$50 million Research Institute, launched a new Technology Accelerator. Investments in: Honors Program, Study Abroad, Two Ohio Centers of Excellence (Design & Innovation and Performing Arts). Co-chair of UC Foundation Strategic Planning Task Force.

Professor of Pediatrics, Biology, Biomedical Engineering and Education

The University of Cincinnati & Cincinnati Children's Hospital 2010 – 2017

Research and teaching in immunology and inflammation. The Department of Pediatrics at The University of Cincinnati and Cincinnati Children's Hospital is one of the top 2-3 departments in the US and top 5 in the world.

Senior Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education & Academic Affairs

Professor of Medicine & Biology

Emory University

2006 - 2010

Provided oversight of undergraduate academic affairs, student enrollment and recruitment, university accreditation and specific strategic plan initiatives at this AAU, US News top 20 university. Launched: new \$100 million financial aid program (Emory Advantage), university-wide lecture series (Life of the Mind), Arts Gala, rolled out new cluster hires in science (mathematics, biostatistics, ethics, molecular genetics), a new office of preprofessional advising, a review of the undergraduate experience, opened a new Admissions Office building.

GlaxoSmithKline Professor & Associate Dean

Member UCL Council, Governance & Finance Committees University College London 2001 – 2006

Principal investigator of research group and Chair of Department, member of the university's Board of Trustees and of its governance and finance committees. UCL is ranked #17 in the world by Times Higher Education. Helped form global links between UCL and universities in Asia and North America. Was key part of a \$25 million investment in eye research at UCL.

Associate Professor, Harvard Medical School

Assoc. Scientist - Schepens Eye Research Institute Harvard University 1996 – 2001

Principal investigator of research group and professor in the Committee on Immunology. Harvard is ranked in the top 2-3 universities in the world by multiple rankings. Served as Head of Immunology Division, PI on a new T32 training grant, Executive Committee of another Harvard-wide training grant. Served on Institute strategic planning committees and worked with President to attract >\$8 million in philanthropic giving from foundations and individuals.

Assistant Professor of Medicine

The Johns Hopkins University 1992 – 1996

Principal investigator of research group and professor in the School of Medicine and Krieger School of Arts and Science. Johns Hopkins is America's oldest and most research intensive graduate university. Served on admissions committees for multiple programs.

Fellow and then Research Associate in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

Harvard University

1988 - 1992

Research fellow and then Research Associate in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Helen Hay Whitney Fellow.

HONORS AND AWARDS

2025	Honorary Degree, Trinity Western University
2024	Appointed to the USA-Japan Foundation Board of Trustees
	Elected, National Academy of Medicine
	Honorary Doctorate, Tyndale University
2023	Appointed by Gov Whitmer to Michigan Economic Development Comm
	Board of Trustees, Gerald Ford Presidential Foundation
2022	Elected, American Academy of Arts & Sciences
	Executive Committee, Council on Competitiveness
2019	Appointed to Board of Directors of Fulbright by Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs
2017	Elected Fellow, Canadian Academy of Health Sciences
	Professional Achievement Award, University of Chicago Alumni Association
2016	NAAAP 100 Award, National Association of Asian American Professionals' top award
	(USA and Canada), Awarded at Presidential Town Hall Mtg, Las Vegas
	National Multiple Sclerosis Society Award
	Ohio Cancer Research Award
	The 2016 Reginald Wilson Award, 98th Annual Meeting American Council on Education
2015	Elected Fellow, The Johns Hopkins University Society of Scholars

- Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Man of Vision Award Medical Mutual Pillar Award Inside Higher Education, In List, Most Notable University President
- **2014** National Arthritis Foundation (Cincinnati Chapter) Keynote Speaker Inducted as Member of the National Academy of Inventors, USA National Human Relations Award, American Jewish Congress Named one of 6 University Presidents to Watch in 2014, Education Drive Named Honorary Consul General of Japan for Ohio
- **2013** Commencement Speaker, Cincinnati State College Keynote Speaker, eduWeb Conference, Boston First Tee Award Scientist, Shriners Hospital for Children, Cincinnati
- **2012** Ohio Asian Leaders Distinguished Trailblazer Award Inducted into Omicron Delta Kappa Inducted as Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science National Science Foundation Program on Women STEM Faculty, \$3.7M

	Inducted as Fellow of the Graduate School, University of Cincinnati Sigma Xi - Full Member
	Brit Katz Senior Appreciation Award, Class of 2010, Emory University
	* Awarded annually by the Senior Class to the Single Faculty Member or
	Administrator considered to have made a profound impact on their undergraduate
	experience
	Emory College Council Appreciation Award for Administrators
	Honorary Recipient, Emory College Class of 2010, Ring Ceremony
2009	
	Emory College Council Appreciation Award for Administrators
	Phi Beta Kappa Gamma Chapter Faculty Teaching Recognition
	Honorary Membership, Alpha Tau Omega
2008	Elected Fellow, Royal Society of Chemistry (FRSC)
	Plenary Lecture, International Congress of Eye Research (ICER), Beijing
2007	Phi Beta Kappa Gamma Chapter Faculty Teaching Recognition
	Genentech Visiting Professor, University of Cincinnati
	Elected Fellow, American Academy of Allergy and Immunology (FAAAAI)
2004	Plenary Lecture, 12th International Congress of Immunology (ICI)
	Isaac Bekhor Lecture, USC-Doheny Eye Institute
2003	Presidential Lecture, UCLA-Harbor Medical Center
	Honorary Research Fellow, King's College, University of London
2002	Elected Fellow, Royal Society of Medicine
2001	Who's Who in America
2000	Inducted into the Collegium Internationale Allergologicum
	Pharmacia International Award in Allergy Research (\$50,000)
	JSPS Visiting Professor, Kyoto University Faculty of Medicine
	Plenary Speaker, Institute for Genome Research Symposium on Immunology
	Albert Heritage Fund Distinguished Visiting Professor, U. Calgary
	1995 American Diabetes Association Career Award
	National Arthritis Foundation Investigator Award
	1991 Fellow of the Helen Hay Whitney Foundation
	Juvenile Diabetes Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship
1988	Roche Laboratories Award for Excellence in Research
	McGill Cancer Centre Research Award
	1988 Predoctoral Fellowship, Fonds de la Recherché en Sante du Quebec
	Symposium Award, International Symp. on the Immunology of Diabetes
	1988 J.W. McConnell Award, McGill University
	1985 David Stewart Memorial Award in Teaching, McGill University
	Squibb Scholarship, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Inst. for Cancer Research
1981	Litton Bionetics Internship, Frederick Cancer Research Center

COMMITTEE/BOARD MEMBERSHIPS

- Executive Committee, U7+ Consortium of World Universities 2019-
- Selection Panel, LUI Che Woo Prize 2019-2022
- Vice-Chair, U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities Executive Heads, 2018-2022
- Steering Committee, Association of Pacific Rim Universities, 2018-
- Member, Board of Directors, Universities Canada, 2018-2022
- Chair, Presidents Committee, Research U niversities' Council of British Columbia, 2018-2022
- Member, Presidents Group, 2018-
- Steering Committee, Talloires Network, 2017-2018
- Member, Board of Governors, Business Council of Canada (formerly Business Higher Education Roundtable), 2016-2022
- Chair, Peter Wall Board of Trustees, 2016-2021
- Member, Presidents Committee, Research Universities' Council of British Columbia, 2016-2022
- Member, Great Northern Way Trust Shareholders, 2016-2022
- Member, Global Federation of Competitiveness Councils, 2016-2022
- Founding Member, Global University and Research Forum, 2016-
- Board of Directors, American Council on Education, 2016-
- Board of Directors, Mitacs, 2016-2022
- Executive Committee, National Council on Competitiveness, 2014-
- Executive Committee, Urban Serving Universities, 2014-2016
- President, Health Strand, Urban Serving Universities, 2014-2016
- Board of Directors, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, 2014-2016
- Advisory Committee to the Director of the National Institutes of Health, Appointed by NIH Director Francis Collins, 2013-2016
- Ohio Third Frontier Advisory Board, Appointed by Governor John Kasich, 2013-2016
- Board of Directors, Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber 2013-2016
- Board of Directors, UC Health 2012-2016
- Board of Trustees, The Cincinnati Art Museum 2012-2016
- Board of Directors & Executive Committee Big East Conference 2012-2014
- Board of Directors, Cintrifuse 2012-2016
- Board of Directors, CincyTech 2012-2016
- Board of Directors, Uptown Consortium 2012-2016; Chairman 2016
- President & Chairman of the Board of Directors, University of Cincinnati Research Institute 2012-2015
- Co-Chair, Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Early Grade-Level Reading Campaign 2012-2016
- Invited Delegate, 2012 USA-JAPAN Council
- Chancellor's Ohio Completion Task Force, Ohio Board of Regents 2012-2014
- Executive Committee, Strive Partnership 2012-2016
- Board of Directors, Japan-America Society, 2010-2016

- Board of Directors, Alois Alzheimer's Society, 2010-2013
- Board of Directors, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, 2010-2016
- Board of Trustees, University of Cincinnati Foundation, 2010-2016
- Board of Trustees, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, USA 2009-
- Executive Committee, Strive Network 2012-2016
- Board of Advisors, Strive for College. 2009-
- Chairman, Board of Directors, Global H.E.E.D. 2009-
- External Review Panel Duke University SACS Reaffirmation, 2009
- Jack Kent Cooke Graduate Fellowship Award, National Selection Committee, 2007-2010
- Board of Directors, Posse Foundation, Atlanta, 2006-2010
- Medical Advisory Board, Medical Research Council, UK 2001-2005
- College of Experts, Medical Research Council, UK, 2005-2007
- Medical and Scientific Advisory Board, Tear Film & Ocular Surface Society, 2006-
- National Institute for Health & Medical Research (INSERM) National Research Program on Vision: International Advisory Panel, 2005
- Athena Charter for Women in Science, The Royal Society, 2005-2007
- Board of Governors, Trent School, Church of England, 2003-2007
- International Referee, National Medical Research Council, Singapore, 2003-2007
- Medical Research Council Advisory Board, 2002-2006
- Permanent Member, Immunological Sciences (IMS, now HAI) Grants Panel, NIH, 2002-2006, 2008 Meetings Committee, British Society of Immunology, 2002-2007
- Ad hoc Member, Immunological Sciences Study Section, NIH, 2001
- Chair, Publications Com., Soc. Leuk. Bio., 2000
- Tenure Review Committee, Laboratory of Molecular and Developmental Immunology,
- Food and Drug Administration, 1999
- Cellular Immunology Study Section, National Arthritis Foundation, 1998-2000
- Councillor & Publications Committee, Soc. for Leuk. Biol., 1998-2000
- International Review Committee, Wellcome Trust, 1997-2001
- Study Section, Allegheny Health Sciences Univ., 1996
- Study Section B, American Cancer Society, 1996
- Animal Genetics Study Section, USDA, 1995-
- Experimental Immunology Special Study Section, NIH, 1995
- External Referee: Int. Lab. of Genetics, Naples, 1994
- Special Study Section, NIDDK, 1993

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

- **1.** Ono SJ, Colle E, Guttmann RD, Ullmann H, and Fuks A. In vitro studies on the inducibility of MHC gene expression in the rat insulinoma cell line RIN5F. Transplantation Proceedings. 19:2997-3000, 1987.
- 2. Ono SJ, Issa-Chergai B, Seemayer TA, Guttmann RD, and Fuks A. Class I major histocompatibility complex gene expression is enhanced in prediabetic BB rats. Transplantation Proceedings. 19:3187-3190, 1987.
- **3.** Ono SJ, Issa-Chergai B, Seemayer TA, Colle E, Guttmann RD, and Fuks A. Insulindependent diabetes mellitus in the BB rat: Enhanced MHC class I heavy chain gene expression in pancreatic islets. Diabetes. 37:1411-1418, 1988.
- **4.** Colle E, Ono SJ, Guttmann RD, Fuks A. Association of susceptibility to spontaneous diabetes mellitus in the rat with genes of the major histocompatibility complex. Diabetes. 37:1438-1443, 1988.
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SECTION 8 Proposed Employment Terms



PRESIDENT-ELECT ONO EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

The below terms are consistent with standard provisions in presidential contracts in the state of Florida and nationally, and reflect the recommendations and analysis performed by our executive compensation consultant, Mercer.

SPECIFIC KEY TERMS:

- Five-year employment contract beginning June 4, 2025
- UF annual base salary of \$1,500,000
- UF annual accrued retention payment of 20% of UF annual base salary, with vesting subject to Dr. Ono remaining in active employ of the university as president in good standing and completing satisfactory service through May 30, 2030
- UF annual performance bonus up to 20% of UF annual base salary
- Standard Executive University benefits (health, disability, vacation, life)
- Supplemental Life and Disability Coverage
- UF retirement contribution of 5% of UF annual base salary
- Consistent with state law, any compensation payments by the University that cannot be paid from public funds, shall be paid with non-public Foundation funds
- Requirement to reside in university-owned John H. and Mary Lou Dasburg President's house
- The following mandated presidential duties and responsibilities will, among others, form the basis for the Board's determination of Dr. Ono's performance, bonus, salary increase, retention and reappointment:
 - Dean appointments will require approval of the Chair of the Board of Trustees and notice to the Vice Chair. Dr. Ono will make it a priority to fill the interim dean positions with individuals who are firmly aligned with and support the principles guiding Florida's approach to higher education, including as articulated by the legislature, the Board of Governors, and the UF Board of Trustees.
 - Provost appointment will require approval of the Chair of the Board of Trustees and notice to the Vice Chair. Dr. Ono will make it a priority to appoint a permanent provost who is firmly aligned with and supports the principles guiding Florida's approach to higher education, including as articulated by the legislature, the Board of Governors, and the UF Board of Trustees.

- Ensure that the faculty tenure review process continues in a rigorous manner with a focus on maintaining classroom integrity and academic excellence.
- Oversee a strategic review of courses to assess their educational and economic value. Programs with a consistent low return on investment will be eliminated.
- Commit to working with Florida and Federal DOGE to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse.
- Work with Florida DOGE to evaluate and reduce administrative overhead, ensuring that University resources are directed to teaching, research, and student success while safeguarding taxpayer and donor investments.
- Prohibit the use of any public or private funds from being spent on DEI or political or social activism.
- Lead a comprehensive review of accreditation standards across the University's colleges and programs ensuring that accrediting standards are complied with in a manner that is consistent with federal and state laws and mandates.
- UF Health annual base salary of \$500,000
- UF Health accrued retention payment of 20% of UF Health annual base salary
- UF annual performance bonus up to 20% of UF Health annual base salary
- UF Health retirement contribution of 5% of UF Health annual base salary
- Allows for termination with or without cause
- Requires 90 days' prior written notice of resignation
- Faculty appointment in the College of Medicine, Department of Ophthalmology
- Standard covenants and cooperation with the Board of Trustees included
- Subject to Board of Governors ratification



UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

SECTION 9 Addendum: Santa Ono BOT Opening Statement



SANTA J. ONO – OPENING STATEMENT UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Chairman Hosseini, members of the Board, distinguished colleagues:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. It is an extraordinary honor to have been unanimously chosen by the search committee as the finalist to be the next president of the University of Florida—an institution with exceptional momentum, not only in national and international rankings, but also in the breadth, depth, and quality of its academic enterprise.

I believe the University of Florida is uniquely positioned to become the best public university in the United States. Because of bold choices, a clear vision, and the reforms led by this Board and this state, Florida is leading the country in higher education reform—and it is one of the reasons I am here. I understand and support what Florida's vision for higher education represents: a decisive move away from the ideological bias and activist-driven culture that has come to define too many college campuses.

The goal is not to replace one orthodoxy with another—it is to restore balance, protect the pursuit of truth and create a university environment where all students can thrive, regardless of viewpoint. Florida is showing the nation that it's possible to elevate academic excellence without ideological indoctrination. That's the work I want to lead—and I am here because I believe in the direction Florida is taking higher education and because I am fully aligned with the values that have made the University of Florida's recent success possible. Universities are not meant to be echo chambers. They are meant to be places where students encounter ideas, challenge assumptions and develop the intellectual tools to lead in a complex world.

I am the son of Japanese immigrants who came to the United States in the late 1950s and raised our family in Vancouver, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. My father was a professor of mathematics at the University of British Columbia, the University of Pennsylvania and Johns Hopkins University. Interestingly, he was first invited to visit the United States by Robert Oppenheimer, who brought him—along with a select group of mathematicians—to the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. My mother cared for me and my two brothers and taught Japanese in downtown Baltimore. Every member of our family is a proud American citizen, and we are deeply grateful for the opportunities this country has given us.

Thirty-six years ago, I married my graduate school sweetheart, Wendy Yip. Wendy is a Boston University– trained lawyer and has held several leadership roles in public service. We are the proud parents of two daughters and my family has enjoyed being deeply involved in the university communities where we have lived. We are now looking forward to moving to Gainesville and joining the Gator Nation.

I studied at the University of Chicago for my undergraduate degree and completed my Ph.D. at McGill University. I am a molecular immunologist, and my research has focused on the biology of juvenile

diabetes, allergic inflammation and age-related macular degeneration. I have held faculty positions at Johns Hopkins, Harvard University and University College London.

My path into academic leadership began at Emory University, where I served as senior vice provost and deputy to the provost. From there, I became provost and then president of the University of Cincinnati, before leading the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. Most recently, I served as the 15th president of the University of Michigan.

Each of these presidencies taught me a great deal about myself, about higher education, about learning and evolving, as well as about critics and criticism. Before I speak directly on those issues, I want to acknowledge what makes the University of Florida so exceptional—its students, faculty, staff, alumni and the broader Florida community.

I strongly believe that the core mission of public universities is to uphold academic excellence, viewpoint diversity, and accountability to the public we serve. That means preparing young people to become engaged citizens—not ideological activists. It means focusing on knowledge, truth and integrity above all else.

The University of Florida is rising because of the work done in this room and across this campus because of the excellence of its faculty, the energy of its students, and the vision of this Board and Florida's leaders. I am here because I share that vision—and I intend to carry it forward, unapologetically.

I am especially inspired by The University of Florida's signature strengths—including, for example, its world-class research inartificial intelligence, agriculture, space and brain and cardiovascular science; its excellence across professional schools; its growing prominence in academic health; and its national leadership in civic education through the Hamilton School. This is a university where scholars change lives—and where ideas change the world.

And let us not forget: the University of Florida is home to one of the most accomplished athletics programs in the country. In fact, the University of Florida is the only institution in the modern era to have won three national championships in football and basketball. The University of Florida also has some of the most successful women's teams in the nation, such as gymnastics, tennis, and softball — each with multiple national championships. This is a testament to the discipline, teamwork, and spirit that defines the Gator Nation.

I want to speak directly, unambiguously, and strongly to four priorities that have received a lot of attention recently and which have helped define the University of Florida as an institution, and my work in higher education: our work to combat antisemitism, our stance on DEI and climate change and our responsibility to defend democracy.

First, I want to reaffirm my unwavering commitment to combating antisemitism on campus.

During my tenure at Michigan, I heard from Jewish students and faculty who felt marginalized or unsafe—especially in the aftermath of the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attacks in southern Israel. In

response, we enacted new policies, improved enforcement mechanisms and engaged directly with Jewish community leaders to ensure that harassment and hate were eliminated from our academic community. I am proud that my leadership earned the trust of many who were watching closely, including national organizations like the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League, who recognized that I did not flinch when courage was required.

Let me be very clear: based on my experience, I believe that antisemitism is not just one form of hatred among many—it is a uniquely virulent and persistent threat, especially on college campuses today. It often hides behind the language of political critique, but its effect is unmistakable: intimidation, isolation, and fear for Jewish students and faculty.

That said, I reject all forms of religious discrimination. But the challenges are not symmetrical. On today's campuses, antisemitism has become increasingly normalized in the name of activism, and that is what makes it so dangerous right now.

As a university president, I have seen firsthand how antisemitic rhetoric and actions have crossed the line into harassment. That is why I took action at Michigan, and why I will do the same here at Florida. No student should ever feel unsafe because of their Jewish identity.

I am committed to protecting Jewish students and to uphold a climate of respect here at the University of Florida. Antisemitism is not a partisan issue. It is a moral one. And we must be cleareyed and consistent in condemning it, confronting it, and preventing it.

Second, I want to address the issue of DEI.

As I have said publicly and unequivocally: DEI will not return to the University of Florida during my presidency. I fully support the reforms signed into law by Gov. DeSantis and the steps already taken by this board and this institution. The University of Florida officially discontinued its DEI offices and programs on March 1, 2024. That decision was not only bold—it was necessary and courageous. I, like this university, am committed to providing an exceptional education to all students, protecting free speech and making sure everyone is evaluated on their merits.

In the fall of 2023, I initiated a similar decision at the University of Michigan. After more than a year of review involving the Board of Regents and the executive leadership team, it became clear that Michigan's very large and long-standing DEI programs were engendering feelings of division, disillusionment, and exclusion among some faculty, staff and students. I witnessed firsthand how these structures diverted resources away from student success and academic excellence.

As a result, under my leadership, Michigan made the very same decisions that UF has made—to eliminate DEI offices, to end mandatory diversity statements and to redirect investments toward programs that serve all students.

These actions—eliminating diversity statements in November 2024 and closing the DEI office in March 2025—stemmed from discussions initiated in 2023, well before the 2024 U.S. presidential election. It

is also important for me to note that these decisions were finalized well before anyone approached me about the University of Florida's presidential search.

I understand that a few individuals have circulated older statements or videos of me—regarding DEI programs at the University of Michigan and the University of British Columbia. I understand why some past statements have raised questions. In hindsight, I see those moments differently too. What matters most is not what was said then, but what I've done since—and what I am committed to doing here.

There are two important points to make. First, during that time, DEI programs were nearly universal across American higher education—including at institutions throughout the state of Florida and at the University of Florida itself. Second, the seismic shift we have seen in higher education throughout 2023 and 2024 began right here in Florida—driven by the leadership of Gov. DeSantis and state legislators. Like many other university leaders, I have evolved and changed my views on DEI based on what I have observed both at institutions I have led and across the broader landscape of higher education. As my research colleagues will understand, it is entirely reasonable, indeed a hallmark of the scientific method, to update our perspectives when we receive new data. So yes, my personal views have evolved over this time—much has occurred across the continent—and I am excited to be at the leading edge of this reform at the University of Florida, in the state of Florida.

The fact is that some of my past remarks on DEI do not reflect how I think today. That evolution did not happen overnight. It was shaped by what I witnessed firsthand: how large DEI bureaucracies, despite good intentions, began to stifle open dialogue, erode trust, and create division. It became clear to me—through experience, not theory—that something had gone wrong, and that real reform was necessary. Changing your mind isn't always easy, especially in public life. But when the evidence and outcomes are clear, leadership means acting on what you've learned. That's what I've done. And I will continue to lead with humility, clarity, and conviction.

In the past, I have also made land acknowledgment statements—often as part of institutional events. At the time I made those acknowledgements, I believed I was respecting history and honoring the contributions of Native peoples to our country. But I have come to understand that for many Americans, those statements symbolize a broader drift in higher education toward symbolism over substance. I have therefore discontinued the practice.

Today, I am focused on leading a university that unites people around shared values: merit, freedom of thought and excellence. I don't believe our role is to divide students by ancestry or historical grievance, but rather to prepare them to succeed in the real world, contribute to this nation, and strengthen our democracy. That's what the University of Florida stands for—and it's what I will advance every day as president.

I am certainly not coming to Gainesville to slow the pace of reform. I am coming because this is one of the places in the country where it is possible to focus on the core business of universities: education, research, healthcare and civil discourse. And if lasting change is the goal, reformers need people, like me, who have seen dysfunction from the inside—people who understand how ideologies spread, how they entrench themselves and how to dismantle them.

We have seen what happens when universities are handed over to political activists and grievance entrepreneurs. America needs leaders grounded in scholarship, not ideology. I am a biomedical scientist. I came to Florida to help rebuild higher education around excellence, inquiry and merit. I came to Florida because I truly believe that it can rise from being one of America's great public universities to becoming the very best. I did not come to bring DEI back. I came to make sure it never returns.

Questions regarding my position on climate change have also been raised.

I have embraced the position of institutional neutrality, which means I will not use my role to promote personal beliefs on politically or socially contested issues—including climate change.

It is not the role of a university president to advocate for one interpretation or viewpoint. My responsibility is to ensure that the university remains a trusted source of objective research, open dialogue and credible data. That is especially important on complex and evolving topics like climate change, where science must speak for itself and guide decision-making based on facts, not ideology.

The University of Florida will be committed to producing rigorous, impartial scientific research and sharing that knowledge with Florida's policymakers, industries and communities. My goal is to provide the state with the best possible data so that stakeholders across Florida can make informed decisions in the public interest.

Finally, I want to address the role of the university in this moment of global democratic uncertainty.

As I said last year on the Michigan Minds podcast, democracy is under threat. China, Russia, Iran and other adversaries are working systematically to undermine free societies, including ours. They are doing so not only through military and economic competition, but through disinformation, cyberattacks, and the erosion of civic trust.

Universities have a profound responsibility in the face of these threats. We are not only engines of discovery—we are also stewards of democracy. There is a fundamental responsibility for universities to educate future citizens and future government leaders who are committed to protecting our nation's remarkable democratic system. Again, this is not a partisan statement—it is a recognition that democracy, and the civic institutions that uphold it, form the cornerstone of our nation's fabric. Universities like the University of Florida must lead in advancing civic education that strengthens our shared democratic foundations.

That responsibility is powerfully embodied at the University of Florida through the work of the Hamilton School for Classical and Civic Education. With its commitment to open inquiry, philosophical rigor, and historical understanding, the Hamilton School is preparing students to be citizens—thoughtful, informed, and principled. I intend to fully support its growth and its mission.

As we look forward, I want to speak briefly about my vision for the University of Florida. Importantly, this vision will require a robust listening and planning process with the full university community and

our key stakeholders. It will ultimately be our collective vision.

I see us focusing and leading across six of the most dynamic themes in education and in our world, bolstered by specific actions we will take to realize the vision.

1. Lead nationally in interdisciplinary, AI-integrated research across all fields

We will position the University of Florida as a global leader in convergent research, bringing together scholars in public health, engineering, business, education, liberal arts and medicine to address complex challenges. In this endeavor, we will also extend our AI initiatives to encompass the arts, humanities, social sciences, and professional schools, exploring intersections of technology with ethics, culture, law, journalism and design.

2. Advance Florida's economic, civic, and cultural prosperity

We will deepen our role as Florida's land-grant and flagship university by aligning research with state priorities: agriculture, energy, infrastructure, education and cultural heritage. This will include expanding partnerships with Florida industries and government to embed our expertise in public problem-solving, especially through law, education, public health and architecture. We will also strengthen our leadership in civic education and classical learning through the Hamilton School while investing in public-facing scholarship in history, ethics, political science and religion.

3. Build a magnet for global talent across all disciplines

In parallel with growth in STEM and biomedical fields, we will recruit leading scholars and rising stars in humanities, social sciences, design, performing arts and professional disciplines. We will forge global academic partnerships which span disciplines—joint degrees in philosophy and technology, or arts and medicine—to prepare students for tomorrow's global challenges.

4. Make research central to the student experience—undergraduate through professional education

We will integrate hands-on research and creative work into every major, from studio arts to law clinics to engineering labs. In doing so, we will expand interdisciplinary capstones, faculty-mentored inquiry, and public scholarship opportunities across the entire campus.

5. Modernize infrastructure for innovation in all domains

We will build and renovate flexible, transdisciplinary spaces—such as collaborative labs, performance venues, digital humanities hubs and maker studios. We will also advance the university's "Smart Campus" transformation to support research, teaching and performance through AI-enabled technologies and digital platforms—while safeguarding academic freedom and privacy. The acquisition of Scripps by the University of Florida was a visionary move and will provide a strong foundation for the university to become an even more powerful force in biomedical innovation and translational science. And, the Jacksonville campus will expand our impact and provide advanced opportunities for academic programming, research, innovation and partnerships.

6. Secure institutional resilience and national leadership

We will broaden our research portfolio by investing in competitive funding for arts, humanities,

education, social policy, and public interest law, as well as traditional STEM fields. Simultaneously, we will grow our endowment through a targeted campaign which supports endowed chairs in underfunded fields, student support in creative disciplines, and public scholarship centers like the Hamilton School. Through our bold efforts, we will amplify the University of Florida's visibility as a beacon of excellence pluralism, and American renewal, shaping national discourse in education, democracy, culture, and innovation.

My goals are clear: to strengthen what I believe is one of the most consequential universities in America; to lead in the reform of higher education in ways that rebuild public trust and demonstrate value to all Americans—through merit, excellence and hard work; and to serve and enhance the success of Florida and our nation. I am proud to be an American, and I believe public universities have a patriotic duty to strengthen the country's future—by educating citizens, not activists.

One of the reasons the University of Florida stands apart from its peers is its courage to reject ideological conformity. While many elite universities have doubled down on activism, the University of Florida has doubled down on academic excellence, civil discourse and merit. This is not just a policy choice—it is a strategic differentiator. As president, I will not only uphold that distinction, I will also double down on it—because it sets the University of Florida apart, and because it is right.

In closing, I want to emphasize this point: we are not merely stewarding one of the top public universities in the nation, we are building something extraordinary for the future of Florida, for this great nation, and for the world.

I am not coming to impose a vision—I am coming to serve one. This is our moment. And with courage, clarity, and collaboration, we will show what American higher education can still be.

I am deeply honored to be invited to join you in that effort—and I cannot wait to get started.

Thank you—and Go Gators.

