

UWF Board of Trustees
11000 University Parkway
Building 10, Office 102
Pensacola, FL 32514

October 12, 2020

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

Dear Chair Kitson,

At its meeting on September 9, 2020, the University of West Florida Board of Trustees unanimously approved the attached "President's Employment Agreement," which extends Dr. Martha D. Saunders' contractual term for a one-year period commencing on January 1, 2021, through and including December 31, 2021, on the terms and conditions described therein. In support of this decision, I am very pleased to provide the following summary of accomplishments by Dr. Saunders, who has served as President of the University of West Florida since January 1, 2017.

As president, Dr. Saunders has organized her activities around an approved University strategic plan in alignment with the Board of Governors' strategic priorities, with an extensive track record of success. Her relentless focus on excellence has resulted in the University ranking among the three top-performing public universities in the performance-based funding metrics established by the Board of Governors for three out of four years of her presidency. The University has received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from INSIGHT into Diversity magazine three out of the last four years and was named a "Great College to Work For" in 2019 and 2020.

She continues to recognize and act on the best opportunities for UWF, increasing its visibility through innovative programs. Under Dr. Saunders' leadership, the institution has ascended as a national leader in cybersecurity. In 2020, the National Security Agency and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security redesignated UWF as the Southeast Centers of Academic Excellence in Cybersecurity Regional Hub, providing leadership to advance cyber defense education among colleges and universities in eight states, along with Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The NSA also selected UWF to lead a coalition of 10 nationally-designated institutions in establishing the National Center of Academic Excellence-Cybersecurity Workforce Development Program, which will focus on recruiting, preparing and placing transitioning military and first responders into cybersecurity work roles.

Dr. Saunders' showcased her exemplary leadership this year when, under extremely difficult circumstances, she effectively navigated the University through the COVID-19 pandemic. While coordinating a seamless transition to remote instruction, Dr. Saunders successfully executed the majority of her goals. With a laser focus on positioning UWF as a desirable and accessible institution for all prospective students and a dedication to maintaining the University's spirit of innovation and adaptability, Dr. Saunders has proven her ability to capitalize on UWF's assets and determine new areas of growth.

Below are some of her most significant accomplishments, among many:

Teaching and Learning

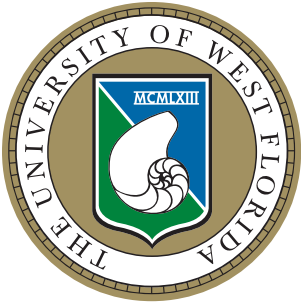
The University, in partnership with the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, welcomed the inaugural cohort of five students to the newly established intelligent systems and robotics doctoral program, which is the first in Florida.

- The UWF Center for Cybersecurity launched the Cybersecurity for All® program to enhance workforce development.
- The University was named a 2020 Gold-Rated Military Friendly School in the large public university category.

office 850.474.2449
bot@uwf.edu

uwf.edu

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- Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University had prepared for interruption of operations by creating e-learning shells for every course offered on the Canvas Learning Management Platform. Faculty who were not previously using distance learning in their courses only had to activate the shell and their courses were available online at the beginning of the pandemic. As a result, UWF saved precious time converting our courses to safer, remote delivery.

Scholarship, Research and Innovation

- The University of West Florida mechanical engineering and computer science programs recently achieved accreditation from the respective Engineering and Computing Accreditation Commissions of ABET, the global accreditor of college and university programs in applied and natural science, computing, engineering and engineering technology. Additionally, the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering received re-accreditation from the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET.
- The Hal Marcus College of Science and Engineering celebrated the grand opening of the Laboratory Sciences Annex, a state-of-the-art facility that provides additional space for wet teaching labs and offices for faculty and staff.
- The University won a five-year grant totaling approximately \$2.4 million to prepare cybersecurity students for federal, state, local and tribal government organizations amid a cyber workforce shortage.
- At the beginning of the global pandemic, the University responded to the national PPE shortage by asking one of the University's direct support organizations to manufacture, manage and distribute 3D-printed full face shield supplies at its Sea3D Additive Manufacturing Laboratory in downtown Pensacola. The 3D-printed full face shields are provided to local health care organizations free of charge.

Community and Business Engagement

- The University of West Florida is further positioned to find and fill critical gaps in Northwest Florida's high-tech workforce through a Triumph Gulf Coast grant. The grant will address shortages in additive and advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity.
- In only its fourth season of existence, the University of West Florida football program won its first NCAA Division II national championship, defeating previously undefeated Minnesota State University 48-40 in McKinney, Texas.
- The Fall 2020 Returning to UWF Plan received public endorsements from the City of Pensacola, Escambia County, Greater Pensacola Chamber of Commerce, Pensacola Downtown Improvement Board, Santa Rosa County and the Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce. The plan was formed to protect the health and well-being of the entire Northwest Florida community.

Additionally, Dr. Saunders was the recipient of multiple honors, including being named one of Miami Herald's 50 Influential Floridians in 2019 and 2020; one of Florida's 500 Most Influential Leaders by Florida Trend in 2020; and winner of an 850 Magazine Pinnacle Award, highlighting women in business. She continues to be an active member of the Northwest Florida community, serving on various community boards and organizations, and is sought out for interviews and presentations as a thought leader in higher education. Throughout her presidency, she has demonstrated a continued commitment to the classroom, teaching an undergraduate class in Leadership Communication for the Department of Communication.

Florida law, namely Section 1001.706(6)(a), Florida Statutes, entrusts to the Board of Governors confirmation of the reappointment of a university president by the university's board of trustees. Accordingly, on behalf of the UWF Board of Trustees, I respectfully request that the Board of Governors confirm Dr. Saunders' reappointment for a one-year period commencing January 1, 2021, through and including December 31, 2021, on the terms and conditions described in the approved employment agreement. It should be noted that Dr. Saunders has preemptively declined a salary increase in her FY 2021 contract terms, and has also requested that any proposed performance bonus earned under her FY 2020 contract instead go to UWF's Employee Emergency Assistance Fund.

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

Sincerely,

Dave Cleveland, Chair
University of West Florida Board of Trustees

cc: Dr. Martha D. Saunders