



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

IN RECOGNITION AND PROFOUND APPRECIATION
OF DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

COMMENDATION OF MARTHA D. SAUNDERS AS PRESIDENT EMERITUS

- WHEREAS,** President Martha D. Saunders has provided dedicated service as the sixth president of the University of West Florida since January 1, 2017; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders has dutifully educated the next generation of communication professionals at UWF for over four decades and will continue as a tenured professor; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders has also served the University in a variety of leadership roles including Director of the Honors Program, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Provost and Executive Vice President, among other positions; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders championed the creation of more than 20 new academic programs, including cutting-edge offerings in cybersecurity, mechanical engineering, and the state's first Intelligent Systems and Robotics Ph.D. program in collaboration with the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders has defied national trends by achieving record enrollment every year since 2021, marking a 14% increase over the past five years, reflecting her efforts to create a welcoming and dynamic academic environment; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders continuously led UWF to its status as a top-performing public university in the Florida Board of Governors performance-based funding metrics; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders spearheaded the establishment of UWF's Center for Cybersecurity, enhancing student support and expanding our influence in critical fields; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders' leadership has resulted in top performing national rankings for the University, including top regional institutions in the South, a Gold-Level Military Friendly School and Military Spouse Friendly School, and a Great College to Work For; and milestone athletics achievements including national championship titles for UWF's men's tennis, football and men's golf teams; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders took great pride in the natural beauty of UWF's 1,600-acre campus, bringing the azaleas to their full potential, being listed on the National Camellia Trail and earning the Tree Campus Higher Education designation from the Arbor Day Foundation; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders led the University to reaching a historic milestone of 100,000 alumni; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders was instrumental in the execution of a successful 50th Anniversary Capital Campaign and the launch of the Here for Good Capital Campaign; and
- WHEREAS,** President Saunders has been a highly respected leader in higher education at both the national and local levels, earning numerous accolades including the Liberty Bell Award, the Ethics in Business Award, recognition among the Florida's 500 Most Influential Leaders, Miami Herald's 50 Influential Floridians and inclusion on the InWeekly Power List, among other accolades; and

NOW, THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED that The University of West Florida Board of Trustees, at its regular meeting on this 12th day of June, the year of 2025, hereby extends its utmost appreciation to Martha D. Saunders for her leadership and exemplary service to the University and confers upon Martha D. Saunders the title, President Emeritus of the University of West Florida, with all the privileges pertaining thereto, effective July 14, 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution is included in the minutes of the meeting, and a copy is presented to Martha D. Saunders as a token of the Board's appreciation and sincere thanks.

Rebecca Matthews
Board of Trustees Chair