

UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA

Presidential Search

Dear Colleagues,

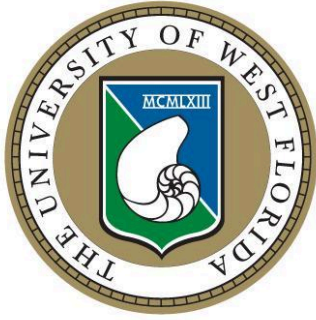
Today, I am pleased to announce the members of the University of West Florida Presidential Search Committee. Please read the [press release](#) and visit the [Presidential Search website](#) for updates and opportunities to provide input.

These individuals, who were appointed in accordance with Florida Board of Governors regulations, represent the Florida Board of Governors, UWF Board of Trustees, faculty, students, alumni, military and the community.

Each member offers a unique professional background, public service experience, as well as a commitment to the success of UWF. I am grateful for their dedication to this process and for giving their time to assist our University throughout the search.

The UWF Presidential Search Committee members are:

- **Zack Smith** - Chair, Presidential Search Committee; UWF Board of Trustees; Chair, UWF Student Affairs Committee; Senior Legal Fellow, The Heritage Foundation
- **Trista Bennett** - UWF Board of Trustees; President, UWF Student Government Association
- **Dr. Ken Ford** - Founder and Chief Executive Officer Emeritus, Institute for Human & Machine Cognition
- **Ashton Hayward** - President, Andrews Research & Education Foundation; Co-founder, Andrews Medicine; Principal at Shumaker; Former Pensacola Mayor (2011-2018)
- **Alan Levine** - Vice Chair, Florida Board of Governors; Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, Ballad Health
- **Ginger Bowden Madden** - State Attorney for the First Judicial Circuit of Florida
- **Sabrina McLaughlin** - Owner and Executive Creative Director, 3125 Communications
- **Collier Merrill** - President, Merrill Land Company; President and Owner, Great Southern Restaurants; Chair, UWF Historic Trust
- **Paul Mixon** - District 1 County Commissioner
- **Dr. Rachel Moya** - UWF Board of Trustees; Chair, UWF Finance and Facilities Committee; Chief Executive Officer, Scale Strategies Inc.
- **David Peaden** - External Affairs Manager (Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties), Florida Power & Light
- **Dr. David Ramsey** - Chair and Professor, UWF Reubin O'D. Askew Department of Government



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- **Dr. Heather Riddell** - 2025-2026 Faculty Senate Representative, UWF Board of Trustees; Associate Professor, UWF Department of Communication
- **Ashley Ross** - UWF Board of Trustees; President, Ross Consulting
- **Retired Captain Terrence "Village" Shashaty** - President, American Heritage Financial; Former Commanding Officer, Pensacola Naval Air Station

UWF will follow the process required by the [State University System's Board of Governors regulation for presidential searches](#). The committee is advisory and will be responsible for recommending qualified candidates to the UWF Board of Trustees, which will then interview the finalists and select the next president, pending final confirmation from the Board of Governors.

Many thanks to all and we will provide you with updates as we progress.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Matthews
Chair, UWF Board of Trustees