



UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA

Presidential Search

Dear Argonauts and friends,

On behalf of the University of West Florida Board of Trustees, I am pleased to announce the Board has selected Manny Diaz Jr. to serve as the next president of UWF, pending confirmation by the State University System of Florida Board of Governors. This decision reflects the Trustees' confidence in his leadership and vision for UWF, and our collective excitement for the new chapter ahead for students, faculty, staff, alumni and the entire Northwest Florida community.

The [Presidential Search Committee](#), led by UWF Trustee Zack Smith, conducted a comprehensive process in accordance with state law and Florida Board of Governors' regulations – developing the position profile, engaging stakeholders, marketing the role, screening the most qualified applicants, and conducting in-person interviews before recommending a finalist to the Board for consideration. I extend my gratitude to the Search Committee members for being generous with their time and expertise as each took on this important duty. As the next step, the appointment will be presented to the Florida Board of Governors for consideration and confirmation.

Manny Diaz Jr. is a lifelong educator and experienced executive. Raised in a working-class family in Hialeah, Florida, he has always been passionate about learning and teaching. He began his career teaching social studies and coaching baseball in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, later serving as an assistant principal and then chief operating officer at Doral College. He subsequently served in the Florida Legislature and is Florida's first Hispanic Commissioner of Education, where he also sat on the State University System of Florida Board of Governors. He holds a bachelor's degree from St. Thomas University, a master's in educational leadership from Nova Southeastern University, and completed executive study at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Throughout his interim service at UWF, President-elect Diaz has emphasized student-centered academic excellence, community partnership, athletics and momentum in priority areas ranging from research to workforce-aligned programs such as cybersecurity, robotics and military affairs, among many others.

This is a moment of promise for UWF. Thank you to our campus community, alumni, donors, military partners and local leaders for your continued support and engagement throughout the search. We look forward to this exciting new chapter.

Go Argos!

Best regards,
Rebecca Matthews
Chair, UWF Board of Trustees