

UA Board of Regents Office

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Many Traditions One Alaska

February 16, 2026

Dear UA Community -

The Presidential Search Process is well underway, and we've seen strong interest in the position. For priority consideration, applications must be submitted by close of business on March 5, 2026. The committee will begin the review process immediately after.

As we prepare for the interviews and vetting of finalists later this spring, I want to share an important update with you about how finalist candidates will be evaluated and how members of our university community will be involved.

A Shift in Finalist Evaluation Procedures

Historically, UA has conducted fully public finalist interviews and forums for senior leadership positions. For this presidential search, the Board of Regents has asked the Search Committee to use a different approach termed the "representative model" that balances transparency with candidate confidentiality.

This approach has been recommended by WittKieffer, the third-party search firm we hired to identify candidates and help with the selection process. The representative model reflects how many public universities now conduct their senior leadership searches. In recent years, highly qualified candidates - especially sitting presidents and chancellors - have declined to participate in searches with a fully public evaluation process for finalists due to concerns about professional risk if they are not selected for the role. Adopting a representative model helps ensure UA can attract and seriously consider the strongest possible candidates while still incorporating meaningful stakeholder input.

How the Representative Model Will Work

The Search Committee is charged with vetting candidates and forwarding the top three to five unranked finalists to the Board of Regents. Finalist candidates will visit each main university campus. While on campus, they will meet with the chancellor and a subset of the chancellor's management team, as well as representatives from the Faculty Councils, Staff Councils, and student governments.

The candidates may also meet with community leaders from the various main campus communities. While in Fairbanks, the candidates will meet with the senior system office leadership as well as the full Board of Regents. During their visits, the finalists will have the opportunity to ask questions, tour the main campuses, and see the communities where they are located.

All individuals involved in the candidate selection process will be required to sign non-disclosure agreements to protect the identity of each candidate and any potentially personally identifiable information about them. Feedback from the various stakeholders involved in the interview process will be provided back to the Board of Regents for its consideration.

Commitment to Engagement and Transparency

The Board and Search Committee recognize that this model is a departure from past practice. I want you to know that this decision was made thoughtfully, with the goal of balancing openness with the practical realities of university presidential searches today and UA's long-term interests.

Selecting the next UA President is one of the most important responsibilities of the Board of Regents. The input the Board receives from the various stakeholder groups will be carefully considered as we evaluate the finalists and make an offer.

We will continue to communicate key milestones and opportunities for feedback throughout the search. If you have any questions, please feel free to forward them through the staff, faculty and student representatives on the Search Committee (Austin Cranford for staff, Jackie Cason for faculty, and Bonnie Brennan for students).

Regards,

Scott Jepsen
Chair, UA Presidential Search Committee
Chair, UA Board of Regents