



**USF Presidential Search Committee  
Minutes  
Thursday, March 27, 2025**

Welcome and Charge

Chair, Mike Griffin

Chair Mike Griffin welcomed everyone and is grateful to everyone for agreeing to serve on this search committee. Chair Weatherford has charged this committee with selecting the University of South Florida's ninth President.

Today's meeting will cover the general process of the committee with guidelines for those that are on the USF Board of Trustees as the law has changed since the last search and we want to be sure everyone is aware of how it all will work. We will be following the process required by the Board of Governors and are thankful to have Governor Ken Jones on the call today. This committee serves in an advisory role which will be responsible for ultimately recommending a slate of highly qualified candidate(s) or candidate finalists to the USF Board of Trustees. The BOT will then interview those finalists and select the Next President upon confirmation by the Board of Governors.

Chair Griffin would like to thank President Law for her incredible leadership and the tremendous work that she has done and continues to do. USF is grateful for the successes that have happened over the past three and a half years with her as the President.

We will gather stakeholder input through multiple listening sessions, which will help refine the position criteria and begin identifying qualified candidates. Details on how the community can provide input will be shared soon. We also have a website, which hopefully you have visited, where much of the information will be posted. When Mike Griffin led this process a few years ago, there was significant feedback and engagement from the USF community, and we expect the same level of involvement this time. We will provide clear guidance through our website.

USF plans to work with SP&A again for consulting services in this search. Out of respect for the University of Florida, we will wait for their search to be fully completed before bringing SP&A on board. Once UF's process concludes, we will hear from Alberto Pimentel and his team.

Ken Jones, Governor of the Florida Board of Governors, shared his experience serving on numerous search committees, noting that some have gone more smoothly than others. Over his four years on the Board, nearly every president at the twelve public universities has been replaced, an unprecedented turnover in such a short time. He highlighted the significant media attention this search will attract and emphasized that transparency is key. This search presents an opportunity to set an example for how to conduct a process effectively. He acknowledged the success of the last search and praised Rhea Law for her outstanding leadership. Her contract was renewed at the recent Board of Governors meeting, extending until a new president is chosen. He thanked everyone for their service and encouraged them to reach out to Mike Griffin with any questions. He also reminded everyone that Mike Griffin, as Chair, will speak on behalf of the committee.

## Open Meetings, Sunshine Law, and Public Records Compliance

General Counsel, Gerard Solis

Gerard Solis gave a presentation using PowerPoint regarding Sunshine Law and public records law. There have been changes in the law around confidentiality for applicants, however, Florida has the broadest sunshine laws in the country and for that reason the attention to these laws and the exemptions that go with them are important will help to recruit the very best President that we can.

We will be talking about two laws, open meetings law (or Sunshine Law) and Public Records Law. Starting with Chapter 286, the Open Meetings Law, anytime this committee gets together or a committee like it, there are three things you must do.

- (1) That meeting must be open to the public,
- (2) You must provide reasonable notice and
- (3) You must keep minutes.

Gerard Solis discussed each requirement in further detail.

All materials involved in the search process are considered public records, except for any information that can identify a candidate. Public record requests may be submitted during this process, and if you receive one personally, please direct it to Gerard Solis.

Please direct any questions to Gerard Solis, Kiara Gayle or Brittany Dix and refrain from asking another member of the search committee to avoid any potential issues. Specifically, under the Open Meetings Law, a meeting occurs when at least two members of the committee are present and are discussing matters that could come before the committee for action.

Committee member Derrick Brooks asked for clarification regarding other university business, and Gerard provided an explanation.

## Non-Disclosure Requirements

General Counsel, Gerard Solis

Committee members will be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement, which is best practice and aligns with the Board of Governors Regulations. This template has been successfully used by other universities in their searches without placing an undue burden on individuals volunteering their

time. The agreement acknowledges that, as a committee member, you will defer to Mike Griffin to speak on behalf of the committee, and the Chair of the Board of Trustees will speak on behalf of the university.

It also emphasizes the importance of the information you receive, which must be treated confidentially. We will share parts of this non-disclosure agreement with both our search consultant and applicants, helping them feel confident that the committee is committed to protecting their identities.

Additionally, the agreement specifies that you will not contact individuals outside of the process unless explicitly directed by the committee.

Adjournment

Chair Griffin

Chair Mike Griffin acknowledged that some aspects of the process may take longer than expected, and that there may be periods where things seem slow. He emphasized that patience and attention to detail will be crucial during this time. We will ensure that ample notice is given when it's time to reconvene. Once the UF search is finished, listening sessions will be held, and your participation is encouraged. There were no further comments, and Chair Mike Griffin adjourned the meeting.