



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

North Carolina A&T State University Chancellor Search Charge to Search Advisory Committee UNC President Peter Hans November 6, 2023

One of the most important duties of any UNC System President is to help select strong leaders for our institutions. Choosing the right chancellor is crucial for the campus, for the community it serves, for our state, and for the strength of the entire university system. Capable leadership matters, and it can resonate for decades. I take this responsibility seriously, and I approach it with a deep commitment to the institution and its faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

A successful chancellorship begins with the thoughtful work of the search advisory committee — with all of you. I am honored to serve alongside you, and grateful to each of you for committing your time and goodwill to this important endeavor. We are all here to serve North Carolina A&T, and I know that the Board of Governors, your colleagues across the UNC System, and of course, the broader Aggie community are grateful for your dedication.

I am especially indebted to immediate past Board of Trustees Chair Hilda Pinnix-Ragland for leading this search advisory committee. I have great admiration for Hilda's leadership and her passion for this university and its mission. I am also grateful to A&T's current Board Chair, Kim Gatling, for being such a wonderful partner throughout this process. We've set the stage for a professional, energizing, and successful search on behalf of North Carolina A&T.

The purpose of my charge to this committee is to place all of us on shared ground as we embark on this important undertaking and to explain the process we will follow. There are three broad areas that will be crucial to our success:

First, your role as members of the search advisory committee.

Second, traits I consider important in your next chancellor.

Third, the process through which we will work.

Role of Search Advisory Committee Members

Each of you was selected for this committee because of your leadership, your passion, and your demonstrated commitment to North Carolina A&T. You all have expertise and perspectives that are vital to the search process, and all of you share a common bond in your desire to see North Carolina A&T soar to ever-greater heights.

Under UNC Policy 200.8, [Policy on Chancellor Searches and Elections](#), our duty as members of the search advisory committee is to see ourselves and to function not as representatives of particular interest groups, but as members of a team dedicated to a single objective: the

identification and recommendation of the strongest possible candidates to lead this institution into the future. In fulfilling our shared duty, we are responsible for receiving input from a wide range of stakeholders, crafting a leadership statement that best describes the desired qualities of a new chancellor, considering the qualifications of candidates and conducting interviews, and finally, proposing an unranked slate of at least three highly qualified candidates for consideration by the North Carolina A&T Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees will then nominate at least three unranked candidates to me. Once I receive the recommended candidates, I will carefully consider each of them and nominate one individual for election by the UNC Board of Governors.

Because your full participation in this process is crucial to our success, I ask that you commit to attending all search committee meetings and candidate interviews. I plan to personally participate in meetings and interviews and look forward to spending time with you as we conduct our work in the months ahead.

I also ask that you keep an open mind toward all candidates and assess each individual on the basis of the skills, attributes, and experience that we identify in the leadership profile as being most critical to the long-term needs and ambitions of this institution.

We trust and fully expect members of this committee to maintain confidentiality as required by state law. Breaking confidentiality can jeopardize the search process, harm the institution, and potentially damage a candidate's career. Out of respect for your fellow committee members and the value of our shared work, please keep our deliberations in the strictest confidence.

Finally, let's all respect the role of our committee chair. Chair Pinnix-Ragland will serve as the sole spokesperson for the search advisory committee and the arbiter of all questions about the search. Please refer all inquiries to her so that we can ensure that any information shared about the search is consistent with state law, university policy, and our charge. For legal advice, Chair Pinnix-Ragland will rely on North Carolina A&T's general counsel, Melissa Jackson Holloway, who will serve as legal counsel to this committee. Please direct any questions you have, legal or otherwise, to Chair Pinnix-Ragland.

Traits of a Strong Campus Leader

We're not here to fill Chancellor Harold Martin's shoes — that's not possible after such a storied career and a brilliant tenure leading this institution. But it absolutely *is* possible to find the right leader for North Carolina A&T's next chapter, and that's our commitment. Given this institution's sterling national reputation and tremendous momentum, I have no doubt we will attract and benefit from a highly competitive candidate pool.

In thinking about where to begin in developing this charge, I looked to the 2009 leadership statement that resulted in Chancellor Martin's selection. Many of the core insights from that search remain excellent guideposts today — reverence for the history and legacy of North

Carolina A&T, strategic vision for the future of this great university, a devotion to student success, respect for faculty and staff, enthusiastic engagement with alumni and the broader Aggie community, and, of course, profound personal integrity. Those traits will always be crucial for great leadership at A&T.

While I think you would all agree with me that these skills and attributes are still as relevant today as they were 14 years ago, times have changed, and North Carolina A&T has grown and evolved considerably.

As we look toward the university's next era, we need our next chancellor to demonstrate leadership capabilities and attributes in the following areas:

- *North Carolina A&T's Unique History and Mission.* Someone with a profound reverence for North Carolina A&T's unique 132-year history and mission as North Carolina's only land-grant, doctoral research, historically black college and university (HBCU), and the institution's unique place in American higher education as our country's largest and most productive HBCU.
- *Integrity and Transparency.* Someone with unwavering integrity and commitment to transparency, which is so important for earning and maintaining public trust.
- *Strategic Partnerships.* Someone who can forge strategic partnerships and strong relationships with the North Carolina A&T Board of Trustees, UNC System leadership and sister institutions, state and local community leaders, corporate partners, alumni, donors, the entire Aggie community, and other key stakeholders.
- *UNC System Governance and Strategic Goals.* Someone who understands and appreciates the structure of the UNC System and its strategic plan, and is committed to advancing our shared goals, especially student success.
- *Student Success.* Someone with an intense focus on student success. Someone who is committed to academic excellence and cultivating the right environment for our students, especially those who are first generation, supported by financial aid, or attending college while raising families of their own. A&T's next leader must feel the value of access in their core, and see the link between affordability and student support, and the upward economic and social mobility that a degree from A&T means for its graduates.
- *Strategic Vision and Leadership.* Someone with a vision that matches the enormous capacity and potential of North Carolina A&T. Someone with a sense of energy and possibility that balances short-term demands with long-term aspirations to drive this institution's growth and success in achieving its strategic goals, especially in advancing the institution's doctoral research productivity and national standing, expanding its excellence in STEM fields and high-need workforce programs, and extending the impact of its community engagement.
- *Economic Development.* Someone who embraces the institution's essential role in the revitalization and community and economic development of our local community, the broader region, and our state.

- *Government Relations.* Someone who has a natural comfort with advocacy and government relations, sharing the A&T story with lawmakers and leaders at every level and across every political background.
- *Human Capital and Infrastructure.* Someone who understands the essential contribution of world-class faculty and high-performing staff, both of whom are at the heart of this institution, and the necessity of top-quality infrastructure to support A&T's mission at the highest level.
- *Fiduciary Stewardship.* Someone with the experience and ability to manage the institution's budget in a fiscally prudent and transparent manner, making the highest and best use of public and private resources.
- *Operational Excellence.* Someone who applies sound management practices to sustain the operational health of the institution and advances the university's commitment to business process enhancement and customer service.
- *Academic Freedom and Free Expression.* Someone who is wholly committed to the principles of academic freedom and free expression.
- *Creativity and Innovative Leadership.* Someone with a demonstrated eagerness to explore innovative approaches and who welcomes new ideas for strengthening this institution's impact while at the same time honoring its unique history and mission.

North Carolina A&T deserves a leader who feels immense pride for all that this university represents, and immense excitement about all that it can become.

That's a lot to ask of a leader, but it's not too much to ask on behalf of North Carolina A&T and all the people it serves. I have no doubt that the depth and richness of the candidate pool will help drive our success. We will cast a wide net and consider candidates both internal and external, traditional and nontraditional. We cannot go into this process with a rigid idea of who the next chancellor might be. We must remain open-minded in our search and diligent in our review and consideration of candidates.

There's only one Harold Martin, and we've been incredibly fortunate to have his wisdom and leadership during the last 14 years. Now, we can – and we will – find the right person for North Carolina A&T's next chapter.

Search Process

Our process will follow state law, university policy, and well-established procedures for conducting a professional, successful search. This includes complying with open meetings and confidentiality laws. Melissa Holloway will provide greater detail on those requirements during today's meeting.

This search will be supported by an executive search firm, helping ensure we cast the widest net possible for promising candidates. The process for selecting that firm is already underway and

you'll hear more about that during today's meeting. I want to thank your Chief of Staff, Erin Hart, for her exemplary work in managing the search process thus far. Her professionalism and grace have kept us on track, and I'm grateful!

Finally, I want to stress the importance of gathering broad input from the Aggie community – both on campus and well beyond – as we move forward. It is absolutely essential to the success of this search. The campus has already launched a website where updated information will be posted throughout the search process. The website includes an online survey so that we can hear the Aggie community's thoughts about campus priorities, points of pride, and the desired qualities and characteristics of the next chancellor. The campus will also host a series of listening sessions, and the search firm might suggest other opportunities to gather input.

Public universities serve an amazing range of constituents, and I encourage everyone who cares about North Carolina A&T's future to offer their thoughts and ideas during this search. This is a moment of transition for this institution, which gives us a wonderful opportunity to hear about your priorities for A&T's next chapter in its long and storied history, and how this institution's next leader can best serve its mission. I'm excited for what we'll learn together.

Our goal is to successfully complete this search by the end of the academic year. While it is far more important to get the right person than adhere strictly to a timetable, I'm confident that we can work thoughtfully and efficiently toward the goal of me recommending a nominee to the UNC Board of Governors for election by the end of the spring semester.

It's an honor to be a part of this process and to work alongside such a distinguished committee. Selecting the right leader for North Carolina A&T is a top priority for me, for the Board of Trustees, the Board of Governors, and the state of North Carolina. The Aggie community is counting on us, and I know we'll make them proud.