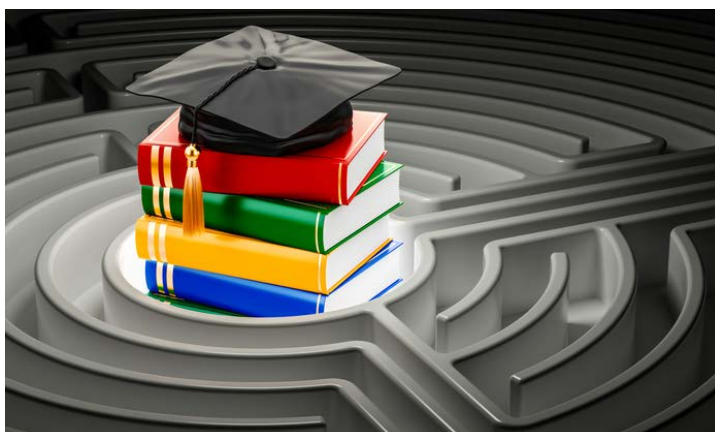


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## The High Demand for Higher Education Leaders Continues



The higher education landscape is shifting across the world, and the next generation of university leaders require a unique set of skills to negotiate this change, according to executive recruiters.

The traditional university model is being challenged by growing student migration, disruptive technologies, and an increasingly competitive market-driven economy, says **Odgers Berndtson**. “The higher education sector has become truly global, with academics moving internationally to enhance their careers,” the firm said. “Today’s university leaders must be able to create and demonstrate fiscal as well as academic value for stakeholders. An increasing focus on international collaboration and industry partnerships requires higher education leaders to be commercially savvy and politically agile.”

With the school year winding down, a number of top colleges and universities have announced they are seeking new, high profile leaders to take them into new eras of fundraising, digitalization, sports and, in some cases, globalization. Several universities haven’t changed leaders in years or even decades, and their boards of trustees and search committees are finding an entirely new and highly competitive landscape as they set out. It is another reason why they’re calling in executive recruiters to assist.

The role of the university president seems to change in response to cyclical economic crises. This was evident in 2008 with the housing market, and in 2000 in response to the dot-com bubble bursting, according to Barry Vines, managing director and senior member of **ZRG Partners’** higher education practice. “As the underlying economics of higher education shift, we will sometimes see that the fit of a particular president to her or his institution has changed in response,” he said. “Sometimes that leads to a disconnect where there was previously a fit. Top academic institutions require

the president to be very visible at fundraisers and events. Some institutions need the president to be engaged as a community leader off-campus as well as on.”

The president’s ultimate responsibility, however, continues to be the safety of the students, faculty, and staff. So how does a university president continue to manage the demand for her or his time? “The answer is in the fit,” said Mr. Vines. “The reason for vetting the fit is to find out if this potential president can cover the institution’s need for leadership. University presidents are people as well. They carry the burden of unhappy alumni, lack of funds, and failing programs. The current demand depends on the institution’s need for leadership. That need isn’t only limited to open searches and positions. You also need to consider the type of leadership needed, again, as fits with the underlying economic needs of the institution, its city or town, or even its state. When those conditions shift, you’ll see more institutions seeking out leaders that can respond to the present moment, not in a capricious way, but with the longevity of the institution at the heart of the matter.”

### BY THE NUMBERS

#### The Search for Leadership

At least **92%** of all university and college president searches are conducted in partnership with an executive search firm.

Source: Higher Ed Dive

The reason for turnover again points to the fact that the president is not aligned with the needs of the institution. Sometimes that alignment can change. No institution needs or wants a president-for-life. “If the president is making solid decisions on key initiatives, they can stay out of trouble with the board of trustees,” said Mr. Vines. “Misalignment between the board and the president is never easy to overcome, but it’s also not usually impossible. Thinking of public institutions alone, the opportunity for a new generation of university presidents aligns with the need in that state. There isn’t a single mold that you can use to stamp out new presidents. A well-funded public institution doesn’t need the same things from their president that a small private institution without much of an endowment does. Regardless of the situation—private or public, well-funded or attempting to grow—if the supporters get behind a president, their tenure as president will be longer. Without that base of support, however, the

(cont’d. to page 2)



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president feels that they can no longer lead an institution effectively and they are more likely to resign. Then comes the turmoil."

### Community Colleges

Community colleges across the nation are losing a record number of presidents. Inside Higher Education recently reported that California Community College leaders say that the pandemic has exacerbated an already rampant leadership turnover in the system. Larry Galizio president and CEO of the Community College League of California says that at least 17 of the 137 California community college leaders have retired between January 2020 and March 2022. He noted that the demands of the president's job and the emotional toll of the pandemic have led to burnout and prompted early retirements.

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*"The role of the university president seems to change in response to cyclical economic crises. This was evident in 2008 with the housing market, and in 2000 in response to the dot-com bubble bursting."*

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"We are also seeing similar losses of community college leadership across America," said Preston Pulliams, president and CEO of **Gold Hill Associates**, which specializes in executive searches for community colleges. "The overall result being an unprecedented loss of senior leadership skills and talent across the nation's community colleges. This often occurs with decreasing predictability and planning therefore it can be very disruptive for each of these institutions. These turnovers can trigger other staff retirements and resignations, slow the pace of the college's strategic planning process, and negatively impact the college's ongoing operations and commitments."

This loss of leadership has also revealed another issue for higher education and that is a lack of true succession planning. "A planning process for a succession plan should begin the moment a new president is hired," Mr. Pulliams said. "An effective succession plan should also be in place for the executive cabinet officers who are also retiring and resigning at record rates. These plans should identify and describe the replacement processes for these critical positions and include an onboarding process for the hired individuals. These components will allow colleges as they are faced with these record level retirements and resignations to have some planned approaches to assist them in responding to these record losses of critical leadership."

Mr. Pulliams says key characteristic for future community college leadership can differ depending on their ability to manage institutional transformation. The past expectations of our community college leaders are changing. "There is now tremendous public pressure for effective crisis management, student cost containment, and student graduation and completion rates increases especially for the students of color," he said.

*(cont'd. to page 3)*

Under the current challenges faced by most of our nation's community colleges one of the most critical is the need to increase the community college student's completion rates. Joe May, chancellor emeritus of Dallas College identified four key leadership strategies to address the need for more successful student completion rates. They are: Consider the community before the college; cultivate employer partnerships; eliminate significant barriers that require minor fixes; and give learners agency over their skills.

"It is my perception that good leadership is impossible without effective communication skills," said Mr. Pulliams. "Creating and promoting a vision, team building, and collaboration are all based on effective communication skills. In addition, the most critical component of effective communication skills is the ability to be an active listener. This involves responding in a sensitive and appropriate manner. This ability will be a foundational method of building trust with a leader's staff, faculty, and communities. It is with this trust that will eventually allow leaders to deal with the challenges that were listed in this article and allow them to create real institutional transformations."

### Retiring Baby Boomers

The Great Resignation isn't playing out in Canada as it is in the U.S., at least not yet, said Alex Verdecchia, principal at **McDermott + Bull**. "Succession planning has always been something institutions have attempted to improve, with some incorporating formal training into their succession plans," he said. "The pandemic, however, forced many institutions to focus on the more emergent issues such as student safety, balancing the rights of individuals against the need for public safety, the increased demand in hybrid education across all disciplines, ensuring quality teaching, and learning via an online medium that is new to many, etc."

Smaller, liberal arts colleges seem to have been hit hard by the pandemic. "Smaller institutions tend to pull their leadership talent from other similarly positioned universities as research-intensive universities tend to pull from other research-intensive universities," said Mr. Verdecchia. "What we've seen is that while the pandemic may have impacted smaller institutions harder, recruiting executive talent to those institutions has not been affected significantly." Mr. Verdecchia notes that in Canada, the divide between private enterprise and public-sector institutions is significant. "It is unusual for candidates with purely private sector experience to find their way into leadership roles in higher education," he said. "Where we see this occasionally is in leadership roles for business schools. Colleges and polytechnic institutes with their focus on applied education are more likely to hire from the private sector, but even then, the preference is to find candidates with a mix of public and private sector experience."

### The Great Realignment

"I feel that we are not seeing the Great Resignation but the Great Realignment," said Jane Griffith, managing partner and founder of **Griffith Group**. "Candidates are questions if their values align with their organization and if not, leaving those roles. That being said, I believe there should be a huge emphasis on succession planning

## LEADERSHIP SEARCH

### EFL Associates Seeks Provost for Ottawa University in Kansas



Executive search firm **EFL Associates**, a CBIZ Inc. company, has been called in by Ottawa University (OU) in Ottawa, KS to lead its search for a new provost and chief academic officer.

Steve Waldron, the recruitment firm's managing director—legal practice and higher education practice, is leading the assignment.

The new provost must be an articulate spokesperson for the relevance of the liberal arts as they relate to undergraduate, graduate, professional, and adult and online programs across a dynamic, multi-state university system. The search firm says that this individual will be expected to have immediate credibility through a record of outstanding teaching and scholarship coupled with a focus on student success. The successful candidate will be expected to build trust within the Ottawa community by listening carefully, responding directly to issues of importance, advocating for students, faculty, and staff, and building a consultative, collaborative, and timely decision-making process. Likewise, this leader will encourage colleagues to be at the forefront of academic innovation and creativity and will be responsible to ensure individuals and departments are meeting their agreed upon goals.

Founded in 1978, EFL Associates provides executive search services from offices in Kansas City, Denver, St. Louis, and Raleigh, NC. The firm specializes in the following areas: finance and banking, higher education, non-profit, life sciences, energy, construction and engineering, consumer packaged goods, manufacturing, public pension organizations, chief financial officers, and board services.

but not all organizations are thinking that far out yet. A lot are still trying to recover from COVID."

"We are recruiting international talent but in Canada, our visa requirements require us to hire Canadians first," Ms. Griffith said. "That being said, there is a huge interest in bring expats with that international experience home. However, we know fundraising isn't as sophisticated in Australia and we know the U.K. does not have the same emphasis we have on our indigenous communities and reconciliation efforts. In Canada a big trend continues to be on diversity and our work with indigenous communities. One big university in Toronto, Ryerson University, for example is currently going through a change as a result of this work."

"With school shutdowns and virtual learning playing out over the past two years, attendance and tuition decreased dramatically, and sports and other programs were placed on hold," said David Kant, president of **Dynamic Search Consulting**. "The entire education industry was devastated, quickly changing the operating basis for universities and colleges from times of growth and expansion to that of surviving and keeping their head above water in managing costs with a fraction of the revenue seen in prior years. Unfortunately, most implemented hiring freezes and pay cuts. Many offered early retirements and had to discontinue certain majors and degree programs to run leaner and more efficiently."

"Fortunately for those who were able to weather the storm, the industry is now recovering and on the

(cont'd. to page 4)



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upswing,” Mr. Kant said. “While some are still teaching virtually or with a hybrid model, most have returned to in-person learning and have resumed sports, music, and other programs. Universities and colleges are eager to ramp back up and make up for lost time and hiring demand is at an all-time high again. I’m happy to say I’ve been seeing many executive searches begin in the last few months for deans, superintendents, professors, sports coaches, and traditional corporate leadership openings.”

When it comes to professors and educators, and even superintendents and deans, these roles will always be filled from within the higher education industry, for obvious reasons, according to Mr. Kant. “However, for key traditional leadership positions, it certainly has become a popular trend to hire from without the industry. And interestingly enough, it makes a lot of sense. For higher education recruiters, they are able to dramatically expand the size of the available talent pool and find great synergy in hiring a president or CFO, for example, who has P&L revenue and personnel oversight of comparable magnitude, an MBA, perhaps a former successful entrepreneur, and often are more business savvy than those who grew up in a non-business path starting out as an educator,” he said. “This brings fresh perspective and sound financial and overall business leadership to the table.”

When asked what higher education roles are hot right now two years into the pandemic, Carlos Pena, founder and principal of **Pena Search**, said: “Fundraisers. The pandemic either put a halt on or slowed down capital campaigns -- unusual, considering that universities are almost always in campaign mode, or just simply slowed at a minimum regular fundraising programs,” he said. “It was difficult for development officers to effectively connect with and engage new donors through Zoom. As vaccines rolled out and the sense of returning to ‘normal’ was felt, robust efforts to fill empty positions were launched. And because institutions are trying to make up for time lost during the pandemic, they are offering strong compensation packages and flexibility to work remotely. Also, candidates are demanding higher salaries and flexibility to work remotely. Because competition for solid candidates is so strong, it takes skill and a deep understanding of the field to effectively identify and engage good candidates.”

According to Michael J.R. Wheless, co-founder, principal and consultant at **Anthem Executive**: “DEI roles are certainly hot. However, we are seeing more openings than we have seen in quite some time for president and provost,” he said. “Innovation and creativity roles are also in demand. In addition, we will see more data execs as the adoption of AI is pushed to new levels.”

“Fundraisers are another position in demand,” said Mr. Wheless. “Before the pandemic hit, a president with a billion-dollar endowment shared that he cannot raise money fast enough. His reasoning came from both factors he can control and some he cannot that are going to impact university finances in the future. Was he right or what? Among the learnings of the pandemic, one is to strive to be debt-free and forever have resources saved for rainy days.”

Among the oldest, ongoing operating institutions in the world are colleges and universities. “For this reason, (cont’d. to page 5)

## LEADERSHIP SEARCH

### Isaacson, Miller Called in by University of Michigan to Find 15th President



The University of Michigan has retained **Isaacson, Miller** to assist in the search for its 15th president. John Isaacson, John Muckle, and Elizabeth Dorr are spearheading the assignment. The school removed Mark Schlissel as president in December after it

learned that Dr. Schlissel may have been involved in an inappropriate relationship with a university employee. The board has named former University of Michigan president Mary Sue Coleman as interim president. The president of the University of Michigan, a leading public research university, is one of the most prominent and influential positions in all of higher education.

"The committee's work will rely on the university community's insight into the challenges and opportunities that may face our university and its new president in the coming decade, as well as the personal characteristics and experiences needed to lead the university at this moment in time," the school said in a statement. "We hope that all members of our university community will lend their opinions, insights and expertise to this critical endeavor." Regents Sarah Hubbard and Denise Ilitch, co-chairs of the committee, announced the committee's formation in a message to the school's community.

The search committee, which also includes members of University of Michigan's Dearborn and Flint campuses, is "widely representative of our diverse university community," Ms. Hubbard wrote in the message. "We are grateful for their willingness to engage in this important work."

The importance of the UM presidency in all of higher education makes this committee's work that much more important, said Ms. Ilitch. "The committee's work will rely on the university community's insight into the challenges and opportunities that may face our university and its new president in the coming decade, as well as the personal characteristics and experiences needed to lead the university at this moment in time," she said.

they can be slow to change," said Mr. Wheless. "Sometimes, unless there is an event or forced change, change does not occur at the rate of other industries," he said. "Take video tech for example that has been with us well before the pandemic. Before the pandemic, some were resistant to teaching/working by video. The pandemic forced this change and now, for example, some of the same professors are enjoying the freedom of being able to teach from anywhere in the world."

Now, perhaps more than any other time in history, the need for a high-performing university leadership is essential, according to Mr. Wheless. "They must excel in a rapidly-changing and extremely demanding higher education environment to meet the needs of a diverse constituency and, in the wake of a COVID environment, build more customizable and accessible working and learning pathways for faculty and students," he said. "Today's leaders need to have the vision to see around corners and the capacity to find creative ways to grow and support the academic mission. They need the ability to foresee, prevent and solve problems and seize

opportunities – internally and externally. This means leaders must develop an astute understanding of their stakeholders' needs and motivations. They must work cross-functionally, make informed shared decisions, and adapt proactively—all while reliably producing results."

Technology adoption is turning the world on its head. For example, Anthem Executive was recruiting for SVP of finance and administration for a university in Michigan. During the search, one of the candidates got an offer from another institution. That university found out the candidate had aging parents, and it was a real challenge for this candidate. They offered her their role but to do so remotely so she could live in the same location as her parents. "We have seen this transpire outside higher ed for outstanding exec-level candidates, but never in higher ed, and especially not for a cabinet-level role," said Mr. Wheless. "It is a sign of the times for the adoption of tech, such as video. Everyone has it on their desk today where they did not some short time ago. Predictability is becoming another factor," he said. "AI is bringing ever increasing predictability to a host of occurrences and processes in higher ed. Leaders who have the skill to effectively leverage and execute the rapidly maturing predictability factors being developed via AI are going to be sought after. Ask any higher education leader and they will tell you that higher ed has generally done a poor job with growing their own talent. AI will advance this in the future."

Mr. Wheless has also been hearing for some time now that leaders in colleges and universities across the nation are retiring or have reached retirement age. "They are worried because higher ed has not done a great job at succession planning or growing their own and we are witnessing a considerable change of the guard," he said. "This is compounded by the fact that COVID has made many leaders rebalance their life priorities and where they chose to work. Quality of life is being chosen over money, and in a lot of cases, career. Factors such as these will open the door for more new faces in leadership. Some will be ready and some will not. Universities and boards appetite for faster results will diminish the time in the chair for some execs who cannot hit the ground running. AI will increasingly impact this too in the future."

### Racial and Cultural Awareness

"After a year of national reckoning that thrust centuries-old social justice fault lines to the forefront, chief diversity officers have become champions of intentional organizational and transformational change on college campuses across the country," said Keight Tucker Kennedy, partner at Isaacson, Miller. "The role has evolved over the years and many institutions have launched CDO searches with the benefit of initial institution-wide conversations and buy in, while others have responded to a flash point that necessitated a search."

These key leaders play a critical role in bringing awareness, discovery, impact, and progress to some of the most important academic issues facing a campus community today," Ms. Tucker Kennedy said. "Chief diversity officers also help senior leaders see and understand the way changing demographics and diversity can benefit an institution."

# Hunt Scanlon Top 50 Higher Education Search Firms

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<b>Academic Search</b> <a href="#">Jay Lemons</a> , President (202) 332-4049	<b>Korn Ferry</b> <a href="#">Jodi Weiss</a> , Practice Leader, Non-Profit & Higher Education (917) 744-5983
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<b>Anthem Executive</b> <a href="#">Mike JR Wheless</a> , Co-Founder & Principal (713) 570-6992	<b>Myers McRae</b> <a href="#">Emily Parker Myers</a> , President & CEO (478) 330-6222
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<b>Berkhemer Clayton</b> <a href="#">Betsy Berkhemer-Credaire</a> , President & CEO; <a href="#">Fred Clayton</a> , Chairman (213) 621-2300	<b>Odgers Berndtson</b> <a href="#">Steve Potter</a> , CEO (646) 553-4758
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<b>Hudson Group</b> <a href="#">John Assunto</a> , President & CEO (860) 652-8660	<b>ZRG</b> <a href="#">Diane Charness</a> , Managing Director (202) 350-4666

## SPOTLIGHT

## Recruiting Leaders for Higher Education in a Time of Change



*For over four decades, **Academic Search** has been a leader in designing and implementing search processes for leaders of colleges and universities across the country. The firm has completed hundreds of executive searches for higher education institutions and related organizations, for roles ranging from presidents to provosts to deans.*

*L. Jay Lemons became president of Academic Search in 2017, after serving for 25 years as a college president in both public and private higher education. He recently sat down with Hunt Scanlon Media to discuss the current market for recruiting university and college presidents and other leadership.*

**Dr. Lemons, with the demand from top universities to find new leaders, how has the market been for search within the higher education sector?**

Data has shown that more presidents announced their resignations in 2021 compared to 2020. We have done more executive-level searches in the past year than in the last 10 years. As institutions have begun to find their footing in this pandemic era, leaders are feeling more comfortable searching for other opportunities or simply retiring, and more institutions are turning to executive search firms to fill the critical presidential role.

**Why do you feel there is so much recent turnover?**

For many who delayed their retirements or felt they could not leave their institutions at the height of the pandemic, they are now finding it is a better time to make that move. There is less of a sense now from candidates that they would be leaving their institutions at a time of critical need. Pre-pandemic, as the stakes for colleges around financial constraints and enrollment declines rose, presidential tenures shortened, and these issues have only been compounded by the changes endured in the past two years, making the length of a president's tenure continue to trend downward.

**What are colleges and universities looking for in their senior leaders?**

For many boards, members are looking for leaders with business acumen, who will be able to steer transformational change at the institution. Because so many campuses are facing financial concerns and enrollment woes, one's ability to think innovatively about ways to increase revenue and fundraise, relationship build, and develop partnerships on behalf of an institution are more paramount than ever. Institutions are also feeling the fatigue of the past few years, so a leader who will be able to inspire and to encourage and empower those around him or her is also sought at this time by many campuses.

**Are there any new challenges for recruiting new leaders for higher education institutions?**

It is imperative that boards come together prior to the launch of a presidential search to determine the real opportunities and challenges the next leader will face and the priorities and goals the board expects the new leader to address. Members of the board must also determine the background, experience, and characteristics sought in the presidency. Without this work at the front end of the search, a search can easily fall apart later in the process.

**How have diversity and inclusion progressed at universities?**

Many schools are looking at diversity, inclusion, equity, and social justice as becoming imbedded in the institution's mission and core values. They are creating diversity statements and restructuring their teams to ensure issues in this space are getting proper attention. Presidents are now hiring chief diversity officers to lead in these efforts and to create diversity and inclusion strategic plans as part of the larger university plan, with the expectation that the new CDO will examine institutional policies and procedures as it relates to DEI efforts and initiatives. In addition, these new leaders are being hired with the capacity to advise and educate staff, faculty, and administrators in this space, while also examining the student experience both inside and outside of the classroom as it relates to creating an inclusive environment for all.

**Besides presidents, what are some top roles in demand at universities?**

We are finding that leadership needs are abundant at all levels, from executive to faculty. More specifically, senior leadership or cabinet-level positions are turning over at similar rates to presidencies. Even prior to the pandemic, presidential and cabinet-level tenure was in a decline, and we are finding that that trend is continuing. In addition, many institutions are re-examining their cabinet-level positions and conducting inaugural searches for positions such as university-wide diversity officers to meet the current needs of their constituents, especially students.

**What do you see looking forward for the higher education sector? Do you see new types of senior leaders entering the sector?**

The need to find talented campus leaders is and will remain important for the growth and success of our higher education system moving forward. It will be interesting to see if the increasing trend in number of searches being conducted within the higher education sector will continue as it has in the last year. There is much movement now by senior leaders. Those entering the sector generally need the expected background and experience tailored for the position, but there is also now a need for leaders to be adaptable, to bring fresh and innovative ideas, to have the capacity to fundraise, relationship build, and develop external partnerships on behalf of an institution at a higher level than perhaps in previous years.

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## Odgers Berndtson Names Head of U.S. Collegiate Sports Practice

**Odgers Berndtson** has appointed Dan McHale as a partner and head of its U.S. collegiate sports practice. "We are thrilled to add Dan to our growing sport and entertainment practice," said Drew Cloud, head of Odgers Berndtson's U.S. sport and entertainment practice. "Dan is a great example of how we are building a team of relatable consultants that can support our clients with unique insights and understanding of their needs. Dan's experience combined with Odgers Berndtson's search leadership creates an incredible advantage for our clients and our firm."

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*"In my conversations with the team at Odgers Berndtson, it quickly became clear that we shared a vision for using practical industry experience to help clients be successful."*

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Mr. McHale joins the firm after a career as an NCAA Division 1 college basketball coach. He spent 25 years leading and supporting coaching teams at top tier universities, including University of Louisville, Iona College, Seton Hall University, the University of Minnesota, and the University of New Mexico. During his coaching career, he was one of the youngest Division 1 head coaches in the country while he led the team at Eastern Kentucky University. Mr. McHale also was a part of a University of Kentucky national championship team and participated in four NCAA tournament teams and three Southeastern Conference championships.

### Working with Coaches and Administrators

In his new role with Odgers Berndtson, Mr. McHale will work with coaches and administrators to secure top coaching talent in the country. He will also work closely with the practice's leadership to continue to expand the firm's presence in the sports and entertainment industry.

"In my conversations with the team at Odgers Berndtson, it quickly became clear that we shared a vision for using practical industry experience to help clients be successful," said Mr. McHale. "I am excited to draw on my coaching experiences and deep relationships to help the firm and our clients succeed."

Odgers Berndtson delivers executive search, leadership assessment, and development strategies to organizations globally. The firm's 250-plus partners cover more than 50 sectors and operate out of 59 offices in 29 countries. The U.S. wing of the firm launched in 2011 and has been one of the fastest growing search firms in the Americas. It now ranks No. 12 on the **Hunt Scanlon** Top 50 Recruiters ranking.

Odgers Berndtson's global education practice works in partnership with a range of clients including schools, universities, research institutes, associations, edtech, and commercial education businesses, to identify and assess leaders capable of delivering excellence and thriving in a complex changing world. Based in over 60 offices worldwide, they are a globally-integrated team with experience in established markets and fast-growing developing economies.

## 7 Qualities to Look for in a College President

Robin Mamlet, managing director, and Sheila Murphy, consultant, of **WittKieffer** wrote an article for *The Chronicle of Higher Education* on six essential qualities to look for in a college president. They were characteristics — such as a sense of emotional intelligence and an appetite for data and analysis — that search committees have identified time and again. Much has changed during the past few years, of course. In rethinking this topic and consulting with colleagues as well as sitting presidents, WittKieffer has identified a set of additional qualities that every campus C.E.O. should possess. What follows are seven interconnected traits essential to success in the top job on any campus.

**No. 1:** An ability to lead in this era of intense social activism. Even before the murder of George Floyd, the political tenor on college campuses was changing. Conversations between presidents and students, in particular, were increasingly strained and discordant. In the aftermath of Floyd's murder, it became even more essential for leaders to be adept at encouraging civil discourse — especially regarding concerns about systemic racism or about campus buildings, statues, and monuments named after now-controversial figures.


**No. 2:** Expertise in crisis management. The pandemic has brought many institutions to a point of crisis. For others, this moment is less existential but no less crucial. Search committees are keenly aware that this is a defining moment, from which their institution will emerge either as stronger or...not. They seek leaders who can truly empathize, who not only care deeply about the people in the organization but can adeptly respond to their needs.

**No. 3:** Strong advocacy of a college education. Is the degree worth it? The realities of our post-COVID world have sparked renewed questions about the value of the traditional, four-year campus experience. A pervasive idea among more and more parents: If a student can find a good job out of high school, can't that substitute for a bachelor's degree? ("Why can't my kids go to work at GM or Google and get a vocational education there?") Indeed, a recent Georgetown University study found that the pay gap is narrowing between college graduates and the pool of people who are either high-school graduates or only have limited higher education.

**No. 4:** An optimistic, opportunistic view of partnerships. Today's savvy presidents, seize on partnerships in the spirit of entrepreneurialism and "coopetition." Their framing is, "We're in a position of strength and could become even stronger if we engage with our fellow institutions differently." This new model is not about overcoming constraints, making course corrections, or plugging holes. It is about expansiveness and aspiration — doing something collectively that a single institution can't do well on its own.

**No. 5:** A nuanced understanding of how to defend freedom of speech and ideas. Academe's reputation as a marketplace of ideas — where freedom of expression is valued and protected — has been increasingly challenged of late. Activists on the political left argue that a college or university should not spend money or give voice or visibility to speakers whose ideas

(cont'd. to page 10)



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they deem abhorrent and antithetical, especially to such deeply held values as diversity and inclusivity. Meanwhile, when an institution rejects or disinvites guest speakers whose messages are said to promulgate hate and violence, or to hurt and devalue certain groups, activists on the political right rush to label it as a devotee of “cancel culture.”

**No. 6:** Skill at diplomacy. Fissures between trustees and faculty members have multiplied as both sides strive for what each sees as in the best interest of the institution. Many trustees (rightly so) believe we are in an unprecedented era that requires agility and quick, decisive action, while faculty members (rightly so) hold firm to the principles of shared governance, believing that additional perspectives and input lead to better outcomes, and asserting their right to weigh in on matters of institutional import.

**No. 7:** An ability to work fast. Higher education has to shift gears more rapidly than it used to. While academic tradition favors discourse, iteration, and inclusiveness, presidents today must make more decisions in less time. We see that playing out in presidential searches: More and more committees are looking for candidates who move quickly and intentionally toward achieving concrete goals. In today’s fast-paced and highly dynamic environment, pace matters. Some academics might label this “speedism” — the idea that faster is smarter and better — but, like it or not, it is a tangible reality of today’s higher education leadership that has crept in from the corporate world.

WittKieffer, based in Oak Brook, IL, assists hospitals, health systems, academic medical centers, medical schools and physician groups; biotech, pharmaceutical, diagnostics and medical device companies; colleges and universities and not-for-profit community service and cultural organizations with senior administrative recruiting assignments. With more than 100 search professionals nationwide, its consultants recruit CEOs, CFOs, COOs, CNOs, physician executives and other leaders.

### **RECENT SEARCH**

#### **WittKieffer Places New Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion at Syracuse University**

**WittKieffer** recently placed Mary Grace A. Almandrez as the new vice president for diversity and inclusion at Syracuse University. Leading the assignment were consultant Christine J. Pendleton, senior associate Sandra Chu, and senior partner Robin Mamlet. She was selected following a national search that yielded a diverse and highly qualified pool of candidates. “Mary Grace’s depth and breadth of professional and academic experience make her uniquely qualified for this position,” said Kent Syverud, chancellor. “I have great confidence in her ability to move Syracuse forward in achieving our aspiration to be a university that is truly welcoming to all. She has demonstrated visionary leadership, creativity, and resilience throughout her career in working through some of the most challenging issues. I look forward to welcoming Mary Grace to the Orange community.” Since March 2020, Dr. Almandrez has served as associate vice president for community, equity, and diversity and chief diversity officer at the University of Rhode Island (URI) after serving in an interim role for over a year.

## FaithSearch Partners Appoints Leader of Higher Education Practice

**FaithSearch Partners (FSP)** has expanded with the addition of Andy Westmoreland as senior vice president and leader of its higher education service line. "Andy Westmoreland has dedicated his professional life to Christian academic institutions and I'm excited to have him lead our higher education practice," said Ed Fry, president and chief executive officer of FaithSearch Partners. "He is a great addition and will have an outstanding impact on our team and our clients. In addition to his leadership and executive search experience, Andy is an accomplished faith leader who is a perfect fit for our culture and mission."

Dr. Westmoreland's career in higher education spans 42 years, including two college presidencies and hundreds of executive searches. He most recently served as president of Samford University in Birmingham, AL for 15 years and as president of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, AK, for eight years. In addition to his tenure as president, Dr. Westmoreland also taught political science, served on charity boards, and is an accomplished author and speaker.

FaithSearch Partners has led executive searches for institutions of higher learning for nearly 15 years. With the addition of Dr. Westmoreland, FaithSearch's higher education service line will focus on executive searches for faith-based and other colleges and universities, including collegiate athletics searches.

Dr. Westmoreland's educational credentials include an undergraduate degree in political science from Ouachita Baptist University, a master's degree in political science from the University of Arkansas and a doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He is former chair of the board of trustees for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, and he served as president of the American Association of Presidents of Independent Colleges and Universities.

"I am delighted and humbled by the opportunity to join FaithSearch Partners," said Dr. Westmoreland. "I have led faith-based institutions throughout my career and now my experience and faith will allow me to positively impact a broader set of colleges, universities, their leaders, and ultimately the next generation of students. I couldn't be more excited."

FaithSearch Partners is focused exclusively on serving faith-based hospitals, healthcare organizations, non-profits, ministries, churches, educational institutions and faith-oriented businesses. The firm is based in Dallas with locations in Denver; Houston; Los Angeles; Orlando, FL; Nashville, TN; Asheville, NC; and Tyler, TX.

FaithSearch Partners was recently called in by William Carey International University (WCIU) to lead in its search for its next president. WCIU is a private faith-based university licensed by the State of California and accredited by the DEAC (Distance Education Accrediting Commission) to grant graduate-level degrees. The university was founded in 1977 under the leadership of Ralph D. Winter, one of the most influential missiologists of the twentieth century.



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## Higher Education Recruiting in the News

### Spencer Stuart Places President for Davidson College



**Spencer Stuart** has assisted in the recruitment of Douglas Hicks as the 19th president of Davidson College in North Carolina. He succeeds Carol Quillen, who announced in August that she is stepping down after 11 years as president. “Doug learned and led at some of our nation’s top liberal arts colleges,” said Alison Hall Mauzé, chair of Davidson’s board of trustees. “He began his teaching at one of the country’s first leadership schools and led the faculty at a prestigious university.” Anthony Foxx, former U.S. transportation secretary and chair of the search committee, said: “I can say with confidence that this has been the most wide-open search in the history of the college, and in 2022, that’s as it should be. We could have selected any candidate in the world.”

### WittKieffer Seeks VP of People and Workplace Culture for Colorado College

Oak Brook-IL-based **WittKieffer** has been enlisted to find the inaugural vice president of people and workplace culture for Colorado College in Colorado Springs. Consultants Sarah Miller and Melissa Fincher led the assignment. “This is a phenomenal opportunity for a forward-thinking leader who brings passion for organizational culture, advancing the role of the workforce in the success of an organization, and serving as the strategic partner to the president and the senior leadership team,” said the search firm. “As the college’s champion of workplace culture, the vice president will identify, recommend and advance initiatives that allow staff and faculty members to do their best work,” said WittKieffer.



### Storbeck Search / Diversified Search Group Recruits President for Hampton University



Higher education-focused **Storbeck Search**, part of the **Diversified Search Group**, has placed Darrell K. Williams as the new president of Hampton University in Hampton, VA. He will succeed William R. Harvey, who retires on June 30 after leading Hampton for 44 years. The assignment was led by Shelly Weiss Storbeck, global education practice lead and managing director; Jeffrey Alston, senior associate; and Lisa Solinsky, senior associate. Mr. Williams was chosen from almost 300 applicants. The board of trustees created a presidential search committee in January 2021, after Dr. Harvey announced his retirement. Storbeck Search led the university’s initial selection process. Based on a select set of competencies and through interviews, the applicants were narrowed to a pool of 15 and then three finalists.



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If you are an academic president, provost, dean, chancellor, talent leader or executive recruiter specializing in higher education, this report is designed specifically for you.

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## More Higher Education Recruiting in the News

## AGB Search Seeks New President for Princeton Theological Seminary



Washington, D.C.-based **AGB Search**, which specializes in higher education leadership assignments, was recently called in by Princeton Theological Seminary to lead its search for a new president. Consultants Loren Anderson and Shannon McCambridge

are spearheading the assignment. The seminary is deeply committed to its Presbyterian identity and heritage. Credentials as an ordained minister in the Presbyterian church with a doctorate in a relevant field are preferred. AGB Search conducts searches for college and university presidents, chancellors, provosts, vice presidents, deans, university system heads, and CEOs of coordinating boards and related foundations. The firm was founded by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) in 2010.

## Myers McRae Assists Winthrop University in the Recruitment of 12th President

Macon, GA-based **Myers McRae**

**Executive Search and Consulting** has

assisted in the recruitment of Edward Serna as the 12th president of Winthrop University in Rock Hill, SC. Leading the search for the firm was Emily Parker Myers, CEO, and

Kenny Daugherty, president, along with Jennifer Barfield, senior vice president. Dr. Serna was chosen from a diverse applicant pool which included sitting presidents, provosts, and other educational leaders. "We knew we wanted an academic leader with previous experience as a public university president and a proven record of leading change during challenging times," said Glenn McCall, board chair. "Dr. Serna is well positioned to undertake the presidency at a critical time in Winthrop's history."



## Florida International University Selects R. William Funk &amp; Associates to Find Next President



The Florida International University (FIU) board of trustees' governance committee recently interviewed executive search firms and selected R. William Funk & Associates to assist with the search for its sixth president.

Mark Rosenberg abruptly resigned from the role in January in the wake of accusations of misconduct toward a staffer. Kenneth A. Jessell, the university's chief financial officer and senior vice president for finance and administration, has been serving as interim president since Dr. Rosenberg stepped down. Dallas-based R. William Funk & Associates has extensive experience recruiting for top research universities and has also helped recruit for FIU leadership positions in the past. The firm has placed presidents at numerous institutions, including Rutgers University, Indiana University, Texas A&M University, and the University of South Carolina.