Dear Georgia Southern faculty, students, staff, alumni, and community members,

The Georgia Southern University Presidential Search and Screen Committee is pleased to announce the initiation of our search. As you already know, our committee was charged by the Chancellor on Wednesday, August 29th to undertake the search for our next President. The committee met with members of the Chancellor’s office, Board of Regents, and the Witt/Kieffer search firm to discuss the responsibilities and goals of the committee, and the process for our search. As members of our shared community, we want you to stay informed about the work of the committee, and we would like to share with you a brief overview of the search process.

The committee will finish the position announcement, and publish it during the month of September. We need your input though. We will be organizing multiple Listening Sessions throughout the day both (in Statesboro) on September 10th and (in Savannah) on September 11th. Anyone from any location is welcome to participate in these sessions at the more convenient location. Once the committee has completed the position announcement, we will place advertisements around the country and approach suitable candidates.

To that end, the committee discussed the university and community’s role in providing feedback on the candidate pool. Later this week, we will post the Presidential Search and Screen Committee page (https://www.georgiasouthern.edu/PresidentialSearch). It will include details about the Listening Sessions and a regularly updated timeline. The page will host a survey, which anyone from our community can anonymously submit feedback for the committee to consider as we begin our screening process. This page also lists a contact email address (GeorgiaSouthernPresident@wittkieffer.com) by which you can submit recommendations or nominations for consideration as well. You know the cultures and histories of our institutions, and we need you to help identify leaders who could effectively shape our university’s future. With your help, especially at these early stages, we fully believe we will be able to reach our goal of submitting our list of candidates to the Regent’s Special Committee early in December.

The Georgia Southern of 2018 is not the same institution as it was in 2015. We need a President who can represent and genuinely speak to our entire—our diverse—university. When our committee forwards our selection of candidates, we want to be sure these people will have the ability and knowhow to reach and interact with our total university: our students, our faculty, our staff, our alumni, our local communities, and our state as a whole. We need someone who can effectively draw these groups together to both enable and inspire our entire student body to truly succeed.

As with any search, the responsibility ultimately comes to the committee to make recommendations. In any search, we trust the screening committee to represent the housing body, and ultimately to have the organization’s best interest in mind and at heart. This committee is no different. As you know, the committee is comprised primarily of faculty, staff, and students elected to positions of leadership or representation by their own colleges, departments, divisions, and peers. Our alumni and community members, likewise, represent the successes of our campuses and our communities, and have been extensively committed to the development of our universities. I ask, above all things, you trust your colleagues, your neighbors, and your friends to represent the best interest of our university.

The committee deliberated at considerable length on the best way to proceed. As a group, we decided we must be able to consider people who have demonstrated success at the highest levels, and have been thoroughly effective in their institutions or organizations. For many of these people, actively interviewing
for the position here at Georgia Southern would jeopardize not only their current position, but could imperil the good work they are currently doing on behalf of their organization, their staff, or their students or employees. The committee \textit{unanimously} voted in favor of conducting a search that would keep the candidate’s name confidential throughout the entire search. This process in no way means the campus community is excluded from the process. What this process will allow us to do is draw on the same candidate pools we would with a public search, but also on the pools other universities do as they search for presidents. The entire committee agreed the best possible outcome required this level of confidentiality. Releasing the names of our finalists, once we come to that stage, would prevent highly qualified candidates from even considering the position. I know some members of our community will not agree with this decision. I understand and I respect that position, but the committee firmly believes the ultimate benefit gained merits the additional level of confidentiality.

The committee extensively discussed the responsibility we have to our university, to its students, staff, and faculty, both present and future. The weight of that responsibility is what ultimately guided our decision. Even though the names of the candidates will remain confidential, we are committed to remain transparent with you on the search process and progress. Again, we ask for your active participation in helping us define what we need in the next President of Georgia Southern University.

On behalf of the Georgia Southern University Presidential Search and Screen Committee,

Dustin Anderson  
Committee Chair