



# Savannah State University Presidential Search



# About

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## University System of Georgia

The University System of Georgia (USG) is one of the largest and most respected systems for higher education in the United States. USG has been cited nationally for its excellent leadership, academic innovation, state government support and rise in student achievement.

Among other accomplishments, USG has pioneered intervention and support systems to increase student access to college, close performance gaps and improve graduation rates as a member of Complete College America. And the groundbreaking Momentum Approach initiative has drawn national attention for its use of data-driven analysis and increased support of all USG students, driving up retention and completion rates as more students stay on track toward degree attainment. Since 2011, USG has experienced a 39.6% increase in students earning degrees annually. In FY 2024 alone, USG graduates received a record 76,571 degrees — the most in system history.

With 26 public colleges and universities across Georgia, USG enrolls 344,000 students, employs over 48,000 staff and faculty and has a statewide economic impact of \$21.9 billion. The system and its institutions play a critically important role in local economies across the state, offer degree programs ranging from associate through doctorate and help drive Georgia's economy.

### State Universities

USG's state universities including Savannah State University are recognized as among the best in their region of the state and share a common mission to have:

- A commitment to excellence and responsiveness within a scope of influence defined by the needs of an area of the state, and by particularly outstanding programs or distinctive characteristics that have a magnet effect throughout the region or state;
- A commitment to a teaching/learning environment, both inside and outside the classroom, that sustains instructional excellence, serves a diverse and college-prepared student body, promotes high levels of student achievement, offers academic assistance and provides developmental studies programs for a limited student cohort;
- A high-quality general education program supporting a variety of disciplinary, interdisciplinary and professional academic programming at the baccalaureate level, with selected master's and educational specialist degrees and selected associate degree programs based on area need and/or inter-institutional collaborations;
- A commitment to public service, continuing education, technical assistance and economic development activities that address the needs, improve the quality of life and raise the educational level within the university's scope of influence; and
- A commitment to scholarly and creative work to enhance instructional effectiveness and to encourage faculty scholarly pursuits, and a commitment to applied research in selected areas of institutional strength and area need. In addition to these core characteristics, Fort Valley State University and Savannah State University both have unique and distinct statewide missions as 1890 land-grant institutions. Both they and Albany State University are USG's three HBCUs.

With an overall mission of research, teaching and service, USG and its governing Board of Regents are constitutionally independent but traditionally enjoy strong support from the Governor’s Office and the Georgia General Assembly.

The size and scope of USG are among its greatest strengths, allowing for both an economy of scale and a diversity of missions that reach every corner of Georgia and all 159 of the state’s counties. Its 26 higher education institutions uniquely include four research universities, four comprehensive universities, nine state universities and nine state colleges — for a total of four sectors.

## Board of Regents

With its creation in 1931, the Board of Regents became the single governing and management authority over USG.

The governor appoints members of the Board to a seven-year term, and regents may be reappointed to subsequent terms by a sitting governor. Regents donate their time and expertise to serve the state in a position that is a voluntary one without financial remuneration. Today, the Board is composed of 19 members, five of whom are appointed from the state-at-large and one from each of the state’s 14 congressional districts.

The Board elects a Chancellor who serves as its chief executive officer and oversees the public colleges and universities that comprise USG as well as the Georgia Archives and the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS).

## Savannah State University

Savannah State University (SSU) is the first public historically Black college and university (HBCU) in Georgia and the first institution of higher learning in the city of Savannah. The school was established in 1890 with the Second Morrill Land Grant Act, which mandated that southern and border states develop land-grant colleges for black citizens. Later that year, the Georgia General Assembly passed legislation creating the Georgia State Industrial College for Colored Youths, which served as Georgia’s 1890 land-grant institution until 1947. A preliminary session of the college was held in the Baxter Street School Building in Athens before moving to Savannah in October 1891.

Upon the creation of USG in 1932, the college became one of the first members of the system, and its name was changed to Georgia State College. Its name changed again in 1950 to Savannah State College,



and the institution received initial accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in 1955. The USG Board of Regents elevated the college to university status in 1996 and renamed the institution Savannah State University. SSU strives for excellence in strong curricula, vital program offerings and community engagement.

The university's 201-acre campus in the popular city of Savannah is one of the most picturesque in the state.

The moss-laden sweeping oak trees, expansive marsh and historic architecture are the backdrop for this vibrant residential campus. Savannah State students experience a challenging, energized collegiate life; study relevant academic majors in current and emerging fields; and engage in lectures, cutting-edge research and quality student-faculty engagement in a student-centered learning environment.

Serving 3,100 undergraduate and graduate students, Savannah State provides a supportive yet challenging learning environment with opportunities to establish close student-faculty relationships and relevant social and professional networks. More than 76% of students attend full-time, and over 81% are Georgia residents. The two largest majors are Business Management (14.3%) and Biology (13.6%). The retention rate from Fall 2022 to Fall 2023 of first-time, full-time students was 69.3 percent.

SSU has a strong record in research and grant funding and aggressively seeks funds from federal sources, including the National Institutes of Health and National Science Foundation. Grants compose approximately 10% of Savannah State's annual budget and directly support the university's mission to achieve student success. These grants support curriculum enhancement, faculty and student research, student scholarships, presentations at conferences and other scholarly activities.

## Overview

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### Mission

As the first public historically Black university in Georgia, Savannah State develops productive members of a global society through high-quality instruction, scholarship, research, service and community involvement. The university fosters engaged learning and personal growth in a student-centered environment that celebrates its African American legacy while nurturing a diverse student body where all are welcome. SSU offers graduate and undergraduate studies including nationally accredited programs in the liberal arts, the sciences and the professions.

## Academic Divisions

The university's mission and educational goals are realized through comprehensive program offerings in the College of Business Administration; the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences; the College of Sciences and Technology; and the College of Education.

### College of Business Administration

- Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship provides access to education for business and smart product development, faculty expertise, coaching, programming and financial counseling to encourage the development of technology-based ventures.
- Among the small percentage of business schools globally to be accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International.

### College of Education

- SSU offers the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program in response to the critical need for K-12 teachers of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by encouraging talented STEM students and professionals to pursue teaching careers in elementary and secondary schools.
- This year, USG approved an expansion of the college to include a new program in elementary education, which will help alleviate the state's teacher shortage.
- SSU in 2022 was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for \$3.1 million to continue the Upward Bound program for an additional five-year period beginning in June 2023.



### College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

- SSU is one of only a few institutions in the country to offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management.
- One of two universities in Georgia accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications.
- SSU's partnership with the Georgia Film Academy provides a unique-in-the-nation collaboration and rigorous professional training for job placement in the state's \$2.6 billion film industry.

### College of Sciences and Technology

- No. 1 producer nationally of African American graduates in marine sciences.

- Only HBCU in Georgia offering a bachelor’s degree in computer science technology with cybersecurity track.
- Forensic science program offers unique virtual reality crime scene training facility including two degree paths: forensic biology and forensic chemistry.
- One of two universities in Georgia to offer an engineering technology education program.

## Programs of Study

Associate of Arts, Associate of Sciences, Accounting, Behavioral Analysis, Biology, Biology Education, Chemistry, Civil Engineering Technology, Computer Information Systems, Logistics & Supply Chain, Computer Science Technology, Criminal Justice, Data Analytics, Electronics Engineering Technology, Engineering Technology, Education, Forensic Science, Global Logistics & International Business, Homeland Security & Emergency Management, Interdisciplinary Studies, Management, Marine Sciences, Marketing, Mass Communications, Mathematics, Mathematics Education, Mechanical Engineering Technology, Middle Grades Education, Political Science, Social Work, Sociology, Visual & Performing Arts.

## Points of Pride

### Military Friendliness

- SSU offers the region’s only four-year Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) program with tuition-assisted training in science and technology leading to commissioned service which educates and trains young men and women for leadership positions in the United States Navy and Marine Corps.
- Award-winning Army ROTC program, in partnership with Georgia Southern University, is the largest of its kind in the Southeastern United States, and recruits only the highest quality students, serving as the Green to Gold counterpart battalion for both Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield.



### Athletics & Extracurriculars

- Savannah State holds championships in multiple divisions and conferences across several of its programs, and has produced professional baseball players, basketball players, football players, an

NFL Hall of Famer and multiple Olympic athletes. Today, the Tigers compete at the NCAA Division II level with 12 of 15 sports vying in the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC).

- In addition to its academic support programs and extracurricular activities, the University has exhibits, performances, sports teams, concerts and community volunteer service projects geared to strengthening relationships with neighborhoods in the greater Savannah area.
- This year, SSU debuted a new turf football field in the Theodore A. Wright Stadium. The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation selected the university as one of four HBCUs in Georgia and Alabama to receive new turf fields in order to improve field quality, safety and accessibility for students and local community groups serving youth through football.

## Savannah, Georgia

Established in 1733, Savannah is a historic city with a revered past, a vibrant present and an innovative future. With nearly 400,000 area residents, Savannah has maintained steady growth, with the economy based mainly in shipping ports, manufacturing, tourism and the military. It is home to the fourth-busiest port in the nation.

With a world-class reputation for hospitality and grace, Savannah attracts visitors internationally. This beautiful river city is consistently named to popular lists, including the “World’s Top Ten Trendy Travel Hot Spots” by The New York Times, “Top 10 U.S City to Visit” by Condé Nast Traveler, “Top 10 Most Beautiful Places in America” by USA Weekend Magazine, and “Top 25 Places to Live and Work” by Outlook Magazine.



The city offers a high quality of life and a family-friendly lifestyle. Museums, live entertainment, an active art scene, outstanding cuisine, trendy boutiques and national chains for shopping, as well as concerts and performances, are all part of what makes Savannah a popular place to live, work and enjoy.

## The Opportunity

This is an incredible opportunity for a dynamic, transformational and accomplished leader who can provide strong guidance and a steady hand to advance the university’s rich history of academic excellence and forge a bold future focused on students and growing Georgia’s highly skilled workforce.

# The Position

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## Summary

Savannah State University seeks a highly motivated, visionary, skilled and charismatic individual to serve as the next president.



The president transforms BOR strategic goals into tangible plans by collaborating with the USG Board of Regents, system office staff, campus leaders, external constituents and outside organizations to develop an efficient, student-centered culture responsive to the needs of its stakeholders, supportive of ideals and ethical verities, and loyal to its rich legacy and heritage.

The president should be a dynamic leader of the executive team and oversees staffing, budget and operations to ensure institutional effectiveness.

## Priorities, Challenges and Opportunities

Savannah State aspires to be the premier public urban institution of higher education, achieving prominence through innovation and instruction, research, creativity and service with the dissemination of knowledge and information.

To successfully chart the course for the future, the next president will address the following priorities and challenges:

- Develop and execute the university’s strategic plan.
- Strengthen student enrollment, retention and success.
- Address and affirm long-term and comprehensive financial sustainability.
- Provide long-term leadership stability.
- Provide and support a unifying vision and promote the SSU legacy.
- Sustain and enhance academic quality.
- Elevate and expand the brand and identity of SSU.
- Identify and expand partnerships.



## Leadership Attributes

### Visionary

The next president of Savannah State will serve as a transformative leader, channeling the institution's rich history while driving it toward new heights of distinction. This leader will inspire the university community through a visionary approach that embraces academic excellence and fosters a continued culture of growth for students, faculty and staff alike. Their leadership will promote an ambitious future for SSU, articulating a strategic plan that unites stakeholders and aligns measurable goals with meaningful progress.

### Mission-Driven

Deeply connected to Savannah State's legacy and its role as the first HBCU in Georgia, the president will be a passionate advocate for the institution's mission. They will bring energy and commitment to fostering pride in SSU's long-standing traditions while ensuring it meets the evolving needs of students today. This leader will exemplify integrity, demonstrate an unwavering dedication to students and will inspire the community to embrace the vision of Savannah State University.

### Student-Centered

Under the next president's leadership, SSU's students will remain at the forefront of every decision. By promoting policies that enhance the overall student experience, this leader will ensure that academic excellence goes hand in hand with holistic development. The ideal candidate will be an empathetic and approachable presence on campus, engaging directly with students to foster a vibrant community and cultivate a nurturing environment where every student feels valued and supported.



## Servant Leadership

As a servant leader, the next president will prioritize empathy, stability and shared responsibility, demonstrating a leadership style that encourages collaboration and innovation. Their strategic thinking and ability to solve problems creatively will ensure that the institution balances growth with sustainability. Through their leadership, they will promote a campus culture where all members of the SSU community feel a strong sense of belonging and purpose.

## Leadership Development

Building a high-performing leadership team will be the president's greatest strength. With a commitment to talent development, the president will foster a culture of accountability, innovation and collaboration. They will identify and nurture leadership potential, bringing out the best in faculty and staff to advance the university's mission. By cultivating transparency and teamwork, they will guide SSU through any organizational shifts focusing on community building.

## Strong Academic Leader

The president will champion academic innovation, leveraging their extensive experience to create opportunities for students to discover their intellectual passions and translate them into rewarding careers. This forward-thinking leader will identify new pathways for growth, ensuring SSU remains adaptive to the challenges and opportunities within higher education. Their leadership will expand SSU's academic reach, solidifying its reputation as a beacon of excellence.



## Financial Acumen

Savannah State's next president will bring strong financial management skills and innovative strategies to ensure long-term stability and growth. They will optimize resources, align financial planning with academic goals, and increase revenue streams through successful fundraising initiatives. Their clear communication with stakeholders will inspire confidence and foster continued support for SSU's financial health.

## Enrollment Management

With a clear plan for enrollment growth and student success, the president will implement data-driven strategies to attract and retain students, boost graduation rates and enhance SSU's appeal to prospective students. They will anticipate and adapt to higher education trends, ensuring SSU remains a student recruitment and retention leader.

## Shared Governance

The next president will be a collaborative leader who deeply values shared governance and fosters a culture of trust, accountability and respect. Promoting transparent decision-making and maintaining close relationships with faculty and staff will create an environment where teaching, learning and service thrive, ensuring that all voices contribute to the university's success.

## Strategic Collaborator and Community-Builder

With an ability to bridge disciplines and connect diverse perspectives, the president will unify the Savannah State community around shared goals. Their leadership will drive dynamic strategic priorities that position the university for long-term success while fostering a culture of cooperation and innovation. They will leverage SSU's reputation of building a thriving community through thoughtful collaboration.

## Fund Development

As a charismatic and persuasive advocate for Savannah State, the president will lead successful fundraising efforts and inspire donors, alums, and external stakeholders to invest in the university's future. They will forge new partnerships while reinvigorating current and past connections, demonstrating a clear vision for SSU's growth and sustainability. Their commitment to fundraising will be instrumental in ensuring that the university has the resources needed to continue delivering an exceptional educational experience.

## Exceptional Communicator

The president will be an authentic, dynamic communicator who can inspire others through storytelling and vision. They will possess excellent interpersonal skills, ensuring they effectively engage with stakeholders at all levels. Through thoughtful dialogue and clear communication, the president will foster a deep sense of connection and purpose, making the university's mission accessible and compelling to all.

## Qualifications

### Required Professional Experience

In its next president, SSU seeks a proven leader who has a record of success with institutions or organizations of similar size and complexity. Individuals with the requisite leadership experience in education, industry, business, government, the military or other sectors will be given full consideration.

# Application Process

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The Board of Regents invites letters of nomination, applications (letter of interest, complete CV and references), or expressions of interest to be submitted to AGB Search.

Applications should be received by **November 8, 2024**, for full consideration. Materials will be reviewed confidentially immediately and continue until the appointment is made.

## Candidates should provide the following:

- Letter of interest stating how their experience and qualifications connect with the required/preferred characteristics and priorities expressed in the leadership profile.
- A curriculum vitae/resume.
- Five professional references with email addresses and phone numbers provided (references will not be contacted without prior permission from the applicant).

Applications should be in PDF format and submitted through the AGB Search portal at: [Savannah State University – President](#)

Nominations and questions may be submitted to: [SavannahStatePres@agbsearch.com](mailto:SavannahStatePres@agbsearch.com).

**AGB Search is assisting with this search. Nominators and prospective applicants may contact the executive search consultants for additional information:**

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