



# THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

## **Appalachian State University Chancellor Search Charge to Search Advisory Committee UNC President Peter Hans August 15, 2024**

Selecting excellent leaders for each of our public universities is one of the most important duties of the UNC System and for me as president. Sound leadership makes an enormous difference in the life and health of our institutions. Our students, faculty, staff, and our state are relying on us to get it right, and I know we will.

It's an honor to serve alongside all of you as we search for the next chancellor of Appalachian State University, one of the most exciting, most effective, and certainly most beautiful public universities in the country. As a North Carolinian and a son of the mountains, I am thrilled for the opportunity to be part of shaping the next chapter of this great institution.

I'm grateful to all of you for offering your energy, insight, and devotion to this place as we launch a search worthy of App State. I'm especially thankful to Senator Deanna Ballard for bringing her strong connections to the High Country and deep experience in public service to this vitally important work. I know how much she cares about our public universities, about this region, and about strengthening the excellent work of Appalachian State. I know she'll enjoy our full confidence and support as we work together on a search that will make this community proud.

A well-run search is important not simply for a successful outcome, but for generating confidence and optimism across the university and the surrounding community. Simply put, our actions as a committee will lay the groundwork for the next chancellor's success, and I take that responsibility very seriously. If we carry out our duties with professionalism and well-founded excitement, we help build momentum for Appalachian State and begin building the reserves of trust that are critical for a new leader to be effective.

Public universities inspire a lot of devotion and a whole lot of opinions, both on campus and off. This place has a range of constituents with an even broader range of priorities for leadership. It is not the job of a search advisory committee to find consensus among those stakeholders, but to ensure that their views are sincerely sought and carefully considered. That means approaching our work with patience, curiosity, and open-minded optimism about the future of Appalachian State.

Similarly, our approach to evaluating candidates will be to offer genuine interest in different visions, backgrounds, and realms of expertise. A successful chancellor is someone with energy, ambition, and a commitment to serve that are well-matched to the institution and the moment, and I'm excited to see the outstanding candidates I know that Appalachian State will attract.

My charge to this committee is meant to give us all a clear understanding of our roles and responsibilities. There are three main areas that are crucial for a successful process:

First, our roles as members of the search advisory committee.

Second, traits I believe are important in Appalachian State's next chancellor.

Third, the process through which we will work.

### ***Role of Search Advisory Committee Members***

You were each asked to serve on this committee because of your devotion to our public universities, your record of leadership, and the confidence you've earned from your colleagues and fellow Mountaineers. All of you have important perspectives on different aspects of the university's work, and I know you'll bring that experience and insight to the task ahead of us. While we bring different backgrounds and ideas, I know we'll carry out this important responsibility with a common sense of purpose and a shared desire to see Appalachian State thrive.

Under UNC Policy 200.8, [Policy on Chancellor Searches and Elections](#), our duty as members of the search advisory committee is to work as a cohesive team dedicated to a single objective: the identification and recommendation of the strongest possible candidates to serve and strengthen this institution. You all bring experience and relationships as members of different constituencies — faculty, students, staff, alumni, trustees, business and community leaders — and you should bring those perspectives to bear on the search process. But you are not acting as a representative or delegate of any interest group; you are here to exercise your best judgment in service to all Appalachian State's many stakeholders.

Over the next several months, we will hear wide-ranging input on what our App State community wants and needs from its next leader. We will combine that feedback with our own insights to craft a leadership statement conveying our hopes and expectations for Appalachian's next chancellor. We will weigh the unique strengths of the candidates and interview those we believe

most promising. And, finally, we will put forward an unranked slate of at least three highly qualified candidates for consideration by the Appalachian State Board of Trustees.

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

You are a select group, chosen for particular areas of expertise, and your full participation is crucial to our shared success. I ask that you commit the time and energy required of this important undertaking, including attending all search committee meetings and candidate interviews. I am grateful for the chance to work alongside you and will benefit from our time together in the months ahead.

Having been trusted with this role, we are bound to maintain confidentiality as required by UNC policy and state law. Breaching confidentiality puts the entire search process at risk, potentially damaging both Appalachian State's reputation and candidates' careers. For the sake of the university and those putting their trust in us, it's vital that we undertake our work with integrity and keep our deliberations in the strictest confidence.

Finally, I ask that we respect the role of our chair, Senator Ballard, and allow her to serve as the sole spokesperson for the search advisory committee. Please pass along any media inquiries or other communications about the search to her so that we can ensure the information we provide is consistent and remains within the bounds of state law, university policy, and our charge. For legal advice, Chair Ballard will look to Appalachian State's Office of General Counsel which will serve as legal counsel to this committee. Please direct all questions you have, legal or otherwise, to Chair Ballard.

### ***Traits of a Strong Campus Leader***

Appalachian State is widely admired for the quality of its student experience, its disciplined focus on providing real opportunity for the students of the mountains and beyond, its community engagement, and its thoughtful approach to growth and outreach. Since its founding in 1899, App State has lived up to its pioneering spirit and kept faith with its mountain values as it grew into the nationally ranked university it is today. The next chancellor of this excellent institution will need to harness those strengths and offer an ambitious vision for how this university can best serve a fast-growing region while remaining true to its mission of access and opportunity.

I also believe it is essential that we seek a leader who embodies the values and spirit of this unique institution and region. In the words of a fellow North Carolina native son, Charles Kuralt, "The lessons we learn in the classroom are important, but the lessons we learn from the land, from the mountains, and from the people of North Carolina are what truly shape our character and understanding of the world." I believe this sentiment perfectly encapsulates the traits and values we should look for in your next chancellor — someone who understands the strength that comes from a genuine sense of place, a true commitment to the people in the mountains and beyond.

Higher education leadership is demanding, requiring a mix of skills and experience that really is broader than most sectors of our society. I won't attempt an exhaustive list of the qualities we're looking for, but it's fair to say that we'll need an impressive balance of vision and execution; discipline and diplomacy; personal empathy and professional accountability.

Based on my own experience working with all of our chancellors, I am eager for someone with:

- ❖ *Great capacity to lead and inspire.* Chancellors are only as good as the teams they cultivate and empower. A great leader operates with trust, compassion, and clear expectations to achieve strong results. Working effectively with a wide range of constituent groups, especially faculty, staff, and students, as well as alumni and the wider community, is essential for a culture of collaboration and respect.
- ❖ *Strategic vision.* Universities are sprawling, decentralized organizations, and there is always a wealth of promising ideas competing for attention and resources. Being strategic and disciplined about areas of strength and investment — giving the institution a sense of focus and identity — is crucial for progress.
- ❖ *A clear devotion to the mission of public higher education.* Founded as a teacher training school, Appalachian State has always embodied the best of public service and commitment to uplifting its region. An effective leader must continue to prioritize access and opportunity for the people of North Carolina.
- ❖ *A relentless focus on student success.* Access is only meaningful if it leads to opportunity, and Appalachian State has an impressive record of graduating students on time and into promising careers. A far-sighted chancellor must sharpen that focus in a fast-changing economy and during a time of increased skepticism toward the value of college.
- ❖ *An appreciation for Appalachian State's mountain heritage and its role in the region.* This university is proudly rooted in the mountains, a catalyst for art, education, sports,

and culture in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Honoring that identity and celebrating it to the wider world is a key responsibility of any App State leader.

- ❖ *A commitment to responsible growth.* Boone is a fast-growing town, and Appalachian State is a big part of its appeal. A collegial, collaborative relationship with the community is essential for maintaining a thriving environment for students and residents alike.
- ❖ *A statewide perspective.* Being part of the UNC System means making decisions not just in the best interest of an individual institution, but with the needs and interests of the entire state very much in mind. An effective chancellor finds ways to expand and improve within the broad priorities of the UNC System and public higher education.
- ❖ *Honesty and integrity.* Earning and keeping trust, especially in an environment of competing interests and ideas, is vital in leading such an open and collaborative institution, and it demands the highest level of personal integrity, honesty, and transparency.
- ❖ *Comfort with high-profile accountability.* Public higher education is a lively enterprise, with a lot of stakeholders and inevitable controversies over big decisions. A confident leader will welcome that scrutiny as a sign of healthy interest in the state's public universities.
- ❖ *Fiscal prudence and operational expertise.* Sound financial management and operational efficiency are critical to serving the university's many goals.
- ❖ *A commitment to academic excellence, academic freedom, and freedom of expression.* The university's mission of teaching, research, and service depends on scholarly excellence and the freedom of the faculty to pursue knowledge without fear or favor. We must also ensure that all members of the campus community are free to engage in open dialogue and civil discourse. A chancellor must be ready to defend those core principles.

That's just the top of the list, and it's an enormous amount to ask of any one person. But it's what this place needs to grow and thrive into a new era for public higher education, and I'm confident we will find a person who can deliver.

The depth and richness of our candidate pool will determine this search's success. We should consider candidates who are both internal and external, traditional and nontraditional. I'm excited about the range of candidates we're likely to see in the coming months, and I hope all of us will be open-minded about the strengths and experiences that are most valuable for the work

of leading Appalachian State. I am completely confident in this committee's ability to keep the core values of this institution front and center in our discussions, relying on a shared love of this place and a deep desire to see it flourish.

### ***Search Process***

Our process will be thorough, professional, and a source of pride for all of those involved. We will follow state law and university policy, and we will conduct ourselves in a way that brings credit to Appalachian State and to all of North Carolina's public institutions. This includes complying with open meetings and confidentiality laws, and working through this complex process with respect for our fellow committee members and for the candidates we consider.

This search will be supported by the System Office's executive search team led by Lynn Duffy. Lynn, our System Office senior associate vice president for leadership and talent development, and her team have extensive backgrounds in chancellor searches and have recruited strong national pools of candidates in previous searches. Because of their expertise, Chair Ballard and I have determined that we do not need to engage an external search firm. Lynn will be working closely with Chair Ballard and this committee throughout the search process, which you'll hear more about during today's meeting.

As with any chancellor search, we will seek and consider the broadest possible array of public input. Universities have many different constituencies, and their interests deserve fair and open consideration by this committee. We have already launched an online survey to solicit input from all those who care about App State and I've been astounded by the early response – over 1,400 Mountaineers have already responded to the survey, which I think is a UNC System record. You can find the survey on the App State chancellor search website. If you've not yet taken it, I hope you will. We will also have open listening forums, a website to keep you informed about the search process, and ample opportunity for members of this committee to hear directly from key stakeholders about their hopes and concerns.

Done well, this search should be an opportunity for App State to shine. There is so much to be proud of here in Boone, and so much to look forward to. I'm immensely glad to be sharing this important task with all of you, and confident that we'll deliver for the Mountaineers and for all North Carolinians.

125 years down, many more to go in High Country!