

EXECUTIVE SEARCH

President



THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE®

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Institution: The University of Alabama in Huntsville

Role: President

Location: Huntsville, Alabama

Reports To: Sid J. Trant, Chancellor of the University of Alabama System

Website: uah.edu

THE OPPORTUNITY:

The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) invites nominations and applications for a bold, visionary, and dynamic leader to serve as its next President. UAH stands at a defining moment in its history, a moment of tremendous promise, possibility, and purpose. The University seeks a leader who will champion the spirit of discovery that has long defined UAH and guide it toward an even more remarkable future. Founded on a legacy of innovation and fueled by a passion for exploration, UAH has earned national distinction as a comprehensive research university where science, engineering, and technology thrive alongside robust programs in business, nursing, education, the arts and humanities. This breadth of disciplines creates a vibrant academic community committed to advancing knowledge, fostering creativity, and preparing students for success in a rapidly changing world. Located in the heart of one of the nation's most dynamic innovation corridors, UAH is uniquely positioned to expand its impact through strategic partnerships with federal agencies, industry leaders, and the Huntsville community. The next President will accelerate UAH's growth trajectory, championing academic excellence across all disciplines, and strengthen its role as a catalyst for economic development and intellectual leadership in Alabama and beyond.



ABOUT UAH: Founded in 1969 as an extension of the University of Alabama, UAH has grown into a comprehensive, research-driven institution with nationally recognized strengths in aerospace, defense, and advanced technologies, reflecting [UAH's mission](#) to provide outstanding education, produce important discoveries, and serve workforce needs locally and beyond. Located in the heart of one of the country's most advanced science and technology hubs, UAH offers over 100 areas of study across six colleges, including Engineering, Nursing, Business, Science, Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, and Education. With a student body of nearly 6,500 undergraduates and over 1,600 graduate students, and 374 full-time faculty members, UAH is known for its rigorous academics, high return on investment, and commitment to immersive experiences that prepare students for success in a rapidly evolving world.



The University's 500-acre campus is situated in Huntsville, Alabama, also known as "The Rocket City," a city renowned for its deep ties to aerospace, defense, and biotechnology industries.

As the anchor tenant of Cummings Research Park, the second-largest research park in the U.S., and adjacent to Redstone Arsenal, a Federal Center of Excellence, the University is a key partner to NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, the U.S. Army, and numerous Department of War agencies. UAH's research strengths span a wide range of disciplines, including aerospace systems, cybersecurity, data analytics, space propulsion, and severe weather.

Through its 17 interdisciplinary research centers and strong industry collaborations, UAH plays a vital role in driving innovation, economic development, and workforce readiness in Alabama and beyond.



POSITION:

The **Presidency** of UAH offers a rare and inspiring opportunity to lead a comprehensive university defined by innovation, imagination, and impact. UAH is a place where discovery in science and engineering meets creativity in the arts and humanities, and where business, education, nursing, and the social sciences prepare future leaders to shape a changing world.

The next President will have the chance to build on the University's strong foundation, elevate its academic distinction, and champion a bold vision that aligns with the evolving needs of students, faculty, and global partners. UAH's annual research expenditures exceed \$150 million, and the institution maintains exceptional financial stability, providing a secure platform for ambitious growth and innovation.

Beyond the campus, the President will serve as a strategic leader and collaborator within the broader Huntsville community, engaging with an impactful network of civic, cultural, educational, and industry partners. As Huntsville continues its exciting growth as a hub of innovation and opportunity, UAH and its next leader will play a pivotal role in shaping the region's future by advancing education, research, and community impact across multiple sectors. The President will have a transformative opportunity to strengthen UAH's partnerships, broaden its impact, and position the University as a driving force for academic discovery, societal advancement and meaningful impact on communities locally and globally.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **Serve as a Visionary Leader and Driver for Change:** Lead the advancement of the University's [mission](#) at a critical moment in order to capitalize on current momentum and potential.
- **Grow and Integrate the Research Portfolio:** Increase faculty participation in grant-funded research, align academic programs with research priorities, and position UAH to reclaim Carnegie R1 status through strategic investment in graduate education and Ph.D. production.
- **Forge Strategic Partnerships:** Strengthen and expand relationships with major federal agencies and businesses in Huntsville, including Redstone Arsenal's 70+ Tenant Agencies, and local and national defense contractors, to enhance UAH's role in regional innovation and national security.
- **Lead Fundraising and Corporate Engagement:** Drive philanthropic and corporate investment, particularly within Cummings Research Park and emerging sectors such as Artificial Intelligence, Crypto, Forensics, UX and Technical Communications, Technical / Business Law, Cybersecurity, and Aerospace.
- **Enhance Campus Life and Student Engagement:** Improve the overall student experience by expanding housing, growing Greek life, further investing in the 15 NCAA Division II varsity sports programs, increasing student engagement, and fostering a sense of community on campus.

- **Demonstrate a Student-First Leadership Approach:** Ensure that all decisions, initiatives, and programs reflect a deep commitment to student success and engagement, placing students at the heart of the University's mission and fostering an environment where they can thrive.
- **Champion Institutional Neutrality and Academic Freedom:** Ensure all actions, decisions, and communications support the institution's neutrality policy, fostering an intellectually independent environment that promotes academic freedom, open inquiry and discovery.
- **Support and Empower Faculty:** Champion faculty development, recruitment, and retention; promote a culture of academic excellence and innovation; and ensure faculty are rewarded and supported in their teaching, research, and service missions.
- **Demonstrate a Transparent Leadership Style:** Embrace a collaborative approach with the University faculty and staff that builds trust through open communication and respect for the principles of shared governance.
- **Build and Inspire a High-Performing Leadership Team:** Lead a strong cabinet of senior administrators, promote operational excellence, and cultivate a culture of accountability, collaboration, and innovation.
- **Articulate and Execute a Bold Vision:** Develop and communicate a compelling strategic vision that energizes the campus community, aligns with Huntsville's growth trajectory, and positions UAH as a national leader in science and technology.
- **Create New Energy and Momentum:** Serve as a visible, engaged, and inspiring leader who brings fresh perspective, builds trust, and galvanizes support across campus and the broader community.
- **Champion the University's Core Mission and Discover New Opportunities:** foster a continued commitment to excellence, integrity and collaboration, inspiring faculty, staff, students and stakeholders to reach new heights.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE AND CORE COMPETENCIES:

Energetic and Dynamic Leadership

- Demonstrates a high level of enthusiasm, visibility, and personal engagement across campus and the broader community.

Mission-Driven Focus

- Deeply committed to UAH's core values of academic excellence, research innovation, and public service, with a clear understanding of its role in advancing academic excellence.

Strategic Relationship Builder and Civic Leader

- Excels at building meaningful relationships across sectors, serving as a connector between the university and key stakeholders in government, industry, and the local community to amplify UAH's regional and national impact.

Fundraising Expertise

- Proven ability to lead successful fundraising campaigns, engage corporate partners, and secure philanthropic support to advance institutional priorities.

Strategic Understanding of Huntsville's Innovation Ecosystem

- Brings a deep appreciation for Huntsville's unique position in aerospace, defense, and technology, and leverages that knowledge to align UAH's growth with regional opportunities.

Research Leadership and Institutional Advancement

- A deep appreciation for research and scholarship, with experience leading or contributing to high-impact research initiatives and securing external funding and driving measurable success in advancing research to elevate institutional reputation.

Student-Centered Leadership

- Demonstrates a genuine commitment to student engagement, fostering a supportive environment that prioritizes student success and well-being while understanding and appreciating the unique and high-achieving student body at UAH.

Experience with Strategic Leadership in Capital Development

- Demonstrates expertise in overseeing large-scale physical property expansions with strategic impact both within the University and in the larger community.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT:

UAH is part of the University of Alabama System (UA System), which was established in 1969 and includes UAH, the University of Alabama (UA), the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), and the UAB Health System. The self-nominating [Board of Trustees](#) comprises 15 members representing Alabama's seven congressional districts, with the Governor of Alabama as an ex-officio member. Non-ex-officio members are elected by the Board, confirmed by the State Senate, and may serve up to three consecutive six-year terms. The Board ensures the effective leadership, management, and control over the activities of the three doctoral research universities and the UAB Health System. This structure provides for a definitive, orderly form of governance, and secures and continues responsive, progressive, and superior institutions of higher education.



Sid. J. Trant
Chancellor
The University of Alabama System

Sid J. Trant serves as Chancellor of The University of Alabama System. As an Alabama native and first-generation college graduate, Trant is a strong advocate for education's ability to change lives and is passionate about increasing access to educational opportunities for Alabamians and beyond.

As Chancellor, Trant is the chief executive officer of Alabama's largest public employer and largest higher education enterprise, which comprises three dynamic research universities – The University of Alabama, The University of Alabama at Birmingham and The University of Alabama in Huntsville – as well as the world-class UAB Health System. He serves as the principal liaison between the Board of Trustees and the UA System's component institutions, working closely with the university presidents and health system CEO to implement policies set forth by the Board while supporting the multi-faceted missions of the System's institutions. Trant's team-oriented leadership empowers each UA System institution to provide exceptional educational, research and patient care experiences to all.

Before being appointed Chancellor by the UA System Board of Trustees on February 7, 2025, he served as Interim Chancellor for ten months. Prior to that role, Trant was the UA System General Counsel and Senior Vice Chancellor for over six years, representing and working closely with the Board of Trustees and the System's institutions in all legal matters as well as leading the UA System Office of Counsel, with staff located at each institution. Trant has been an invaluable member of the UA System's executive team throughout a period of tremendous growth, during which time the System's economic impact surpassed \$18.6 billion, research and development expenditures grew to over \$1 billion, and student applications increased by 50%. The University of Alabama System educates and graduates more students than any university in the state.

Before he joined the UA System in September 2017, Trant was a partner at Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP for 30 years. While steadfastly serving his clients, he also served in various roles inside the firm, including practice group chair, hiring partner, and member of the firm's Executive Committee. He graduated summa cum laude from UA in 1983 as a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He earned his juris doctorate degree in 1986 from Georgetown University Law Center, where he was a member of the Order of the Coif and graduated magna cum laude. Before joining the Bradley firm, he served as legislative assistant to Senator Howell Heflin in Washington, D.C. and was a judicial clerk for the Honorable Sam C. Pointer Jr., experiences which still inspire and guide him today.

WHY IS THIS A COMPELLING POSITION?

This President will lead the University and closely partner with the City of Huntsville and the Tennessee Valley Region as they are at the threshold of an exciting future. The region is home to nationally significant institutions with partnerships and opportunities that will position UAH at the heart of innovation and economic development both for the City of Huntsville and on the national stage. The next leader will have a profound impact on these efforts. Key areas of engagement include:

Redstone Arsenal

Redstone Arsenal is a cornerstone of national defense and technological innovation, serving as a major U.S. Army installation and home to key federal agencies, including the Missile Defense Agency and Army Materiel Command. It also hosts a diverse ecosystem of partners such as the Defense Intelligence Agency, FBI, ATF, NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, and numerous defense contractors, creating one of the most concentrated hubs of military and aerospace expertise in the nation. UAH has strong partnerships with Redstone Arsenal, particularly in areas such as engineering, cybersecurity, national security, space and defense-related research. Through collaborative projects, internships, and workforce development initiatives, UAH supports Redstone's mission while providing students and faculty with unique opportunities to contribute to national security and cutting-edge advancements. This relationship enhances UAH's role as a vital contributor to both regional growth and the broader strategic interests of the United States.

Cummings Research Park (CRP)

CRP is the second-largest research park in the United States and a vital engine of innovation and economic development in Huntsville. Home to more than 300 companies specializing in aerospace, defense, biotech, and advanced technology, CRP offers UAH a unique environment for collaboration, applied research, and workforce development. The university's close proximity and strong ties to CRP enable students and faculty to engage directly with industry leaders, contributing to real-world solutions and advancing UAH's mission as a hub for innovation and academic excellence.

U.S. Space Command

It was [recently announced](#) that the U.S. Space Command headquarters will relocate to Redstone Arsenal. As a unified combatant command responsible for military operations in space, including satellite defense and missile warning, its presence in Huntsville reinforces the city's role as a national leader in aerospace and defense. This move brings approximately 1,400 jobs and deepens the region's federal footprint, creating new opportunities for collaboration with UAH. UAH is uniquely positioned to support Space Command's mission through its research capabilities, STEM programs, and proximity to Redstone Arsenal, further solidifying its role in advancing national security and space innovation.

UAH PRESIDENT'S HOME:



UAH's President resides in the stately Fletcher-Lowe House, located in Huntsville's historic Twickenham District. A. S. Fletcher, a delegate to the 1901 Alabama Constitutional Convention, built the chateau style home in 1901 - 1902 with the architect Herbert Cowell of Joliet, Ill. The property was later inherited by Fletcher's nephew, Robert Joseph Lowe, and his wife, Jane Knight Lowe, both of whom were deeply involved in civic and philanthropic efforts in Huntsville. Upon Mrs. Lowe's passing in 1997, she bequeathed the home to the University of Alabama in Huntsville Foundation, and it now serves as the official residence of the university's president. This transition from private residence to institutional landmark symbolizes UAH's deep roots in the community and its commitment to preserving local heritage. The Fletcher-Lowe House not only provides a distinguished setting for university leadership but also stands as a living testament to Huntsville's rich architectural and civic legacy.

LOCATION:

Huntsville, Alabama is a city that defies expectations. As the largest city in the state, it has surpassed Birmingham and Montgomery in both size and influence, and it boasts one of the most educated populations in the nation. Known affectionately as the "Rocket City," Huntsville played a pivotal role in the development of the Saturn V rocket, the three-stage rocket that launched the Apollo missions to the moon. Today, NASA Marshall Space Flight Center continues to push the boundaries of propulsion technology, while the U.S. Space & Rocket Center, one of the largest space museums in the world, welcomes visitors from across the globe and hosts the renowned Space Camp®.





The city's roots stretch back to 1805, when it was founded by John Hunt and briefly served as Alabama's first state capital. Its Twickenham Historic District preserves a stunning collection of antebellum architecture, offering a window into the past. Yet Huntsville is anything but frozen in time. It's a thriving center of innovation, home to Cummings Research Park, the second-largest research park in the United States, where hundreds of tech and aerospace companies operate. Industry giants like Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, Leidos, Science Applications International Corporation, Booz Allen and Deloitte have established a strong presence here, and the city also hosts major manufacturing facilities for Toyota, Aerojet Rocketdyne, GE Aerospace and a Meta data center.

Creativity pulses through Huntsville's cultural scene. Lowe Mill Arts & Entertainment, once a textile mill, now houses hundreds of artists and studios, making it one of the largest privately-owned arts facilities in the country. The Orion Amphitheater draws top-tier musical acts, while the city's Von Braun Center has multiple venues and hosts the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, Broadway Theatre League and the Huntsville Havoc Hockey Team, adding depth to its artistic offerings. For those who crave the outdoors, Monte Sano State Park provides panoramic views and peaceful trails, the Huntsville Botanical Garden offers a lush escape, and John Hunt Park delivers expansive recreational space for sports and leisure. Adding to the city's vibrant entertainment options, the Rocket City Trash Pandas, Huntsville's popular minor league baseball team, bring family-friendly fun and community spirit to the region.



In every corner of Huntsville, southern hospitality meets scientific ambition. It's a city that celebrates its past while boldly shaping the future, making it one of the most compelling places to explore in the American South. Whether you're drawn by rockets, history, art, or nature, Huntsville has a way of surprising you. As the heart of North Alabama, the region offers a dynamic blend of innovation, natural beauty, and cultural richness, creating an environment where progress and quality of life thrive together.

UAH IN THE NEWS:

[Huntsville in the Top 25 Fastest Growing Cities in the Country](#)

[UAH Researcher Wins Top Prize in Space Physics](#)

[Engineering Program Teams with Boeing to Benefit Workforce and Academic Curriculum Development](#)

[UAH Programs in Top 10 Nationally for Federal Funding, First in Alabama](#)

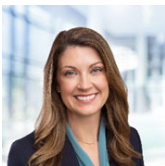
THE PROCESS:

Confidential review of applications, nominations, and expressions of interest will begin immediately and will continue until an appointment is made.

To ensure full consideration, please email a letter of interest and a CV, as 2 separate PDFs, by **January 5, 2026** to Lori Hemmer at: lhemmer@zrgpartners.com.

ABOUT ZRG PARTNERS:

ZRG is a global talent advisory firm that is changing the way companies hire and manage talent. ZRG's data-driven approach to executive and professional search has been changing the way clients think about how to find top talent. The company's digital Zi platform combines talent intelligence, candidate insights, and process improvement to dramatically deliver executive searches quicker and with proven better results.



Lori Hemmer

Principal

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Lori Hemmer has 14 years of experience in higher education administration and academic medicine, with a strong focus on executive search and leadership transitions. She has led searches for Presidents, Chancellors, and senior leaders across academia and healthcare.

Before joining ZRG, she was a Senior associate in executive search and previously served as Chief of Staff to the Chancellor at Vanderbilt University, where she managed senior leadership searches and daily operations. She also held a strategic leadership role at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, supporting key C-suite initiatives.

[Link to complete bio for Lori Hemmer.](#)



Barry Vines
Managing Director

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Barry Vines is a Managing Director in ZRG's Atlanta office and a senior member of both the Global Healthcare Services & Solutions and Higher Education Practices. With a strong background in healthcare, academic medicine, and higher education, he brings deep insight into every search.

Barry believes successful placements come from truly understanding a client's needs and finding leaders who can drive transformation. Before joining ZRG, he worked with global and boutique search firms, following leadership roles at AT&T, UAB Health System, Cisco Systems, and Computer Associates.

He holds a BS in Mathematics from Birmingham-Southern College.

[Link to complete bio for Barry Vines](#)