

EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Assistant Vice Chancellor, Human Resources



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Institution: University of Alabama System Office
Role: Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources
Location: Tuscaloosa, AL
Reports To: Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration
Website: uasystem.edu/home

THE OPPORTUNITY:



The University of Alabama (UA) System Office is seeking a strategic partner and experienced human resources professional for the role of Assistant Vice Chancellor for Human Resources (AVCHR). This next leader will be ready to roll up their sleeves while shaping the future of HR across a complex, multi-campus system. Reporting to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, this role will set the vision for the System Office Human Resources function, lead a high-performing team, and serve as a trusted advisor on everything from talent strategy and employee relations to benefits oversight and compliance for more than \$6 billion in plan assets. The AVCHR will collaborate with the Chief Human Resource Officers at three doctoral research universities and the University of Alabama at Birmingham Health System, drive initiatives in compensation and classification, and ensure human resources practices align with the priorities of the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor. This is an opportunity for a bold, business-minded leader to bring innovation, operational excellence, and strategic insight to a growing organization while influencing policy and shaping the employee experience across the UA System.

POSITION:

The **Assistant Vice Chancellor, Human Resources** is the chief human resources officer of the University of Alabama System Office, which coordinates among the University of Alabama System operating divisions - the University of Alabama, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and the UAB Health System – as appropriate and oversees centralized System functions. The role leads all aspects of the System Office Human Resources Department, serves as an advisor and strategic partner to System Office administration, and is responsible for System-shared benefits applicable to all UA System entities, including affiliates.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES:

- Set the strategic direction for the System Office Human Resources Department by offering vision, leadership, and strategic planning in alignment with the priorities of the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor;
- Collaborate closely with executive leadership and stakeholders across the UA System;
- Supervise all functions within the System Office Human Resources Department, including recruitment, retention, succession strategies, benefits design, consultant and vendor relationship management, administration, organizational development and training programs, compensation, classification, salary administration, and performance management;
- Address employee relations matters with utmost confidentiality, integrity, ethical standards, initiative, and sound judgement, including consulting with the General Counsel and Senior Vice Chancellor on personnel issues as needed;
- Provide leadership and guidance regarding System-shared employee benefits; chair, coordinate and work collaboratively with the System Benefits Committee, which includes HR leaders from each university within the UA System (UA, UAB and UAH), to evaluate and implement benefit plans that enhance the UA System's competitive standing; serve as Plan Sponsor for UA System 403(b), 457(b), 401(a), and 415(m) retirement and deferred compensation plans, coordinate with recordkeepers and third-party investment consultants to manage plan investments;
- Develop, motivate, and retain a high-performing, customer-focused Human Resources team committed to operational excellence and recognized for their competence, collaboration, support, efficiency, and innovation;
- Participate actively on the System Policy Committee to lead reviews of current policies and contribute to the formulation of new policies, practices, and procedures;
- Ensure full compliance with all federal, state, and local employment regulations;
- Support the Compensation Committee of the Board of Trustees by overseeing executive hiring, reporting, and salary administration, as well as benchmarking for roles governed by Board Rule 302.

OTHER DUTIES

- The position may be required to perform other duties as assigned.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Director of Human Resources

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE AND CORE COMPETENCIES:

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- Bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management, Business Administration or a related field;
- 10 years of related experience and a history of progressively responsible management and leadership experience in areas of significant, complex, and high-level responsibility in human resources and administrative operations.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- An advanced or terminal degree (e.g., Master's, J.D., Ph.D.) in a field relevant to the responsibilities of the role;
- Career-related certifications such as Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) and/or Human Resources Certification Institute (HCRI) designations, Certified Benefits Professional (CBP) or Certified Compensation Professional (CCP);
- Experience in higher education or healthcare.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES (COMPETENCIES)

- Demonstrated strong interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills with the ability to collaborate effectively with diverse individuals and groups, including senior executives and board members;
- Proven success in advancing through leadership roles within human resources, with expertise in areas such as compensation and benefits, talent acquisition and succession planning, performance management, and employee engagement;
- Proficient in HR systems, data analytics, and software programs including Microsoft Office Suite and Smartsheet;
- Exceptional planning, organizational, and time-management abilities, with a track record of managing multiple priorities and meeting deadlines;
- Skilled in providing guidance on employee performance issues, resolving conflicts, mediating disputes, conducting investigations, and managing complex employee relations matters confidentially;
- Adept at making timely, well-informed decisions and involving relevant stakeholders in decision-making processes when appropriate;
- Comprehensive and up-to-date understanding of all applicable federal and state employment laws and regulations (e.g., ADA, FMLA, Title IX) to ensure organizational compliance;

- Demonstrated experience and ability to lead a small, high-performing HR team while effectively collaborating with larger HR operations across multiple campuses in a complex, system-wide environment.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

- Sedentary Work: involves exerting up to 10 pounds of force occasionally or a negligible amount of force frequently to lift, carry, push, pull, or otherwise move objects. Sedentary work involves sitting most of the time but may involve brief periods of walking or standing;
- Hours are typically 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, may sometimes be required to work more than 40 hours to meet project timelines. Travel between UA, UAB, UABHS, UAH and affiliated organizations may be required.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

- Exposure can include office environments and other locations that are not extreme or hazardous.

WHY IS THIS A COMPELLING POSITION?

This role offers an exceptional opportunity to serve as the strategic HR leader for one of the most influential higher education systems in the Southeast. As the chief human resources officer for the UA System Office, the AVCHR operates at the intersection of leadership, policy, and systemwide impact shaping HR strategy that touches four major institutions: UA, UAB, UAH, and the UAB Health System. Few HR positions offer such a unique blend of scope, complexity, and influence.

The role is compelling because it extends far beyond traditional HR oversight. It drives alignment with the Chancellor and Board of Trustees, leads major decisions around employee benefits that affect tens of thousands across the System, and acts as a trusted advisor on sensitive, high-stakes employee relations matters. The leader in this seat will shape policy, steward retirement and deferred compensation plans, guide executive hiring and compensation for Board-governed roles, and architect the long-term HR strategy that safeguards organizational excellence.

This position also offers the rare opportunity to lead a small, high-performing team, unify HR initiatives across multiple campuses, and elevate System-wide cohesion through collaboration with HR leaders across UA, UAB, and UAH. The breadth of influence from organizational development to succession planning, compliance, compensation architecture, and workforce culture positions this leader as a transformative voice in the evolution of the UA System.

Finally, the governance structure under the Board of Trustees provides a stable, mission-driven foundation, allowing the AVCHR to focus on shaping progressive HR policies, strengthening talent systems, and advancing a culture that supports the educational, research, and healthcare

missions of Alabama's flagship institutions. For an HR leader seeking strategic impact, multi-site complexity, and a platform to drive long-lasting institutional change, this is a genuinely standout opportunity.

LOCATION:

Tuscaloosa, Alabama is a spirited Southern city that blends college-town energy with deep cultural roots and a steadily growing economy. Home to the University of Alabama, the city hums with year-round activity. Football Saturdays basically function as unofficial holidays, and you'll feel the buzz of student life, innovation, and community pride throughout town. Beyond campus, Tuscaloosa has a strong local identity: a mix of riverfront beauty, historic neighborhoods, and a food scene that leans proudly into barbecue, soul food, and Southern comfort.



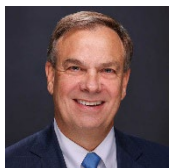
Economically, Tuscaloosa is anchored by higher education, healthcare, and manufacturing, most notably the Mercedes-Benz U.S. International plant, which continues to draw investment and support a wide network of suppliers and tech-forward jobs. The city has also been expanding its downtown and riverfront districts, creating a more walkable, connected urban core with new housing, restaurants, green spaces, and arts venues.



Life in Tuscaloosa offers a slower pace with everyday conveniences: affordable living, approachable neighborhoods, and easy access to nature. The Black Warrior River runs through the city, giving residents plenty of chances to enjoy walking trails, paddleboarding, and riverfront parks. Culturally, you'll find a blend of music, history, and Southern hospitality plus regular festivals, art shows, and local markets that give the city its warm, community-centered feel.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT:

The UA System was established in 1969 and includes UA, UAB, UAH, 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.



Dana Keith

Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration
The University of Alabama System

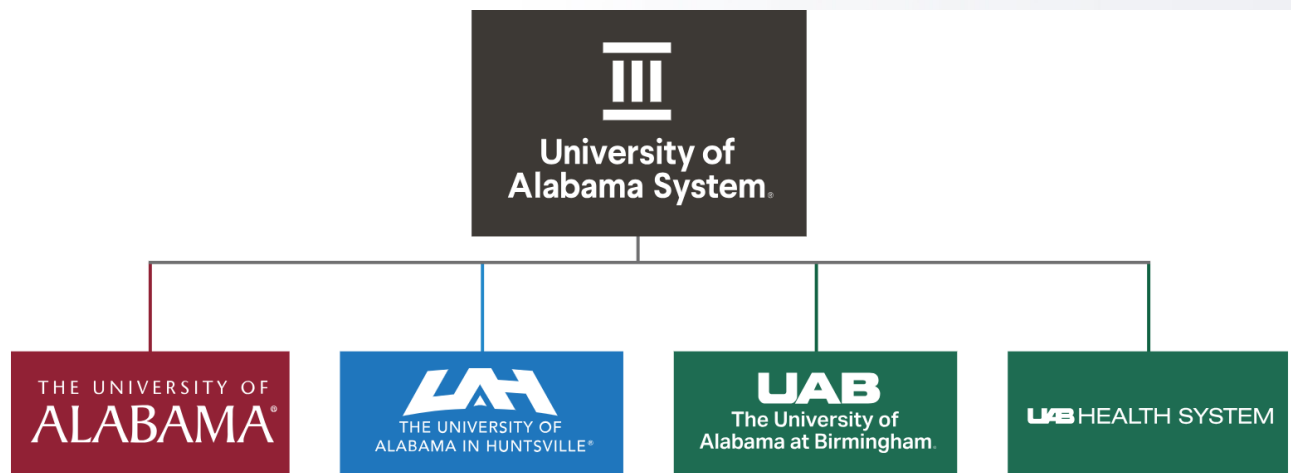
Dr. Dana S. Keith serves as Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration for The University of Alabama System, a role she has held since 2016. She provides strategic and operational leadership for the System Office's finance and administrative functions, including financial and tax reporting, payroll, human resources and system-wide benefits, investments, facilities management, and information technology.

Dr. Keith leads the System's overall asset and debt strategy, guiding the issuance of debt and managing the investment of \$6.8 billion in endowment and operating reserves across the UA System's three universities, health system, and affiliates. She also oversees the revolving capital plans of System entities totaling \$1.7 billion, ensuring sustainable and strategic financing. As liaison to the Board of Trustees, she supports the Finance, Investment, Compensation, and Physical Properties Committees.

Beyond her System leadership, Dr. Keith serves on the Board of Directors of UAB Medical West and represents the Chancellor on multiple affiliated foundations. With more than 24 years of higher education finance experience, she worked in healthcare prior to beginning her financial career as a senior auditor with Ernst & Young.

Dr. Keith earned her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from The University of Alabama and is a licensed Certified Public Accountant.

ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA SYSTEM:



The UA System is Alabama's largest higher education enterprise and largest public employer, comprised of University of Alabama (UA), and The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH), and the UAB Health System. The UA System improves the lives of people across Alabama and beyond through the teaching, research and service rendered through their component campuses and health system.

The UA System provides accessible and high-quality education to 70,000 students, leads the nation in cutting-edge research and serves their citizens through outreach and public service programs. Their hospitals and clinics care for millions of patients annually and serve people in every county 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, a resume, and complete contact information of three professional references, as 3 separate PDFs, by **January 26, 2026** to UofA-AVCHR@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

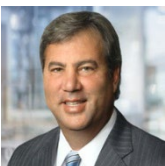
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Lori Hemmer has 14 years of experience in higher education administration and academic medicine, with a strong focus on executive search and leadership transitions. She has led searches for Presidents, Chancellors, and senior leaders across academia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