



**Graduate Assistants United**  
YOUR UNION, YOUR VOICE

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Monday, April 18, 2022

Dear Mr. Patel and the Board of Trustees,

When [the members of the University of Florida Presidential Search Committee were announced](#) on March 30th, 2022, UF-GAU was disappointed to realize that among the members of the "UF Board of Trustees, student body, faculty, administration, alumni and other stakeholders and supporters of the University of Florida" you had not selected a single graduate student to aid in this search. We were even more disappointed [when the list of advisors to consult and assist with the search was announced](#) this past Friday and it also did not include a single graduate student representative.

Among the fifteen members of the Presidential Search Committee, there are four Board of Trustee members, one member of the UF Foundation National Board, one member of the Florida Board of Governors, three UF Faculty representatives, one UF Dean, one staff member, one UF undergraduate student, and three UF alumni. Among the thirteen advisors are high-level administration personnel at UF and even the President of Santa Fe College. It is outrageous that the Board of Trustees does not respect the graduate students enough to allow them a voice in determining our next president, even in an advisory role.

Graduate students are over one-quarter of the student population at UF. Furthermore, we are the most diverse portion of the student body with less than 50% of graduate students identifying as white and with over 3,000 international students completing their postgraduate education at UF. Does the Board of Trustees not view the graduate student population as a stakeholder or supporter of UF? Or does the Board of Trustees simply not consider graduate students important enough to contribute to this presidential search?

Graduate students, particularly graduate assistants, are a major portion of what helped make UF a Top 5 public university in the United States. As teaching assistants and research assistants we teach courses, conduct research, complete service, and dedicate ourselves to the success of the University of Florida. We deserve a seat at the table.

We demand that you appoint a graduate student representative to the University of Florida Presidential Search Committee and allow graduate students a say in deciding the future leader of our university.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Hartnett".

Rachel Hartnett  
Co-President, UF-Graduate Assistants United