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**Board of Governors confirms Saunders as next UWF President**

**Pensacola, Fla. – Nov. 3, 2016** – The Board of Governors confirmed Dr. Martha Saunders as the sixth president of the University of West Florida, effective Jan. 1, 2017, during its quarterly meeting held today at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. Saunders will replace Dr. Judy Bense, who will retire as UWF President on Dec. 31.



In September, the UWF Board of Trustees unanimously approved a resolution to recommend Saunders as president-elect, contingent upon the completion of a successful background screen and subject to confirmation by the Board of Governors as outlined in the State University System regulations.

Saunders currently serves as provost and executive vice president for UWF. In this role, she functions as the University’s chief academic officer and vice president for the Division of Academic Affairs, as well as the chief operating officer with oversight over all University divisions. She was previously a faculty member and administrator at UWF from 1984-2002.

This will be Saunders’ third time leading a university. She served as chancellor at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater from 2005 to 2007 and president at the University of Southern Mississippi from 2007 to 2012.

Saunders began her career at UWF in 1984 as a professor in the Department of Communication Arts, where she then became coordinator of the Public Relations Program. She also served as director of the University Honors Program and associate dean of the College of Arts and Social Sciences from 1996 to 1999. In 2000, she was named dean of the UWF College of Arts and Sciences.

She received a bachelor’s degree in French from the University of Southern Mississippi, a master’s degree in journalism from the University of Georgia and a doctorate in communication theory and research from Florida State University.

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