



**Chancellor**  
Leadership Profile  
January 2025



## The Opportunity

The University of Tennessee System is accepting nominations and applications for the position of Chancellor of the [University of Tennessee Southern](#) (UTS) campus, located in Pulaski, TN. The Chancellor is the Chief Executive Officer of the University of Tennessee Southern campus, provides visionary leadership to the campus and reports directly to the [UT System President](#). This position is appointed by the President and approved by the [University of Tennessee Board of Trustees](#).

The next Chancellor will be responsible for leading UT Southern to new levels of achievement and must possess a proven record of successful oversight of complex institutions. The Chancellor will have an entrepreneurial spirit that will move the

institution's academic mission forward and lead efforts to raise new resources from the University's many and broadly based constituents. The Chancellor will be a highly visible figure both externally and internally, fully engaging with faculty, students, staff, alumni, the extended University family, and elected and government officials to address the challenges of the



University and the region. The Chancellor will create a culture of belonging where all students feel accepted, respected, and equipped for success.

The Chancellor will possess the skills to promote academic excellence, provide visionary leadership in strategic initiatives that enhance the standing of the University, manage budget planning and accountability, respect and promote shared governance, enhance access to and engagement in the institution, and engage the University with the wider regional community. The Chancellor must have a strong commitment to public higher education, a compelling desire to further the mission and core values of UT Southern, and an alignment with the [Be One UT values](#). Those strengths will be realized in this individual's ability to attract and retain exceptional faculty and students, increase private philanthropy, and demonstrate success in implementing the University's strategy.

UT Southern's next Chancellor will have the opportunity to lead a special and vibrant university toward future successes and will be presented with the opportunity to achieve the following professional and personal accomplishments:

- Lead a student-centered university with a strong reputation and positive momentum into its next chapters of success.

- Serve as a passionate advocate of a mission to advance student success, including increases in retention and graduation rates, and enhance the University's resources, quality, and impact.
- Partner with a cohesive and collaborative senior leadership team and a dedicated, energetic team of faculty and staff.
- Work closely with the leadership within the UT System in a state that values – and invests in – higher education.
- Be an active and influential leader in Pulaski, South Central Tennessee, and across the state to meaningfully impact quality of life and economic vitality.

## Key Priorities

The next Chancellor of UT Southern will address the following priorities, among others:

**Provide visionary leadership.** The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees recently approved UT Southern's inaugural five-year strategic plan – [Igniting Excellence 2023-2028](#) – that captures the spirit of the institution, from the pursuit of excellence to the enrichment of the student experience and the deepening of the institution's pledge to foster meaningful community relationships. Igniting excellence depends on serving Southern Middle Tennessee and educating students to meet the current and future workforce needs of the region and the state. Consistent with UT Southern's mission and values, this strategic plan is a roadmap that draws inspiration from the institution's rich history while embracing exciting opportunities for the future. This dynamic plan will evolve, requiring a Chancellor who will be able to work with all institutional constituents to continually assess the University's vision and implement strategies that will fulfill UTS's mission and achieve its goals. This individual must be able to effectively set priorities, ensure decisions at all levels of the University align with those priorities, and passionately communicate UTS's vision in a manner that connects with the University's many constituents. The next Chancellor must ensure alignment with the [University of Tennessee's strategic pillars](#) and act as a collaborative partner in the advancement of the System's goals.

**Create high-quality, student-centered educational experiences and foster student success.** UTS has set a goal of growing enrollment to 1,250 by 2028 – a 28% increase. Given the University's size, location, and being the newest campus in the UT System, UTS is uniquely positioned to offer a distinct educational experience that combines intimate campus charm, small-classroom environments, and personalized attention with the resources and opportunities of a major public university, resulting in an affordable, high-quality academic program array that is committed to regional and state workforce needs. UTS also values its unique student population, 36% of whom are first generation and 38% of whom are student athletes. Their success transcends classrooms, courts, and fields as a testament to the collaborative efforts of academics and athletics to support student success. As the University grows, there will need to be a continued focus on improving student outcomes by continually bolstering a highly personalized academic experience and supportive campus environment that will ultimately improve four- and six-year graduation rates. The next Chancellor must be able to build on the positive momentum that is underway in these areas, encourage collaboration across a complex institution and system, and apply strategies and initiatives that are laser-focused on student success as the University pursues its goals of growth and transformational outcomes for all students.

**Engage the Pulaski community and southern middle Tennessee region.** UTS's location 70 miles south of Nashville and 40 miles north of Huntsville, Alabama embodies a place where the community becomes family and where learning transforms into regional growth and effectual change. The next Chancellor will understand and embrace UTS's profound sense of responsibility to the community coupled with a unique history of recently joining

the UT System as the fourth undergraduate campus through the acquisition of Martin Methodist College (founded in 1870). The acquisition in 2021 is still fresh on the minds of faculty, students, staff, and the broader community, with an ongoing learning curve that requires a Chancellor who can deftly navigate change management and is comfortable in the associated ambiguity of this institutional transition. The UTS community is proud of their past which they want to uphold, knowing they have a bright new future to mold. As such, the next Chancellor will be expected to build authentic and meaningful relationships with community partners, listening to the needs of employers, and understanding the opportunities to positively impact the region's upward trajectory through purposeful and mutually beneficial collaborations.

**Foster University spirit and elevate visibility.** UT Southern's Chancellor must be a passionate, visible, and engaged leader with the ability to instill pride, energy, and a sense of Firehawk spirit in constituents on-campus and in the community. The University's NAIA Division 1 athletics programs, its many contributions to arts, culture and community service in Giles County, and its desire to expand its rich portfolio of academic programs to enhance that flex to align with regional industry and state workforce needs all serve as avenues to a more intense connection to the institution and elevated visibility in the community and beyond. The next Chancellor will serve as the University's lead cheerleader, celebrating the accomplishments and contributions of faculty, staff and students, elevating its brand, and making it a university of first choice for students.



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# About The University of Tennessee Southern

## Big Enough to Serve, Small Enough to Care

The University of Tennessee Southern, founded in 2021, proudly serves as the newest and smallest member of the UT System, joining as the fourth undergraduate campus through the acquisition of Martin Methodist College (founded in 1870). Nestled in the heart of southern middle Tennessee, UT Southern is located approximately 70 miles south of Nashville and 40 miles north of Huntsville, Alabama, and embodies a place where the community becomes family, where learning transforms into action, and where opportunities abound. As the only public four-year institution of higher education between Chattanooga and Memphis, situated along Tennessee's southern border, UT Southern currently enrolls more than 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students. UT Southern offers a distinct educational experience that combines the personalized attention of a tight-knit community in Pulaski with the resources and opportunities of a major public university resulting in an affordable, high-quality education and values low student-teacher ratios and emphasizes personalized classroom interactions. UT Southern proudly offers nearly 40 academic programs across various divisions, including business, education, humanities, mathematics and sciences, nursing and social sciences.

## Strategic Plan: Igniting Excellence 2023-2028

In March 2024, UT Southern's inaugural five-year strategic plan was unanimously approved by the UT Board of Trustees. [Igniting Excellence](#) marks a significant milestone for the university, emphasizing its commitment to enhancing academic excellence, promoting innovation, creating transformational student experiences, and fostering greater community engagement.

The strategic plan is built on three foundational pillars designed to guide UT Southern through its next phase of growth and development:

1. **Enhance Academic Excellence and Promote Innovation:** Aiming to elevate the university's academic profile and encourage a culture of innovation and research that meets the evolving needs of the region and the state.
2. **Create Transformational Student Experiences and Foster Student Success:** Focused on providing students with engaging, high-quality educational experiences that promote personal and professional growth.
3. **Establish Greater Connectedness and Facilitate Campus and Community Engagement:** Dedicated to strengthening the ties between the university, its students, and the wider community to enhance the educational, economic, and cultural life of Southern Middle Tennessee.

## Mission

The University of Tennessee Southern provides an inspiring student-centered and transformative academic experience that empowers our students to excel in their chosen fields, nurtures intellectual inquiry and critical thinking, and instills a commitment to lifelong learning. With a profound sense of responsibility to our community, we strive to foster engagement and collaboration with all stakeholders to advance effectual change in the region and beyond.

## Vision

At UT Southern, we engage minds, transform lives, and illuminate a bright future, all while contributing to the success of our community, state, and nation through innovative educational opportunities and meaningful connections.

## Values

### Integrity & Transparency

- Champion ethical choices.
- Honor commitments.
- Foster trust, honesty, and openness

### Excellence & Distinctiveness

- Pursue quality.
- Establish ambitious benchmarks.
- Aspire to exceed expectations.

### Respect & Civility

- Embody professionalism.
- Lead with empathy and kindness.
- Welcome diverse perspectives; listen for understanding.

### Connectedness & Collaboration

- Serve with purpose.
- Build partnerships.
- Create unity through teamwork.

### Innovation & Transformation

- Think big.
- Be bold.
- Inspire others.



## Required Qualifications

The position requires significant administrative leadership in higher education or comparable leadership experience. A terminal degree is preferred. The successful candidate must have an understanding of UT Southern's mission to actively engage students, faculty, and staff; inspire change; and enrich and sustain the community. The University and community expect a Chancellor with an understanding of the role of a community-engaged public institution, an enthusiasm for students, an appreciation for faculty and staff, and a commitment to the [Be One UT values](#).

The Chancellor must express a passion for the mission of public education and understand the important social and economic roles it plays in the region and state. The Chancellor should be able to articulate the institution's values, serve as a persuasive advocate for the University at the state level, and lead efforts to raise new



resources from the University's many and broadly based constituents. The successful candidate will have the experience and a clear vision for how to grow federal, state, philanthropic, and industry support and will have the skills and experience to effectively communicate in a complex environment with various internal and external constituencies.

The next Chancellor must have exceptional leadership skills and a demonstrated

record of successful leadership in a complex organization. This individual must have the ability to work with cross-functional teams; foster teamwork and collaboration; delegate effectively and hold direct reports accountable; and deliver performance-based results.

The Chancellor's direct reports include the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, the Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Vice Chancellor for Access and Engagement, the Vice Chancellor for Research, the Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, the Vice Chancellor of Advancement, the Vice Chancellor and Director of Athletics, the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement, the Vice Chancellor of Information and Chief Information Officer, and the Vice Chancellor of Communications and Marketing.

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## Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile and a CV or resume. WittKieffer is assisting the University of Tennessee Southern in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **March 13, 2025**.

Application materials, nominations, and inquiries can be directed to Jen Meyers Pickard, Ph.D., Lauren Bruce-Stets, and Charlotte Harris at [UTSouthernChancellor@wittkieffer.com](mailto:UTSouthernChancellor@wittkieffer.com).

Please note that the state of Tennessee prides itself on the transparency of its government, and all formal applications will be subject to release upon public inquiry. If applicants do not want to have their materials made public if they do not become finalists, they must specifically request this at the time of their application.

Compensation for the position will be competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience. The University offers a comprehensive [benefits](#) package that includes excellent healthcare and tuition benefits for employees and their families, generous retirement benefits, a wide variety of professional development opportunities, supportive work and family benefits and much more. Additionally, Tennessee residents do not pay a state income tax.

### ***EEO/AA Statement / Non-Discrimination Statement***

*The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment without regard to and will not be discriminated against on the basis of, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or covered veteran status.*

*Inquiries and charges of violation of Title VI (race, color, national origin), Title IX (sex), Section 504 (disability), ADA (disability), ADEA (age), sexual orientation, or veteran status should be directed to the [appropriate affirmative action office](#). Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to the campus ADA Coordinator.*

# Appendix: UT Southern Organizational Chart

