



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Board of Trustees

P.O. Box 160002
Orlando, FL 32816-0002

Brian Lamb, Chair
Florida Board of Governors
State University System of Florida
325 West Gaines Street, Suite 1614
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400

January 14, 2025

Dear Chair Lamb,

On December 5, 2024, the University of Central Florida (UCF) Board of Trustees unanimously approved the attached "Second Amendment and Extension of Employment Agreement," extending President Alexander N. Cartwright's contractual term for one year, from April 13, 2025, through April 12, 2026. As required by Florida Statutes, this extension is contingent upon ratification by the Florida Board of Governors.

Since assuming the role of President in April 2020, Dr. Cartwright has demonstrated transformational leadership, exceptional vision, and an unwavering commitment to advancing UCF as Florida's Premier Engineering and Technology University. Over the past five years, he has not only guided the university through a period of remarkable growth and success but has also laid a strong foundation for UCF to achieve preeminence. His leadership has aligned institutional goals with the strategic priorities of the State University System of Florida, ensuring that UCF is well-positioned to meet the evolving needs of its students, faculty, and the state.

President Cartwright's leadership was instrumental in the development of UCF's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, Unleashing Potential: Becoming the University for the Future. This plan, created with the guidance of the Board of Trustees and in close collaboration with faculty, students, and community stakeholders, provides a focused roadmap for differentiating UCF as a leader in engineering, technology, and innovation. It has already driven progress across key areas such as student success, research excellence, community engagement, and operational efficiency.

Dr. Cartwright's implementation of the plan is yielding measurable results, as demonstrated by UCF's performance against accountability metrics:

- **Improved Graduation Rates:** The university achieved a record 58.7% 4-year graduation rate in 2023-24, an increase from 46.3% when President Cartwright began his tenure. Additionally, Pell-eligible students reached a six-year graduation rate of 76.1%.
- **Post-Graduation Success:** 70% of graduates are employed or enrolled in further education within a year of graduation, exceeding prior metrics.
- **Affordability:** 72% of graduates completed their degrees without federal loans, surpassing the university's 2027 strategic plan goal well ahead of schedule.
- **Research Excellence:** UCF's total research expenditures reached a historic \$247 million in 2023-24, with faculty achieving notable gains in patents, licenses, and awards that drive innovation and economic growth. Faculty hiring reached an all-time high under Dr. Cartwright's leadership at 1,877 FTE, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and discovery and reducing UCF's student to faculty ratio from 31:1 to 28:1.

President Cartwright firmly believes that a vision without resources is just a hallucination, and he has worked closely with state leaders, community partners, and university supporters to secure the investments necessary for UCF's future. His accomplishments include:

- **Increased State Investment:** President Cartwright secured over \$100 million in state appropriations to support hiring faculty in engineering and technology disciplines, fund the Dr. Phillips Nursing Pavilion, and enhance student success initiatives.
- **Philanthropic Growth:** The UCF Foundation consistently raises over \$100 million annually. Highlights include a \$40 million gift from MacKenzie Scott, as well as a record-setting 10.5% alumni participation rate in 2023-24.
- **Endowment Growth:** President Cartwright has also prioritized investing in UCF's future and worked to increase the university's endowment from \$163 million when he arrived to \$262 million as of June 2024.

Dr. Cartwright's efforts have also positioned UCF as a national leader in higher education. The university is now ranked among the top five public universities for innovation by U.S. News & World Report, solidifying its reputation in space exploration, artificial intelligence, and renewable energy research. UCF's transition to the Big 12 Conference has further elevated its national profile and attracted record investment in our athletics program from donors and a \$90 million investment from Orange County Tourism and Development dollars. He has also shaped new initiatives like the Pegasus Partnership Program have deepened connections with industry, enhancing opportunities for students and advancing regional economic development.

Under President Cartwright's leadership, UCF is on track to achieve preeminence by 2026, unlocking new opportunities and resources that will propel the university to even greater heights. His continued focus on differentiating UCF as Florida's Premier Engineering and Technology University ensures that the institution will remain at the forefront of innovation, education, and economic impact.

On behalf of the UCF Board of Trustees, I respectfully request the Florida Board of Governors' confirmation of President Cartwright's reappointment for the term commencing April 13, 2025, through and including April 12, 2026. Please find the approved Second Amendment and Extension of Employment Agreement attached for your review.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, I am happy to discuss this matter further at your convenience.



Sincerely,
Alex Martins
Chair, UCF Board of Trustees