



Dean, Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

THE SEARCH

The University of Florida (UF), a member of the American Association of Universities (AAU) and Florida's public flagship university, seeks an accomplished and ambitious leader to serve as the Dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering (HWCOE or the College). This is an opportunity to lead a college enjoying a tremendous run of success and growth at the top university in the nation's third most populous and second fastest-growing state—one that offers a unique combination of scale, breadth, affordability, and excellence.

Thanks to generous philanthropic and state support, HWCOE has two new signature buildings and is completing aggressive hiring initiatives to expand the faculty. This growth has allowed the College to extend its reach, becoming more productive and collaborative as the faculty produces world-class research and educates top students from around the nation and world, developing them into engineering leaders with the skills and creativity to address some of society's most pressing problems. The Dean will build on this strong foundation to aggressively pursue excellence in HWCOE's research, teaching, and outreach missions and promote its story and impact on a national and global level.

The University of Florida has made significant investments in faculty across the University, adding more than 600 new positions supported by the state legislature over the past several years, including 100 new faculty across campus through a signature long-term artificial intelligence initiative that will transform the curriculum and research at UF—home to the most powerful university-owned supercomputer in the nation. These efforts are part of a period of momentum and achievement at UF that has translated into a startling rise in the U.S. News and World Report (USNWR) rankings, with the institution now ranked the No. 7 public university in the nation, with excellence across the campus reflected in 28 top-25 national programs. Total University research expenditures increased to a record \$1.33 billion in 2025.

Reporting to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean is the chief academic officer of the College and is responsible for leading its education, research, service, and outreach agenda,

as well as leading philanthropic efforts and building strategic internal and external relationships to support its mission. The Dean will pursue excellence in a variety of ways: developing and moving aggressive research agendas and projects within the College and across UF; improving the College's reputation across multiple metrics including rankings, federal funding, inventions, and patents and licenses; developing a strategic vision for the College that will carry it through the next decade; and leading a vigorous fundraising program in support of the College for the next campaign. The Dean must be an experienced administrator and collaborative leader who values integration and variation in a successful academic enterprise.

The University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed in confidence as noted at the end of this document.

The University of Florida

The University of Florida (UF) is a land-grant research university and the flagship of Florida's state university system. Founded in 1853 and located in Gainesville since 1906, UF has 16 colleges, a major academic health center, a championship-winning athletic program and, in keeping with its land-grant mission, one of the nation's most comprehensive agriculture and natural resources programs. All are located on the university's 2,000-acre campus, joining its historic core with advanced facilities and preserved natural areas, and connecting to adjacent innovation, commercial, and residential districts. The University is among the nation's largest and most academically comprehensive, offering more than 100 undergraduate majors, 200 graduate programs, and 30 certificates. With their online bachelor's program ranking second in the nation by USNWR, UF is also a leader in providing online education that allows online students to graduate with the same valued credentials as their on-campus peers. UF prides itself on providing students with a fulfilling and affordable educational experience, with more than half of UF students graduating with no student loan debt.

Community

Enrollment numbers for Fall 2024 totaled 39,793 undergraduate, 15,118 graduate, 3,597 unclassified, and 3,382 professional students for a total enrollment of 61,890. The University employs more than 30,000 people, including approximately 6,600 faculty. UF faculty include 38 members of the National Academies including three National Academy of Engineering members. Ninety-one faculty are fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The acceptance rate for the Class of 2029 was 20 percent. UF has a 97 percent freshman retention rate and 91 percent of students graduate within six years. More than 75 percent of students are Florida residents, but University of Florida students hail from 48 states and more than 140 countries.

Financials

The University has enjoyed a sustained run of unwavering support from the State of Florida, which has endorsed its drive to become one of the nation's best public research universities while offering the second-lowest undergraduate tuition rates for in-state students among all flagship universities in the nation. Tuition and fees for in-state undergraduate/graduate students in the 2025-26 class are \$6,381/\$10,770. The University has an annual budget of \$10 billion and closed the largest fundraising campaign in its history in 2023. *Go Greater* topped \$4 billion and generated vital funds to support students and faculty, improve the university infrastructure, and pursue multidisciplinary ideas to address global challenges. The state of Florida is ranked [No. 1 in Higher Education by U.S. News and World Report](#)—a ranking that takes into account metrics such as graduation rates, cost of attendance, and student debt burden.

UF today

With engineering, life sciences, and a comprehensive complex of health science colleges within walking distance of one another, UF's disciplinary breadth positions it well to address modern problems and questions through interdisciplinary research. Research expenditures have topped \$1.33 billion as the University has sought and won more large, multi-PI grants. It is home to more than 170 research centers and institutes across its portfolio and is among the top public research universities in the U.S. for industry-sponsored research.

In 2020, UF launched an artificial intelligence initiative to achieve its vision of becoming a national leader in the application of AI. The initiative is anchored by a \$60 million gift from alumnus and engineering advisory board member Chris Malachowsky that included \$25 million in hardware, software, training, and services from NVIDIA, the technology company he co-founded and a world leader in AI and accelerated computing. The initiative includes an AI-centric data center that houses the most powerful university-owned supercomputer in the nation and a comprehensive effort to integrate AI across the curriculum, with modules for specific technical and industry-focused domains, certificates and degree programs, and the hiring of 100 faculty. In December 2024, the university's board of trustees approved a \$24 million investment to upgrade the supercomputer. This fourth version of HiPerGator—the new NVIDIA DGX SuperPOD with 63 NVIDIA DGX B200 systems—was delivered to campus in 2025.

By deploying AI across the curriculum, UF students and faculty are better equipped to address major challenges such as rising seas, aging populations, data security, personalized medicine, urban transportation, and food insecurity. Graduates take this training with them into their careers, impacting the world and playing an important role in the state as Florida transforms its workforce to support a diversified, technology-driven, high-wage economy. UF promotes AI across the curriculum as a replicable and scalable strategy to address the nation's pressing need to develop an AI-enabled 21st-century workforce.

The University is pursuing other initiatives to engage industry in the state and develop the workforce of the future, including plans to open a campus in Jacksonville in 2026. The site includes at least 22 acres of buildable land close to many corporate headquarters and offices. It will be within walking distance of the growing Brooklyn community, and will build on the College's and UF Health's offerings through advanced graduate and professional degree programs in addition to research efforts. Research will be world-class, and one focus will be semiconductor technology through the [Florida Semiconductor Institute](#). Primary areas of study will be data analytics, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, financial technology, transportation, and coastal infrastructure. The Dean will be expected to be a leader in delivering on this new opportunity in a rapidly evolving urban economy.

Location

UF's 2,000-acre campus is located in Gainesville, a vibrant college city located in North Florida. With a population of approximately 285,000 residents, the Gainesville metropolitan area offers a rich history, short commuting times, and a temperate climate. The city is known for its diversity of cultural events, restaurants, year-round outdoor recreational activities, social opportunities, and abundant natural resources including forests, lakes, springs, rivers, and wetlands. For 40 years, Gainesville has been a Tree City Community and is known for its extensive tree canopy. Situated in the central part of the Florida peninsula with both Atlantic and Gulf coasts within easy driving distance, Gainesville area residents have ready access to state and regional attractions and international travel. UF plays an integral role in both the city of Gainesville and Florida as a whole, which is the third most populous state in the U.S. As an economic powerhouse, UF supported 134,400 full- and part-time statewide jobs, \$19.6 billion in industry output, and \$12.6 billion in value added to the Florida economy as projected in the preliminary findings for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

THE HERBERT WERTHEIM COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Named after distinguished alumnus Dr. Herbert Wertheim in 2015, HWCOE champions a multidisciplinary approach to engineering, producing problem-solving and innovative leaders. Graduates are focused not only on being exceptional scientists but also innovators, entrepreneurs, collaborators, and savvy professionals.

The Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering fosters and provides world-class programs in engineering education, research, and service to enhance the economic and social well-being of the citizens of Florida, the nation, and the world. HWCOE is ranked No. 32 overall and No. 18 for undergraduate programs among public universities, and ranked No. 43 overall and No. 24 for graduate programs among public universities by U.S. News and World Report, with two departments ranked in the top-15 for undergraduate and graduate programs among public institutions. Each of the departments across the College prioritizes collaboration and cross-departmental work for undergraduate as well as graduate programs, encouraging students to be involved with research at all levels. A consistent emphasis on leadership mentoring, hands-on and interdisciplinary research—some of which is conducted in real-world settings and targeted at solving the most critical societal problems—make Gator Engineering graduates among the most well-

prepared in the workforce. The UF AI Initiative further boosts the demand for these engineering graduates, immersing them in multidisciplinary, artificial intelligence technology that prepares them for success in what has been called the “Fourth Industrial Revolution.”

Community

The Dean will oversee [9 departments, the Engineering School of Sustainable Infrastructure & Environment, 2 academic institutes, and 8 research institutes](#). As of fall 2024, the College’s 20 academic degree programs are taught by 301 tenured and tenure-track faculty and 82 instructional faculty. Fall 2025 enrollment within the College includes 8,506 undergraduate and 2,662 graduate students. Reporting from the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) data indicate that over the past five years the College is growing research expenditures at an average rate of 10 percent per year, to approximately \$133.3 million for fiscal year 2024-2025.

The HWCOE is home to more than 80 award-winning [student organizations](#) and design teams, allowing students to advance their leadership, team collaboration, and technical skills and develop in-depth hands-on engineering skills and explore their passion and place within the field of engineering alongside a community of peers. Among the teams that consistently win national competitions are the UF concrete canoe team, Steel Bridge, Gatr2, Vex Robotics, and Gator Motorsports. The College launched a new [Center for Experiential Learning](#) in 2025, designed as a single place where students, faculty, advisors, and industry partners can go for information and support about co-curricular, outside of the classroom, and formative experiences for students.

Finances

Colleges at UF operate in a Responsibility Center Management budget model. The College receives support from tuition dollars that contributed approximately \$53 million, \$48 million in university investment, and generated approximately \$30.5 million in research overhead last year. Its endowment is valued at \$206.4 million as of the quarter ending June 30, 2025 with estimated annual spending transfers of \$8 million.

Philanthropic gifts, since 2009, have totaled more than \$487 million, including the \$50 million catalyst gift from Dr. Herbert Wertheim and his family. This generosity has allowed the College to launch a \$300 million public-private partnership that leveraged funds from the state, university, and private donors, and added two major facilities to enhance the scholarship of engineering and its application to practice: The [Wertheim Laboratory for Engineering Excellence](#), which opened in Fall 2021, and the [Malachowsky Hall for Data Science and Information Technology](#), which is a 263,000 square foot academic building that opened in Fall 2024.

Research

The research enterprise at UF is poised to continue its tremendous momentum and growth, and research in engineering is seen as a priority and foundational player in those efforts. College faculty conduct impactful research and have been recognized for their excellence through awards, memberships in the national academies, and other leading professional associations. Research funding awards to faculty in the College reached \$139 million in fiscal year 2024-25, a record high. The College excels in research across a range of areas including cybersecurity, coastal hazards, transportation, materials under extreme environments, humans and technology, regenerative medicine, space, technologies for national security, neuroengineering, semiconductor materials and devices, and more recently, computer science and engineering education research. Federal awards reached \$121.5 million in fiscal year 2024-25, an increase of 27 percent from five years ago. Hires over the past decade have strengthened the College's research impact as faculty have won over 90 NSF CAREER awards, 9 PECASE, and 14 Department of Defense YIP and YFA awards. The College also operates more than [20 centers and institutes](#).

HWCOE's research and teaching is supported by world-class facilities and infrastructure comprising more than 800,000 gross square feet of space, including more than 360,000 square feet of research space. Examples of specialized and shared user facilities include the UF Nuclear Training Reactor, NSF NHERI Boundary Layer Wind Tunnel, DOE NSUF Nuclear Materials Characterization Facility, a drone park operated by the Air Force Center of Excellence for Assured Autonomy, and a biotechnology laboratory. The College's Nanoscale Research Facility provides access to state-of-the-art characterization instrumentation, many of which are unique in the state of Florida or the US Southeast. Characterization instrumentation tools include Electron Microscopy and Microanalysis, X-Ray Microscopy, and Particle Analysis. A class 100-1000 nanofabrication research cleanroom is well-suited for the current opportunities in the semiconductor space. The [Florida University Space Research Consortium](#)—a partnership among Florida's three leading space research and educational institutions—also provides crucial backing as it collaborates on advanced projects with both NASA and Florida's private sector.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

Reporting to the Provost, the Dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering will be responsible for the oversight of the entirety of the College, including the strategic pursuit of research excellence; the recruitment and retention of a highly accomplished diverse faculty group made up of top-tier scientists and educators; the success of HWCOE's students as they prepare to be leaders in engineering; managing the allocation of the College's fiscal, human, and capital resources; setting a priority for interdisciplinary collaboration; planning and assessing academic programs; managing promotion and tenure processes; and garnering support from UF's wide alumni base as well as from industry and other external stakeholders and cultivating development opportunities with a broad array of constituents.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

The next Dean of the Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering will inherit a college with ample resources and talented people that is playing a vital role in the advancement of one of the top public universities in the nation. As the leader of the College and an integral member of the leadership team at UF, they will face many challenges and have the chance to seize a variety of opportunities to advance HWCOE and UF and contribute to the betterment of the State of Florida, the nation, and the world.

Grow research

Research expenditures in the College have more than doubled over the past decade and the Dean will enjoy several advantages to enable this to continue—including faculty hiring initiatives, new infrastructure, and its location on a campus with 15 other colleges, including a medical school and a comprehensive complex of health sciences colleges.

Working with faculty and department leaders, the Dean will ensure the success of a renowned, impactful research enterprise by establishing a vision for research excellence, connecting faculty, empowering them to take risks, and seeding big ideas and investments. They will support these ambitious goals through strategic hires and by building the resources, infrastructure, and support to enable teams to pursue multidisciplinary projects and compete for multi-university center grants. As the external face of the College, the Dean will pursue efforts to connect with federal agencies, industry partners, and the state to continue to produce exceptional discoveries, interdisciplinary collaborations, and more opportunities for tech transfer. The Dean must have the academic taste, judgment, and foresight to make opportunistic hires, develop resources, and advocate for additional research infrastructure and space renovations.

Develop a strategic vision

The Dean will assume leadership of HWCOE at a time of significant change in higher education and engineering. The College is in an enviable position because of its ability to attract strong undergraduate students, outstanding infrastructure, world-class faculty, and position as a leader in a variety of fast-evolving, groundbreaking areas that offer solutions to some of the world's biggest problems. But HWCOE's position among the top colleges of engineering in the nation means that it will face fierce competition for students, faculty, and staff and support for research. The next Dean must be a strategic leader who will use this time of disruption to the advantage of the College, the University, and the state, driving HWCOE in exciting new directions and aligning its next strategic plan with the University's. The Dean must be a tireless advocate, strong communicator and convener, and creative visionary to position the College for continued success.

Advocate for the College and build its reputation

In the upcoming campaign, the College is anticipated to play an important role in the University's overall effort, with goals still under development and aspiring to be roughly double than those of the Go Greater campaign. These resources and state funding have been put to good use as the College has recruited

exceptional new faculty and built two new statement buildings. The College's affordability, reputation, and position as the flagship university in a large and growing state ensure that it will continue to attract strong students. But in a competitive environment where reputation often lags results, the Dean must be a tireless advocate for the College on a university, state, and national level. They must seek out and strategically pursue areas where the College can be world-class and make the case for the College's impact and needs to alumni, friends, and industry. While rankings are not an end unto themselves, the pursuit of improved metrics that influence rankings and reputation will make HWCOE a stronger and more impactful College, which will allow the Dean to be increasingly effective at attracting world-class faculty and students.

Ensure that HWCOE continues to attract, educate, and develop top students

During a time when many colleges around the country face enrollment challenges, HWCOE enjoys strong student demand, thanks in part to UF's position as a top public university in a large and growing state that offers tuition rates that are among the most affordable in the nation. The College has leveraged this distinct advantage to recruit consistently strong classes and grow enrollment by more than 20 percent over the past decade.

The Dean will lead efforts to ensure the College continues to recruit and develop top students in an increasingly competitive environment. This work will include promoting opportunities to refresh the curriculum through the continued development of interdisciplinary and experiential learning while encouraging new pedagogical approaches, methods of delivery, and the development of courses that prepare students to succeed in their careers. They will also be attentive to the continued development of students through strong mentoring and advising, as well as creating co-curricular opportunities, including building strong ties to industry to provide research and internship opportunities for students. As one of fewer than 20 colleges in the nation with an engineering education department, UF has a history of offering an engaging and innovative educational experience for students. The [Engineering Innovation Institute](#) educates more than 2,000 students a year and, since 2010, has served as a nexus for educational innovation. These efforts will be further developed by the College's new Center for Experiential Learning.

Collaborate across the institution

Deans at UF enjoy a great deal of autonomy and the size and breadth of the College allows for plenty of opportunities for internal collaboration. But the increasing focus on interdisciplinary research and educational opportunities to address modern challenges and prepare for modern careers requires a leader who can work creatively across campus, and within HWCOE, to pursue areas of mutual benefit for the colleges and the University as a whole. Located next to the College of Medicine and on a campus alongside 15 other colleges, multiple hospitals, and world-class research institutes, HWCOE has unlimited opportunity for collaboration. To make the best use of these opportunities, the Dean must be a careful listener, strong communicator, and thoughtful risk-taker to craft a vision that leverages the strengths of the College and its surroundings. The Jacksonville campus will also offer multiple opportunities for HWCOE to collaborate with the UF health science colleges, the Levin College of Law, and Warrington College of

Business, particularly given Florida's role as a hub for FinTech. Other opportunities for engineering to collaborate across campus abound, particularly in areas such as medicine, agriculture, and the physical sciences.

Recruit and retain top faculty

HWCOE has enjoyed an unprecedented run of faculty hiring and expansion over the past several years. Given the increasingly competitive space the College finds itself in and the success that faculty have attained, the Dean's role will include ensuring faculty develop their careers and work in a collaborative culture where they can prosper. The Dean will build on existing strengths, working with departments to seek opportunities for complementary hires, promoting HWCOE and its people on the national level, and ensuring that faculty are retained. While the recent rate of growth of the faculty ranks is not sustainable, the Dean will play an important role in shaping the College in the coming years through hiring and retention efforts and ensuring that resources and attention are devoted to faculty development and mentorship.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate should possess many of the following qualifications:

- A world-class scholar with broad recognition in engineering or a closely related field with a distinguished research and educational record that merits appointment as full professor in the College;
- A strong record of achievement in research, and the ability to energize and inspire faculty across a diverse array of disciplines to pursue research opportunities;
- Record of demonstrated creative thinking, vision-and-mission setting, and the ability to make clear, informed, data-driven decisions;
- A nuanced understanding of sponsored research activity in an academic setting and the taste, drive, and energy to seize upon creative opportunities to establish areas of excellence;
- Strong communication skills and the ability to articulate a compelling message to diverse audiences;
- Strong executive ability and the courage to accept challenges and decisively pursue opportunities;
- A strong and politically savvy negotiator, adept at finding mutually beneficial solutions to problems;
- An innovator who can reference the latest trends in engineering education scholarship, and has the judgment and knowledge to take informed risks;

- A collaborative leader with a proven track record of bringing interdisciplinary groups together to achieve goals and objectives;
- Ability to develop a climate and a culture conducive to recruiting and retaining outstanding faculty and staff;
- Financial acumen and proven abilities in budget and financial management;
- Evidence of securing external support through fundraising and development;
- Evidence of support for student achievement and student success;
- Ability to provide civic leadership and to successfully work with professionals in industry and academic, community, and governmental organizations;
- Strong emotional intelligence combined with nuanced listening and interpersonal communication skills.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

The University of Florida has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in its identification and review of candidates. The search is underway and will continue until the position is filled. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be sent electronically to:

Greg Esposito, Partner
Melissa DePretto Behan, Senior Associate
Rachel Banderob, Senior Search Coordinator
Victoria Castillo, Senior Search Coordinator

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-florida-herbert-wertheim-college-engineering/dean>

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