



Controller Leadership Profile

September 2025



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

We invite nominations and applications for an experienced, forward-thinking visionary to serve as the next Controller of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), one of the country's top-performing Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Reporting to the Chief Financial Officer, the Controller will cultivate strong working relationships and collaborative partnerships across the FAMU Finance and Administration leadership team, as well as with other key stakeholders including administrators, financial leaders in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, and units such as Contracts and Grants, Title III, Audit and Compliance, Risk Management, Legal, and Emergency Preparedness. The Controller's Office also provides financial support to university auxiliaries and Direct Support Organizations (DSOs).

The successful candidate will lead a team of professional and administrative staff responsible for a broad portfolio of financial operations, including:

- Financial reporting and accounting
- Payroll liability and disbursement
- Tax accounting
- Student financial services
- Cash management and treasury services
- Asset management
- Accounts payable and disbursements
- Financial policies and procedures
- Internal controls

Key responsibilities include:

- Ensuring compliance university-wide with externally imposed financial recording and reporting regulations, including State of Florida Statutes, GASB, and Single Audit requirements
- Overseeing financial reporting, forecasting, and internal control operations to safeguard university assets and support in accomplishing strategic and financial objectives
- Supporting the Assistant Vice President in interpreting, communicating, executing, and developing financial policies
- Assisting with policy and procedure updates and improvements

The Controller will assist the Division of Finance and Administration with adhering to its mission to deliver high quality services that drive students' success, financial stability, campus and infrastructure sustainability and a compliant and productive work environment.

In alignment with the division's core values, the Controller should exemplify:

- Student and stakeholder focus
- Innovation in processes and services
- Financial integrity and transparency
- Diverse and inclusive work environment

The ideal candidate will be an accomplished leader with positive sustained impact in complex environments, where collaboration and leadership are critical to success. They must be an exceptional communicator—able to actively listen, write effectively, and deliver clear, professional presentations to varied audiences. Attendance at conferences and seminars to support personal and professional development is expected, as is the ability to represent the University with distinction.

To submit a nomination or express interest in this position, please refer to the Procedure for Candidacy on page 8.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The Controller will report directly to the Chief Financial Officer and be an integral and vital part of the university's leadership team. The Controller will be responsible for upholding FAMU's commitment to excellence.

In addition, the Controller will be expected to:

Strategic Financial Leadership

- Plan, organize, and direct the fiscal and accounting activities of the university, providing strategic leadership and policy direction to all areas of the Controller's Office.
- Design, establish, and maintain an organizational structure and staffing model that effectively supports departmental goals and objectives.
- Represent the Division of Finance and Administration in financial and accounting matters both within the University and externally, serving as a liaison between the university and other state agencies and institutions.
- Perform additional duties as required to support the university's financial operations and strategic initiatives.
- Serve on various university and state-level committees as needed.

Financial Operations

- Design and enhance the university's automated financial and information systems to improve operational efficiency and data accuracy, including troubleshooting existing systems and testing and implementing future upgrades.
- Implement operational and financial controls that safeguard university assets while maintaining cost-efficiency.
- Ensure compliance with university policies and procedures related to all financial transactions and electronic feeds to the general ledger.
- Collaborate extensively with the university's direct support organizations, particularly in matters related to financial operations.

Policy Development and Compliance

- Develop and establish policies and procedures for university fiscal affairs to ensure compliance with all internal and external guidelines.
- Draft and review legislative changes and updates to university policies and procedures to ensure alignment with institutional and regulatory standards.
- Oversee audit engagements conducted by internal and external auditors, ensuring compliance and transparency across financial operations.



Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Education/Certifications

- A bachelor's or master's degree in Accounting, Finance, Business Administration, Management, or a closely related field is required.
- CPA certification is strongly preferred.

Knowledge and Work Experience

- Minimum of seven to nine years of progressively responsible experience, with at least ten years of demonstrated expertise in financial accounting, reporting, and management.
- Possesses comprehensive knowledge of federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, and regulations, with the ability to interpret and apply them effectively in a complex organizational setting.
- Demonstrates strong analytical skills, including the ability to identify trends, anticipate operational impacts, detect discrepancies, and implement corrective actions to enhance performance.
- Provides strategic leadership and operational oversight in programmatic, budgetary, and administrative functions to support and advance institutional goals.
- Experience in PeopleSoft or Workday is preferred.
- Deep understanding of university policies, procedures, and governance structures, and can represent the institution effectively in designated areas.

Leadership Skills and Competencies

- Upholds the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and ethical conduct in all professional endeavors.
- Provides strategic, policy-oriented leadership with a proactive and innovative approach to problem-solving and decision-making.
- Communicates effectively across diverse audiences, demonstrating diplomacy, conflict resolution, and collaborative leadership.
- Applies critical thinking grounded in comprehensive data analysis, while embracing diverse perspectives and maintaining strong ethical principles.
- Champions ethical business practices and fosters a culture of accountability throughout the organization.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of strategic alignment, effectively coordinating tasks and personnel to support organizational goals.
- Cultivates personal and team effectiveness by promoting innovation, adaptability, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

About Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

Overview

Founded on October 3, 1887, FAMU is a public, historically Black university located in Tallahassee, Florida. Known as Florida's Opportunity University, FAMU has built a legacy of providing high-quality, affordable education to underrepresented and underserved communities.

From its origins as The State Normal College for Colored Students, FAMU has evolved into a nationally recognized institution. In 1953, it achieved university status, marking a transformative era of academic expansion with the establishment of the Schools of Pharmacy, Law, Nursing, and Graduate Studies. FAMU also became the first historically Black institution to join the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

Throughout its history, visionary leaders like Presidents Nathan B. Young, John Robert Edward Lee Sr., and Dr. George W. Gore guided FAMU's growth in enrollment, academic excellence, and infrastructure. Today, FAMU continues to thrive as part of the State University System of Florida, offering over 130 years of "Excellence With Caring."

With a commitment to innovation, student success, and community impact, FAMU remains a beacon of opportunity—preparing future leaders to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

In addition to the main Tallahassee campus, FAMU has several satellite campuses across Florida. These include the College of Law in Orlando and the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Institute of Public Health, which has sites in Crestview, Tampa, Jacksonville, and Miami.

Accolades

FAMU earned multiple spots on the badge-eligible list of the U.S. News & World Report 2025 Best Colleges because of its high rankings:

- National Universities #152
- Top Public Schools - National Universities #81
- Best Value - National Universities #87
- Social Mobility - National Universities #20
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities #3
- Best Undergraduate Computer Science #214
- Best Undergraduate Psychology #249
- Best Undergraduate Nursing #254
- 23-degree programs ranked in top 10
- National Science Foundation Top HBCU for Research and Development #1
- Named Fulbright HBCU Institutional Leader
- Forbes Top HBCU for online programs #1
- Producer of African American Bachelor's (Baccalaureate) Graduates, Diverse Issues in Higher Education Top 100 #11

Mission

FAMU is an 1890 land grant doctoral/research institution devoted to student success at the undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and professional levels. FAMU enhances the lives of its constituents and empowers

communities through innovative teaching, research, scholarship, partnerships, and public service. The University continues its rich legacy and historic mission of educating African Americans and embraces all dimensions of diversity.

Vision

FAMU will be recognized as a leading national public university that is internationally renowned for its competitive graduates, transformative research, and innovation.

Values

FAMU is guided by the core values of accountability, inclusion, innovation, and integrity. The University also upholds and endorses the Board of Governors' Statement of Free Expression, fostering a campus environment where open-minded and respectful civil discourse is expected and encouraged. These principles serve as the foundation for FAMU's actions, support its historic mission, and drive the realization of its strategic goals.

Academics

At FAMU, students receive a world-class education via our 14 colleges and schools, 54 bachelor's degrees, 29 master's degrees, three professional degrees, and 12 doctoral degrees, which prepare our scholars to be leaders in their chosen fields. Our alumni have received national and international accolades due to the outstanding educational opportunities provided through excellence with caring at the #1 public HBCU.

Student success is at the heart of our mission. FAMU ensures that each student is equipped with the academic resources and support needed for a smooth transition into college life and to overcome academic challenges while pursuing a degree.

Their distinguished faculty members are renowned scholars, researchers, and industry leaders, committed to delivering a transformative educational experience through teaching, mentorship, innovation, and discovery,

Leadership

Marva Johnson, President



Marva Johnson, J.D., MBA, is the thirteenth president of FAMU and a tenured Professor in the University's College of Law. President Johnson assumed the presidency on August 1, 2025, as a distinguished leader in business, legislative affairs, and public education policy.

In 2014, she was appointed to the Florida State Board of Education and elected chair in 2015. During her tenure, she championed policies aimed at improving educational outcomes for all students, playing a vital role in implementing performance-based funding measures to encourage state colleges to improve student success metrics, including graduation rates. Johnson also worked to enhance accountability across the state's colleges, with a focus on closing achievement gaps and ensuring that all students had access to high-quality,

low-cost education options.

President Johnson holds the distinction of serving as a member of Florida's 2018 Constitution Revision Commission and chair of the Education Committee. Her leadership in education reform has consistently focused on creating pathways to education excellence for students of all backgrounds.

Before assuming the presidency, Johnson served as Group Vice President of State Government Affairs for Charter Communications. In this role, she focused on expanding broadband access, particularly in underserved communities, and oversaw state government affairs, regulatory and local franchising matters, state legislative issues, and strategic partnerships. She also led government and community initiatives across nine southern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

President Johnson is deeply committed to community service. She has served on the boards of several organizations focused on providing educational opportunities to youth, including the Florida Virtual School and Pace Center for Girls, where she actively serves as the Chair of the Board of Trustees. Additionally, she serves as a mentor and provides leadership development through several local, state, and national organizations. She has received many accolades and was recently recognized by Florida Trend magazine as one of the Top 500 Most Influential People in Florida.

President Johnson earned her Juris Doctor from the Georgia State University College of Law. She also holds a Master of Business Administration from Emory University's Goizueta Business School and a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Georgetown University.

She is a wife, mother, and a proud member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Tallahassee, Florida



The state capital of Florida, Tallahassee, roughly translated as "old fields" or "old town" from the Muskogean Indian language, is a vibrant community full of natural beauty and a thriving culture. With its rolling hills and canopy roads, Tallahassee is anything but what most people imagine when they think of Florida. Nestled among massive southern live oak trees dripping with Spanish moss, our beautiful college town is simultaneously a respite from the hectic big cities and a lively community full of creativity. Here are just a few things we love about Tallahassee.

Engaged & Involved

As Florida's seat of government, Tallahassee is brimming with opportunities for civic engagement. If students are looking for a future in politics, internships are available in numerous branches of both state and local government. Florida State's [Center for Leadership & Social Change](#) and Leon County's [Volunteer Services](#) are great ways to get involved and help give back to the community. Those who want to make a difference on campus can find their place in the [FSU Student Government Association](#).



Tree City, USA

Tallahassee is known for its trees. From majestic live oaks to tropical palms, we're surrounded by them. We take great pride in our city's natural beauty, for it has a lot to offer. A stroll through [Alfred B Maclay Gardens State Park](#) will offer plenty of fantastic photo ops. The beautiful [Cascades Park](#), in the heart of the city and just minutes from campus, is perfect for a jog. Known to some as "[Trailahassee](#)", the region also offers numerous hiking and biking opportunities. When the summer sun is high, nothing can beat a dive into the cool waters of [Wakulla Springs](#) just south of town, or a tubing trip down one of the nearby rivers.

Creative Capital



Being both a college town and state capital, Tallahassee is booming with arts and culture. Some of the city's more famous museums include the [Museum of Florida History](#), the outdoor [Tallahassee Museum](#) and the [Tallahassee Automobile Museum](#) whose collection includes Abraham Lincoln's horse-drawn hearse and two Batmobiles. In and around downtown, you'll find all sorts of unique street art celebrating the city and state culture. On the First Friday of each month, the [Railroad Square Art Park](#) comes alive for a lively gallery hop. Music fans will find venues of all sizes, from the intimate confines of FSU's [Club Downunder](#) to the open-air amphitheater at [Cascades Park](#).

For more information on visiting Tallahassee, please visit [Visitor Services](#).



Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting FAMU in this search, which will remain open until an appointment is made.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Diane Smith and Stephanie Ikediobi

sikedobi@wittkieffer.com

In accordance with federal and state law, the FAMU is committed, as evident in our policies, principles and practices, to an educational environment and equal opportunity workplace wherein each member of the University community is free from any form of harassment and discrimination. Therefore, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of any legally protected group status (including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972), in accordance with University regulation, state, and federal laws. Discriminatory conduct in the form of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking, is also prohibited.