

Find more news from Stetson University at [Stetson Today](#).

STETSON UNIVERSITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stetson University Announces Witt/Kieffer to lead Presidential Search

Choice reflects firm's experience, innovation

DELAND, Florida, April 9, 2019 – The Presidential Search Committee for Stetson University has announced that Witt/Kieffer has been retained to support the committee's search for Stetson's next president.

Two senior partners at Witt/Kieffer, Lucy Leske and Dennis Barden, will co-lead the Stetson University presidential search. A veteran of president search processes, Leske has written extensively on leadership transition and assessment, professional development for women and underrepresented leaders, and staff recruitment and retention. She played a key role in developing Witt/Kieffer's international higher education practice. Barden brings nearly 40 years of higher education experience to his search practice, and has played a central role in almost 400 of the firm's searches across higher education, in the non-profit sector and in healthcare philanthropy. He is a recognized thought leader in higher education and a popular speaker and panelist on the topic of leadership in higher education.

"This is a big step forward in this process," said Joe Cooper, chair of Stetson's Board of Trustees and the search committee. "We are excited to move forward in partnership with Witt/Kieffer. The firm's outstanding reputation and innovative search approach for higher education leaders as well as their collective portfolio of similar search work provide the best fit as we seek our university's 10th president."

For 50 years, Witt/Kieffer has been a leading executive search firm dedicated to identifying outstanding leadership solutions for organizations committed to improving the quality of life. The Education Practice has extensive experience in recruiting presidents, provosts, senior advancement officers, deans and directors of major academic and administrative units such as finance, enrollment management and student affairs. Witt/Kieffer consultants have worked with hundreds of boards and search committees in the pursuit of academic leadership.

"The Board of Trustees with the assistance of the Presidential Search Committee and Witt/Kieffer is committed to attracting and hiring an outstanding president that will lead our Stetson community into the future," said Cooper. "Later this month, members of our search committee along with Lucy Leske and Dennis Barden will hold community forums across our campuses in DeLand and Gulfport. We look forward to speaking with students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees and other friends of Stetson to help identify Stetson's opportunities and challenges, and align those with the key attributes to seek in our next president."

The search committee established a website to keep the Stetson community up to date as the process moves forward at www.stetson.edu/presidentsearch. Witt/Kieffer asks that all nominations, applications and expressions of interest be sent to StetsonPresident@wittkieffer.com.

The 15-member committee met earlier in April to review potential search agencies and interview principals at each agency. Stetson University President Wendy B. Libby, Ph.D., announced in February that she would be retiring in June 2020.

About Stetson University

Founded in 1883, [Stetson University](#) is the oldest private university in Central Florida. Stetson focuses on intense learning experiences in a supportive community that allows students to develop their voice in a connected, inclusive environment. Stetson University ranks No. 5 on U.S. News & World Report's 2019 list of Best Regional Universities (South), and has been recognized as one of The Princeton Review's 384 Best Colleges, 2019 edition. [Stay connected](#) with Stetson on social media.

Contact:

Janie Graziani
jgraziani@stetson.edu
P: 386-822-7214