



**FORT VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**
EMPOWER *the* POSSIBLE.



FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP PROFILE

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH 2026

OVERVIEW

Fort Valley State University (FVSU) offers a rare presidential opportunity: leading Georgia's only land-grant Historically Black College and University. That distinction is central to FVSU's identity, mission, and promise.

For more than 130 years, the university has expanded access, advanced opportunity, and prepared students to thrive through academic programs that integrate high-quality instruction, research, extension, and hands-on learning experiences.

Today, as one of 25 public colleges and universities within the University System of Georgia, Fort Valley State stands at a pivotal moment, with a powerful legacy to honor and a future ready to be shaped by bold, visible, and mission-driven leadership.

With a distinctive academic portfolio that includes 29 undergraduate majors, Fort Valley State is deeply connected to Georgia's needs and the broader workforce. Signature programs such as the Cooperative Developmental Energy Program, the only program of its kind in the nation, reflect the university's ability to create innovative pathways in mathematics, engineering, chemistry, biology, health physics, and geoscience through partnerships with leading energy companies. FVSU also offers Georgia's only four-year veterinary technology program, reinforcing its strength in applied learning, agriculture, and STEM.



PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

MEASURABLE *PROGRESS* AND GROWING VISIBILITY

The next president will join Fort Valley State at a time of measurable progress and growing visibility. Ranked the No. 1 public HBCU in Georgia for nine consecutive years, FVSU has experienced enrollment gains in each of the past two fall terms and growth in summer enrollment for four consecutive years. The university is also strengthening student persistence, with first-year retention increasing for three consecutive years. These gains reflect an institution building on its strengths while expanding the possibilities for the students and communities it serves.

Fort Valley State's mission remains deeply relevant and increasingly visible. The university continues to be recognized as a driver of social mobility, now ranked No. 11 among Top Performers on Social Mobility among National Liberal Arts Colleges. This recognition underscores FVSU's enduring role in opening doors for students, strengthening families and contributing to the economic and civic vitality of Georgia.

The physical campus is also advancing. The opening of Legacy Hall in January 2026 marked the university's first new on-campus housing facility in 20 years, with the building completed entirely debt-free. Together, these achievements point to an institution with a clear upward trajectory, strong community pride and significant opportunity for a president who can build capacity, elevate academic distinction, deepen partnerships and position Fort Valley State University for its next era of distinction.

FVSU's progress extends beyond the classroom. Across campus, students are achieving at a high level academically, socially and athletically. The Wildcat men's volleyball team won the 2026 SIAC Men's Volleyball Championship, marking its third consecutive conference title and reflecting the pride, discipline and competitive spirit that animates the Fort Valley State community.



THE UNIVERSITY



A PROUD PAST. *A BOLD FUTURE.*

Fort Valley State University (FVSU) is a leader in research, academic excellence, and student success, recognized as a Research College and University in the 2025 Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Located in the heart of Georgia, FVSU combines the close-knit support of a small college with the resources of a leading public university. It is the only institution that is simultaneously a University System of Georgia institution, a historically Black university, and an 1890 land-grant institution.

Historically referred to as “the light in the valley,” FVSU’s legacy is built upon the belief that every human being is entitled to limitless learning and the benefits of knowledge. Led by the motto “Empower the Possible,” the university is preparing students to embrace their genius as future global leaders and enabling discovery that will make real what is only now imagined.

POPULAR MAJORS

Popular Majors: Nursing, Biology, Psychology, Criminal Justice, Management and Animal Science, Computer Science and Veterinary Technology

QUICK FACTS (FALL 2025 NUMBERS)



3,177
Total Enrollment



76.83%
Retention



777
Incoming FTFT class of scholars



\$3,985
Cost of Attendance – \$3,985 (for in-state tuition, fees and books)



3.0
Average Freshman GPA – 3.0

THE UNIVERSITY

MOMENTUM

AT FORT VALLEY STATE

Across enrollment, research, national recognition and student opportunity, FVSU is strengthening its positioning while remaining firmly grounded in its mission.

#1

PUBLIC HBCU IN GEORGIA
for nine consecutive years

#11

NATIONALLY FOR SOCIAL MOBILITY
And the highest-ranking public institution in Georgia for social mobility

3,177

STUDENTS
Fall 2025 Enrollment

#22

Ranks 22nd in Top Public Schools
Among National Liberal Arts Colleges

\$15.5M+

Research Expenditures
Fiscal Year 2023

CARNEGIE

Research College & University
2025 Classification

MORE ABOUT FVSU

- FVSU's four-year veterinary technology program is the only one in Georgia.
- FVSU is the #8 top producer nationally of African Americans with bachelor's degrees in agriculture, agricultural operations and related sciences and is #1 in the state of Georgia by Diverse Issues.
- FVSU was ranked as a Top 50 Online Master's Degree in Counseling by EduMed.org.
- Small class sizes and an affordable cost of attendance expand opportunities for students with the talent and determination to use education as a pathway to maximize their potential.



ACADEMICS AND *RESEARCH*



ACADEMICS

Highly accomplished faculty guide students through coursework, facilitate engagement in professional organizations, connect students with internships and research opportunities, and ensure that students are exposed to the most accomplished professionals working in industry today. Small faculty-student ratios ensure that each student has direct access to instructors when they need help or advice. Instructors know students by name, understand their perspectives, and have a personal interest in student success.

RESEARCH

Among FVSU's dynamic emerging areas of distinction are its fast-growing undergraduate research opportunities, in which students, as early as freshman year, can engage directly in world-changing research with an internationally recognized faculty member tackling complex global challenges like cancer, brain science, socio-economic disparities, environmental sustainability, education, automation, artificial intelligence, food safety and agricultural productivity.



ATHLETICS, DEVELOPMENT *AND REACH*

ATHLETICS

The Wildcats represent Fort Valley State University in NCAA Division II sports as a full member of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC). The university fields 10 varsity programs, including football, basketball, cross country, track and field, volleyball, and softball. Notably, in 2026, the men's volleyball team captured its third consecutive SIAC championship.

DEVELOPMENT

FVSU's Division of University Advancement leads the development of resources to support student success beyond the tuition and fees students pay. From 2020-2025, total gifts reached \$17.8 million, including \$7 million in new pledges and commitments and \$5.6 million in alumni contributions.

The Fort Valley State University Foundation, Inc., an independent non-profit corporation established on November 15, 1972, strategically partners with Fort Valley State University to raise and manage private contributions from alumni, friends, industries, and foundations to meet the needs of the institution which are not funded through state allocations.

WARNER ROBINS CAMPUS

The Warner Robins Center provides educational space for programs including Clinical Mental Health Counseling, School Counselor Education, Middle Grades Education, Elementary/Special Education, and Rehabilitation Counseling and Case Management.



GOVERNANCE

BOARD OF REGENTS

OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

With its creation in 1931, the Board of Regents became the single governing and management authority over the University System of Georgia.

The governor appoints members of the Board to a seven-year term, and regents may be reappointed to subsequent terms by a sitting governor. Regents donate their time and expertise to serve the state in a position that is a voluntary one without financial remuneration.

Today, the Board has 19 members: five appointed from the state at large and one from each of the state's 14 congressional districts.

The Board elects a chancellor to serve as its chief executive officer and chief administrative officer, overseeing the public colleges and universities that comprise the University System of Georgia, as well as the Georgia Archives and the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS).

19

REGENTS

14

CONGRESSIONAL
DISTRICTS

7

YEAR TERMS



OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPACT

The next president will have a significant opportunity to build on Fort Valley State University's growing institutional strength and extend its influence across Georgia and beyond. Continued progress in enrollment, retention, and graduation rates will be central to that work, as will sustaining and strengthening FVSU's recognition in key measures of excellence, including social mobility, national distinction, public university performance, and national standing among HBCUs across the country.

The ideal candidate will understand that enrollment growth must be achieved not only through successful recruitment, but also through stronger pathways for transfer students, expanded online learning and deeper connections with local high schools. The incoming president will also inherit a growing research enterprise with emerging strength in agricultural sciences, small ruminants, and nanotechnology.

Fort Valley State was recently recognized as a Research College and University by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, supported by more than \$15.5 million in annual research expenditures. This designation affirms FVSU's expanding capacity for discovery, innovation and externally funded scholarship.



THE PRESIDENCY

EXPANDING FVSU'S *INFLUENCE*

Building on this foundation, the next president will have the opportunity to expand sponsored research activity, strengthen academic partnerships and elevate Fort Valley State's profile as an institution of academic excellence and student achievement.

This work will be essential to broadening FVSU's reputation beyond athletics and ensuring that its academic strengths, faculty expertise, and student accomplishments are more widely known.

Fort Valley State's historic strength in agriculture and growing strength in STEM create a powerful platform for the next president to position graduates for success in the modern workforce. By aligning academic programs, research priorities, and partnerships with the needs of students, employers, and communities, the university can continue to prepare graduates who are ready to lead, serve, and contribute meaningfully to Georgia's future.

*academic excellence, student achievement
and groundbreaking research*

More broadly, the next president of Fort Valley State will have the opportunity to expand FVSU's influence across Georgia through academic excellence, student achievement, and groundbreaking research.

This expanded influence will lead to more partnerships with industry leaders, government agencies, community partners, and donors, securing the resources needed to expand FVSU's reach.

With a land-grant mission that has shaped Fort Valley State's focus since 1895, the next president can expand that legacy of service for students, the local community, and the state of Georgia.



LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES

STUDENT SUCCESS AND *STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS*

The next president will address the following priorities, listed in no particular order of importance.

STUDENT SUCCESS AND INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

Student success is central to the future of Fort Valley State University. The next president will have the opportunity to continue enrollment growth, strengthen retention and graduation outcomes, and ensure that all students have the resources they need to thrive academically and personally while preparing for the professional workforce ahead. This work will include meaningful engagement with FVSU's 60-plus student organizations, as well as continued investment in tutoring, advising, career readiness and other supports that help students persist and succeed. Equally important, the president will be expected to cultivate a safe, caring and inclusive student experience—one that supports mental health and well-being and helps every student feel a strong sense of belonging at Fort Valley State.

ALUMNI, COMMUNITY AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

The ideal candidate will fully embrace and understand the importance of the relationship between Fort Valley State University and the Fort Valley community. As the only Georgia university that is both an HBCU and a land-grant university, FVSU has a longstanding mission of educating underserved populations. The next president will include alumni in that progress by not only sharing success with them but also creating an environment for alumni to engage, advocate and support the growth of Fort Valley State. Beyond alumni and the local community, the ideal candidate will also build strategic partnerships and connections to provide more opportunities to students, prepare them for the modern workforce and bring more visibility to the work being done at Fort Valley State.



LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES

CAMPUS CULTURE AND *INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY*

CAMPUS CULTURE AND INSTITUTIONAL PRIDE

The incoming president must embrace the university's culture and identity. The president should be an approachable and visible presence on campus, fostering transparency, open communication and trust between the administration and students. Through consistent engagement, the ideal candidate will ensure that students, faculty, alumni and supporters feel genuine pride in Fort Valley State and a shared sense of ownership in its future. Stakeholders will look to the next president to honor the traditions that make FVSU distinctive while helping create new ones that strengthen campus pride, deepen engagement and bring students, faculty and alumni together across academics, athletics and the full life of the university.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Fort Valley State's ambitions will require financial discipline, resourcefulness and strategic capacity to bring them to life. The next president must be a strong steward of institutional resources, with the ability to secure new support, align investments with the university's highest priorities and make thoughtful decisions that strengthen the institution for the long term. This will require proven experience in fundraising and budgeting, as well as the judgment to direct resources where they can have the greatest impact. With this leadership, FVSU can continue to grow its facilities, support staffing needs across the university and ensure students have the resources, services and environment they need to thrive.



QUALIFICATIONS, COMPETENCIES AND QUALITIES

Taken together, these priorities call for a president whose leadership reflects both purpose and proven capacity.

FVSU seeks a leader with the judgment, credibility, and vision to guide a public, land-grant institution, strengthen its academic and operational foundation, and inspire confidence among students, faculty, staff, alumni, community partners, and state leaders. While experience in higher education or the public sector is valued, we encourage candidates from other sectors with relevant leadership experience to apply.

The successful candidate will bring experience managing significant operations, advancing meaningful change, and translating ambition into measurable progress for Fort Valley State University.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Substantial senior leadership experience in an institution or organization with responsibilities comparable to the breadth, public mission and scale of Fort Valley State University.
- Proven ability to guide financial, operational and organizational priorities with discipline, transparency and sound judgment, including experience managing budgets, varied funding sources and competing institutional needs.
- A record of securing resources and building productive relationships with donors, public officials, corporate and industry partners, alumni, civic leaders and other supporters who can advance the university's mission.
- Demonstrated capacity to recruit, develop and retain strong leadership teams, set clear expectations and foster a culture of accountability, collaboration and continuous improvement.
- The integrity, humility, political judgment and steadiness to lead within a public higher education system, work constructively with governing and state leaders and navigate change with confidence and credibility.
- A deep commitment to the success of students served by an HBCU and 1890 land-grant university, including access, affordability, academic quality, career preparation, well-being and the support students need to persist and graduate.



ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

LEADERSHIP AND *FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP*

LEADERSHIP, INTEGRITY AND INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

- A visible, accessible and student-centered leadership approach grounded in active listening, transparency, empathy and follow-through.
- A record of strengthening shared governance and fostering collaboration among faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members and external partners.
- Commitment to faculty and staff development, professional growth, morale and organizational capacity.
- Demonstrated appreciation for FVSU's mission, culture, history and institutional identity.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP, ADVANCEMENT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Significant fundraising and advancement experience, including major gifts, corporate partnerships, capital strategy and endowment growth.
- Proven budgeting experience, sound financial oversight and business acumen.
- Experience managing resources effectively and aligning investments with institutional priorities.
- Experience advancing campus infrastructure and facilities, including housing, transportation, student-life spaces and public-private partnerships.



ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

STUDENT SUCCESS, MISSION *AND EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT*

STUDENT SUCCESS, ENROLLMENT AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

- Demonstrated success developing creative enrollment strategies for traditional, transfer and nontraditional students, including online learning and high school pathways.
- Experience improving retention and graduation outcomes by addressing barriers related to housing, financial aid, advising, staffing and student support services.
- A record of developing or strengthening academic programs aligned with workforce needs and emerging fields.
- Commitment to athletics as part of the student experience, including appropriate resources and recognition for student-athletes.

MISSION, LAND-GRANT IDENTITY AND INSTITUTIONAL DISTINCTION

- Experience with or demonstrated understanding of HBCUs and the role these institutions play in advancing access, opportunity and student success.
- A functional and operational understanding of the land-grant system in Georgia and nationally, with the ability to leverage FVSU's role in agriculture, extension, research and service.
- Ability to elevate FVSU's academic brand by showcasing academic excellence, research, student achievement and distinctive programs.

COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIPS AND EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

- Exceptional communication and relationship-building skills, with the ability to engage with transparency, credibility and purpose across students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, industry, government and community partners.
- Experience strengthening town-gown relationships and supporting community and economic development.
- A relationship-oriented approach that builds trust, encourages engagement and connects stakeholders to FVSU's future.

PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDACY

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited and will be held in the strictest of confidence. Applications should include one PDF including a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile. Material review will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled.

This search is being guided by a committee representing key university stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, community leaders, and representatives of the Board of Regents.

APPLICATIONS, NOMINATIONS AND INQUIRIES CAN BE DIRECTED TO:

FortValley_Pres@usg.edu

Members of the Presidential Search Committee are as follows:

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

- Regent Mat Swift, committee chair
- Regent Chris Cannon
- Regent and Board Chairman David B. Dove
- Regent T. Dallas Smith
- Marion Fedrick, senior advisor on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Initiatives, USG; former president, Albany State University
- Terrence Ferguson, alumnus; veterinarian
- Olivia Langevine, chief of staff, USG
- Berlethia Pitts, Ph.D., professor, College of Arts and Sciences; coordinator for the Languages and Liberal Studies unit of the Department of Arts and Communications
- Jenniya Sams, president, FVSU Student Government Association
- The Honorable Calvin Smyre, alumnus; former legislator; Chairman Emeritus, Fort Valley State University Foundation
- State Rep. Patty Marie Stinson, legislator
- Jeff Washington, Ed.D., alumnus; principal, Eagle Springs Elementary School

ABOUT FORT VALLEY, GEORGIA



Fort Valley, Georgia | Peach County

PLACE AND COMMUNITY



Founded in 1856, Fort Valley is the county seat of Peach County and is home to 8,780 residents, according to the 2020 Census. This charming Southern town is known for its tree-lined streets, beautifully preserved historic homes, and strong sense of community, guided by a dedicated mayor, city council, and professional police and fire departments.

Widely celebrated as the “Peach Capital of the World,” Fort Valley is the heart of Georgia’s largest peach-producing region. Lane Southern Orchards, on the edge of town, exemplifies this legacy with its expansive peach packing and retail facility—now a favorite tourist destination.

Fort Valley also boasts a rich industrial and educational heritage. It is the birthplace and corporate headquarters of the Blue Bird Corporation, one of the nation’s leading school bus manufacturers.

The city is also home to Fort Valley State University, a historically Black university with deep roots in the community, and the American Camellia Society, which celebrates one of the South’s most iconic flowers.

Railroad history runs deep here as well. Visitors can still see the town’s original passenger station and the old freight terminal and switching station—remarkably preserved since their construction by the Central of Georgia Railroad at the turn of the 20th century.

Downtown Fort Valley is experiencing a vibrant revival. Several historic commercial buildings have been restored, most notably the Austin Theatre. Once abandoned for over 30 years, this early-20th-century movie house has been beautifully renovated into a thriving arts center, serving as a symbol of Fort Valley’s resilience and creative spirit.

MIDDLE GEORGIA

Nestled in the heart of Georgia, the Middle Georgia region is a tapestry of vibrant communities, rich history and natural beauty. This area offers a diverse mix of small-town charm, growing urban centers, and scenic rural landscapes. Whether you are seeking career opportunities, a place to raise a family, or a peaceful retreat, Middle Georgia provides an exceptional quality of life with a cost of living that's hard to beat.

INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Fort Valley State University is committed to equal opportunity and employment decisions based on merit. In accordance with applicable federal and state law and University System of Georgia policy, FVSU prohibits discrimination based on age, color, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, or veteran status. Employment decisions are based on the knowledge, skills, abilities, and qualifications necessary to successfully perform the responsibilities of the position.

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA STATEMENT OF CORE VALUES

The University System of Georgia is comprised of our 25 institutions of higher education and learning, as well as the System Office. Our USG Statement of Core Values are Integrity, Excellence, Accountability, and Respect. These values serve as the foundation for all that we do as an organization, and each USG community member is responsible for demonstrating and upholding these standards. More details on the USG Statement of Core Values and Code of Conduct are available in USG Board Policy 08.02.18.01.02.

Additionally, USG supports Freedom of Expression as stated in Board Policy 06.05 Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom.

INTEGRITY

EXCELLENCE

ACCOUNTABILITY

RESPECT





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PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

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