

## AGENDA

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### TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY BOARD OF REGENTS Public Notice

Date: Thursday, May 16, 2024  
Time: 9:00 AM  
Place: Texas Southern University - Library Learning Center, 5th Floor, 3100 Cleburne Street,  
Houston, TX 77004

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Chair: Brandon L. Simmons  
Vice Chair: James M. Benham  
Second Vice Chair: Stephanie D. Nellons-Paige  
Secretary: Marilyn A. Rose

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#### I. Call to Order

#### II. Roll Call

#### III. Conflict of Interest Statement

#### IV. Chairman's Comments

#### V. Board Business

V.A. Discuss and Approve the Appointment and Employment Contract of the Sole Finalist, Vice Admiral James W. Crawford, III, as President of Texas Southern University  
Action Requested: Approval

#### VI. Executive Session

VI.A. Texas Government Code - Section 551.071 - Consultation with University Attorneys on any matter in which the duty of the attorneys to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with the Texas Open Meeting Act, including any matter listed on this notice/agenda, pending or contemplated litigation, and proposed settlement agreements.

VI.B. Texas Government Code - Section 551.072 - Deliberations concerning Purchase, Lease or Value of Real Property.

VI.C. Texas Government Code - Section 551.073 - Deliberations about Negotiated Contracts for Prospective Gifts or Donations.

VI.D. Texas Government Code - Section 551.074 - Personnel Matters: Deliberations Concerning the Appointments, Duties, Responsibilities, Evaluations or Dismissal of Personnel (including but not

limited to the Regents, Interim President, General Officers, and Executive Management Employees).

**VII. Reconvene in Open Session to Consider Actions on Executive Session Items as Necessary**

**VIII. Adjourn**



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE April 25, 2024**

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## **James W. Crawford III Named Sole Finalist for President of Texas Southern University**

HOUSTON – Brandon L. Simmons, Chairman of the Texas Southern University Board of Regents, announced during today’s meeting of the Board of Regents that James W. Crawford III was selected as the sole finalist for president of Texas Southern University.

“I applaud the work of the Presidential Search Committee in identifying an extraordinary leader who will shepherd Texas Southern University during such a consequential time for higher education,” said Simmons. “Jim Crawford has served students as a university president and board member. He has served as one of our country’s top lawyers as Vice Admiral and Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Navy, where he advised Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. He is a husband and father of twin sons. Texas Southern is proud to deliver leadership focused on preparing graduates to flourish in a thriving Texas economy.”

“Throughout this process, I have learned so much about Texas Southern University, and I am honored to join this esteemed institution with such a rich history,” said Crawford. “I look forward to working collaboratively with faculty, staff, students, alumni and the community to uphold and elevate our commitment to academic excellence, innovation and economic empowerment as we advance our mission of transforming lives and creating leaders.”

Crawford comes to Texas Southern from Felician University, where he served as president for nearly two years after filling the role of interim president of the university for nine months. Since his appointment in June 2021, Crawford made numerous contributions to Felician including overseeing the completion of the Wellness and Recreation Center and other large capital projects, as well as the creation of the STEM Center in Kirby Hall on the Lodi campus. Crawford’s higher education experience includes service on the Board of Trustees of his alma mater, Belmont Abbey College.

An experienced leader, Crawford served in the United States Navy for more than 30 years, retiring as a Vice Admiral and its 43rd Judge Advocate General (JAG). He has served as the head of the Naval Legal Service Command, legal counsel to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and commander of NATO Rule of Law Field Support, Afghanistan. Crawford served under six Presidents and was Lead Counsel for the principal military advisor to Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama. He was a trusted voice for the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and Secretaries of Defense Robert M. Gates and Leon Panetta. As the Judge Advocate General of the Navy, Crawford led 2,400 judge advocates, enlisted employees, and civilian employees of the Navy’s global legal organization. He is the recipient of numerous military awards, including two Distinguished Service Medals.

A native of Charlotte, N.C., Crawford graduated from Belmont Abbey College and earned his Juris Doctorate from the University of North Carolina. He holds a Master of Laws degree in ocean and coastal law from the University of Miami, and a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College. He was named an MIT Seminar XXI Fellow.

Crawford has also served on Boards of Directors for the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society, Lucy's Hearth, and the Church of the Nativity. He is married to the former Elizabeth Ann Goncalo, and they have 16-year-old twin sons.

Under state law, university governing boards must name finalists for president at least 21 days before making an appointment. The Board of Regents will meet again to make the appointment, and TSU expects Crawford to begin his new duties in late May.

#### **STATEMENTS ABOUT JAMES W. CRAWFORD III AND TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY:**

##### **James Benham – TSU Board of Regents Vice Chair & Chair of Presidential Search Committee**

Given the current challenges and opportunities that exist across higher education, we knew that leading Texas Southern University forward at this time would require a candidate with very specific credentials. If you look at James Crawford's accomplishments, leadership and track record for success both from serving his country and in higher education, we are confident he embodies the ideal set of qualities we all strived to fulfill with this search. James' illustrious career as one of the highest-ranking attorneys in the country, while overseeing a substantial team of professionals will serve our university and law school well into the future.

##### **Admiral Michael Glenn Mullen, Former Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff**

Jim Crawford is an extraordinary leader and person who cares deeply about young people and their education. I have worked with him on some of the most complex issues in the world. He is a man of superb character and a leader of matchless capability. The sky is the limit.

##### **Admiral John M. Richardson, Former Chief of Naval Operations**

When I was the Chief of the U.S. Navy, Vice Admiral Jim Crawford was my Judge Advocate General. But he was far more than that – I came to trust him as one of my closest advisors. His moral judgement is impeccable, and he helped me navigate through some very challenging issues in national security. Jim Crawford is the absolute best.

##### **Chris Swenson - Former Chairman & 8-year Member of Felician University's Board of Trustees**

James Crawford was an absolutely inspirational figure for our students, faculty, and staff at Felician University. He served our country brilliantly and brought the same focus on mission and service to our school. In the time he was with us, he helped us tremendously.

#### **ABOUT TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY**

Texas Southern University (TSU) honors our designation as a special-purpose institution for urban programming and research. As such, TSU is a comprehensive university providing higher education access to the nation's underserved communities with academic and research programs that address critical urban issues and prepares its diverse student population to become a force for positive change in a global society. A distinguished educational pioneer since 1927, the University has become one of the most diverse and respected institutions in Texas.

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