

Univ. of Akron President Steps Down to Rejoin Law School



Summary: *The President of the University of Akron will be stepping down from his position to rejoin the faculty at the law school.*

The University of Akron will have to start looking for a new president. Matthew Wilson announced to the school and community in a letter that he is stepping down from his position, much to everyone's surprise. Wilson had been in the running to be president of the University of Central Florida but was not ultimately selected so he has decided to go back to the law school, according to the Akron Beacon Journal.

Wilson, 47, first came to the University of Akron in 2014 to be dean of the law school. He was pulled from the law school to be university president by the trustees in July 2016. In an interview Thursday afternoon after his letter stating his intentions was released, Wilson explained that he was "plucked out of the law school" to help the university stabilize its finances and grow through the introduction of new initiatives. The move back to the law school will be official July 31.

UA trustees chose Wilson to lead the school in 2016 after a rough two-year tenure with Scott Scarborough, who finally resigned after repeated calls for his resignation. Scarborough took over UA when it was already suffering financially due to falling enrollment and a debt-financed building boom. The way he handled cuts to the budget was criticized.

Wilson believes now is a good time for him to move on. He said "it would be a great point to make a shift." He said "a lot of the hefty lifting has been done. A lot of the new creative initiatives have been put in place." Much of the work Wilson has done has been to boost enrollment. The school was able to close the budget gap from the previous fiscal year. Their budget crunch continues but by continuing to keep their expenses down, UA will continue to shrink its deficit.

Wilson said, "It has truly been magical to have \$42 million of budgetary swing." UA was able to close a \$30 million budget gap and put \$12 million in their reserves. Turning the school around was "very demanding," causing him to miss time with his wife and son, who successfully battled an aggressive form of pediatric cancer. Now he plans to take time "reflecting on what might be the next step, whether it's to the law school or eventually some other opportunity."

The decision to step down "came after much thought and consideration and is based on a host of personal and family consideration." As a member of the law school faculty, Wilson will likely have the ability to pursue outside jobs. Wilson clarified in the interview what he is "not actively seeking out jobs" but would not answer about whether or not he had applications pending. He did say, however, "If something were to come along that would be a lifetime opportunity ... I'd certainly listen to it. ...I don't know what the future holds."

Wilson made it to the final four candidates for the UCF president position but the school selected UCF Provost Dale Whittaker as the new president. He said he was interested in the job "due to our roots in the Orlando area and the opportunities associated with this once-in-a-lifetime chance at the largest university in the country."

Do you think Wilson ever wanted to leave his place with the law school? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about the law school at the University of Akron, read these articles:

- [University of Akron Law School Lands \\$2 Million Bequest](#)
- [University of Akron Law School Planning Tuition Increase](#)
- [Several Changes in Best Value Law Schools List](#)

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