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**Doug Blackburn, Tallahassee Democrat** 5:07 p.m. EDT May 20, 2014



*(Photo: Democrat files)*

Former Florida State President Talbot "Sandy" D'Alemberte has nominated state Sen. John Thrasher to be FSU's president, filling the void created when Eric Barron was hired by Penn State in mid-February.

D'Alemberte's three-page letter endorsing Thrasher was sent to William Funk, the Dallas-based head hunter hired to help FSU find a new leader, on Monday, two days before FSU's presidential search advisory committee is set to meet.

D'Alemberte, an unabashed Democrat, notes in his letter that his support for Thrasher crosses party lines.

Thrasher, a Republican from St. Augustine, is co-chair of Gov. Rick Scott's re-election campaign, a former chairman of the Republican Party of Florida and a former speaker of the House who remains a powerful presence in the Legislature.

"In an ideal world, I would not say that John was the best candidate, but in the world we live in I would say he is the best candidate," D'Alemberte told the Democrat Tuesday.

Document: [Sandy D'Alemberte nominates Thrasher for FSU president \(/story/news/local/fsu-news/2014/05/20/sandy-dalemberte-nominates-thrasher-for-fsu-president/9339059/\)](http://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/fsu-news/2014/05/20/sandy-dalemberte-nominates-thrasher-for-fsu-president/9339059/)

FSU professors, speaking during the public comment portion of the search committee's first meeting, made it clear that they want an academic and not a politician for FSU's next president. FSU Provost Garnett Stokes has been serving as interim president since Barron's departure.

D'Alemberte contends that Thrasher has the ability to work the halls of the Capitol to bring much-needed funding to the university. Thrasher served as chairman of the FSU Board of Trustees during the final years of D'Alemberte's eight-year presidency, which ended in January 2003.

The 14-year-old FSU medical school is named after Thrasher in honor of the legislation he engineered.

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