



**Dean, Vanderbilt University School of Engineering
Nashville, Tennessee**

THE SEARCH

Vanderbilt University invites nominations and applications for the position of Dean, Vanderbilt University School of Engineering (VUSE). In this endowed position, the dean will assume leadership of a deeply talented and engaged community of faculty, staff, students, and alumni at a time of tremendous opportunity to build on the ambitious momentum across the University and lead the School of Engineering to even greater distinction.

Founded in 1886, the Vanderbilt University School of Engineering is internationally recognized for the superior quality of its research and education programs in selected fields of engineering. VUSE fosters strong partnerships inside the university and with its research peers. The combination of innovative and interdisciplinary research, commitment to undergraduate and graduate education, and active collaboration with the distinguished Vanderbilt University Medical Center creates an invigorating atmosphere for faculty members, research staff, and graduate and undergraduate students. VUSE has experienced significant and strategic faculty growth in recent years, expanding the tenure-stream faculty from 89 in 2015 to 115 in 2021 and non tenure-track faculty from 52 to 78 during the same period. Notably, there will be opportunity for continued growth among the faculty ranks, building on the institution-wide strategic priority, [Destination Vanderbilt](#), to recruit new faculty who are leaders and rising stars in their fields across the university. The school currently enrolls over 1,473 undergraduate and 830 graduate and professional students across all degree programs. VUSE's talented staff, which numbers 150 in total, deftly support and manage the myriad operations and complex research and administrative processes across the school.

The dean will join a university with a steadfast commitment to its students and to addressing the defining issues of our time, and a school dedicated to training and mentoring the next generation of outstanding engineers, scholars, and innovators. Through bold and inspired leadership, the dean will strengthen community within VUSE, communicate the school's exceptional story to key external stakeholders to raise its profile and visibility, and position VUSE as a leader in international conversations about the future of engineering education. The dean will be a natural collaborator and coalition builder, partnering with other schools and leaders across campus to cultivate new or strengthen existing degree programs and initiatives and develop and support an outstanding and increasingly diverse faculty. In tandem with the university's sizable investments to support capital projects and improve campus infrastructure, the dean will partner creatively with university leadership to address VUSE's infrastructural opportunities. Externally, the dean will engage with donors, alumni,

government leaders, and industry partners to increase the school's reach and impact and to generate enthusiasm and support for Vanderbilt Engineering.

The Vanderbilt University School of Engineering seeks a leader with a record of outstanding scholarship and a collegial, transparent, decisive, and empowering leader to propel the school forward. The dean must be an exceptional communicator and astute manager who is skillful at building relationships, fostering a strong and inclusive sense of community, and operating within a complex university system. The next dean will bring a considerable record of administrative leadership and must possess the ability to represent the school compellingly with a variety of audiences, including alumni, donors, and industry partners. The dean will hold a steadfast commitment to and track record of success with diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Vanderbilt has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search. All inquiries, nominations and applications should be directed to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document and will be held in the strictest confidence.

ABOUT NASHVILLE

As the hub for several booming industries, the home to a global community – including the nation's largest Kurdish population – and "America's friendliest city" according to *Travel + Leisure* magazine, Nashville combines history and hospitality with diverse culture and growth.

Tennessee's capital is also an international destination for the arts, entrepreneurship, and scientific research, thereby attracting world-renowned scholars to Vanderbilt and the broader community. In turn, it's no surprise that many students, families, and professionals choose to call Music City home.

Major regional industries include many that are key strategic partners for VUSE, such as healthcare management and IT, automotive production, manufacturing, and technology. VUSE has ongoing relationships locally with Nissan, Amazon, and Oracle and is facilitating additional relationships across the city. Nashville has been named one of the 15 best U.S. cities for work and family by *Fortune* magazine, was ranked as the #1 most popular U.S. city for corporate relocations by *Expansion Management* magazine and was named by *Forbes* magazine as one of the 25 cities most likely to have the country's highest job growth over the coming five years, making it the perfect backdrop for VUSE's [Smart Cities](#) integrated systems research.

Home to more than 100 stand-alone parks, and a quick drive away from the Great Smoky Mountains, Nashville offers many opportunities for enjoying the great outdoors. In addition to the nearby greenways, scenic hiking routes, and historic riverfront, the Vanderbilt campus is itself a top outdoor attraction. An accredited arboretum, the university campus has more than 6,000 trees and shrubs, including nearly 200 different species.

ABOUT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Vanderbilt University, located in Nashville, Tennessee, is a top-15 private research university offering a full-range of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees. Created in 1873 from an initial \$1

million gift from Cornelius Vanderbilt, who envisioned a school that would “contribute to strengthening the ties that should exist between all sections of our common country,” Vanderbilt is situated on a 330-acre campus near the thriving city center, serving more than 13,000 students and employing almost 7,000 faculty and staff. [In October 2022, Provost C. Cybele Raver announced a \\$5 million annual investment to enhance graduate education](#) and promote discovery and collaboration, inspire scholarly excellence, and augment student support structures across the university.

Vanderbilt offers 71 undergraduate majors and a full range of graduate and professional degrees across 10 schools and colleges, including the Blair School of Music, College of Arts and Sciences, Divinity School, Graduate School, Law School, Owen Graduate School of Management, Peabody College, School of Engineering, School of Medicine, and School of Nursing. The combination of cutting-edge research, strength in the liberal arts, and nationally recognized schools of business, divinity, education, engineering, law, medicine, and nursing creates an invigorating atmosphere where students tailor their educational experiences to meet their goals and where researchers collaborate to solve complex questions affecting health, culture, and society.

Vanderbilt University is one of the core partner universities in association with [Oak Ridge National Laboratory](#) (ORNL), the U.S. Department of Energy’s largest science and energy laboratory conducting research in energy and security. This relationship offers opportunities for Vanderbilt University faculty, postdoctoral researchers, and students to access ORNL’s world-class facilities as well as develop collaborations with ORNL researchers.

Vanderbilt provides a gateway to greatness, drawing the best and brightest students from all backgrounds across the nation and around the world. Vanderbilt alumni can be found in Congress, on the judicial bench, among the list of Nobel laureates, heading corporations, conducting innovative medical research, writing for and appearing on the stage and screen, and playing in the NFL and major league baseball.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion are top priorities across the Vanderbilt campus. In 2019, a university-wide Diversity Council was convened and charged with advocating for diversity and inclusion for all members of the Vanderbilt community. The Council is the latest example of the efforts by Vanderbilt’s senior leadership to support EDI work across campus.

The University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor’s, master’s, education specialists and doctoral degrees. Vanderbilt is a member of the Association of American Universities.

University Leadership

Daniel Diermeier, an internationally renowned scholar of political science and managerial leadership, began his tenure as the ninth chancellor of Vanderbilt University on July 1, 2020. Diermeier was formerly provost and dean of the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago and before that a longtime professor at Stanford University and Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management.

Diermeier guided the University through the many challenges and unknowns of the COVID-19 pandemic—driven by Vanderbilt’s commitment to protecting the health, safety, and wellbeing of the community, and also by the university’s mission to provide an empowering residential education to the leaders of tomorrow. During his first year in office, Diermeier launched several ambitious programs with the goal of setting new benchmarks for excellence. Key initiatives include Destination Vanderbilt, a bold commitment to recruiting and hiring renowned faculty at an increased rate, and The Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy, which seeks to elevate evidence-based reasoning in the national conversation. Diermeier also oversaw the launch of Vandy United, a \$300 million campaign dedicated to Vanderbilt student-athletes, athletics programs, and Commodore fans, which is the largest undertaking of its kind in the University’s history.

A first-generation college graduate, Diermeier earned a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Rochester. He also holds master’s degrees in political science from the University of Rochester and the University of Munich, and he earned a master’s degree in philosophy from the University of Southern California.

C. Cybele Raver is Vanderbilt’s provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs. An esteemed developmental psychologist whose leadership has spanned research, clinical, academic, and administrative settings, Raver oversees all faculty, staff, programs, and initiatives for Vanderbilt’s 10 schools and colleges. She also leads the University’s research, admissions, student affairs and residential life.

Raver has recently been elected as a fellow of the AAAS and holds a Cornelius Vanderbilt Chair as professor of psychology and human development at Peabody College.

Prior to joining Vanderbilt, Raver was deputy provost at New York University, where she worked to advance interdisciplinary research and provided leadership for faculty and graduate students. She was also the provost liaison for several institutes, including NYU’s Center for Data Science, the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, and the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, as well as the Social Science Division and Graduate School within the College of Arts & Science.

A native of New York City, Raver earned her B.A. magna cum laude from Harvard University, where she studied psychology and filmmaking. She later earned her Ph.D. in developmental psychology from Yale University.

Vanderbilt University School of Engineering

Vanderbilt’s university-wide culture of and strategic commitment to interdisciplinary research, study, and engagement is fundamental to VUSE’s mission, vision, and overarching success. VUSE is internationally recognized for the superior quality of its research and education programs and prepares students to become leaders and innovators in solving increasingly challenging and significant problems. Vanderbilt University School of Engineering’s next dean must be nimble and future-oriented, positioning the school to tackle the complex and interconnected issues of the 21st century and beyond.

The school encompasses the departments of Biomedical Engineering, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Computer Science, Electrical and Computer Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering, along with the Division of General Engineering and multiple [interdisciplinary degree granting programs](#).

The Vanderbilt University School of Engineering fosters strong scholarly partnerships inside the university and with its research peers. VUSE has a long and successful tradition of collaboration with colleagues at other universities, VUMC, the Vanderbilt College of Arts and Science, the Peabody College of Education and Human Development, and other key colleges and schools on campus.

In 2015, during the last strategic planning effort at the School, priority research areas spanning multi-disciplinary groups, centers, and institutes were loosely combined into a collection of nine “intellectual neighborhoods” to promote interdisciplinary approaches to research and discovery. Since then, VUSE has been opportunistic in its continued research growth and cross-institutional collaborations, including targeted hires in computer science, the creation of a Computer Science department separate from Electrical and Computer Engineering, and key projects with the Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC). VUSE also benefits from a host of innovative and entrepreneurial partnerships across the university, organizing these efforts through a robust and interdisciplinary group of [centers, institutes, and labs](#) including the Vanderbilt Institute for Energy and Environment that brings together various disciplines in the study of environmental management and policy issues, Vanderbilt Institute for Surgery and Engineering, a trans-institutional center, the Biophotonics Center which focuses on translational research to the clinical and commercial sector, The Institute for Software Integrated Systems, which conducts basic and applied research in the area of systems and information science and engineering, and the Vanderbilt Institute of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (VINSE), which leverages its state of the art cleanroom to enable new multi-disciplinary discoveries in the field of nanoscience. Furthermore, [The Wond’ry](#), Vanderbilt’s Center for Innovation and Design, and the Center for Technology Transfer and Commercialization streamline efforts to bring ideas to life and optimize the flow of innovation to the marketplace.

Academic Programs

The VUSE strives to meet its mission and commitment to undergraduate education by offering degree programs in fields of engineering relevant to the needs of today’s society. An objective of these programs is to provide a technical education integrated with strong humanities, fine arts, and social sciences subject matter that provide the requisite foundation for leadership and life-long learning. The availability of second majors and minors in subject areas in other schools and colleges of the university increases opportunities for engineering students to enhance their education by pursuing studies in the non-technical disciplines. At the graduate level, VUSE offers eight PhD programs and a number of master’s of engineering and master’s of science programs, including the recent addition of online master’s and off-residence PhD programs. Its online master’s program in computer science was recently named the #1 program in the United States by *Fortune* magazine.

Student Profile

VUSE's total undergraduate enrollment in the fall of 2021 was 1,473. The first-year undergraduate student population is a remarkable 50.1% women, and the entire undergraduate population includes 9.9% African-American, 20% Asian-American, 10.4% Hispanic-American, and 14% International students. Twenty-three percent of students in the first-year class are Pell Grant recipients. Students also benefit from [Opportunity Vanderbilt](#), the university's commitment to meeting 100% of demonstrated financial need without loans. Over 30% of the engineering undergraduates have studied or interned abroad for at least a month and 88% of VUSE's domestic undergraduates seeking employment have at least one job offer before graduation. VUSE undergraduates also have the opportunity to participate in one of the country's largest and most rigorous summer research programs. In 2020, 70 students participated in the 10-week program and received \$6,000 of support to aid in the cost of housing and living expenses. In 2022, three engineering undergraduate students received NSF fellowships.

The Vanderbilt University School of Engineering hosts 830 graduate/professional students, 65.9% who are pursuing a PhD and 20.8% who are enrolled in online (2U) master's degree programs. The School of Engineering also hosts 32 post-doctoral scholars. In 2022, 16 engineering graduate students were awarded highly competitive NSF Graduate Research fellowships, and Biomedical Engineering netted more than any other BME department in the country with 10 fellows.

Faculty and Staff

The Vanderbilt School of Engineering has 153 full-time teaching faculty, including 115 tenure and tenure-track faculty, and 126 non-teaching research faculty and staff. VUSE also boasts 29 endowed chairs for full professors and seven endowed chairs for junior faculty members.

Thirty-one current faculty members have or held NSF CAREER awards and three earned a PECASE award. At present, senior faculty members hold 89 fellowships (some faculty members are fellows in more than one society), including ten American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) fellows and one National Academy of Engineering (NAE) member.

VUSE employs 150 administrative and research staff, who are critical members of the community and integral to the work and accomplishments of the school. This group also includes a 17-member staff advisory council to boost the ideas of staff, open lines of communication across the school, and celebrate the integral work of staff to support the VUSE's mission.

Finances

FY2020 research expenditures totaled \$67,809,000 and the per tenure/tenure-track faculty member research expenditures were \$600,079. It is expected that with the steep increase in the number of faculty in recent years, the total expenditures will increase rapidly in the next few years as well.

The FY2023 annual budget for VUSE is \$141M, including an estimated \$5.2M that will come from individual giving.

Board of Visitors

The Vanderbilt University School of Engineering's Board of Visitors is comprised of some of the school's most distinguished alumni and friends. The board was established in March 2013 as the successor organization to the school's Committee of Visitors and the Engineering Alumni Council. Board members serve as advisers to the dean and senior staff and meet twice annually. The board's role is to provide advice and foster the achievement of excellence in all aspects of the school, review and support strategic plans, and assist in developing beneficial relationships with industry, government, and other academic institutions.

Industry Partnerships

The Vanderbilt University School of Engineering is interested in strengthening its connections to local, national, and international corporations of all sizes, as well as startups, as a means to initiate new opportunities for its students and faculty and increase revenue streams to the school. The dean's office works with faculty to increase funding opportunities for scholarly and student activities as well as state government and trade associations to advocate for incentives and policies, respectively, that advance the university's mission. In just the past year, dean's office staff has met with over 30 companies to discuss various types of partnerships.

Large, institutional-level relationships are being developed between Vanderbilt (primarily VUSE) and Nissan, Amazon, and Oracle. Prospective relationships are also being explored with Capgemini and Ford. Additionally, the Vanderbilt School of Engineering is strengthening the relationship with the metro government of Nashville to expand research opportunities on [Civic Innovation Challenge \(CIVIC\)](#)-related projects directly related to smart and connected cities and other infrastructure.

Notably, Nashville has become an attractive metropolitan area for corporate expansion and relocation. Over the next five years, six companies are expected to create over 30,000 new jobs in the metro area. This growth exceeds normal corporate growth that a major city experiences in a good economy. The dean's office meets regularly with the Nashville Technology Council and its advocacy committee, the state economic and community development office, and the Chamber of Commerce to provide input on workforce development and corporate partnership opportunities.

THE ROLE OF THE DEAN

Reporting to the provost, the dean serves as the chief academic and executive officer of the Vanderbilt University School of Engineering, empowering faculty and staff, ensuring student success, and representing VUSE within the university and in the broader world. The dean also serves as a key institutional leader and as a member of the university's leadership team. The dean promotes a culture of innovation, inclusion, and excellence within the school and fosters collaboration across the university and with key external partners.

The dean will thoughtfully partner with faculty to set VUSE's vision and strategic direction and has considerable autonomy to execute on these collective strategic priorities on behalf of the school, including primary responsibility for a \$141M annual operating budget. In collaboration with other

deans, most notably the dean of Arts & Sciences and the dean of the School of Medicine Basic Sciences, the VUSE dean has the opportunity to recruit exceptional scholars into a dynamic STEM environment at Vanderbilt. In addition, the dean is the chief steward of relationships with the school's alumni base and with industry partners to bolster support and opportunities for scholars, students, and graduates. The dean partners with department chairs and program directors for the seven academic units as well as directors of several centers and institutes. Current direct reports to the dean include Vice Dean of Engineering, Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education and Faculty Affairs, Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, Senior Associate Dean for Research, Associate Dean for Development and Alumni Relations, Associate Dean for Academic Success, Associate Dean for Strategic Learning Programs, and Chief Business Officer (who also reports centrally to the University's finance department).

Opportunities and Challenges for the Dean

The primary opportunities and challenges for the next dean will include the following:

Develop a bold vision for future innovation, excellence, and societal impact

The Vanderbilt University School of Engineering aspires to even greater heights of achievement and requires a leader who can work creatively, strategically, and collaboratively with a range of internal constituencies and external stakeholders to identify and implement a cohesive direction, and to motivate, inspire, and galvanize faculty, students, and staff in its pursuit. The dean will articulate and realize a vision of high-impact, high-visibility research, education, and entrepreneurship that serves the public good by addressing important societal problems. The dean will achieve this by drawing upon the school's existing strengths, building new areas of impact, and strategically leveraging areas of excellence across the entire university. As other institutions are increasing their investments in engineering, the dean must be forward-thinking and strategic to increase Vanderbilt's leadership position and differentially raise its stature and influence in the field. Defining priority areas for investments, deepening the partnerships with other Vanderbilt schools and programs, and identifying areas for programmatic innovation will be critical tasks.

Champion and enhance a climate of diversity, equity, and inclusion

The next dean will need to possess a deep understanding and fierce commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, including an acute sense of the particular challenges in the field of engineering. This will lead to a focused effort on recruitment and retention of both women and underrepresented groups at all levels. An active listener, the dean will also foster a community-centric culture that is welcoming and supportive of all faculty, staff, and students. The dean will set the tone for an inclusive climate within the school that promotes and nurtures the success and development of the entire community, encouraging and incentivizing collaboration and "de-siloing" across the school.

Support transformative, interdisciplinary research

The dean will ensure the continued growth and success of a robust research enterprise by supporting individual faculty research efforts while also facilitating and incentivizing teams to pursue large,

multidisciplinary projects. The dean works with other leaders especially the engineering chairs, to establish the research vision, set the tone for innovation and excellence, and guide collaborative research efforts. At the same time, the dean will nurture relationships with government and foundation partners to ensure that VUSE is positioned to compete effectively for research support. Garnering additional large center grants from the NIH, NSF, DOE, DOD, and other funding agencies, as well as large industry-university collaborations will be critical. In addition, the dean must address the school's needs for expanded engineering research administration infrastructure and new or updated facilities including highly specialized, well-equipped laboratories that will enable engineering faculty and students to continue their cutting-edge work.

Support and pursue collaborations across the university and externally

The dean will be a leader for the university, working strategically and collegially with peer deans and university administration to champion initiatives broadly related to science, engineering, and entrepreneurship. The Vanderbilt University School of Engineering has tremendous potential to further leverage existing partnerships within and outside the university, and the dean will foster a robust culture of innovation and catalyze additional opportunities for collaboration and interdisciplinary research and programming that contribute to and strengthen Vanderbilt in the long term. Furthermore, supporting the development of industrial collaborations, research partnerships, and entrepreneurial activity will be a priority for the dean to broaden and amplify the impact of Vanderbilt Engineering in the world.

Bolster VUSE's financial standing through philanthropy and thoughtful resource management

The dean will be a vocal champion to a range of external audiences and potential funders for the ways in which the Vanderbilt University School of Engineering is changing the world. The dean must publicize the accomplishments of faculty, staff, and students and be a tireless advocate to generate critical resources to fuel the school's continued success. In collaboration with the development team, the new dean will cultivate and diversify advancement opportunities to strengthen the financial base of the school. This will include increased engagement with major donors and alumni, as well as seeking new individual, industry, and corporate partners to provide additional resources. The dean will also seek out alternative sources of funds such as revenue-generating programs and grants from a range of federal funding sources and will also be an effective advocate for necessary resources and support from university leadership. The dean will be a creative and resilient problem-solver, able to identify opportunities for operational and administrative efficiencies and thoughtfully manage limited resources. An astute understanding of finances and the relationship between academic priorities and budget will be important for the next dean to be successful.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no single candidate will have all of the following qualifications and characteristics, the ideal candidate should possess many of the following:

- A record of distinguished research and excellence in teaching, mentoring, and scholarly activities commensurate with appointment to the rank of full professor with tenure;

- An open, consultative, and empowering leader; an excellent collaborator who can partner effectively with colleagues, including fellow deans and administrators, faculty, staff and students;
- The aptitude to work with faculty to develop and execute a vision and plans for the future in an environment of shared governance;
- Broad-minded, with experience and interest beyond engineering to tie the school to the university;
- Commitment to collaboration, transparency, and entrepreneurship;
- Ability to communicate effectively in writing and verbally to build and enhance relationships with faculty and staff, alumni, the greater Nashville community, and various other constituent groups;
- Ability to recruit and retain talented and diverse faculty and a commitment to a culturally diverse academic environment;
- A demonstrated track record of enhancing diversity and inclusion at all levels, the ability to articulate its value with accountability and build consensus, and a deeply held commitment to increasing the number of underrepresented minorities and women in STEM;
- An astute understanding of finances and the relationship between academic priorities and budget; a responsible steward who is able to ensure prudent and efficient use of resources;
- Quantifiable success in major development and fundraising initiatives within a large, complex organization.

TO APPLY

Vanderbilt University has engaged Isaacson, Miller to assist the VUSE Dean Search Committee with identifying and reviewing candidates for this position. Inquiries, applications, and nominations may be sent in confidence to the following:

Katie Rockman, Partner
Karen McPhedran, Managing Associate
Afi Tettey-Fio, Senior Associate

<https://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/8662>

Vanderbilt University has a strong institutional commitment to recruiting and retaining an academically and culturally diverse community of faculty. Minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and members of other underrepresented groups, in particular, are encouraged to apply. Vanderbilt is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.