



Northwestern University

**Search for the Associate Vice President for Research and
Executive Director of Innovation and New Ventures
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL**

Northwestern University seeks a visionary, strategic, and seasoned leader to serve as the Associate Vice President for Research and the Executive Director of the Innovation and New Ventures Office (INVO). Reporting to the Vice President for Research, Milan Mrksich, the Associate Vice President (AVP) and Executive Director of INVO will chart the future course of innovation and commercialization activities to enhance Northwestern's impact through translation of its outstanding educational and research activities. Launched in 2011, INVO has developed a broad array of programs and services to harness and channel the innovative and entrepreneurial energy of faculty and students. The next AVP will build on this strong foundation to position Northwestern as an international leader in this domain and capitalize on the unique assets across the University. Additionally, the AVP will foster impactful partnerships with external entities to extend Northwestern's innovation ecosystem, tapping into the vibrant new business development landscape in Greater Chicago. The AVP will work closely and collaboratively with University leadership as well as local, regional, and national partners to catalyze the translation of Northwestern innovations to benefit the public and promote economic growth.

The AVP oversees the Innovation and New Ventures Office, which is responsible for maximizing the societal impact of the University's intellectual property assets by shepherding them through critical processes that get them from campus to market, including patent application, prosecution, licensing, compliance, and enforcement, enabling commercial investment in and licensing of inventions and discoveries flowing from Northwestern's research. The AVP has 6 direct reports and an overall supervisory portfolio of more than 30 staff. The AVP's vision and leadership combined with the expertise of INVO's staff help integrate Northwestern's academic mission with the University's social contract to contribute to economic growth. Additionally, the AVP oversees the Querrey InQbation Lab, a University incubator that accelerates translation of its rich faculty research portfolio by providing an array of startup resources from work spaces and legal assistance to mentorship and funding. To widen the pipeline for startup activity, the InQbation Lab also offers educational opportunities and fellowships for aspiring entrepreneurs. In support of a student culture that embraces innovation and delivers relevant entrepreneurship training, the AVP's portfolio includes The Garage, which serves as a vehicle to inspire

students to solve real-world problems. Since its launch in 2015, The Garage has catalyzed more than 1,000 student-founded startups.

Northwestern University seeks an AVP with the experience and vision to provide strategic leadership across INVO's broad portfolio. To succeed in this role, the AVP must possess a demonstrated record of successful organizational leadership as well as a deep understanding of how to move Northwestern's research innovations to the market through a sophisticated awareness of the evolving issues in intellectual property, technology licensing, and patent management. The AVP must possess a forward-looking strategic view of how to shape the next phase of a university innovation engine and be a tireless advocate for and champion of INVO's mission internally and externally, to grow the awareness and reputation of INVO and Northwestern more broadly.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1851, Northwestern University is a private institution recognized both nationally and internationally for the quality of its educational programs at all levels. Northwestern combines innovative teaching and pioneering research in a highly collaborative environment that transcends traditional academic boundaries. It provides students and faculty with exceptional opportunities for intellectual, personal, and professional growth in a setting enhanced by the richness of Chicago.

Northwestern has a broad array of 12 schools, all of which are highly ranked and recognized. These schools are integrated throughout three campuses—the primary campus in Evanston, on the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan; the Chicago campus, nestled in the heart of a world-class city; and the University's first global campus in Doha, Qatar. Highly prestigious faculty accolades, including an impressive ten-year increase in the number of members in the National Academies and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences across a wide range of schools and departments coupled with a high standing among private universities for the number of prestigious NSF CAREER awards to junior faculty, exemplify Northwestern's commitment to excellence in faculty and research.

Northwestern's mission of teaching and research is supported by 4,000 full-time faculty members and more than 10,000 staff. The University enrolls approximately 8,800 undergraduate students representing all 50 states and 105 countries. More than 14,000 graduate students are enrolled in 160+ graduate and professional programs across ten of Northwestern's schools. More than 90 percent of undergraduate applicants rank in the top 10 percent of their high school classes. The undergraduate class of 2025 made up of 2,086 students selected from over 47,000 applicants, resulting in a 7 percent admit rate.

Northwestern's most recent capital campaign, [We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern](#), concluded in June 2021 raised a total of \$6.1 billion, far surpassing the initial goal of raising \$3.75 billion.

With \$924 million in sponsored research funding in FY 2022, Northwestern is recognized globally for its high-impact research spanning academic disciplines and profoundly contributing to society through the

commercialization of new products and services. This performance is part of a larger growth trajectory, with the University's overall research funding increasing nearly 82 percent since 2012. Such growth has furthered the societal impact of Northwestern's research while consistently elevating the University into the top 10 national rankings. The scope of University activity continues to be broad, with researchers making important contributions across many areas, including through frequent interdisciplinary work, bringing together teams from across the life sciences, engineering, the social sciences, humanities, and more.

Northwestern is a community of learners situated within a network of historical and contemporary relationships with Native American tribes, communities, parents, students, and alumni. It is also in close proximity to an urban Native American community in Chicago and near several tribes in the Midwest. The Northwestern campus sits on the traditional homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires, the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa. It was also a site of trade, travel, gathering, and healing for more than a dozen other Native tribes and is still home to over 100,000 tribal members in the state of Illinois.

It is within Northwestern's responsibility as an academic institution to disseminate knowledge about Native peoples and the institution's history with them. Consistent with the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion, Northwestern works towards building relationships with Native American communities through academic pursuits, partnerships, historical recognitions, community service, and enrollment efforts.

THE INNOVATION AND NEW VENTURES OFFICE

INVO was designed to support the University's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem and accelerate the translation of faculty- and student-driven inventions to the public. It has served its commercialization mission through the creation of initiatives such as the Querrey InQbation Lab, the [N.XT Fund](#), [Lakeside Discovery](#), and The Garage. Additionally, INVO has created new entrepreneurial training programs, including [commercialization clinics](#); [INVO Forward](#); [INVOPracticum](#); and [INVOReach](#), which focuses on developing resources that improve diversity of inventorship and entrepreneurship at Northwestern.

INVO offers an essential service of bringing together talent, funding, and other resources to help launch startup companies based on intellectual property developed at Northwestern, resulting in 15 new startups last year, with a total of 123 since INVO began. In FY 2021, INVO processed 265 invention disclosures, 695 new patent applications, and issued 240 patents. In addition, the office executed 220 agreements. Licensing revenue from INVO in FY 2022 was \$14 million. Since INVO's launch, Northwestern has seen a 63 percent increase in inventions—2,600 in total. INVO also has supported a substantial increase in filed and issued patents over the last decade, with a 152 percent increase in patents filed and a 279 percent increase in patents issued.

INVO plays a crucial role in supporting innovation across campus and serves as a critical liaison among Northwestern policymakers, individual faculty, and student-scholars who benefit from the expertise housed within INVO. Some of its most consequential components include:

[The Querrey InQbation Lab](#)

The Querrey InQbation Lab is a University incubator that provides support and resources for the early stages of company formation, allowing the University to immediately enable near-term opportunities and increase the pipeline of startup companies. This collaborative space provides a home for Northwestern's highly entrepreneurial faculty to contribute to innovation through the commercialization of sophisticated scientific discoveries. It also serves as a springboard to catalyze economic growth and opportunities to the Evanston and Chicago communities. The InQbation Lab offers a variety of programs related to different phases of the commercialization process, including [The Mentor Network](#), establishing a pool of mentors, advisors, and board and management talent for Northwestern entrepreneurs; [Entrepreneurial Fellowships](#), an opportunity for recent PhD graduates seeking to commercialize Northwestern research; [FoundHer](#), an annual fellowship designed to cultivate female faculty entrepreneurs at Northwestern; and [INVOForward](#), a customer discovery bootcamp for Northwestern entrepreneurial faculty and startups. These programs, and others, are open to Northwestern startups, faculty, undergraduate and graduate students (Master's, PhD, MBA, MD, and JD) and postdoctoral fellows.

[The Garage](#)

Launched in 2015, The Garage provides programs and resources where Northwestern students build the knowledge, grit, and networks for bringing new ideas to life. The Garage serves undergraduate, graduate, and professional students from across Northwestern's campuses through programs, funding, and mentoring, while infusing innovation throughout the culture and community. The Garage works to encourage students to discover their strengths while encouraging entrepreneurial initiative in a supportive environment. Since its founding, The Garage has launched more than 1,000 startups, has offered access to over 500 mentors and experts, and hosts 1,000 visitors per month.

THE ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION AND NEW VENTURES

Reporting to the Vice President for Research, the AVP and Executive Director of INVO will actively and strategically promote the societal and economic impact of intellectual property developed by researchers at Northwestern and develop key innovative partnerships both internally and externally to benefit Northwestern and its key constituencies. The AVP will provide guidance, direction, and support to faculty, students, and staff in all aspects of industry-funded research and technology licensing and continuously identify needs and opportunities that will enrich the innovation ecosystem. Together with other University offices, the next AVP will continue to develop industry engagement and deepen corporate partnerships.

Specifically, the AVP will be expected to: 1) provide leadership and strategic direction for INVO; 2) act as the campus catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship and champion the impact of the University's intellectual property; 3) continue to develop the strong, robust and productive relationship with faculty and student inventors and entrepreneurs on campus; 4) assess the current practices in light of rising volume and complexities of technology licensing and industrial contracts activity; and 5) serve as a national leader in the technology licensing, innovation, and commercialization community.

The AVP sits at an important nexus of engagement across campus constituencies and works collaboratively with the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Sponsored Research, the Office for Research Development, Corporate Engagement, and other Office for Research stakeholders. The AVP is also a key partner in working with deans and leadership of established innovation and entrepreneurship programs in Northwestern's colleges and schools.

The AVP oversees more than 30 staff, with 24 in the areas of invention management, new ventures, intellectual property, operations, and licensing, and another eight in The Garage. The AVP's six direct reports include the Senior Director of Invention Management, the Director of License Strategy & Business Development, the Interim Executive Director of the InQbation Lab, the Associate General Counsel, the Senior Director of Finance & Administration, and the Executive Director of The Garage.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In addition to ensuring the effective and seamless execution of the objectives of INVO, the AVP and executive director will face the following opportunities and challenges:

Provide leadership and strategic direction for the Innovation and New Ventures Office

Since its founding, INVO has fomented a lively culture of entrepreneurship at Northwestern. In its next phase of development, Northwestern seeks a strategic-minded leader with knowledge of innovation, commercialization, and external partnerships to inform the University's future strategy, policies, and operations. The AVP and Executive Director will be looked to as the University's primary thought leader in these areas and must bring such expertise to inspire confidence within the University and among its external partners.

Expand innovation and entrepreneurial activity across disciplines and industry sectors

Continuing to broaden and diversify the portfolio of translational activity, with an eye towards supporting the physical sciences and identifying emerging opportunities, will be an important task for the new AVP. Bioelectronics, therapeutics, nanotechnologies and materials science, and synthetic biology have been central players in Northwestern's current portfolio of technology licensing activities. The AVP will sustain and grow these areas of strength and identify new directions, including opportunities at the intersection of social sciences, data science, communication and digital technologies. INVO will leverage the

tremendous entrepreneurial ecosystem across all schools at Northwestern and ensure the innovation architecture is supporting needs in all parts of the University. Success will be measured not only by the volume of INVO-supported activity, but also by the distribution of that activity across fields and the representation of new fields in INVO programs and spaces.

Champion the critical work and services of INVO and increase awareness among academic units about its services

The AVP will be a visible and vocal presence across Northwestern in the promotion of INVO to key current and future partners. The AVP will promote its services and the value it brings to the Northwestern community and ensure that researchers and academic units are informed about the substantial offerings of INVO. Focusing on ease of access and navigation of services as well as an effective communications and marketing strategy will be ongoing efforts. By fostering a better understanding of the systems, processes, and potential of the office to promote their scholarship and translate their achievements, the AVP will facilitate more efficient interactions between scholar-entrepreneurs and INVO. If done truly well, INVO will help Northwestern attract the nation's, if not the world's, foremost researchers interested in the potential commercialization of their work.

Recruit and retain a talented team and develop resources to fuel INVO's increased activity

The growth of Northwestern's research portfolio puts increasing pressure on INVO staff to quickly and skillfully field requests, manage license portfolios, and advise and process patent and other IP requests from Northwestern investigators across many fields. The AVP will recognize the needs of INVO staff and work to support them at all levels, while ensuring efficient and high quality service in all its functions. Furthermore, the AVP will anticipate future growth and will continue to recruit talented staff to the office's ranks while making every effort to retain existing talent, many of whom have built longstanding and valuable connections with key investigators at Northwestern and beneficial relations externally. Ensuring a high-performing organization in core services is critical to enabling investments and growing new services that will enable the next level of impact for INVO.

Foster and embed a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship through training

The InQbation Lab and The Garage were created to stimulate the entrepreneurial and innovative pipeline for faculty and students, respectively. The AVP will work across both spaces to leverage the current expertise and expand opportunities through training efforts and outreach across the University. The AVP will help develop a roadmap for training and extracurricular events to foster entrepreneurial activity and create a vibrant research and innovation hub.

Serve as a regional and national leader in the innovation and commercialization community

The next AVP will be a visible and defining presence in inventorship, entrepreneurship, and innovation leadership circles, both promoting Northwestern's approaches to technology licensing and commercialization, as well as bringing creative ideas back to the University through this national and international interface. The AVP will be a presence among, and a leader of, their peers nationally and internationally, an effective public speaker, and a recognized leader in the field. The AVP must become deeply embedded throughout the Chicago innovation sector, in particular, and position Northwestern as a thought leader and key partner regionally.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

While no single candidate may have all the ideal qualifications, the committee seeks candidates with the following qualifications and abilities:

- Experience in university innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems with both faculty and student entrepreneurship goals and priorities;
- Ability to cultivate partnerships across a large institution, working with faculty, staff, and other researchers across a wide spectrum of research disciplines;
- Demonstrated track record of implementing a strategic vision;
- A deep understanding of commercialization paths and experience building internal and external partnerships;
- Highly developed interpersonal and collaborative skills, including the ability to work effectively with teams of senior stakeholders;
- Ability to establish trust and positive working relationships among a diverse set of stakeholders;
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, with an emphasis on building and supporting a more representative entrepreneurial sector;
- A strong track record in the recruitment, development, and retention of teams;
- A strong customer-service orientation toward the needs of faculty and student inventors, entrepreneurs and external development partners;
- Experience with new venture start-ups, raising venture capital, and cultivating corporate partners and investors for seed and venture-stage collaborations and deals;
- Proven capacity to design and negotiate complex commercial-based alliances between external funders and universities;
- Energy and vision to inspire others about the possibilities ahead as well as the judgment to set priorities and make difficult decisions;
- Advanced degree required, preferably in a science, engineering, or technology area, business, or law.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Confidential review of applications and nominations will continue until an appointment is made. Applications, nominations, and inquiries should be directed electronically in confidence to:

John Muckle, Partner (he/him/his)
Becca Kennedy, Partner (she/her/hers)
Katie White, Associate (she/her/hers)
Kira Hamilton, Search Coordinator (they/them/theirs)

Isaacson, Miller

<http://www.imsearch.com/search-detail/S8775>

Northwestern University is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer of all protected classes, including veterans and individuals with disabilities. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply. As per Northwestern University policy, this position requires a criminal background check. Successful applicants will need to submit to a criminal background check prior to employment.

Appendix

NORTHWESTERN LEADERSHIP

President Michael H. Schill

Michael H. Schill took office as Northwestern's 17th president on September 12, 2022. He also serves as a professor in the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. He previously spent seven years as president of the University of Oregon (UO), where he raised the University's profile in teaching, research, innovation, student access, and diversity. Under Schill's leadership, UO built the Phil and Penny Knight Campus for Accelerating Scientific Impact, increased its four-year graduation rates by 10 percentage points, and launched the Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health in a new campus in Northeast Portland. Schill also led the extension and historic close of the university's fundraising campaign in 2021, which exceeded its goal with \$3.2 billion total raised.

Provost Kathleen Hagerty

Kathleen Hagerty assumed the role of Provost on September 1, 2020, after serving as Associate Provost for Faculty during the 2019-2020 academic year and previously as Interim Dean of the Kellogg School of Management. Hagerty joined Kellogg more than 30 years ago and holds the First Chicago Professorship in

Finance. She has earned a reputation as an accomplished scholar and respected faculty leader, with vast experience attracting and retaining top faculty in an increasingly competitive market for academic talent.

Vice President for Research Milan Mrksich

Milan Mrksich is a scientist, entrepreneur, and administrator who was named Northwestern's Interim Vice President for Research on October 1, 2019 and assumed the permanent role on May 14, 2020. A globally known multidisciplinary investigator, Mrksich is the Henry Wade Rogers Professor with appointments in the Departments of Biomedical Engineering, Chemistry, and Cell and Developmental Biology. He also was Founding Director of Northwestern's Center for Synthetic Biology and an Associate Director of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center, where his focus included strengthening state-of-the-art instrumentation and techniques.

Mrksich is an award-winning leader in the science and engineering of developing surface chemistries for life science applications. Most notably, he developed the SAMDI biochip technology. In addition, Mrksich has served as an active adviser to government and industry. He is also the Founder and Director of SAMDI Tech and a Founder of Lyra Therapeutics. As Vice President for Research, Mrksich oversees an integrated portfolio of expert services and resources delivered by 18 units. He also leads the development and implementation of University-wide strategic plans that support high-impact research efforts.