



**Search for the Dean of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas**

THE SEARCH

Wichita State University (WSU), Kansas's only urban public research university, seeks an innovative, engaged, and collaborative leader to be the next Dean of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Dean). Founded in 1895, WSU focuses on access and affordability, with a deep commitment to the Wichita community and the State of Kansas as a driver in talent development and economic prosperity. Known for its innovation and growth, WSU is on an impressive trajectory, where collaboration and creativity shape the future of education, with an entrepreneurial spirit embedded in its foundation.

An emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), Wichita State University is one of the nation's fastest-growing public research universities with a trajectory and momentum rarely seen among peer and aspirant institutions in today's higher education climate. With an attainable goal to reach R1 status in the next several years, WSU boasts a 130-acre Innovation Campus, a recent partnership with the University of Kansas on the new \$300 million [Wichita Biomedical CenterSM](#) in downtown Wichita, and the brand new [Shocker Success Center](#).

The next Dean will join WSU and the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at an exciting moment in the University's history where courageous, transparent, and empathetic leadership will allow the College to realize its ability to be the center of academic and research excellence on campus. The Dean's primary responsibility is to advance the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences' academic quality and research profile through visionary leadership committed to strategic planning, interdisciplinary collaboration, ethical governance, and skillful human and financial resource management. The Dean is charged with supporting and advancing the educational and research agendas of all academic units within Fairmount and closely collaborating with the faculty to further the University's research production capacity and re-envision the College as a place of distinction for top graduate students and faculty while retaining its commitment to excellence in teaching. The Dean will also enhance the College's educational impact on campus and in the region while ensuring Fairmount remains student-centered, innovation-driven, and entrepreneurial-focused. A deep personal commitment to and demonstrated track record of actively supporting and promoting inclusive excellence is a priority. In line with the University's strategic plan and priorities, the Dean will work with the other academic Deans and the President's Executive Team

to advance WSU as an innovative university by focusing on increasing enrollment, promoting student success and retention, developing new educational experiences, applied learning, funded research, improvement of facilities, and digital transformation. The Dean will also be responsible for ongoing fundraising efforts in close partnership with the WSU Foundation.

Wichita State University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of the next Dean. All confidential inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed in confidence, as noted at the end of this document.

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

The mission of WSU is to be an essential educational, cultural, and economic driver for Kansas and the public good. With the aspiration to be one of the nation's premier urban public research universities, known for providing impactful applied learning experiences and driving economic prosperity, WSU continues to raise its profile via the university-wide [strategic plan](#) and three key priorities:

- Helping families through access and affordability.
- Supporting Kansas businesses with a talent pipeline that meets employer needs.
- Increasing economic prosperity with higher education that benefits the Kansas economy.

Highly focused on core and distinctive values, the University has specifically committed to:

- Student-Centeredness: Promote holistic student success through a supportive learning environment in which all students, past, present, and future, continually thrive and grow.
- Research and Scholarship: Accelerate the discovery, creation, and transfer of new knowledge.
- Campus Culture: Empower students, faculty, staff, and the greater Wichita community to create a culture and experience that meets their ever-changing needs.
- Inclusive Excellence: Be a campus that reflects and promotes, in all community members, the evolving diversity of society.
- Partnerships and Engagement: Advance industry and community partnerships to provide quality educational opportunities and collaboration to satisfy rapidly evolving community and workforce needs.

The University's recently approved [10-year master plan](#) will guide the general direction for future campus facilities. It builds upon the university's rapid growth over the past decade and defines the path for continued success and transformation.

Wichita State is one of six state universities governed by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) and is Kansas' only urban-based research university. With an institutional operating budget of over \$750 million, WSU's approximately 5,390 employees have a regional economic impact of \$1 billion. On a sprawling 330-acre campus, WSU currently has over 900 tenured or tenure-track faculty and an enrollment of around 17,500 students (approximately 77 percent undergraduate and 23 percent graduate) with a steady record of sustained enrollment. While WSU continues to experience success in its enrollment, the enrollment cliff is a reality, and the University has prepared to address this challenge with a comprehensive [strategic enrollment management plan](#), a university-wide roadmap to improving student experience, retention, and access through outreach, collaboration, and innovative system and process design. Strategic goals include developing and advancing activities that foster a culture that promotes a positive experience; increasing enrollment of new, degree-bound first-time-in-college, returning adults, international, and online students; increasing persistence rates of degree-seeking student populations; and increasing non-degree for-credit enrollment.

WSU leadership is focused on strengthening the educational opportunities provided to students, helping ensure student success, and providing a wide array of research and career opportunities. To foster these opportunities, the University has experienced [audacious growth](#) over the last ten years with new research centers, labs, classroom buildings, housing, dining, and athletic facilities. The newest college, the College of Innovation and Design, merges arts, science, and technology curricula to create opportunities for student-faculty collaboration across the colleges and is one of the only in-person programs of its type in the country.

To help address the state's core workforce needs while creating a seamless pipeline to higher education, WSU has partnered with a local technical college now known as the WSU Campus of Applied Sciences and Technology, commonly referred to as [WSU Tech](#). WSU Tech offers more than 100 programs of study, including aviation, health care, manufacturing, design, paraeducator, and business.

Leadership

[Dr. Richard \(Rick\) Muma](#) was named the 15th president of Wichita State University on May 6, 2021. Before becoming president, he was the Provost and Executive Vice President. Dr. Muma has also served as senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Strategic Enrollment Management and chair and professor in the Public Health Sciences and Physician Assistant departments.

[Dr. Shirley Lefever](#) is the Executive Vice President and Provost, previously serving as the Dean of WSU's College of Applied Studies. Dr. Lefever has publicly announced her intention to retire, and the search is underway for the new Provost.

Culture of Innovation

WSU's award-winning [Innovation Campus](#) is an interconnected community of partnership buildings where organizations establish operations and reap the rewards of the University's vast resources and laboratories that give students access to real-world applications and the training needed to transition into the workforce effortlessly. It is also a community makerspace that provides students and non-students access to the technology and services that help facilitate product development and mixed-use areas that provide everyone with a place to learn, work, live, and play.

Student Success

At WSU, student success is a core campus priority and an essential part of strategic enrollment management. With an impressive range of support and services from orientation to graduation, student success is the philosophy behind academic and student life opportunities across campus. To signify the incredible value of this work, WSU opened the [Shocker Success Center](#) in the summer of 2024, an \$18.5M renovated building located in the center of campus. This holistic resource for students will bring together 19 different student services previously housed in 10 buildings scattered across campus to provide a one-stop shop for student needs.

Research

With yearly funding topping \$400 million, research at Wichita State University ranges from bioscience, chemistry, and engineering to mathematics, physics, education, and ancient civilization. Among all universities, WSU ranks 13th in overall expenditures in engineering R&D, fourth in overall aeronautical R&D, and first in industry funding aeronautical R&D. In the most recent year, WSU received 1,526 sponsored awards, totaling more than \$411 million, an increase of three percent from last year's award dollars. As reported in 2023, WSU had over \$261 million in research expenditures. WSU's research portfolio has more than doubled in the last five years.

Highly engaged research is a critical component of WSU's Innovation strategy. The unique blending of accomplished faculty, high-tech labs, research facilities, and on-campus partnerships offers students the chance to participate in vital research that is changing lives. Since 2010, Wichita State University is one of the fastest-growing research universities in the United States. The University intends to continue that arc with increased opportunities for student research and interdisciplinary research projects. Currently designated as a "High Research Activity" institution, WSU is strategically moving towards the "Very High Research Activity" Carnegie classification. In the last several years, strengthening research awards has moved WSU far beyond the threshold of an R1 classification, and the University is now concentrating on increasing the number of PhD graduates across the academic units.

THE CITY OF WICHITA

Situated in the center of the U.S. Great Plains, and as Kansas' largest metro area, with a growing population of nearly 700,000, Wichita is the state's commercial, financial, medical, cultural, and entertainment hub. Despite the region's growth, WSU has a large footprint across Wichita and is a leader in the active higher education community of the city, which includes multiple universities and community colleges. Wichita has maintained the friendly Midwestern feel and enjoys a mild climate for most of the year. Wichita has been nationally recognized for its low cost of living, growing economy, and excellent quality of life. Forbes recently [named Wichita](#) the number 4 city to move to in 2024.

Below are additional accolades the city has recently received:

- No. 3 U.S. Advanced Industry Hotspot
- No. 1 Most Affordable College Town in America
- Top 10 Best Cities for New College Grads
- The 15 Best Midsize Cities for New Grads
- Top 10 Best Places to Live
- Top 10 Best Value City
- No. 2 Most Recession-Proof City

More information about the City of Wichita can be found at <https://www.wichitachamber.org/main/welcome-to-wichita/>

FAIRMOUNT COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

College Mission: To cultivate intellectual curiosity and foster contemplation of the human experience and the natural world. Faculty members are dedicated to creating, expanding, applying, and preserving knowledge; and to introducing students to the scholarship, theories, methods, and perspectives of their diverse disciplines. A liberal arts and sciences education develops transferable analytical skills--the capacity to gather and interpret information, think critically, and communicate effectively--and stimulates a lifelong love of learning that enriches graduates and their communities.

The [Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#) (Fairmount) is the oldest and largest academic unit on campus. It brings together disciplines in the humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and natural sciences and mathematics to form the intellectual heart of WSU. Fairmount firmly believes that a liberal arts and sciences degree is about the development of the whole person. It allows one to become more in pursuing a career path and lifelong learning and learning for its own joy. Through liberal arts and sciences classroom education, research opportunities, applied learning, and internship experiences, students grow to their full capacities, understand issues in their breadth and depth, have a more intellectually meaningful life, and contribute to the betterment of society. To these ends, Fairmount challenges students to think

critically and intuitively, to cross disciplinary boundaries, to recognize and value diverse perspectives, and to solve problems creatively and with perseverance.

Fairmount serves 6,154 students (5,648 undergraduate and 506 graduate students) in 17 schools and departments with 191 faculty members (131 tenured or tenure-track, 60 non-tenure track), 78 staff, and a budget of \$21.1 million. Of the College student body, 48.8 percent are first-generation, 24.8 percent are from underrepresented groups, and 24.9 percent are from low-income backgrounds. Fairmount offers 30 bachelor's degrees, 16 master's degrees, three doctorates, 29 certificates, and two associate degrees.

Faculty are committed to teaching and research excellence and have received grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Justice (DOJ), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The College boasts \$9,215,443 in external funding and \$56,999 in internal awards.

Rooted in the liberal arts, Fairmount's strong and diverse academic programs have a distinct breadth and depth, serving the General Education curriculum, which is the bedrock of the WSU student academic experience.

Humanities

- [English](#)
- [History](#)
- [Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures](#)
- [Philosophy](#)
- [Women's, Ethnicity and Intersectional Studies](#)

Social & Behavioral Sciences

- [Anthropology](#)
- [School of Criminal Justice](#)
- [Elliot School of Communication](#)
- [Political Science](#)
- [Psychology](#)
- [Sociology](#)
- [School of Social Work](#)
- [Hugo Wall School of Public Affairs](#)

Natural Sciences & Mathematics

- [Biological Sciences](#)
- [Chemistry and Biochemistry](#)
- [Geology](#)
- [Mathematics, Statistics, and Physics](#)

Fairmount is ever-expanding its reach to bring interdisciplinarity to academics that will inform research, the classroom, and community partnerships. The [Academic Center for Biomedical and Health Humanities](#) (HealthHum) is a prime example of these endeavors. The Center enhances the visibility of the wide range of scholarship and teaching in areas related to health and human flourishing beyond the traditional health professions. The Center facilitates collaborative partnerships between the University, industry, and community to reflect and promote inclusive excellence in health and well-being through interdisciplinary academic scholarship, resources, and education that respects society's evolving diversity and helps satisfy rapidly evolving community needs. The [Environment Finance Center](#) (EFC) is one of 10 Environmental Finance Centers in the country that provides communities with professional training, technical assistance,

and applied research and helps communities build capacity to address environmental challenges and provide quality of life for everyone.

Inclusive Excellence

The principles of inclusive excellence are infused throughout Fairmount's teaching, research, and service. Fairmount College is also committed to instituting the recommendations made by the Advance Grant team, awarded \$3,900,000 from the National Science Foundation to recruit more women and people of color to Wichita State's STEM fields and improve the experiences of women and faculty of color already at WSU. One of those recommendations was to create associate deans of Inclusive Excellence for each of Wichita State's undergraduate colleges. In 2022, the Fairmount College Dean's Office created its role of Associate Dean for Inclusive Excellence, a half-time position reporting to the Dean.

Applied Learning and Mentorship

A hallmark of the WSU experience is applied learning and mentorship. [Applied learning](#) at WSU works continuously to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world experience. Students in every major can gain the skills, connections, and confidence needed for career success before graduation with employers in virtually every industry through applied learning placements, co-ops, and internships. Around 96 percent of student co-op placements are paid (the national average is 47 percent). In FY23, the university hosted over 9,000 student-applied learning experiences, with students earning more than \$30 M in wages working with over 700 employers. The Kansas Board of Regents indicates that WSU graduates are more likely to be employed in Kansas after graduation and earn more than graduates from other traditional Kansas universities. Nearly 74 percent of WSU students are employed in Kansas within a year of graduation (the highest among other state universities).

THE ROLE OF THE DEAN OF THE FAIRMOUNT COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

Reporting directly to the Senior Executive Vice President and Provost, the Dean serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The Dean's direct reports include three Associate Deans, the Senior Assistant Dean, the College's 16 Directors and Department Chairs, the Budget Manager, Community Outreach Coordinator, Executive Assistant, and Office Coordinator.

Through innovative, dynamic, open, transparent, and respectful leadership and management, the Dean will work to strengthen the already successful undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs, grow enrollment, and ensure that sustainable resources exist to enable Fairmount to meet its goals and objectives, while steadfastly upholding the College's mission and core values in these efforts. The successful candidate will possess the ability to persuasively advocate for Fairmount in a variety of contexts, to speak the language of different disciplines, to promote and support interdisciplinary, highly engaged research, to effectively lead and inspire a talented team of staff, to engage multiple communities,

and to stimulate learning that capitalizes on the diversity of the College. The Dean will demonstrate a commitment to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service and support faculty members striving for excellence in these domains. The Dean will ensure the community is an inclusive one that values, supports, and celebrates the contributions of all faculty, staff, and students.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

In particular, the next Dean will be charged with addressing the following opportunities and challenges:

Provide collaborative and visionary leadership for Fairmount in a time of rapid change and accelerated growth.

Working with the College, the next Dean will develop a compelling vision for the future of WSU's largest and most academically diverse college in the context of a rapidly changing higher education landscape, leveraging its disciplinary breadth and diversity to develop a world-class model for innovative, interdisciplinary education in the liberal arts and sciences. The Dean must be conversant with and undeterred by the challenges facing higher education—especially a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences with its diverse disciplines—and know how to address these challenges and opportunities successfully. In particular, the next Dean is expected to embrace the value of undergraduate and graduate education, foster high-quality, high-impact research that supports the goal of becoming an R1 institution, support faculty development, and leverage data to inform decisions.

Additionally, with WSU's 10-year master plan now in process, it is vital for the Dean to collaboratively develop a strategic plan for Fairmount's future, ensuring that university leaders recognize Fairmount's buildings and facility needs and align them for future growth and address student demand and educational imperatives.

Position Fairmount to grow enrollment in both undergraduate and graduate academic programs

With the higher education enrollment cliff on the horizon, WSU has proactively implemented a comprehensive strategic enrollment management plan to drive enrollment across all programs, engaging faculty, students, and staff in this universal effort. The Dean will bring a strong track record of skillfully managing and growing enrollment and the challenges of supporting an increased number of students. The Dean will work with faculty to develop additional diverse, innovative, and distinctive academic programs to attract and retain a high-quality and diverse student body at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. With the university's goal of becoming an R1 institution, the Dean will determine the needs of graduate programs, their ambitions, and support mechanisms to enhance the graduate student experience.

Vociferously advocate for the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and collaborate with partners across the WSU campus.

The next Dean will serve as a valued partner to and collaborator with senior leaders and peers in the broader University community, contributing to university-wide efforts to reach Research 1 status and increase enrollment while also being an effective and dedicated spokesperson and advocate for Fairmount's value, needs and interests. The Dean will provide savvy and innovative financial management and compellingly communicate Fairmount's priorities to the University community, articulating its contribution to the success of the institution's mission while positioning and promoting its broad array of disciplines.

The next Dean will be an engaged and visible academic leader for the College and the University, developing mutually beneficial relationships with colleagues outside the College and partnering with other academic units to pursue innovative opportunities in multidisciplinary research, teaching, and outreach to local industry, nonprofits, government agencies, and other community partners.

Recruit, retain, and mentor faculty and staff in a teaching and research environment, ensuring academic quality and distinction.

In collaboration with Fairmount's leadership team, the Dean will lead efforts in the recruitment, retention, and professional development of an exceptional and diverse faculty and staff. By relying on the strength of the University's shared governance and unwavering commitment to innovative excellence, the Dean will fortify Fairmount's recruiting position and ensure the continued ability to attract and retain academic talent for all Fairmount departments. The Dean will reinforce a positive, inclusive culture and nurture collaborative initiatives to foster a strong community that will buoy the success of faculty, staff, and students. The Dean will actively support faculty research, strongly encourage innovative, inter- and transdisciplinary research, and energize Fairmount's research portfolio in support of WSU's research ambitions.

Fairmount benefits from a group of dedicated and talented staff members who are integral to the college's daily work and bring their expertise and exceptional service to bear in support of the College's students and mission. To maintain this high bar, the Dean will work to provide appropriate recruitment and retention initiatives to attract talented staff and advocate for resources to support professional development and mentorship.

Support and enhance Fairmount's deep commitment to inclusive excellence and student success

WSU is committed to building and supporting one of the most diverse student bodies in the state, with the goal of becoming a Hispanic-serving institution. Integral to the growth of Fairmount is ensuring a thriving culture that nurtures, respects, and profoundly supports inclusive excellence. Members of the College are deeply committed to building an environment that prioritizes the success of all students, faculty, and staff, and the Dean will actively and passionately support these efforts, using their influence and commitment to drive the work to fulfill this priority.

Student success drives the University's strategic framework. As such, the Dean will need to pay close attention to student development matters, support services, and student engagement at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and continue to engage the Fairmount community in innovating and promoting student success efforts. The Dean will lead efforts to further leverage programs and services to aid in recruiting intellectually talented and diverse students.

Provide fundraising, revenue generation, and resource allocation leadership to support Fairmount's aspirations and priorities.

A superb and experienced financial steward, the Dean will be a compelling, tenacious, and persuasive champion for the College internally and externally and will strategically and adeptly manage college resources during times of financial constraint. As the face of Fairmount, the Dean must be an effective advocate, emissary, and public speaker who will further enhance the College's profile and resources. As a key partner with two embedded Directors of Development and with the WSU Foundation and Alumni Engagement team, the Dean will develop and foster relationships with critical stakeholders such as alumni, funding agencies, industry partners, foundations, and donors to articulate unique opportunities for collaboration, research, applied learning, and areas for investment. In addition to philanthropic priorities, the Dean will bring an entrepreneurial vision to develop new revenue streams to further support programmatic, facility, and scholarship priorities.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

While no one person will embody all of them, the successful candidate will exemplify many of the following qualifications and attributes:

Minimum requirements:

- An earned doctorate or equivalent terminal degree and a record of distinguished scholarship and teaching requisite for an appointment as a tenured full professor within an academic department in the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.
- Five years of significant administrative and leadership experience.

Additional Responsibilities, Skills, and Attributes:

- A distinguished track record of teaching, research, and service and intellectual curiosity are necessary to lead a diverse academic college.
- Astute financial acumen and demonstrated ability to acquire and manage external resources through research funding, grants, and contracts; Ability to work with the WSU Foundation to secure philanthropic support for Fairmount.
- Experience with accreditation process standards within colleges of liberal arts and sciences.
- Ability to clearly articulate the nature of the college mission in an urban setting.

- Demonstrated entrepreneurial skills combined with the ability to leverage the expertise of faculty to enhance the reputation of the college and University.
- Demonstrated understanding of and a commitment to working as a member of the senior academic leadership team comprising the Senior Executive Vice President and Provost, the Associate Vice presidents for Academic Affairs, and the college Deans.
- Deep and demonstrated commitment to inclusive excellence and to strategies that incorporate the valuable contributions of students, staff, and faculty.
- Demonstrated commitment to collaborative decision-making, including experience with shared governance.
- Demonstrated commitment to the college's role in supporting the University's mission.
- Demonstrated entrepreneurial skills and an ability to leverage the expertise of staff and faculty to enhance the educational and research missions.
- Ability to build interdisciplinary/departmental initiatives with other units to promote technology transfer and applied learning.
- Ability to be a dynamic, engaging, and effective spokesperson who actively advocates for and strengthens the link between education, career opportunities, and economic development.
- Ability to communicate effectively an informed vision of the College in an innovative university to all stakeholders and to translate that vision into practice.
- Effective interpersonal skills and highly proficient oral and written communication skills.
- Understanding of current and emerging strategies to improve student recruitment, retention, and student success.
- Record of active involvement in professional organizations and community engagement.

To Apply

Wichita State University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist the Dean of the Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences search committee in identifying and reviewing candidates. Inquiries, referrals, and resumes accompanied by a cover letter should be submitted via [the Isaacson, Miller search page](#).

Jacqueline Mildner, Partner
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Washington, DC

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in the investigation of any such allegation. Sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking are forms of sex discrimination and are prohibited under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, other federal laws, and WSU policy. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding WSU's non-discrimination policies: the Institutional Equity and Compliance Director (Telephone: (316) 978-3205), Title IX Coordinator (Telephone: (316) 978-5177), or Equal Opportunity Coordinator (Telephone: (316) 978-3186), each located at Wichita State University, 1845 Fairmount, Wichita, KS 67260, Human Resources Building.