



## BAKER SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Search for the Associate Dean, Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville  
Knoxville, Tennessee

### THE SEARCH

The Howard H. Baker Jr. School of Public Policy and Public Affairs (the School) at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK), seeks an accomplished and highly entrepreneurial academic administrator to serve as Associate Dean. The Baker School is expected to serve between 350 – 400 students across all of its programs in its third year of operation. The school's graduate programs are growing rapidly, and the undergraduate degree, entering its second year, has proven to be popular among first-year students at UTK. The School has an extraordinary building on campus, a faculty known for expertise in key public policy fields, and a dedicated group of faculty and staff who are committed to building a leading school of public policy and public affairs at the University of Tennessee. The Associate Dean will serve as the School's chief academic officer, overseeing faculty and programs to set the School up for long-term success. In partnership with the Dean, the Associate Dean will operationalize the School's strategic initiatives, lead all facets of faculty oversight, including recruitment, retention, and development, as well as curricular enhancements, and serve as the School's liaison to the broader UTK campus, particularly those programs with cross-listed academic offerings and joint faculty appointments.

Launched in 2023, the Baker School, the first of its kind at any public university in the state of Tennessee, envisions a state and country with thoughtful leadership, sound policy, and engaged citizens. As the flagship land-grant institution in a state known for skilled political leadership, UTK aims to produce skilled public problem solvers who will serve at the highest levels of local, state, and federal government as well as in public-facing roles in the private and non-profit sectors.

The Associate Dean will join the Baker School at a transformative time and play a pivotal role in shaping academic excellence by leading faculty recruitment, mentoring, and retention while overseeing tenure, promotion, and annual review processes. The Associate Dean will also collaborate closely with the Dean to drive engagement programs for instruction, research, and service, and influence strategic decisions to ensure the School's growth and build its national standing. Within the Baker School, the Associate Dean

will establish a robust academic infrastructure and student support systems, refining curricula and academic policies while fostering a vibrant and supportive School community to shape the next generation of public policy leaders. As a vital liaison within UTK, the Associate Dean will advocate for the Baker School, strengthen cross-collegiate relationships, and enhance its reputation, positioning the School for significant growth and success in public policy and public affairs education.

The Baker School has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment effort. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## ABOUT THE BAKER SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Baker School aims to educate and produce the next generation of skilled public problem solvers prepared to take leadership roles in their communities. The Baker School is the first and only institution of its kind in the state of Tennessee. Baker School students are grounded in the legacy of Howard H. Baker Jr., a former U.S. Senator, Senate Majority Leader, White House Chief of Staff, and Ambassador to Japan, with curricula and co-curricular activities focused on Baker's guiding principles, including:

- *Confidence in America*—understanding and holding confidence in American institutions;
- *You Might Be Right*—respect for opposing viewpoints as a hallmark of leadership;
- *Finding Common Ground*—mastering the art of the possible to solve complex problems.

Across all degree programs, Baker School students are inculcated with public service values and values of viewpoint diversity and intellectual humility in and out of the classroom. The Baker School offers a [Bachelor of Science](#) in Public Affairs, a [Master of Public Policy](#) (MPP), and a [Master of Public Administration](#) (MPA). For qualified students, the Baker School offers a five-year bachelor's and master's [accelerated program](#). The Baker School also has three minor programs: Public Affairs, Policy Analytics, and American Civics. Projections for the Fall 2025 semester predict the Baker School will serve approximately 175 undergraduate majors, 70 undergraduate minors, 44 in-person MPA and MPP graduate students, and 65 online MPA students. With its first cohorts progressing toward degree completion, the Baker School anticipates significant enrollment growth across all its programs as it educates the next generation of public leaders.

By the Fall of 2025, the Baker School will have 23 world-class full-time faculty members—including those with primary tenure homes in the School as well as those with joint appointments with other schools and colleges across UTK—who bring deep subject matter expertise and applied policy-making experience. Under the umbrellas of two research centers, Baker School faculty and experts combine sound science and thoughtful policy to address challenges facing the state of Tennessee, the United States, and the world. The [Center for Energy, Transportation, and Environmental Policy](#) addresses critical energy and environmental challenges by creating policy-relevant research and educational opportunities that integrate natural, physical, and social science, and the [Center for National Security and Foreign Affairs](#)

provides critical insights on national and international security challenges and foreign policy solutions through policy-relevant research, education, and engagement. The Baker School also houses the [Institute of American Civics](#), which is independently funded by the Tennessee legislature and is responsible for encouraging civic knowledge and participation among UTK undergraduates and the state at large.

In addition, 30 exceptionally dedicated staff within the Baker School help ensure a seamless experience for both students and faculty.

## The future of the Baker School

The Baker School is an emerging thought leader among public policy and public affairs schools, with cutting-edge policy research and deep student engagement. In the next 10 years, the Baker School seeks to establish a national reputation for graduating skilled public problem solvers and informing key issues in American public policy and public affairs. To achieve this objective, the Baker School has created a strategic plan that identifies existing assets and opportunities, guiding investments of time and resources over the next decade. Both faculty and staff headcounts are anticipated to grow to meet increasing student enrollment, student support service needs, and broader Baker School administrative needs.

## Leadership

[Marianne Wanamaker](#) is the inaugural Dean of the Howard H. Baker Jr. School of Public Policy and Public Affairs at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She is a professor of economics and public policy, a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research, and a research fellow at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. She is the former chief domestic economist at the White House Council of Economic Advisors, where she also served as the senior labor economist. From 2009 to 2021, her primary appointment was in UTK's Haslam College of Business.

## Location

Located in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Knoxville, TN, is known for its excellent quality of life with a relatively low cost of living, abundant restaurants, access to nature, and more. It is easily accessible via several interstates and an airport. A popular area for people and families of all ages, Knoxville is growing steadily as word begins to spread about its abundant opportunities and warm, welcoming community. Additional details about Knoxville can be [found here](#).

## ROLE OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

The Associate Dean will have an opportunity to shape the Baker School's trajectory at a critical moment in its development and help build a world-class public policy and public affairs school for students, faculty, and staff. Reporting directly to the Dean, the Associate Dean has a central role in the administration of the Baker School. This position provides leadership and direction for the Baker School's faculty and

academic programs. The Associate Dean is responsible for setting the strategic hiring goals of the school, mentoring and retaining faculty, and overseeing tenure and promotion processes and the annual review process. The Associate Dean's role in developing academic programs complements the faculty affairs portion of the position. The directors of graduate and undergraduate studies report to the Associate Dean, and the allocation and development of faculty teaching and research resources to meet program growth is a key part of the Associate Dean's portfolio.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

The Associate Dean will be a highly collaborative and strategic leader with proven experience in elevating academic excellence and driving key administrative decisions. To be successful in this work, the Associate Dean will address the following opportunities and challenges:

### **Partner with the Baker School Dean to drive strategy**

Leaders inspire others to work toward a shared vision. The Associate Dean will help shape and drive the vision of the Baker School, serving on the Dean's cabinet and providing advice and information to the Dean on all matters related to faculty, academic programs, and curriculum. The Associate Dean will also serve as the voice of the faculty on the Dean's cabinet, ensuring that the faculty perspective is well represented in strategic conversations about the future of the Baker School. In addition, the Associate Dean has an opportunity to provide fundraising support to the Dean and the School's Director of Advancement in development activities focused on academic priorities.

As the Baker School grows and finds its foothold amongst its peers nationally, the Associate Dean will partner with the Dean and other School leaders in conducting national surveys, special events related to faculty and students, benchmarking, college-wide instructional activities, and public policy and public affairs education-related research and development. This is an opportunity for a systems-oriented leader to influence and execute the Dean's strategic vision for the Baker School and build on a solid foundation primed for growth.

### **Serve as the chief faculty affairs administrator for the Baker School**

As the Baker School continues to grow and meet increasing demand for public policy and public affairs education in Tennessee and beyond, the Associate Dean will be responsible for the professional growth and development of current and future faculty, including recruiting and hiring, retention, promotion and tenure, and annual reviews. As a critical liaison between the Dean and faculty, the Associate Dean is expected to be highly visible and accessible to faculty while serving as a key point of communication in both directions. The Associate Dean will help translate the Dean's strategic goals for the Baker School into actionable initiatives that utilize and leverage the faculty's expertise.

As the Baker School evolves and matures, the Associate Dean will establish and refine shared governance processes and procedures that help shape its culture and community. By design, the Baker School is highly interdisciplinary and includes faculty from several academic disciplines, including business, economics, international relations, political science, public administration, and others. The School derives great strength from this multi-disciplinary orientation, but it requires careful attention to faculty governance systems to ensure the potential for collaboration and engagement is fully realized. This work will be especially important as the Associate Dean recruits and onboards new faculty, particularly in the first five years, as the School prioritizes senior faculty hires.

### **Further develop academic program infrastructure and student support systems**

In partnership with the Graduate and Undergraduate Program Directors, and serving as ex officio member of their respective faculty committees, the Associate Dean will provide academic oversight to ensure the development of curricula, instructional resources, and academic processes of the highest quality. As the first classes of Baker School students progress through their degree programs, the Associate Dean will be integral in the assessment and refining of the curricula, as well as reporting for future accreditation requirements. In addition to curricular and pedagogical oversight, the Associate Dean will establish and interpret critical academic policies and procedures that inform the creation, maintenance, and revision of curricula, courses, and programs of study within the School. Working alongside the Baker School professional Student Success staff, the Associate Dean will also oversee academic policies and ensure the right systems are in place to support the academic success of students while maintaining a high level of academic rigor and quality.

### **Liaise with the broader University of Tennessee, Knoxville community**

The Associate Dean will play a crucial role as a staunch advocate for the School in the broader UTK community. As the chief academic and faculty affairs administrator for the Baker School, the Associate Dean will serve as the liaison to UTK's Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs, ensuring that School policies and procedures adhere to and align with the broader campus' practices. The Associate Dean will be a strong University citizen who will build and maintain relationships across departments, schools, and colleges at UTK to bolster the Baker School's reputation and ability to partner with other academic units, particularly those programs with cross-listed academic offerings and joint faculty appointments.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The ideal candidate will be a distinguished public policy/public affairs leader and scholar with substantive experience in academic administrative leadership. While no single candidate will possess all ideal attributes, we encourage you to apply if you bring many of the following experiences and qualities:

- *Professional & academic credentials:* Demonstrated record of scholarly output and excellence in teaching and research. Qualifications appropriate to hold rank of full professor in the Baker School. Doctoral Degree in Political Science, Public Policy, Public Affairs, Public Administration, Economics, or a related field required.
- *Leadership experience:* Demonstrated success in executing a strategic vision. A record of dynamic partnership with people across schools and departments at all levels to align activities with broader school and institutional goals and interests. Accomplished executive management, including the formulation and implementation of organizational policies, processes, and procedures. An understanding and appreciation for shared governance structures.

*Administrative experience:* Demonstrated success in attracting, retaining, and mentoring faculty. Collegiality and an orientation toward teamwork and partnership. Experience assessing faculty's annual performance as well as review and determination of faculty appointments and research through the promotion and tenure process. A genuine commitment to and track record in supporting faculty.

- *Communication skills:* Superb written, oral, and interpersonal communication. High emotional intelligence and an active listener. An ability to engage individuals and groups internal to the Baker School and externally to the larger campus community to establish key partnerships and collaborations. Diplomatic savviness to manage competing needs and priorities of constituents. A commitment to intellectual diversity in all of its forms.
- *Personal qualities:* Integrity, dependability, and steadiness. The ability to lead all members of a school with fairness, humility, compassion, and trust. Personal and professional drive, persistence, resilience, and optimism. Strong commitment to public policy and public affairs education, civic and public service values, and research.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-tennessee-knoxville-baker-school-public-policy-and-public-affairs>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Jeff Kessner, Partner  
 Stephen Kalogeras, Associate  
 Jenny Rubin, Senior Search Coordinator  
 Isaacson, Miller

*The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment without regard to, and will not be discriminated against on the basis of, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, or covered veteran status.*

*Inquiries and charges of violation of Title VI (race, color, national origin), Title IX (sex), Section 504 (disability), ADA (disability), ADEA (age), sexual orientation, or veteran status should be directed to the (EEO). Requests for accommodation of a disability should be directed to the ADA Coordinator at the [EEO office](#).*

## APPENDIX

### History of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville is the state's flagship research institution, a campus of choice for outstanding undergraduates, and a premier graduate institution. As a land-grant university, it is committed to excellence in learning, scholarship, and engagement with society.

Founded in Knoxville in 1794 as Blount College, the institution that would become the University of Tennessee, Knoxville began as a struggling college with a small student body and faculty. Named for Tennessee's first governor, William Blount, Blount College operated from a downtown Knoxville building. In 1807, the university became a state institution and was renamed East Tennessee College. In 1820 the university bought 40 acres just west of downtown to establish a campus on what is now known as "The Hill."

The college's fifth president, Joseph Estabrook, led a significant period of growth that began in 1834. The following years saw the addition of faculty, improvements to the curricula, and new dormitories. In 1840, the Tennessee legislature ratified his vision by renaming the college East Tennessee University (ETU). Although the campus was ravaged during the Civil War, its fortunes turned when, in 1867, Congress passed a special act making the State of Tennessee eligible to participate in the Morrill Act of 1862. In January 1869, ETU was designated as Tennessee's recipient of the Land-Grant designation and funds. The law designated the university as a "land-grant" institution, allocating federal land and funds to teach agricultural and mechanical subjects and to train students for military service. Trustees soon approved the establishment of medical departments through the Nashville Medical College and added advanced degree programs and ETU became the University of Tennessee.

In 1887 the university expanded the science and engineering curricula and began to officially admit women students. The state legislature made its first appropriation to the university. In this period, the university also saw the founding of a law school and the start of a teacher training institute. Following more years of growth, the medical and dental colleges moved to Memphis. As UTK grew, the Knoxville campus became part of a statewide system that includes campuses in Martin and Chattanooga, the Medical Campuses headquartered in Memphis, and three specialized institutes: Agriculture, Public Service, and Space.

### The University of Tennessee, Knoxville Today

UTK has continued to respond to Tennessee's changing economic and social needs during the 20th and into the 21st century as it serves the state by educating its citizens, enhancing its culture, and making a difference in people's lives through research and service.



Today, UTK is a thriving institution, the #1 public university in Tennessee, and has achieved the highest research designation from the Carnegie Foundation. It has a student body of over 36,000 students and more than 1,700 full- and part-time instructional staff. UTK offers more than 900 degree-granting undergraduate and graduate programs across [14 colleges and schools](#). Rooted in its vision of a world enriched by ideas, improved through action, and inspired by the Volunteer spirit of service and leadership, UTK is focused on achieving its mission of education, research, and service.

As the flagship land-grant university of Tennessee, UTK is dedicated to amplifying the Volunteer spirit of selfless leadership. A diverse community with shared commitment to discovery, creativity, learning, and engagement, the University of Tennessee, Knoxville aims to:

- Empower learners of all ages and backgrounds to achieve their dreams through accessible and affordable education and state-of-the-art research training opportunities;
- Advance the prosperity, well-being, and vitality of communities across Tennessee and around the world through our research, teaching, service, and engagement;
- Commit to excellence, equity, and inclusion within the university, across the state, and in all our global activities.

The University's 2021 strategic plan, *It Takes a Volunteer*, can be read [here](#).

## Leadership

Donde Plowman has served since 2019 as chancellor of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In that time she has overseen a 19 percent increase in enrollment, even as enrollment has dropped dramatically at many other universities. The University has set new records in student retention, alumni giving, state support, and research expenditures. Before becoming chancellor, Plowman served as dean of the College of Business and then executive vice chancellor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She was previously a department head at UTK. Plowman is a globally recognized organizational scientist whose scholarship includes the topics of leadership, change management, and strategic decision-making.

John Zomchick has served since 2020 as provost of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He most recently served as vice provost for faculty affairs, a position he held for more than five years. He also served as interim provost and senior vice chancellor from August 2016 until April 2018. Before joining the Office of the Provost's staff, he served as executive associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences. A professor of English, Zomchick came to UTK in 1985. He is a scholar of eighteenth-century English literature.

## History of the Baker School

The Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy was established in 2003 with a congressionally funded endowment and a mission to educate and promote research to further the public's knowledge of the United States' system of governance, and to highlight the critical importance of public service.

Senator Howard Baker and a dedicated board and staff were committed to the Center's growth and development. From its humble beginnings in Hoskins Library on the UTK campus, the Center focused on four main areas: public programs, archives, research, and civic education and engagement. In 2005, plans were announced to build a new facility to house the Center to include a museum on government, archives, classrooms, and meeting rooms. Completed in 2008, the new building was celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony that included Vice President Dick Cheney, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen, U.S. Senators Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker, and U.S. Representative John Duncan.

In 2012, the Center revised its mission and added a new focus on policy research in the areas of Energy and Environment, Global Security, and Leadership and Governance, along with academic courses and additional student engagement programs. The Center's research and instructional capacity increased significantly, facilitated by the hiring of jointly-appointed faculty and the establishment of a fellows program that created research capacity and expertise in the Center's focus areas. Senator Baker continued to be engaged with the Baker Center until his death in June 2014.

In 2021, Dr. Marianne Wanamaker, a UTK professor of economics, was selected by a University-wide search committee as executive director of the Center. In early 2022, Chancellor Donde Plowman and Provost John Zomchick commissioned a task force to examine the conversion of the Baker Center into a school of public policy. The full Task Force Report including the group's findings and recommendations can be [read here](#).

Based on the task force's findings that the State of Tennessee was not currently served by a school of public policy, and academic programs in the area of public policy and public affairs would serve the state's workforce needs, the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees approved the transformation of the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy into the Baker School of Public Policy and Public Affairs in February 2023.