



**Search for the Vice Provost for Research and Innovation and Executive Director,  
Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence  
Grand Valley State University  
Allendale, MI**

**THE SEARCH**

Grand Valley State University (GVSU) seeks a collaborative and innovative leader as the next Vice Provost for Research and Innovation (VPRI) and Executive Director of the Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence. GVSU stands at an exciting inflection point, poised to build on a strong foundation of teaching and research excellence. The university is committed to unlocking new opportunities for growth and innovation by expanding its research agenda and cultivating emerging areas of excellence that will define its next chapter of discovery and impact.

GVSU embraces its role as a public university that promotes a culture of active, engaged, and ethical scholarship by supporting innovative faculty and student research coupled with collaborative community and industry partnership. Through its advancement of basic and applied research, creative activity, and a broad span of scholarship, GVSU is well-positioned to contribute to the development and application of knowledge, create a dynamic environment for learning, and contribute to the economic and intellectual progress of the West Michigan region.

Reporting directly to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Vice Provost will lead the charge in advancing GVSU's research enterprise by invigorating the university's scholarly enterprise and inspiring faculty and students to actively engage in sustaining a dynamic teaching-research ecosystem. The VPRI will be a visible presence on campus, working closely with university leadership and supporting units to craft a forward-thinking research strategy that leverages innovative funding sources, strengthens the university's commitment to research-informed teaching, strengthens an ecosystem that identifies research opportunities and supports collaboration, and enhances operational efficiencies in research administration. This leader will uphold GVSU's commitment to research integrity while fostering an environment where scholarship and creative work thrives, propelling the university to new heights in its research endeavors.

The successful candidate will have an earned PhD or terminal degree along with credentials and achievements that merit appointment as a full professor at GVSU. The successful candidate will also have the demonstrated ability to engage and inspire faculty, staff, students, and the GVSU community around a vision for innovation, research, and creative activities. In addition, the successful candidate will have

exceptional interpersonal, verbal, and written communication skills; the ability to manage financial resources in a creative, equitable, and transparent manner; and the ability to lead and manage a talented team of research administration professionals.

Grand Valley State University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. Nominations, inquiries, and applications, including a CV and letter of interest, should be submitted in confidence as indicated at the end of this document.

## **GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY**

Established by the Michigan legislature in 1960, Grand Valley State University began as a small college dedicated to the ideals of a liberal education. The start-up was financed by a cadre of entrepreneurs, notably William Seidman, who believed West Michigan would only thrive with a university devoted to raising the region's educational and cultural engagement. Sixty years later, Grand Valley has exceeded all of its founders' expectations: it has evolved into a comprehensive, selective, public university that provides a wide array of [fully accredited academic programs](#), all the while continuing to place a high value on liberal education, teaching, student success, research, and interdisciplinary collaborations. Grand Valley attracts more than 22,000 students with its high-quality programs, state-of-the-art facilities, and vibrant campus life. The university offers 100 undergraduate and 43 graduate degrees [across eight colleges](#).

Grand Valley enjoys exceptionally [close ties to its community](#) that have led to countless opportunities for external collaborations and resources. Not only are Grand Valley's main campuses located close to Lake Michigan, amidst the natural beauty of West Michigan, but they are also situated in one of the most dynamic economic areas of the state. The university is in the center of a metropolitan area with a population of nearly 1.1 million, supporting a strong industrial base and rich cultural and recreational opportunities.

The university has campuses in Allendale, Grand Rapids, and Holland and centers in Muskegon, Traverse City, and Detroit. Grand Valley's main campus is situated on 1,322 acres, 12 miles west of Grand Rapids in Allendale. The 65-acre Robert C. Pew Campus is located in the heart of Grand Rapids and includes the colleges of engineering, computing, education and community innovation, and business. The 14.5-acre Health Campus anchors the east end of Grand Rapids' "Medical Mile," so named for the concentration of hospitals and medical schools, and houses the colleges of health professions and nursing. The Meijer Campus in Holland is home to GVSU's Police Academy and offers evening, accelerated, hybrid, and online coursework to area students.

## **UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP**

Appointed in 2019 as the university's first female president, [Dr. Philomena V. Mantella](#) has expanded programs at GVSU aimed at non-traditional and underrepresented students. This led to GVSU welcoming its largest and most diverse incoming class ever in the fall of 2023. Dr. Mantella's commitment to growth and innovation is at the core of her work, which is to redefine what higher education is for the public

good. She is focused on education's fitness for the future, equipping graduates with the competencies and mindset to succeed in the dynamic knowledge economy. This includes the creation of a number of unprecedented partnerships with the business community, the development of a national alliance to give underrepresented student voices a say in their education, and the breaking down of barriers to increase access to higher education for all adult learners.

Before joining GVSU, Dr. Mantella worked at public and private institutions in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Michigan. She earned a PhD in college and university administration from Michigan State University and master's and bachelor's degrees from Syracuse University.

[Dr. Jennifer Drake](#) is the Acting Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and formerly served as the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Dr. Drake received her PhD in English from the State University of New York at Binghamton. She earned the rank of Professor in the English Department at the University of Indianapolis and has served in a wide range of posts, including at the University of Indianapolis as the Founding Director of the Woodrow Wilson Indiana Teaching Fellowship Program and Dean of the Shaheen College of Arts and Sciences. Most recently, she served as Provost and Vice-President for Student & Academic Life at The Evergreen State College (2017-2020).

In her work, Dr. Drake has prioritized enhancing student engagement and success, creating and sustaining strong academic programs, supporting faculty and staff professional development, promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, collaborating with community partners, and ensuring accountability to stakeholders.

### **THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (OVPR&I)**

The Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Innovation (OVPR&I) is the hub for advancing GVSU's research, scholarly, and creative activities, supporting the institution's faculty, staff, and students. The OVPR&I includes the [Center for Scholarly and Creative Excellence \(CSCE\)](#), which houses the [Office of Research Compliance and Integrity \(ORCI\)](#), the [Office of Sponsored Programs \(OSP\)](#), and the [Technology Commercialization Office \(TCO\)](#). Together, these units support GVSU's research infrastructure to promote ethical, innovative, and impactful scholarship across the university.

The CSCE offers several internal funding opportunities for faculty, including the [Catalyst Grant for Research and Creativity](#) and the [Collaborative Research and Creative Activity Initiative](#). These initiatives, coupled with dissemination and proposal support, exist to promote a culture of active, engaged, and ethical scholarship. In FY24, the CSCE provided over \$258,000 in awards to 839 faculty, reinforcing GVSU's commitment to supporting groundbreaking research and creative endeavors. The VPRI, as executive director of the CSCE, leads a Faculty Research and Development Committee comprised of representatives from all colleges and the University Libraries to help develop policies pertaining to research, conduct, and development.

The OVPR&I also works closely with several committees across campus, including the Institutional Review Board (IRB), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), Lab Safety Program, Radiation Safety Committee, and Undergraduate Research Council (URC), to maintain a safe, ethical, and inclusive research environment that meets the highest standards of integrity and compliance.

Beyond the CSCE, the OVPR&I also partners with a wide array of cross-cutting units and centers across GVSU's campuses to strengthen its research ecosystem. These include the Center for Undergraduate Scholar Engagement and the Graduate School, as well as community-oriented and externally facing units such as the Robert B. Annis Water Resources Institute, the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy, and the Barbara and Stuart Padnos International Center. The OVPR&I supports additional collaborations with GVSU's ten other centers and institutes to foster connections between the university, community partners, and regional stakeholders to maximize the impact of its scholarly and creative activities.

### **THE ROLE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

Reporting directly to the Provost, the Vice Provost for Research and Innovation and Executive Director of the CSCE serves as a champion of and proselytizer for GVSU's research and scholarly activities across the broad GVSU community, overseeing approximately 10 talented faculty and staff across the ORCI, OSP, and TCO units and managing a \$2.8M operating budget. The VPRI provides strategic leadership to advance the university's research enterprise, champions the scholarly and creative efforts of its faculty, staff, and students, and fosters a culture of innovation, research, and academic excellence.

The VPRI oversees all facets of the university's research activities, including securing internal and external funding, ensuring research compliance and integrity, and driving technology commercialization. With a deep appreciation for the transformative impact of applied and translational research, creative inquiry, and innovation, this leader will amplify GVSU's influence on its students, faculty, and external audiences on the regional, national, and international level.

Building on a strong foundation of research and creative excellence, the VPRI will cultivate a forward-thinking strategy that explores emerging opportunities and elevates the university's research agenda while advancing its teacher-scholar education model. As a visionary and inspiring leader, the VPRI will play a critical role in growing research by building on existing strengths, improving the research support infrastructure for increased collaboration and partnerships, and identifying future opportunities for community-engaged research and impact to forge a vibrant teaching-research ecosystem.

### **OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES**

#### **Strengthen the breadth and depth of GVSU's research enterprise across disciplines**

GVSU is recognized both regionally and nationally for its impactful research and innovative scholarly activities, which reflect its mission of learning and discovery. The incoming VPRI will boldly articulate its areas of excellence and serve as a dynamic advocate for these efforts across all disciplines. Collaboration

is critical to success, and the VPRI will partner with the provost, senior leadership team, academic deans, vice provosts, faculty, and staff to nurture a vibrant, inclusive, and collaborative culture of research, scholarly and creative excellence. University leadership is developing an institutional action plan in consultation with faculty to capitalize on GVSU's distinctive strengths and integrate high-impact teaching with faculty research, scholarship, and creative endeavors. The VPRI will play a central role in advancing this initiative by crafting a forward-thinking strategy that balances the university's aspiration to expand sponsored research opportunities and research capacity with its well-established teacher-scholar model of education. To achieve this vision, the VPRI will secure resources that drive innovation and encourage inter- and multi-disciplinary collaborations that engage students and amplify GVSU's strong foundation of faculty expertise and academic excellence. The VPRI will also design and implement new programs, processes, and funding opportunities to inspire and mentor faculty at all career stages—junior, mid-career, and senior—in their pursuit of grants and creative endeavors. The VPRI will be a key convener, leading in efforts to encourage collaborations and the formulation of teams to seek out funding opportunities, enabling brainstorming sessions, developing workshops, and creating platforms for proposal reviews. Through these efforts, the VPRI will position GVSU as a leader in applied and community-focused research while reinforcing its core mission of learning, discovery, and educational impact.

#### **Leverage GVSU's existing operational strengths to enhance its research infrastructure**

Grand Valley's research infrastructure is supported by a dedicated team of faculty and professional staff within the CSCE units who provide vital research support across campus. To help the university achieve its ambitious research goals, the VPRI will assess the current research infrastructure to identify areas for improvement and optimize resources and operations to ensure that CSCE staff are fully supported in their roles to deliver exceptional service to the campus community.

The VPRI will also prioritize enhancing the delivery of research support services by cultivating a proactive, service-oriented culture that minimizes barriers to faculty and student research engagement. This will include bringing greater awareness to existing CSCE programs and initiatives and educating researchers on available resources for funding and grant support. Additionally, the VPRI will advocate for additional staffing and resources to expand capacity in areas such as sponsored program administration and research compliance, which require heavy reporting and monitoring.

Under the VPRI's leadership, the CSCE will evolve into a comprehensive hub for research administration, offering faculty the tools and guidance necessary to successfully navigate the grant proposal lifecycle and ethical conduct of research. The VPRI will also implement structures to better support faculty and students in their scholarly and creative pursuits by raising awareness of funding opportunities and securing additional internal and external resources to sustain long-term research efforts. Through these efforts, GVSU's research infrastructure will be equipped to grow in step with its expanding research ambitions.

### **Deepen community connections for continued collaborative impact**

In addition to producing high-quality graduates who contribute to Michigan's future, GVSU plays a vital role in strengthening the connections between the university and the communities it serves. Units within the CSCE, such as the Technology Commercialization Office (TCO), build and sustain partnerships that empower use-inspired research and drive economic growth. GVSU's Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI) integrates research and outreach to protect Michigan's vital water resources. The Muskegon Innovation Hub supports small businesses and entrepreneurs with funding and strategic guidance. The university's Blue Dot initiative further enriches the region's economic and technological ecosystem by fostering collaboration with the business community on emerging technologies and digital literacy.

The next VPRI will be essential in expanding these community-focused, research-driven initiatives and creating stronger partnerships between GVSU and regional stakeholders to address pressing challenges and generate meaningful societal benefits. By cultivating relationships with local industries, organizations, and government agencies, the VPRI will ensure that GVSU remains a key partner in the region's economic and social development while cultivating a comprehensive university intellectual property portfolio. This focus on community engagement will reinforce the university's role as a trusted resource and catalyst for innovation, helping West Michigan thrive while aligning GVSU's mission with the needs and aspirations of the communities it serves. Through this approach, GVSU will maintain its applied and community-driven research while fostering impactful, long-term collaboration in the state and beyond.

### **Maintain a commitment to research integrity and excellence**

The Office of Research Compliance and Integrity (ORCI) is a cornerstone of GVSU's research and creative enterprise, providing essential support to ensure that all activities adhere to the highest standards of compliance and integrity. As the Institutional Official, the VPRI will be instrumental in promoting and strengthening the ORCI's work across its eight compliance areas, ensuring university programs comply with federal, state, and institutional regulations on health, safety, and responsible research conduct. This will involve close collaboration with key committees such as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to ensure that the university's research practices align with regulatory frameworks while fostering accountability and transparency.

Recognizing the ever-evolving nature of research conduct and compliance, the VPRI will prioritize developing training programs and accessible resources to educate faculty, staff, and students on the ethical conduct of research. By creating a robust framework for training and serving as a compliance knowledge base, the VPRI will help ensure that research and scholarly activities across the university reflect a shared understanding of best practices and regulatory standards.

In partnership with ORCI staff, the VPRI will actively promote the highest standards of safety and integrity, ensuring that research remains fully compliant with federal, state, local, and university policies while adapting to the changing needs of researchers, regulatory bodies, and funding agencies. A key priority will

be demystifying the work of ORCI, equipping researchers with the tools and support necessary to engage in sound, responsible research practices. The VPRI will ensure that researchers uphold the university's commitment to research excellence by championing a culture of ethical scholarship.

### **Enhance University-wide communication of research and resources to extend impact and increase visibility**

GVSU's research enterprise has made notable progress in advancing its scholarly activities, driving innovation, and fostering meaningful community engagement. Yet, opportunities remain to expand this influence on a broader scale. Achieving these goals will require strengthening the university's research culture through a clear and consistent outreach strategy that effectively communicates its efforts to internal and external stakeholders. As the leader and public ambassador of GVSU's research enterprise, the VPRI will be a visible and engaged advocate, promoting the critical role of the CSCE and its units in advancing research, scholarship, and creative activities.

The VPRI will collaborate with university leadership and campus partners across departments and colleges to develop a strategic communication plan that shares GVSU's research story, increases awareness of available resources, and fosters a culture of inclusion and accessibility for faculty and students. By providing proactive and transparent communication, the VPRI will ensure that faculty across all disciplines and career stages receive comprehensive support throughout the research lifecycle—from identifying funding opportunities and managing grants to reporting, monitoring, and disseminating findings. These efforts will help stakeholders across the GVSU community and beyond fully recognize the value of research as a function of GVSU's mission. They will also demonstrate how the university's teacher-scholar model aligns with its distinctive identity within the state and delivers meaningful contributions to the broader community.

### **Uphold the tenets of GVSU's teacher-scholar model**

Grand Valley employs the Boyer model of teaching and scholarship in harmony with each other, allowing faculty to integrate their research and creative activities into their classrooms and coursework, all while providing students with unique, first-hand opportunities for engagement. The model flourishes when faculty are provided the time and resources to effectively balance their teaching and scholarly activities, allowing each to inform and enhance the other. This framework also supports the success of research, experiential learning, and mentoring opportunities available to students. By investing in research, GVSU aims to expand the capacity for faculty and students to engage in impactful scholarship and creative endeavors collaboratively. Understanding the intrinsic connection between research and teaching, the VPRI will work closely with faculty and units like the Graduate School and the Office of Undergraduate



Research and Scholarship (OURS) to advance experiential learning and student mentoring opportunities, reinforcing the foundational teacher-scholar framework across all disciplines.

### **QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS & EXPERIENCE**

The successful candidate will bring many of the following qualifications, skills, and experience:

- Earned PhD or terminal degree with a strong record of teaching and research or scholarly activity that merits appointment as a Full Professor at GVSU.
- Proven record of research leadership and administration and managing teams of research administration professionals.
- Extensive experience working collegially and collaboratively with faculty, staff, and administrators at all university levels.
- Thorough understanding of the importance of compliance with regulatory laws, policies, and procedures related to the research enterprise and a commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards of research.
- Ability to engage and inspire faculty, staff, students, the GVSU community, and external stakeholders around a vision for the research enterprise.
- Passion for faculty mentorship and supporting graduate and undergraduate student research.
- Experience working with community partners and external stakeholders.
- Exceptional interpersonal skills; verbal and written communication skills; and the ability to effectively lead and work collaboratively with diverse internal and external constituencies.
- Commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion through actionable leadership and initiatives.
- Proficiency in exercising excellent judgment and equitable decision making in a complex, fast-paced environment.
- Astute budgeting and financial acumen with evidence of fiscal leadership in setting budgets and priorities.

### **TO APPLY**

Grand Valley State University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in its identification and review of candidates. All inquiries, nominations, and applications may be sent in confidence to:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/gvsu/vice-provost-research-innovation>



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*Grand Valley State University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and actively works to enhance its diversity.*