



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Search for the Executive Vice President and Provost  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

## THE SEARCH

The University of Minnesota (the University or UMN) - one of the most prestigious comprehensive, public land-grant research universities in the nation - seeks a bold, creative, collaborative, and dynamic strategic leader to serve as its next Executive Vice President and Provost (Provost). The Provost will join the University at an exciting moment in time and will help shape its next chapter. Under the leadership of UMN's recently appointed new president, Dr. Rebecca Cunningham, strategic planning efforts are underway, and the University is poised to deepen its commitment to research, teaching, and service, open access to opportunity, and innovation to advance its land-grant mission and further expand its impact nationally and internationally. The next Provost will advance the University's strategic direction and provide academic leadership for faculty, students, and staff as UMN enters its next era.

The University's impact in national and international spheres can be measured by its [\\$1.35 billion in research funding](#). The National Science Foundation ranks the University 12th among U.S. public research universities, and *US News and World Report* UMN ranks Minnesota 23rd in Top Public Schools nationally. [Times Higher Ed Sustainability Impact Ranking](#) places UMN fifth nationally and in the top 10 percent globally. UMN was also ranked first among U.S. public universities in the Times Higher Education's [global interdisciplinary Science Ranking \(ISR\)](#). Similarly, the University's service to the state is measured across multiple areas: its five campuses serve 68,000 undergraduate and graduate students; its over 600,000 [alumni](#) (62 percent of whom live in Minnesota) contribute to its economy; its [healthcare enterprise](#) serves over 1.3 million patients annually in hospitals and clinics across the state; and its [extension](#) programs provide solutions, practical education, and training for all Minnesotans. UMN is home to 4,926 faculty and over 23,000 non-academic staff. UMN faculty are world-recognized for their research, teaching, clinical, and engagement accomplishments. UMN currently boasts 26 Nobel Prize recipients and recipients of prestigious awards such as the Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellowships, and many other highly prestigious awards & honors and members of the National Academies.

Reporting directly to the President, the Provost serves as UMN's chief academic officer across the system with a focus on the Twin Cities campus. The Provost is responsible for the approval of faculty promotion and tenure as well as academic programs, operations, planning, and continued support and growth of the

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system-wide research enterprise. The Provost is a close partner of the President and works as part of the [executive leadership team](#). They will guide the implementation of the systemwide strategic plan on the Twin Cities campus, both Minneapolis and St. Paul, to advance the academic and research trajectories through shared faculty governance and leverage a highly collaborative and inclusive culture to promote the recruitment and retention of faculty, students, and staff. The Provost will need to support the institutional systems and infrastructure that will further faculty excellence and interdisciplinary research as well as strengthen key areas of investment in enrollment and student success. The next Provost will possess the ambition and creativity to drive towards aspirational goals. They will possess nuanced communication skills and vision to lead in an increasingly complex landscape. They will evince a collective process that engages students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors to maximize the University's many assets to further shape the future of UMN and achieve even higher levels of distinction and success.

The successful candidate will also further harness, execute, and develop interdisciplinary excellence; innovate and implement strategic enrollment best practices; continue to deliver exceptional programs for all UMN students; be an energetic champion of the University's values; and ensure efficient management of the vast academic enterprise encompassing the system campuses.

The University of Minnesota has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist in this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed in confidence to the University or search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The University of Minnesota is a comprehensive, land-grant public research university ranked among the world's most respected institutions of higher learning. The University has scholars of national and international reputation and a strong tradition of education and public engagement. With 68,000 students enrolled across five campuses located throughout Minnesota—the Twin Cities, Duluth, Morris, Crookston, and Rochester—the University advances discovery and innovation to improve society for all. The University is a proud member of the AAU and has the special distinction of being both a globally engaged R1 research institution and Minnesota's land-grant university, creating a unique capacity and responsibility to improve the lives of Minnesotans and drive the state forward.

The University of Minnesota is situated and built within the homelands of the Dakota, the Ojibwe, and scores of other Indigenous peoples. It is important to acknowledge the peoples on whose land we live, learn, and work as we actively seek to improve and strengthen relations with the 11 sovereign tribal nations of Minnesota. The University also acknowledges that words are not enough. The University provides support, resources, and programs that increase access to all aspects of higher education for American Indian students, staff, faculty, and community members.

The University's [five distinct campuses](#) serve all regions of the state. Each campus has [unique strengths](#), enriched by its surrounding communities. The Chancellors of the greater Minnesota campuses report

directly to the President and work in close collaboration with the Provost to achieve systemwide goals. UMN staff and faculty focus on meeting the needs of each student, supporting them through world-class programming, academics, and hands-on experiences. The University's mission and work extends beyond the campuses, as community engagement is a vital part of the University of Minnesota's mission. From community-partnered research and outreach centers and extension offices to community-based field projects, health clinics, and environmental and agricultural projects, UMN faculty, students, and staff are working hand-in-hand with communities throughout Minnesota and the globe.

The University continues to build on its legacy of excellence in education, research, and service. The Provost's primary focus will be the Twin Cities campus (St. Paul and Minneapolis), but will work in collaboration across the five-campus system to broaden and deepen this legacy. Whether the Duluth campus's recent designation as an Age-Friendly University, Crookston's recognition as a top performer in the latest sustainable campus index, Morris' unwavering commitment to undergraduate education as reflected in their recognition as a College of Distinction, or leading the workforce preparedness of healthcare workers at Minnesota and beyond at Rochester, the Provost will work with the System Chancellors to further embody UMN's singular vision of excellence and a unified drive to serve.

## People and Programs

Nearly 55,000 students are enrolled on the flagship [Twin Cities](#) campus in the heart of Minneapolis-St. Paul, which is the 16th largest metropolitan area in the country. A major research university of exceptional breadth and depth with expansive interdisciplinary opportunities, the Twin Cities campus advances education, research, and outreach across 17 [schools and colleges](#): Biological Sciences; Continuing and Professional Studies; Dentistry; Design; Education and Human Development; Extension; Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Sciences; Law: Liberal Arts; Management; Medicine: Nursing; Pharmacy; Public Affairs; Public Health; Science and Engineering; Veterinary Medicine. The University of Minnesota is one of the few land-grant leading research universities positioned in a vibrant metropolitan city with over 25 Fortune 500 companies. The University of Minnesota has consistently advanced the land-grant mission with exceptional vigor—distinguished by a comprehensive commitment to integrating public engagement deeply into teaching and learning, research, and discovery.

At the heart of the University are its essential staff members and its more than 4,000 faculty members. Faculty are considered some of the best in their respective fields. UMN currently boasts 26 Nobel Prize-winning faculty, recipients of prestigious awards such as Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellowships, and many National Academies and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences members. The staff, over 14,000 strong, are known for their dedication to the institution and its community.

Students come to the University of Minnesota from all 50 states and 148 countries. The Twin Cities Campus enrolls more than 30,000 undergraduates and 14,000 graduate and professional students across more than 150 undergraduate majors and more than 550 graduate and professional programs. The University of Minnesota has more than 600,000 living alumni worldwide.

## Research & Innovation

The University averages over \$1.35 billion in research expenditures annually, ranking 12th nationally among public universities in the United States. The University's technology transfer work has been recognized for its excellence in several national and global rankings, including: *World's Most Innovative Universities* (Reuters) where UMN ranked 22nd globally and 2nd among Big Ten public institutions; and *Universities Granted U.S. Utility Patents* (National Academy of Inventors) where UMN ranked 16th in the world and 4th among Big Ten public institutions.

## Health Sciences

The University trains over 70 percent of Minnesota's health professionals, and health sciences and medical research accounts for over \$570 million in externally funded research annually. [University of Minnesota Health Sciences](#) unites education and research across six schools and [patient care](#) across the state. The deans of the six health science schools and health science faculty report through the Provost, while responsibility for clinical services and clinical training sites falls under the new Executive Vice President for Health Affairs. The University is in the midst of renegotiating its relationship with its partner health system, which will offer additional opportunities for health science deans to expand health sciences education across the state.

## Division I Athletics

The Twin Cities campus is home to Golden Gopher Athletics, a founding member of the Big Ten, where more than 600 Division I student-athletes compete on 21 (9 men's, 12 women's) teams. Student-athletes not only compete at the highest level in their sports, but they also maintain an average 3.46 GPA, one of the highest among public institutions. The University's Intercollegiate Athletics department generates a high level of public interest and media coverage. Golden Gopher student-athletes are featured on television, radio, websites, and in magazines and newspapers nationwide.

## A Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

The University strongly embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion as foundational values and has made engagement and diversity central to strategic planning across the system. Students on the Twin Cities campus include 29 percent Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students and 9.5 percent international students (from over 140 countries), and roughly one in four students of all undergraduates are first-generation students. The University is a nationally recognized leader for students learning abroad and offers programs in more than 70 countries. The Twin Cities campus has been recognized nationally for excellence in diversity and global learning, research, and engagement in the last five years.

The Twin Cities campus is located in a diverse and economically vibrant region at the heart of an increasingly global Midwest. Minnesota has 11 federally recognized tribal nations, the largest urban American Indian population in the country, a dynamic Black community, and significant African, Latinx,

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and Asian American populations. The links between Minnesota communities and communities worldwide are notable: the Twin Cities has the largest number of people of Somali descent outside of Somalia and the nation's largest urban Hmong American population.

### **Budget and Economic Impact**

The University has an annual operating budget of \$4.5 billion structured in an RCM budget model. The University generates an estimated economic impact of \$9 billion for the Minnesota economy. UMN is the state's seventh-largest employer and encompasses regional [extension](#) offices, research and outreach centers, clinics, labs, professional education outreach, and K–12 educational engagement programs throughout the state, as well as world-class performing arts facilities, museums, and galleries. *Forbes* has also ranked the University as one of the country's 20 best educational employers.

### **University Leadership**

#### **President Rebecca Cunningham**

Following a national search, the University of Minnesota Board of Regents selected [Dr. Rebecca Cunningham](#) as the 18th President of the University of Minnesota System, effective July 1, 2024.

Dr. Rebecca Cunningham most recently served as the Vice President for Research and Innovation at the University of Michigan, where she was responsible for fostering excellence and upholding the University's public mission in research, scholarship, and creative practice across three campuses and a health system. During her leadership tenure, the University expanded its research volume to a record \$1.86 billion annually as Dr. Cunningham led the design and implementation of the first comprehensive review of the University of Michigan research, scholarship, and creative practice enterprise.

A faculty member in the University of Michigan Schools of Public Health and Medicine since 1999, Dr. Cunningham previously served as the Associate Vice President for Research-Health Sciences, where she oversaw research faculty affairs and partnered with colleagues across disciplines to facilitate and energize the University's research agenda. As a researcher, Dr. Cunningham has earned continuous federal research funding for more than 25 years as a principal investigator and is a National Academy of Medicine member.

Dr. Cunningham holds a bachelor's degree from Fairfield University and a medical doctorate from Jefferson Medical College. She completed her residency in emergency medicine at the University of Michigan Health System in Ann Arbor and a postdoctoral research fellowship with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

#### **Board of Regents**

Established in 1851 at the founding of the University of Minnesota, the [Board of Regents](#) is the University's governing board. Regents articulate a vision for the University and work to ensure the University of

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Minnesota fulfills its mission of education, research, and outreach for the benefit of the people of Minnesota, the nation, and the world. There are 12 Regents who each serve six-year terms and are elected by the Minnesota legislature. There is one Regent from each of the state's eight congressional districts as well as four additional Regents from the state at large.

### **Minneapolis and St. Paul**

The University's flagship Twin Cities campus is in the heart of a dynamic metro area that is a global economic leader, a hub for education and culture, and renowned for its abundant cultural and natural resources. The Minneapolis-St. Paul metro is home to the 4th-largest concentration of Fortune 500 companies in the country as well as thriving entrepreneurial and small-business sectors. Ranked as one of the country's leading "creative economy" communities, the Twin Cities is renowned for its arts and nonprofit sectors, as well as its many lakes and parks and wealth of recreational and entertainment opportunities. Spanning locations in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, the Twin Cities Campus is part of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. It is a place that offers strong work-life balance, low cost of living compared to similarly sized metro areas, and high rates of health coverage – in short, a place that ranks highly in quality of life surveys.

## **ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST**

The Provost serves as the chief academic officer of UMN and will work in close partnership with the President, serving as the principal senior executive for day-to-day campus academic operations. The Provost is the lead academic administrator with leadership and oversight of the deans of UMN's 17 colleges and schools, libraries, and its over 300 research centers, and works across the institution to develop and implement components of the strategic plan and manage the allocation of the academic budget. The Provost leads a division of service-oriented departments, including: undergraduate studies; graduate school; libraries; enrollment management; international programs; and numerous other departments serving the academic and student success mission.

The Provost will convene vice provosts, deans, other senior administrators, and faculty leadership bodies as appropriate to address issues that cut across divisional lines, play a key role in the allocation of campus resources, and other strategic campus initiatives in close collaboration with the President and other senior leaders. A large and talented leadership team will assist the Provost in carrying out these responsibilities, including vice provosts, deans, directors, and an executive support staff.

UMN seeks a Provost with experience and commitment to academic excellence who can work with the president, the senior leadership team, the deans, faculty, and staff to further elevate the University's academic distinction and recognition as a premier public land-grant research institution.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

### *Lead towards an ambitious future*

The Provost is a central figure in driving significant progress toward institutional academic, enrollment, and research goals. With the University engaged in a strategic planning process, it looks forward to an ambitious next chapter. The Provost will be excited about and comfortable in a state of change. They will take an enterprising view of the institution's future potential, must embrace and champion this pursuit of excellence, and bring urgency and an unwavering commitment to ensuring the highest academic and organizational standards. The Provost will be a highly visible academic leader with an authentic and collective engagement style who is firmly committed to shared governance, academic freedom, and respectful dialogue. The Provost leads interactions with key faculty committees and must demonstrate deep intellectual curiosity and an appreciation for contributions across a wide array of fields. The Provost will seek to grow the earned distinction of the University. They will identify strengths, areas for improvement, prioritize where investments will raise overall institutional standing, and develop strategies for accelerating advancement in key areas. Such collective work from the Provost will ensure that the University reaches its full potential for impact.

### *Foster interdisciplinary excellence*

The breadth and depth of the University offers tremendous opportunity for impact. The Provost must lead the effort to harness the collective power of such a diverse institution. Recognizing that colleges and programs thrive by adapting to serve their distinctive constituents and are themselves nimble and entrepreneurial, the Provost plays a significant role as a convener of the deans. They will nurture shared aspirations, culture, strategy, and priorities and enhance opportunities for new and creative cross-college programming and research. The Provost will encourage collaboration in a highly decentralized environment with an RCM budget model.

### *Advance research*

The University of Minnesota is committed to its mission as a public research university. In collaboration with the deans and faculty, the Provost will nurture scholarly activities, convene leaders in signature research areas, and develop initiatives that increase the impact and visibility of the University's scholarly and creative endeavors. Working closely with the Vice President for Research and Innovation, the Provost should be proactive in identifying large-scale opportunities in the federal funding or philanthropic landscapes that can amplify the work of the faculty. In relevant fields, the Provost will continue to accelerate the translation of research and innovation into practice through partnerships with industry, external organizations, and alumni to ensure faculty innovation reaches its fullest potential to impact the state of Minnesota and beyond.

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***Lead, develop, and support world-class faculty and staff***

The Provost must promote equitable systems, structures, and standards of excellence that attract, support, and retain talented faculty and staff across all schools, programs, and campuses. The Provost will work with the deans, the Office of Human Resources, and Faculty Affairs to support faculty hiring, retention, and promotion at the tenure-track, tenured, and contract faculty levels, and to ensure the necessary resources are available to support this goal. The Provost must cultivate an environment that places a premium on the well-being and continuous professional growth of faculty and staff. They will ensure that work processes and communication channels to faculty across the University are effective.

***Champion and actualize the institutional values of inclusion and a welcoming campus community to all***

The Provost will be a vocal and energetic champion of the University's values supporting inclusive excellence and efforts that continue to expand access and broad representation while also ensuring that structures and programs are in place to help all community members thrive. The Provost will support cross-university initiatives as well as efforts in each of the schools and colleges to advance programs that support a diverse community flourishing.

***Support effective enrollment management and ensure coordinated and impactful student success efforts***

The Provost will ensure that systems and processes of enrollment are effective and allow for access resonant with the public mission of the institution. While keeping that value paramount, they will ensure that enrollment management strategy effectively distinguishes the value and brand of the flagship Twin Cities campus within a competitive marketplace, ensuring the enrollment of a deep and diverse student body. Students are drawn to Minnesota's innovative programs and the perspective that is both local and global. Minnesota must continue to deliver exceptional programs at the undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and professional levels to continue to attract excellent students. The Provost must foster a vibrant, supportive intellectual community for students, ensuring quality and supporting student success consistently across colleges and programs. The Provost will work closely with leaders in Student Life to ensure alignment between the University's academic priorities and the holistic development of students. This includes fostering a strong partnership that bridges academic success with student well-being, ensuring that both areas support the University's broader mission. The Provost will be a key partner in efforts to increase the efficacy of and access to career preparation across the colleges of the flagship Twin Cities campus.

***Manage a robust academic enterprise***

The University of Minnesota is a vast and complex institution, and the Provost's Office plays a critical role across a multitude of mission-critical areas. With a prevailing focus on the University's public mission and commitment to academic excellence, the Provost must ensure that the office is organized optimally to

ensure efficient management of the enterprise. The Provost will create systems and processes to support the needs of a modern institution. They will partner with the deans to ensure clarity around strategic goals and metrics for their respective units. They will be the leader of a critically important high-performing team and must have an ability to empower and delegate to this team as appropriate for a portfolio of this magnitude.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one candidate will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

- An earned doctorate or equivalent terminal degree with an outstanding record in research and education commensurate with the appointment of full professor with tenure at the University of Minnesota.
- A scholar and person of impeccable academic judgment with an uncompromising commitment to, and broad appreciation of, academic excellence in recruiting, developing, evaluating, and retaining faculty; assessing academic programs; and supporting world-class teaching and research.
- An experienced, ambitious, collaborative, and entrepreneurial academic administrator with a track record of success in change management and data-informed decision-making at a complex institution with very high research activity.
- An astute understanding of university finances and the relationships among academic priorities, budgeting, and the ability to marshal relevant information and data to inform decision-making.
- An enthusiastic and sincere facilitator who is dedicated to the University of Minnesota and to partnering with the President and senior leadership team, shared governance, deans, faculty, vice provosts, staff, chancellors, vice chancellors, and student leaders to realize the University's strategic vision and land-grant mission.
- A superb communicator and enthusiastic advocate for the University's academic mission, for its faculty, staff, and students, and for their commitment to excellence, with a passion for education, research, and broad humanistic values.
- A global and interdisciplinary thinker able to harness and facilitate the potential for collaborative activities across school, campus, and disciplinary boundaries.
- A collegial, accessible, transparent, and consultative academic leader with absolute integrity and ethics and unwavering commitment to deepening the richness and diversity that characterize the Minnesota community and leading the University from excellence to eminence.
- Confidence, experience, and demonstrated excellence in academic and administrative leadership at the level of dean, Provost, and/or other senior administrative positions of a major university or equivalent organization, with a track record of success in a large, complex research environment.

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## COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The Executive Vice President and Provost is a 100-percent time, 12-month, professional and administrative (P&A) appointment based in Minneapolis. Salary is commensurate with education and experience, with an anticipated salary range of \$610,000-\$750,000

The University of Minnesota offers excellent benefits. Please visit the [Office of Human Resources](#) website for more information regarding benefit eligibility.

## 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: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-minnesota/provost>.

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Rebecca Kennedy, Partner (she/her)  
Dan Rodas, Partner (he/him)  
Andy Marshall, Managing Associate  
Steph Simon, Senior Associate  
Maya Bennett, Senior Search Coordinator  
[Isaacson, Miller](#)

*The University of Minnesota shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, familial status, disability, public assistance status, membership or activity in a local commission created for the purpose of dealing with discrimination, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.*