



Assistant Vice President for Strategy & Engagement  
Tulane University  
Division of Student Affairs  
New Orleans, Louisiana

## THE SEARCH

Tulane University seeks a collaborative, bridge-building strategist to serve as the institution's Assistant Vice President for Strategy and Engagement (AVP SE) within the Division of Student Affairs. The AVP SE will serve as a guiding voice for programs, resources, and strategies to ensure each Tulane student experiences a supportive, healthy, and academically excellent environment. The AVP SE will join Tulane at a time of ongoing and exciting upward momentum. This is an extraordinary opportunity to join a highly functioning division comprised of a remarkably talented student affairs team with a legacy of unwavering support and commitment to students.

Tulane University offers degrees across an attractive array of ten schools and colleges with approximately 8,500 undergraduate and 5,900 graduate and professional students. The university is enriched by its location and relationship with the city of New Orleans, which provides incredible opportunities for fostering engagement and community. Under the mission and vision of the [Division of Student Affairs Strategic Plan](#), the AVP SE will have the opportunity to champion and elevate the division's core values which include collaboration, integrity, empathy, well-being, and innovation.

Reporting to the Vice President of Student Affairs, the AVP SE will strategically partner across key campus leaders and divisions, working closely with university-wide strategic priorities to ensure alignment, collaboration and support for the campus community. This individual will directly supervise [The Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life](#), which includes staff, programs, services, and spaces that ensures all students are supported and can thrive at Tulane. The AVP SE will continue to uphold and enhance the legacy of the Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life, and curate a vision for the Center's future; provide collaborative and transparent leadership that builds student engagement and promotes consistent support for all students. They will also partner with Student Affairs leadership and institutional colleagues to implement a strategic vision that enhances the student experience and creates a sense of belonging for all students. The AVP SE serves as a present and engaged student advocate and champion; and support the development of a dedicated team of professionals. The new AVP SE will be a

passionate and visionary leader with a proven track record of cultivating student engagement and introducing innovative spaces and programs that continue to create an environment that reflects the uniqueness of Tulane's students and enables every student to thrive within the shared Tulane community. The AVP SE will serve as the liaison to the office of Academic Excellence and Opportunity and work closely with the leadership from the Provost's Office to create synergy with university wide efforts to support all students.

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

## ABOUT TULANE UNIVERSITY

Tulane University traces its origins to 1834 and today it is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities with a deep commitment to the highest quality research and teaching. The University has an operating budget of just over \$1 billion and an endowment of \$2 billion with over 1,200 full-time faculty members and a staff of approximately 2,900. Tulane attracts an outstanding student body that is both intellectually curious and driven by community engagement. The University's 8:1 undergraduate student-faculty ratio allows Tulane undergraduates to receive the personalized attention of a smaller liberal arts college along with the resources of a major research institution. Additionally, Tulane offers over 200 graduate degree programs across nine schools. In 2006, Tulane became the first major research institution to require public service as a graduation requirement for undergraduates, which led to the Carnegie Foundation recognizing Tulane with its Community Engagement Classification. Tulane is also the most national university in the country, with its undergraduates traveling further to attend college, on average, than those of any other university. As such, it plays a valuable role in recruiting talent to New Orleans, with about 20% of all Tulane graduates stay in Louisiana after graduation. Tulane University continues its impressive ties with the New Orleans community and was recently named "the most engaged in the community" by the Princeton Review.

Student success is on an upward trajectory with a 93% retention rate and 87% graduate six-year graduate rate. The newest class of Tulane students hails from 49 states and territories, 36 countries, with 28% identifying as people of color, 63% female, and a record-setting 14% are first-generation college students.

Student life is vibrant at Tulane. Known as the Green Wave, Tulane athletes compete in 16 sports in the American Athletic Conference. There are more than 300 student organizations on campus. The extensive list of organizations includes the Tulane Undergraduate Assembly, which advocates for the entire undergraduate student body and works closely with Student Affairs. Similarly, the Graduate and Professional Student Association is the unifying body of Tulane's graduate and professional divisions and is a vital partner to the Division. Another aspect of Tulane student life includes the Greek-letter organization community, comprised of 25 fraternities and sororities and over 3,100 members. The fraternity and sorority community is remarkably engaged with the university and New Orleans.

With a three-year live-on requirement and 14 communities, including graduate student housing, over 4,500 residents from 49 states call Tulane's campus home. The newly opened River and Lake Residence Halls, which are part of the ongoing Village project, are part of the largest capital investment in Tulane's history that will transform student opportunities on the uptown campus. The next phase of the Village, with the addition of two more residence halls, is currently under construction.

Another notable community space is the Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life and The Commons, which serves as a hub for campus life that houses meeting space, campus programming, dining options, the bookstore, student involvement opportunities, and many other student resources. Whether it's a newly launched Student Accessibility peer mentoring program, serving over 26,000 in-patient visits in Campus Health & Wellness, offering more than 70 group exercise classes weekly through Campus Recreation, or over 2,250 meals served in the Center for Intercultural Life weekly "Wednesdays with the O" series, there are abundant opportunities for engagement, support, and community at Tulane.

## ABOUT THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Tulane University's Division of Student Affairs serves undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The Division's mission is to cultivate support, connection, and growth throughout the student experience. Dedicated to fostering a community where everyone thrives, Student Affairs provides excellence and innovation in housing, health, support, and counsel as well as recreation, venues for understanding, and opportunities for resolution. Student affairs steadfastly supports students. Whether through educational opportunities and programs, building a healthier campus, or during times of crisis, the division embodies Tulane's motto "non sibi, sed suis" or "not for oneself, but for one's own."

The Division supports the academic mission of the University, develops students at the individual and community level, and ensures each Tulane student's experiences a supportive, healthy, and academically excellent environment. The work of the Division is built upon the values of personal development, care and thriving, serving all students, and values-driven resource management and stewardship.

Student Affairs is comprised of the following departments: Campus Health & Wellness, Campus Recreation, Case Management & Victim Support Services, the Counseling Center, Family Programs, Fraternity & Sorority Programs, , the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility, Housing & Residence Life, the Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life, , Religious Life, Student Conduct, Student Resources & Support Services, and the Well for Health Promotion.

The Division of Student Affairs is led by Dr. Sarah Cunningham, who joined Tulane in August 2024. Prior to moving to New Orleans, she served as the Vice President of Student Development at Saint Louis University. In this role Sarah oversaw twelve units including the University's Department of Public Safety. Sarah's prior roles include Assistant Vice Provost for Student Life Strategy and Policy at Johns Hopkins University, and Executive Director for Student Leadership, Involvement and Student Life Centers and Assistant Dean of Students at the University of Chicago. Prior to UChicago, she also worked at the

University of Florida, George Mason University, and at Slippery Rock University. Sarah has contributed to the field of student affairs for over twenty years.

### **The Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life**

The Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and equitable campus environment. The center's mission is to support the retention and success of underrepresented students by centering their experiences and voices. It actively promotes accountability and cultural transformation, ensuring that Tulane becomes a place where all students can thrive. The center was named in 2019 after [Carolyn Barber-Pierre](#), a long-time Tulane University employee and trailblazer known for her steadfast support of students. The Trailblazers program is an ongoing initiative established by Tulane President Michael Fitts that celebrates the contributions of people from an array of backgrounds who have made a substantial and lasting impact at Tulane. Carolyn continues her legacy at Tulane and was recently named as a Senior Advisor in the Office of the Provost.

Located in the Richardson Building on Tulane's uptown campus, the center serves as a safe haven for students to be seen, heard, and supported. The Center serves all students, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. It provides various resources and programs that advocate for student concerns and needs, helping them navigate challenges they may face. The center also engages the entire campus community in fostering a culture of inclusion and equity. The center and its departments provide programming, community, and mentoring for students, as well as consulting with academic and administrative departments committed to supporting a more inclusive and supportive Tulane. Through these efforts, the Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life plays a crucial role in enriching the student experience at Tulane University.

## **ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR STRATEGY & ENGAGEMENT**

The Assistant Vice President, Strategy and Engagement is a member of the senior leadership team for the Division of Student Affairs. This position provides the critical leadership, vision, and direction to create an affirming environment for all Tulane students. Tulane recognizes that every student brings an important perspective, lived experience, and cultural background to the community and the Division's commitment is to cultivate a university where they each have access to resources and support systems that cater to their needs so they can reach their full potential.

The AVP SE role is a newly imagined iteration of the former Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs & Director of the CBP-CIL. Guiding the evolution of the role is the firm commitment to elevating the work of the CPB-CIL, led by the AVP SE, in creating spaces and experiences of belonging and support, and enhancing the campus climate for students. The AVP SE also serves as a member of the senior leadership team crisis response initiatives.

Reporting to the Vice President of Student Affairs, the AVP SE is a key liaison to numerous campus partners and will work closely with university wide strategic priorities to ensure alignment, collaboration and

support for the campus community. The AVP SE also leads the strategic planning and staff development and engagement for the Division of Student Affairs. The AVP SE will supervise the leadership and services located in the Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life (CBP-CIL). As the AVP SE, this position will further represent these offices when meeting with the university's administration and the Division of Student Affairs' leadership team. The AVP SE will direct the 8 full-time employees of the CBP-CIL and manage the approximately \$850,000 budget. The two Directors for Intercultural Life, the Director of Strategies for Excellence and Opportunity, and the Executive Secretary for Intercultural Life all directly report to the AVP SE.

The AVP SE also has the opportunity to create an organizational structure at the CBP-CIL that honors the multiple and intersectional lived identities of Tulane's student communities. These guiding principles will inform all programs and services within the CBP-CIL, extend across the Division of Student Affairs and into the broader Tulane Community. The AVP SE will work closely with senior leadership within the Provost's Office leading strategic work on academic excellence opportunities for all students as well as other leaders across campus, collaborating on strategic initiatives. The AVP SE ensures the development and implementation of initiatives that foster a welcoming campus environment and promote student success and engagement. They must be an empathetic leader who values and supports all communities of students.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR STRATEGY & ENGAGEMENT

To be successful, the Assistant Vice President for Strategy & Engagement will address the following key opportunities and challenges:

### **Uphold and enhance the legacy of the Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life, and curate a vision for the future.**

The Carolyn Barber-Pierre Center for Intercultural Life has a storied legacy of serving and supporting students and enhancing the campus climate for students from all backgrounds. The Center offers outstanding and successful programs and events and peer mentorship and student leadership opportunities housed within a welcoming space.

Recently, the offices within the CBP-CIL were integrated into one unit and the AVP SE will join at a time where assessing the structure, operations, and programs will be a priority. The AVP SE, their team, affiliated colleagues including faculty, staff, and religious life staff and advisors, will all have significant responsibility in shaping the campus climate and advancing efforts to create a campus and New Orleans community with a strong and sustained sense of belonging. As Tulane University strives to become a world-class model of academic excellence where all students can thrive, the Center's work will be central to this endeavor. The AVP SE will carry on the strengths and traditions that make the CBP-CIL exemplary, and build on this foundation to administer key initiatives, attract students and other community members

to engaged with the Center, and help students feel welcomed, supported, and reflected in the Center's spaces and programs.

**Partner with Student Affairs leadership and institutional colleagues to implement a strategic vision that enhances the student experience and creates a sense of belonging for all students.**

The AVP SE will be an essential partner in the creation and execution of a strategic plan and related priorities focused on the development and support of students. The AVP SE will work to sustain and improve belonging, engagement, and student success within the CBP-CIL and throughout the Division. The AVP SE must preserve what makes Tulane University's Student Affairs successful and unique while also creating a forward-looking vision consistent with current and future leading practices that best suit students and student affairs staff needs. Frequently tasked with managing multiple priorities, they will work closely with their team and divisional colleagues towards implementing the vision for the future of student life at Tulane.

The AVP SE will also join Tulane at a unique and momentous time in student affairs and higher education, both nationally and within the state of Louisiana. The AVP SE must be forward-thinking, strive at times of uncertainty, and successfully manage change. This leader will be called upon to have a keen sense of the best practices, trends, and anticipated opportunities and challenges related to their portfolio. Not only must they be in tune with these matters and their sociopolitical contexts locally and nationally but also work closely with institutional leadership and colleagues to adjust, translate, and operationalize policies and practices accordingly. The AVP SE also plays a vital role in training and supporting staff in these areas.

**Serve as a present and engaged student advocate and champion.**

A proven advocate for students, the AVP SE supports the strengthening of the community, culture, and climate at Tulane. This person is highly engaged and visible on campus and invests time getting to know and support students. The AVP SE must possess a desire, energy, and resilience to know and relate to all Tulane students and advocate on their behalf. This person is a storyteller who can inspire others through their work and is adept at advocating successfully in a university context.

A successful AVP SE will integrate key principles of belonging and student engagement in all aspects of their operations and ensure support for students and staff. The AVP SE will execute efforts that improve the student experience and foster access to programming, spaces, mentoring, and resources. This person must be student-centered and utilize their position and skillset to be a champion for students.

**Build and support the development of a dedicated team of professionals.**

Through supportive leadership, clear purpose, and continual opportunities for education, development, and training, the AVP SE will lead and develop a talented team of professionals. This includes the supervision and development of the CBP-CIL team, as well crafting and executing professional development initiatives for the broader Division of Student Affairs team. The AVP SE will lean on their

colleagues' expertise in their efforts to build a structure of professional development that embeds support and opportunities for growth in the day-to-day work of serving students.

As an experienced supervisor and manager, this individual will bring strong commitment and knowledge of the national landscape of student affairs to the division and to the CBP-CIL. They will translate their knowledge of the landscape in evaluating the current CBP-CIL organizational structure with an eye toward clearly defined responsibilities and outcomes. The AVP SE will also provide direction for their team and ensure practices are aligned with the goals of the CBP-CIL and Division of Student Affairs. They will inspire and motivate staff by fostering a culture of respect, collaborative support, and excellence in student affairs best practices.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Tulane seeks in its Assistant Vice President for Strategy & Engagement an exceptional student-centered leader. The University seeks candidates who bring the following skills and experiences.

- Master's degree and 10 years of directly related work experience and progressive responsibility or bachelor's degree and 13 years of directly related work experience and progressive responsibility. A degree in college student personnel, higher education administration, counseling, or a related field is strongly preferred.
- Demonstrated effective oral, written, and interpersonal communication skills.
- Experience with student affairs operations and programming.
- Demonstrated experience in innovative problem solving and relationship building with an array of constituencies.
- Demonstrated success in supervising student affairs professionals.
- Experience with multi-unit supervision, strong fiscal acumen and ability to develop collaborative partnerships on behalf of student success.
- Experience working in highly collaborative and complex environments.
- Experience working with a broad range of students on issues including advocacy, programming, training, and assessment.
- Experience working in a leading research institution environment.
- Experience in administrative, strategic planning and assessment, and budget management.

## 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/tulane-university/assistant-vice-president-strategy-and-engagement>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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