



Dean of the College of Engineering
Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas

THE SEARCH

Wichita State University (WSU), the premier urban-serving, public research university in Kansas, seeks a visionary, engaged leader and educator to be the next dean of the College of Engineering (COE). Founded in 1895, WSU has a keen focus on student success, powerful industry partnerships, and innovative faculty conducting cutting-edge applied research in state-of-the-art facilities. It is a growth-minded university where collaboration and groundbreaking ideas shape the future, with an entrepreneurial spirit embedded in its foundation.

Since 2010, Wichita State University is one of the fastest-growing research universities in the United States. They intend to continue that arc with increased opportunities for student research and interdisciplinary research projects. Currently designated as a “High Research Activity” institution, WSU is strategically moving towards the “Very High Research Activity” Carnegie classification. Considerably strengthening research awards in the last several years has moved WSU far beyond the threshold of an R1 classification, and the University is now concentrating on increasing the number of PhD graduates.

The dean will continue the College’s remarkable trajectory by providing strategic and growth-minded leadership in collaboration with faculty, staff, students, and other key internal and external stakeholders, including an actively engaged Industry Advisory Board (IAB). Rated the No. 1 engineering school in Kansas by U.S. News and World Report in 2024, the College has a total enrollment of 2,865 students and includes seven academic departments. The University as a whole set a record for total research and development awards in recent years, with a current total of \$411 million in research funding.

The City of Wichita is a manufacturing and aeronautics powerhouse with one of the highest per capita concentration of engineers in the country. A major economic driver, the College enjoys mutually beneficial partnerships with strong regional and national corporate and governmental organizations through numerous WSU initiatives, including the Innovation Campus and the National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR). College of Engineering students participate in paid applied learning and research with

employers such as Airbus, Spirit AeroSystems, Koch Industries, Textron Aviation, Boeing, NASA, SpaceX, NASCAR, and the U.S. Department of Defense.

The dean will be charged with advancing the academic quality and stature of the College. This requires a visionary leader who is committed to interdisciplinary collaboration, ethical leadership, and who is skilled in strategic planning and human and financial resource management. Demonstrated experience cultivating the success of students, staff, and faculty is a priority. The dean will assist with the advancement of WSU as an innovative university by focusing on increasing enrollment and funded research at the undergraduate and graduate levels, paid applied learning, job placement, and tech transfer. Close collaboration with industry, entities on the Innovation Campus, and with NIAR will be essential. The new dean will continue to support a strong tradition of undergraduate and graduate education and will pay special attention to the recruitment and retention of faculty, undergraduate, and graduate students. The dean will also be responsible for ongoing fundraising efforts in close partnership with the WSU Foundation.

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

WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Mission of WSU is *to be an essential educational, cultural, and economic driver for Kansas and the public good. With the aspiration to be one of America's most innovative research universities known for providing impactful student experiences and driving the prosperity of people and communities they serve.* In 2025, WSU launched its [university-wide strategic plan](#) in alignment with its institutional priorities:

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

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

- Student-Centeredness: Promote holistic student success by co-creating a supportive and accessible learning environment with our students – past, present, and future – where each individual is equipped and inspired to thrive, grow, and reach their full potential.
- Research and Scholarship: Accelerate the discovery, creation, and transfer of new knowledge.
- Campus Culture: Empower students, faculty, staff, and the greater Wichita community to create a culture and experience that meets their ever-changing needs.

- **Inclusive Excellence:** Be a campus that reflects and promotes, in all community members, the evolving diversity of society.
- **Partnerships and Engagement:** Advance industry and community partnerships to provide quality educational opportunities and collaboration to satisfy rapidly evolving community and workforce needs.

Wichita State is one of six state universities governed by the Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) and is Kansas' only urban-based research university. With an institutional operating budget of \$794 million, WSU's approximately 5,937 employees have a regional economic impact of \$1.2 billion. On a sprawling 330-acre campus, WSU currently has over 589 tenured and tenure-track faculty and an enrollment of 17,700 students (14,280 undergraduate and 3,420 graduate) with a steady record of sustainable enrollment. WSU is home to eight colleges, including the College of Applied Studies; College of Engineering; Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; College of Fine Arts; College of Health Professions; the Dorothy and Bill Cohen Honors College; College of Innovation and Design; and the W. Frank Barton School Business. Offering 74 Bachelor's degree programs, two associate degrees, 13 doctoral degrees, 54 master's degrees, and over 121 credit-bearing certificates, WSU offers its educational opportunities to students and community members through the main campus and six regional campuses as well as WSU Online.

While WSU continues to experience success in its enrollment, the enrollment cliff is a reality, and they have prepared to address this challenge with a comprehensive [strategic enrollment management plan](#). This program is a university-wide commitment to improving student experience, retention, and access through outreach, collaboration, and innovative system and process design. Strategic goals include developing and advancing activities that foster a culture that promotes a positive experience; increasing enrollment of new, degree-bound first-time-in-college, returning adults, international, and online students; increasing persistence rates of degree-seeking student populations; and increasing non-degree for-credit enrollment.

WSU leadership is focused on strengthening the educational and career-building opportunities provided to students, helping ensure acceleration to their success. To foster these opportunities, the University has developed new research centers, labs, classroom buildings, housing, dining, and athletic facilities over the past 10 years. The newest college, the College of Innovation and Design, merges arts, science and technology curricula to create opportunities for student-faculty collaboration across the colleges and is one of the only programs of its type in the country.

Companies and government organizations are eager to engage with the University, students and faculty for innovative research and experiential learning opportunities. WSU and the College of Engineering work continuously to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world experience. Students in every major can gain the skills, connections, and confidence needed for career success prior to graduation with employers in virtually every industry, and more specifically, engineering students have access to the largest engineering co-op and internship program in the state. Around 96 percent of students have

placements in paid applied learning (the national average is 47 percent). In 2024, students earned more than \$35M in wages and worked in more than 9,000 positions. The Kansas Board of Regents indicates WSU graduates are more likely to be employed in Kansas after graduation and earn more than graduates from other traditional Kansas universities. Nearly 74 percent of WSU students are employed in Kansas within a year of graduation (the highest among state universities). Almost 25 percent of Wichita engineers are WSU graduates.

To help address the state's core workforce needs while creating a seamless pipeline to higher education, WSU established an alliance with Wichita Area Technical College, now known as WSU Tech. WSU Tech offers more than 100 programs of study, including in aviation, health care, manufacturing, design, and business.

The dean will work closely with the senior vice president for research and industry and defense programs, who also serves as executive director of Wichita State's [National Institute for Aviation Research](#) (NIAR). Established in 1985, NIAR's mission is to conduct research, transfer technology, and enhance education in support of the nation's aviation industry, as well as other sectors that benefit from aviation-related innovation. NIAR is one of only a few institutes in the country conducting research on aviation safety and is home to more than 20 advanced laboratories, including facilities for aerodynamics, additive manufacturing, crash dynamics, and robotics. Through NIAR, students gain hands-on experience at the forefront of design and discovery.

Culture of Innovation and Research

The [Innovation Campus](#) is another opportunity for the dean. Situated on 120 acres, WSU's Innovation Campus is an interconnected community of partnerships where organizations establish operations and reap the rewards of the University's vast resources and laboratories that give students access to real-world applications and the training needed to effortlessly assimilate into the workforce. It is also a community makerspace that gives both students and non-students alike access to the technology and services that help facilitate product development and mixed-use areas that provide everyone with a place to eat, sleep, play, shop, and share.

Named for Wichita State's beloved 13th president, the \$32 million, 143,000-square-foot [John Bardo Center](#) (JBC) opened in January 2017 as the first phase in the development of WSU's Innovation Campus. Each College of Engineering department and program has contributed to JBC's design through a task force of faculty members and department chairs. The result is a project-based experiential learning environment that brings engineering fundamentals to life. The building houses 25 hands-on learning labs and all the tools necessary for innovators to develop ideas into tangible products and bring them to market, including a 3D print center, business incubator, and accelerator spaces, and a technology transfer office.

Highly engaged research is a key component of WSU's Innovation strategy. The unique blending of accomplished faculty, high-tech labs and research facilities, and on-campus partnerships offers students the chance to participate in vital research that is changing lives.

Leadership

WSU's continued success and forward momentum in bringing the university's vision to life have been sustained under the leadership of President Rick Muma and the President's Executive Team. Dr. Muma has served the university in various instructional and leadership roles since 1994.

Dr. Monica A.F. Lounsbery has served as senior executive vice president and provost of Wichita State since January 2025 and is a strong advocate for student success, research advancement, and faculty support across the university.

More information on Wichita State University can be found at www.wichita.edu.

The City of Wichita

Sitting in the center of the U.S. Great Plains, and as Kansas' largest city, with a growing population of nearly 700,000, Wichita is the commercial, financial, medical, cultural, and entertainment hub for the state. Despite its growth, Wichita has maintained a friendly Midwestern feel and enjoys a mild climate for most of the year. Wichita has been nationally recognized for the low cost of living, growing economy, and excellent quality of life. Below are additional accolades the city has recently received:

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

More information about the City of Wichita can be found [here](#).

THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

The [College of Engineering](#) is a hallmark of Wichita State University, moving upward in recent years in national rankings, and is now recognized as one of the top 100 engineering schools in the United States. Through primarily the work of the National Institute for Aviation Research (NIAR) in FY23, the University ranked first nationally in industry-funded aerospace research and development (R&D) by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Other prestigious NSF rankings include No. 2 in industry-funded engineering R&D expenditures with \$164 million and No. 8 on the list of top universities in total engineering and research and development expenditures of \$336 million. Thus, the new dean has an extraordinary foundation on which to further advance faculty research and external grant awards.

The College has five strategic goals:

1. *Fueling Innovation Through Leadership*: Attract, retain, and enable the advancement of excellent educators, researchers, and staff.
2. *Engineering the Next Generation of Problem Solvers*: Grow enrollment by fostering a student-centered, state-of-the-art, research-intensive, and industry-aligned curriculum that provides a quality and impactful engineering and computing education.
3. *From Discovery to Impact - Engineering Tomorrow*: Enhance industry, government, and community partnerships to accelerate the discovery, creation, and transfer of new knowledge to achieve R1 status by 2030.
4. *Advancing Engineering Through Smart Investments*: Support smart investments for educational and research goals to achieve R1 status by 2030.
5. *Hands-On Learning, Real-World Impact*: Enhance value-added impactful applied learning experiences to enable student success.

The COE has continued to build mutually beneficial relationships that provide resource support, critical partnerships and collaboration, community engagement, and jobs in industry for current and graduating students.

Including both tenure and tenure-track as well as non-tenure track faculty, the College has 91 faculty members and approximately 2,865 students across the seven departments —[aerospace](#), [biomedical](#), [electrical and computer](#), [industrial, systems and manufacturing](#), [mechanical](#), and [applied engineering](#) — as well as the [School of Computing](#). The Cybersecurity program is recognized as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyberdefense Education by the NSA and DHS; all other undergraduate programs are ABET-accredited.

The WSU College of Engineering Industry Advisory Board (IAB) works closely with the dean on workforce development and industry partnerships regionally and nationally. The 32-member board is comprised of individuals representing a number of different industries within the state of Kansas and on a national level. Many members of the IAB are also proud graduates of the College. The dean relies on these board members for feedback on industry engineering needs and curriculum updates. The board meets once each semester, generally coinciding with the WSU Foundation National Advisory Council Meetings.

The [Project Innovation Hub](#) is a hands-on prototyping laboratory located within the John Bardo Center on WSU's Innovation Campus. Using rapid prototyping and small-scale manufacturing equipment, the Project Innovation Hub was designed to transform ideas into reality. Earlier this year, fundraising for the new [Shocker Fly Lab](#) was kicked off with a \$1 million gift. The Fly Lab is an enclosed space to research, design, and test unmanned aerial vehicles that will position the university at the forefront of unmanned aerial systems education and development. The nearly \$13 million project will be completed in two phases and located on the Innovation Campus.

Engineering+

In response to the recommendation of the National Academy of Engineering report on the future needs for engineering graduates, the college launched the [Engineering+ program](#). Through this program, WSU graduates enter the workforce with a broad-based education, incorporating real-world learning, research, study abroad, leadership development, and service learning. This program makes the educational experience more meaningful to the student and the student more competitive in the job market with local and national industries. In addition to the course requirements for an engineering or computer science BS degree at WSU, each student must complete at least three of the seven following activities: cooperative education or internship; entrepreneurship and innovation; global learning or study abroad; multidisciplinary education; undergraduate research; leadership training; or service learning.

Engineering Student Success Center

The [Engineering Student Success Center](#) (ESSC) supports students as they enter the College of Engineering and persist towards an undergraduate degree. In partnership with engineering faculty and staff, the ESSC provides a personalized approach by offering a wide range of support services that help students achieve their academic and personal goals. The ESSC supports over 30 student-run, engineering-related organizations, engineering living learning communities, the GEEKS tutoring and academic success center, the Calculus Clinic, the math summer bridge program, the ACE mentoring program, merit-based and need-based scholarships, and engineering summer camps for children in the community.

THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Reporting directly to the senior executive vice president and provost, the dean serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of the College of Engineering. The dean's direct reports include the college's seven department chairs; the assistant dean for finance; the assistant dean for student success;

the associate dean for undergraduate and graduate studies; the associate dean for research; the director of scholarships and scholar programs; the director of advising; the director of marketing and communications; the director of the data center; and the director of the Project Innovation Hub. The dean oversees an annual operating budget of \$ 18.7 M. Thirty percent of the college budget comes from tuition, 27 percent from student fees, 24 percent from research grants and sponsored programs, and 19 percent from a State of Kansas grant.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

To ensure the College of Engineering's sustainable growth, innovation, and increase academic distinction, the next dean will address the following key opportunities and specific challenges:

Provide visionary academic leadership

The College of Engineering is a premier engineering training ground in the state and in the country. The next dean will endeavor to maintain this trajectory by shaping a compelling vision that advances applied research, workforce-ready academic programs, hands-on learning opportunities, undergraduate and graduate student success, and strategic and mutually beneficial industry partnerships. In concert with the college community and external stakeholders, the dean will articulate this vision and work closely with University and College leadership to establish strategic goals and measures aligned with the strategic plan and goals of the university.

Significantly grow and promote pioneering research and world-class interdisciplinary scholarship

The new dean will be an active promoter and advocate for the College and will leverage the strength of faculty to further elevate the College's visibility, encouraging intellectual leadership on the national stage. The dean will lead bold, strategic initiatives that expand the College's research enterprise, driving innovation, securing new opportunities and partnerships, both on and off campus, and elevating WSU's impact on both industry and society. The dean will work across the College and with deans across the University to increase interdisciplinary endeavors and foster a vibrant culture of externally funded research and entrepreneurship. Further, the dean will allocate resources and space appropriately, leading a community of top scholars with an eye on continuous advancement across multiple metrics, including various national rankings and industry collaborations.

Expand applied learning opportunities by growing industry partnerships

Industry partnerships with the college are paramount to workforce development in Wichita, as the University is one of the major economic drivers in the city and the state. Building on the momentum of successfully established industry partnerships, the new dean will concentrate on expanding opportunities for paid applied learning experiences, including co-ops, internships, and research activities. The dean's physical location on the Innovation Campus provides ample opportunities to preserve and grow existing relationships and to generate new connections that are vital to the University, the College, and the community. The dean will continue to collaborate with the senior vice president for Industry and Defense

Programs to facilitate new engagements with NIAR, while also helping faculty align their work with the fast-paced, results-driven nature of industry. This includes cultivating an awareness of industry timelines, expectations, and the agility required to translate research into real-world impact.

Strengthen faculty and staff recruitment, retention, and career advancement

With a distinguished record in both research and teaching, the new dean will be a dynamic advocate for attracting top-tier faculty and fostering their long-term success at WSU. By relying on the strength of the University's shared governance, state-of-the-art facilities and infrastructure, and unwavering commitment to excellence, the dean will fortify the College's recruiting position and ensure the continued ability to attract and retain diverse, talented academic and industry talent in an increasingly competitive market. The dean will consistently reinforce a positive, achievement-driven, and inclusive culture and nurture collaborative initiatives to foster a deeply connected, collaborative, and engaged academic and research community. The dean will ensure the growth of new and junior faculty, supporting and elevating them in their scholarly endeavors through competitive start up packages, mentorship, and professional development opportunities. Equally important are the staff who significantly contribute to the University's and COE's success. The dean will ensure staff are professionally fulfilled and challenged, deployed to their best advantage, and feel supported and empowered in their work.

Position the College of Engineering to grow undergraduate and graduate enrollment

WSU has implemented a comprehensive strategic enrollment management plan to drive enrollment across all programs, engaging faculty, students, and staff in this universal effort. Addressing the looming demographic shifts nationwide will require more intentional and strategic efforts to sustain and accelerate this enrollment growth. The next dean will need to work in close partnership with faculty to lead efforts to grow doctoral enrollment in the College. Together, the dean and the college community are responsible for cultivating robust, research-driven programs that fuel innovation, support the University's long-term goals, and advance the national stature. A thriving graduate community is vital to reaching R1 status and to maintaining WSU's relevance and resilience in an increasingly competitive academic landscape. To support this vision, the dean will bring a proven track record of strategically managing enrollment and attracting high-caliber undergraduate and graduate students. The dean will also continue to champion student success and retention initiatives, working closely with the Engineering Student Success Center to ensure all students are supported throughout their academic journey. The dean will promote a culture of belonging throughout the college community, ensuring that the research and educational experiences are welcoming and support the success of all students. The next dean will build upon this commitment to accelerate recruitment, retention, and degree completion of all students.

Bolster the college's financial standing through fiscal stewardship, philanthropy, and thoughtful resource management

In collaboration with the WSU Foundation development team and the embedded senior director of development, the new dean will cultivate and diversify advancement opportunities to strengthen the financial base of the College. This will include increased engagement with major donors and alumni, as well as seeking new industry and corporate partners to advance the mission and vision of the college. The dean will also seek out alternative sources of funds, such as revenue-generating programs and grants from a range of federal and state funding sources. The dean will be a creative and resilient problem-solver able to identify opportunities for operational and administrative efficiencies and thoughtfully manage resources. An astute understanding of finances, resource allocation, and the relationship between academic priorities and budget will be important for the next dean to be successful.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will exemplify the following qualifications and attributes:

- The ideal candidate will have a distinguished record of teaching, research, and service appropriate for appointment at the rank of tenured full professor. Consideration will also be given to individuals with high-level industry experience comparable to academic division leadership, as well as those with demonstrated insight into, or experience in, higher education.
- A strong administrative background with significant, successful experience at the rank of department chair or above. Prior success in leading and growing a department, college, or business, including the recruitment and mentoring of researchers, practitioners, and educators who embody high caliber professionalism and diversity.
- Experience with leading accreditation processes such as ABET.
- A proven track record in securing and managing external grant funding, as well as demonstrated experience with fundraising.
- Highly effective interpersonal skills and an adept oral and written communicator who can inspire, cultivate key external constituencies, attract partners, raise funds, generate excitement among alumni, and obtain commitments to support the college.
- A strong ability to clearly articulate the nature of the university and college missions within an urban setting and the ability to clearly articulate college goals and alignment with, and in support of, the university mission.
- Ability to develop effective strategies to increase undergraduate and graduate enrollment in line with the university's strategic enrollment management plan.

- Demonstrated strong entrepreneurial spirit and an ability to leverage the expertise of faculty to enhance the economic capacity of business and industry of the greater Wichita metropolitan area and the state of Kansas.
- Capability of working within a culture of shared governance, academic freedom, and due process.
- Demonstrated commitment to working with the senior university and academic leadership, consisting of the President's Executive Team, Provost, the associate vice presidents for academic affairs, and the Council of Deans.
- An open and consultative leader; an excellent collaborator who can partner with and inspire faculty, staff, and students to elevate the College to heightened levels of success.
- Experience garnering student feedback to inform program development and a commitment to student engagement.
- Track record of effectively building trust and developing people to work collaboratively.
- Success in fostering a culture of externally funded research.
- Experience supporting technology transfer, public/private partnerships, and university engagement in the external community.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Wichita State University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist the dean of the College of Engineering search committee in its identification and review of candidates. Inquiries, referrals, and CVs accompanied by a cover letter should be submitted via the Isaacson, Miller [Dean of the College of Engineering search page](#).

Jackie Mildner, Partner
 Robin Dougherty, Managing Associate
 Pamela Carty, Senior Search Coordinator
 Isaacson, Miller

Wichita State University (WSU) does not discriminate in its employment practices, or in its educational programs or activities on the basis of age (40 years or older), ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, political affiliation, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a veteran. WSU also prohibits retaliation against any person making a complaint of discrimination or against any person involved or participating in the investigation of any such allegation. Sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking are forms of sex discrimination and are prohibited under Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, other federal law, and WSU policy. The following persons have been designated to handle

inquiries regarding WSU's non-discrimination policies: the Institutional Equity and Compliance Director (Telephone: (316) 978-3205), Title IX Coordinator (Telephone: (316) 978-5177), or Equal Opportunity Coordinator (Telephone: (316) 978-3186), each located at Wichita State University, 1845 Fairmount, Wichita, KS 67260, Human Resources Building.