



Searcy Family Dean of the College of Arts and Science

THE SEARCH

Vanderbilt University, a world-class research university based in Nashville, Tennessee, seeks a visionary and collaborative leader to serve as the next Searcy Family Dean of the College of Arts and Science (A+S). This is a pivotal moment for the college and an extraordinary opportunity to shape the future of liberal arts education at one of the country's most dynamic universities. The new dean will lead an ambitious academic community focused on excellence, innovation, and bold ideas, as evident in the university's motto, *Crescere aude*: "Dare to grow."

As Vanderbilt's most academically diverse college and one of four founding schools, A+S plays a foundational role in the university's mission. A+S offers more than 100 majors and minors across the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences; it is home to approximately 630 full-time faculty, 230 staff, 4,000 undergraduate students, and 670 graduate students. As the interdisciplinary core of Vanderbilt, A+S faculty and students collaborate extensively with all of Vanderbilt's other schools and colleges. The college's reputation is reflected in its faculty, which includes internationally recognized scholars, numerous members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of Medicine, and the National Academy of Sciences; winners of the Pulitzer Prize; and recipients of Carnegie, Guggenheim, and MacArthur fellowships.

Under its current leadership, the college has invested in and dramatically expanded its research footprint, growing external grant funding from \$35 million to \$56 million. The college launched bold infrastructure projects, reimaged its undergraduate core curriculum, increased graduate student stipends, and strengthened a sense of belonging while increasing access to its services and programs. It also played a central role in Vanderbilt's *Dare to Grow* campaign, which has surpassed a fundraising goal of \$3.2 billion, with A+S surpassing its set goal of \$420 million and continuing to outpace expectations.

The next Dean will inherit a college that is collegial, ambitious, and fiscally sound—with a \$283 million budget and debt-free operations. They will be charged with defining the future of interdisciplinary liberal arts and sciences education and research in the 21st Century, not only at Vanderbilt but as a model for other universities. They will build and advance an ambitious vision

for A+S's long-term excellence, one that reinforces its role as the intellectual heart of the university. This includes further elevating interdisciplinary collaboration, investing in academic and physical infrastructure, and accelerating discovery across all fields—from the humanities and social sciences to physical, life, and lab sciences. This is an exceptional opportunity for a collaborative, strategic, and intellectually engaged leader to work in close partnership with faculty, students, staff, and senior leadership. The next dean should exhibit exceptional listening and communication skills, interpersonal and political acumen, managerial sophistication, financial stewardship, fundraising abilities, and a commitment to shared governance.

A search committee has been established and is supported by Isaacson, Miller, the national search firm. Confidential nominations, inquiries, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Vanderbilt University, located in Nashville, Tennessee, is one of the top research universities in the nation. Created from an initial \$1 million gift from Cornelius Vanderbilt, who envisioned a place that would "contribute to strengthening the ties that should exist between all sections of our common country," the university is situated on a 330-acre campus near the thriving city center. Vanderbilt employs almost 7,000 faculty and staff and serves more than 13,000 students across 10 schools and colleges. The College of Connected Computing, Vanderbilt's 11th college, will enroll its first students in the fall 2026 semester.

Vanderbilt offers undergraduate programs in the liberal arts and sciences, education and human development, engineering, and music, as well as a full range of graduate and professional degrees. Its strength in the liberal arts—combined with nationally recognized programs in business, creative writing, divinity, education, engineering, law, medicine, music, and nursing—prepares its graduates for lives of impact, discovery, creativity, and service.

To be at Vanderbilt is to live, learn, and work in a dynamic, ambitious, and highly supportive environment in which the unique contributions of every member of the community are welcomed, valued, and nurtured. We are dedicated to nurturing a vibrant community where everyone can find purpose, establishing an environment where individuals' well-being and development take center stage.

The University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees. Vanderbilt is a member of the Association of American Universities.

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Daniel Diermeier is the ninth chancellor of Vanderbilt University. He joined Vanderbilt in 2020, after serving as Provost at the University of Chicago and, before that, Dean of the Harris School of Public Policy at Chicago. Earlier in his career, he was on the faculty of Stanford University and Northwestern University.

An internationally renowned scholar of political science and managerial leadership, Diermeier has launched several ambitious initiatives at Vanderbilt, including Destination Vanderbilt; a bold commitment to recruit and hire stellar faculty at an increased rate; Dialog Vanderbilt, an intentional effort to consistently advance and more deeply imbed the university's long-held values of free expression, civil discourse and institutional neutrality across campus and beyond; and The Vanderbilt Project on Unity and American Democracy, which seeks to elevate evidence-based reasoning in the national conversation. During his tenure the University has also launched Vandy United, a \$300 million fundraising campaign focused on Vanderbilt student-athletes, athletics programs, and Commodore fans, the largest undertaking of its kind in the University's history.

A first-generation college graduate, Diermeier earned a PhD in political science from the University of Rochester. He holds master's degrees in political science from the University of Rochester and the University of Munich, and also earned a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Southern California. In 2013 he was elected as a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences as a political scientist and game theorist.

C. Cybele Raver serves as the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at Vanderbilt University. An esteemed developmental psychologist whose leadership has spanned research, academic, and administrative settings, Raver oversees all faculty, staff, programs, and initiatives for Vanderbilt's 10 schools and colleges. Raver is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and is the Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Psychology and Human Development at Peabody College.

Before her tenure at Vanderbilt, she was deputy provost at New York University. She has held faculty positions at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy and Cornell University's Department of Human Development. Throughout her career, she has received prestigious awards from the American Psychological Association and the William T. Grant Foundation, and has been granted support from the MacArthur Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Spencer Foundation, in which she garnered more than \$24 million in funding.

THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

The College of Arts and Science (A+S) is the liberal arts and sciences core of one of the world's preeminent research institutions, anchoring its research mission, shaping undergraduate and graduate education, and serving as a vital intellectual partner to every other school on campus. Fully realized, A+S is at once a microcosm of the university at large and the most tangible embodiment of the mission and values of the university.

A+S offers a rich academic portfolio of more than 100 majors and minors and is home to a world-class faculty whose expertise spans the full breadth of the liberal arts and sciences. What sets A+S apart is not the strength of its disciplinary parts, but its integrative power. A+S faculty engage in research and education with colleagues in engineering, law, business, education, and medicine—making A+S both the heart and connective tissue of the university. A+S's scale, large enough to support disciplinary depth yet agile enough to foster interdisciplinary partnerships, positions it uniquely for innovation. Research is intertwined with pedagogy; faculty-student collaboration is an important component in Immersion Vanderbilt. In that spirit, the college has engaged in a multi-year process examining and reconsidering the core curriculum, resulting in the new A+S College Core launching in the fall of 2025.

The college is in a period of clear strength and forward momentum. Recent years have seen a dramatic increase in externally sponsored research, from \$35 million to \$56 million annually. The college's vibrant academic environment is reinforced by its strong fiscal health. It operates with a \$283 million annual budget and no debt, supported by robust annual fundraising, with more than \$34 million in gifts and pledges in FY2024 alone.

With such a large footprint, A+S's space needs are evolving. Garland Hall is undergoing a renovation and expansion, including new offices, teaching labs, and classrooms, to be completed in the fall of 2025. In the summer of 2025, work will begin on a new collaborative building that will be a shared space for A+S, the School of Engineering, and the School of Medicine Basic Sciences. Other construction projects include the renovation of the Stevenson Center, an advanced microscopy and imaging hub in the Engineering Science Building, and a trans-departmental quantum computing hub.

ROLE OF THE DEAN (Key Opportunities and Challenges)

Reporting to the Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, the Searcy Family Dean of the College of Arts and Science serves as the college's chief academic and administrative officer, setting strategy, aligning resources, and ensuring catalytic impact across the University and beyond.

The Dean's team includes the Vice Dean and Senior Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs; the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; the Senior Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education; the Associate Dean of Development; the Chief Communications Officer; the Chief Business Officer; and the Chief Operations Officer.

The Dean will:

Articulate a compelling vision for the liberal arts in the 21st Century

As Vanderbilt aspires to redefine the role of a great university of the 21st Century, Vanderbilt seeks a Dean for A+S who will articulate and lead a compelling vision for the liberal arts and scientific core at Vanderbilt and beyond. The Dean will champion, promote, and advocate for excellence in research, teaching, and societal impact. The Dean will champion innovation in curriculum and support excellence across all fields represented by A+S, and an understanding of the vital role the various disciplines play in a thriving educational and intellectual environment. In recent years, the university has set ambitious goals for sponsored research and discovery in the STEM disciplines; at the same time, its commitment to the humanities, arts, and humanistic social sciences remains unwavering.

Catalyze a culture of discovery, service, and impact.

Vanderbilt believes that academic discovery is fully realized when it is translated to society through scholarship, service, and mentorship. As a key priority of the Provost, the Dean will drive a culture of scholarship and service that aims to generate knowledge for the benefit of society, from forging local partnerships to informing national policy discussions, bringing scientific and medical advances to market, and developing the workforces and economies of communities all over the world. The Dean will lead a faculty that is committed to training the next generation to do the same.

Foster a culture of collaboration and interdisciplinary partnerships.

Vanderbilt is fundamentally a vibrant intellectual community, and the Dean will build partnerships across Vanderbilt's ten schools and colleges, as well as with external partners and global institutions. The Dean will serve as a connector and catalyst—amplifying research, enriching the student experience, and driving new ideas at the intersections of disciplines.

Steward and support A+S resources and operations.

A+S finances are strong, and the college has successfully avoided many of the issues that beset other colleges of arts and sciences. Even so, the Dean will ensure the operational strength of the college, including financial stewardship, staff development, and academic infrastructure. The Dean will oversee an experienced senior leadership team and will work closely with university partners to manage a \$283 million annual budget and plan for long-term resource allocation.

Lead strategic fundraising and alumni engagement.

Vanderbilt is in the midst of the successful *Dare to Grow* fundraising campaign. As the college with the largest alumni body, A+S has an instrumental role in this effort. Having surpassed an

original goal of \$420 million, work continues towards a stretch goal. On average, A+S raises more than \$30 million annually, and it benefits from a generous and engaged College Cabinet and Board of Advisors. The Dean will prioritize continued attention to the College's fundraising efforts and play a central role in cultivating donors, deepening relationships, and communicating the college's impact.

Champion a culture of belonging and health.

The Dean will build on the college's collaborative culture, upholding shared governance and fostering open dialogue. The Dean will lead with integrity, build trust across constituencies, and cultivate a high-performing, responsive leadership team.

The successful candidate will bring intellectual stature, academic leadership, and a deep belief in the transformative power of the liberal arts and sciences to shape society, expand opportunity, and elevate the mission of research universities.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess many of the following professional qualifications, experiences, and characteristics:

A track record of entrepreneurial and collaborative intellectual leadership: Galvanizing vision for the leadership role played by arts and science at a top research university. Demonstrated success in communicating and implementing new ideas collaboratively. Clear evidence of ability to translate strategy into action. Intellectual curiosity and informed engagement.

Commitment to academic excellence: Passion for supporting creative expression and discovery; nuanced understanding of the disciplines in the College, including trends and emerging fields; appreciation for scholarly rigor and the work of the College's faculty. Demonstrated success in strengthening academic programs and research. A record of embracing and encouraging multidisciplinary work; evidence of collaboration with partners across campus.

Demonstrated record of commitment to people, culture and belonging: A history of success in building communities in which every individual's journey is valued and nurtured to bring out the best in every person.

Superb management, planning, and financial skills: Excellent organizational skills. Ability to establish clear frameworks for decision-making. An understanding of and interest in finances and the interplay of academic programs and program development, resource requirements including staffing and compensation, market interest, and revenue generation (including fundraising).

Courageous leadership: Evident orientation toward broad consultation and active listening. Willingness to take on difficult issues, mediate disagreement, and act. Commitment to working through shared governance, faculty engagement, transparency, and open communication.

Excellent communication skills, oral and written: Demonstrated talent for inspiring enthusiasm, energizing supporters, and influencing and motivating others. Skill and drive to advance the philanthropic goals of the College. Proven ability to formulate and advance arguments in support of initiatives. Ability to articulate decisions consistently and clearly, with tact and diplomacy.

Professional and personal qualities: Commitment to the mission, purpose, values, and ideals of Vanderbilt University. Ability to inspire confidence. Resourcefulness. Bias to innovate, experiment, and act. Optimism, resilience, persistence, willingness to learn and reflect, and humility. Integrity of the highest order.

An earned doctorate or terminal degree. A record of scholarship appropriate for leadership of a distinguished college of a major university, with an appointment as a tenured full professor.

TO APPLY

Confidential inquiries, applications, and nominations may be sent in confidence to:

Katie Rockman and Anita Tien, Partners

Andy Marshall, Managing Associate

www.imsearch.com/open-searches/vanderbilt-university-college-arts-sciences/dean

Vanderbilt University strives to create an environment where individuals feel valued, understood and integral to our collective success, upholding high standards of professionalism and our beliefs of belonging, collaboration, self-direction and growth. Vanderbilt University is an equal-opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or status as a protected veteran, or any other characteristic protected by law.