



Saint Peter's UNIVERSITY

The Jesuit University of New Jersey

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Saint Peter's University

Jersey City, New Jersey

Saint Peter's University, inspired by its Jesuit, Catholic identity, commitment to individual attention, and grounding in the liberal arts, educates a diverse community of learners in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs to excel intellectually, lead ethically, serve compassionately, and promote justice in our ever-changing urban and global environment.

– Mission Statement

THE SEARCH

Saint Peter's University (SPU, Saint Peter's, or the University), a Catholic Jesuit university located in Jersey City, New Jersey, seeks a strategic, innovative, and mission-driven administrator and educator with a distinguished academic record to serve as the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The VPAA will join Saint Peter's at a pivotal moment in the institution's history—with new leadership under President Hubert Benitez, the completion of the University's largest and most successful fundraising campaign, and the launch of its new strategic plan, Igniting the Mission. The VPAA will play a key role in implementing the strategic plan, with one of its six pillars being to expand and enrich the academic portfolio and student experience. It will be critical that the next VPAA honors Saint Peter's storied history while collaboratively and compassionately leading the academic unit into its next mission-centered chapter of impact.

Founded in 1872, Saint Peter's is one of 27 Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States and serves the most diverse student body of all Jesuit higher education institutions in the nation. SPU's founding mission—to prepare students of all backgrounds to be leaders in their individual lives and broader communities—is more relevant than ever and offers a powerful narrative platform from which to advocate for institutional resources and wide-ranging philanthropic engagement.

The University comprises five schools and colleges—the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Nursing and Health Professions, the Caulfield School of Education, the Frank J. Guarini School of Business, and the School of Professional Studies—offering more than 50 undergraduate majors and minors, 18 master’s programs, five doctoral programs, and post-master’s and certificate programs. In Fall 2025, Saint Peter’s enrolled a record-setting first-year class, bringing total enrollment to approximately 3,300 full- and part-time students. The University is supported by 343 full-time and adjunct faculty members and 243 staff, with an operating budget of approximately \$78 million, two-thirds of which is directly tied to academic activities. The 2026 *U.S. News & World Report Best Colleges* rankings named Saint Peter’s number one in New Jersey for both Social Mobility and Best Value, while also ranking fifth in Social Mobility, second in Best Value, 16th for Best Colleges for Veterans, and 38th overall in the Regional Universities North category. These recognitions affirm the transformative and accessible nature of a Saint Peter’s education and its lasting impact on students, families, and communities.

Reporting to the President, the VPAA serves as the chief academic officer and is a member of the President’s Cabinet. The VPAA is one of five vice presidents and directly oversees a team that includes the assistant vice president for academic affairs and assessment, the five school deans, and the directors of the Guarini Institute for Government and Leadership, Faculty Research and Development, Service Learning, Honors Program, and Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

The successful candidate will collaboratively guide the implementation of the academic vision set forth in the new strategic plan, advancing Saint Peter’s tradition of student success and innovation with a deep commitment to its liberal arts core. The VPAA will work to strengthen the University’s value proposition while ensuring the effective allocation of resources, cultivating a culture of trust and shared governance, supporting excellence in teaching, learning, and research, and championing the Jesuit ideals that are woven into the very fabric of the institution.

The University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. All expressions of interest from qualified candidates are encouraged. Inquiries, nominations, and applications can be directed in confidence to the firm, as indicated at the end of this document.

SAINT PETER’S UNIVERSITY: THEN AND NOW

Chartered in 1872 by the New Jersey legislature, Saint Peter’s was originally founded as Saint Peter’s College, an independent liberal arts college of men in downtown Jersey City. Following a dramatic decline in enrollment as a result of World War I, the institution was forced to close in 1918. Saint Peter’s reopened in 1930, adopted the peacock as its official mascot, reflecting the spirit of resurrection and eternal life, and moved to its current location in 1936. Women entered the evening division, now known as the School of Professional Studies, in the 1930s. In 1966, women were first admitted to the day session, and now women constitute over 59 percent of the overall student population. Saint Peter’s offered its first graduate program in education in 1980. On August 17, 2012, Saint Peter’s College officially became known as Saint Peter’s University.

One of 27 Jesuit institutions of higher education in the United States, SPU is today recognized as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and a Carnegie Community-Engaged and Leadership for Public Purpose Institution, as well as a First-Gen Forward Institution, and boasts a long legacy of educating immigrants and first-generation students. Reflecting its strong commitment to access and affordability, Saint Peter's was ranked second overall Best Value in the Regional Universities North category in the 2026 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Colleges Rankings. Nearly 98 percent of students rely on scholarship support to afford their education, and half of Pell recipients have no estimated family contribution.

The University now offers undergraduate, master's, and doctoral degrees, and has shifted from a largely commuter school to one with a sizeable residential component; approximately 25 percent of undergraduates live on campus. At the same time, the University also now offers programs online, while still maintaining a strong sense of community. Faculty, staff, and students alike feel very deeply tied to SPU's commitment to Jersey City, Hudson County, and New Jersey as a whole. The undergraduate population largely derives from surrounding communities, with approximately 85 percent of full-time undergraduates identifying as New Jersey residents. Twenty-seven percent of graduate students identify as international. The University is committed to uniting its domestic and international student populations, with foundational commitments to community engagement and service as primary facets of every student's experience.

MISSION AND JESUIT, CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Saint Peter's educational mission is inspired by the nearly 500-year-old tradition of Jesuit education first established by Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. The tradition is manifested in a strong core curriculum, personal care for its students and each other, the nurturing of intellectual and spiritual freedom, and the development of men and women with and for others. The student-centric community of Saint Peter's University remains fiercely dedicated to *cura personalis* (care and personal attention to the development of the whole person). At SPU, the liberal arts curriculum remains a primary means to cultivate in students a well-rounded education informed by ethical reflection and practice.

The Jesuit tradition informs all aspects of life at Saint Peter's. In particular, Campus Ministry encourages students' commitment to spiritual development, service, and progressive activism. Through community service programs, students have a wide array of volunteer opportunities available to them locally, nationally, and internationally. Although Saint Peter's is a Catholic, Jesuit institution, it welcomes students of all religious faiths and backgrounds, including those with no religious affiliation, and offers a variety of services for students, such as retreat programs and spiritual advising.

ACADEMIC PROFILE

In the Catholic Jesuit tradition of education, SPU offers a broad core curriculum, rooted in the liberal arts, designed to educate well-rounded, conscious, and compassionate students. Students can earn baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as continued learning certificates and credentialing. At the undergraduate level, more than 50 majors, 18 master's programs, five doctoral

programs, and post master's and certificate programs are offered through the [College of Arts and Sciences](#), the [School of Nursing](#) and Health Professions, the [Caulfield School of Education](#), the [Frank J. Guarini School of Business](#), and the [School of Professional Studies](#). The average class size is 20, with a student-faculty ratio for Fall 2024 at approximately 12 to one for full-time undergraduate students. Ninety-nine percent of seniors have participated in experiential learning, and SPU has a six-year graduation rate of 58 percent.

As of 2025, tuition and fees totaled \$43,170, and 86 percent of first-year students received need-based financial aid.

The five pillars of the strategic plan position Saint Peter's to realize its vision of becoming a national model of Jesuit excellence—empowering students from all backgrounds to pursue thriving careers, achieve social mobility, and lead purposeful lives of compassion, justice, and service.

- Strengthening Jesuit Mission and Core Identity
- Expanding and Enriching the Academic Portfolio and Student Experience
- Ensuring Financial Viability and Sustainability
- Enhancing Value Proposition and Differentiation
- Elevating Community Engagement

Students

SPU's students are known for their resilience, drive, and commitment to service. They are also intellectually ambitious and practically minded in their pursuit of research, internships, and leadership roles. Many are first-generation college students who see education as a pathway to social mobility, and they bring with them a strong sense of determination, adaptability, and purpose. The student body is remarkably diverse, reflecting the University's location in Jersey City. They come from many cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, which enriches the classroom experience and fosters a spirit of openness and inclusivity.

In the Fall of 2025, the University enrolled approximately 3,300 full-time and part-time students in programs leading to bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as other forms of professional certification. The undergraduate population totals approximately 2,400. Eighty-six percent of full-time undergraduates are New Jersey residents. Fifty-five percent of undergraduate students identify as women, 67 percent as students of color, and four percent are international students. The University's graduate population totals approximately 900 in Fall of 2025, and 27 percent are international students. Saint Peter's is the alma mater to more than 30,000 living alumni, more than 7,000 of whom are alumni of the graduate programs.

Like many institutions, Saint Peter's has experienced shifting enrollment trends. While undergraduate enrollment had seen several years of decline after COVID, it welcomed a record-breaking first-year class of 630 students in 2025. Graduate students comprise 27% of all enrollment. The *Igniting the Mission*

Strategic Plan aims to expand and strengthen the breadth, depth, and scope of the academic portfolio, with the VPAA playing a central role in advancing and implementing its initiatives.

Faculty and Staff

Saint Peter's 343-member faculty (103 full-time and 240 part-time) are dedicated teacher-scholars who embody the Jesuit value of *cura personalis* by combining rigorous scholarship with personalized mentorship. They are deeply committed to preparing students for purposeful lives while advancing knowledge and creative expression across disciplines.

Their accomplishments reflect both scholarly distinction and community engagement. At the 2024 celebration of faculty scholarship, Saint Peter's faculty were recognized for producing 201 scholarly and creative works, including 59 peer-reviewed journal articles, 28 art exhibitions, 22 documentaries, 17 book chapters, and nine books, underscoring their disciplinary excellence and commitment to the University's Jesuit mission. They have also led community-engagement and entrepreneurship initiatives in the region, hosted cultural celebrations such as Diwali for hundreds of graduate students, and earned prestigious honors, including the Fulbright Scholars program and the NJCPA Ovation Award for Innovation.

Saint Peter's 243 staff members are also integral members of the community and support critical academic, co-curricular, and business operations of the institution. Many are alumni of Saint Peter's, underscoring their dedication and passion. They are partners in the educational mission and a tight-knit community on campus. Working in coordination and collaboration with the faculty, the staff are committed to students' success. With open-door policies and a culture of mentorship, they form lasting relationships that often inspire students to explore new majors, pursue advanced studies, and discover meaningful career paths.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Hubert Benitez, DDS, PhD, took office on July 1, 2024, as the 23rd president of Saint Peter's University. As president, Dr. Benitez serves as chief executive and administrative officer of the University and works in close collaboration with the Board of Trustees and with internal and external constituencies to provide overall leadership and direction for the institution. Dr. Benitez came to Saint Peter's University having dedicated two decades of his career in higher education as a faculty member and administrator, with significant experience in public, private, and Jesuit higher education institutions. He is passionately committed to access and opportunity, social justice, and working with first-generation and diverse student bodies.

Saint Peter's is governed by a 28-member Board of Trustees. The Trustees oversee the leadership, planning, and resources of the University, ensuring its overall vitality and mission. Kenneth Moore '91, Chief Operating Officer of Jennison Associates in Manhattan, serves as the chair of the board.

FINANCES, BUDGET, AND FUNDRAISING

More than 30,000 Saint Peter's alumni serve as lifelong stakeholders and are the University's largest constituency group. SPU graduates are connected by a transformational, Jesuit educational experience and remain committed to the University's health and future. Saint Peter's Alumni Board promotes alumni participation and involvement in the current life of their alma mater, along with the advancement of the University, while supporting opportunities for social, intellectual, and spiritual enrichment for graduates.

In June of 2024, Saint Peter's announced the conclusion of the Peacocks Rise: Campaign for Saint Peter's University, the University's largest and most successful fundraising campaign. The campaign raised in excess of \$86 million, surpassing its original goal of \$75 million. Buoyed by an unprecedented run to the Elite Eight in the 2022 NCAA Division I Men's Regional Basketball Tournament, gifts and pledges to the University surged by 278 percent, and applications increased by 59 percent. The campaign secured transformational scholarships, revitalized signature facilities, amplified unrestricted giving, and generated investments in students and infrastructure that helped SPU realize greater academic and athletic distinction. Among the signature donations were \$10 million for development of the west campus and for scholarships, another \$10 million gift to transform the School of Business, and a \$5 million lead gift for phased renovation of the Yanitelli Recreational Life Center. Annual unrestricted giving is also positive, with a record 6,500 donors choosing not to specify the use of their gift to Saint Peter's during the *Peacocks Rise Campaign*.

Saint Peter's reports total assets of \$179 million, an annual operating budget of \$79 million for FY 2024, and an endowment of approximately \$43 million.

CAMPUS

Saint Peter's campus comprises nearly 25 acres in the heart of Jersey City. Approximately 25 percent of full-time undergraduate students live in four University residence halls. Instructional facilities include McDermott, Dinneen, Gannon, Pope, Rankin, and Loyola Halls. SPU's [Theresa and Edward O'Toole Library](#) includes a modernized Digital Research Commons and the Digital Humanities Center. Designed with input from students, the [Mac Mahon Student Center](#) features living room areas, a coffee shop, a University store, spacious dining areas, fitness and game rooms, office space, and The Duncan Family Sky Room, an event space that accommodates 430 and offers breathtaking skyline views of New York City. The [Victor R. Yanitelli Recreational Life Center](#), a 125,000-square-foot facility, houses the athletics programs, and the University's Joseph J. Jaroschak Field is just minutes from campus.

Funded primarily from donations, Saint Peter's campus has undergone significant renovations in the last five years. For example, technological and space upgrades to the Guarini School of Business were financed through a \$10 million donation from Congressman Frank J. Guarini. The renovation of the new Run Baby Run Arena was funded by a \$5 million gift from alumnus Thomas P. Mac Mahon. The creation and then expansion of the STEM Engagement and Empowerment Center—with classroom upgrades and the addition of a hydroponics lab—was funded by two successive Title III HSI STEM grants of \$8.7 million. The

University has also renovated the Center for Academic Success and Engagement with funds through a \$2.9 million Title V HSI grant, including creating an instructional design space, a media center, and a writing studio.

ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Reporting to the President, the VPAA serves as the Chief Academic Officer for Saint Peter's and has overall responsibility for providing vision and leadership for all academic programs; academic planning, policy, curriculum, faculty hiring and development, and assessment and accountability of the university's educational and research programs. The VPAA provides leadership and oversight for the academic budget, research, and undergraduate and graduate programs.

The VPAA works closely with the Chief Operating Officer on all financial and strategic activities for the University, as well as with other senior leaders to ensure that the strategic directions and policies of the university are aligned with the academic mission. The VPAA is also the primary liaison to the Board's Committee on Academic Affairs.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Guide the implementation of the distinctive academic vision defined in the new strategic plan, *Igniting the Mission*, that centers on student success and inspires innovation.

With the rollout of the new strategic plan, President Benitez seeks a creative and courageous partner to forge a bold academic vision—one rooted in the Jesuit mission, the liberal arts, and Saint Peter's storied past, yet oriented toward the University's forward-looking aspirations. The VPAA will collaborate with the President, Cabinet, faculty, staff, and students to establish a unified academic vision with clear priorities that advance Saint Peter's core values: educating a diverse community of learners to excel intellectually, lead ethically, serve compassionately, and promote justice. The next VPAA will elevate and showcase the University's strengths in teaching and research across disciplines while ensuring academic programs remain relevant, innovative, and responsive to the needs of a rapidly changing world.

Develop and support Saint Peter's commitment to excellence in teaching, learning, and research.

The VPAA must have a deep appreciation for the challenges and rewards of serving as both teacher and scholar within a liberal arts university. Building strong relationships with faculty across the institution, the VPAA will provide resources to support ongoing professional growth to promote the highest standards of excellence in teaching and scholarship. A key responsibility will be to uphold and defend academic freedom, ensuring that faculty can pursue inquiry, research, and teaching in ways that advance knowledge and reflect the University's mission. This includes establishing priorities and plans for faculty mentoring and career-long development that strengthen retention and sustain a vibrant academic community.

Equally important is the ability to attract new talent. The VPAA will partner with academic departments to recruit, hire, and retain outstanding teacher-scholars, ensuring that Saint Peter's continues to advance its mission through faculty who are both dedicated educators and engaged scholars.

Strengthen Saint Peter's value proposition while ensuring effective allocation of resources.

With a keen awareness of the challenges facing higher education today, including the evolving nature of student learning, expanding opportunities for global engagement, affordability, and the uncertainty regarding AI and its impact on the student population at Saint Peter's, the next VPAA must be committed to honoring the rich teaching and learning environment that Saint Peter's offers students. To sustain a competitive edge as a tuition-dependent university, the pragmatic leader will utilize data to define Saint Peter's market position, which will help identify areas needing intentional investment and others to reallocate resources for programmatic innovation. The VPAA will be a strong steward of financial resources, prioritizing the academic mission and gracefully making tradeoffs in the face of constraints in collaboration with faculty and shared governance processes. They will work closely with academic deans to align academic planning with financial planning, helping them secure resources, primarily through relevant academic programs, supporting faculty-sponsored grant-seeking, and private philanthropy.

Cultivate a culture of trust and foster a deeper commitment to shared governance.

Saint Peter's has a long tradition of shared governance, and the next VPAA must balance broad input and collaborative decision-making with the need for speed and efficiency. While drawing on the excellence of faculty, staff, and students, remaining nimble will be critical to the University's continued success. This leader will have the opportunity to strengthen shared governance by refining policies and procedures and by serving as a clear, decisive communicator to all stakeholders. As the University moves forward under the vision of new leadership, the VPAA must cultivate strong relationships with representative bodies to secure genuine buy-in for initiatives. Above all, the VPAA must ensure that faculty and staff feel heard, valued, respected, and recognized, fostering a culture of collaboration and academic excellence.

Champion the values of equity and inclusion.

Since its founding, Saint Peter's has welcomed students from all backgrounds, and the next VPAA must provide strong leadership in advancing this commitment. The Division of Mission Integration and Ministry, through the Center for Inclusive Excellence, coordinates campus-wide efforts, fostering collaboration across schools and units; the O'Toole Library curates and promotes academic resources and programs to support equity and inclusion, and the Office of Faculty Research and Development coordinates opportunities to create welcoming and supportive learning environments for students from all backgrounds.

Grounded in Jesuit values, equity and inclusion are central to the University's mission, and the VPAA will serve as a visible institutional leader, promoting these values in both word and action. This includes welcoming the difficult but necessary conversations that examine practices, policies, and culture, and ensuring that progress is ongoing and measurable. Given the students Saint Peter's serves—and within a

campus environment whose size and geography create a deeply personal and immersive experience—a demonstrated history of advancing equity and inclusion will be essential for the VPAA.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Saint Peter's University seeks in its next VPAA a superb scholar and experienced administrator and educator who combines effective communication skills with a deep commitment to collaboration and shared governance. Candidates should bring demonstrated experience in academic leadership, a record of significant administrative accomplishments, the ability to cultivate consensus, and a sense of shared purpose within a diverse community.

While the search committee recognizes that no single candidate will possess every desired qualification, it seeks individuals who offer the following experience and abilities:

- A PhD and a record of distinguished scholarship and teaching requisite for a tenured appointment as a full professor at Saint Peter's.
- A demonstrated commitment to undergraduate education as well as excellence in graduate and professional programs, with the ability to clearly articulate the enduring value of a liberal arts education.
- Successful experience in academic administration commensurate with Saint Peter's size and complexity.
- A resonance with the Jesuit charism, with commitment to advancing the Jesuit tradition that is integral to SPU's core identity, and to the personal and professional development it fosters.
- Moral leadership and adherence to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.
- A collaborative and transparent leadership style that fosters trust, empowerment, and broad consultation; exceptional emotional intelligence; and outstanding communication and listening skills, including the ability to convene, mediate, translate complex ideas, and build unity across diverse audiences.
- Strong management, planning, and financial acumen, including the ability to set programmatic and budgetary priorities that balance near-term needs with long-term objectives.
- Exceptional academic judgment and high standards, with a demonstrated history of recruiting, developing, and retaining outstanding faculty.
- Excellent organizational and time-management skills, with the ability to prioritize effectively and make timely, well-considered decisions.
- Superior ability to work across a wide range of constituents and departments, creating structures that promote integration and institutional cohesion.
- A proven commitment to equity and inclusion with the capacity to successfully recruit, retain, and develop a welcoming campus community of faculty, staff, and administrators.
- A sophisticated understanding of sponsored research activity, research administration, and infrastructure, along with awareness of funding trends and opportunities.
- Experience guiding the development and implementation of strategic initiatives.

- Diplomacy, judgment, and the ability to engage with transparency and integrity in building consensus around complex or difficult issues.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

Saint Peter's University is located in Jersey City, NJ.

The expected salary range will be \$180,000 to \$235,000.

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 for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/saint-peters-university/vice-president-academic-affairs>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Phillip Petree, Partner
Steph Simon, Senior Associate
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Isaacson, Miller Inc.

Saint Peter's University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer and desires to ensure that faculty, students, and staff members from underrepresented and marginalized populations are an integral part of the life and governance of the institution.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Saint Peter's University. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Saint Peter's University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.