



Search for the Vice President for Student Affairs
Wichita State University
Wichita, Kansas

THE SEARCH

Wichita State University (WSU) seeks a strategic, innovative, compassionate leader to serve as the next Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA). As a member of the President's Executive Team, the VPSA will implement a vision that is WSU-aligned and supports the holistic development of a student body that represents a wide range of student backgrounds – traditional, graduate, transfer, international students, adult learners, commuter students, first generation, and low-income students. WSU is a leader in student care, engagement, and success, and the VPSA will continue to elevate programs that enrich the student experience, fostering pathways to achievement and cultivating a vibrant community of future alumni.

Wichita State University is one of the nation's fastest-growing public research universities with a trajectory and momentum rarely seen among peer and aspirant institutions in today's higher education climate. With an attainable goal to reach R1 status in the next few years, WSU boasts a 130-acre Innovation Campus, a recent partnership with the University of Kansas on the new \$300 million [Wichita Biomedical CenterSM](#) in downtown Wichita, and the new [Shocker Success Center](#). Known as the Shockers and proudly represented by its storied mascot, [WuShock](#), Wichita State University enrolls more than 18,450 students from across the United States and 115 countries. The Division of Student Affairs excels in the holistic support of students' physical and mental health and wellness; special accommodations; residence life; engagement and belonging; leadership opportunities; and campus recreation. The Division is largely situated within and has operational oversight for the [Rhatigan Student Center](#).

The new VPSA will join Wichita State University at a transformative moment — one that is reshaping the student educational experience, contributing to the economic growth of Wichita, and redefining the return on investment of higher education. As a central figure of WSU's leadership, the VPSA will contribute to the ambitious growth trajectory of the university through the development of our strategic plan and goals; proactively champion the work of student affairs; actively collaborate with academic affairs and other important campus leaders, staff, faculty and students to enhance the WSU student experience; strategically steward and enhance financial resources; and empower a talented and dedicated student affairs division.

Wichita State University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of the new VP/SA. All 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**. WSU is among the nation's most innovative research universities known for providing impactful student experiences, including paid applied learning opportunities, and driving the prosperity of people and communities they serve. In 2025, WSU re-imagined 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*: Empower students, faculty and staff to create a supportive culture that inspires growth, meets evolving needs and fosters success.
- *Research and scholarship*: Find solutions to emerging problems and accelerate the discovery, creation and dissemination of new knowledge and innovation.
- *Partnerships and engagement*: Advance industry and community partnerships to provide quality educational opportunities and collaborations 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 940 faculty and an enrollment of 18,458 students. WSU is home to eight colleges: 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 62 bachelor's degree programs, two associate degrees, 13 doctoral degrees, 54 master's degrees, and over 123 credit-bearing certificates, WSU offers its educational opportunities to students and community members through the main campus and four additional locations as well as WSU Online.

While WSU continues to experience success in its enrollment 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 educational opportunities provided to students, helping ensure student success, and providing a wide array of research and career opportunities. As a result, the university has experienced [audacious growth](#) over the last ten years with new research centers, labs, classroom buildings, housing, dining, and athletic facilities.

Culture of Innovation and Transformative Learning

Wichita State University's [Innovation Campus](#) is a dynamic hub where industry and academia converge to provide students with hands-on, workforce-ready training. Through partnerships with leading organizations and access to cutting-edge labs and resources, students gain real-world experience that complements their academic learning. A major milestone in this effort is the \$300 million [Wichita Biomedical CenterSM](#), currently under construction in downtown Wichita in collaboration with the University of Kansas. As a new WSU site, the Vice President for Student Affairs will play a key role in coordinating student support and services in alignment with campus leadership.

[Applied learning](#) and the [Shocker Career Accelerator](#) are central to WSU's student experience. Across all majors, students engage in internships, co-ops, and placements, 96% of which are paid, far exceeding the national average of 47%. In FY23 alone, over 9,000 students earned \$36 million working with more than 700 employers. This strong foundation in experiential learning contributes to WSU graduates' success and retention in Kansas, with nearly 74% employed in-state within a year of graduation — more than any other public university in the state.

STUDENTS

WSU is the most diverse campus in Kansas. About 77% of its students are from Kansas, and the remainder hail from every state in the U.S. and 115 countries. In the current academic year, approximately 47.5 % of all degree-seeking undergraduates at WSU are first-generation students. While a large proportion of students commute to campus, those who live on campus have three housing options: traditional housing, suite housing and apartment style.

WSU [student life](#) offers a truly immersive student life environment full of [activities and traditions](#). On and off campus, students have access to a wide range of ways to actively participate on campus, including [arts, culture, and entertainment](#), [Greek life](#), [student government](#), and [student engagement and belonging](#) and more than 350 annual on-campus events that engage both the on campus and regional communities.

Shockers' health and wellness

Wichita State University emphasizes student health and wellness, demonstrated through a robust infrastructure led by Student Affairs that supports mental health and physical well-being. A standout example is the on-campus YMCA, a uniquely integrated facility that houses Student Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and Health, Outreach, Prevention, and Education (HOPE). Open to the campus and greater Wichita community, this collaborative space offers dynamic, holistic care and is the only facility of its kind in the country — blending fitness, health, and counseling services under one roof. Additionally, a point of pride for WSU's wellness initiatives is the management of crisis response. With the CARE Team and five social workers on staff, WSU is well-equipped with the key people and resources to ensure students in crisis receive the support they need and deserve.

Student success

At WSU, student success is a core campus priority and a vital component of strategic enrollment management, academic affairs, and student life. With an array of resources and programs that guide students from orientation through graduation, the university embraces a holistic philosophy that integrates academic and co-curricular experiences. To highlight the significance of this work, in 2024, WSU opened the Shocker Success Center — an \$18.5 million renovated facility at the heart of campus. This centralized hub brings together 18 student-focused offices, previously spread across 10 buildings, into a one-stop destination for student engagement, advising, and essential services. The next VPSA will serve as a strategic partner to Academic Affairs, championing these efforts to increase collaboration and ensure all students benefit from the full range of opportunities designed to support their success throughout their university journey.

Faculty and staff

WSU prides itself on its world-class and engaged faculty, which includes 941 total faculty with 357 tenured/tenure-track faculty, 237 full-time non-tenured faculty, and 347 lecturers. The WSU Faculty Senate is a key part of the university and represents all faculty at WSU through shared governance. WSU has more than 2,422 full-time administrative, managerial, professional, technical, and maintenance staff dedicated to the institution's mission and its students, ensuring excellence in institutional administration and operations. The University Staff Senate was created to foster communication and collegiality among staff and to provide staff representation to the university administration while also serving as a cultural driver that reflects the values of WSU's Strategic Plan. The Provost's office fully encourages the professional development of staff, supporting resources and outlets through online training, partnerships with the Kansas Leadership Center, and community-building programs like the WSU Spark Society and the Young Shocker Professionals.

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. 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.

THE CITY OF WICHITA

Situated 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. Wichita maintains a friendly Midwestern feel and enjoys a mild climate for most of the year. Wichita has been nationally recognized for its low cost of living, growing economy, and excellent quality of life. More information about the City of Wichita can be found [here](#).

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Staffed by a team fiercely passionate about their work, the [Division of Student Affairs](#) plays a pivotal role in enhancing the student experience by fostering a supportive, and empowering environment where all students can thrive and succeed. Guided by its mission and core values to engage, educate, equip, and empower, the division is anchored by four key units — Auxiliary Services, Student Life, Student Services, and Wellness — that work collaboratively to meet the diverse needs of WSU's student body. The Student Affairs vision, *Connecting Every Student*, is brought to life through intentional programs, services, and partnerships that ensure students feel engaged, informed, and well-prepared throughout their academic journey and beyond. The Division's [organizational chart](#) provides a detailed departmental structure. The Division includes the following departments.

- Campus Recreation
- Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Health, Outreach, Prevention, and Education Services (HOPE)
- Housing and Residence Life
- One Shocker Family
- Rhatigan Student Center
- Student Accommodations and Testing
- Communications and Marketing
- Student Conduct and Community Standards
- Student Engagement & Belonging
- Student Health Services
- Student Outreach and Support (SOS)

ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

Reporting to the Senior Executive Vice President and Provost, the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) is an essential member of the [President's Executive Team](#). The VPSA will lead closely with a leadership

team of four assistant vice presidents and oversee approximately 150 full-time employees and a budget of \$45 million. Charged with shaping a world-class student experience, the VPSA will lead strategic, innovative initiatives aligned with the university strategic plan. Additionally, the VPSA will foster impactful partnerships across campus and within the broader Wichita community. This role requires a proven leader with a track record of managing cohesive, high-performing teams and modeling a solutions-focused approach to navigating significant changes on campus and in the higher education environment more broadly. The VPSA will be a visible and engaged advocate for student engagement, well-being, and belonging — supporting all students, including undergraduates, graduate students, transfers, adult learners, international students, and veterans. Active collaboration with academic deans, faculty, staff, and student leaders will be essential to cultivating a responsive and student-centered campus culture. Ultimately, the VPSA will continue to shape how student affairs connects co-curricular experiences with academic and career goals, ensuring every student feels supported and empowered.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

Advance student-centered outcomes by establishing measurable goals and executing data-informed growth strategies for the Division of Student Affairs, in alignment with WSU's strategic plan

The VPSA is charged with leading the Division of Student Affairs in cultivating a strategic, innovative, and student-centered campus culture, while serving as a visible advocate for student success and belonging. In collaboration with the Student Affairs team and key campus partners, the VPSA will develop new strategies and programs that align with WSU's ambitious goals and ensure students feel valued, connected, and supported throughout their academic journey. More specifically, the new Wichita Biomedical Campus, located three miles from the main campus, will require the VPSA's attention in the development of policies, guidelines and overall student support and engagement activities. Guided by a holistic framework, the VPSA and Student Affairs will continue to comprehensively support the full spectrum of students' mental health, academic and social wellbeing, and wellness of all students from enrollment to graduation, while recognizing and incorporating the unique needs and lived experiences of WSU's broad spectrum of students. They will offer a data-informed perspective to decision making and the thoughtful allocation of resources while making key investments to augment the student experience and their success while fostering a vibrant campus community.

Proactively champion the work of Student Affairs across campus

The Division of Student Affairs at Wichita State University is a collaborative and deeply engaged team that has established nationally benchmarked standards of excellence. The next VPSA will play a vital role in championing these efforts, working in close partnership with administrators, faculty, staff, students, and the local community to elevate the WSU experience, promote the value of the work, and foster meaningful campus involvement.

A reorganization of services over a decade ago shifted key student support functions — such as enrollment, orientation, and student success initiatives — under Academic Affairs. While the Shocker Success Center has helped create a more seamless structural experience for students, the VPSA will collaborate across divisions to strengthen coordination, improve data-informed decision-making, and ensure that student needs are proactively met. Working with the student affairs team and the senior executive vice president and provost, the VPSA will assess the current structure for effectiveness and best practices. This role will be instrumental in aligning efforts, enhancing transparency, and creating efficiencies that support a unified and student-centered approach to success.

Collaborate with Academic Affairs and other campus stakeholders to systematically enhance the WSU student experience

The VPSA will work enthusiastically with other leaders on critical university priorities around enrollment through student success and retention, safety, and well-being to help ensure that WSU continues to provide access to transformative educational opportunities for all students. An astute relationship builder, the VPSA will find ample opportunity to further reach beyond the boundaries of the Division and partner with Academic Affairs, the Office of Student Success, the Department of Athletics, and other senior administrators to navigate the shifts in student needs while clarifying Student Affairs' identity in this mission critical work. Partnerships will be an essential element of this VPSA's tenure as they look to elevate the student experience outside of the classroom. In all activities, the VPSA will empower Division staff, encourage teamwork and respect, and champion the well-being of all students. An approach that promotes collaboration and communication and clear transparency is paramount. The VPSA will be an advocate with a visible presence on and off campus, actively engaging the student community to build bridges and overcome obstacles to achieve success across the university.

Strategically steward and enhance financial resources

The VPSA will be an astute financial steward, identifying potential revenue streams and efficient means to maximize effectiveness and impact in support of innovative ideas. They will work with the Senior Executive Vice President and Provost, the Senior Vice President for Administration, Finance and Operations, and other senior leaders to develop a clear and transparent budget for the Division. The VPSA will be a strategic leader with a comprehensive understanding of the student affairs landscape and its intersection with university-wide priorities. They will be responsible for assessing and aligning programs, services, facilities, and revenue sources to optimize budget strategy and resource allocation—ensuring that all financial decisions support student success and advance institutional goals.

Provide cohesive, visionary, and transformative leadership for the Division

The VPSA will be a visionary and transformative leader capable of surveying a shifting higher education landscape and working with a deeply committed team of talented student affairs professionals to advance our innovation driven and student-centered mission as a campus. The VPSA will work with student affairs leaders to systematically assess outcomes of the Division, ensure alignment with the university, and to

inform strategic priorities and action(s). The VPSA will foster personnel growth including providing opportunities for education, development, and training. The VPSA will embody a strong commitment to the spectrum of programs and services germane to student affairs and will have a high degree of knowledge of the national landscape of student development in higher education. The VPSA will also prioritize fostering positive culture within the Division of Student Affairs. Through active listening, transparent communication and team empowerment, the VPSA will further strengthen morale and trust – all of which are essential to delivering a transformative student experience.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

WSU seeks a visionary transformational student affairs leader with the skills, empathy, and experience to develop a bold, strategic, and student-focused vision for the Division of Student Affairs. An advanced degree is required, along with ten years of demonstrated progressive leadership experience directly related to student affairs. While no one person will embody all of the following, the successful VPSA candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experiences, and personal qualities:

Strategic Leadership & Planning

- Demonstrated skill in strategic planning, developing measurable goals, implementing strategies and tactics aligned with goals, and using data to assess progress.
- Demonstrated record of work associated with student success including recruitment, retention, and successful graduation.
- Ability to articulate the university's urban-serving mission and translate it into practice across stakeholder groups.

Student-Centeredness

- Evidence of championing policies, practices, programs or initiatives that prioritize student well-being, success, and belonging.
- A track record of engaging students in decision-making, program design, and/or campus life improvements.
- Experience using student feedback and related assessment data to shape services and drive continuous improvement.
- Demonstrated history of accessibility to students through regular engagement, open forums or mentorship.

Financial Stewardship & Resource Development

- Demonstrated ability to align financial planning and budgetary decision with strategic priorities to ensure that resource allocations support goals and enhance student success.
- Proven ability to manage budgets effectively and strategically allocated resources to support and enhance student life initiatives.

- Demonstrated success in securing external funding and leading or contributing to fundraising efforts that advance student-focused programs and initiatives.

Collaboration & Relationship Building

- Ability to build and sustain positive and trusting relationships across diverse campus constituencies, including students, faculty, staff, and external partners
- Skilled in navigating complex organizational dynamics and facilitating inclusive dialogue to promote shared understanding and collective action.
- Ability to work effectively in a team-based environment with individuals from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise.
- Highly effective interpersonal skills and strong verbal and written communication abilities to cultivate mutually beneficial relationships.

Professional Engagement & Expertise

- Active involvement in national or regional professional organizations related to student affairs or higher education.
- Demonstrated commitment to continuous growth and learning through participation in conferences, workshops, and advanced training.
- Recognized expertise in student development, campus life programming, and/or student support services.
- Demonstrated commitment to remaining current with emerging technological applications and best practices in student affairs and ability to implement them in institutional practice.

TO APPLY

Wichita State University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist the Vice President for Student Affairs search committee in its identification and review of candidates. Inquiries, referrals, and resumes accompanied by a cover letter should be submitted via [the search page](#) on the Isaacson, Miller website.

Jacqueline Mildner, Partner
Robin Dougherty, Managing Associate
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Isaacson, Miller

[Wichita State University VPSA Search](#)

Wichita State University (WSU) does not discriminate in its employment practices, or in its educational programs or activities on the basis of age, 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 person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding WSU's non-discrimination policy: Associate Vice President Civil Rights, Title IX Coordinator and ADA Compliance (Telephone: (316) 978-3186), located at Wichita State University, 1845 Fairmount, Wichita, KS 67260, Shocker Success Center, Lower-Level Suite 017.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Wichita State 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 Wichita State University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.