



Search for the Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the
Graduate Division
University of California, Irvine
Irvine, California

THE SEARCH

The University of California, Irvine ("UC Irvine" or "UCI") seeks a collaborative and forward-looking academic leader to serve as Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate Division (Vice Provost and Graduate Dean).

UCI is among the nation's top public research universities and a member of the world-renowned University of California system. As part of UCI's strategic plan, "[Bright Past, Brilliant Future](#)," the University has a goal of growing the strength of their nationally recognized graduate programs and helping more of them gain recognition as being among the best in the country. As UCI considers how best to strengthen and sustain its graduate enterprise amid a changing higher education landscape, the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will play a vital role in leading the development and implementation of a shared vision for graduate education across UCI, reinforcing its standing as an innovative and world-class research university committed to academic excellence and student success. Central to this vision is a strong commitment to graduate students and to ensuring that their perspectives help shape the future of graduate education at UCI.

UC Irvine serves approximately 30,000 undergraduate students, 5,800 graduate students on the general campus, and 2,100 graduate students in Health Sciences. Founded as an interdisciplinary campus, it boasts excellence across the physical, biological, and social sciences, engineering, arts, and humanities, and in its professional schools. *The New York Times* named UCI the top university for "doing the most for the American dream," highlighting its commitment to access and student success, and in *U.S. News & World Report's Best National University 2026* rankings, UCI ranked ninth among all public universities and 32nd out of all universities. A member of the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU), UCI combines the strengths of a major research institution with the dynamism and agility of a younger campus that embraces innovation. In addition, its mission as a public and land grant institution plays a significant role in contributing to the advancement of local, state, national and global communities.

This is a rare and defining moment to join UCI and help shape the future of graduate education within both the campus and the broader University of California (UC) system. The next Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will have the opportunity to leverage UCI's ambition and openness to innovation as part of the UC system's broader commitment to advancing graduate education by piloting new ideas, stabilizing long-term enrollment plans, strengthening collaboration across disciplines, and engaging in systemwide and national conversations about the future of graduate education. While higher education is evolving in complex ways, UCI is ready to think creatively about how graduate education can evolve to meet this moment. As such, the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will help UCI chart a clear path forward, guiding efforts to sustain academic rigor, enhancing the graduate student experience, and developing innovative models that respond to today's realities. As the campus's central advocate for graduate education, the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will partner closely with UCI's Provost, deans, faculty, staff, and students to foster collaboration, align resources, strengthen its vibrant community of scholars, and champion the value of graduate education as crucial to the university's mission and impact.

The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean is the senior academic official responsible for graduate education at UCI. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will be responsible for both graduate education and postdoctoral scholar professional development, with a forward-looking vision of the future of graduate education and 21st-century graduate careers. The ideal candidate will be a tenured full professor and an accomplished scholar with demonstrated expertise in administering graduate education programs, as well as experience working with colleagues across a wide range of scholarly disciplines, and a strong commitment to the principles of shared governance.

To achieve the goals of the Graduate Division, the Dean will address several opportunities and challenges:

- Successfully navigate the current landscape to advance an effective vision for a new chapter in graduate education;
- Ensure increased communication and partnership within the unit and across campus to effectively address current challenges;
- Advance access to graduate education by promoting new, sustainable financial and academic pathways;
- Aggregate and grow resources that will strengthen and sustain graduate education;
- Champion graduate student success and well-being; and
- Serve as a passionate advocate for graduate education at UC Irvine, throughout the UC system, and nationally.

A complete list of the desired qualifications and characteristics can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was produced with the support of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm.

ABOUT UC IRVINE

UC Irvine has experienced an unparalleled combination of rapid growth in enrollment and an equally impressive increase in the size, quality, and influence of its research programs, performing arts, and professional schools since its founding in 1965. UCI is home to over 37,000 undergraduate and graduate students, more than 1,500 ladder-rank faculty, and 19,900 staff members. As a top-rated public university in California, UC Irvine remains committed to excellence and strives to enroll academically talented students who are representative of the state of California.

UCI comprises 15 academic schools: [Charlie Dunlop School of Biological Sciences](#); [Claire Trevor School of the Arts](#); [Donald Bren School of Information and Computer Sciences](#); [Joe C. Wen School of Population and Public Health](#); [Paul Merage School of Business](#); [Henry Samueli School of Engineering](#); [School of Education](#); [School of Humanities](#); [School of Law](#); [School of Medicine](#); [School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences](#); [School of Physical Sciences](#); [School of Social Ecology](#); [School of Social Sciences](#); and the [Sue and Bill Gross School of Nursing](#).

As Orange County's only R1 (very high research activity) university, UC Irvine generates the highest and most intensive level of research activity in the region. In its relatively brief history, UCI has become one of the world's leading research universities, home to many highly distinguished scholars, scientists, and artists. Supported by federal and state agencies, major foundations, and innovative industry partners, research funding at UCI has more than doubled over the past ten years, reaching more than \$600 million in grants and contracts in each of the last three years. The university is particularly known for its research in the fields of cancer studies, neuroscience, and biomedical research, as well as award-winning scholarship in earth systems science/geosciences, education, and psychology. UC Irvine has over 100 [major research centers and institutes](#).

UC Irvine is entering an exciting and challenging new era. With ambitious plans to strengthen contributions in research, education, and service; accelerate the university's ascendancy among globally preeminent research universities; and marshal passions, skills, and ingenuity to further improve people's lives, there is great momentum and ambition across the campus. Developed in 2016 and updated in 2023, UCI's [strategic plan](#), Bright Past, Brilliant Future, is based on four guiding pillars:

- Growth that Makes a Difference: Expanding Our Capacity to Improve Lives
- First in Class: Elevating the Student Experience to Prepare Future Leaders
- Great Partners: Making Regional and Global Connections that Enhance Our Mission and Serve the People
- New Paths for Our Brilliant Future: Forging Best Practices to Power the Coming Century

[UC Irvine recently completed a major fundraising campaign, surpassing its \\$2 billion fundraising goal](#) ahead of schedule and engaging 93,000+ alumni. The campaign represents the largest philanthropic and alumni engagement initiative in the university's history, as well as in Orange County. As of the 2025 fiscal

year, the UC Irvine Foundation's endowment exceeds \$1 billion, further strengthening the university's long-term financial sustainability.

UCI is located in a welcoming and economically vibrant community. Just 15 minutes from the beach and an hour from metropolitan Los Angeles and scenic mountain environments, the campus enjoys a prime Southern California location. UC Irvine is Orange County's second-largest employer, contributing \$7 billion annually to the local economy and \$8 billion statewide. Together with the community, UC Irvine is transforming healthcare and wellness, advancing the American dream through student success, accelerating world-changing research, and illuminating the human experience.

Leadership at UC Irvine

[Howard Gillman](#), Ph.D., was appointed the sixth chancellor of the University of California, Irvine, in September 2014, having previously served as Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor since June 2013 and interim chancellor since July 1, 2014. Before coming to UC Irvine, he served for more than two decades as a professor of political science, history, and law at the University of Southern California, including five years as dean of the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. He has received many awards for his scholarship and for his teaching excellence and dedication to students. He received his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, all in political science, from UCLA.

[Hal Stern](#), Ph.D., is the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor of UC Irvine. He previously served as founding chair of the Department of Statistics, Dean of the Donald Bren School of Information and Computer Sciences, and Vice Provost for Academic Planning. Prior to joining the faculty at UC Irvine, he held faculty positions at Iowa State University and Harvard University. Under the direction of the Chancellor, the Provost assumes primary responsibility for the academic and organizational functioning of the campus and the advancement of the University's missions in research, teaching, and service. He earned a bachelor's in mathematics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a Ph.D. in statistics from Stanford University.

A point of distinction for the University of California is its tradition of shared governance in which the faculty share responsibility for guiding the operation and management of the University while preserving the authority of the governing board, the University of California Board of Regents, to ultimately set policy. Chiefly responsible for maintaining the University of California's high-quality education, the Academic Senate approves and oversees courses and curricula, and establishes requirements for admissions, certificates, and degrees. It also advises the administration on budgetary, personnel, and other matters pertinent to UC operations.

ABOUT GRADUATE EDUCATION AT UCI AND THE GRADUATE DIVISION

UCI offers 135 graduate academic and professional degree programs across 15 different academic units. Its graduate programs are consistently ranked among the nation's best, with 29 doctoral programs placing within the top 25 among public universities nationally. In the 2024-2025 academic year, UCI awarded 1,994 Masters degrees, 553 Ph.D.s, 110 M.D.s, 155 J.D.s, 17 D.N.P.s, and 38 Pharm.D.s. The UCI Graduate Division provides a [directory of degree programs](#) that is organized by academic school and lists all current offerings.

As one of the nation's leading research universities, UCI has a steadfast commitment to rigorous academics with cutting-edge research and is a thriving generator of innovation and discovery. Graduate and postdoctoral scholars at UCI are equipped with the tools of analysis, expression, and cultural understanding necessary for leadership in today's world.

UCI provides the most generous and comprehensive on-campus housing guarantee for graduate students in the UC system, including a guarantee of on-campus housing for all newly admitted, full-time Ph.D., M.F.A., and J.D. students and for many medical students. Additionally, the university operates five on-campus childcare centers (serving infants through age 12) through [UCI Child Care Services](#).

The [UC Irvine Graduate Division](#) provides leadership on all graduate education matters, working with scholars engaged in study, teaching, and research in the pursuit of a graduate degree or postdoctoral training. The Graduate Division enhances the educational experience by engaging and leading on all facets spanning the graduate student academic and professional life spectrum: student success, academic progress and advocacy, fellowships, funding and financial support, diversity, employment, and wellness and professional development. A considerable portion of the Division's work involved direct interaction with students, including listening to their concerns, advising on academic and personal challenges, and fostering an environment where graduate students feel supported throughout their journey at UC Irvine.

The Graduate Division holds a central role in supporting graduate students, faculty, and programs across campus. The Division offers a variety of services for its graduate students, including:

- **Graduate Admissions:** The Division's admissions team oversees program applications, guides applicants through admission criteria and academic policies, and offers support to academic units across campus.
- **Fellowship and Funding Support:** A variety of support options are provided for graduate students in the form of university-funded fellowships, scholarships and grants.
- **Professional Development:** The Division's Graduate & Postdoctoral Scholar Resource Center functions as a central hub for professional development resources provided by the Graduate Division. Graduate students and postdoctoral scholars have the opportunity to participate in workshops, events, and academic courses that foster their personal and professional growth.

- **Academic Services:** The Division coordinates enrollment services for graduate students and is the point of contact for processes related to degree paperwork, changes in major, degree status, filing fee and coursework petitions, and oversees degree certification and re-admission.
- **Student Support:** The Graduate Division team plays an important role in providing comprehensive support for graduate students. They work directly with students to navigate and address academic challenges, resolve issues, and develop strategies for both personal and academic success. The division also facilitates regular open communication with student government, hosts weekly office hours, and organizes town halls to ensure student voices are heard and concerns are addressed. In addition, the team advises on academic and employment policies and analyzes graduate student financials related to employment remission and funding.

ROLE OF THE VICE PROVOST AND GRADUATE DEAN

Reporting to the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, this leader will collaborate closely with other university leaders, including vice provosts, vice chancellors, deans and associate deans, department chairs, graduate program directors, Academic Senate's Graduate Council, as well as those in the UC system to manage graduate funding and ensure standards of excellence, fairness, and equity across all graduate programs. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will provide leadership and oversight in strategic planning, implementation, coordination, review and support of graduate education, and will ensure accountability in all processes and policies related to graduate education. They will oversee central communications relating to graduate and postdoctoral education, manage fellowship and operations budgets, and set priorities for resource allocation and utilization.

The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will oversee graduate admissions, academic progress, financial support, student affairs, professional development and the granting of doctorate and master's degrees, postdoctoral education and training, and related services. In addition, they will work to strengthen alignment between central and school-level priorities, build transparency in communication and decision-making, and enhance the systems and infrastructure that support graduate student and program success. They will partner closely with Associated Graduate Students, the elected representatives of the graduate student body, on matters related to graduate student success and wellbeing. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will have a visible and approachable presence within the graduate student community, actively engaging with students to advance initiatives that promote their success and ensure their voices are heard and reflected in key decisions.

The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will oversee a talented and dedicated staff, including an Associate Vice Provost, Associate Dean, Assistant Dean and staff organized in the following teams: Communications; External Affairs; Postdoctoral Affairs & Extramural Support; Admissions & Academic Affairs; Technologies; Enrollment; Graduate Recruitment & Retention; Graduate Student Affairs; and Finance, Operation, & Data Management. They will manage a budget of approximately \$5.2 million and oversee approximately \$74 million annually in graduate student support.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VICE PROVOST AND GRADUATE DEAN

The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will play a key role in guiding the future of graduate education at UCI for years to come. This individual will be a thoughtful communicator, collaborator, and consensus-builder, who will bring clarity, alignment, and transparency to a complex academic environment. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will promote a culture of shared purpose within the Graduate Division and across campus. They will balance strategic vision with operational acumen to ensure that UCI's graduate enterprise continues to grow in strength, coherence, and sustainability. In doing so, the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will be expected to address several key opportunities and challenges, detailed below:

Successfully navigate the current landscape to advance an effective vision for a new chapter in graduate education

Charged with guiding UCI's graduate enterprise through a period of change and opportunity, the next Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will provide clear direction as UCI works to strengthen and sustain graduate education in a dynamic higher education environment. In close partnership with academic units, the Graduate Council, and associate deans of the schools, this leader will guide graduate education's strategic direction to reflect UCI's interdisciplinary strengths and commitment to academic excellence. They will also partner with academic schools and programs on pedagogical reforms for a new era, to ensure that teaching and learning approaches evolve to meet the emerging needs of their student population.

The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will bring clarity and coordination to a decentralized structure and will work to create stronger alignment between academic units while maintaining the flexibility that has long supported disciplinary distinction and allowed each school to thrive. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean should have an awareness of [ongoing UC conversations](#) and the national dialogue on the future of graduate education and should assess and refine existing policies, practices, and structures to ensure that they are consistent and responsive to current needs. This leader must think creatively and deliberatively about how challenges can be met to guide UCI toward a unified direction that balances innovation with long-term sustainability.

Ensure increased communication and partnership within the unit and across campus to effectively address current challenges

This position calls for a leader who has demonstrated experience building and sustaining trust and communicating transparently across all parts of the university, from faculty and staff to administrators and students. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will be a bridge builder and trusted partner across the university community. To ensure that faculty, students, and staff feel informed and engaged, the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will work closely with the Graduate Council of the Academic Senate, which sets policies and advises the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean on their implementation. Together, they ensure that policies are implemented clearly and promptly, and that decisions and funding matters are communicated transparently and widely.

Within the Graduate Division, the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will model openness and collaboration, continue to look for ways to maximize efficiencies, and streamline processes to create smoother systems that better serve students and programs. They will also be attentive to the well-being and development of their staff – recognizing the expertise each staff member brings, providing opportunities for professional development, and ensuring that the Division’s internal structure is well positioned to support the campus’s ambitious goals for graduate education.

Advance access to graduate education by promoting new, sustainable financial and academic pathways

UCI is an intellectual hub for scholars and students from various backgrounds and has an unwavering commitment to ensuring all are included in campus life. The next Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will strengthen UCI’s ability to attract and support talented students by advancing accessible and sustainable pathways to graduate study. This includes promoting sustainable funding models, transparent financial support structures, and practices that enhance affordability and exploring alternative ways to support students. The next leader will also explore new academic pathways that reflect changing student and workforce needs while maintaining UCI’s academic rigor.

Aggregate and grow resources that will strengthen and sustain graduate education

Resource development and allocation is critical to ensure UCI’s Graduate Division can operate at full capacity. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean plays an important fundraising role in partnership with schools, with a particular emphasis on helping to increase financial support for graduate students. This includes engaging with donors effectively and securing extramural funding. Increased support for fellowships allows UCI to compete with other top-tier institutions.

Equally important will be the work of aligning and integrating existing campus resources to strengthen infrastructure and improve consistency across schools. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will also advocate for resources through active partnerships to identify new opportunities for investment and collaboration. In addition, they will work closely with the Vice Chancellor for Research, particularly given the amount of graduate support that is tied to grants. As a result of these efforts, the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will help enhance systems and capacity to ensure the Division is positioned to deliver efficient and transparent services to students, academic units, and the broader campus.

Champion graduate student success and well-being

The new Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will find effective ways to build the graduate culture, in and out of the classroom. Importantly, they will bring a commitment to be visible and actively engaged with graduate students. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will create opportunities for open conversation to listen to student perspectives, understand their experiences, and advocate for decisions that positively impact their experience and success. Graduate students have distinct needs from undergraduates—social, housing, financial, and otherwise. Student wellness must be sustained and tailored accordingly. While the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean is not directly responsible for providing services such as food, housing, or mental health support, they are responsible for ensuring that these and related issues are

acknowledged and addressed through appropriate University channels. Additionally, the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean must ensure continued outcomes-driven innovations in professional and career development for graduate students, connecting them with opportunities that prepare them for diverse pathways within and beyond academia. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will be a strong steward and enhancer of graduate student life, providing vital linkages to other areas and offices of the University, and shaping and administering policy with an eye toward the whole student.

Serve as a passionate advocate for graduate education at UC Irvine, throughout the UC system, and nationally

UCI has risen to the top tier of American research universities in its short history, but it is still nimble enough to set the tone of what graduate education can and should look like in the 21st century. The new Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will be responsible for broadcasting UCI's success on a local and national stage, and educating the public on the importance of graduate education and the significant role that developing graduate students in professional and non-professional degrees can play in the local, national, and international landscape.

The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will also work with local businesses to determine employment needs and what credentialing programs UCI can offer to fill existing gaps. This leader will also serve as a strong advocate within the UC system, representing UCI's interests in discussions about graduate education policy, funding, and opportunity, and ensuring the campus's voice helps shape systemwide priorities. The Vice Provost and Graduate Dean represents UCI to external constituencies, including the UC Council of Graduate Deans, the AAU Association of Graduate Schools, the Council of Graduate Schools, and other forums. Through this engagement, the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean will elevate the visibility and value of graduate education as essential to research, innovation, and societal impact.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate must possess a Ph.D., M.D., J.D., or an equivalent terminal degree in their field. While no single candidate will possess all the ideal qualifications, the successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences, knowledge, and abilities important to the role:

- A strong academic record commensurate with appointment to the rank of full professor with tenure is required;
- A desire to support a culture of integrity and mutual respect;
- A commitment to creating an inclusive environment for the student body, faculty, and staff;
- A proven, demonstrated commitment to shared governance and openness to collaborative relationships with campus units;
- Working knowledge of grantsmanship, particularly in a graduate student context (e.g., training grants, etc.);
- A commitment to innovative and engaging graduate education;

- Demonstrated skill in navigating decentralized academic environments and aligning diverse perspectives to promote clarity, consistency, and shared goals;
- Excellent financial strategy and financial management skills, and demonstrated experience working with complex budgeting models;
- An interdisciplinary thinker, committed to building frameworks that will facilitate collaboration across disciplines;
- The ability to communicate to staff, faculty, students, and others, and to build cohesiveness and community among constituents; a commitment to transparent communication that builds trust across the university;
- Demonstrated ability to understand and react to current complexities, including the political, financial, technological, and global challenges that public universities face today;
- The capacity to serve as an advocate for graduate education within the UC system and externally at state and national levels;
- Honesty, integrity, enthusiasm, energy, and perspective; a strong work ethic, supported by commitment, decision-making, and follow-through; and
- The desire and ability to develop a deep appreciation for the mission and aspirations of UCI, with the capacity to effectively articulate the Division's vision to key partners and constituents.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

UC Irvine is required to provide a reasonable estimate of the compensation range for this role. This range takes into account the wide range of factors that are considered in making compensation decisions, including, but not limited to, experience, skills, knowledge, abilities, education, licensure and certifications, and other business and organizational needs. The full annual salary range for the Vice Provost and Graduate Dean is \$300,000 to \$350,000. It is not typical for an individual to be offered a salary at or near the top of the range for a position. Salary offers will be commensurate with a final candidate's qualifications and experience.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND SUGGESTIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. **For best consideration, please apply by Wednesday, January 14, 2026.** Inquiries, suggestions, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the [Isaacson, Miller website](#). Electronic submission of materials is required.

David Bellshaw, Cati Mitchell-Crossley, Leslie Lemus, and Thea Kosmack
Isaacson, Miller

The University of California, Irvine 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, age, protected veteran status, or other protected categories covered by the [UC anti-discrimination policy](#).

As a condition of employment, the finalist will be required to disclose if they are subject to any final administrative or judicial decisions within the last seven years determining that they committed any misconduct.

- “Misconduct” means any violation of the policies or laws governing conduct at the applicant’s previous place of employment, including, but not limited to, violations of policies or laws prohibiting sexual harassment, sexual assault, or other forms of harassment or discrimination, as defined by the employer.
- [UC Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [UC Anti-Discrimination Policy for Employees, Students and Third Parties](#)
- [APM - 035: Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination in Employment](#).

As a University employee, you will be required to comply with all applicable University policies and/or collective bargaining agreements, as may be amended from time to time. Federal, state, or local government directives may impose additional requirements.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by our client. 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 our client governs.