



# Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs





## THE SEARCH

The University of Wisconsin–Madison (UW–Madison) invites nominations and applications for an innovative leader to serve as the next Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (Provost). This position provides an opportunity to be the top academic leader at one of the nation's premier public research universities.

UW–Madison is the [Universities of Wisconsin's](#) flagship university, defined by its scale, scope, groundbreaking impact, and unwavering public mission. As a land-grant, AAU member university with one of the largest research enterprises in the nation, UW–Madison is uniquely positioned to address the most complex challenges of our time. Its foundational commitment to the [Wisconsin Idea](#)—that the university's influence should extend beyond the classroom to improve lives across the state and around the world—continues to animate its every action. UW–Madison is a campus where intellectual ambition meets public purpose, and where a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff are empowered to contribute meaningfully to society.



Today, UW–Madison stands at a moment of extraordinary momentum. Building on a strong foundation of academic excellence and institutional strength, the university is investing in faculty and facilities to fuel its continued success. The campus is home to a dynamic cohort of [deans and academic leaders](#) who are eager to collaborate across boundaries and co-create new models of interdisciplinary innovation. The [RISE initiative](#) exemplifies this spirit-catalyzing over 100 new faculty hires and investing in computational research, collaborative infrastructure, and cross-campus scholarship. Financially sound and philanthropically supported, UW–Madison continues to evolve its physical and academic landscape. The university is poised to ascend further among the top public universities in the country.

The successful candidate for Provost at UW—Madison will be an experienced academic leader with the operational sophistication, financial savvy, and emotional intelligence to navigate one of the nation's most complex and vibrant public research universities. They will bring a deep understanding of the evolving landscape of higher education and the capacity to lead with both strategic acumen and an execution-oriented mindset. Serving a university dedicated to fulfilling its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background and viewpoint, the next Provost will advocate for pluralism in all its forms—intellectual, cultural, and experiential—ensuring that the university remains a place where a broad range of perspectives are not only welcomed but essential to academic inquiry and institutional excellence.

The Provost will inspire ambition across the academic enterprise, co-creating bold initiatives that advance interdisciplinary collaboration, elevate scholarly output and recognition, and expand the university's global impact. They will communicate with transparency, uphold the principles of shared governance, and foster trust across a broad and engaged campus community in a politically astute and institutionally agile way. The Provost will work in close partnership with the Chancellor, the Deans, Vice Provosts, and other senior leaders to ensure the university rises to the pressing challenges facing higher education today.

## UNIVERSITIES OF WISCONSIN

The Universities of Wisconsin comprise a system of [13 public universities](#) united under a shared mission to provide accessible, high-quality education; foster research and innovation; and serve communities across the state. With campuses located throughout the state, the Universities of Wisconsin educate over 161,000 students annually and drive economic, cultural, and civic vitality throughout Wisconsin. Each campus contributes to the system's collective strength. At the heart of this system is the University of Wisconsin—Madison.

The Universities of Wisconsin are governed by an 18-member [Board of Regents](#), which sets policy and oversees the system's direction. A system President, appointed by the Board, leads the overall administration and coordination across the 13 universities. Each campus is led by a Chancellor who manages day-to-day operations and reports to the President. More information about the Universities of Wisconsin can be found [here](#).

## UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—MADISON

As a public land-grant university with a prolific research enterprise, UW—Madison is home to those driven by a desire to explore new worlds and apply new ideas to real-world problems. With a total annual budget of over \$4 billion, including more than \$1.7 billion in annual research expenditures, UW—Madison has ranked in the top ten for national research spending every year since 1972. Few universities match UW—Madison's incredible depth and remarkable breadth. The university's [23 schools, colleges, institutes, and divisions](#) include an academic medical center; a college of engineering; schools of veterinary medicine, pharmacy, and nursing; a school of computer, data, and information sciences; a land-grant agricultural research program and extension program; and a wide array of physical and natural science, social science,



humanities, and arts programs. Ranked 39th overall and 13th among the nation's public institutions by U.S. News and World Report, UW–Madison has been named a [“new Ivy”](#) by Forbes. UW–Madison generates \$30 billion annually in economic impact.

UW–Madison is a supportive academic community of 51,822 students, including 37,198 undergraduates, with an 18:1 student-to-faculty ratio. Its rigorous [academic programs](#) include 136 undergraduate majors, 148 master’s programs, 120 doctoral programs, and numerous professional degrees. More than 2,000 full-time faculty and over 20,000 staff contribute to the university’s incredible learning and research environment. Reflecting a strong commitment to student success, UW–Madison boasts a first-year retention rate of 96.3%, a four-year graduation rate of 78%, and a six-year graduation rate of 89.7%.

UW–Madison’s faculty are members of and leaders in some of the most prestigious academies and professional organizations in the U.S. and around the world, including Nobel Laureates and MacArthur “Genius Grant” honorees. More quick facts about UW–Madison are available [here](#).



## Shared Governance

Shared governance at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is a foundational principle that ensures faculty, academic staff, university staff, and students all have a voice in shaping university policies and operations. This collaborative model is rooted in Wisconsin state law, which mandates inclusive decision-making across campus constituencies. Each governance group—[faculty](#), [academic staff](#), [university staff](#),

[and students](#)—organizes independently and appoints representatives to participate in institutional governance. Through committees, assemblies, and advisory roles, these groups influence decisions on academics, research, campus climate, and leadership hiring. The result is a transparent, inclusive, and participatory system that strengthens the university’s mission and community.

## Research and Innovation

The University of Wisconsin–Madison’s research enterprise of \$1.7 billion is distinguished by a legacy of groundbreaking discoveries and a robust infrastructure that positions it among the nation’s leading public research institutions. From the early 20th-century identification of vitamins A and B to the Nobel Prize-winning discovery of reverse transcriptase, UW–Madison has consistently contributed to breakthrough innovations.

The [Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research \(OVCR\)](#) supports university research efforts through strategic funding mechanisms and collaborative infrastructure. OVCR also supports the work of UW–Madison’s [18 major research centers and institutes](#) that collectively secure over \$160 million in external research awards annually. Explore details about the university’s research initiatives [here](#).

The [Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation \(WARF\)](#), established to manage the university’s patented technologies and invest the revenue to support future university research, stands as the nation’s oldest independent research foundation and has served as a model for similar technology transfer entities nationwide. The [WARF annual grant](#)—often referred to as the “Margin of Excellence”—enables high-impact, cross-disciplinary initiatives, while the Fall Research Competition fosters faculty-led innovation and strengthens extramural funding proposals.

### RISE Initiative

The Wisconsin Research, Innovation, and Scholarly Excellence (RISE) Initiative, launched by Chancellor Jennifer L. Mnookin in February 2024, represents a transformative investment in UW–Madison’s academic and research enterprise. Designed to address complex challenges of critical importance to Wisconsin and the global community, RISE is a multifaceted strategy focused on accelerated faculty hiring, enhancement of research infrastructure, interdisciplinary collaboration, and expanded student opportunities. The initiative builds upon UW–Madison’s longstanding strengths in diverse academic disciplines and its proven capacity to engage with industry and community partners. Over the next three to five years, RISE will facilitate the hiring of over 100 new faculty members—an approximate 40% increase in hiring—thereby positioning the university to deepen its research excellence and societal impact.

Financially, RISE is underpinned by strategic revenue growth from increased research productivity and enrollment, complemented by legislative support and philanthropic investment. The university’s federal research portfolio has seen an average annual growth of 8% over the past five years, and recent legislative



changes have granted UW–Madison greater flexibility in revenue allocation. These resources will be directed toward building a robust infrastructure that supports transformative discoveries and their translation into real-world solutions. RISE also integrates research into the educational mission, ensuring that students—both undergraduate and graduate—benefit from cutting-edge knowledge and are equipped to thrive in a rapidly evolving workforce. The initiative’s thematic focus areas will not only drive innovation but also reshape curricula to prepare students for leadership in emerging fields. Discover insights into RISE [here](#).



## Finance

The University of Wisconsin–Madison’s strong financial position for fiscal year 202425– reflects the institution’s scale, breadth of excellence, and enduring strength. The university generated over \$5.1 billion in total revenue, sourced from five primary streams: state government investments, federal government investments, tuition, research grants, and philanthropic contributions. As at many public institutions, philanthropy and tuition have grown as a proportion of revenue to create a more balanced and sustainable funding portfolio.

UW–Madison’s strategic stewardship of resources demonstrates a robust capacity to sustain excellence while expanding access and affordability. Academic units account for 60% of total expenditures, affirming UW–Madison’s commitment to its core missions of education, research, and outreach. An additional 24%

supports student financial aid and essential academic infrastructure, while 9% funds auxiliary units such as housing and campus services. The university's affordability initiatives are particularly noteworthy: in 202425–, 67% of bachelor's degree recipients graduated with zero student loan debt, and 25% of Wisconsin resident undergraduates benefited from institutional aid programs like Bucky's Tuition Promise and Bucky's Pell Pathway, which are funded entirely through institutional and private sources. The institution's ability to graduate students in under four years on average, retain talent within the state, and produce a high return on investment makes UW–Madison a vital engine for workforce and economic development.

### **New Budget Model**

UW–Madison is in a strong financial position and is proactively updating its budget model to ensure long-term sustainability and enhance support for its core missions. The university is currently inviting community feedback on the proposed [modified activity-based budget](#), which will be deployed in FY 2027. At the same time, UW–Madison is preparing for some of the financial forces impacting higher education more broadly. For [fiscal year 2026](#), the university introduced modest reductions—5% for schools and colleges and 7% for administrative units—as well as pausing select capital projects and tightening hiring and travel policies. This forward-looking approach reflects UW–Madison's commitment to innovation, efficiency, and maintaining excellence in the face of evolving financial landscapes.

### **Leadership | [Dr. Jennifer L. Mnookin](#)**



The 30th leader in UW–Madison's history, Chancellor Mnookin is a top legal scholar dedicated to advancing the university's mission in research and education. Since taking office in 2022, Chancellor Mnookin has launched the Wisconsin RISE initiative, championed programs to meet the full financial needs of Pell-eligible undergraduate students, launched a comprehensive sustainability initiative, and unveiled a plan



to foster innovation and entrepreneurship across campus. Most recently, she launched the Wisconsin Exchange: Pluralism in Practice, a campus-wide initiative to enhance viewpoint diversity, promote vigorous discourse and debate, and intensify the campus culture of civil dialogue. Before coming to UW–Madison, she was the dean of the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law and has also held faculty positions at the University of Virginia and Harvard. She holds degrees from Harvard, Yale Law School, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



## ROLE OF THE PROVOST

As the chief academic officer of the university, the Provost plays a key role in creating and implementing the academic vision of the university in close partnership with the chancellor. The Provost leads the deans from UW–Madison's schools and colleges, the Division of Continuing Studies, Extension, the International Division, and University Libraries to collaboratively advance the academic mission, focused on excellence, creativity, community, and the Wisconsin Idea. As the leader of a talented and committed team of Deans and Vice Provosts, the Provost will build upon the existing excellence, knowledge, and skills of academic leadership and other stakeholders, including the Universities of Wisconsin and the state legislature. In addition to playing a leading role in the strategic vision for the academic enterprise, the Provost also holds responsibility for effective execution of both key strategic academic initiatives and the effective day-to-day oversight and operation of the academic enterprise. To sustain a world-class university, the Provost must be a close partner with the chancellor and work collaboratively and effectively with senior



administrative officers. The Provost reports directly to the chancellor and must have the chancellor's complete trust and confidence. The Provost represents the university on academic issues with internal and external constituents and acts on behalf of the chancellor when appropriate.

## THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

The Office of the Provost at UW–Madison serves as the central hub for academic leadership and administrative coordination across the institution. It provides the guiding vision and [strategic framework](#) to advance the university's academic mission, ensuring alignment with the Wisconsin Idea—UW–Madison's foundational principle that the university's work should benefit the broader public.

Key functional areas under the Office of the Provost include academic planning and institutional research, faculty and staff affairs, enrollment management, teaching and learning, continuing studies, international programs, libraries, information technology, and strategic consulting. The office also supports student success through initiatives such as the [Wisconsin Experience](#), which integrates academic and co-curricular learning, and the [Center for Teaching, Learning & Mentoring \(CTLM\)](#), which partners with instructors to enhance pedagogy. Through these efforts, the Office of the Provost ensures that UW–Madison remains a leader in higher education, fostering innovation, inclusion, and excellence across all facets of university life. Visit this page to learn more about the office [here](#).



## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PROVOST

### **Co-create and implement visionary academic initiatives.**

UW–Madison seeks a Provost who is both a strategic executor and thought partner, able to co-create bold, forward-looking academic initiatives and translate them into effective action across disciplines. This leader must unify diverse colleges and centers to foster interdisciplinary collaboration that strengthens education and research excellence while upholding transparency and shared governance. The Provost should balance visionary academic leadership with pragmatic management, navigating through political dynamics and maintaining open communication to build broad-based support for new initiatives.

### **Lead with operational clarity and emotional intelligence.**

To lead a large, complex, decentralized public research university, the next Provost must possess a strong capacity for tactical execution and operational oversight—someone who can skillfully navigate institutional processes, manage competing interests, and make difficult decisions with wisdom, sound judgment, and empathy. Equally important is the ability to engage with diverse stakeholders—faculty, staff, deans, and students—fostering trust and collaboration across units while minimizing a sense of competition or administrative barriers. By embodying both strategic focus and genuine openness to listen, the Provost can unify the campus community and drive progress aligned with UW–Madison’s mission and stature as a leading research university.

### **Communicate transparently and uphold shared governance.**

Clear, consistent communication is essential—especially in explaining how decisions might affect different parts of the university. The Provost must embrace shared governance by engaging faculty and stakeholders early in decision-making processes and reinforcing the values of transparency, inclusion, and institutional trust. By cultivating a culture where a range of voices are heard and respected, the Provost can bridge divides within the decentralized campus structure and support UW–Madison’s ability to navigate change thoughtfully while advancing its public mission.

### **Inspire academic ambition and excellence.**

UW–Madison needs a dynamic Provost who not only celebrates the university’s many achievements but also motivates the community to pursue a more ambitious and impactful future. This leader must recognize and elevate the unique areas of excellence that define the institution and identify areas poised for advancement, galvanizing faculty and students to pursue transformative scholarship and learning. By collaborating across colleges and centers, the Provost can catalyze innovative academic programs that enhance UW–Madison’s national and global reputation. Just as vital is cultivating an environment where rigorous inquiry thrives alongside creative problem-solving, empowering emerging leaders and change agents within the faculty, staff, and student body.



**Play a central role in the successful roll-out and adoption of a new financial model.**

UW–Madison is currently undergoing a transition from an “incremental” budget allocation to a more decentralized “hybrid” budget approach that more closely follows research and instructional activity. UW–Madison decided on this approach to ensure collaboration across the university and reduce potential redundancies and inefficiencies. Implementing and adjusting this new approach requires a Provost who has a sophisticated understanding of university budgets and experience navigating complex finances. Working closely with the chancellor, the Vice Chancellor of Finance and Administration, and the deans, the Provost will help lead a smooth transition.

**Advocate for pluralism and inclusive intellectual engagement.**

The Provost must be a visible and eloquent advocate for pluralism in all its forms—identity, background, viewpoint, and perspective—serving as a thoughtful spokesperson who champions the value of engaging across differences. The ideal candidate will support efforts that encourage intellectual engagement across political and ideological divides, fostering a campus culture of respectful dialogue and inclusive excellence. This leader will help navigate sensitive issues with nuance and integrity, supporting initiatives that promote robust discourse without compromising academic freedom.

**Strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration and scholarly integration.**

A successful Provost will mobilize the university’s intellectual diversity by promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and cross-college initiatives. This role demands a deep appreciation for the breadth of scholarship and a commitment to breaking down silos to advance shared academic goals. By bringing together deans around collaborative programs and initiatives, supporting interdisciplinary research institutes and centers, and continuing interdisciplinary hiring programs, the Provost can further strategic opportunities to place UW–Madison at the forefront of solving societal challenges.



## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Candidates must possess a record of scholarship, teaching, and experience that qualifies them for tenure and for the most senior academic leadership role at UW–Madison.

The skills needed by an effective Provost include:

1. Deep knowledge of the research, teaching, and public-service missions of large public, research-intensive, land-grant universities. This includes:
  - Ability to establish and maintain strong working relationship with a variety of partners and constituents in an environment of shared governance;
  - Experience working effectively in an environment that requires prioritization and efficient use of existing resources and strategic creation of new resources;
  - Experience in managing faculty and staff grievances, complaints, and crises;
  - Experience in effectively managing staff and budgets;
  - The ability to build consensus in a complex organization;
  - The creativity and problem-solving skills needed to address both challenges and opportunities and to drive positive change;
  - The ability to move effectively between ‘big picture’ institutional thinking and grounded, plans for execution, and the skills to lead and drive success from plan to operational reality.
2. Substantial experience in higher education and the skills to create and implement an ambitious vision for excellence in the context of a large public research university. This includes:
  - Demonstrated experience in creating innovative educational and research programs and seeing them through to success, with continual assessment and, as needed, iteration;
  - Demonstrated experience in faculty, staff, and administrative hiring, retention, and professional development;
  - Evidence of and commitment to fostering a healthy climate that enables success for all members of the university community;
  - Evidence of and commitment to, and a record of success in, fostering diversity of background and viewpoint across an organization;
  - Evidence of and commitment to, and experience creating and sustaining, an excellent student experience that includes both in-classroom and out-of-classroom learning experiences;



- Experience working with alumni and other supporters, involving them on campus and promoting philanthropy.
3. Personal skills and values that result in effective leadership at UW–Madison. This includes:
- A commitment to excellence coupled with a collaborative approach to working with staff, faculty, and students in which everyone is treated as a respected partner;
  - A commitment to fostering an environment in which students and employees, regardless of their background, their identity, or their viewpoint, can reach their full potential, and in which we recognize that diversity of all kinds - from identity to viewpoint - strengthens our ability to fulfill our mission;
  - Commitment to the highest level of ethical behavior in all aspects of the job;
  - Ability to get things done in a timely and effective manner, achieving measurable progress on top campus priorities and initiatives under the guidance of the Chancellor and in close collaboration with the other Vice Chancellors, Deans, and other campus leaders, including faculty, staff, students, and shared governance leaders;
  - A commitment to the Wisconsin Idea and the importance of outreach and service beyond campus boundaries;
  - Excellent communication and interpersonal skills; demonstrated ability to address complex issues with sound judgement and effective change-management strategies. Proven ability to make difficult decisions after consultation with a range of stakeholders.



## 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:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-wisconsin-madison/provost-and-vice-chancellor-academic-affairs>.

Kate Barry, John Muckle, Tiffany Weber, and Kaitlin Cruz  
Isaacson, Miller

---

**Important information regarding confidentiality:** Unless confidentiality is requested in writing, UW–Madison is required by Wis. Stat. sec. 19.36(7) to release the names of all applicants to anyone who requests that information. If you would like to request confidentiality, please indicate that via this survey: <https://www.research.net/r/UWM-Provost-Confidentiality>. All candidates who advance to the finalist stage will be announced publicly prior to their campus visits.

The University of Wisconsin is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We promote excellence by acknowledging skills and expertise from all backgrounds and encourage all qualified individuals to apply. Please visit <https://apps.diversity.wisc.edu/questionnaire.aspx> to complete voluntary self-identification information.

Requisition #: JR10005435

If you need to request a disability or pregnancy-related accommodation for any step in the process (e.g., application, interview, pre-employment testing, etc.), you can find information about how to make a request at the following website: <https://employeeabilities.wisc.edu/disability-accommodation-information-for-applicants/>

Employment will require a criminal background check. It will also require you and your references to answer questions regarding misconduct, including sexual violence and sexual harassment.

The Annual Security and Fire Safety Report (<https://jobs.wisc.edu/asr>) contains current campus safety and disciplinary policies, crime statistics for the previous 3 calendar years, and on-campus student housing fire safety policies and fire statistics for the previous 3 calendar years. UW–Madison will provide a paper copy upon request; please contact the University of Wisconsin Police Department.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by UW–Madison. 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 UW–Madison would supersede any conflicting information in this document.



