



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Search for the Vice Provost for Academic Strategy and Budget

University of Minnesota

Minneapolis, Minnesota

THE SEARCH

The University of Minnesota (UMN), one of the most prestigious comprehensive, public land-grant research universities in the nation, seeks a strategic and collaborative leader to serve as its inaugural Vice Provost for Academic Strategy and Budget (VPASB). This is an exciting opportunity to impact the academic budget model and academic programming priorities at a world-class institution at a moment of new presidential and executive leadership, strategic renewal, and evolving fiscal complexity.

Reporting to the Executive Vice President and Provost (EVPP), the Vice Provost for Academic Strategy and Budget (VPASB) will be primarily responsible for the development, communication, execution, and management of academic budget prioritization and innovative strategies and initiatives on behalf of the Office of the EVPP and across the University of Minnesota campuses, and aligning academic programming, strategies, and performance with the University's new strategic roadmap, [Elevate Extraordinary 2030](#). The VPASB will focus on accelerating organizational performance through cohesive budget and strategy planning and execution, ensuring the financial and operational health and success of the Office of the EVPP by facilitating the development and execution of the EVPP organization's budget. This individual will work in close collaboration with other executive team members, including the Vice President and Chief Budget Officer, the Director of University Data and Institutional Reporting, academic deans, Chief Financial Managers, and campus Chancellors.

Given that UMN is a large, complex, and highly distributed institution, the VPASB must be an accessible leader, clear communicator, and genuine collaborator with strong financial aptitude and a demonstrated capacity for creativity and innovation. The VPASB will also need to liaise and communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders across the University of Minnesota campuses.

The University of Minnesota has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist in this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed in confidence to the University or search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The University of Minnesota (UMN) is a comprehensive, land-grant public research university ranked among the world's most respected institutions of higher learning. UMN has scholars of national and international reputation and a strong tradition of education and public engagement. With 70,000 students enrolled across five campuses located throughout Minnesota—the Twin Cities, Duluth, Morris, Crookston, and Rochester—UMN advances discovery and innovation to improve society for all. The university is a proud member of the Association of American Universities and has the special distinction of being both a globally engaged R1 research institution and Minnesota's land-grant university, creating a unique capacity and responsibility to improve the lives of Minnesotans and drive the state forward.

The University's [five distinct campuses](#) serve all regions of the state. Each campus has [unique strengths](#), enriched by its surrounding communities. The Chancellors of the Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Rochester campuses report directly to the President and work in close collaboration with Cabinet members to achieve University of Minnesota goals. UMN staff and faculty focus on meeting the needs of each student, supporting them through world-class programming, academics, and hands-on experiences. As community engagement is a vital part of the University of Minnesota's mission, work extends beyond the campuses. From community-partnered research and outreach centers and extension offices to community-based field projects, health clinics, and environmental and agricultural projects, UMN faculty, students, and staff work together with communities throughout Minnesota and the globe.

Financial Position

The University's FY2026 annual operating budget is \$5.1 billion, structured in a Responsibility-Center Management (RCM) budget model. Major revenue sources include operations and maintenance state appropriations at \$672 million, tuition at \$1.1 billion, sponsored funds at \$750 million, and \$2.2 billion in local unit generated revenues, including endowment income. As of June 30, 2025, the total value of UMN's financial assets was \$4.5 billion.

In 2024, S&P Global Ratings (S&P) affirmed the University's "AA" long-term rating with a stable outlook, highlighting the University's position as Minnesota's flagship land-grant research University, healthy financial resources, diverse revenue streams, low-to-moderate debt burden, and prodigious fundraising. In addition, S&P affirmed the University's "A-1+" short-term rating, reflected by the University's own self-liquidity and credit quality. S&P acknowledges soft enrollment trends, somewhat weak financial performance, and the uncertainty with the University's affiliation agreement with Fairview as offsetting factors.

Research & Innovation

In the 2023 NSF HERD rankings, the University reported over \$1.35 billion in research expenditures annually, ranking 12th nationally among public universities in the United States. UMN's technology transfer work has been recognized for its excellence in several national and global rankings, including

World's Most Innovative Universities (Reuters) where UMN ranked 22nd globally and 2nd among Big Ten public institutions; and *Universities Granted U.S. Utility Patents* (National Academy of Inventors) where the university ranked 16th in the world and 4th among Big Ten public institutions.

Health Sciences

UMN trains over 70 percent of Minnesota's health professionals, and health sciences and medical research account for over \$570 million in externally funded research annually. [University of Minnesota Health Sciences](#) unites education and research across six schools and [patient care](#) across the state. The university is in the midst of renegotiating its relationship with its partner health system.

Economic Impact

The University generates an estimated economic impact of \$11.5 billion for the Minnesota economy. UMN is the state's seventh-largest employer and encompasses regional [extension](#) offices, research and outreach centers, clinics, labs, professional education outreach, and K-12 educational engagement programs throughout the state, as well as world-class performing arts facilities, museums, and galleries.

University Leadership

President Rebecca Cunningham

[Dr. Rebecca Cunningham](#) began her appointment as the 18th President of the University of Minnesota on July 1, 2024.

As President, Dr. Cunningham is working closely with the U of M community and Minnesotans broadly to design and implement a bold new vision that effectively positions the five campuses for continuous success. President Cunningham is focused on prioritizing an accessible, world-class education for students and advancing the University's powerful mission to enhance the health, safety, and prosperity of people across the state, nation, and world.

President Cunningham maintains a faculty appointment in the School of Public Health's Division of Epidemiology & Community Health.

Before joining the University of Minnesota, Dr. Cunningham served as the Vice President for Research and Innovation at the University of Michigan, where she was responsible for expanding its annual research portfolio to a record \$2 billion. At Michigan, Dr. Cunningham led a university-wide strategy that bolstered discovery and impact, accelerated knowledge translation, supported entrepreneurial activity, expanded statewide economic development, advanced undergraduate student success, and strengthened diversity, equity, and inclusion.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Fairfield University and a medical doctorate from Jefferson Medical College. President Cunningham completed her residency in emergency medicine at the University of Michigan.

Executive Vice President and Provost Gretchen Ritter

[Dr. Gretchen Ritter](#) joined the University of Minnesota as EVPP on July 31, 2025, assuming the roles of chief academic officer for the University's five campuses and the Provost for the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus. Provost Ritter joined the University from Syracuse University, where she was the inaugural vice president for civic engagement and education. In this role, Ritter collaborated with academic programs and units to advance appreciation for civic engagement and community service while facilitating campus-wide programming to foster civil dialogue and free expression across viewpoints. During this time, she was a professor of political science in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and a faculty affiliate with the Program for Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration.

She served as the vice chancellor, provost, and chief academic officer at Syracuse University from 2021 to 2024, where she navigated a world health crisis, distance learning, and calls for social change. Of the many accomplishments during her leadership, Ritter implemented a new academic strategic plan, hired two of the largest faculty cohorts in the university's history, and guided the expansion of their College of Engineering and Computer Science.

Prior to her time at Syracuse University, Provost Ritter was the executive dean and vice provost of the College of Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell University, and the vice provost of undergraduate education and faculty governance at the University of Texas at Austin, accompanied by numerous faculty appointments.

An expert in both women's constitutional rights and democracy and citizenship in American politics, Provost Ritter's extensive research background is an asset to the University for navigating contemporary issues of higher education. She holds a bachelor's degree in government from Cornell University and a doctorate in political science from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Board of Regents

Established in 1851 at the founding of the University of Minnesota, the [Board of Regents](#) is the University's governing board. Regents articulate a vision for the University and work to ensure the University of Minnesota fulfills its mission of education, research, and outreach for the benefit of the people of Minnesota, the nation, and the world. There are 12 Regents who each serve six-year terms and are elected by the Minnesota legislature. There is one Regent from each of the state's eight congressional districts as well as four additional Regents from the state at large.

Minneapolis and St. Paul

The University's flagship Twin Cities campus is in the heart of a dynamic metro area that is a global economic leader, a hub for education and culture, and renowned for its abundant cultural and natural resources. The Minneapolis-St. Paul metro is home to the 4th-largest concentration of Fortune 500 companies in the country, as well as thriving entrepreneurial and small-business sectors. Ranked as one of the country's leading "creative economy" communities, the Twin Cities is renowned for its arts and nonprofit sectors, as well as its many lakes, parks, recreational and entertainment opportunities.

Spanning locations in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, the Twin Cities Campus is part of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. It is a place that offers strong work-life balance, low cost of living compared to similarly sized metro areas, and high rates of health coverage—in short, a place that ranks highly in quality-of-life surveys.

ROLE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC STRATEGY AND BUDGET

The VPASB serves as a key advisor to the Provost and colleagues within the Office of the EVPP and provides sound and strategic thought partnership on aligning resources to advance the key imperatives detailed in the [Elevate Extraordinary 2030](#) strategic plan. Through program review, policy change, and operational best practices, the VPASB provides direction for aligning academic resources with strategic priorities through financial and resource planning, budget development and management, performance monitoring, and oversight of budget processes for the academic units reporting to the Office of the EVPP. The VPASB develops financial models and forecasting and provides budget guidance for academic strategic initiatives. A systems-level thinker, the VPASB is responsible for formalizing the Office of the EVPP strategic-planning processes, leading the development of the strategies and translating them for stakeholders across a variety of EVPP units, and driving organizational change and improvement by forging and sustaining collaborative working relationships across the EVPP organization, EVPFO organization, and the University at large, including all of the campuses.

The VPASB stewards the budget and planning processes for the Office of the EVPP, including the central office, the 17 schools and colleges, and all units that report to the EVPP. This leader will serve as a key advisor to senior leadership, providing insightful analysis to support effective decision-making by the schools/colleges, EVPP units, and other University leaders. The VPASB collaborates with and is a provider of trusted information to the deans, chief financial managers, and other key stakeholders to ensure the economic well-being of the EVPP units and to support actions that drive decision-making and success. The VPASB is also a critical strategic partner with counterparts within the Office of the Executive Vice President for Finance and Operations (EVPFO), and the Office for Institutional Research, and works closely on relevant academic strategy and budgetary matters with colleagues in the Office of the President.

Responsibilities of the VPASB

The VPASB is responsible for aligning academic resources to strategic commitments, while identifying opportunities for operational efficiencies within academic units, and creating new potential revenue sources to support continued academic excellence. Key areas of focus include:

- Tying long-term academic planning, financial strategies, and budget to the overarching University strategic plan.
- In conjunction with academic Deans, developing and implementing assessment and forecasting tools for academic programs and initiatives to support effective decision-making about sunseting or launching academic programs in alignment with the University's strategic priorities and mission, including workforce development.
- Developing long-term financial strategies, budget forecasting, resource allocation, and creating financial models to guide academic planning and support decision-making.
- Providing trusted advice and insight to the Provost and other senior academic leaders on emerging issues, opportunities, and threats, and related financial policy development.
- With academic and non-academic partners across the University, assessing and identifying opportunities for greater operational, staffing, and technology efficiencies across academic units.
- Working with enrollment management leaders across the campuses, foster greater collaboration between University campuses in support of enrollment and revenue generation.
- Providing guidance to schools, colleges, and academic support units on financial matters, including budget and multi-year planning.
- Leading the development, preparation, and presentation of all budget materials for the Office of the EVPP.
- Presenting and demystifying the academic budget process and model for internal and external audiences, translating complex financial structures into clear, accessible information that fosters understanding, trust, and accountability among stakeholders.
- Providing leadership and strategic oversight for the EVPP's financial planning functions, including developing and analyzing operating budgets, maintaining and enhancing internal financial controls, and developing sophisticated annual and multi-year financial reporting that supports the strategic decision-making processes.
- Creating short- and long-term budget plans for the University's academic leadership that support the development and assessment of institutional goals.
- Ensuring that financial reporting effectively supports academic decision-making.
- Managing the shared financial services function for the Office of the EVPP, providing financial support to reporting academic units.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one candidate will embody every quality, the most competitive candidates will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

- Earned doctorate, requisite terminal degree, MBA, or master's degree in economics, finance, accounting (or similar field); additional experience will be considered in lieu of the degree.
- At least 10+ years of experience with financial analysis, academic planning, budget management, accounting principles, and/or strategic resource planning.
- Experience with fiduciary and/or operational responsibilities across a complex organization.
- Financial, resource, and budgetary acumen, including evidence of fiscally responsible management practices and a record of transparency and accountability.
- Superior planning and analytical skills, and an in-depth knowledge of strategic analysis, budgeting, modeling, resource management, and demonstrated ability to analyze and interpret complex financial, academic or budgetary data into understandable, presentable, and actionable information.
- Demonstrated capacity for innovative and creative thinking.
- Strong acumen in operations, project management, administration, academic program leadership, and/or business services with experience facilitating process efficiencies, and improvement initiatives.
- Considerable experience as a trusted advisor with a track record of successful collaborative leadership within a large, complex, and highly decentralized organization with multiple stakeholder groups.
- Considerable experience and success in change management on large-scale projects.
- An understanding and appreciation of the values embraced by the University of Minnesota.
- Ability to make timely decisions in a rapidly changing environment and in a collaborative manner while meeting the objectives of the University and Office of the EVPP.
- Strong collaborator who develops trusted and effective relationships.
- Proactive and innovative thinker and problem-solver.
- High personal and professional integrity, with a blend of self-confidence and humility.
- Excellent communication skills, both written and verbal, with an ability to explain complex concepts in understandable terms.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The Vice Provost for Academic Strategy and Budget position is a 100-percent-time, 12-month, professional and administrative (P&A) appointment based in Minneapolis. Salary is commensurate with education and experience, with an anticipated salary range of \$245,000 - \$325,000.

The University of Minnesota offers excellent benefits. Please visit the [Office of Human Resources](#) website for more information regarding benefit eligibility.

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:

Rebecca Kennedy, Managing Partner
Afi Tettey-Fio, Senior Associate
Cortnee Bollard, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-minnesota/vice-provost-academic-strategy-and-budget>

The University of Minnesota shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, familial status, disability, public assistance status, membership or activity in a local commission created for the purpose of dealing with discrimination, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

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