



Assistant Vice President for Career and Professional Development  
University of Notre Dame  
South Bend, Indiana

## THE SEARCH

The University of Notre Dame (Notre Dame) seeks a bold, student-centered, and mission-driven leader to serve as its next Assistant Vice President for Career and Professional Development (AVP). This is a rare opportunity to shape the future of one of the nation's premier career centers while advancing Notre Dame's distinctive vision for the formation of young people in mind and heart, preparing them to discern their vocation and lead lives of purpose, faith, and principled service to others.

At Notre Dame, career development is more than job placement. It is a vital part of the University's holistic approach to student formation. The Assistant Vice President will help students connect who they are with who they are called to become, creating pathways for exploration, reflection, experiential learning, and professional success from the moment they arrive on campus through graduation and beyond.

Overseeing the [Meruelo Family Center for Career Development](#), the Assistant Vice President for Career and Professional Development will set a bold vision that honors Notre Dame's rich traditions while embracing innovation and emerging opportunities in the evolving world of work. This individual will lead a talented and dedicated team in delivering comprehensive, inclusive, and highly personalized career services that support students across all colleges, schools, and degree programs. The AVP will inspire a culture of excellence, collaboration, and care across the Center, empowering staff to deliver exceptional career advising, programming, employer engagement, and strategic partnerships. Working in close collaboration with campus leaders, faculty, alumni, and employers, this leader will ensure that career development is deeply integrated into the student experience and aligned with the University's mission.

This leader will have the opportunity to influence institutional strategy, deepen partnerships across the University, strengthen employer and alumni engagement, expand access to transformative experiences such as internships and career treks, and build on Notre Dame's exceptional reputation for preparing graduates to be a force for good in the world.

The University of Notre Dame has retained the national executive search firm, Isaacson, Miller, to assist in this important recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

The [University of Notre Dame](#), founded in 1842 by the Congregation of Holy Cross, is an independent Catholic research university located next to South Bend, Indiana, about 90 miles east of Chicago. Animated by its [distinctive Catholic mission](#), Notre Dame is consistently ranked among the nation's top 20 institutions of higher education by *U.S. News & World Report* and is a member of the Association of American Universities, which includes North America's leading research universities.

Notre Dame's culture is shaped by a deep sense of community and a commitment to serving humanity—to be, in the words of its founder, Fr. Edward Sorin, C.S.C., a “force for good” in the world. Dedicated to the pursuit and sharing of truth for its own sake, the University fosters free inquiry and open discussion across the arts, sciences, professions, and all areas of scholarship and creativity.

Notre Dame is distinctive among the nation's top universities: rigorously intellectual, firmly values-driven, and defined by an ethos of service and a dialogue between faith and reason. Its foundational aims are to be a preeminent research university, to provide an unsurpassed undergraduate and post-baccalaureate education, and to ensure that both are informed by its Catholic mission. In pursuing these goals, the University measures itself against the highest standards of academic excellence in research and teaching.

Serving over 13,000 undergraduate and graduate students, academic life at Notre Dame is organized through eight colleges and schools: the [College of Arts and Letters](#), [Mendoza College of Business](#), [College of Science](#), [College of Engineering](#), [Graduate School](#), [Keough School of Global Affairs](#), [Law School](#), and [School of Architecture](#). The University also includes 11 major research institutes, more than 40 centers and special programs, and the [University Libraries](#). The Graduate School offers 31 doctoral and 22 master's degree programs across 31 departments, institutes, and programs.

Notre Dame is also one of fewer than 60 U.S. colleges and universities committed to meeting the full demonstrated financial need of undergraduate students. In September 2024, President Rev. Robert A. Dowd, C.S.C., announced [Pathways to Notre Dame](#), a major initiative to expand affordability and access through need-blind admission for all undergraduate applicants and no-loan financial aid.

In 2023, the University launched “Notre Dame 2033: [A Strategic Framework](#),” to guide the University over the next decade. The framework focuses on three themes — Strengthening Foundations, Global Catholicism, and Science and Engineering for a World in Need. Together these themes advance the [University goals](#).

The University is also a vital partner in the South Bend community. The city offers the feel of a smaller community with many big-city amenities, including Broadway productions, outstanding music and performance venues, and a vibrant, growing innovation culture. The broader Michiana region offers a high

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quality of life and abundant outdoor recreation. Notre Dame has also played a key role in regional development, including helping secure a \$42 million grant from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation for St. Joseph, Elkhart, and Marshall counties. More recently, the University received a \$30 million Lilly Endowment grant through its College and Community Collaboration initiative to support a planned tech and talent district anchored in the historic former South Bend Tribune Building, just over a mile from campus.

## UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

[Rev. Robert A. Dowd, C.S.C.](#) became Notre Dame's 18th president in June 2024. A member of Notre Dame's political science department since 2004, he specializes in comparative politics. Prior to his election as president, he served as vice president and associate provost for interdisciplinary initiatives, overseeing several institutes, centers, and other academic units.

[Rev. Gerard J. Olinger, C.S.C.](#), serves as Vice President for Student Affairs and leads the holistic formation of students across six key areas: Residential Life, Campus Ministry, Belonging and Engagement, Student Development, Student Health and Wellness, and Career and Professional Development. Previously, he served as Vice President for Mission Engagement and Church Affairs at Notre Dame.

## THE MERUELO FAMILY CENTER FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The [Meruelo Family Center for Career Development](#) is a vibrant and deeply collaborative organization of more than 25 staff members dedicated to helping students navigate discernment, opportunity, and professional growth. Within the [Division of Student Affairs](#), the Center includes undergraduate career advisors by college, specialist advisors focused on particular industries and pathways, career consultants for master's and Ph.D. students, employer engagement professionals, regional engagement staff, and operations and partnerships team members.

Boasting state-of-the-art facilities in the [Duncan Student Center](#), the Meruelo Center works closely with colleagues throughout Student Affairs, as well as faculty, academic leadership, and administrators across Notre Dame's eight colleges and schools. As an externally-facing University leader, the AVP also enjoys strong relationships with a committed alumni network, benefactors, and employers who seek graduates known for academic excellence, strong values, an ability to think critically, communicate strongly, work collaboratively, and a desire to contribute meaningfully to the world. These partnerships, along with [strong first-destination outcomes](#), make Notre Dame an exceptional place to lead career development.

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## ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT

Reporting directly to the Vice President for Student Affairs and serving on the Division of Student Affairs Senior Leadership Team, the Assistant Vice President will provide strategic leadership for the [Meruelo Family Center for Career Development](#) and champion a University-wide vision for career development for undergraduate and graduate students. The AVP will lead with creativity and purpose, building a future-facing strategy that helps students discover their gifts, discern meaningful paths, and pursue lives and careers of impact.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT

- **Develop and lead a compelling strategic vision** for career development that draws on the University's Catholic, Holy Cross mission to advance student formation, vocational discernment, and post-graduate success.
- **Position the Meruelo Family Center for Career Development as a national model** for mission-centered, student-focused career development in higher education and elevate career services as a continued priority, fostering strong partnerships across academic and administrative units.
- **Expand opportunities for experiential learning**, including internships, career treks, networking experiences, and other high-impact practices that prepare students for meaningful futures.
- **Strengthen employer and alumni engagement**, building relationships that open doors for students and reinforce Notre Dame's national reputation for excellence.
- **Lead and inspire a high-performing team** of career advisors, specialists, consultants, employer and regional engagement professionals, and operations and partnerships staff.
- **Champion innovation and continuous improvement** in career education, student engagement, data-informed decision making, and service delivery.
- **Enhance access to career resources and opportunities** so that all students can thrive and confidently pursue their aspirations.
- **Strengthen and deepen connections with academic partners** that provide students with a holistic experience of personal formation and vocational discernment, integrating academic, personal, and professional experiences.

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## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The Assistant Vice President, Career Development will bring a distinctive blend of strategic leadership, student-centered vision, operational and people management excellence, and mission alignment to advance Notre Dame's commitment to student formation and post-graduate success. The successful candidate's experience will reflect the following:

### **Understanding and Appreciation of the University's Catholic Mission:**

Notre Dame's Catholic, Holy Cross mission is fundamental to its identity and its approach to educating the whole person. The successful candidate will demonstrate a deep appreciation for this mission and a commitment to helping students discern lives of meaning, purpose, and service. This leader will understand career development as an essential part of forming students' minds and hearts and preparing them to be a force for good in the world.

### **Student-Centered, Collaborative, and Innovative Leadership:**

The Assistant Vice President will bring experience leading student-centered initiatives that promote holistic discernment, growth, and formation. A highly collegial and collaborative leader, this individual will build a compelling vision that inspires students, staff, alumni, employers, and campus partners to see career development as a shared institutional effort. The successful candidate will balance respect for tradition with a forward-looking commitment to innovation, excellence, and meaningful engagement across campus.

### **Operational Excellence, Staff Leadership, and Resource Stewardship:**

The successful candidate will demonstrate a strong record of delivering exceptional career services, resources, and outcomes, while fostering high levels of satisfaction among students, employers, and campus partners. This leader will have experience developing and inspiring high-performing teams, building a culture of excellence, accountability, and care, and managing budgets and resources strategically and responsibly to support long-term success.

### **Executive Presence, Inclusion, and Integrity:**

The Assistant Vice President will demonstrate the executive presence, communication skills, and relationship-building capacity necessary to represent Career Development and the University with distinction to both internal and external audiences. The successful candidate will demonstrate a sincere commitment to cultivating a culture of inclusion, respect, and belonging, and will lead with emotional intelligence, empathy, sound judgment, humility, and integrity of the highest order.

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## 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 Assistant Vice President, Career and Professional Development website](#).

Sean Farrell, Partner  
Robin Dougherty, Managing Associate  
Drew Chang, Senior Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

*The University of Notre Dame is dedicated to equal employment opportunity and to the implementation of positive programs designed to ensure the prevention of any discriminatory practices, either intentional or inadvertent, with respect to race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability, veteran status, age, or sex.*

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