



Search for the Vice President for Institutional Initiatives
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, New York

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) seeks a driven, strategic leader to serve as its inaugural Vice President for Institutional Initiatives (“the VP”). Building on an impressive institutional trajectory, the VP will play a pivotal role in advancing RIT’s strategic priorities, as President Bill Sanders implements his agenda for continued development and progress. Reporting directly to the President, the VP will be a key member of the President’s leadership team, partnering to advance and operationalize RIT’s 2035 Strategic Framework: *Transforming Lives Through Creativity and Innovation*, as well as other institute-level initiatives.

RIT is a global, private research university with its main campus in Rochester, NY, and four global locations in Croatia (Dubrovnik and Zagreb), Dubai, and Kosovo. Over the past decade, RIT has pursued a bold strategy that has resulted in advancement in every key institutional metric across applications, enrollment, fundraising, faculty, and research. Notably, in 2019, RIT achieved “R2” designation in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Since 2019, RIT’s research output, grant funding, and doctoral student production have grown substantially, and a key institutional priority is to continue this upward trajectory and secure eligibility for R1 status by 2030.

The Vice President for Institutional Initiatives will provide executive-level leadership and counsel to the President and senior university leadership and will lead the advancement of select institution-wide priorities. The VP will coordinate strategic planning and execution, lead high-priority cross-functional initiatives, and work across academic and administrative areas to translate institutional priorities into clear plans, aligned action, and measurable outcomes.

Success in the role will require a combination of strategic thinking, disciplined execution, and change leadership. Because many institutional initiatives will span existing areas of responsibility, the VP must be highly effective at leading through influence, building shared ownership, clarifying accountability, and working in partnership with university leaders responsible for implementation.

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

With a history dating back to 1829, the institution became formally known as Rochester Institute of Technology in 1944. Today, RIT is a private, comprehensive, doctoral research university. A top-ranked

university for innovation, RIT has been among the top 100 universities for four years in a row on *U.S. News and World Report's* listing of National Universities. It is distinguished by its commitment to preparing students for success in a globally connected society, a highly interdisciplinary culture for research and education, and a longstanding commitment to experiential education, including a century-old co-op program.

The university's portfolio includes 13 doctoral degrees, and RIT is internationally recognized for excellence in fields at the intersection of technology, the arts, and design, with significant enrollment in computing, engineering, and business. RIT is also the home of the [National Technical Institute for the Deaf \(NTID\)](#), which serves over 1,100 deaf and hard-of-hearing students, fostering an inclusive campus where students of all abilities learn and collaborate.

RIT's reputation continues to grow, with *U.S. News & World Report* ranking RIT #5 in the nation for co-op and internship programs, #32 among "Most Innovative Schools," and #44 for "Best Value."

2035 Strategic Framework

In the spring of 2026, the RIT Board of Trustees approved the [2035 Strategic Framework](#), titled *Transforming Lives Through Creativity and Innovation*. The plan was developed through an extensive process that began in the spring of 2024; more than 1,000 students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and partners contributed their perspectives through conversations, forums, and engagement sessions. The result is a framework grounded in RIT's mission and values, designed to remain agile as higher education, technology, and global needs continue to evolve. At the heart of the Strategic Framework are four interconnected pillars that will shape RIT's work over the next 10 years:

- **Transformative Student Experience and Success:** Empower students to lead and thrive in a rapidly evolving world by expanding RIT's experiential, interdisciplinary, and collective approach to education and fostering their development as well-rounded, future-ready individuals.
- **World-Changing Research:** Advance knowledge, pursue groundbreaking discoveries, and shape the future through research, scholarship, and creative endeavors, leveraging RIT's interdisciplinary strengths to address pressing global challenges and contribute to the betterment of society.
- **Culture of Well-Being and Belonging:** Cultivate a culture where individual growth, holistic well-being, and a deep sense of belonging – within RIT's community and in harmony with the natural world – are integral, making it a defining element of how the RIT community learns, teaches, works, and thrives together.
- **Global Reach and Mindset:** Leverage and enhance RIT's role as a globally engaged organization, creating a cohesive and interconnected university with a deep commitment to cross-cultural understanding, engagement, and community prosperity.

University Leadership

President William H. Sanders

Dr. William “Bill” Sanders became RIT’s 11th president on July 1, 2025. Sanders has nearly 40 years of experience in higher education. He most recently served as the Dr. William D. and Nancy W. Strecker Dean of the College of Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University. Prior to Carnegie Mellon, Sanders spent 25 years as a tenured professor and held the Herman M. Dieckamp Endowed Chair in Engineering at the University of Illinois. He earned his bachelor’s degree in computer engineering; master’s degree in computer, information, and control engineering; and doctoral degree in computer science and engineering, all from the University of Michigan.

Sanders’ research interests include secure, dependable, and resilient computing systems with a focus on critical infrastructures. He has directed work at the forefront of national efforts to make the U.S. power grid smart and resilient. His significant scholarly record includes publishing more than 300 technical papers in this field. He is also a co-developer of a tool for assessing the security of networked systems that is available commercially under the name NP-View from the startup company [Network Perception](#), which he co-founded, and had a successful exit in 2024.

A recognized leader in his field, Sanders was [elected to the National Academy of Engineering \(NAE\)](#) in 2023 for his contributions to cybersecurity and resiliency technologies. Sanders is also an elected fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

ROLE OF VICE PRESIDENT FOR INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

The Vice President for Institutional Initiatives is a key member of the President’s leadership team, working across the President’s Cabinet and the broader university to advance a defined portfolio of institution-wide priorities. The Vice President helps RIT adapt and thrive in an increasingly competitive and rapidly changing higher education landscape by strengthening cross-functional collaboration, fostering transparency and accountability, and driving disciplined execution.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Planning and Presidential Initiatives

- Advise the President on institutional strategy, organizational priorities, and emerging opportunities.
- Engage stakeholders across the institution to inform and advance institutional priorities, identify resource requirements, and build alignment around RIT’s future.
- Lead the development and coordinated implementation of designated presidential initiatives and strategic projects, including efforts to advance strategic framework goals and key performance indicators.

- Leverage research, analysis, and environmental scanning to support executive decision-making.
- Develop strategic recommendations, briefing materials, presentations, and reports for the President and Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

Strategic Initiative Implementation and Project Leadership

- Lead designated complex cross-functional initiatives from conception through implementation and assessment, in partnership with the academic and administrative leaders responsible for affected areas.
- Establish clear project governance, including roles, decision-making responsibilities, timelines, milestones, measures of success, and accountability mechanisms. Identify risks, barriers, and resource requirements and jointly develop mitigation strategies with accountable partners.
- Build alignment and coordinate work across academic and administrative units to support institutional priorities and agreed-upon outcomes.
- Monitor progress, assess results, surface barriers, and provide regular status reports to the President and executive leadership.

Executive Leadership Support

- Serve as a member of the President's Cabinet and serve, as needed, on other executive leadership groups.
- Partner with university and shared governance bodies, including Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and Student Government, to foster engagement and alignment around major university priorities and initiatives.
- Represent the President at meetings, events, and external engagements, as appropriate.

Stakeholder and Partnership Development

- In partnership with university leaders responsible for external relations, government relations, foundations, corporate partners, community organizations, and other relevant areas, cultivate relationships and partnerships that advance designated institutional priorities and initiatives.
- Identify opportunities for external partnerships and support to pursue grants, gifts, and external funding.

Organizational Effectiveness and Change Management

- Lead designated organizational change initiatives associated with new programs, structures, or strategic priorities.
- Design and facilitate executive planning processes and strategic discussions that support institutional decision-making and alignment.

- Promote best practices in project management, organizational effectiveness, and continuous improvement.
- Foster a culture of innovation, accountability, and cross-functional collaboration.

QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

Required Qualifications

- Master's or Doctoral degree is preferred.
- Minimum of seven years of responsible leadership experience in higher education or another complex organization, with demonstrated experience in working at the enterprise or executive level.
- Proven success leading large-scale strategic initiatives and organizational change across organizational boundaries, including achieving results through leaders and teams outside of one's direct reporting structure.
- Exceptional analytical, written, verbal, and presentation skills, with the ability to synthesize complex issues and communicate effectively with varied internal and external audiences.
- Demonstrated experience advising and working effectively with senior executive leadership; experience engaging governing boards or similar oversight boards.
- Strong project management, facilitation, and stakeholder engagement capabilities.

Competencies

Strategic Leadership & Organization-Wide Perspective

- Strategic and Systems Thinking
- Enterprise and Cross-Functional Leadership
- Political and Organizational Acumen
- Problem Solving and Decision Making

Change & Execution Leadership

- Change Leadership
- Project and Change Management

Influence, Relationships & Collaboration

- Relationship and Trust Building
- Collaboration and Influence

Executive Presence & Professional Judgment

- Executive Presence
- Executive Communication
- Judgment, Discretion, and Integrity

ABOUT ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

Situated in Henrietta, a suburb just south of Rochester, New York, RIT's expansive 1,300-acre campus blends modern architecture with green spaces, creating a dynamic environment for innovation, learning, and creativity. The campus features cutting-edge facilities, including specialized labs and studios, reflecting RIT's strengths in technology, design, and experiential education. RIT is nestled within the Finger Lakes region, known for its natural and outdoor resources, affordability, and high quality of life. The area has urban, suburban, and rural areas all within a short drive of campus.

Home to nearly 1.1 million people, Greater Rochester is the third-largest metro area in New York. Rochester is a multifaceted, vibrant city, and one of the best to visit, live in, and enjoy. Located on the southern shore of Lake Ontario and intersected by the Genesee River, the city of Rochester offers a rich cultural and historical backdrop. It is a thriving culinary destination, a playground for music enthusiasts, and an area known for its imaginative arts and theater scene.

Rochester has a legacy of innovation, once home to major companies like Kodak and Xerox. Today, the city of Rochester is a dynamic hub for business and technology, home to leading companies, high-tech industries, and start-up enterprises in optics, imaging, manufacturing, engineering, software, and health care.

COMPENSATION

The VP for Institutional Initiatives is a full-time, permanent position based on-site in Rochester, NY. The University offers a competitive and comprehensive benefits package. The anticipated base salary range for this role is \$275K to \$375K. The starting base salary will be commensurate with qualifications, experience, market, and organizational considerations.

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/rochester-institute-technology/vice-president-institutional-initiatives>

John Muckle, Partner
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Isaacson, Miller

In compliance with NYS's Pay Transparency Act, the anticipated starting salary for this position is listed above. Rochester Institute of Technology considers factors such as (but not limited to) scope and responsibilities of the position, candidate's work experience, education/training, key skills, internal equity, as well as market and organizational considerations when extending an offer. The hiring process for this position may require a criminal background check and/or motor vehicle records check. Any verbal or written offer made is contingent on satisfactory results, as determined by Human Resources.

RIT does not discriminate. RIT provides equal opportunity to all qualified individuals and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, age, marital status, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, veteran status or disability in its hiring, admissions, educational programs and activities. RIT provides reasonable accommodations to applicants with disabilities under the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the New York Human Rights Law, or similar applicable law.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). 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 RIT would supersede any conflicting information in this document.