

# UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON** SYSTEM

An Invitation to Apply for the Position of

## **VICE CHANCELLOR / VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH**

**The University of Houston**  
Houston, Texas

### **THE SEARCH**

The University of Houston (UH or the University) – a vibrant, Carnegie Tier One research university aspiring to double its research footprint– invites nominations, expressions of interest, and applications for the position of Vice Chancellor/Vice President of Research (VPR). A dual appointment as the chief research officer leading research efforts for the University of Houston System and the University of Houston, the VPR is a compelling opportunity for a visionary, strategic and dynamic leader to join an institution with a thriving ecosystem of research innovation at its core. Centered in the values of excellence, integrity, innovation, and responsiveness and based on the foundation of teaching, research and service, the University of Houston is an engine for discovery with a bold vision for building a top 50 public university.

Reporting directly to the President, the VPR will join the Division of Research (DOR) at a historic time for the University and the state of Texas. With UH total research expenditures more than doubling in the past decade, the new Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine that opened in 2020, an ambitious faculty hiring initiative, and growing community-centered programs and initiatives with the greater Houston area, the impact is limitless. Looking ahead, a proposed bill in the Texas legislature would create an endowment fund of about \$1.3 billion to the University of Houston contingent on voter approval in November. This new multibillion-dollar funding stream will help the University of Houston to better compete on the national stage as a research powerhouse by enhancing the research infrastructure and hiring.

UH is a dynamic research enterprise where discoveries fuel innovation that address society's most urgent challenges. The VPR will have the opportunity to further build, create, and imagine a strategic vision that positions UH at the forefront of international research productivity and impact. The next VPR will work collaboratively with the President, Provost, administrative leadership, faculty and staff to envision and implement a strategy for the University to accelerate growth of the research enterprise, paying close attention to building robust operations to

support the University's growing research ambitions. The VPR will lead a research culture that fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and amplifies human-centered design; serve as an externally engaged representative for the UH research enterprise; and bolster economic development through expanded federal funding and industry partnerships.

The University of Houston has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. Please direct all confidential applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the conclusion of this document.

## **THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON**

The University of Houston was founded in 1927 to provide higher education to working Houstonians and train professionals for business and industry in Houston and the region. UH has proud beginnings as Houston Junior College. As the institution grew and prospered, it became the University of Houston in 1934, a state institution in 1963, and joined the newly created University of Houston System in 1977. UH has experienced unprecedented growth in the past two decades. It is the flagship campus of the University of Houston System that serves more than 75,000 students and includes the University of Houston-Clear Lake, the University of Houston-Downtown, the University of Houston-Victoria as well as the UH Technology Bridge innovation park and instructional sites in Katy, Northwest Houston, Pearland and Sugar Land. Visit the [University of Houston System webpage](#) for more information.

UH is the largest research university in Houston and the third largest university in the state of Texas. The spirit of academic excellence is deeply ingrained in the history and tradition of UH, which is complemented by vibrant campus life and a tangible energy rooted in campus vitality and community connections within the broader city of Houston. UH offers nationally ranked programs and world-class faculty at a global crossroads of culture in the fourth-largest city in the United States. Students have endless opportunities, with Houston ranking third in the nation for the number of Fortune 500 headquarters. The University of Houston System contributes \$3.1 billion to the Houston economy each year, generates roughly 24,000 local jobs and has a \$6.4 billion economic impact on the Greater Houston area. The effect of the University on the Houston community is profound. It includes more than 600 partnerships with community organizations and students contributing almost 1 million hours of internship service and volunteer hours each year.

As of the Fall of 2022, UH enrolls 37,282 undergraduate students and more than 8,500 graduate and professional students – more than 2,000 of whom are doctoral students. The University offers 109 majors and minors, 105 master's, 41 doctoral, and three professional degree programs. Students have the opportunity to conduct research at all levels, including [undergraduate](#), where they benefit from internal fellowships and scholarships as well as NSF-funded Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs).

UH is an Hispanic-Serving, Asian American- Serving and Native American Pacific Islander- Serving Institution and is considered one of the most ethnically-diverse research university in the United States, with a student body that is 20% white, 22% Asian American, 33.2% Hispanic, 10.9% African American, 9.4% International, 2.9% Multi-racial, and .2% Native American and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. The University has been ranked by [\*Hispanic Outlook on Education Magazine\*](#) among the top 100 Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the nation.

The University is home to a broad range of academic [colleges and schools](#), including the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design, the Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts, the C. T. Bauer College of Business, the College of Education, the Cullen College of Engineering, the Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership, UH Law Center, the College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences, the Tilman J. Fertitta Family College of Medicine, the College of Natural Sciences & Mathematics, the Andy and Barbara Gessner College of Nursing, the College of Optometry, the College of Pharmacy, the Graduate College of Social Work, the Hobby School of Public Affairs, and an interdisciplinary Honors College.

## **University Leadership**

### ***President***

Dr. Renu Khator has served as Chancellor of the University of Houston System and President of the flagship University of Houston campus since January of 2008. Her leadership has not only been historic because of who she is as a leader – the first Indian immigrant to lead a comprehensive research university in the United States as well as the first female chancellor in the state of Texas – but also because of how she leads. Chancellor Khator's vision has inspired faculty, staff, students, alumni and the greater Houston area to truly transform UH over the past decade, continually setting the bar higher for what the community can achieve together. This community-wide effort has enabled UH to achieve Carnegie Tier One research status in half the predicted time, resulted in opening Houston's first medical school in more than 40 years, more than tripled the number of National Academy members on the faculty, exponentially improved graduation rates and recently set course for a dynamic strategic plan to become a top 50 public university – a major component of which is the continued growth of the research enterprise.

Chancellor Khator earned her master's and Ph.D. in political science from Purdue University and has held numerous university leadership roles prior to her role as Chancellor, including most recently as the provost and senior vice president at the University of South Florida. More information is available through the [Office of the President webpage](#).

### ***Provost***

Dr. Diane Z. Chase was appointed Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for the University of Houston System and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost for the University

of Houston in February 2023 after a national search. Dr. Chase has more than 40 years of experience in academia with more than 20 years in higher education administration leadership positions. Dr. Chase serves as the chief academic officer in concurrent positions for the UH System and UH and oversees an annual operating budget of more than \$561 million. Dr. Chase earned a Ph.D. in anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania, with her research focusing on the intersection of history and archeology, complex societies, sustainability and urbanism in reconstructing past lifeways of the ancient Maya. Prior to her current role, Dr. Chase served as the Vice President for Academic Innovation, Student Success and Strategic Initiatives at Claremont Graduate University.

### **Together, We Rise. Together, We Soar.**

UH began the university-wide strategic planning process in 2020, using the platform "Dare to Dream" as an opportunity to involve faculty, staff and students in conversations that helped to identify goals, articulate priorities, and co-create a road map for turning their dreams into reality. After a year of listening, learning and planning, the strategic plan "*Together, We Rise. Together, We Soar*" was launched early in 2021 setting a bold course for a seven-year strategy to evolve core initiatives of the University from 2021-2028. The strategic plan is comprised of five goals centered around the vision to build a top 50 public university. One of our top priorities is Nationally Competitive Research: to build a research powerhouse that impacts our region and the world.

[The strategic plan webpage](#) provides more information.

### **Finances**

The University's annual operating budget is \$1.37 billion, with an endowment of \$984.2 million. Support for the University is on the rise. For example, UH completed a successful campaign in August 2020, raising \$1.2 billion. The campaign received donations from more than 187,000 donors across all 50 states and 46 countries, and it was designed to continue the strategic transformation of UH System universities. Top priorities funded through the campaign include supporting student scholarships and fellowships, building state-of-the-art facilities, attracting and retaining top faculty, advancing academic programs, building a nationally relevant athletics program, and workforce training and research to help fuel a healthy Houston economy.

### **The City of Houston**

Located in the fourth-largest city in the United States, the University of Houston enjoys the privilege of a small community feel on campus with the opportunities of a bustling city right around the corner. With 6.7 million residents, the Houston metro area provides everything from

world-class dining and cuisine to cutting-edge research. Houston serves as a business and innovation hub and is known as the energy capital of the world. It is home to more than 4,700 energy-related firms and more than 20 companies on the Fortune 500 list. NASA headquarters offer internationally recognized aeronautic research facilities, and Texas Medical Center is the world's largest medical complex with 47 highly recognized treatment and research institutions.

As one of only four U.S. cities that feature professional resident companies in theater, opera, symphony and ballet, Houston is a mecca of diverse cultural and educational experiences. The Museum District is the country's fourth largest, housing 19 distinct museums in four different walkable zones. Houston is a city constantly on the brink of the next great thing as people of all identities and experiences flock to be a part of the global community.

### **THE DIVISION OF RESEARCH – A POWERHOUSE OF INNOVATION**

The Division of Research (DOR) provides multifaceted administrative and operational support for the research ecosystem at UH and is dedicated to enabling faculty to continue innovative work and research through comprehensive resources and services. Comprised of five offices including [Contracts and Grants](#), [Research Integrity and Oversight](#), [Animal Care Operations](#), [Business Operations](#), and [Communications](#), the DOR interfaces with faculty and staff in college or school-specific research support services to synthesize and expedite logistical functionality. In the Fall of 2022, the [Office of Technology Transfer and Innovation](#) which previously reported through the DOR, moved under the new Division of Energy and Innovation.

In congruence with the ongoing commitment to shared governance at UH, the [Research and Scholarship Committee](#) (RSC) of the UH Faculty Senate engages with the President, Provost, and Vice Presidents in developing recommendations and policies that affect the research community for the UH campus. The RSC facilitates internal discussion with faculty, providing a forum to gather and disseminate information to the faculty and serving as a faculty voice to University administration on matters pertaining to research. Supported by 24 committee members representing all colleges, the RSC meets regularly with the VPR to engage in ongoing conversations to enhance effective communication and procedural efficiencies that remove barriers and obstacles for research activities. In addition to the RSC, the VPR meets regularly with the [18 Research Deans](#) from all UH colleges.

The University of Houston's research infrastructure encompasses more than 683,000 square feet of research space that continues to grow and includes participation in 18 active research consortiums. Researchers at UH are part of a world-renowned faculty that includes 18 NAE members, 70 NSF Career Award Winners since 1996, 4 National Academy of Science Members and a combined total of 36 National Academy of Inventors fellows and senior members. The University has an impressive record of producing intellectual property, with annual licensing income exceeding \$60 million and a worldwide ranking among the top 100 university systems in the world for utility patents. The DOR completed a [division-specific strategic plan](#) that was

launched in 2018 centered on the mission of effectively and professionally serving the research community and leading the University in creating, directing and propagating institutional research projects.

### **Research Thrusts**

In the current competitive climate of research and development nationally and internationally, UH has focused on creating an intentional institutional research plan that directly engages and supports the Houston community to address interdisciplinary research challenges aimed at boosting economic development and improving the quality of life. The research thrusts include Cyber and Physical Security, Drug Discovery and Development, Sustainable Communities and Infrastructure, Accessible Health Care, and Energy Security and Transition. For more information, please refer to the [DoR website](#).

### **National Centers and University and College-based Centers and Institutes**

UH currently leads 10 nationally funded centers, involving numerous collaborations and external partnerships with other universities and industry, supported by \$20 million in funding to conduct research in the areas of energy (subsea engineering), psychology, superconductivity, laser mapping and homeland security. These centers include the [Advanced Superconductivity Manufacturing Institute](#), the [Center for Building Reliable Advances and Innovations in Neurotechnologies](#), the [Borders, Trade, and Immigration Institute](#), the [Center for Integrated Catalysis](#), the [Center for Success of English Learners](#), the [National Center for Airborne Laser Mapping](#), the [National Center for Research on Educator Diversity](#), the [HEALTH Center for Addictions Research and Cancer Prevention](#), the [Subsea Systems Institute](#), and the [Texas Center for Learning Disabilities](#).

The University also supports active research endeavors through an additional [30 university and college-based centers and institutes](#), evaluated by the Research and Scholarship Committee and classified as centers and institutes that conduct a significant amount of research activity. These centers span a variety of disciplines to explore vital issues in areas such as health, education, and energy through a scientific and humanistic lens.

### **Core Facilities**

The University currently has eight core facilities and over 20 additional college and department facilities. Approximately \$22 million has been committed to purchase equipment for new core facilities in five of the national priority research areas including Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Materials, Imaging and Scanning, Data and Sensing, and Automation and Autonomy. This investment demonstrates the continued prioritization of expanding the research infrastructure so the research community can compete effectively for research awards and continue to excel at delivering the goals and objectives of their research projects. The current core facilities include the Animal Behavior Core, Animal Care Operations, the Digital Humanities

Core, the Electron Microscopy Core, the Mass Spectrometry Core, the Research Computing Data Core, and the Texas Center for Superconductivity. For more information, please refer to the [core facilities webpage](#).

### **Strategic Partnerships with the City of Houston**

UH is uniquely able to explore research focused on innovative solutions to real-world problems with direct access to assessing how discoveries impact a community and city as complex and diverse as Houston. The DOR initiated a *Research Reaching Houston* project to learn and assess how the research ecosystem affects the daily lives of the local community. The project has compiled over 100 stories of real-world applications of UH research. Highlights include research that has impacted community health, health equity, natural disasters, social justice and urban infrastructure. To learn more about the amazing work that transcends research in a lab to improving the quality of life for Houston residents, please see the [Research Reaching Houston](#) website.

### **THE ROLE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR/VICE PRESIDENT OF RESEARCH**

Reporting directly to the President and serving on the President's Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team, the VPR serves as the chief research officer for the University System and the University of Houston. In this role, the VPR leads the Division of Research, providing strategic vision, oversight, and management of all aspects of university research administration and operations, centers and institutes, and economic impact efforts both internally and externally in collaboration with industry partners as well as local, state, and federal agencies.

The DOR is supported by an administrative leadership team which is led by the VPR and includes the Associate Vice President for Research Administration, the Assistant Vice President for Research Administration, the Assistant Vice President for Sponsored Research Administration, the Executive Director of Animal Care Operations and Chief Veterinarian, the Executive Director of Research Integrity and Oversight (RIO) Office, and the Director of Strategic Research Communications. The DOR is comprised of approximately 80 staff in total and supports the work of researchers totaling \$249.73 million in research expenditures annually.

As a strategic advisor and partner to the president and provost, the VPR will be a catalyst for growth, continuing to build upon the research infrastructure with a futuristic mindset that capitalizes on existing strengths and projects future opportunities for impact. The VPR will prioritize a service-oriented approach to research administration, focused on removing barriers to collaboration and communication, rationalizing work processes, and operationalizing open and effective communication for faculty to access research support resources.

### **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

**Develop and implement a transformative research vision that will increase annual research expenditures to \$400 million in five years.**

The University of Houston has experienced significant research growth over the past decade, more than doubling research expenditures since 2013 to nearly \$250 million this year. To reach the University's ambitious goal of \$400 million, the next VPR must be an entrepreneurial and visionary leader who can articulate and cultivate a synergistic environment where researchers from multiple disciplines and backgrounds assemble to pursue large, team-focused, multi-disciplinary grants while retooling systems to support their submission and execution. With initiatives such as the [Presidential Frontier Faculty](#) program and the [Texas University Fund](#), the state and the University are prioritizing research preeminence as a top strategic priority. The next VPR must cast and operationalize a bold research vision that leverages current investments to maximize returns to establish a virtuous cycle of growth and impact.

**Assess and improve research support infrastructure to enhance operational efficiencies**

The University of Houston is a large and diverse institution that has undergone significant growth in its research profile in recent years to become a dynamic institution with leading researchers across a variety of fields. The pandemic and subsequent great resignation, along with competition from industry, created staffing shortages in the Division of Research that are being addressed. The next VPR must be a resourceful advocate to support and build core facilities and address funding compliance challenges resulting from new policies from federal agencies as well as challenges specific to UH. The next VPR will critically assess the organizational structure and operational efficiency of the DOR, working with faculty, staff, and leadership to assess ways to improve the infrastructure to support research growth. They will work to find innovative ways to maximize faculty research productivity and embrace a service-oriented culture that minimizes barriers to success.

**Lead a research culture that fosters and promotes team science and interdisciplinary collaboration.**

The University has research strengths across a range of disciplines, including materials and advanced manufacturing, health science, psychology, energy, and a variety of engineering disciplines. UH researchers aspire to large, multidisciplinary funding opportunities that span domains and disciplines, as well as major training grants that attract and support talented graduate students. The University seeks to expand its research impact by both building upon strengths and diversifying its funding base, attracting support from a broad array of federal sources as well as from industry, philanthropic, and private foundations to encourage continued excellence across the arts, humanities, and social sciences.

The next VPR should pursue ways to take full advantage of the University's location in a diverse, vibrant, and international city – encouraging the continued pursuit of research that has positive



impacts on the community and engages with industry through opportunities such as SBIR and STTR grants. Major funders are increasingly focusing support on research that solves societal problems. The University would benefit from a more collaborative approach across colleges that connects the social sciences and humanities with STEM fields and focuses on impact and a human-centered approach to research. The University's scale, location, and diverse student population make it a particularly attractive partner for other universities looking to collaborate in proposals for large federal funding opportunities. The VPR will establish pathways for collaboration within and outside UH that align with the University's strategic goals, communicating opportunities to researchers and highlighting the impact of research and innovation on the state, nation, and world.

**Serve as the external representative of the UH research enterprise to inspire and galvanize investment from key stakeholders.**

The VPR will be the representative of the University's research enterprise both internally and externally, championing the work of researchers and advocating for research support. They should be a strong communicator who inspires others and can discuss the University's research goals and impact to a wide variety of audiences – from researchers and federal agencies, to friends and alumni of UH. They will seize opportunities to align the University's strengths and advantages with national research initiatives, bringing opportunities to the attention of researchers.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

While no individual candidate is likely to embody all of the desired qualifications, skills, and experience, the successful candidate will possess many of the following:

- Earned Ph.D. or terminal degree along with credentials and achievements that demonstrate a distinguished record of scholarly and research excellence;
- Progressively responsible experience managing complex research programs at an R1 university;
- A commitment to expanding research across a broad range of disciplines, including the physical and natural sciences, engineering, medicine, the humanities, social sciences, and liberal and performing arts;
- Demonstrated leadership in and understanding of the importance of compliance with regulatory laws, policies, and procedures as it relates to the research enterprise;
- A commitment to the mission and values of a public university, including shared governance, public service, diversity and access;
- A proven track record of conducting impactful research and securing major research funding with leading federal funding agencies;

- The ability to effectively manage operations of a complex research enterprise with a customer-service oriented culture;
- The ability to communicate clearly and work cooperatively and transparently with administrators, faculty, students, staff, and external constituencies and an appreciation and understanding of the need for collaboration and synergy among these groups;
- The ability to provide intellectual leadership to UH's broad and diverse research community and serve as a champion for research across all disciplines;
- Leadership that inspires and galvanizes faculty and staff to pursue large-scale and multidisciplinary research efforts;
- Knowledge and understanding of the current legislative, regulatory, and public policy environment that directly impacts research;
- The ability to serve as a strong external University representative to corporations, agencies, and other key stakeholders;
- A track record of building a culture of support and service that is flexible and responsive to research needs;
- Strong evidence of an entrepreneurial mindset and astute budgeting and financial acumen; and
- Strong interpersonal skills; a good listener and relationship builder;

## TO APPLY

The University of Houston has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. Applicants are asked to submit a CV and letter of interest via the link below. All applications, nominations, and inquiries should be submitted in confidence to:

Greg Esposito, Partner  
Hannah Moore, Senior Associate  
[Vice Chancellor/Vice President of Research](#)

*The policy of the University of Houston (UH) is to ensure equal opportunity in all its educational programs and activities, and all terms and conditions of employment without regard to age, race, color, disability, religion, national origin, veteran's status, genetic information, or sex (including pregnancy), except where such a distinction is required by law. Additionally, UH prohibits discrimination in all aspects of employment and educational programs on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.*