



GENESEO

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

The State University of New York, Geneseo
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Geneseo, NY

THE SEARCH

SUNY Geneseo (Geneseo, the College), a forward-looking, selective public liberal arts college with a rich tradition of academic excellence, seeks an experienced academic leader to serve as provost and vice president for academic affairs and steward the college's vision to become the nation's first equity-centered public honors college.

SUNY Geneseo is consistently ranked among the best public undergraduate institutions in the country. The campus of approximately 4,100 (Fall 2022) students is located in the historic village of Geneseo in the beautiful Finger Lakes region of western New York, 30 minutes from Rochester, on land that originally belonged to the peoples who are now the Seneca Nation of Indians and the Tonawanda Seneca Nation.

The 152-year-old institution is renowned for achieving remarkable results—even when facing challenges. The College has gained momentum through the pandemic, with a recently updated curriculum emphasizing diversity, pluralism, antiracism, global awareness, sustainability, and integrative learning, and with major renovations underway to infrastructure and multiple core campus buildings.

SUNY Geneseo seeks a leader with an established record of success as a teacher-scholar and academic administrator; a proven ability to serve as a trusted and valuable advisor to institutional leadership and senior colleagues; a profound appreciation for excellence in liberal arts undergraduate education; a deep commitment to diversity, access, affordability, and belonging; and a thorough understanding of challenges and opportunities facing higher education and unique institutions like Geneseo. The provost's purview at Geneseo is broad and diverse, leading across 18 arts and sciences departments and two professional schools (education and business) as well as a variety of centers and other critical academic affairs and student success functions. The position requires a leader who is comfortable navigating complexity and using data to inform decision-making and who has the collaborative talents necessary to bring together many constituents in a highly interpersonal campus culture. In leading academic affairs and advancing Geneseo's equity-centered honors college vision, the provost must be a skilled communicator and relationship builder with a penchant for and record of translating strategic vision into action. The next provost will join the SUNY Geneseo community to build on the institution's history as a

leading public liberal arts college and advance its equity-centered honors college vision, positioning it solidly for the next decade.

SUNY Geneseo has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important recruitment. All inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE SUNY SYSTEM

As part of the [State University of New York](#) (SUNY), Geneseo plays an important role in the system and has access to resources in areas such as international programs and research support beyond those of a typical small campus. SUNY is the nation's largest and most comprehensive state university system, consisting of 64 campuses that include major research universities, health sciences centers, comprehensive and technical colleges, and community colleges committed to providing a broad range of outstanding academic programs for students within New York and from around the world.

SUNY enrolls more than 363,612 students (half of them in community colleges), has more than 83,000 employees, and has a projected all-funds budget in excess of \$13 billion. The system annually receives upwards of \$1 billion in sponsored research funds. SUNY is a significant force in higher education nationally with increasing global impact as well as a vital economic, social, and cultural engine for the State of New York.

[John B. King Jr.](#) is the 15th Chancellor of the SUNY System. Chancellor King served in President Barack Obama's cabinet as the 10th US Secretary of Education. His service in Washington, DC, followed his tenure as New York State's first African American and first Puerto Rican Education Commissioner, a role in which he oversaw all elementary and secondary schools, as well as public, independent, and proprietary colleges and universities, professional licensure, libraries, museums, and numerous other educational institutions.

ABOUT GENESEO

We are a distinctive public liberal arts college that welcomes and inspires students to develop their knowledge and skills to build a better world. Our supportive, inclusive community is exceptional in cultivating creativity, engagement, and discovery. We find strength in diversity, joy in growth, and fulfillment in lifelong learning. —SUNY Geneseo Mission Statement

Founded in 1871 as a normal and training school, [SUNY Geneseo](#) is one of the original campuses of the SUNY system, established in 1948. It has evolved into a nationally recognized, selective public liberal arts college with undergraduate and graduate programs of study. SUNY Geneseo is proud of its status as New York State's sole member of the [Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges](#) (COPLAC).

As part of its liberal arts mission, Geneseo prepares its students to become responsible and engaged citizens who can assist the communities in which they live to become more diverse and inclusive, more globally aware, and more sustainable. As an indication of its success, for the ninth consecutive year,

Geneseo was included in *Washington Monthly's* top five US master's institutions, this time placing second for its contributions to the public good; in 2021, it was ranked number one. Because of its mission and the quality of its educational programs, Geneseo attracts bright, inquisitive, highly motivated, and socially responsible students who make the most of the opportunities college affords them. With a mean high school grade-point average of 92.38, Geneseo is the most selective of the SUNY comprehensive universities.

This combination of a talented faculty dedicated to student learning and a student body able and eager to rise to high expectations produces impressive student outcomes. Geneseo has one of the top two highest four-year graduation rates among the 64 SUNY institutions and ranks in the top 15 in the nation among public institutions for its six-year graduation rates among recipients of federal Pell grants. It is also among the top institutions in the nation of its type in the number of alumni with doctorates in STEM disciplines, the number of Fulbright US Student Program awards, and the number of Peace Corps volunteers it produces.

Strategic Plan

Higher education is undergoing transformational change. SUNY Geneseo views change as an opportunity to grow and refine its identity as a public liberal arts institution. The intention to become the nation's first equity-centered public honors college is a natural extension of Geneseo's strengths and values, and its foregrounding in the 2022–27 strategic plan provides a unifying vision for the College. The strategic plan elements of access, experience, outcomes, and infrastructure support that honors college vision. In addition, they align with New York State's focus on increased access to an affordable, high-quality education and promote the development of the long-term structures that ensure financial and institutional stability. In articulating the vision of delivering a distinctive, equity-centered, public honors college experience, Geneseo embraces a bold and forward-looking agenda. This presents an exciting opportunity for the College to build on its history of delivering transformative learning experiences as it redefines the honors experience for all students, centering equity, advancing access, and embracing innovation.

Academics

Geneseo has carved a distinctive niche in the higher education market by competing for outstanding students with some of the most exceptional private colleges in the nation. The institution offers more than 155 programs of study, including 60 undergraduate degree programs, 26 interdisciplinary minors, and graduate programs in accounting and education. Nearly 30% of Geneseo's undergraduate students have a double major or both a major and a minor. Geneseo has a strong history of undergraduate research support, and approximately 70% of Geneseo's faculty report having worked with undergraduate students on research. Through recent curricular reform, students are now guaranteed to have a high-impact, integrative learning experience during their time at Geneseo through enhanced opportunities for study abroad, undergraduate research, internships, and civic engagement. Geneseo is also the only SUNY comprehensive college to house a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. In 2018, Milne Library earned the Excellence

in Academic Libraries award in the college category, placing it among the best in the nation for institutions of its type by the Association of College and Research Libraries.

The College is home to 18 academic departments in arts and sciences, a CAEP-accredited School of Education, and an AACSB-accredited School of Business. SUNY Geneseo is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and a recent reaffirmation noted no recommendations or requirements and contained eight formal recognitions of accomplishments, progress, or exemplary/innovative practices.

Faculty and Staff

Geneseo sets high expectations for itself and its students. Its 350 faculty (218 full-time and 132 part-time) are productive, nationally recognized scholars on the cutting edge of their disciplines. They are at the same time highly regarded teachers, devoted to ongoing pedagogical innovation. That dedication to quality instruction has been hearteningly and consistently recognized beyond the institution. In the 2023 *US News & World Report* rankings, Geneseo was once again identified as number one in the Best Undergraduate Teaching category among regional universities in the North. This makes nine number one appearances on this list since it was established 13 years ago. The student-to-faculty ratio is 16 to one, and median undergraduate class size is 22.

The College is also home to hundreds of staff, who are integral members of the Geneseo community and support critical academic, co-curricular, and business operations of the institution. Many are alumni of Geneseo, underscoring the college's role as an important local employer and the dedication and passion of its faculty and staff. They are partners in the educational mission and tight-knit community on campus.

Student Life

A strongly residential college, Geneseo houses 54% of its students on campus. Of the institution's over 4,100 undergraduate students, 65% identify as female, 15.2% come from multicultural backgrounds, 98% are from New York State, 1% are out-of-state, and 1.2% are international students (data as of Fall 2022). Graduate programs in business and education serve approximately 85 graduate students per year. Geneseo seeks to be a welcoming campus, and the close relationships formed among the various members of the community—faculty, staff, and students—are reminiscent of those found in a much smaller institution.

Geneseo offers a vibrant student and campus environment. As many as 1,000 students present scholarly and creative work at the annual Geneseo Recognizing Excellence, Achievement, and Talent (GREAT) Day symposium. Students may participate in the Diversity Summit, a full, class-free day of diversity-focused sessions hosted by members of the college community. In addition to an award-winning leadership development program, students also may participate in a variety of community service programs and more than 180 student-led organizations, including academic, performing arts, musical, cultural, and fraternal.

The [Geneseo Knights](#) compete in 13 intercollegiate sports for women and eight for men at the NCAA Division III level in the State University of New York Athletic Conference (SUNYAC). They have sustained an impressive record over many years, winning the seven most recent SUNYAC Commissioner's Cups for aggregate conference performance. The College also offers competition in 21 club sports and 31 intramural sports.

Finance and Budget

As a tuition-driven institution, Geneseo faces many of the challenges that the higher education market is grappling with today. Historic enrollment peaked at around 5,600 total students, but the College has seen a 10-year net 24.4% decline in enrollment. From challenging demographic trends in the college-aged population to resource limitations given the pandemic, the college's strategic plan is aimed at addressing the structural budget deficit and prioritizing long-term financial sustainability and stability through diversifying revenue streams, fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, and ensuring the proper infrastructure is in place to support both its current actual and ideal future student population sizes and needs. The College has long been a lean organization, but attention to structure, efficiencies, and faculty and staff support will also be essential in ensuring fiscal health.

Geneseo has an endowment valued at nearly \$42.7 million and will soon launch the public phase of a comprehensive campaign. The college's operating budget is approximately \$80 million. The operating budget is supported by general revenues of the state at 15% and an additional 85% campus-generated revenue. The estimated student expense is \$27,000 for in-state students and \$37,000 for out-of-state students. In 2023, *The Princeton Review* named Geneseo as one of the 209 Best Value Colleges for undergraduate education for students seeking a superb education with great career preparation at an affordable price, and it appeared on the regional Best Northeastern Colleges list, considered to be "academically outstanding." Fiske's 2023 edition notes that SUNY Geneseo is a "preferred option" due to its serious academic environment and affordable pricing.

The fiscal operations of institutions within the SUNY system are integrated with data structures in the central administration, though the campus maintains significant leadership and decision-making. For instance, capital funding for academic and administrative facilities is handled centrally by the state via SUNY, thereby allowing Geneseo to free itself from the concerns of selling bonds.

Geneseo has four separate operating budgets: the State Purpose Budget, the DIFR Budget (Dormitory Income Fund Reimbursable), the IFR Budget(s) (Income Fund Reimbursable), and SUTRA (State University Tuition Reimbursable Accounts). These budgeting cycles typically start in the winter. The total campus portfolio budget including funding from related entities is \$139 million (this reflects budgets from entities, such as Campus Auxiliary Services).

SUNY Central establishes target allocations of the budget for each SUNY campus composed of both tuition revenue and state tax-dollar support. The College distributes Geneseo's campus allocation on a prorated basis, providing the starting points to establish budgets for the divisions and departments. The vice president for finance and administration takes the preliminary budget to the cabinet for discussion and

final approval by the president. The Budget Priorities Committee and the Strategic Planning Group recommend priorities when new funds become available.

Leadership

[Denise A. Battles, PhD](#), has served as president of SUNY Geneseo since 2015, marking a return to her native upstate New York. She is the second woman to lead the College as permanent president since the college's founding in 1871. A geologist by training, her career has been dedicated to serving in public higher education institutions, and she has held faculty and administrative appointments in Georgia, Colorado, and North Carolina. President Battles has also served in leadership and/or board roles in multiple higher education associations, including the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), American Council on Education's (ACE) Council of Fellows, Association of Chief Academic Officers, and Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC). Reflecting her interest in STEM gender equity issues, she served for six years on the editorial board of the *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*.

Location

Geneseo is home to approximately 8,000 residents and is located in picturesque Geneseo, NY. Geneseo is a historic village and one of only 24 communities in the nation with its historic district recognized as a National Historic Landmark. Its name derived from the Haudenosaunee place name with a meaning of pleasant or beautiful valley. Genesee Valley is the jewel of Geneseo, with its own character of rolling hills, expansive vistas, and modest snowfall. Its small-town feel, stunning landscapes, and lush farmlands combine with the vibrant energy of students and the commitment to scholarship and learning from professors to make Geneseo one of the most desired areas to live in the western Finger Lakes region. In addition to local cafés, farmers' markets, and unique shops, Geneseo's location offers easy day-trip access to Niagara Falls; Toronto, Ontario; Buffalo, NY; and Rochester, NY. Beautiful Letchworth State Park, recently voted the nation's Best State Park, is within 10 miles of campus. The area offers reasonable cost of living options, making it ideal for families.

THE ROLE OF THE PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Reporting to President Battles, the provost and vice president for academic affairs serves as the second in command and the institution's chief academic officer as well as a key member of the cabinet. The provost, working with the deans and other academic leaders, has responsibility for supporting the faculty and advancing teaching, scholarship, and associated student support services. The new provost will join the president's cabinet in playing a key role in the development and support of the college's strategic priorities. This will include solidifying a shared vision as an equity-centered public honors college and strategically and collaboratively implementing that vision. The provost will also engage with SUNY partners to advance and ensure institutional alignment with system initiatives, including research, curriculum, student retention and success, and transfer.

The provost will oversee a talented team of 12 direct reports. As a result of recent reorganization, the dean of arts and sciences and the deans of the schools of business and education will report to the provost along with an associate provost for academic success, an associate provost for assessment and curriculum, an associate provost for finance and administration, the institution's chief information officer, and five academic directors. The provost's office oversees academic planning and advising, the registrar, access opportunity programs, the library, computing and information technology, campus events and scheduling, sustainability, and career design. In addition, the provost's office supports a variety of centers, including those for teaching and learning, digital learning, integrative learning, and interdisciplinary programs, and the offices of institutional research, national fellowships and scholarships, study abroad, accessibility services, and sponsored research.

Recognizing the unusually large number of direct reports to the provost and the relatively flat organizational structure, the college commissioned an outside study to examine the academic affairs division to ensure alignment of divisional structures with institutional strategic priorities. As of fall 2023, the college has repurposed an unfilled vice provost role into a true dean of arts and sciences position, which will assume oversight of the 18 arts and sciences departments and department chairs. A search for the inaugural dean of arts and sciences will begin this fall, and it is expected that the selected new provost will be involved in the later stages of the dean search in addition to any further refinement of the academic affairs organizational structure.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Specifically, the provost and vice president for academic affairs will work to address the following opportunities and challenges:

Help define what it means to be an equity-centered public honors college and strategically execute that vision

SUNY Geneseo seeks to advance its identity as a public liberal arts institution that aspires to deliver an honors experience for all students. The next provost will need to help fully actualize this ambitious and groundbreaking initiative and will work collaboratively with constituents across Geneseo to clearly define how the College will center equity, articulate what a contemporary and inclusive honors experience should look like, and ensure a rigorous and supportive educational experience in realistic, actionable terms. In collaboration with the president, cabinet, faculty, students, staff, and the greater campus community, the provost will champion a strategic academic vision that is responsive to the changing public higher education landscape and leverages Geneseo's distinctive strengths and future opportunities.

The next provost must be a champion of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging and ensure the College is a welcoming and supportive place for all to study, work, and live. The provost will not only have a deep-seated commitment to DEIB but also must be an engaged student of these issues and have demonstrated a record of successful action and courage, both personally and professionally, in this important work. The provost will be expected to be a thought leader on these issues in word and action

and to bring a working theory of change related to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging grounded in the Geneseo context.

Lead a diverse and complex portfolio and ensure the academic affairs infrastructure is optimized to help SUNY Geneseo reach its ambitions

The breadth of the provost's division presents the opportunity for greater alignment and coordination across the academic program, student experience, and other critical functional units that support Geneseo's mission and strategic direction. The college has recently commissioned an outside study to examine potential new organizational structures for academic affairs, to ensure alignment with the institution's strategic priorities. The initial phase of this work is underway with the creation of a new dean of arts and sciences position to organize and oversee the 18 liberal arts departments. The design of this new structure will provide the incoming provost enhanced support in managing a large portfolio, more time to devote to institutional strategy and visioning, and the means to develop future academic leaders and administrative bench strength within academic affairs. The next provost will also have the opportunity to further articulate what an optimal structure for their division should look like and build a team around themselves. Through examining existing protocols, policies, and administrative systems—or by thinking through how to foster more operational efficiencies, enhance communication, and better utilize technology—the provost will be able to consider the ideal administrative structure moving forward that is in alignment with the strategic vision of the college. They will also work to establish best practices for regularly sharing key college-wide data and updates and fostering a sense of community and common purpose among diverse constituents.

Recruit, retain, and develop a distinguished faculty and academic affairs staff

The provost is the chief academic officer as well as an intellectual and administrative leader on campus. The new provost will lead the academic mission during a period of significant change and expand opportunities for students, staff, and faculty. Strategic investment in faculty hiring, mentoring, scholarly support, and retention will be central to Geneseo's pursuit of its goals. The provost will prioritize recruiting, retaining, and developing talented faculty and staff who contribute to the overall diversity of the institution, including those from historically marginalized groups. The provost must be intellectually curious about all disciplines and professions represented across the 18 departments and two schools; sensitive to the needs of faculty and staff in today's world; and supportive of strengthening Geneseo's unique balance of the teaching, scholarship, and service missions. The provost will be a strong advocate for academic and faculty affairs and maintain a tradition of high-functioning relationships with shared governance and the UUP and CSEA unions, building on Geneseo's recent receipt of the 2022 SUNY Shared Governance Award.

Invest in student success, new program development, and curricular innovation

Building on the momentum of the last several years, the provost will work with the chairs, deans, and faculty to inspire curricular and pedagogical innovation. The provost will work to develop and implement new, entrepreneurial academic programs that drive enrollment and help diversify the college's revenue

sources as well as ensure current programming is well packaged and marketed. New programs will exhibit a variety of options—reach diverse student populations, advance Geneseo’s physical presence in Rochester and the region, align with strategic plan implementation, extend online learning, and expand opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. The provost will take the lead to advance the implementation of the new curriculum, the integrative and applied learning graduation requirement, and new baccalaureate learning outcomes. The provost will also accelerate progress toward building an equity-minded learning experience for all students, enhancing critical academic support functions related to recruitment, retention, persistence, and student success.

The next provost will continue Geneseo’s tradition of recruiting exceptional students and its commitment to provide all students with an equally outstanding experience during their time at the institution through excellent advising and mentoring, innovative teaching and curricula, appealing extracurricular programming and events, and a sustained a focus on student-centered support in a residential environment. The new provost should possess an understanding of the needs and expectations of today’s students as well as an interest in engaging with pressing student issues, including campus issues related to diversity and belonging, student mental health, sexual assault, and alcohol and substance use.

Demonstrate sound financial stewardship and management

Like most colleges and universities today, SUNY Geneseo faces financial pressures with limited resources. The provost, in close collaboration with the vice president for finance and administration, will lead the financial strategy for the academic units to ensure long-term sustainability. To address the budget deficit and diversify revenue sources, the provost, as an institutional leader, will bring highly developed financial acumen to strategic conversations about enrollment, program development and assessment, organizational structure, and the implementation of the strategic plan. They must balance a realistic understanding of the financial pressures facing Geneseo with optimism and inspiration and bring a solutions-oriented approach to academic and institutional planning. The provost is also expected to be an externally engaged face of the College, interfacing with alumni, donors, state and system leadership, and the broader community.

CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALIFICATIONS

SUNY Geneseo seeks in its new provost a superb record of progressively responsible and successful academic leadership roles in higher education that demonstrate the requisite experience and preparedness to serve as the chief academic officer and the first among equals on a talented cabinet. A terminal degree from an accredited institution and a strong background in teaching, research, scholarly and/or creative activities, and service, demonstrating a record commensurate with appointment at the rank of full professor with tenure, are required.

The search committee understands that no single candidate will have all the ideal qualifications, but it seeks candidates with the following experience and abilities:

- Significant line management experience, managing teams and budgets at scale, with a preference

for leadership experience at the decanal level or above

- Successful and considerable experience in academic administration, including enrollment, student success, program development, assessment, and accreditation
- Demonstrated experience leading a large team and empowering academic stakeholders and staff
- Understanding of the fiscal challenges facing public institutions and liberal arts colleges, demonstrated budgetary management experience, and a history of generating new public and private resources
- Deep commitment to Geneseo's core values and aspiration to be an equity-centered public honors college; a meaningful track record of leadership in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, access, and antiracism
- Experience guiding the implementation of an ambitious, comprehensive strategic plan
- Penchant for action and the capacity to shepherd change, inspire optimism, and lead initiatives to successful completion
- Proven commitment to the importance of undergraduate education and academic excellence in graduate and professional programs as well as the ability to articulate the distinctive value of a liberal arts education
- Understanding of and appreciation for working collaboratively within shared governance and a collective bargaining environment; a demonstrated open and transparent leadership style
- Strong management, problem-solving, relationship building, and conflict management skills
- Wide-ranging intellectual curiosity; the capacity to learn and support areas outside their own expertise and partner with other divisions outside of academic affairs
- Willingness to work hard and to respect and celebrate the hard work of others, balanced with the capacity to foster and model a culture of well-being and belonging
- Emotional intelligence and intercultural competence; a demonstrated ability to communicate with nuance and foresight; demonstrated experience with and a commitment to engaging and listening to diverse constituencies and audiences
- Ability to serve as an excellent ambassador for SUNY Geneseo and to engage effectively with alumni, donors, parents, New York State, and other external audiences on behalf of the institution

TO APPLY

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including CVs and two- to three-page letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be sent electronically to:

Kate Barry, Partner
Elizabeth Dorr Weithman, Managing Associate
Steph Simon, Associate

Kaitlin Cruz, Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/suny-geneseo/provost>

SUNY Geneseo is committed to fostering a diverse community of outstanding faculty, staff, and students, as well as ensuring equal educational opportunity, employment, and access to services, programs, and activities, gender expression, sexual orientation, familial status, pregnancy, predisposing genetic characteristics, military status, domestic violence victim status, or criminal conviction.