



Search for the Vice President of Student Affairs  
Tulane University  
New Orleans, Louisiana

## THE SEARCH

Tulane University, one of the nation's most prestigious research institutions, invites nominations and applications for their next Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA). Working closely with the Tulane community, especially students, the Vice President will lead the Division of Student Affairs in cultivating support, connections, and growth throughout the student experience. The new VPSA will be collaborative and visionary, tasked with fostering student engagement, health and wellness, and critically important resources to all students, including graduate and professional students. The Vice President will join Tulane at a time of ongoing and exciting upward momentum. This is an extraordinary opportunity to lead a highly functioning division comprised of a remarkably talented student affairs team with a legacy of unwavering support and commitment to students.

Founded in 1834, Tulane offers degrees across an attractive array of ten schools and colleges, including the truly unique Newcomb-Tulane College, the home of all undergraduate students where they can flourish as both students and service-minded citizens. The university is known for its highly collaborative environment, and it has developed innovative interdisciplinary research and educational programs that span all the schools. Tulane has cultivated an emphasis on community service and practical experience that is infused in its programs, culture, and community. With approximately 8,500 undergraduate and 5,900 graduate and professional students, Tulane takes pride in providing hands-on experiences to its students who provide thousands of hours of public service to the greater New Orleans community. Tulane is integrally connected to the vibrancy and diversity of New Orleans and its culture. The university is enriched by its unique location, which provides incredible opportunities for engagement, community, and experiential learning.

An active and visible presence in the Tulane community, the next VPSA will enthusiastically engage with and advocate for students. The Vice President will envision and activate the future of student affairs that enhances student success at Tulane. The VPSA will lead a passionate and innovative team that is resilient and looking to the future. Reporting to the Provost and serving on the President's cabinet, the VPSA will harness the division's mission and proactively leverage administrators and faculty across the University to strengthen the student experience, leading through influence and effective communication skills.

Creative, energetic, and strategic, the next VPSA will be a student-centered leader with demonstrated proficiency in student engagement as well as equity and inclusion best practices. This person will have a track record of innovation and collaboration at an academically rigorous and diverse institution, strong supervisory skills, decisive leadership including during times of crisis, a commitment to the university and local community, and the ability to coordinate resources and people to serve students effectively and efficiently.

Tulane has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of the Vice President of Student Affairs. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence as noted at the end of this document.

## **TULANE UNIVERSITY**

Tulane traces its origins to 1834, when it was founded as the Medical College of Louisiana. It was renamed the University of Louisiana in 1847 and the legislature subsequently transferred it to the Board of Administrators of the Tulane Education Fund in 1884. With that transfer, Tulane University was established as a private, nonsectarian university and named in honor of benefactor Paul Tulane, a wealthy merchant who donated more than \$1 million in land, cash, and securities “for the promotion and encouragement of intellectual, moral and industrial education.” In 1886, the H. Sophie Newcomb Memorial College was established as Tulane’s college for women. The unified Newcomb-Tulane College today enrolls all full-time undergraduates at the University. The University has an operating budget of just over \$1 billion and an endowment of \$2 billion. The Tulane faculty totals over 1,200 full-time members with a staff of approximately 2,900.

Tulane University is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching ranks Tulane as a university with “very high research activity.” As such, it is committed to the highest level of research. Tulane attracts an outstanding student body that is both intellectually curious and driven by community engagement. The University’s 8:1 undergraduate student-faculty ratio allows Tulane undergraduates to receive the personalized attention of a smaller liberal arts college along with the resources of a major research institution. Additionally, Tulane offers over 200 graduate degree programs across nine schools. In 2006, Tulane became the first major research institution to require public service as a graduation requirement for undergraduates, which led to the Carnegie Foundation recognizing Tulane with its Community Engagement Classification. Tulane is also the most national university in the country, with its undergraduates traveling further to attend college, on average, than those of any other university. As such, it plays a valuable role in recruiting talent to New Orleans, as only 15% of Tulane’s students are from New Orleans, and about 20% of all Tulane graduates stay in Louisiana after graduation. Tulane University continues its impressive ties with the New Orleans community and was recently named “the most engaged in the community” by the *Princeton Review*.

Student success is on an upward trajectory with a 94% retention rate and 88% graduate rate. The newest class of Tulane students is the most diverse yet, with students hailing from 49 states and territories, 36 countries, 41% identifying as people of color, 61% female, and a record-setting 10% are first-generation college students.

Student life is vibrant at Tulane. Known as the Green Wave, Tulane athletes compete in 16 sports in the American Athletic Conference. Within the last few years, Tulane has built several new facilities to accommodate athletes, including a new football stadium. There are more than 200 student organizations on campus. The extensive list of organizations includes the Tulane Undergraduate Assembly, which advocates for the entire undergraduate student body and works closely with Student Affairs. Similarly, the Graduate and Professional Student Association is the unifying body of Tulane's graduate and professional divisions and is a vital partner to the Division. Another aspect of Tulane student life includes the Greek-letter organization community, comprised of 25 fraternities and sororities and over 3,100 members. The fraternity and sorority community is remarkably engaged with the university and New Orleans.

With a two-year live-on requirement and 14 communities, including graduate student housing, over 4,500 residents from 49 states call Tulane's campus home. The newly opened River and Lake Residence Halls, which are part of the ongoing Village project, are part of the largest capital investment in Tulane's history that will transform student opportunities on the uptown campus. The next phase of the Village, with the addition of two more residence halls, is currently under construction and is expected to open in 2025.

Another notable community space is the Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life and The Commons, which serves as a hub for campus life that houses meeting space, campus programming, dining options, the Bookstore, student involvement opportunities, and many other student resources. Whether it's a newly launched Student Accessibility peer mentoring program, serving over 26,000 in-patient visits in Campus Health & Wellness, offering more than 70 group exercise classes weekly through Campus Recreation, or over 2,250 meals served in the Office of Multicultural Affairs' weekly "Wednesdays with the O" series, there are abundant opportunities for engagement, support, and community at Tulane.

## **LEADERSHIP**

Michael Fitts is the 15th president of Tulane University. He arrived at Tulane in July 2014, bringing with him a strong emphasis on heightening cross-disciplinary education and research. President Fitts believes students and higher education institutions can set themselves apart in a fast-changing world and ever-shifting economy through the combining of different fields and skills. In his first year at Tulane, he launched task forces to lead the University in deepening its unique strengths for interdisciplinary collaboration. He sees powerful advantages in the University's manageable size, its wide selection of professional schools, and the unified undergraduate college.

Previously, President Fitts served 14 years as Dean of the Law School at the University of Pennsylvania, where he was recognized for greatly boosting their offerings in interdisciplinary education. He also presided over a quadrupling of Penn Law's endowment, a more than 40 percent increase in the size of the Law School faculty, and a doubling of all forms of student financial aid. He earned a bachelor of arts degree from Harvard University and received his juris doctorate from Yale Law School.

Dr. Robin Forman was appointed Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost in September 2016. He previously served as Dean of the Emory College of Arts and Sciences and the Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Mathematics at Emory University. He has held faculty and administrative appointments at Rice University and has served as an instructor at MIT and as a visiting professor at the University of Burgundy, Harvard University, and the Mathematical Research Institute. Dr. Forman received a bachelor of arts and a master of arts in mathematics from the University of Pennsylvania and a doctoral degree in mathematics from Harvard University. His research, which has been funded by the National Science Foundation, the National Security Agency, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, focuses on combinatorial methods in topology and geometry. The Division of Student Affairs reports to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

## **DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Tulane University's [Division of Student Affairs](#) serves undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The Division's mission is to cultivate support, connection, and growth throughout the student experience. Dedicated to fostering a community where everyone thrives, Student Affairs provides excellence and innovation in housing, health, support, and counsel as well as recreation, venues for understanding, and opportunities for resolution. Student affairs steadfastly supports students. Whether through educational opportunities and programs, building a healthier campus, or during times of crisis, the division embodies Tulane's motto "non sibi, sed suis" or "not for oneself, but for one's own."

The Division supports the academic mission of the University, develops students at the individual and community level, and enhances the University's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. The work of the Division is built upon the values of personal development, care and thriving, serving all students, and values-driven resource management and stewardship.

Student Affairs is comprised of 15 [departments](#), which are: Campus Health & Wellness, Campus Recreation, Case Management & Victim Support Services, the Counseling Center, Family Programs, Fraternity & Sorority Programs, Gender & Sexual Diversity, the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility, Housing & Residence Life, the Lavin-Bernick Center for University Life, Multicultural Affairs, Religious Life, Student Conduct, Student Resources & Support Services, and the Well for Health Promotion.

## **THE ROLE**

Reporting to the Provost and as a member of the Provost's leadership team, as well as the President's cabinet, the Vice President for Student Affairs will serve as a consummate champion for the Tulane University student community. The VPSA will lead and provide strategic direction and administrative oversight to the Division of Student Affairs. The VPSA plays a critical role in setting and implementing university priorities affecting students and works collaboratively across the university with senior leaders, faculty, students, and staff in support of programs, spaces, policies, and resources that advance student development, belonging, wellness, inclusion, safety, and community at Tulane. The VPSA will support all students by leading and empowering their team and fostering a welcoming environment for students to explore and grow.

The Vice President of Student Affairs supervises 8 direct reports, which are the following: Assistant Vice President for Intercultural Life, Assistant Vice President for Campus Life, Assistant Vice President for Campus Health & Wellness, Associate Vice President & Dean of Students, Director of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion, Director of Marketing & Communications, Assistant Dean of Administration & Finance, and an Executive Assistant.

The VPSA indirectly oversees more than 250 professional staff, in addition to approximately 500 student and part-time employees. The Vice President manages approximately \$62 million in revenue against \$30 million in operating expenses. The VPSA will have oversight of this complex budget and work with the Provost to ensure all student programs and departments are properly funded. The next VPSA should be energized by the abundance of possibilities to impact students and the unique opportunity this role offers to lead a well-functioning division and dedicated team. Moreover, the VPSA should be excited about being a part of the New Orleans community, one of the most unique, culturally rich, diverse, and dynamic cities in the world.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS**

To be successful, the next Vice President of Student Affairs will address the following key opportunities and challenges:

### **Craft and advance a shared vision for Student Affairs**

As the Division transitions to its next leader, the VPSA must preserve what already makes student affairs at Tulane successful and unique, while creating a forward-looking vision consistent with current and future leading practices in student affairs that best suits Tulane's needs. Collaboration and the unwavering support for students are hallmarks of successful leadership at Tulane and are expected as vital characteristics of the next Vice President.

To be successful, the VPSA must facilitate sustained opportunities for dialogue with students, staff, and faculty. The outcome of the Vice President's vision and action plan must be a co-creation with key stakeholders throughout the institution, including students. The VPSA's vision must be inclusive of the Divisions' breadth of departments, offerings, and talents. This vision and action plan must serve as a common thread among all departments and prioritize student engagement, community, wellness, belonging, and equity and justice. Through the work of Student Affairs and their newly formed guiding vision, the VPSA will be actively involved in developing the Division's identity at Tulane and the New Orleans community in a way that inspires and energizes.

### **Provide leadership in enhancing the undergraduate, graduate, and professional student experience**

The next VPSA will continue the remarkable momentum in transforming the Tulane University student experience. Tulane's national reputation has boomed in recent years with application numbers and yield on the rise with an increase in high-achieving and diverse students. Community, support, determination for success, and an excitement for Tulane and New Orleans are defining themes among the campus community.

To succeed in their role, the VPSA must not only enhance the services, resources, and program offerings for undergraduate students, but also engage and support graduate and professional students and be inclusive of these populations in their decision-making and communications. Encompassing approximately 40% of the student population, the Vice President will increase the presence of Student Affairs offerings to graduate and professional students at both the Uptown and Downtown campuses.

### **Engage with students through presence and collaboration**

The next Vice President will intuitively understand students and engage with them as part of their leadership approach. A visible presence will be requisite in keeping abreast of the campus climate, how students are changing, and what their needs might be. A VPSA for all students in a high-touch environment, they must possess a desire and energy to know students and advocate on their behalf. Students, and their families, frequently turn to the VPSA and their team for guidance, trust, and support. By being engaged with students, the Vice President can leverage their role as a division leader, executive cabinet member, and consummate collaborator to inform, resolve, and otherwise champion the voice of the Tulane student body. The VPSA will actively and authentically engage the community to build bridges across siloes and overcome obstacles to success across the University. The VPSA will work passionately with other leaders on critical university priorities such as equity, safety, and well-being to help ensure that Tulane continues to provide access to transformative educational opportunities for all students.

### **Foster a strengthened commitment to equity and inclusion**

As a proven innovator and advocate for equity, diversity, and inclusion in student affairs, the next VPSA will lead an ongoing university-wide effort to promote EDI excellence, a climate where all can succeed,

and build equitable practices, all guided by the university's [Strategy for Tomorrow](#). The VPSA will regard student success and student affairs work through an equitable lens in partnership with colleagues across the institution and will assume a leadership role in educating the community and executing efforts that improve the student experience and equitable access to student affairs programs and services. A successful Vice President will integrate the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of the operations of student affairs and ensure support for students and staff from historically underrepresented groups.

### **Support and lead a team of dedicated professionals**

The VPSA is a consummate supporter and champion of Student Affairs employees at all levels of the organization. The Division has a legacy of recruiting top-tier talent and affording staff the space and opportunities to apply their creative solutions and develop their skills as student affairs professionals. The VPSA cares about their team at a holistic level, advocates on their behalf, and works fervently to improve and sustain morale. Through accessible and supportive leadership, clear purpose, and transparency, the VPSA will lead and develop a talented multi-generational team of professionals. As an experienced supervisor and educator, this individual will bring a deep understanding of the national landscape of student affairs practices. The Vice President will inspire and motivate both their direct reports and their respective teams and will foster a culture of collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and excellence.

### **Effectively manage financial and operational resources**

The next VPSA must be an experienced financial steward as well as a strong advocate for resources – human, physical, and financial, demonstrating the university-wide value and impact of student affairs. The division's budget is comprised of varied sources and should be aligned with an ongoing appraisal of current programs and services, facilities, organizational structures, and processes. The VPSA will engage in the appropriate collaborative exercises, resource adjustments, and dialogue that ensures values-driven and innovative resource management throughout the division. The Vice President will pay particular attention to advocating for appropriately funded personnel and resources, uphold a legacy of sustainable budgetary practices, and creatively plan for the future of the Tulane student experience, such as the completion and opening of The Village.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

Tulane seeks in its Vice President of Student Affairs an exceptional student-centered leader. The University seeks candidates who bring the following skills and experiences:

- A doctorate or other terminal degree is strongly preferred;
- A commitment and passion for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students;
- Proven skills as a senior manager and supervisor in a complex environment, with demonstrated ability to mentor and support staff from a breadth of student affairs functional areas;

- Sincere engagement with students and the campus community; a strong, visible presence and active participation in a range of campus activities;
- A track record of responsible fiscal and other resource allocation management that is aligned with student needs;
- Demonstrated success in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives as well as fostering a supportive and inclusive environment and embracing diversity in all aspects of a university community;
- The capacity to identify and think strategically about opportunities for creative collaboration across departments and a talent for bringing others on board and building momentum toward a common goal;
- Sophisticated interpersonal skills, including a firm, but fair, approach to the resolution of conflict and change management;
- Proven ability to address crises with equanimity, discretion, and respect;
- Demonstrated experience in assessment, evaluation, and development of student affairs programs, services, and facilities;
- Involvement in the student affairs profession and expertise in critical issues such as student mental health and wellness, crisis management, and recruiting and developing student affairs talent;
- A personal commitment to the education, wellness, support, and engagement of a racially and culturally diverse student body in an urban environment;
- Strong oral and written communication skills.

### **Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations**

Tulane University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist the Vice President of Student Affairs search committee in its identification and review of candidates. Please direct all inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications in strict confidence to:

Kate Barry, Partner  
Ivan Ceballos, Senior Associate  
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/tulane-university/vice-president-student-affairs>

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