



Search for the PROVOST  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PARIS  
PARIS, FRANCE

## THE SEARCH

The American University of Paris (AUP), a liberal arts institution that is American by tradition, French by location, and global in both intake and outlook, seeks an innovative, collaborative, and dynamic leader to serve as its next Provost and chief academic officer. Chartered in 1962 and located in the prestigious 7<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement* of Paris, AUP provides a student-centered, academically rigorous, and career-enabling education to degree-seeking students, both undergraduate and graduate, from around the world.

A distinctive liberal arts university, AUP's permanent faculty and staff of just under 250 engage throughout the academic year with a student body of around 1,400 students, enabling them to cross cultural barriers and academic disciplines with ease and to assume their places as responsible global citizens. Students represent 102 nationalities and speak 62 languages. The size of the student body combined with the institution's pedagogical philosophy creates an intimate, engaging, and stimulating educational environment. Classes are conducted in English, though most students and faculty speak more than one language. The University's 21<sup>st</sup>-century curriculum prepares students for tomorrow's world where critical thinking, communication skills, digital mastery, and cross-cultural understanding will be required.

Under the leadership of President Sonya Stephens, the Provost will join AUP at an exciting moment as the University is primed to build upon its strong reputation and promote excellence across teaching, learning, and research. This is an outstanding opportunity for an accomplished scholar and administrative leader with an international perspective to influence and shape the University's academic life. The Provost will work closely with the faculty, President, senior leadership, and the Board of Trustees to review and support the institution's undergraduate and graduate curriculums, develop its vibrant research centers, and promote the teacher/scholar research model for faculty. The Provost will serve as a key member of the senior leadership team and play a pivotal role in achieving AUP's academic, strategic, and financial/institutional goals.

The Provost will be charged with providing visionary leadership, bringing both a commitment to the liberal arts and an appetite for innovative methods for skills-building and career development. In this role, the Provost will provide academic advice and guidance to members of the senior leadership team, the President, and the Trustees, while ensuring the smooth functioning of the Academic Affairs team. The

Provost will seek to forge external partnerships in Paris and globally. As the chief academic officer of the University, the Provost will support and develop a distinguished faculty, while shepherding a culture of trust, mutual respect, and transparency among and between the administration, faculty, and staff. The Provost will promote diversity and inclusion in the AUP community through all of these efforts.

The American University of Paris has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search and to help identify outstanding candidates. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF PARIS**

Having recently celebrated its 60th anniversary, AUP enjoys prominence as a private, urban university and a global center for interdisciplinary research and teaching. Throughout its existence, AUP's mission has been to provide students from all over the globe with a transformational educational experience that crosses disciplines, cultures, and borders. The University achieves this mission by providing its students with a curriculum combining liberal arts inquiry, preparation for professional life, and interactive, student-centered learning in small classroom settings. An AUP education supports cultural fluency, a sense of global engagement, and a capacity to negotiate differences that emerge from diversity.

AUP is incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware in the US as a non-profit corporation, registered with the US Internal Revenue Service as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, and registered in France as a non-profit association. It is licensed by the Board of Education of the State of Delaware as an institution of higher learning; accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools; and authorized by the French *Rectorat* as an *établissement d'enseignement supérieur*.

## **The Faculty**

The AUP faculty includes 110 full-time professors, 89 part-time professors and adjuncts from 29 different nations. Three-quarters speak three or more languages and three-quarters hold terminal academic degrees. All permanent faculty members who participate in graduate teaching also teach in the undergraduate program.

Dedicated to teaching, research, and service, the faculty produces relevant research that focuses on the cross-cultural, the comparative, and the interdisciplinary – all in support of the University's mission to produce graduates for a world held in common. A shared curricular vision stretches across all departments and programs, looking toward global sustainability, conflict resolution, world governance, cultural translation, and social justice. AUP's curriculum can be described as hybrid, combining the best of liberal arts with vocationally enhancing, hands-on applied learning. The faculty host international conferences, study groups, research projects, and events that enrich the AUP community and the broader public.

## Academic Programs

AUP educates its students to think critically, communicate in a world of many languages, develop creative, interdisciplinary approaches to important contemporary challenges, and be technologically and culturally literate in a world of rapid change.

Central to the undergraduate experience at AUP is its flagship Global Liberal Arts Core Curriculum. Eight academic departments administer undergraduate and graduate programs, which include 25 majors and 40 minors. Seven graduate programs offer Master of Science or Master of Arts degrees. Interdisciplinary programs flourish across all departments, driven by faculty research and student interests.

## Research Centers

AUP houses five supra-departmental, interdisciplinary research centers, listed below, that are mission-driven and designed to promote exchange and scholarly faculty research on subjects that reflect the major global challenges of our time and the University's values. AUP's location in Paris provides convenient access to world-class archives, institutions, and experts, and the University naturally draws leading researchers, artists, and writers for scholarly convocation and collaboration. Overall, the centers link teaching and research in a hands-on environment, fostering a greater sense of global engagement in students and the university community.

*The Center for Critical Democracy Studies* encourages a robust, interdisciplinary study of democracy as a social state, a political regime, or a form of agency. Purposely aligned with AUP's liberal arts curriculum, the Center encourages all fields from the natural and environmental sciences to the social sciences and humanities to explore democracy. Center-sponsored research is global, inter- and trans-disciplinary, with conferences and events organized around key themes of democracy's past, present, and future.

*The Center for Writers and Translators* promotes literary activity, especially where it relates to the practice of translation, taken in its broadest sense. The Center galvanizes AUP's active literary culture while drawing on Paris' great literary tradition of novelists and poets. It welcomes writers and translators to Paris, sponsors and hosts readings, lectures, and debates, and publishes a set of short books which make available new explorations in writing, in translating, and in the areas linking these two activities.

*The George and Irina Schaeffer Center for the Study of Genocide, Human Rights and Conflict Prevention* promotes innovative research, curricula, and pedagogies leading to a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of genocide and mass violence. The Center's goal is to foster scholarly discussion, in Paris and abroad, by means of conferences, lectures, and publications on how individuals, communities, and governments can respond to the challenges of extreme violence in the service of enduring peace and understanding. The Center proposes several fellowships for AUP faculty, staff, and students to encourage research on these questions.

*The Joy and Edward Frieman Environmental Science Center* pursues cutting-edge research in the environmental sciences, lab- and field-based science pedagogies, and public outreach on current environmental issues. Faculty conduct research in evolutionary biology and climate change impacts and collaborate on interdisciplinary projects using state-of-the-art climate chambers. The Center offers opportunities for faculty and student research collaborations leading to peer-reviewed publications, hosts high-level research symposia, fosters exchanges with the international scientific community, and raises awareness of human-induced climate change.

*The Center for Media, Communication, and Global Change* promotes engaged research and teaching that explores the consequential role of media, communication, and new technologies in global political, social, and cultural change. The Center was preceded by the *Civic Media Lab* from 2017-2022. It works with students, professors, scholars, policy advocates, and ordinary citizens to think about and use interactive media, technology, and art in positive ways in the classroom, the field, and across the world. The Center builds curriculum, organizes conferences, provides funding, and encourages intellectual activity.

### **International Networks and External Partners**

The University engages in multiple international networks and has relationships with institutions in the US, Europe and elsewhere including: The George Washington University; the University of Southern California; Denison University; the Sorbonne; Lingnan University; Northeastern University; Oxford University; Southern Methodist University; Tulane University; Vanderbilt University; Wellesley College; University of Cape Town; and the University of East Anglia. AUP participates in three consortia that include other American universities abroad: the Association of American International Colleges and Universities; the Consortium of American Academic Libraries Abroad; and the Global Liberal Arts Alliance. The Board of Trustees is a member of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

### **Campus in the Heart of Paris**

Situated on the banks of the Seine, AUP's urban campus occupies seven buildings in Paris' 7<sup>th</sup> *arrondissement* between *Les Invalides* and the Eiffel Tower. The University's intellectual and cultural endowment has always been its location at the center of a bustling, cosmopolitan European and world capital. AUP has successfully shaped its curriculum and extracurricular life to Paris' many centuries of art, history, literature, politics, and music. The city's monuments, libraries, neighborhoods, demographic shifts, and cultural and linguistic plurality make it a true "living laboratory." AUP students come to Paris for the city's cultural and linguistic heritage as well as for the internships and capstone experiences possible in the international public and private institutions located there.

In recent years, every space on campus has been built or renovated to enhance student learning and to achieve a heightened sense of community. As of 2023, AUP has substantially completed a master plan to create an architecturally eclectic, modernized, and consolidated urban campus. A recently built Learning

Commons overlooking the Quai d'Orsay connects via glass archway to the Combes Student Life Center, forming the heart of the expanded campus. A new Monttessuy Center for the Arts, with its Olivia de Havilland Theatre, opened in fall 2021 at the foot of the Eiffel Tower.

## LEADERSHIP

### President Sonya Stephens

Professor Sonya Stephens began her duties as the American University of Paris' 13th President September 1, 2022.

Professor Stephens is an exceptional academic leader and an internationally recognized scholar of 19th-century French literature. She has long devoted herself to advancing liberal arts education and is a highly skilled academic, fundraiser, administrator, and community builder in the context of higher education.

Prior to joining AUP, Stephens was the 19<sup>th</sup> president of Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts, from 2016 as acting President and from 2018 on a permanent basis. Her presidential tenure coincided with the successful implementation of an ambitious strategic plan. Stephens joined Mount Holyoke in 2013, when she was appointed as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty. In this role, she worked closely with offices and departments across the college as well as with partner institutions in the Five College Consortium to enhance the college's reputation and increase support for faculty research and curricular innovation.

Professor Stephens speaks fluent French and has traveled extensively in France. An expert in 19th-century French literature and its relation to visual culture, she is the author of *Baudelaire's Prose Poems: The Practice and Politics of Irony* and has also edited several books, including *A History of Women's Writing in France* and *Translation and the Arts in Modern France*. She holds a doctorate in French from the University of Cambridge and a master's degree in French studies from the Université de Montréal, where she was a Commonwealth Scholar. She earned her bachelor's degree in modern and medieval languages from the University of Cambridge.

Her previous roles highlight her deep commitment to furthering liberal arts education. Before joining Mount Holyoke, Stephens served as chair of the Department of French and Italian and Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education at Indiana University Bloomington. There, she led the campus-wide development and implementation of new general education requirements, the establishment of an integrated Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning and was responsible for assessment and reaccreditation efforts. She began her career as a faculty member at Royal Holloway, University of London, where she chaired the Department of French and led the creation of the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures. A full bio can be found [here](#).

## THE ROLE OF THE PROVOST

The Provost is the University's chief academic officer and one of two executive vice presidents, both appointed by the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the President. The Provost reports directly to the President, with whom they will work closely to carry out the University's academic vision.

The Provost serves as a member of the President's leadership team, which includes the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, Chief Information Officer (CIO), Vice President for Student Services and Security, Director of Communications and Outreach, Vice President and Director of Enrollment Management, and Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations. The Provost is second-in-command to the President in accordance with the University By-Laws, and works closely with all members of the team to advance the University's mission and strategy.

As the chief academic officer, the Provost represents the faculty in all matters, and is responsible for devising, revising, and advancing the Academic Master Plan of the University, as well as directing all academic support services. They are accountable for the entire academic operation of the University, developing and supporting the independent development of majors, minors, cross-disciplinary programs, general education, and graduate programs.

The Provost promotes faculty development, research, and career advancement, and mentors and reviews new faculty. In support of AUP's mission, the Provost builds consensus among faculty members and department chairs, and resolves conflict that arises within departments. The Provost serves as an ex officio member of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, the General Education Committee, the Curriculum Committee, the Council of Chairs, and the Graduate Program Review Board.

In accordance with French law and American academic principles, the Provost coordinates with department chairs in all aspects of hiring, and recommends promotions and emeritus status to the President. They also oversee all faculty periodic review processes. The Provost establishes budgetary priorities and participates with the leadership team in broader priority decisions. They are responsible for the academic budget, which is approximately two-thirds of the operating budget of the University. The Provost oversees the University's research centers and the University Learning Commons.

The Provost leads the Academic Affairs team with whom they meet regularly and is expected to manage. The direct reports are:

- The Registrar
- Academic Resource Center (ARC) Director/Director of Academic Technology
- Academic, Career and Experiential Advising (ACE) Director
- Library Director
- Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) Academic Affairs team manager

- Dean for Institutional Effectiveness
- Associate Dean for Academic Administration
- Associate Dean for Graduate Studies
- Director of the Teaching and Learning Center
- Director of Faculty Development and Academic Director of the Learning Commons
- Co-directors of Firstbridge
- Coordinator of Academic Budgets and Grants
- The eight chairs of academic departments
- The directors of the five research centers
- Executive Assistant to the Provost

Critically, the Provost bridges the academic and administrative functions within the University by representing the faculty to the administration. The Provost also represents the faculty to the Board of Trustees, and liaises with the Chair of the Board Committee on Academic Affairs, and the Chair of the Board. As the second-in-command, the Provost represents AUP to partner institutions and all outside constituencies, including standing in for the President whenever appropriate.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES**

The Provost will join AUP at an exciting moment with substantial opportunities for impact. Under the vision and leadership of President Stephens, the University is poised to further build upon its strong reputation and unique position in the world of higher education. With a broad remit to serve the liberal arts mission of the institution, the Provost will be central to moving forward efforts to promote excellence across AUP's academic program and faculty research. The new Provost will have an overarching opportunity to shape AUP's future multidimensionally by developing new curricular and co-curricular offerings, forging new global partnerships, and supporting initiatives that strengthen the student body, faculty, and staff.

Specifically, the Provost will work to address the following opportunities and challenges:

### **Review and support the undergraduate curriculum**

To best address 21<sup>st</sup> century global challenges, AUP replaced its general education program with a new Global Liberal Arts Core Curriculum (GLACC) in the fall of 2019 after a comprehensive review of the undergraduate program. The Provost must ensure the continued validity and competitiveness of AUP's undergraduate curriculum and communicate a compelling academic vision for the future while remaining grounded in the University's liberal arts tradition. The Provost will review the undergraduate curriculum including GLACC degree requirements, majors, and minors. They will develop priorities and advise on curricular and co-curricular offerings that strengthen the educational experience, encourage interdisciplinary teaching and learning, and support academic and pre-professional development.

### **Review and support graduate education**

The Provost will review AUP's graduate education programs and support faculty in identifying and crafting new graduate offerings that leverage the University's mission, strengths, resources; support AUP's strategic priorities; and address untapped student demand and interest. With an entrepreneurial spirit, they will work closely with faculty and administrative leaders to ensure the efficient and cost-effective administration of current and new graduate programs.

### **Provide visionary leadership**

As the chief academic officer, the Provost will bring a deep commitment to the liberal arts and innovative approaches to skills development and career preparation. They will foster a sense of pride in AUP's unique position in higher education and will work collaboratively with the faculty to set priorities and make transparent and strategic choices to advance academic excellence.

### **Provide academic advice and guidance to senior colleagues and the Trustees**

The Provost will provide expert counsel and forward-thinking insights about the University's academic needs to the President, members of the senior leadership team, and to the Trustees. They will anticipate and suggest ways to improve instructional effectiveness, emerging classroom technology, and student support services. With the Chief Financial Officer, the Provost will anticipate and articulate the impact of programmatic decisions on the University's academic and financial future. In particular, the Provost will be central to ongoing conversations around enrollment growth, defining the ideal composition and size of the student body, and diversifying degree seekers.

### **Support and develop a distinguished faculty**

AUP has an outstanding faculty dedicated to teaching, research, service, and the University's mission. The incoming Provost will have an opportunity to shape the future of the University through careful faculty recruitment and developing, generating, and allocating resources for this purpose. Serving as a champion of the teacher/scholar model, the Provost will nurture a culture of collaboration and innovation across the faculty. The Provost will place a serious focus on supporting faculty development and research, maximizing existing resources and identifying new opportunities within the University as well as through external partnerships. As the chief academic officer, the Provost will lead discussions about teaching loads, curricular goals, faculty recognition, and other matters related to faculty morale.

### **Support the smooth functioning of Academic Affairs**

Under the leadership of the Provost, the Office of Academic Affairs works collaboratively with all constituents of the University to promote and sustain intellectual activity, teaching, and learning at AUP.



The Provost will oversee the complex organization of departments, functional areas, and committees that fall under Academic Affairs including faculty governance, institutional research, curricular review, and the University's wide offering of academic resources and supports including the Library, the Teaching and Learning Center, Accessibility & Accommodation Services, and the Quai D'Orsay Learning Commons. The Provost will be attuned to the work being done across these administrative units and actively involved in decision making, academic administration, academic planning, and budget decisions happening within and across each. Additionally, the Provost will promote and support the professional development of the Academic Affairs staff, providing them with the resources, opportunities, and tools needed to implement and sustain the programs and services necessary to achieve AUP's goals.

### **Continue to develop and expand the University's research centers**

AUP's research centers are mission-driven and promote scholarly exchange and faculty-mentored student research on subjects valued by the university community. Through scholarly discussions, research, conferences, seminars, and public lectures, the centers advance a commitment to liberal learning as a vehicle for interdisciplinary inquiry. In partnership with center directors, the Provost will champion the growth and development of the research centers, enabling them to become financially self-sustaining entities integrally linked to AUP's academic mission.

### **Shepherd a culture of trust, respect, and transparency among the administration, faculty, and staff**

AUP is a close and tight-knit community that values shared governance inclusive of the administration, the Board, the faculty, the staff, and students. The Provost will lead by example, and follow sound effective principles of shared governance. Harnessing strong communication and interpersonal skills, the Provost will clearly articulate the University's priorities and goals to all members of the AUP community and work to ensure that faculty, administrators, staff, and students have the systems and supports needed to work together to achieve the University's academic mission. To facilitate transparency across the institution, the Provost will strive to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the academic administration to the faculty, and work with the faculty to communicate and uphold expectations and standards. The Provost will also work with faculty leadership to provide transparency and metrics for budgeting and academic priorities.

### **Forge external partnerships in Paris and globally**

AUP is an international island in Paris. Uniquely positioned to partner with Paris' educational, non-profit, business, and civic community, AUP must be a leader in capitalizing on the city and its many assets. The Provost will work with the faculty and University leadership at all levels to forge relationships in and around Paris that will expand and improve upon the academic work of the University.

International partnerships greatly enrich AUP's academic offerings and lend visibility far outside Paris. Building on the success of AUP's current partnerships in Europe and the United States, AUP hopes to forge additional partnerships across the globe, with potential opportunities in South America and/or India. The

Provost's leadership will be essential to identifying, articulating and formalizing such partnerships, especially in relation to student and faculty exchange, academic offerings, and research opportunities.

### **Promote diversity and inclusion in the AUP community**

As part of its educational mission, AUP seeks to build and sustain a campus community that embraces diversity and inclusion in teaching and learning. The Provost will nurture an environment that celebrates a diversity of viewpoints, background, and experience.

### **Oversee the implementation of a new Student Information System**

AUP is due to implement a new student information system in the Fall of 2024. While this is an important milestone, this is just the beginning of investment in AUP's digital transformation, and the new Provost will have an interest in further advancing streamlined business processes, self-service educational support, and related technologies. Experience of how other institutions manage such processes and support student success will be an advantage.

### **THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE**

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated success as a transformative, results-oriented leader who can partner with the President and senior leadership, as well as faculty, to carry forward AUP's academic vision. Harnessing creativity and flexibility, this person will possess the ability to reconcile academic priorities and needs with the realities of a tuition-driven institution. They must balance being detail oriented and operational to manage the work of Academic Affairs, while possessing the ability to see the "big picture" and communicate this vision to others. The ideal candidate can translate ideas into actionable plans and then execute them successfully. They will possess strong interpersonal and communication skills and equally strong financial, managerial, and technical skills.

The successful candidate will be an accomplished educator who can enhance AUP's global liberal arts curriculum, taught by faculty representing 29 nationalities and multiple languages/citizenships in the classroom. They will possess strong but sensitive, faculty-friendly leadership that mentors and encourages new faculty while supporting experienced faculty. The ideal candidate will also be a student-focused educator who thrives in a close-knit community where they may be called upon to perform many varied tasks at once, and interact effectively with students, parents, and faculty alike.

The Provost must have a distinguished record in one of the University's academic disciplines commensurate with the rank of a full professor and be qualified to serve as chief academic officer. They will bring a minimum of three years of experience in academic administration as a department head/chair, associate dean, dean, assistant provost, provost, or other senior academic role, and present evidence of

prior scholarly engagement and achievements. While proficiency in French would be an asset, it is not required.

While few individuals will embody all of them, the successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences and qualities:

- Evidence of exceptional writing and communication skills, and organizational capacity.
- Extensive budget management experience, and ability to link strategic, operating, and financial plans to AUP's academic mission.
- Experience assessing and building academic programs, including general education and/or first-year success.
- Extensive experience of American academic traditions and familiarity with graduate education at the Master's level.
- Experience living/working abroad.
- Demonstrated prior success in academic grant writing.
- Ability to navigate and understand the complex French employment structure, including French unions and French labor law.
- A skilled negotiator who can manage varying viewpoints and bring people to consensus.
- Demonstrated entrepreneurial spirit with the ability to help create viable academic programs that further AUP's mission.
- A very good listener, with the ability to relate well to a wide variety of constituents and members of the University community.

## APPLICATIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND INQUIRIES

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including resumes and letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be sent electronically to the Isaacson, Miller executive search team via the link below.

Dan Rodas, Partner  
Amble Ryan, Senior Associate  
Nicole Sancilio, Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/american-university-paris/provost>

*We invite and encourage members of underrepresented populations to apply. The University is an equal opportunity employer and we view diversity as an essential source of our vitality and strength.*