



Search for the Vice Provost for Student Life
Creighton University
Omaha, Nebraska

Creighton University, a top-ranked private, Jesuit, and Catholic comprehensive university, seeks a collaborative, engaged, and innovative student affairs leader to serve as the Vice Provost for Student Life (Vice Provost). The Vice Provost will be joining Creighton as they embark on fulfilling an ambitious [strategic plan](#) that charts a bold, dynamic, and inspiring future focused on student success and holistic student development that will develop graduates who are deeply engaged in tackling complex issues facing society. The next Vice Provost will have the opportunity to serve as a strategic partner with a dedicated and highly collaborative [President's Cabinet and Council](#), [Provost Council](#), and other senior leaders, staff, and faculty at Creighton to continue to cultivate an institutional culture around student success, well-being, and engagement for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at both their Omaha and Phoenix campuses.

As one of 27 Jesuit universities in the U.S., Creighton consistently ranks as one of the top National Universities and number one in the Midwest. Creighton is also recognized for undergraduate teaching, innovation, and as a best-value institution. The university enrolls more than 4,400 undergraduate and 4,300 graduate and professional students across nine schools and colleges with its main campus in Omaha, Nebraska, and a Phoenix health sciences campus that opened in 2021. Demonstrating the university's commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students, Creighton has been recognized as a part of the First Scholars Network with The Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA.

The Vice Provost will be joining Creighton at a pivotal time to provide vision and oversight for a vibrant and transformational out-of-class student experience that focuses on holistic student learning and development both in Omaha, Nebraska, and a health science campus in Phoenix, Arizona. The Vice Provost will serve as an active and visible student-facing leader while enhancing collaborations across the university. In partnership with the campus, the Vice Provost will ensure that the programs and services within Student Life enhance the student experience and help achieve university goals while remaining true to the mission and values of Creighton University. They will be supported by a robust [team](#) of highly dedicated professionals who are ready to be inspired around a vision for Student Affairs after persevering

from front-line COVID-response and interim leadership. The Vice Provost will have the opportunity to address a number of opportunities and challenges, including:

- Craft a strategic vision and plan that inspires the university and division for the future
- Work collaboratively across the university to support the success of a diverse student body
- Cultivate a highly dedicated Student Life team to innovate with best practices
- Thoughtfully augment and steward resources and facilities

A list of the desired qualifications and characteristics of the Vice Provost can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared by the search committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to provide background information and detail the key opportunities and challenges related to the position. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

ABOUT CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY

As a Jesuit university rooted in Catholic tradition, Creighton is enriched and guided by its mission and identity. Creighton approaches education with a passion for learning and a zeal for making a difference in the world. In the Catholic tradition, Creighton celebrates diversity, encourages learning through dialogue, and pursues the truth in all its forms. As a Jesuit institution, Creighton continually brings the richness of a 450-year-old educational tradition to bear on the most contemporary issues of our world. This Jesuit vision commits Creighton to form individuals of competence, conscience, and compassion, who learn by reflecting upon their experiences of being for and with others. Creighton does this in service of a faith that does justice.

There are nine schools and colleges at Creighton University across undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools known for their quality and wide range of academic disciplines including The College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate School, Heider College of Business, School of Dentistry, School of Law, School of Medicine, College of Nursing, and the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions. Undergraduate students are supported through the Ratio Studiorum Program, supporting first- and second-year students' academic and career planning. [The Success Center](#), led by the Vice Provost for Student Success, provides high touch support and services dedicated to the care and academic success of students. The Success Center, along with the Offices of [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) and the [Office of Mission and Ministry](#), work closely with the Division of Student Life in support of student well-being and success.

In addition to its ranking among the top national universities, per *U.S. News & World Report*, Creighton also earned No. 46 in Most Innovative Schools and No. 62 in Best Undergraduate Teaching. In addition, Creighton ranks among the top schools in several online degree categories, including No. 25 in Best Online Master's in Education Programs. In 2017, the University received a reaffirmation of its accreditation status until 2027, with no interim visits or reports required.

With over 50 percent of students living on campus, and a first- and second-year on-campus housing requirement, Creighton has created a vibrant [residential life experience](#), including several living and learning communities. Creighton has made exciting and impactful investments over the years that have responded to student needs and improved housing and auxiliary services throughout the campus, including a recently opened suite-style residential hall for first-year students and student center renovations, with additional developments on the horizon. Creighton boasts a 92 percent first-to-second-year retention rate, understanding there is still room to adapt and accomplish new student success objectives. One of the cornerstones of student life at Creighton is the emphasis on student leadership and development. Creighton students are able to explore and enhance their leadership skills, whether through involvement in over 300 student organizations, club and intramural sports, residence life, service-related activity, fraternity and sorority life, or participation in leadership development programs. This is demonstrated in the amount of engagement students take part in each year. In fact, students complete over 1 million in total student service hours every year and around 4,500 students participate in club and intramural sports.

Creighton University embraces and thrives on diversity of all kinds and the undergraduate Class of 2027 reflects this commitment. The class is talented and diverse with 34% ranked in the top 10 percent of their high school class and 46 percent of students having a 4.0 high school GPA or higher. Female students make up 56 percent and male students make up 44 percent. They also have a growing population of students of color, with 28.7% of the freshman class in Fall 2023 identifying as students of color. Creighton is also achieving success in socioeconomic diversity by providing greater access to underserved students and their families, fulfilling an important aspect of the University's mission with 12 percent of the class being first-generation college students. More than half of the incoming class is interested in studying in a pre-professional program and 80 percent are interested in studying in the health sciences or business.

Creighton was asked to open a campus in Phoenix to help solve the shortage of healthcare providers in the Southwest. Creighton's connections in the region mean students will have diverse opportunities for hands-on experiences. The program is part of the Creighton University Arizona Health Education Alliance with close relationships to Dignity St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, Valleywise Health and District Medical Group, Inc. Creighton's new, modern health sciences campus is home to nearly 1,000 health sciences students across multiple professions bringing interprofessional collaborative practice and education to improve and innovate patient care. Creighton's Health Sciences Campus has students enrolled in the School of Medicine (MD and Physician Assistant), School of Pharmacy and Health Professions (Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy), and College of Nursing.

Creighton contributes to Nebraska's "brain gain" with 77 percent of freshmen coming from outside of Nebraska and 42 percent of freshmen coming from 400+ miles away, including students from 21 countries and 13 states in the United States, including 4.5% from Hawaii. Many graduates work in and around Omaha. 43.1% of students who completed an undergraduate degree in 2021-22, reported being employed in Omaha or the surrounding areas. A significant portion of physicians, dentists, pharmacists,

occupational therapists, physical therapists, nurses, lawyers, and other professionals in Omaha are Creighton graduates. Creighton University has an enormous economic impact on the Omaha region, contributing to more than \$847 million in annual economic impact and placing among the top 20 largest employers in Omaha and the top 100 private employers in Nebraska.

Leadership

The current leader of Creighton, Reverend Daniel S. Hendrickson, S.J., Ph.D., became the 25th president of the university in 2015. A Nebraska native with deep ties to Creighton as a former faculty member and trustee, Fr. Hendrickson embodies a commitment to education in the liberal arts and humanities as essential foundations for a meaningful life, a global perspective derived from extensive living and learning in more than 35 different countries, and enthusiasm about the possibilities for graduate and professional programs at the intersection of health, sciences, law, and business. During Hendrickson's tenure, Creighton has seen record-breaking classes of more than 1,000 first-year students each year; an increase in student support efforts has helped Creighton achieve a 99% outcome rate for graduates; achieved greater national recognition; lead a [campaign](#) that has raised more than \$600 million, including nearly \$200 million in scholarship dollars; and opened a \$100 million health sciences campus in Phoenix, making it one of the largest Catholic health professions educators in the U.S. Creighton has also achieved recognition for undergraduate teaching, research, and internship opportunities. Fr. Hendrickson earned his B.A. in psychology and theology from Marquette University in 1993 and entered the Society of Jesus in 1994. He received his M.A. in philosophical resources from Fordham University in 2000, a Master of Divinity degree from the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University in 2006, and M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Columbia University in 2010 and 2012, respectively. He also serves as a member of the Board of Trustees at both Xavier University and Boston College and is a member of the Global Advisory Board for Jesuit Worldwide Learning.

Mardell Wilson, EdD, RDN joined the university as provost in the fall of 2020. As provost, Dr. Wilson brings a firm commitment to the campus's continuous evolution toward best serving its students with a focus on integrated wellness, holistic student learning, mental health and student success, including supporting and re-imagining numerous student-centered facilities and space improvements. Wilson previously served as professor and dean of the Edward and Margaret Doisy College of Health Sciences at Saint Louis University (SLU). With her background in the allied health professions and in her role as dean of the health sciences college at SLU, Dr. Wilson collaborated with deans and faculty across the university's schools and colleges, developed a five-year research plan, a peer-reviewed publication support program, and the foundation for an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program, among other initiatives. In her time at Creighton, she has supported continued growth, in partnership with President Hendrickson, across the university's programs and research portfolio. Prior to her time at SLU, Dr. Wilson spent 17 years as a professor and administrator at Illinois State University. At both SLU and Illinois State, Wilson has worked to cultivate an environment in which inclusivity and appreciation for diverse perspectives are fostered and celebrated, and has reached out to deans and faculty partners to creatively consider how to enhance cross-disciplinary collaborations that address innovative and exciting ways to approach teaching, research, clinical operations, and service-learning. From 2009 to 2014, she served as the assistant and then associate vice president for Academic Fiscal Management in the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic

Affairs at Illinois State. Dr. Wilson earned her undergraduate degree in human resources and family studies – dietetics from the University of Illinois and her master’s degree in the field from Eastern Illinois University, and her Ed.D. in curriculum and instruction from Illinois State University. Dr. Wilson is also a registered dietitian nutritionist.

ABOUT THE DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE

[Student Life](#) at Creighton exists to help students become the best possible versions of themselves. Guided by Creighton’s Catholic, Jesuit values and in support of the mission of the university, Student Life fosters holistic student development in the Ignatian tradition, to produce students engaged in their communities with compassion, confidence, and character. Creighton strives to develop students and staff holistically; create and sustain a campus culture, climate, and environment for all community members; partner in the pursuit of academic excellence; and encourage lifelong learning and the development of staff and the division. Student Life is dedicated to enhancing student experiences in and out of the classroom providing students with co-curricular opportunities that complement the curricular experience at Creighton. The division fosters a supportive and inclusive campus culture for all students that enhances every aspect of their collegiate journey while ensuring students feel safe, cared for, and respected throughout their education.

For more information about Student Life at Creighton, visit: www.creighton.edu/division-student-life

ROLE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR STUDENT LIFE

Reporting to the Provost, the Vice Provost works closely with university leadership, including the deans, to advance the university’s strategic goals by providing the priorities and direction of the division. The Vice Provost will leverage student development theory and innovative student affairs practices to promote a holistic student experience. They will also serve as a highly-visible advocate for students and a conduit for information sharing with students, staff and faculty colleagues, as well as other community stakeholders to promote student well-being, engagement, and success, and manage in times of crisis. The Vice Provost must be adaptable and be equally as comfortable working as a strategist and implementor while having the necessary management and evaluation skills to lead significant organizational initiatives. The Vice Provost will also utilize data and assessments to adapt services as needed to best support students. The Vice Provost leverages relationships and influences on a number of campus committees, including the President’s Cabinet, President’s Council, Provost’s Council, Academic Policy & Administrative Committee, Critical Incident Response Team, among others.

The Vice Provost provides leadership for the following units:

- Housing & Auxiliary Services (Housing and Auxiliary Operations, Dining Services, University Events & Operations, and Creighton Retreat Center)

- Student Formation (Community Standards & Student Conduct; Student Life Communications, Technology, and Student Transitions)
- Student Engagement & Belonging (Residential Life, Student Leadership and Involvement, Fraternity & Sorority Life)
- Integrated Wellness (Student Counseling Services, Violence Intervention and Prevention Center, Recreation & Wellness, Student Health Education & Compliance)

The Vice Provost provides oversight of a division of approximately 85 staff and presently has five direct reports, including the Associate Vice Provost for Integrated Wellness, Senior Director of Student Formation, Senior Director of Engagement and Belonging, Assistant Vice Provost for Housing & Auxiliary Services, and Executive Assistant, while overseeing a budget totaling an estimated \$39 million.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VICE PROVOST FOR STUDENT LIFE

The Vice Provost will have the opportunity to serve on the executive team of a highly collaborative and innovative campus deeply committed to its students to address the following opportunity and challenges:

Craft a strategic vision and plan that inspires the university and division for the future

Upon arrival, the Vice Provost will play a critical role in setting a strategic direction for the division to accomplish university-wide goals, support the lifespan of students from pre-arrival through graduation, and inspire a team in support of a transformational student experience. The Vice Provost will lead a division ready for visionary leadership after navigating a pandemic and leadership transitions when the university is poised for innovation and new student success initiatives. The new strategic plan for the division will show an appreciation for Creighton's mission and values and support the holistic development, well-being, and success of students through more nimble and proactive services, utilizing data and assessment to adapt as needed. The Vice Provost will need to also be aware of issues that impact all student populations, including commuter and transfer students, and stay informed on issues impacting graduate and professional students to best provide services for an ever-more-diverse student body. To be successful, the Vice Provost will be a highly visible and approachable figure on campus to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students and work closely with students to keep a pulse on their needs, encourage their engagement, help ensure a sense of belonging and well-being for all students, and augment their co-curricular experiences.

Work collaboratively across the university to support the success of a diverse student body

The Vice Provost will support a cohesive, holistic, and transformational student experience at Creighton by enhancing partnerships and communication with other units, including the Schools and Colleges, as well as the Phoenix campus; the offices of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Mission and Ministry; and Student Success, to better align students' curricular and co-curricular experiences, close equity gaps, and provide more seamless services in support of all students. The Vice Provost will coordinate services within

the division, engage meaningfully with the deans of the schools and colleges, and create intentional co-curricular inroads to ensure all students have knowledge of and access to the resources and services they need to be successful. This will include keeping a pulse on undergraduate, graduate, and professional student needs, and working across the university to ensure the appropriate forward-thinking processes, policies, protocols, and solutions. It will also require an integration of the Phoenix campus and an eagerness to collaborate with student affairs colleagues across the graduate and professional schools to create cohesion and seamless incorporation of services. The Vice Provost will build bridges where needed with Student Life staff and provide new spaces and opportunities for collaboration among units. With success, the Vice Provost will promote a culture across the university of proactive, seamless, and holistic support to care for the mind, body, spirit, and success of Creighton's diverse student population. The Creighton culture promotes collaborative approaches to achieve institutional goals.

Cultivate a highly dedicated Student Life team to innovate with best practices

The Vice Provost will inherit a caring, talented, and dedicated staff - some who have a longstanding tenure at Creighton, while others have entered the community more recently – all of whom are eager to evolve and innovate to continue providing outstanding student services for all students. The Vice Provost will seek opportunities to develop, mentor, and retain the Student Life team while also promoting a culture of self-care, enthusiasm, and excellence, galvanizing a commitment to continuous professional development and innovation among the staff through the sharing of best practices. The Vice Provost will also ensure a more equitable division through recruitment and inclusion efforts. To accomplish university goals, it will be important that the division be viewed as highly collaborative and willing to innovate around student learning and success efforts. The Vice Provost will champion the work of the departments and promote the expertise of staff in the appropriate venues to foster collaboration while also advocating on their behalf when needed. Upon arrival, the Vice Provost will be expected to undertake a comprehensive review of their units to identify ways to strengthen the effectiveness of the division in support of the university's strategic plan and enhancing the overall Creighton student experience.

Thoughtfully augment and steward resources and facilities

The Vice Provost will be responsible for the strategic oversight and shepherding of resources to best support the division, making improvements as necessary, and providing recommendations to leadership as appropriate for student success initiatives and providing the physical spaces necessary to best accommodate all students, including non-residential students. The Vice Provost will be creative and thoughtful in the allocation of resources to enrich student experiences, as well as engage in new opportunities for revenue generation. This will include finding new ways to invest in and leverage technology to synchronize efforts among Student Life units and with other units on campus for more coordinated communication and responses around student crises and success efforts, such as early alert systems. The Vice Provost will also participate in fundraising efforts for Creighton and work with University Communications and Marketing to thoughtfully tell the stories of Creighton students. By serving on the leadership team of a forward-thinking campus committed to innovation and evolving, the Vice Provost

will have the opportunity to try new things and provide recommendations for future investment to help ensure Creighton can adapt well and proactively to the changing needs of students and remain competitive in an ever-changing higher education landscape.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Creighton University seeks a Vice Provost with exemplary strategic leadership ability and a history of collaborative leadership. A master's degree in a relevant field and a minimum of 15 years of progressive leadership experience, preferably for student life in a complex university setting, is required. The successful candidate will also bring many of the following personal and professional qualities and characteristics:

- Knowledge of current and emerging issues, trends, and best practices in student affairs.
- Proven ability to manage complexity and bring about change, implement creative solutions, and establish best practices that are tailored to unique institutional needs.
- Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, operational practices and processes, human resources modeling, leadership technique, resource allocation, and coordination of people and resources.
- Supervisory experience leading diverse teams; managerial strengths in achieving goals through mentoring and empowering others.
- Ability to instill confidence and trust along with the tact to challenge, in a positive way, various stakeholders and constituents on operational matters.
- An understanding of the goals and values of Jesuit education and Catholic higher education; being of Catholic faith is not necessary.
- Demonstrated success advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; the ability to embrace diversity in all aspects in the Creighton community.
- Experience with strategic and operational planning at an enterprise level.
- Highly developed written and verbal communication skills; interpersonal savvy to establish close relationships with key influencers around campus.

LOCATION

Creighton is located near downtown Omaha, Nebraska, one of the 50 largest cities in the United States and home to over 450,000 people who welcome visitors with open arms and authentic Midwestern hospitality known as the "Gateway to the West." Nestled along the banks of the mighty Missouri River, Omaha stands as a vibrant metropolis with a warm, welcoming atmosphere; a city that has been recognized as a Top 100 Place to Live in America. The city's skyline is complemented by the renowned Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium, consistently ranked among the best in the world, and a bustling downtown area, where modern skyscrapers stand alongside historic brick buildings. With numerous parks, trails, and green spaces, including the Fontelle Forest and Heartland of America Park, Omaha provides ample opportunity for recreation and relaxation. Omaha also boasts a thriving arts scene, with

venues like the Joslyn Art Museum and the Holland Performing Arts Center. The city also has a great sports scene being home to the NCAA Men's College World Series, the Omaha Storm Chasers (Triple-A affiliate of the Kansas City Royals), and the new women's professional volleyball team the Supernovas. Omaha hosts a diverse dining scene and a historic Old Market district offering an array of eateries in a charming and historic brick building. The Omaha Airport is conveniently located only 10 minutes from campus.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/creighton-university/vice-provost-student-life>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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Creighton University is committed to providing a safe and non-discriminatory educational and employment environment. The University admits qualified students, hires qualified employees and accepts patients for treatment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, marital status, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, or other status protected by law.