



Search for the Executive Director
McGee Applied Research Center for Narrative Studies
College of Arts & Sciences
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN

The Position

The McGee Applied Research Center for Narrative Studies (McGee Center) at Vanderbilt University seeks an experienced and visionary Executive Director to lead its mission of promoting media literacy and understanding the impact of news stories on society. Through a holistic approach, innovative research endeavors, and Vanderbilt's commitment to [global impact](#) and [community engagement](#), the center envisions a future where media literacy becomes a cornerstone for informed and empowered citizenship in the 21st century.

The Executive Director will report to the Dean of Arts + Science or their designee, and will provide strategic leadership for all aspects of the McGee Center's operations, oversee research initiatives, develop educational programs, and foster collaborations with internal and external stakeholders. In addition, the Executive Director will manage the renovation and expansion of existing campus media resources, including the [Vanderbilt Television News Archive](#) within the [Jean and Alexander Heard Libraries](#). The McGee Center will lead the conversion of the Vanderbilt Television News Archive's searchable metadata from summaries to full-text transcriptions, restoring the archive to its original purpose of providing the public with data-driven insight into the ways the news media shapes opinion.

The Vanderbilt University College of Arts + Science and the Vanderbilt Libraries are in an exciting time of transformation. With new leadership at the Chancellor, Provost, Dean of the College, and University Librarian levels, the McGee Center will be re-envisioning the future of research at Vanderbilt. Through [radical collaboration](#), the center will deepen student and faculty engagement with the information, equip students for life-long information proficiency, increase faculty research impact, create more opportunities for interdisciplinary experimentation, and optimize access to media and resources, including marginalized and hidden histories and cultures outside of the mainstream.

More information on the [McGee Center naming gift can be found here](#).

Key Functions and Expected Performance

Strategic Leadership: Develop and execute a strategic vision for the center, aligning it with the mission of promoting media literacy and advancing narrative news analysis. Set clear goals, establish priorities, assemble a faculty advisory board, and ensure the center's activities are in line with its long-term objectives.

Research Oversight: Provide leadership and guidance for research initiatives, overseeing the design, implementation, and dissemination of research projects related to media narratives. Foster a culture of scholarly excellence and innovation within the center.

Program Development: Collaborate with faculty members, staff, and external partners to develop innovative educational programs that promote media literacy and critical thinking skills. Identify opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and leverage emerging technologies to enhance teaching and learning experiences.

Stakeholder Engagement: Cultivate relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including faculty, students, community organizations, and philanthropic partners. Seek opportunities for collaborations, funding, and research partnerships that advance the center's mission.

Team Management: Provide effective leadership and management to the center's two-person staff, promoting a collaborative and inclusive work environment. Foster professional development opportunities and mentorship for center staff, encouraging their growth and success.

Budget and Resource Management: Oversee the center's budget, ensuring efficient utilization of resources and alignment with strategic priorities. Seek external funding opportunities, write grant proposals, and manage grants and contracts in collaboration with university stakeholders.

Thought Leadership and Advocacy: Represent the center at conferences, symposia, and other events, presenting research findings, participating in panel discussions, and advocating for the importance of media literacy and narrative studies. Publish research outcomes in reputable academic journals and contribute to the scholarly discourse in the field.

Community Outreach: Engage with the local and national community, raising awareness about the center's initiatives, and serving as a thought leader in media literacy and narrative studies. Collaborate with community organizations, policymakers, and media outlets to promote evidence-based understanding of media narratives.

Qualifications and Characteristics

- **Education:** Ph.D. in a relevant field, such as communication studies, media studies, political science, or a related discipline is required. A distinguished record of research and scholarly achievement is required.
- **Leadership Experience:** Significant experience in leadership roles, preferably in an academic or research environment. Demonstrated ability to develop and execute strategic plans, manage complex projects, and lead interdisciplinary teams.
- **Research Expertise:** Strong background and expertise in media literacy, narrative studies, or related fields. Proven track record of conducting and publishing research in reputable academic journals.
- **Vision and Innovation:** Forward-thinking mindset with the ability to identify emerging trends, technologies, and methodologies relevant to narrative studies. Experience in leveraging technology for research, teaching, and outreach purposes is advantageous.

- **Communication Skills:** Excellent written and verbal communication skills to effectively engage with diverse audiences, including academic, public, and policy-oriented stakeholders. Strong public speaking and presentation abilities are essential.
- **Management Skills:** Proven ability to lead and manage a team, including staff supervision, performance evaluation, and professional development. Strong organizational and budget management skills are required.

Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/vanderbilt-university-mcgee-applied-research-center-narrative-studies/executive>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Katie Rockman, Partner
Stephanie Simon, Senior Associate
Maria Connor, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Vanderbilt University has a strong institutional commitment to recruiting and retaining an academically and culturally diverse community of faculty. Minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and members of other underrepresented groups, in particular, are encouraged to apply. Vanderbilt is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer.

Job responsibilities listed herein are intended to be a thorough representation of the duties, responsibilities, expectations, and qualifications for this specific role at the time of hire but should not be considered all-encompassing as actual responsibilities may evolve to include additional duties as assigned based on organizational and operational needs.

APPENDIX

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

Vanderbilt University, located in Nashville, Tennessee, is one of the top research universities in the nation. Created from an initial \$1 million gift from Cornelius Vanderbilt, who envisioned a place that would "contribute to strengthening the ties that should exist between all sections of our common country," the University is situated on a 330-acre campus near the thriving city center. Vanderbilt employs almost 7,000 faculty and staff, and serves more than 13,000 students across 10 schools and colleges.

Vanderbilt offers undergraduate programs in the liberal arts and science, education and human development, engineering, and music, as well as a full range of graduate and professional degrees. Its strength in the liberal arts—combined with nationally recognized programs in business, creative writing, divinity, education, engineering, law, medicine, music, and nursing—prepares its graduates for lives of impact, discovery, creativity, and service. Over the last 15 years, Vanderbilt has achieved an astonishing record of success in recruiting the very best students, with the undergraduate admit rate going from 33 percent to 6.2 percent. Vanderbilt continues to expand its reach globally, pursuing bold proposals to advance scholarship, reputation, and impact, to deepen student experience, and to recruit on a global scale.

To be at Vanderbilt is to live, learn, and work in a generative and inclusive environment. Instilling a deep sense of belonging is a core value at the institution. The University's leadership is committed to pursuing new and innovative approaches and investing resources to strengthen belonging for everyone at the institution. Identity, equity, diversity, and inclusion are priorities across the campus.

The University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award bachelor's, master's, professional, and doctoral degrees. Vanderbilt is a member of the Association of American Universities.

THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

The [College of Arts and Science \(A+S\)](#) is fundamental and critical to the University. It constitutes the liberal arts core of one of the world's preeminent research institutions and strengthens the whole of Vanderbilt's education and research endeavors through interdisciplinary exploration, critical analysis, and curiosity across boundaries. It is itself uniquely powerful for its connection to and position within the same whole. Fully realized, A+S exemplifies the best of modern higher education and the value of the liberal arts.

The College's distinction among arts and science units at other institutions is twofold. First, it is scaled perfectly for substantive collaboration: notably, in contrast to what obtains elsewhere, the College has substantive pedagogical and research ties to all of the schools and colleges including undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools. It is frequently said that arts and sciences are the "intellectual heart" of a research university; at Vanderbilt, A+S is both the heart and the connective tissue.

Second, the College operates from a position of fundamental health as well as openness to experimentation. The College boasts an exceptionally collegial culture. Faculty across departments support one another, and the environment fosters collaboration and a spirit of shared enterprise.

NASHVILLE

As the hub for several booming industries, the home to a global community – including the nation’s largest Kurdish population – and “America’s friendliest city” according to *Travel + Leisure* magazine, Nashville combines history and hospitality with diverse culture and growth.

Tennessee’s capital is also an international destination for the arts, entrepreneurship, and scientific research, thereby attracting world-renowned scholars to Vanderbilt and the broader community. In turn, it’s no surprise that many students, families, and professionals choose to call Music City home.

Home to more than 100 stand-alone parks, and a quick drive away from the Great Smoky Mountains, Nashville offers many opportunities for enjoying the great outdoors. In addition to the nearby greenways, scenic hiking routes, and historic riverfront, the Vanderbilt campus is itself a top outdoor attraction. An accredited arboretum, the university campus has more than 6,000 trees and shrubs, including nearly 200 different species.

Nashville has been named one of the 15 best U.S. cities for work and family by *Fortune* magazine, was ranked as the #1 most popular U.S. city for corporate relocations by *Expansion Management* magazine and was named by *Forbes* magazine as one of the 25 cities most likely to have the country’s highest job growth over the coming five years.