



## **Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students** *Minneapolis, Minnesota*

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### **THE SEARCH**

The University of Minnesota Twin Cities, a world-class research university of 51,000 students, seeks a strategic, collaborative, inclusive, and student-centered leader with significant administrative and student development experience in a complex organizational setting to serve as the next Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students (VPSA).

Reporting to the President, this individual will lead a first-class, comprehensive student affairs organization. To do so, the VPSA will be an advocate for student voice and needs, a builder of diverse and inclusive campus communities, an effective and innovative collaborator, and a gifted administrator with business acumen. Success in this role will require a deep understanding of the current issues in student affairs and student development theory, the needs of a diverse student body, the role the university plays in creating and sustaining the well-being of all students, and the interdependence of the academic and non-academic aspects of a holistic student experience.

The VPSA will be responsible for overseeing a robust student affairs operation with a budget of approximately \$94 million and a staff of over 500 professionals and 20 units. The successful candidate will work to shape and promote the vision of a fully integrated student experience and enhance the connections between the academic and non-academic dimensions of student life. This person will need to be a respected student ally and advocate and also bring the necessary skills and experiences to manage senior staff and collaborate across campus to meet the needs of a diverse university community.

The University of Minnesota has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All applications, inquiries, and nominations, which remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## **ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**

The University of Minnesota is a world-class research university and one of the largest in the United States. Founded in 1851 as a land-grant university, the school now encompasses more than 60,000 students from 130 countries enrolled on our campuses, thousands of study abroad students, nearly 26,000 employees on five campuses across Minnesota, and half a million alumni living around the world. With an annual operating budget of \$3.8 billion a year, the University generates an economic impact of \$8.6 billion on the Minnesota economy. It is one of the most comprehensive universities in the country and ranks among the most prestigious research universities in the world. As the public land-, sea-, space-grant, and research university for the state of Minnesota, it plays a critical role in shaping an economically strong, culturally vibrant, and civic-minded state.

The University of Minnesota System comprises five distinct campuses—Crookston, Duluth, Morris, Rochester, and Twin Cities—serving all regions of the state. The system campuses together carry out its mission of research and discovery; teaching and learning; and outreach and public service. The University of Minnesota Twin Cities, the flagship R1 research campus located in the large metropolitan area of Minneapolis-St. Paul; the University of Minnesota Crookston, a technology-rich campus located in the northwest corner of the state; the University of Minnesota Duluth, a highly rated comprehensive university on the shores of Lake Superior; the University of Minnesota Morris, a top ranked liberal arts college and sustainability leader on the western edge of the state, and the University of Minnesota Rochester, partnered with a destination academic medical center in southeastern Minnesota. The University also encompasses regional Extension offices, research and outreach centers, clinics, labs, professional education outreach, and K–12 educational engagement programs throughout the state. The University consistently has advanced its mission with exceptional vigor—distinguished by a comprehensive commitment to integrating public engagement deeply into teaching and learning, research and discovery. The University also strongly embraces equity and diversity as foundational values and has made both engagement and diversity central to strategic planning across the system and for the institution as a whole. Students on the Twin Cities campus include 22% students of color, 12% international students, and 25% first generation students. The University ranks ninth nationally for students learning abroad and offers programs in more than 70 countries. In 2017, the University of Minnesota Twin Cities received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from Insight into Diversity for the seventh year in a row. The University is ranked by Forbes as one of the country’s 20 best educational employers.

## **THE TWIN CITIES CAMPUS**

The University’s flagship Twin Cities campus is in the heart of a dynamic metro area that is a global economic leader, a hub for education and culture, and renowned for its

abundant cultural and natural resources. The Minneapolis-St. Paul metro is home to the fourth-largest concentration of Fortune 500 companies in the country as well as thriving entrepreneurial and small-business sectors. Ranked as one of the country's leading "creative economy" communities, the Twin Cities is renowned for its arts and nonprofit sectors, as well as its many lakes and parks and wealth of recreational and entertainment opportunities. Spanning locations in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, the UMN Twin Cities straddles the Mississippi River and adjoins a national park.

The University is an anchor institution for a globally competitive region and state with notable strengths in areas critical to today's knowledge economy—including biosciences, medical devices, and agriculture and food production. The campus is also located in an increasingly diverse region at the heart of an increasingly global Midwest, with eleven federally-recognized tribal nations, the largest urban Native American population in the country, and growing African American, Latino and Chicano, and Asian American populations. The links between Minnesota communities and communities around the world are notable: the Twin Cities now has the largest number of people of Somali descent outside of Somalia and the nation's largest urban Hmong-American population.

The region's internationally engaged businesses, small and large arts organizations, non-profits, and multifaceted communities provide unparalleled learning and career opportunities for students, opening windows onto diverse cultures and perspectives and to the intersections between local and global issues.

The University of Minnesota Twin Cities is located on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous people. The University resides on Dakota land ceded in the Treaties of 1837 and 1851. The University acknowledges this place has a complex and layered history and is committed to ongoing efforts to recognize, support, and advocate for American Indian Nations and peoples.

#### **ABOUT PRESIDENT JOAN T. A. GABEL**

Joan T. A. Gabel was named the University of Minnesota's 17th president by unanimous vote of the UMN Board of Regents in December 2018. She assumed the office on July 1, 2019 and is first woman president in the University's 167-year history. Gabel comes to Minnesota after serving as the executive vice president for academic affairs and provost at the University of South Carolina since 2015. As the chief academic officer, she had system responsibilities and oversaw the schools and colleges of USC Columbia. Previously, she served as dean of the University of Missouri's Trulaske College of Business for five years. While at Missouri, Gabel was named a "shining star" by the Wall Street Journal and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Bunche, Kemper and Holmes-Cardozo awards for excellence in research.

#### **ABOUT THE OFFICE FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Vision: To support and empower students to achieve holistic success.

Mission: We fulfill the mission of the University by fostering student development and wellbeing, promoting an inclusive environment, inspiring life-long positive contributions to society and enriching the University of Minnesota community.

Values:

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
- Personal Development
- Resiliency
- Student-Centeredness
- Wellbeing

Student Affairs is central to the University's mission to advance student learning and success. The division supports students as they transition through the University, provides services and programs that keep them well, helps them solve problems in the face of adversity, and prepares them for careers in a global, complex society. As the University focuses its efforts on solving the world's grand challenges, Student Affairs provides the necessary care and support that students need to be physically and mentally able to do so.

With 20 units and more than 500 employees, Student Affairs is a nationally recognized leader among its peers in many areas, including legal advocacy for students, student union and recreational facilities, career services, co-curricular leadership development, sexual misconduct prevention and victim/survivor services, as well as in its support for student mental health and well-being.

In 2018, in order to best meet the changing needs of students in the context of the broader University mission, Student Affairs began a strategic planning process with a scan of the current environment in higher education and discussed strengths in relation to the strategic direction of the University of Minnesota system. The strategic plan outlined five areas of focus for Student Affairs over three years. With input from staff at various levels of the organization, the following became areas of concentration — *Student Success and Wellbeing, Providing a Community of Care, Student Engagement, Demonstrating our Impact and Equity, Diversity and Inclusive Excellence.*

Units:

- Aurora Center for Advocacy & Education
- Boynton Health
- Care Program
- Career & Internship Services
- Career Services
- Fraternity & Sorority Life
- Leadership Enrichment Programs
- Leadership Minor

- Multicultural Student Engagement
- Off-Campus Living
- Office for Community Standards
- Parent & Family Program
- Student Advocate Services
- Student Conflict Resolution Center
- Student Counseling Services
- Student Legal Service
- Student Parent HELP Center
- Student Services Fee and Sprit Initiatives
- Student Unions & Activities
- University Recreation & Wellness

## THE ROLE

Reporting directly to the President, the VPSA leader will provide visionary leadership and administrative oversight of and accountability for the student development programs in the Office for Student Affairs on the Twin Cities campus. The VPSA also serves as the chief student affairs officer for the University of Minnesota system, coordinating and collaborating with the other system campus student affairs leaders to ensure that programs throughout the University support and advance the system strategic plan and student success. The Vice President works with and represents the interests of a diverse student body to ensure a mutually reinforcing relationship between the academic and non-academic life of students. This leader will help to promote the intellectual, cultural, personal, educational, and social development of all students.

### Major responsibilities:

- Provide leadership to ensure the effective coordination and integration of a wide spectrum of traditional student affairs services with the University's academic programs, in order to achieve student development and learning outcomes and to support overall student growth and success
- Partner with the senior leaders of student affairs/life on the system campuses to identify macro and micro challenges and trends, and develop strategies to support student well-being and success and ensure operational excellence for the system
- Build strong collaborative relationships with key stakeholders on- and off- campus to provide a holistic approach to student development
- Partner with the offices for undergraduate education and graduate education and the office for equity and diversity in creating a sense of belonging for students as well as meeting recruitment, retention and graduation goals for the twin cities campus.
- Assist in establishing, articulating, and assessing institutional goals for and outcomes of the student experience and advise leadership on policies and programs that may enhance student recruitment, retention, and graduation

- Support the recruitment and retention of diverse students and foster a campus climate in which equity and diversity are integral to all aspects of the student experience
- Work closely with academic leadership and others in student affairs to communicate initiatives and activities, share best practices, partner in new ways to drive innovation, and leverage resources to support student affairs programs and initiatives
- Lead and support best practices for effective conflict resolution with students, understanding student mental health and well-being issues, maintaining formal student conduct and disciplinary mechanisms, and convening resources from multiple departments and constituencies to address complex student issues
- Build effective working relationships with faculty to seek and understand the faculty perspective and maximize their participation/engagement in student affairs activities
- Promote integration and synergy among a wide variety of unique student groups and organizations while at the same time providing opportunities for students with similar backgrounds and interests to come together to celebrate commonalities
- Support the development of student intercultural and global competence and foster a campus climate that prepares our students to become global citizens
- Provide a wide range of programs to support appropriate and constructive student experiences for a diverse group of students (i.e., on-campus residential students, commuters, graduate and professional, undergraduate, international, Greek)
- Promote and support a high level of student participation and engagement in student and university governance and student organizations
- Understand and represent the student voice, listening to the more vocal student population and seeking out the views of the less vocal students to ensure all are heard and in a viewpoint-neutral manner
- Assist in managing/supporting freedom of expression/free speech issues that arise
- Create an environment within the Office for Student Affairs that leverages the strengths and accomplishments of its units, promotes synergy and teamwork, and empowers experienced professionals with diverse responsibilities
- Oversee responsible planning, stewardship, management, and accountability of fiscal, capital, and human resources of the Office for Student Affairs, including reporting units
- Oversee over 600,000 square feet of buildings, golf course, and field space, as well as the capital enhancement fee which supports student affairs facilities
- Support professional development and ongoing education of Student Affairs staff
- Manage the fundraising and development strategy, implementation, and engagements
- Provide leadership for the health and wellbeing of students, specifically mental health
- Represent the University to external stakeholders and serve as a face of the University to the student body
- Manage crisis situations involving students and other student issues that attract media or external interest



- Represent the University at national, regional, and local higher education conferences and student affairs association meetings, stay abreast of emerging issues and trends in student affairs, and build the University's leadership profile in student affairs at the national level
- Serve as a member of the President's Cabinet
- Perform other duties as assigned by the President

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

To be successful in this dynamic environment, the VP will address the following opportunities and challenges:

### **Provide visionary and strategic leadership**

The VPSA will be a leader with strategic vision, a sophisticated understanding of the key issues in student affairs, and the innovative spirit to meet the particular challenges facing higher education in the 21st century. As a member of the President's cabinet, the VPSA will be on-call to serve as a principal adviser to the President and other senior leaders on matters that influence the student experience. The VPSA will pose challenging questions on even the most difficult topics and speak with a clear and trusted voice in leadership deliberations. In moments of crisis or conflict, the VPSA will draw on both expertise and creativity to offer constructive ideas and devise effective solutions. The University will look to this individual to originate consequential ideas and stimulate the very best strategic thinking among the leadership.

The successful candidate will inherit a talented senior team, and must therefore inspire, support, and manage accomplished professionals with a wide range of expertise and responsibility. Through accessible and supportive leadership, clarity of purpose, and ongoing opportunities for development, the VPSA will enable the team to continue to enhance performance levels. The VPSA will need to assess and enhance the division's overall effectiveness and structure to ensure it is appropriately addressing the evolving needs of students at the University. The role also requires experience and ability to understand and oversee the complex compliance and regulatory environment in higher education and student affairs and knowledge of best practices in the field.

### **Serve as a highly visible and engaged advocate for students and their needs**

UMN's students are eager to engage directly with campus administrators at all levels within the university in order to sustain and enhance an environment that centers the physical, emotional, and social well-being of the student body. The VPSA will work closely with students, earn their trust and respect, and provide a model of engagement with students for other administrators and faculty. This individual will be expected to sustain a high level of direct and visible involvement with students, and to be deeply engaged in their campus experiences. As social media and technology change the way

students interact with one another and the world, the successful candidate must understand these changes and use these tools effectively.

The VPSA will advocate for the student voice, particularly in settings where they are not present, to ensure that their perspectives are represented. Through attentive listening, responsiveness and authentic transparency about decisions and decision-making processes, the VPSA will reinforce the students' confidence in and collaboration with the administration. UMN has a deep, rich tradition of shared governance, with organizations representing faculty, staff, and students, both undergraduate and graduate/professional. The VPSA will need to exhibit respect and commitment to these long-held governance structures. Collaborating with the organizations and governing bodies to gather appropriate input on key decisions impacting the student experience will be essential to the successful adoption and implementation of new initiatives. In addition, the VPSA must possess the discretion and diplomacy required to effectively navigate within this culture.

**Collaborate to achieve a fully integrated student experience**

The VPSA will promote the vision of a fully integrated student experience, combining the curricular and co-curricular dimensions of student life with a keen appreciation that fulfillment of its academic mission is the university's paramount obligation. The VPSA will help students strike the right balance between the rigor of their academic program and the wide array of options outside the classroom and will seek opportunities to incorporate intellectual engagement in student life. This leader will stay aware of other factors that impact the student experience such as food, housing, and transportation insecurity. The VPSA will need to forge strong connections with the faculty, earning their respect and trust as an advocate for and administrative connection to campus life. As a partner to the Provost, the VPSA will also collaborate closely with academic deans within each of the colleges and schools to plan for and provide services and programs of interest to faculty and students alike and to ensure effective focus on UMN's commitment to the transformative power of equity and diversity to advance excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement at the University.

**Support a diverse student body and address issues of inclusion, access, and equity**

UMN has made tremendous strides to increase the racial and socioeconomic diversity of its student body. The VPSA will work with colleagues to anticipate and respond, in innovative and thoughtful ways, to the changing social and academic needs of the next generation of incoming students. In response to recent incidents on campus and around the country, many students have expressed their desire for a more inclusive campus culture as well as greater transparency, awareness, and enhanced sense of belonging. Addressing these needs and concerns will be a top priority for UMN's next VPSA,



understanding that moments of renewed attention and commitment bring real opportunity for change.

The VPSA will help advance UMN's devotion to the values of access, community and diversity by building an inclusive campus culture ensuring that all students recognize and benefit from the educational and cultural values of difference. The VPSA, in collaboration with the Chief Diversity Officer and others, will envision new ways to encourage student social engagement that aligns with UMN's values and aspirations, and to bring people together across lines of difference.

As the chief student affairs officer, the VPSA will serve as a model for a community of care and respect that supports student development. Along with other student affairs staff, the VPSA will foster opportunities that empower students to appreciate difference, broaden their worldview and explore their sense of purpose. The successful candidate will be comfortable engaging in challenging but crucial conversations and have the ability to build consensus among disparate viewpoints.

### **Effectively oversee and manage a complex business enterprise**

The role requires strong fiscal management skills and the ability to use data to inform decision-making. The complexity of the operational enterprise will require a VPSA with sophisticated business acumen. The successful candidate will manage the overall budget, provide guidance, interpret results, and develop near-term and long-range forecasts. The VPSA will also manage business operations to include policies, financial procedures, revenues, budget reporting, and compliance. Additionally, this leader will further advance the fundraising and development strategies and policies in order to expand resources to best meet the mission of student affairs and needs of students.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

### *Required Qualifications*

- Master's degree
- Demonstrated success in working with students, including a minimum of 10+ years of increasingly responsible professional experience in student affairs in higher education
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity and success in working with diverse constituencies, both domestic and international, to support an inclusive campus environment, including a track record of individual action and institutional leadership
- Excellent management and supervisory skills, including success in leading a team in collaborative strategic and operational planning
- Demonstrated knowledge and experience with capital planning, including oversight of major facility/capital projects

- Demonstrated knowledge of student development theory and application
- Demonstrated ability to build partnerships and promote collaboration within the unit and beyond, particularly as it relates to the interface between student development and undergraduate, graduate and professional, and international education
- Understanding of international education and its impact on the development of student intercultural and global competence and student learning, engagement, and support
- Demonstrated knowledge of strategic enrollment management
- Passion for working with students, bringing a student-focused, civic-minded, service-oriented perspective to the role of student affairs
- Experience handling freedom of expression/free speech issues on campus
- Experience in campus crisis management and demonstrated knowledge and understanding of student mental health and well-being issues, student conduct and discipline, judicial affairs, and relevant legal issues in higher education
- Exceptional interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills and the ability to communicate effectively with multiple and diverse constituents

#### *Preferred Qualifications*

- Earned doctorate from an accredited institution
- Administrative leadership experience, preferably at a large and complex university system
- Previous experience at a comparable public higher education environment
- Understanding of the role of a multi-campus, public research land-grant institution

#### *Desired Attributes*

The ideal candidate will be a visionary, strategic, collaborative, and inclusive leader who possesses personal and professional integrity, extraordinary written and oral communication skills, and a strong commitment to excellence. This person will also possess empathy, humility, transparency, accessibility, trustworthiness, intercultural competence, political savviness, and diplomacy. This person will have a strong record of supervising personnel across many job classifications.

### **APPOINTMENT**

The Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the President. The position is a 100%-time, 12-month academic administrative position, and is an important member of the President's cabinet and senior leadership team.

### **SALARY**

The University of Minnesota offers an attractive compensation and benefits package, commensurate with the successful candidate's background and experience.

## **APPLICATION / NOMINATION PROCEDURES**

Applications and nominations will be accepted until the position is filled, but the priority deadline for the submission of applications is March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. To ensure full consideration, materials should be received as soon as possible. To apply, send a letter of application expressing interest in the position, current vitae or resume, and the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of three professional references. Individuals wishing to nominate candidates should submit a letter of nomination, including the name, present position title, and institutional affiliation of the nominee. All nominations and applications will be held ***strictly confidential*** and will not be made public without permission of the applicant.

## **TO APPLY**

The University of Minnesota has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to:

**Keight Tucker Kennedy, Partner**  
**Martens Roc, Senior Associate**  
**Isaacson, Miller**  
**Washington, D.C.**

[www.imsearch.com/7412](http://www.imsearch.com/7412)

*Electronic submission strongly encouraged*

*The University of Minnesota shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, familial status, disability, public assistance status, membership or activity in a local commission created for the purpose of dealing with discrimination, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. This document is available in alternative formats upon request.*