SEARCH PROSPECTUS:

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Excelsior College®
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Founded in 1971, Excelsior College is a regionally accredited, not-for-profit distance learning institution focused on providing educational opportunity to adult learners. Nationally recognized as one of the pioneers in distance learning and the assessment of learning, Excelsior offers affordable higher education opportunities for individuals looking to complete their degree. With a diverse student body and a long history of educating first-generation college students, active-duty military personnel, and veterans, the Excelsior College community is strongly committed to its mission of supporting the academic success and personal growth of their students.

Excelsior College seeks to fill the position of Associate Vice President for Student Success with an individual who shares that commitment to supporting the success of adult learners. Reporting directly to the Provost, the Associate Vice President will join a leadership team dedicated to delivering on the mission, vision, and values of the institution.
ABOUT EXCELSIOR COLLEGE

HISTORY
Excelsior College was founded in 1971 by the New York State Board of Regents and operated until 1998 as a program under the authority of The University of the State of New York by which degrees and diplomas were awarded during that period. In 1998, the Board of Regents granted the College a charter to operate as a private, not-for-profit, independent institution and, on January 1, 2001, Regents College became Excelsior College. In the early 2000’s, Excelsior was among the first institutions to develop and offer courses via fully online instruction. Today, an independent board of trustees composed of prominent individuals in the fields of education, business, military, and the professions from across the United States governs Excelsior College, ensuring the College delivers upon the promise of its mission, vision, and values.

MISSION
Excelsior College provides educational opportunity to adult learners with an emphasis on those historically underrepresented in higher education. The College meets students where they are—academically and geographically, offering quality instruction and the assessment of learning.

VISION
Excelsior College is a provider of choice for adults seeking access to higher education and academic success, and it is a model for addressing societal and workforce needs.

VALUES

Accessibility and Completion
Excelsior provides programs and services that meet students where they are academically and geographically, and provides support services needed for completion.

Affordability
Excelsior prudently manages its resources to invest in people and offer high-quality education credentials at an affordable price.

Excellence
Excelsior expects a collaborative effort and full engagement from all to develop and provide programs of exceptional value to students and employers.

Trustworthiness
Excelsior values and practices integrity and honesty in our relationships with students, each other, and the communities we serve.

Equity and Inclusion
Excelsior practices inclusion by welcoming and valuing all students, staff members, and faculty members in our learning community, and providing them with educational opportunities.

Collaboration
Members of the Excelsior community work together to develop, deliver, and sustain high-quality academic products and services for students.
LEADERSHIP
The position of Associate Vice President for Student Success reports directly to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, John Caron. Dr. Caron is the College’s second-ranking officer with strategic responsibilities that span the entire institution. He was named to this position in July 2019 after working for more than 20 years in higher education in various senior leadership positions at nationally recognized institutions such as Endicott College, Johns Hopkins University, Northeastern University, Brown University, and Bennington College.

During his career in higher education, Dr. Caron has worked to remove barriers to success, managed recruitment, provided academic strategic direction, and revamped, retired, and launched new programs. He has served on senior leadership teams and led strategic priorities to align with the vision of the institution. Dr. Caron has also taught undergraduate and graduate courses at community colleges and universities. He is a member of the President’s Council on Diversity & Inclusion at Excelsior College, chaired a task force on diversity, equity and inclusion at Endicott College, and served as a trainer/facilitator for the Social Issues Training Program at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

EXCELSIOR’S HOME IN ALBANY, NY
From its early beginnings, 400 years ago as a Dutch settlement, Albany has grown into the diverse, vibrant capital city of New York State, with approximately 1 million people residing in the capital district. From the Albany Pine Brush Preserve to the Adirondack Mountains to the Berkshires, there are a myriad opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts; patrons of the arts and history-lovers will find the Albany Institute of History & Art, the Underground Railroad History Project of the Capital Region, Capital Repertory Theater, the Albany Symphony Orchestra, New York State Museum, and other attractions in the city. A wide variety of restaurants provide diverse dining options and the Capital Craft Beverage Trail promotes the area’s most popular craft beverage facilities, many located in the emerging Warehouse District. The African American Cultural Center of the Capital Region, Inc. provides free arts programs to youth as well as educational, cultural and performing arts events, and other programs. Beautiful churches and cathedrals in downtown Albany also offer an array of worship services and cultural programs.

Excelsior College’s location in Albany brings it into easy proximity for all the city has to offer. Approximately 400 administrators, faculty, and staff work together to advance the mission of the institution and ensure the success of the nation-wide student population of the College.

“Diversity, equity, and inclusion are more than just lofty words. These values demand a life-long commitment to challenging bias, marginalization, and oppression. At Excelsior College, we believe including diverse voices and perspectives in the process of innovation creates impact. Our shared purpose and commitment to these beliefs and values are grounded in the understanding that we are strengthened immeasurably by welcoming and valuing all students, staff, and faculty members.”

—Provost John Caron
ABOUT EXCELSIOR COLLEGE (CONT.)

FAST FACTS
SUMMER 2019

ENROLLMENT: 23,357

DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender
- Female: 11,474 (49%)
- Male: 11,879 (51%)
- N/A: 4 (<1%)

Age
- < 24: 2,206 (9%)
- 24–29: 3,965 (17%)
- 30–39: 8,956 (38%)
- 40–49: 5,604 (24%)
- 50–59: 2,205 (9%)
- 60+: 408 (2%)
- N/A: 13 (<1%)
Average: 36.5 years

Race/Ethnicity
- White: 14,342 (61%)
- Black or African American: 4,214 (18%)
- Hispanic: 2,681 (11%)
- Two or More Races: 889 (4%)
- Asian: 707 (3%)
- Unknown: 247 (1%)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 143 (<1%)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 134 (<1%)

Employment
- Full-time: 74%
- Part-time: 7%
- Not employed: 19%
- Active: 35%
- Veteran: 14%
- Non-military: 51%

Military Service

Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>Associate</th>
<th>Baccalaureate</th>
<th>Certificate</th>
<th>Master’s</th>
<th>Baccalaureate-Master’s</th>
<th>Grad Certificate</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>2,869</td>
<td>11,663</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>14,582</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1,459</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Nursing</td>
<td>5,832</td>
<td>636</td>
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<td>201</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6,829</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8,701</td>
<td>12,299</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1,660</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23,357</td>
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EXAM PASS RATE

79% of all exams

6,272 students completing 12,818 exams

COURSE ACTIVITY

Overall course completion rates

UNDERGRADUATE
- 94%
- 14,557 undergraduate students with 31,390 course registrations in 443 unique courses

GRADUATE
- 96%
- 1,937 graduate students with 4,998 course registrations in 164 unique courses

GRADUATES OF EXCELSIOR COLLEGE

Graduates in past fiscal year: 6,059
Graduates to date: 177,200
Largest programs:
- Associate in Science in Nursing
- Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies
Average length of time to degree completion: 2.8 years
Reporting to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Vice President for Student Success is a strategic leader for initiatives that support post-traditional learners. The AVP–Student Success is a highly visible leader, building and fostering relationships with various units across the College to ensure student needs are prioritized and student success goals are achieved.

The AVP–Student Success is responsible for the budget, planning, and operational functions and services across a wide portfolio including Accessibility Services, Advising, Career Services, Center for Military & Veteran Education, Degree Audit, Ombudsperson, Staff Development/Quality Assurance, and Transcript Analysis. The successful candidate will demonstrate how these areas are managed in an integrated manner and as a part of a consistent, proactive, student/customer experience.

In addition, the AVP–Student Success will be responsible for providing leadership in the coordination, planning, implementation, and evaluation of student success initiatives. In that capacity, the person will work closely with Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support and the School deans. The AVP–Student Success will foster collaborative partnerships with units across the College with the primary goal of cultivating a culture that embraces retention and student success as an institutional hallmark and a shared responsibility. This person will work closely with faculty and staff to design and implement initiatives to improve retention, persistence, and efficiency in student service areas such as transfer credit evaluation. This role is also responsible for performing research and evaluation of procedures and policies in terms of their impact on persistence and success.

THE AGENDA FOR LEADERSHIP
The successful candidate will be prepared to lead a robust and wide-ranging portfolio of areas committed to advancing Excelsior College’s singular focus on student success. This person will thrive in a dynamic work environment, believe wholeheartedly in advancing the success of non-traditional learners across the spectrum of different dimensions of diversity, collaborate naturally across the organization, and bring a spirit of innovation and creative problem-solving. This newly designed position will have the opportunity to make a significant impact at a pivotal moment in the College’s history, a time President James Baldwin described as “a once-in-a-career kind of opportunity to create the future of the College”
From among the various duties and responsibilities the AVP—Student Success will have, three central leadership priorities emerge:

• A catalyst for a renewed commitment to student success. Excelsior College is fully focused on and committed to degree completion for non-traditional learners. Success in this role will be defined largely by persistence and graduation rates as well as customer service metrics (turnaround time, error rates, etc.) that demonstrate a seamless student experience. This person and the areas under their oversight will develop, coordinate, implement, and evaluate initiatives designed to achieve that vision. The successful candidate must have a working understanding of the importance of the different parts of this diverse portfolio and must have experience with and an appreciation for the unique needs of adult learners. While important work is being carried out across the portfolio, two important initiatives will be early priorities: implementation of a new student information system (already underway) in a manner that contributes to the student experience, and development of an advising model that is proactive in supporting students through their journey to completion.

• A strategic, supportive, innovative leader. The staff is talented and committed to Excelsior College, and they seek a leader who is both strategic and supportive. In this context, a strategic leader is one who will listen to stakeholders, outline a vision in alignment with institutional goals, define performance indicators and next steps, and assess implementation of those steps. Use of data to inform decision-making is an essential part of this work. Staff also seek a supportive leader—one who recognizes and values the importance of their work, someone with the emotional intelligence needed to lead change effectively with a human touch, and someone they can turn to for advice, counsel, and (as needed) advocacy. Both the entrepreneurial spirit that marks Excelsior College and the rapid rate of change in higher education call for a leader who is able to cultivate a climate of innovation that keeps pace with the challenges and opportunities that emerge quickly.

• A collaborative member of the Provost's leadership team. In addition to the responsibilities this person will have within their portfolio, they will also serve an important institutional-level role that requires a perspective of the same scope. Carrying out that work demands working across the institution, particularly with the other members of the Provost's administrative and academic leadership staff, including the deans of the three schools at Excelsior, the AVP for Student Services, and the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Support. The vision for this leadership team is not a hierarchical one with crystal clear lines of delineation, but rather a matrix where efforts advance both within and across areas of the College. This will require a leader who is collaborative by nature and who is comfortable working in ambiguity at a quick pace in pursuit of the College’s mission.
ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Analyze data relevant to student needs, retention, attrition, student success, persistence and graduation rates and provide intervention recommendations to the Provost.
- Analyze various data sets to identify trends and recommend solutions to improve student experiences, CRM use, and advising/coaching performance.
- Coordinate with Deans, Faculty Program Directors, Writing Center, Learning Services, and the Center for Educational Measurement & Prior Learning Assessment to evaluate retention and student success initiatives.
- Create a map of the student/customer experience, highlighting and projecting points of contact between students and the College.
- Determine training/on-boarding requirements for new student-facing staff by evaluating advising/coaching plans and student success results; reviewing results of advising/coaching and evaluating training effectiveness.
- Represent the college at regional and national conferences through the attendance and/or presentations.
- Represent the Provost’s Office on ERP and other major college initiatives.
- Track student progress, monitor early warning signs, trends in student success, and evaluate activities, services and programs to ensure activities are relevant and are meeting student needs.
- Work closely with deans, Faculty Program Directors, adjunct instructors and others to monitor performance of at-risk students.
- Work collaboratively with the AVP – Analytics, & Decision Support to develop a system to track data for retention and success of at-risk student groups and populations targeted through retention campaigns and activities.
- Work closely with AVP – Enrollment Management, admissions, student financial services, and records to create cross-functional partnerships to support and implement retention and student success initiatives.
- Other duties as assigned.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Master’s degree from a regionally accredited university in counseling, psychology, higher education, student personnel, or a closely related field preferred. Earned doctorate degree preferred.
- Minimum of five years of administrative experience in higher education or a related field (including vendors, consultants, etc.) at the level of director or equivalent, including both supervisory and budgetary responsibilities.
PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS

- A track record of strong student advocacy and demonstrated leadership.
- Ability to develop and sustain interpersonal professional relationships, cultivate trust, and relate effectively with students and staff.
- Experience working with and advocating for ethnically and culturally diverse student populations.
- Ability to motivate, inspire, lead, and manage through direct supervision and through influencing others.
- Approaches work with grit and with a drive to continue learning (improving one’s abilities, developing new skills, growing in role, demonstrating resiliency).
- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively with others throughout the College.
- Demonstrated integrity, commitment to high standards, ability to achieve results.
- Excellent analytical and written communication and presentation skills.
- Experience with accreditation processes.
- Extensive knowledge of relevant trends and best practices in higher education, particularly those pertaining to student affairs philosophy and non-traditional student populations.
- Leadership in the areas of student support, advising, retention, persistence, and remediation preferably at or working with institutions serving adult learners (age 25 and above) from a distance.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, including project management experience that demonstrates attention to detail and ability to manage multiple complex projects to timely completion.

APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

The search is being assisted by Academic Search, Inc. To arrange a confidential conversation about this position, please contact the consultants conducting the search, Dr. Scott Flanagan and Ms. Bethany Zecher Sutton, by email (scott.flanagan@academicsearch.org and bethany.sutton@academicsearch.org) or by phone (202-332-4049). The position is open until filled, but only applications received by May 8, 2020 are assured full consideration. To apply, a candidate should submit a thoughtful letter of interest addressing the leadership agenda, the required qualifications and desired characteristics; a current, long-form resume or curriculum vitae (showing relevant administrative responsibilities and accomplishments); and the names, phone numbers and addresses of at least five professional references, with an indication of the candidate’s relationship to each reference. References will not be contacted until a later stage in the search, and only with the candidate’s foreknowledge.

Nominations and application materials are to be sent to:

excelsioravpss@academicsearch.org

Excelsior College is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/ADA employer committed to excellence and diversity that strives to enhance our ability to develop a diverse faculty and staff to increase our potential to serve a diverse student population.
ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search, Inc. is assisting Excelsior College in this work. For more than four decades, Academic Search has offered executive search services exclusively to institutions of higher education. Academic Search was founded on the principle of strengthening higher education leadership through professional search services. We are the only search firm in the nation with a formal relationship to a premier leadership development program. As the subsidiary of the American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI), Academic Search provides substantial financial support to a number of leadership identification, development, and support programs across all sectors of public and private higher education. For more information, visit www.academicsearch.org/.

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