SEARCH PROSPECTUS:
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Ferris State University
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Ferris State University invites confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications for the position of Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Provost and VPAA, a member of the President’s Cabinet, will report to President David L. Eisler, and will be the Chief Academic Officer at a vibrant institution committed to collaboration, diversity, ethical community, excellence, learning, and opportunity. This is an exciting opportunity for a talented academic leader to build on the many successes at Ferris and to lead a team that will make a difference in the future of the institution. The search is open and international in its outreach.
Ferris State University is a mid-sized four-year public university known for its quality of instruction and large selection of academic programs, ranging from associate to doctoral degrees, offered through eight degree-granting colleges: Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and Human Services, Engineering Technology, Health Professions, Kendall College of Art and Design, Michigan College of Optometry, and Pharmacy. The university’s main campus is located in scenic Big Rapids, Michigan.

Ferris was founded in 1884 by Woodbridge and Helen Ferris as the privately-owned Big Rapids Industrial School. Woodbridge Ferris noted, “My plea in Michigan. . . is education for all children, all men, and all women of Michigan, all the people in all our states all the time.” It became a state institution in 1950 and a state university in 1987. Since its beginning, the institution has provided students of diverse backgrounds with educational opportunities for rewarding professional and civic lives. The current mission and vision statements reflect these commitments.

Ferris State University has identified these Core Values for all programs and operations:

- **Collaboration**: Ferris builds partnerships within the university and the global community that promote shared goals and success.
- **Diversity**: Ferris commits to be an inclusive university community that respects the dignity of the individual and promotes the acceptance of others.
- **Ethical Community**: Ferris implements policies, procedures, and actions to promote transparency, advance our mission and foster integrity, civility, and respect within and beyond the university.
- **Excellence**: Ferris dedicates itself to innovation and quality execution that sustains and promotes relevance in a changing world through best practices and benchmarking.
- **Learning**: Ferris promotes hands-on, transformative learning; balancing theory and practice; encouraging teamwork and innovation; and emphasizing critical thinking—all are fundamental elements of career success.
- **Opportunity**: Ferris honors the legacy of our founders by encouraging and supporting all who wish to acquire the knowledge, leadership, and communication skills that are the foundations of personal success.

Today, Ferris State University equips students to contribute to a changing world by offering a challenging, adaptive curriculum that consists of a unique blend of technical and professional programs based in traditional academic areas and driven by industry demand. Its many and varied program offerings include several degrees that are unique in Michigan or the United States. For a complete list of degree programs, visit [catalog.ferris.edu/degrees](catalog.ferris.edu/degrees).

Ferris is committed to ensuring that students gain real-world skills beyond the classroom. The university works with numerous external partners, including alumni, industry and professional leaders, for program direction and networking advantages. It also requires program-related internships in most of its degree programs. As a result, most students enrolled in bachelor’s and advanced degree programs participate in internships that support their personal and professional growth.

Ferris serves students from many different backgrounds and regions, providing access to educational opportunities through a traditional,
residential college experience on the university’s main campus in Big Rapids or through its statewide locations, online learning resources, and partnerships with community colleges and career technical centers. More than any institution in the state, Ferris State has connected with Michigan community colleges, creating partnerships on multiple campuses and expanding its online offerings to allow students to complete coursework leading to Ferris degrees at their local community colleges. For more information about Ferris’ statewide locations, visit ferris.edu/statewide.

Ferris is an ideal institution for transfer and non-traditional students who want to complete or further their educations, as its unique transfer process allows students to build on their education with little or no loss of credit.

ACADEMICS AT FERRIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Ferris State University enrolls more than 13,000 students, including more than 1,300 students in graduate and professional programs. With approximately 440 full-time faculty, Ferris offers more than 190 educational programs through its academic colleges, Office of Extended and International Operations and Office of Retention and Student Success. These programs lead to doctoral, master’s, bachelor’s and associate degrees, as well as certificates. Master’s degrees are offered specifically in Business Administration, Career and Technical Education, Criminal Justice, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership, Fine Arts, Information Security and Intelligence, Nursing, and Social Work. Doctoral degrees offered at Ferris are in Community College Leadership, Nursing Practice, Optometry, and Pharmacy.
Each college offers a cluster of related programs targeted to prepare students for specific careers, responsible citizenship, and lifelong learning. With a 16:1 student-faculty ratio, Ferris offers 45 associate degree programs, 105 undergraduate degree programs, 17 master's degree programs, five doctoral degree programs and more than 70 certificate programs (including 10 graduate certifications).

The Division of Academic Affairs includes the following units:

**College of Arts and Sciences**: The College of Arts and Sciences is one of the university’s largest colleges, with approximately 120 faculty across seven departments and more than 1,700 enrolled students. The college offers the General Education coursework for every student who enters Ferris. Arts and Sciences also offers an array of programming leading to bachelor of science, bachelor of arts, and associate degrees, as well as certificate programs, an array of minors, and a master’s degree in social work. The college offers specialized degrees and enriching minors in the behavioral, biological, physical or social sciences; humanities; English, literature and world languages; and mathematics. Its faculty-student research collaboration, robust internships and study abroad opportunities extend learning beyond the classroom. Students graduate with a foundation for entry-level professional careers, graduate and professional programs, and lifelong learning.

**College of Business**: The nationally accredited College of Business provides 25 distinctive academic programs that teach specialized skills in combination with business fundamentals designed to prepare graduates for a fast-paced and competitive workplace. With more than 2,300 students and 71 engaged faculty, the college focuses its curriculum on preparing graduates to encounter real issues as members and leaders of tomorrow’s workforce. A Leadership Advisory Board of presidents, CEOs, and business leaders fuels the college’s response to the changing needs of the business world in the region and globally.

**College of Education and Human Services**: The College of Education and Human Services is home to three exciting schools—Criminal Justice, Education, and Digital Media—with combined enrollment of more than 2,100 students. The college’s 30 industry-experienced faculty are committed to providing innovative instruction and opportunities for hands-on experiences that will help students advance quickly in these essential fields. The college also houses the campus ROTC office.

**College of Engineering Technology**: Ferris State University’s College of Engineering Technology is one of the largest in the nation. The college has world-class labs and state-of-the-art equipment, made possible by ongoing financial support from its industry partners. Some of Ferris’ technology programs are one-of-a-kind in Michigan and the nation. The College of Engineering Technology has 76 faculty and more than 2,000 enrolled students.

**College of Health Professions**: The College of Health Professions offers in-demand programs in a variety of specialty areas. All courses are taught by the college’s 48 qualified, discipline-specific faculty in state-of-the-art classrooms and laboratories, ensuring that, upon graduation, its more than 1,800 enrolled students are well prepared for clinical and internship experiences and careers providing for the health and well-being of others.
Kendall College of Art and Design: Kendall College of Art and Design, on the Grand Rapids campus, offers graduate and undergraduate fine arts degrees as well as a Bachelor of Science degree in Art History. Its more than 1,000 enrolled students benefit from instruction by 43 faculty members.

Michigan College of Optometry: The Michigan College of Optometry at Ferris State University is a national leader in optometry curriculum and instruction and the only doctoral-level eye care professional program in the state of Michigan. With 20 faculty and more than 140 enrolled students, MCO also delivers state-of-the-art eye care to thousands of patients in the region through its University Eye Center.

College of Pharmacy: Graduates of Ferris’ College of Pharmacy compose more than half of Michigan’s practicing pharmacists. Graduates can be found in every type of pharmacy practice and at every level of the pharmaceutical sciences, actively engaged in discovery, dissemination of knowledge, and delivery of state-of-the-art patient care. The college comprises more than 570 enrolled students and 46 faculty.

Other offices and units that report to the Provost include
- the Center for Latino Studies,
- FLITE Library,
- the Office of Graduate Studies,
- the Office of International Education, and
- Retention and Student Success.
Ferris State University is regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and is fully engaged in preparation for a pending HLC visit to reaffirm accreditation. Ferris is well-positioned for another successful visit in October 2020, due to its development of robust systems for comprehensive evaluation of data for all aspects of university programs and services, including learning assessments at both the course and program levels.

Sixty-five of Ferris’ programs also have earned specialized accreditation related to the industries that they serve, such as the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs, Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission, American Council for Construction Education, International Facility Management Association Foundation, National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science, Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing, and the Accreditation Councils on Optometric Education and for Pharmacy Education.

Approximately 89 percent of Ferris programs prepare students for in-demand regional job fields. The University also offers programs that are unique in the state and nation, such as the Michigan College of Optometry, highly-regarded Information Security and Intelligence B.S. and M.S. programs, and four-year Heavy Equipment Engineering Technology, Welding Engineering Technology, and Manufacturing Engineering Technology programs.

Ferris has developed specialized facilities and equipment resources to serve such programs, including its Centers for Welding and Manufacturing Excellence, Dow Interactive Eye Learning Center, College of Pharmacy Center for Innovational Learning and Research, Granger Center for Construction and HVACR, Heavy Equipment Learning Lab, Information Security and Intelligence Digital Forensics Lab, the National Elastomer Center, and the Shimadzu Core Laboratory for Academic and Research Excellence. In addition, Ferris State is home to two learning museums that reflect its commitment to promoting understanding across cultures and identity. The Ferris Museum of Sexist Objects seeks to be a leader in raising awareness and inspiring activism in response to everyday items that promote sexism, gendered violence, and female stereotypes. And the renowned Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia has amassed the nation’s largest public collection of artifacts spanning the segregation era, from Reconstruction until the civil rights movement, and beyond—”not as a shrine to racism,” says its founder, but as a way “to get people to think deeply.”

Consistent with its historic mission, Ferris’ approach to education is distinct in its teaching and training focus. Eighty percent of Ferris classes have fewer than 25 students, and classes are taught by professors—never graduate students. Approximately seventy percent of Ferris students engage in an internship as a requirement of their curricula.

Ferris also is distinctive among its regional peers in its commitment to development of its region’s economy, focusing on job-readiness, hands-on learning, and service to students challenged to succeed in more conventional higher education institutions. It is the only four-year public university in Michigan to accept funding for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 Tuition Incentive Program-eligible students. It also is the first four-year public university in Michigan to offer a test-optional admissions path and prides itself on its service to first-generation college students.
Located approximately 60 miles north of Grand Rapids and 200 miles northwest of Detroit, the city of Big Rapids, Michigan has approximately 12,000 permanent residents and serves as the county seat of Mecosta County. Beyond Ferris State University, Big Rapids is home to significant industrial developments, including Federal Screw Works, Haworth, and Simonds International industrial facilities.

Big Rapids Hospital is part of the renowned Spectrum Health system, and Big Rapids High School ranks among the top ten percent of national high schools, having earned recognition by *U.S. News and World Report* as a Silver Medal School. Big Rapids’ slogan, “You’ll Love It Here,” celebrates the convergence of education, opportunity, local culture, and natural beauty that gives the city its unique character.

Big Rapids offers more than 257 acres of dedicated park land with extensive frontage on the pristine Muskegon River, as well as access to multiple recreational activity and athletic resources, such as tennis courts, baseball and softball diamonds, and a community bandshell and dog park. Residents also enjoy direct access to the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail—a rails-to-trails conservancy route of more than 90 miles across Michigan from Walker to Cadillac. Activities along the wheelchair-accessible trail include biking, inline skating, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing.

With many big-city amenities but a small town feel, Big Rapids is quick to make new residents feel at home. From its historic downtown to the cutting-edge learning resources of Ferris State University, it is a very vibrant and welcoming community that offers something for everyone. To learn more about Big Rapids, visit [https://www.cityofbr.org](https://www.cityofbr.org).

The impressive Ferris campus has approximately 100 buildings on 785 acres, with 3.5 million usable square feet in its buildings. There are more than 7,000 parking spaces and 23 miles of sidewalks. The University is committed to incorporating sustainable design planning principles in its approach to developing and maintaining buildings and grounds. Click [here](https://www.ferris.edu) for a virtual tour of the Ferris State University campus in Big Rapids.
THE POSITION OF PROVOST

This position offers a unique opportunity to lead a complex division at an important point in the history of Ferris State University. The Provost, expected to begin work in Summer 2020, will be collaborating with the President’s Cabinet and Academic Affairs leadership to implement many of the initiatives in Ferris Forward, the recently approved strategic plan for 2019 - 2024. A reaccreditation team visit from the Higher Learning Commission in October 2020 will also provide important direction for the Provost and Academic Affairs.

The Provost serves as the chief academic officer for the University and provides leadership and guidance to faculty, staff, students, and the President’s Cabinet in all areas relating to Academic Affairs, as well as advice and counsel to the President and Cabinet in all matters related to management of the campus. The chief academic officer is charged with the overall administration of all academic units in the context of the University as a whole.

Ferris State University seeks a Provost and VPAA who exemplifies excellent leadership; is experienced in fiscal and personnel management; fosters collaborative and data-informed planning, execution, and accountability; advances the University’s hand-on learning and purpose; champions diversity and inclusion; and enhances its campus culture.

Specifically, Ferris expects the next Provost will

• Report directly to the President and serve as the executive-in-charge in the President’s absence;
• Provide intellectual vision and energy to lead a complex public institution;
• Demonstrate impeccable integrity, a strong work ethic, and a positive leadership style in all behavior, to lead and manage effectively the Division of Academic Affairs;
• Advocate consistently for quality in planning and execution, for Academic Affairs and for the University, in a time of enrollment and budgetary challenges;
• Evaluate, modify, and create academic organizational structures and processes that improve effectiveness and student-centered learning;
• Embrace and implement Ferris Forward, the University’s strategic plan, in fulfillment of its mission;
• Work in strong partnership with the Division of Student Affairs to provide a holistic approach to educational access, excellence, and success for the University’s diverse student body;
• Ensure the quality of the academic enterprise through ongoing assessment;
• Facilitate and create opportunities for scholarly activity in a variety of academic settings;
• Be skilled in using modern technology, including digital and social media, in representing the best aspects of the institution;
• Display confidence in being the voice of the institution;
• Value, sustain, and promote what Ferris has built, including the unique culture of the University, as well as its historic mission and current challenges;
• Foster creativity, innovation, and enthusiasm for Ferris and its work among faculty, staff, students, administrators, and governance and union leaders;
• Seek input on major questions and initiatives from all areas of campus yet be prepared to make bold moves and to communicate frequently and effectively;
• Evaluate and calibrate all decisions while invoking the guiding principle of “How will this affect students and student success?”
• Hire an excellent and diverse faculty, staff, and administration;
• Demonstrate a strong commitment to shared governance and work with faculty and administrators to fulfill this commitment in the context of unions for faculty and staff.

The Provost provides direction regarding accreditation, faculty selection, evaluation and performance; is responsible for analysis of the division’s academic programs, policies, and procedures; and directs studies on major operational concerns. The Provost consults with the Academic Senate and University committees in order to maintain institutional focus on the campus mission and to enhance student learning.

In summary, the Provost exercises leadership and fulfillment of the Provost’s responsibilities in academic programs; management of fiscal resources; Leadership and University Planning; and Quality and Assessment.
THE POSITION OF PROVOST (cont.)

The formal position description includes the following expectations.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS
The successful candidate will have these qualifications:

• Earned doctorate or terminal degree from an accredited institution;
• Academic credentials to merit appointment at the rank of full professor, with a record that may include research, scholarship, external funding and applied practice (broadly defined);
• Successful record of substantial, executive-level academic leadership, including fiscal management and personnel responsibilities, in a complex institution;
• Excellent written and oral communication skills; and
• Demonstrated commitment to diversity, opportunity, and inclusion.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS
In addition, the successful candidate will have some of these preferred qualifications:

• Experience with leadership in a unionized academic organization;
• College/university classroom experience;
• Robust knowledge and understanding of contemporary issues in higher education, including enrollment management, access, accreditation and assessment.

A background check (including a criminal records check) must be completed satisfactorily before any candidate can be offered this position.
The University is being assisted by Academic Search, Inc. Applications should consist of a substantive cover letter, a curriculum vitae, and a list of five professional references with full contact information. No references will be contacted without the explicit permission of the candidate.

Applications, nominations, and expressions of interest can be submitted electronically, and in confidence, to

FerrisProvost@academicsearch.org

The position is open until filled, but only those applications received by **Wednesday, February 5, 2020**, can be assured full consideration. Confidential discussions about this opportunity may be arranged by contacting senior consultants Kate Nolde and Ginny Horvath.

Ferris State University, an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer, is committed to enhancing equity, inclusion, and diversity within its community. The University actively seeks applications from women, minorities, individual with disabilities, veterans, and other underrepresented groups. For confidential assistance, please contact Academic Search, Inc.
ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search, Inc. is assisting Ferris State University 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 http://www.academicsearch.org/.

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