

SEARCH PROFILE:

ESSENTIAL STUDIES DIRECTOR



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POSITION DESCRIPTION

Essential Studies is the University of North Dakota's award-winning general education program. Developed by the faculty as the cornerstone of a liberal education, the program is built to provide students with breadth of knowledge across a range of disciplines while also emphasizing student learning in critical analysis, communication, intercultural skills, information literacy, and quantitative reasoning. The program is committed to both teaching these skills and helping students understand their value.

The Director of Essential Studies provides vision and leadership for this program, and advocates for excellence in general education for all undergraduate students at UND. The Director coordinates the program; collaborates with academic units in the development and ongoing validation of a broad array of Essential Studies courses; works closely with faculty, staff, and advisors to inspire innovative teaching and campus-wide understanding of the program; and communicates the value of the liberal arts and supports student success in interactions with individual students and the larger campus. Working collaboratively, the Director will develop strategic initiatives and promote innovation across the undergraduate Essential Studies curriculum while ensuring its academic quality and integrity. In addition, the Director of Essential Studies provides support and leadership for a variety of initiatives and programs related to the undergraduate experience at UND, and participates, in cooperation with leadership in both Academic and Student Affairs units, in the shaping and leadership of first year experience programs and related student success efforts.

POSITION

This position is a 12-month appointment and will include administrative duties as director of the Essential Studies program (general education at UND). In addition to the administrative work associated with this position, the chosen candidate will be expected to teach at least one course each semester (Fall and Spring) within the Essential Studies Program and/or the person's disciplinary home department/school/college.

This administrative appointment may also carry a separate tenured appointment commensurate with the selected candidate's qualifications and in the department relevant to their discipline, subject to approval from the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education.

In performing the duties of Director of Essential Studies, this individual will report to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Programs and Student Success within the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and will work closely with the University Senate Essential Studies Committee (ESC), academic units, faculty, and other stakeholders.

POSITION DESCRIPTION (CONT.)

EXPECTATIONS FOR DUTIES AS DIRECTOR OF ESSENTIAL STUDIES INCLUDE:

Vision, Leadership, and Advocacy

- Work with the Essential Studies Committee, the faculty, and stakeholders across campus to align the ES program with the strategic vision outlined in the UND LEADS strategic plan.
- Provide vision and leadership for the program, particularly in communicating with students, faculty, staff, and administration the importance of the program, its objectives, and its requirements.
- Affirm the value of a liberal arts education through effective, campus-wide communication.
- Serve as liaison to academic units and leadership throughout the University, and to support units, including Student Academic and Career Services (SASCE), the Teaching Transformation and Development Academy (TTaDA), Student Affairs, Registrar's Office, and Enrollment Services.
- Align the program with national and university best practices in general education, state higher education policies, and university mission and vision.
- Serve as ex-officio member on the University Senate Essential Studies, Curriculum, and Assessment Committees.
- Serve as UND's delegate and spokesperson for general education at state and national meetings and conferences. Participate in such events to ensure that UND is part of state and national conversations in matters relating to general education.
- Participate and/or lead (as needed) efforts to integrate Essential Studies with student success initiatives at UND, including first year experience programming, experiential learning opportunities, and more.

Implementation and Coordination of ES Program

- Work with faculty, program directors, chairs, and deans to ensure that an optimal number of general education/ Essential Studies courses will be offered each semester, on campus and online, in relation to program goals and requirements, departmental four-year plans, and university retention, persistence, and completion goals.
- Work with faculty, program directors, chairs, and deans to promote the creation of innovative or interdisciplinary program courses, especially those integrating High-Impact Practices (HIPs) in teaching and learning.
- Facilitate the implementation of the program and address issues that may arise in coordination with departments, colleges/schools, and other university units.
- Work with departments to educate and support their chairs, faculty, and advisors about the validation & revalidation of ES courses. Work with the ES Committee to support a positive and effective process for the ES validations and revalidations.
- Work with students who have questions or concerns about their general education/Essential Studies programs of study. This includes helping and advising them about petitions, course choices, and alternative options for successfully completing their requirements.
- Collaborate with advisors—both professional and faculty—to provide advice and guidance about the program that is accurate and helpful. Support advisors by providing up-to-date program information and help them educate students about the purposes and value of general education/ Essential Studies learning.
- Collaborate with program course instructors so they are knowledgeable about the program's larger goals and aware of how their own teaching can contribute to the ES learning goals.



POSITION DESCRIPTION (CONT.)

Assessment of General Education/the Essential Studies Program

- Work with the Director of Institutional Effectiveness & Accreditation to develop, manage, and conduct assessment activities for the program, including its effectiveness in promoting student learning outcomes as well as student retention and completion. This includes direct assessments by ES learning outcome and other assessments that might be developed to help UND examine what our students are learning in their general education/Essential Studies work.
- Host (or co-host) campus discussions on the results of assessment activities so that UND can effectively close the loop on assessment activities for the purpose of analyzing and goal-setting related to improvement of student learning in the program.

Promotion of Essential Studies

- Develop web-based or social media and other informational materials that help prospective and current students, parents, faculty, staff, and advisors understand and promote the purposes and benefits of a quality general education, with specific links to the Essential Studies program as a means for students to gain a quality general education that will help them succeed in the workplace and in their communities.

Faculty Development

- Coordinate with the Faculty Development unit in the Teaching Transformation and Development Academy, and with the VPFA, to create and implement support systems for program instructors and advisors for enhancing the delivery and promotion of general education/Essential Studies learning.

Program Management

- Manage program related business.
- Ensure proper and effective keeping and maintaining of program records. Coordinate records management with the Office of the Registrar and with the Essential Studies Committee.
- Ensure support for campus stakeholders: students, faculty, advisors, administration, and the public.





THE PREFERRED CANDIDATE

COMPETENCIES:

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Effective interpersonal communication skills, including the ability to collaborate and engage with students and colleagues of varying backgrounds
- Knowledge and understanding of current developments in general education reform and exemplary models of practice
- Working understanding of assessment methods, curriculum development, assessment design and implementation, and program evaluation
- Strong leadership skills to coordinate and facilitate efforts among a wide range of individuals and departments
- Proficiency in Qualtrics and CourseLeaf software programs
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility efforts
- Experience with change management

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

- Terminal Degree in an Academic Field represented at UND
- Three years of full-time teaching experience at an accredited institution of higher education, with experience teaching in the undergraduate curriculum
- Documented experience teaching general education courses at the undergraduate level

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Five or more years of full-time teaching experience at an accredited institution of higher education
- Five or more years of experience teaching in the undergraduate curriculum, including courses in a general education program
- Experience teaching in a variety of modalities-in person, online, hybrid, and/or hyflex platforms
- Experience with higher education program review, assessment, and reporting
- Administrative experience, including having served as program director or in a similar role



APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

The search for the Essential Studies Director of the University of North Dakota is being assisted by Academic Search. Applications should consist of a substantive cover letter addressing the expectations of the University and the position of Essential Studies Director; a current curriculum vitae (CV); and a list of five professional references with contact information and a brief description explaining the working relationship of each to the applicant. References will not be contacted without the explicit permission of the candidate.

Applications, nominations, and expressions of interest can be submitted in confidence to UNDEssentialStudiesDirector@academicsearch.org. Although the position is open until filled, to ensure full consideration by the Search Committee, applications should be received by October 30, 2024. Confidential discussions about this opportunity may be arranged by contacting:

Dr. Gabriel Esteban, Senior Consultant
Gabriel.Esteban@academicsearch.org, 312-206-2953

UND EEO POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the University of North Dakota to provide equal employment opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, genetic information or any other protected characteristics under applicable law. The University of North Dakota will ensure that all personnel actions, including but not limited to recruiting, hiring, training and promotion, are administered without regard to these protected characteristics. All employment decisions shall be based only on valid job requirements.

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting University of North Dakota in this work. For more than four decades, Academic Search has offered executive search services to higher education institutions, associations, and related organizations. Academic Search was founded by higher education leaders on the principle that we provide the most value to partner institutions by combining best practices with our deep knowledge and experience. Our mission today is to enhance institutional capacity by providing outstanding executive recruitment services, executive coaching, and transition support, in partnership with our parent organization, the American Academic Leadership Institute.

