

# SEARCH PROFILE:

DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



**VALPARAISO  
UNIVERSITY**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW	4
LEADERSHIP	5
THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES	6
THE POSITION	7
LEADERSHIP AGENDA	8
QUALIFICATIONS	9
TIMELINE, APPLICATIONS, AND NOMINATIONS	10



Valparaiso University, located in the vibrant, larger Chicagoland area of Northwest Indiana, seeks an engaged, collaborative, dynamic, and entrepreneurial academic leader to serve as its Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

An independent, Lutheran comprehensive University of nearly 3,000 students committed to excellence in liberal arts and professional education — “Valpo” as it is popularly known — has a longstanding national reputation for academic excellence. Its distinctive mission promotes questioning, the search for truth, and the development of self beyond strict career definitions, while preparing students to lead and serve in church and society.

## INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Founded in 1859, Valparaiso University is located in Valparaiso, Indiana, an hour's drive from Chicago and only 15 miles from Indiana Dunes National Park and central commuter train station. With 190 full time faculty, Valpo offers its approximately 3,000 undergraduate and graduate students more than 70 majors, minors, and concentrations provided by its Colleges of Business, Engineering, Nursing & Health Professions, Arts & Sciences, and Christ College — the Honors College at Valparaiso University. The campus of nearly 350 acres contains more than 60 academic and residential buildings, including the Chapel of the Resurrection, Center for the Arts, a fully equipped athletic center that supports the University's NCAA Division-1 teams, and a comprehensive library and information resources center.

Ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* as an outstanding national, professional-doctoral institution, Valparaiso University is a private, faith-based institution grounded in the Lutheran tradition of scholarship, freedom, and faith. Students of color make up 23% of the student body and the University is currently moving toward recognition as a Hispanic Serving Institution.

Life at Valpo offers students a model of community participation, personal responsibility, and respectful concern for others.

- The student-initiated [honor system](#) relies on each student to maintain standards of academic integrity.
- A [collaborative system of university governance](#) assigns students considerable responsibility for residential and social life.
- The [Office of Volunteer Programs](#) and the Community Research and Service Center exemplify a commitment to learning through service that results in Valpo students' logging more than 200,000 hours of community outreach and service-learning each academic year.
- Extensive [Study Abroad programs](#) and a commitment to institutional diversity deepen students' understanding of the world's variety of cultural and religious traditions.

Guided by a strong sense of ethics and informed by a broad understanding of the scientific, religious, and cultural heritage of human society, Valpo alumni have assumed leadership roles in their communities, churches, social institutions, the nation, and the world.





## LEADERSHIP

José D. Padilla, J.D., became the 19th president of Valparaiso University in 2021. President Padilla joined Valpo as the culmination of a long and successful career in higher education. Most recently, he served as vice president, university counsel, and secretary to the board of regents of the University of Colorado System. Prior to that, he successfully served 15 years in a number of senior leadership roles at DePaul University in Chicago, including vice president, general counsel, and secretary.

President Padilla is widely respected nationally in higher education as having superior business acumen, deep legal knowledge, and extensive work in senior leadership roles. His leadership experiences provide the knowledge to address the University's current needs, which include a strong desire to increase enrollment and attract a more diverse student body. President Padilla received his Bachelor of Education in elementary education from The University of Toledo and his juris doctorate from the University of Michigan Law School.

Eric W. Johnson, Ph.D., serves as Valparaiso University's provost and executive vice president for academic affairs. Provost Johnson was selected as provost in 2021 after serving more than eight years as the Dean of the College of Engineering. Provost Johnson has spent his entire academic career at Valpo, joining the faculty in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering in 1997. He has held the Paul and Cleo Brandt Professorship, served as chair of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and helped create the Valparaiso International Engineering Program. His research interests include modeling electronic components using nanodevices and engineering education pedagogy.



## THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Valparaiso University's College of Arts and Sciences is the oldest and largest college. Valparaiso University opened in the fall of 1859, with three departments: normal, preparatory, and collegiate. Each department offered courses in mathematics and science. The College closed during the Civil War. Upon its reopening in 1873, composition, language and literature courses were added to the curriculum. Thus, the tradition of strong arts and science programs dates to the University's founding and early years. Today, the college is home to 19 departments which offer over 40 majors with both undergraduate and master degrees. Currently, all general education classes are housed in the College of Arts and Sciences. A complete listing of Arts and Sciences programs can be found [here](#).

In 1995, the Valparaiso University Center for the Arts (VUCA) was dedicated as the home for the visual and performing arts and the Brauer Museum. A new faculty and classroom building which also houses the Dean's suite of offices was opened in 2012. Most recently, the Center for the Sciences: Chemistry and Biochemistry was built (2017) giving students exceptional undergraduate research opportunities in the laboratory focused building.

As the heart of the university, the College of Arts and Sciences invites, encourages, and equips its diverse members to share in a life-long practice of transformative learning, reasoned understanding, joyful discovery, and faithful service. The College of Arts and Sciences, as a welcoming community of teachers, scholars, mentors, and students, pursues both intellectual growth and professional development, balances both depth and breadth in learning experiences, practices both thoughtful reflection and active application, and appreciates both tradition and innovation.

### REPRESENTATIVE POINTS OF PRIDE

- Valpo's faculty are frequently recognized by their disciplines as outstanding professors. [Teresa Bals-Elsholz](#), Ph.D., professor of meteorology, has been recognized by the American Meteorological Association (AMS) with the 2024 Edward N. Lorenz Teaching Excellence Award. She has taught at Valpo for 23 years and covered many lower and upper-level courses.
- The Arts and Sciences faculty have received several prestigious grants to provide outstanding programs and experiences for students. Recently, two faculty members in the Department of Education received a 3-year, [\\$750,000 Lilly grant](#) to improve literacy instruction in Indiana. They are using the money to create the Center for Literacy, where undergrads will focus on the science of reading.
- One of the leading researchers in nanoplastics teaches in the Valparaiso University Chemistry Department. [Dr. Julie Peller](#) is currently collaborating with the USGS (Great Lakes Science Center), Renishaw, Inc., and faculty at Rutgers University to determine the amounts of microplastic pollution in the Great Lakes. She has received several NSF grants to conduct her research, has a patent pending, and still takes time to teach first-year students in a seminar on Environmental Justice.
- Valpo faculty provide cutting-edge courses and programs as demonstrated by [Dr. Martin Buinicki](#), Department of English. Dr. Buinicki, through funding provided by a Ball Venture Grant, is creating a Center for Games and Interactive Entertainment to expand Valpo's games-related course catalog. He teaches students how to write for games and is taking English in a whole new direction.

## THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES (CONT.)

Majors in the College of Arts and Sciences offer not only rigorous academic training, but also a great deal of flexibility. The College's superb and dedicated faculty strives to understand each student's goals and aspirations and help the student select the most appropriate course of study, whether it is a traditional major, an interdisciplinary program, or a program designed specifically for an individual student. For entering students who are unsure about a major, the College offers an [exploratory program](#) to help identify the student's strengths and interests.

Students can continue their studies and cultivate their knowledge in new ways through the College's graduate programs. The degree programs in the College of Arts and Sciences push students out of their comfort zones and allow them to pursue knowledge that will be valuable in their future career paths and as lifelong learners. Degrees offered include Master of Arts, Master of

Education and Master of Science in areas such as Mental Health Counseling, Digital Media, Information Technology and Transition to Teaching. The College offers an early entry option to several of these programs to qualified undergraduates to create 4+1 opportunities as well.

Courses in the College of Arts and Sciences are taught by accomplished teacher-scholars who share their enthusiasm as well as their expertise with their students. Ninety percent of the College's faculty members hold the highest degree in their fields, and the faculty includes many distinguished scholars with national and international reputations. At Valpo, these scholars teach students at every level from introductory courses to supervised research, and they share a rare dedication to the craft of teaching. Graduates of the College of Arts and Sciences cite close relationships with faculty mentors as a critical component of their education and success.

## THE POSITION

The Dean is the chief academic and administrative officer of the College of Arts and Sciences and reports directly to Provost Eric W. Johnson '87, Ph.D. The Dean is responsible for all aspects of planning, leadership, and administration of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Dean will be expected to demonstrate innovative leadership and provide vigorous support of the academic programs by fostering relationships within the college, the University community, and various external constituencies. Direct reports include the department chairs, two assistant deans, two associate deans and an executive assistant. The Dean oversees a budget of \$25 million.

In addition to leading the college, the Dean will work closely with fellow deans, the Office of the Provost, and the Offices of Admissions and Advancement on major University initiatives. Valparaiso University developed a new strategic plan, [Uplift Valpo](#), during the 2021-2023 academic years and the incoming Dean will be a thought partner and important voice in the implementation process, sharing innovative ideas and traditional strengths related to the structure and programs housed in the college.

The Dean must demonstrate thoughtful and tactical leadership as the higher education landscape and demands from industry continue to



evolve. The Dean will have a solid track record of building consensus and inspiring leadership with a wide variety of constituents, including University leadership, colleagues, students, alumni, donors, and the general public. The Dean will be expected to work with colleagues across campus to establish a vision for the college that will allow it to innovate and continue to enhance and build on the stellar reputation of the college.



## LEADERSHIP AGENDA

The incoming Dean will find a welcoming community of committed faculty and staff who are dedicated to their students, their scholarship, and to the liberal arts mission of the University and of the College of Arts and Sciences. The Dean's leadership agenda focuses on supporting this mission and seeking out new opportunities for innovation and collaboration. At the same time, the new Dean will attend to the important operational matters that make continued excellence within campus structures. Assuring sound operations and administration is important and necessary but not sufficient for the College to reach the promise of its future. The following emphases are critical areas for leadership for the new Dean.

### CREATING AND COMMUNICATING A SHARED VISION

The College of Arts and Sciences is the backbone of Valparaiso University. It is the disciplinary home to a wide array of student majors. Through the Core Curriculum, it is also the distinguishing foundation for the professional schools. The next Dean needs to bring together faculty and staff across the breadth of the arts and humanities, the natural and social sciences, and the professional programs that make up the College to create a student-centered vision for the future anchored in the power of the liberal arts. Such a vision should engender a renewed sense of community and collaboration and form a basis for ongoing program innovation.

### PROGRAM REVITALIZATION/ PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Valparaiso University and the College of Arts and Sciences are in the midst of program review. The next Dean will thus find a community with a strong tradition of collaboration engaged in significant change and hungry for leadership in prioritizing the next round of efforts. Skill in managing change and balancing competing priorities will be key. The Dean will need to work with faculty and staff to be strategic and nimble in expending effort and resources toward the most productive outcomes.

### NURTURING AND SUSTAINING THE FACULTY OF THE FUTURE

The College of Arts and Sciences is blessed with talented and dedicated faculty who are committed to student wellbeing. They know that Valparaiso is a place that transforms lives, and they want to be a part of that mission. The new Dean will need to attend to ongoing faculty development that enables the faculty to continue to respond to emerging student needs while serving as leaders in their academic fields. This will include finding ways to support and celebrate faculty scholarship and creative activities. The Dean will have the opportunity to welcome, orient and cultivate the success of the next generation of Arts and Science faculty. At the same time, the Dean will need to continue to identify and support faculty leadership across the generations to move the College into the future.



# QUALIFICATIONS

## REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate for the Dean will demonstrate all of these required qualifications:

- An earned doctorate (or appropriate terminal degree) and a strong record of teaching and scholarship that would merit the rank of full professor at Valparaiso in one of the departments represented in the College of Arts and Sciences;
- A record of accomplished leadership in administrative roles with increasing responsibility and complexity, including management of people and budgets, ability to collaborate across disciplines and programs, and effectiveness in advocating for academic programs;
- A strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion with demonstrated success in fostering a positive, inclusive, and collaborative teaching, learning, and work environment.

## PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate for the Dean may also demonstrate some of these preferred qualifications:

- Articulate advocate for a liberal arts education and its value; able to listen and create a shared vision for the College consistent with the University's mission;
- Experience in managing the recruitment, retention, tenure and promotion processes as well as supporting non-tenure track faculty;
- Appreciation of the integration of teaching, scholarship, and service and the ability to nurture all three;
- Able to connect with students and understand their evolving educational needs and aspirations;
- Experience with effectively managing staff and supporting their opportunities for growth and advancement;
- Outstanding communication skills; ability to build relationships across constituencies based on trust and transparency;
- Competency in understanding and utilizing systems to analyze and employ data to drive strategic decision-making;
- Experience with strategically managing both the growth and discontinuance of programs and majors in the context of Valparaiso's mission;
- Ability to foster interdisciplinary collaborations within the College and across the University;
- Clear understanding of the social and market contexts of private higher education and ability to advocate for the college and its programs both internally and externally;
- Strong emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills: integrity, authenticity, empathy, kindness and a sense of humor;
- Experience as a dean, department chair, program director or other administrative role.





## TIMELINE, APPLICATIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Academic Search is assisting Valparaiso University in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications will be held in strict confidence. To learn more about this opportunity, potential applicants are welcome to schedule a conversation with the Senior Consultant for this search—Dr. Linda McMillin ([linda.mcmillin@academicsearch.org](mailto:linda.mcmillin@academicsearch.org)).

### START DATE

The next Dean is expected to start in Summer 2024.

### APPLICATIONS

Applicants should send these separate documents (in PDF format) to [ValparaisoDean@academicsearch.org](mailto:ValparaisoDean@academicsearch.org) by **February 23, 2024**:

- A detailed **cover letter**, addressed to the Search Committee, expressing your interest in this position and addressing how you meet the qualifications as outlined in the profile;
- A current **resume/curriculum vitae**; and
- A **list of five professional references**, including names, titles, organizations, phone numbers, and email addresses, noting your relationship with each reference.

References will not be contacted until later in the search process and only with the candidate's permission. A background check (including identity, degree verification, and criminal records check) must be completed satisfactorily before any candidate can be offered this position.

### APPLICATION DEADLINE

Although the search remains open until the position is filled, for full consideration by the Search Committee, candidates should submit all application materials by **February 23, 2024**. Semifinalists for the position will be invited for a confidential interview via Zoom. Finalists will participate in campus interviews that will include a public presentation.

### NOMINATIONS

Although nominations are not required to be considered for this position, leaders who know of outstanding candidates are welcome to submit confidential nominations by sending an email to [ValparaisoDean@academicsearch.org](mailto:ValparaisoDean@academicsearch.org). Be sure to include the nominee's full name, position, institution/organization, and email address. Academic Search will notify people of their nomination, provide details about the position, and encourage them to apply.

*Valparaiso University maintains a policy of equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment. The University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or (as qualified herein) religion or any protected classification under federal, state or local law. This policy applies to all aspects of employment including, but not limited to, recruiting, hiring, training, transfer, promotion, job benefits, pay, dismissal, social and recreational activities. An institution committed to its Lutheran traditions, the University reserves the right to promote the teachings of the church and to exercise preferences in employment-related practices in favor of Lutherans.*

# ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Valparaiso University 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.



Committed to IDENTIFYING  
AND DEVELOPING LEADERS  
by providing the highest  
level of EXECUTIVE  
SEARCH to our  
higher education  
partners.

