

SEARCH PROFILE:

PRESIDENT



SONORAN UNIVERSITY
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT SONORAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES	4
HISTORY	4
LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	5
FINANCES AND ENROLLMENT	5
THE SONORAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS	6
ACADEMICS	7
OUTREACH AND SERVICES	8
ABOUT THE REGION: THE VALLEY OF THE SUN	9
LEADERSHIP AGENDA	10
QUALIFICATIONS	12
APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCESS	13



The Board of Trustees at Sonoran University of Health Sciences (Sonoran) announces the national search for the fourth president of the institution. Under the leadership of current president Dr. Paul Mittman, Sonoran has undergone a remarkable transformation. The board seeks a strategic, experienced, and visionary leader who will embrace the opportunity to elevate the University to its next level of accomplishment. Reporting directly to the Board, the president is charged with executive authority to carry out the day-to-day operations of the University, build on efforts to further elevate the institution's professions (naturopathic medicine, nutrition, and clinical mental health counseling), strengthen the success of students and alumni in service of the broader community, and to enhance the long-term financial health of the institution. The new president is expected to begin in July 2025. Sonoran University is located in Tempe, Arizona.



ABOUT SONORAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Sonoran University of Health Sciences is many things. A world-class nutrition and naturopathic medical school. An innovative research and development institution. A community health and empowerment clinic. The Sonoran University community—faculty, students, alumni and administration—is passionately dedicated to shaping a healthier future through the healing power of nature. Sonoran is much more than a bricks-and-mortar academic institution—it's a place where passionate, like-minded students, faculty, and staff come together to make a difference in people's lives. The feeling of this commitment is tangible on campus, as illustrated in this video clip: <https://vimeo.com/725443614> and this [viewbook](#).

HISTORY

Sonoran University was originally incorporated as Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine & Health Sciences (SCNM) in 1992. New degree programs, a state-of-the-art research institute, and expansion of free healthcare delivery and access in underserved communities drove the transformation to become [Sonoran University of Health Sciences](#) in 2022.

The inaugural class of future naturopathic doctors enrolled in 1993, when the number of licensed naturopathic physicians in Arizona numbered fewer than 40. Today, over 800 licensed naturopathic physicians practice medicine in Arizona. The institution's first Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine graduation was held in 1996, the same year the institution moved to the current Tempe campus and began an expansion process which has tripled the campus size. The LEED-Platinum Lim Commons building was completed

MISSION

Sonoran University of Health Sciences shapes a healthier future by supporting students as they train to excel as healthcare professionals, by enhancing the health and wellbeing of our patients and communities, and by discovering effective treatments for humanity grounded in the healing power of nature.

VISION

A world that embraces the healing power of nature

CORE VALUES

- We Achieve Excellence
- We Are Resilient
- We Do the Right Thing
- We Love
- We Shape the Future

in 2015 and established a campus hub that includes a café, medicinalary, library, teaching kitchen, classrooms, and the Neil Riordan Center for Regenerative Medicine.

In 1995 Sonoran began a community health program that has provided free care to tens of thousands of women, men, and children in the Greater Phoenix area. The community health program continues to expand, with two new clinics added in 2023. Patients include children in under-resourced school districts, survivors of domestic violence, adults and children recovering from homelessness

ABOUT SONORAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES (CONT.)

and trauma, individuals coping with HIV/AIDS and patients recovering from drug and alcohol addiction. This work is supported by the Sage Foundation for Health, which was established in 2002 and qualifies for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit.

The 2018 founding of the [Neil Riordan Center for Regenerative Medicine](#), offered the Phoenix community a patient-centered non-opioid approach to chronic pain.

In 2019, Sonoran added the [College of Nutrition](#) and subsequently launched two Master of Science programs: MS in Clinical Nutrition and MS in Nutrition Business Leadership.

Soon after, Sonoran established [research programs](#) with a grant from the National Institutes of Health in collaboration with Gaia Herbs. This fueled robust botanical research that is now housed in multiple state-of-the-art laboratory facilities including a Biosafety Level 2 (BSL2) molecular and cellular biology laboratory with cell/virus culture capabilities, a compound isolation laboratory, and a compound identification and quantification facility, as a part of the Ric Scanzo Institute for Botanical Research.

The university continues to grow through innovation, launching the [School of Mental Health](#) with a Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program starting in 2025.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Sonoran University is a not-for-profit corporation recognized as a 501(c)(3), governed by a high-performing Board of Trustees which holds governance authority for the University through a set of responsibilities consistent with those commonly found in higher education. According to its bylaws, the Board may have up to 25 members; at this point, there are 18. Trustees may serve up to three consecutive three-year terms. The Board meets at least four

times per year, as do its three sub-committees (fund development, finance and audit, governance). Ad hoc committees (currently including investment and planned giving) are formed and meet as needed. The Executive Committee consists of officers (Chair and Vice-Chair) and subcommittee chairs and is empowered to take action in routine matters between board meetings.

Sonoran has adopted—and regularly reviews and reaffirms—a governance policy document that articulates the roles of groups and individuals in the University. This document is evidence of a remarkably transparent approach to leadership, as is the inclusion of a faculty member and a student as voting members of the Board. That document defines primary responsibility for the academic enterprise as within the purview of the faculty, which it enacts through a Faculty Senate.

The president is a voting member of the Board, reports directly to the Board, and is charged with executive authority to carry out the day-to-day operations of the University. Current direct reports include senior leaders in academic affairs, finance, student affairs, development, and a chief of staff. The next president will have the opportunity to appoint a new vice president for academic affairs because the incumbent will begin service in a presidency at another institution in early 2025.

FINANCES AND ENROLLMENT

Sonoran University's annual operating budget is approximately \$21 million. Nearly three quarters of annual revenues are generated by tuition and fees (net scholarships and grants, which are negligible in terms of impact on the operating budget). In addition, the University generates auxiliary revenues of over \$2 million per year through the patient services it provides and medicinal sales. Contributions generate between \$1.5-2 million in recent fiscal years—an amount that is essential to



ABOUT SONORAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES (CONT.)

sustaining the current operating model, and a multi-year campaign is underway. As is common in higher education, the largest share of expenses (approximately 60%) goes toward employee compensation. Sonoran employs approximately 60 faculty, one-third of which are full-time, and more than 100 full-time staff, along with nearly 20 part-time staff.

The University holds approximately \$27 million in assets, with about \$5 million in current assets and over \$19 million in property/equipment/software. The University holds slightly over \$10 million in long-term debt. Overall net assets are at approximately \$14 million, with nearly \$4 million donor restricted.

Fall 2023 enrollment was approximately 550, with approximately 375 students enrolled in the ND (Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine) program and another 175 in one of the two Master's programs (MS in Clinical Nutrition, MS in Nutrition Business Leadership) offered within the College of Nutrition. ND enrollment for fall 2024 is expected to be around capacity, which because of facilities constraints is about 400 students. First-to-second year retention rates are typically in the upper 80s for the ND program, with five-year graduation rates around 70%. Greater variability is present in retention and graduation rates for the MS offerings, as those programs are relatively new, were established during the pandemic, and are in highly competitive markets; retention rates have ranged from upper 60s to high 70s with graduation rates only slightly lower. Sonoran expects to roll out a new academic program—a MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling—in early 2025.

THE SONORAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

Housed on 8.5 acres, Sonoran campus facilities include state-of-the-art classrooms, study and library spaces, a café, the integrative Neil Riordan Center for Regenerative Medicine, a teaching kitchen, laboratories, wellness facilities including a fitness center and yoga studio, a cadaver lab, administrative offices and the Ric Scalzo Institute for Botanical Research. In addition, Sonoran clinics, laboratories and a medicinary provide naturopathic medical care to more than 14,000 patients annually.

A recent partnership with Southern California University of Health Sciences will lease a portion of Sonoran's medical center building to SCU for their Doctor of Occupational Therapy program beginning in 2025. Renovations are underway in that space which will provide onsite education, but SCU will not have clinical offerings to the public.

The campus demonstrates Sonoran University's vision and commitment to foster an environment and a support system that promotes not only student learning, but also student health and community. More information can be found here: <https://www.sonoran.edu/about-sonoran/facilities/>





ACADEMICS

Sonoran University is home to three distinct degree granting educational units and multiple centers and programs, many of which connect the University with the Tempe and Greater Phoenix community. These high quality programs enjoy stellar reputations in their fields.

College of Naturopathic Medicine

Sonoran University has the only accredited, full-time, four-year Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine degree program in the Southwest, offered through the College of Naturopathic Medicine. The innovative curriculum consists of rigorous academic study and extensive supervised clinical experiences in a variety of settings, including the on-site Sonoran University Medical Center and Neil Riordan Center for Regenerative Medicine. In addition to exposure to the widest scope of naturopathic therapies, students also learn the same basic sciences as taught in a conventional medical program. Clinical milestones are achieved throughout the program and provide the appropriate progression of medical education for graduates to become successful naturopathic physicians. This education prepares students for the Naturopathic Physician Licensing Board Examination; the quality of the program is evident through the fact that Sonoran graduates consistently score higher than those at peer institutions.

College of Nutrition

The College of Nutrition is committed to inspiring, preparing, and empowering a diverse group of leaders and clinicians in the field of nutrition to have a positive impact on the lives of others. Each program (Master of Science in Clinical Nutrition and Master of Science in Nutrition Business Leadership) has been built with practical input from global industry experts and thought leaders and each course is designed and delivered using best practices in teaching and learning. Led by passionate and dedicated faculty with real-world experience and expertise, students gain current, relevant, and evidence-based knowledge and skills and engage in authentic, practical, and innovative learning experiences. The College of Nutrition is at the forefront of high-quality, innovative, evidence-based, and engaging nutrition education students from all backgrounds who share a passion for nutrition and who are ready to help make a difference.

School of Mental Health

Sonoran University's Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling degree (MSCMHC) program meets the urgent need for licensed practitioners locally and nationwide. Designed for working adults who aspire to become licensed professional counselors, the MSCMHC program is fully online. The innovative curriculum, developed in collaboration with experts in the field, not only provides training on essential requirements for licensure and certification, but also incorporates a unique focus on interprofessional collaboration, field-based crisis counseling, and evidence based integrative mental health care including topics such as nutrition and mindfulness. This program is launching in 2025.

OUTREACH AND SERVICES

In addition to these academic programs, Sonoran University offers a variety of other services that extend opportunities for student learning, research, and health care for underserved local communities:

The Neil Riordan Center for Regenerative Medicine provides non-opioid solutions for patients suffering from chronic pain. The Center's interdisciplinary team – anesthesiologist pain interventionalist, naturopathic physicians, acupuncturists – works closely with patients to determine the best solution to accelerate healing, reduce inflammation, and prevent scarring. Non-opioid pain therapies, including nutrition, mindfulness, acupuncture, manual therapies, and regenerative therapies – prolotherapy, platelet-rich plasma, – offer safe, effective and non-addictive treatments for pain relief.

The Sonoran University Naturopathic Medical Center provides comprehensive healthcare by combining the best of conventional and natural therapies. The Center's physicians and naturopathic medical students improve patients' health and prevent disease, and offer specialty care to treat specific conditions.

The Sonoran University Sage Foundation for Health Community Health Program is staffed with licensed faculty physicians and third- and fourth-year medical students from Sonoran University's College of Naturopathic Medicine. They serve children in underserved and under-resourced school districts, survivors of domestic violence, adults and children experiencing homelessness and recovering from trauma, LGBTQIA2S+ health, individuals coping with HIV/AIDS and patients recovering

from drug and alcohol use. Student physicians treat chronic and acute health conditions by working with patients to restore health and improve self-care choices through daily diet, exercise, and stress reduction treatment plans. Thanks to generous community support, services and treatments are provided to patients at no cost.

Leveraging high quality and evidence-based care standards, the **Virtual Center for Personalized Nutrition** engages clients on a Virtual Care Journey that retains the best practices of in-person personalized nutrition care delivered at no cost in the comfort of home through a virtual care setting.

Sonoran University's Medicinary is the largest natural medicinary in Arizona offering the highest quality, doctor-trusted, professional grade supplements, herbs, and health products.

The Ric Scalzo Institute for Botanical Research explores plant medicines at the cellular, molecular, and cultural level to develop new and improve existing botanical medicines to serve humanity. The Institute's researchers and state-of-the-art facility (molecular biology, analytical chemistry, and isolation laboratories) elucidate mechanisms of action and identify plants' active compounds by combining 21st-century science with botanical medicine's rich centuries-old traditions.

More information about these centers, offerings, and the campus is available online at [Facilities | Holistic & State-of-the-Art | Sonoran](#).





ABOUT THE VALLEY OF THE SUN

Sonoran University's 8.5-acre campus is located in Tempe, Arizona, just east of Phoenix, and part of the fifth largest metro area in the United States. Nicknamed the Valley of the Sun, Greater Phoenix boasts more than 300 days of sunshine each year. The Valley is a destination for nature and outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy hiking, biking, boating, swimming, golfing, horseback riding—and even skiing or snowboarding during the winter. Nearby destinations include Sedona, Tucson, the Grand Canyon, Mogollon Rim and the White Mountains. With a little more time, Phoenix's central location also makes it easy to drive to the bright lights of Las Vegas or the beaches of southern California or Mexico.

Tempe itself is 42 square miles with a population of 185,000 and a median age of 28 years old. Home to Arizona State University, Tempe has the vibe you would expect in a college town, with an abundance of cultural and social opportunities, attracting foodies, art and music lovers, as well as adventurists. Best of all, the town is conveniently located just 10 minutes from the Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. For more about Tempe, see www.visitarizona.com.

LEADERSHIP AGENDA

The opportunity

The next president at Sonoran will have the opportunity to elevate the University to its next level of accomplishment. Under the leadership of Dr. Paul Mittman, Sonoran has undergone a remarkable transformation—from a college with one program in a single building on the verge of closure to a university with multiple programs, expanded delivery modes; an attractive campus with instructional, clinical, and research space; and a stronger financial model. The next president will build on those efforts to further elevate the visibility of the University and the profession to strengthen the success of students and alumni in service of the broader community, and to enhance the long-term financial health of the institution through enrollment growth and strategic partnerships. To achieve these outcomes, key priorities for the next president include:

Thinking and acting strategically to pursue institutional goals

Strategic thinking, planning, and action are crucial in a constantly evolving environment. Sonoran is operating under a strategic plan developed for 2022-27, which affords the new president opportunity to execute toward its completion, modify it as needed, and lay the foundation for the next plan.

Like nearly all small colleges and universities, Sonoran faces a number of strategic decisions. As the University expands, for example, it must determine what elements are core to the organization and which are peripheral or potentially inconsistent with its mission and values. The rapid development of artificial intelligence poses both a potential challenge and an opportunity for Sonoran to deliver even higher impact educational experiences and services (for example, through enhanced use of AI to build on the MSCN's well-received Virtual Health

Center). Another strategic area under exploration is the potential use of additional partnerships as a method to strengthen enrollment, fundraising, research, and/or clinical operations. Similarly, the next president will continue to help the University reconcile the often competing priorities of students, patients, and the community, ensuring an approach that serves all stakeholders effectively. In addition, the president will spearhead a process that determines the optimal financial model to support this vision and plan, identifying the appropriate mix of tuition revenue, clinical revenues, fundraising, and research to support and advance the University. The next leader will effectively lead stakeholder groups in addressing these (and other) strategic questions.

The next president will be forward-thinking and continue to clarify the institution's vision for the future to facilitate greater alignment across the university and purposeful action. This requires strategic thinking that transcends ad hoc decision-making, including a long-term vision that fosters a shared sense of purpose and direction and a cohesive operational framework that translates that vision into action. The successful candidate will be willing to move both thoughtfully and swiftly, adapting and modifying strategies as results become clearer. Data-informed decision-making will play a critical role in this process, ensuring that actions are informed by reliable insights and assessment of existing efforts.

Providing leadership that sustains Sonoran's unique culture and advances its mission and values

The Sonoran University community is unique, both in the program offerings it delivers and in the uncommon commitment of its faculty, staff, and students to the practice of natural approaches to health care. In addition, Sonoran's unique core values combine common higher education



LEADERSHIP AGENDA (CONT.)

aspirations (We Shape the Future, We Achieve Excellence) with others that reflect its commitment to internal and external members of the Sonoran community (We do the Right Thing, We are Resilient, and We Love). Leading effectively in this setting requires perseverance to advance the University while maintaining its unique culture and values. The next president will be passionate about the University's core values and the foundational principles of holistic healthcare while seeking opportunities to build upon them further, and will work to both stay true to these principles and advocate for their further integration into the healthcare system in Arizona and nationally.

The successful candidate will be skilled in applying principles of change management and able to provide organization-wide leadership to navigate the evolving landscape of both higher education and health care. Sonoran has a long-standing commitment to innovation, evident from initiatives like an integrative clinic that offers non-opioid approaches for patients suffering from chronic pain that combines conventional and cutting-edge treatments. Programs and client services that promote natural healing approaches must remain at the forefront of the organization's mission, and these programs and services must continue to evolve as the landscape changes.

The next leader will be a champion for inclusive excellence, ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion are integrated into all aspects of the organization's operations and that all members of the community feel a deep sense of belonging. In addition, the next president will cultivate a culture of cooperation and accountability.

Leading Sonoran's maturation as a university

Transitioning to university status represents a significant opportunity for growth and development. Sonoran became a university in 2022 and is therefore it is relatively early in that process; the next president will be called upon to lead Sonoran as it continues its journey. The next president will lead Sonoran's maturation into a university by growing academic offerings, strengthening research infrastructure, imbuing a culture of scholarship and discovery, and expanding community engagement through the Community Health program. The table is set for additional program expansion, perhaps in part by designing interprofessional offerings that build on what is already in place or developing and acquiring new programs. Sonoran is poised for a heightened emphasis on research in multifaceted ways—advancing the practice of medicine through scholarship, strengthening learning through engaging students, and contributing to financial health through generating resources that support research. The next president will seek opportunities to strengthen infrastructure in ways that are both tangible (facilities and technology) and conceptual (developing and adhering to systemized processes and policies to reach institutional goals).

The type of student engagement possible in a face-to-face doctoral program is fundamentally different from that of a student pursuing a degree completely online, but in both cases engaging students effectively is paramount

for strengthening student success, enhancing degree completion, and fostering a strong alumni network. Creating a shared sense of belonging and engagement for this diverse student body and a faculty and staff that includes individuals working in-person, fully virtual, and everything in between will be a key priority for the next president.

Advancing financial strength

Achieving financial strength requires a strategic approach to both revenue generation and resource allocation. The next president will lead multifaceted efforts to enhance the financial health of the University. Fundraising is a critical part of Sonoran's annual operating model, and the next president will work quickly to strengthen existing relationships and develop others that sustain current philanthropy and pursue possibilities to expand upon it. The strategic approach identified earlier is essential because fundraising efforts must align with both the organization's financial health and its institutional vision. Facilitating greater student success is also a priority, with a focus on improving graduation rates and closing performance gaps presenting opportunities to both actualize the University's commitment to excellence and inclusion as well as potential increases to tuition revenue.

Implementing best practices in financial management will be crucial to ensuring alignment between resource allocation and achievement of institutional goals. The next president will be proficient in using tools such as multi-year financial models and key performance indicators to inform decision-making, assess progress toward goals, and identify areas that may require attention, and to turn that work into impactful outcomes.





QUALIFICATIONS

The next President at Sonoran University of Health Sciences will have a demonstrated commitment to the healing power of nature, a terminal degree (preferably in health sciences), and a successful track record of leadership (preferably within health care and/or education).

Ideally, this person will bring a combination of the following qualities and attributes as well:

- Financial management: the ability to balance vision/finances/execution, understanding of (preferably experience in) managing institutional-level finances and use of financial models, track record of successfully managing resources to achieve greater financial health and organizational success, demonstrated ability to work creatively within constrained resources, and a proven track record of securing financial support.
- Forward-looking systems thinking: views the University as a whole, thinks and acts strategically considering impacts across the organization and over the short- and long-term, utilizes data to inform decision-making, skilled in developing and utilizing processes and policies that ensure both consistency in decision-making and fairness in handling a wide range of circumstances.
- Personal values that align with those of Sonoran: honesty, integrity, transparency, resiliency, high energy, model of dignity and respect, curiosity, humility, care and love for others. A culture champion who connects deeply with the Sonoran community and mission.
- Change mindset and a bias for action: agility in the face of change, ability to envision a different future, flexible and nimble, willing to move quickly and purposefully to achieve outcomes.
- Communication skills: the willingness and ability to listen well, speak effectively on behalf of the institution and its professions, and keep stakeholder groups informed with the spoken and written word.
- Demonstrated commitment to fostering an environment of inclusive excellence, particularly in designing effective learning and clinical environments for a diverse student body and client base. Direct experience working with a diversity of student populations and fostering a sense of belonging for students, staff, and faculty is desirable.
- Skilled at using technology to improve student learning and patient outcomes, and familiar with emerging technological trends and their potential impact.
- Strong relationship-building skills both within and outside the University, as well as the ability to foster a sense of community in the post-COVID, distributed workplace. Values the contributions of faculty and staff, accessible to employees and students alike. Advocates effectively for both Sonoran and the practice of natural approaches to health care and wellness.
- Values scholarship and research as important parts of the University, and a willingness to support faculty and staff in those pursuits.
- A deep appreciation for the value of teaching and learning and the paramount role of the faculty in an institution educating future medical and healthcare practitioners.
- Working knowledge of the various areas of responsibility the president oversees: enrollment management, fundraising, academic leadership, finance and operations. Direct experience in more than one area is preferred.



SONORAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCESS

Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Sonoran University is committed as an institution to building a community where all individuals feel respected, included, supported, and valued. The University values and aims to achieve broad diversity among students, faculty, staff, administrators, board of trustees, vendors, and patients.

Sonoran University is being assisted by Academic Search. Conversations are encouraged as our consultants want to get to know you, to share information that might be helpful in discerning your interest and preparing application materials, and to assist as you navigate every step of the application and interview process. If you are interested in the position, please arrange a confidential discussion by contacting:

Dr. Scott Flanagan

Senior Consultant and Senior Executive Coach

scott.flanagan@academicsearch.org

Direct booking link to schedule a call:

<https://tinyurl.com/2z9s5m6y>

or

Ms. Disa Mason

Consultant

disa.mason@academicsearch.org

Direct booking link to schedule a call:

https://bit.ly/Mason_Bookings

The search committee will begin reviewing applications in October. Though applications will continue to be accepted until the position is filled, only those materials received by October 15, 2024 are assured full consideration.

Applications and nominations should be sent electronically (PDF preferred) to SonoranPresident@academicsearch.org. Applications must include a cover letter that addresses the leadership agenda, responsibilities, and qualifications described in this position prospectus; a curriculum vita; and a list of at least five professional references with an email address and a note indicating the candidate's working relationship with each. References will not be contacted without the explicit permission of the candidate.

In compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, Sonoran University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, age, disability, national or ethnic origin, veteran's status, religion, sexual orientation or marital status in the administration of educational policies, admission policies, financial aid, employment or any other program, practice or activity.

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Sonoran 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.

