

SEARCH PROFILE:

VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT SUCCESS
AND STUDENT LIFE



University of Houston-Downtown®

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The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) is seeking applications and nominations for the **Vice President of Student Success and Student Life (Vice President)**. The successful candidate will possess a proven track record of effective, innovative, and inclusive transformational leadership that champions student success. The Vice President reports to the President, and the desired start date for this position is July 1, 2025.



ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-DOWNTOWN

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) is a comprehensive four-year university that offers bachelor's and master's degree programs aimed at career preparation. UHD has been serving the educational needs of Houston, the fourth-largest city in America, for 50 years. The university is in the heart of downtown Houston, one of the nation's most culturally diverse metropolitan areas and offers one of the lowest public university tuitions in Houston.

UHD is one of the four distinct and separate institutions within the University of Houston System, which also includes the University of Houston, University of Houston-Clear Lake, and University of Houston-Victoria. The university is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) with an annual operating budget of \$224 million and an endowment of \$59 million (FY2023).

UHD's diverse community consists of more than 13,000 students, with 45% enrolled full-time and 55% enrolled part-time. The student population is comprised of 62% female and 38% male students. In terms of ethnicity, 57% of the student population is Hispanic, 18% is Black, 12% is White, 9% is Asian/Pacific Islander, and 5% is International/Other. The university includes 357 faculty members and 1,408 staff members.

UHD is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and Minority Serving Institution (MSI); the university views diversity as essential to academic excellence.

The university invests in society's big challenges with degree programs that are increasingly aligned with

complex urban issues. The downtown location makes it strategically positioned for partnerships with non-profit agencies and local businesses.

UHD offers bachelor's degrees in 46 different areas of study and 12 master's degrees. The top five most popular undergraduate degrees are Interdisciplinary Studies, B.S. (10%), Accounting, B.B.A. (9%), Psychology, B.S. (8%), Criminal Justice, B.S. (7%) and Management (6%).

UHD has four colleges, specifically:

- [Marilyn Davies College of Business](#)
- [College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)
- [College of Public Service](#)
- [College of Sciences and Technology](#)

For more complete data, visit [UHD's Fact Book](#) and [Fact Sheet](#).

MISSION

The University of Houston-Downtown is a community of diverse faculty, staff, students, and regional partners dedicated to nurturing talent, generating knowledge, and driving socioeconomic mobility for a just and sustainable future.

VISION

The University of Houston-Downtown will be an inclusive university of choice for Houstonians seeking to contribute to the social, intellectual, and cultural lives of their communities.



PRESIDENT LOREN J. BLANCHARD

Loren J. Blanchard joined the University of Houston-Downtown as its seventh president on March 15, 2021. In his first year, he launched a new strategic plan focusing on student success. UHD continues to make progress toward fulfilling each of the plan's goals through university-wide implementation and continuous monitoring.

In 2023, the *Wall Street Journal* recognized the university as one of America's Best Colleges, ranking UHD No. 1 in diversity and No. 3 in student experience at the national level. Within the state of Texas, UHD rose to No. 5 in salary impact and No. 11 in social mobility. These rankings affirm President Blanchard's commitment that UHD will remain "an exceptional value for students seeking a high-quality educational experience that will transform their lives and the lives of their families and communities." For Dr. Blanchard, this commitment is

a civic and moral imperative. He firmly believes that the university must work in reciprocal partnerships that address complex local issues — a belief that is consistently evident in his daily work with leaders within the UHD community, officials in government, business partners, and the community-at-large.

President Blanchard previously served as Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic & Student Affairs at California State University (CSU), the largest and most diverse system of higher education in the United States. Before CSU, he served as Provost & Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Xavier University of Louisiana.

A first-generation college graduate, Dr. Blanchard holds a bachelor's degree in Speech Pathology Education from Xavier University of Louisiana, a master's degree in Education from McNeese State University, and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Georgia.



ABOUT THE DIVISION OF STUDENT SUCCESS AND STUDENT LIFE

The division promotes and enhances student success and personal development by collaboratively and strategically creating and leading programs and services that meet a broad spectrum of student needs, interests, and aspirations. The division offers student-centered services, programs, and experiences that promote excellence, stimulate discovery, celebrate differences, and challenge students' growth, development, involvement, and success.

The division works to engage students by providing them with resources and transformational experiences that allow them to achieve their academic dreams, career paths, and personal well-being. The division has over 90 employees with an annual operating budget of \$9 million. The division has the following units:

STUDENT SUCCESS:

- Academic Resources Center (tutoring)
- Accessible Education Center

- [Gator Success Institute](#)
- Career Center
- Testing Services
- Trio programs (Talent Search and Upward Bound)

STUDENT LIFE:

- Basic Needs Center
- Center for Student Advocacy and Community
- Dean of Students
- Sports & Fitness
- Student Leadership & Involvement
- Student Counseling Services
- Student Health Services
- Veterans Services



THE POSITION

The Vice President reports to the President and serves on the executive management team. The Vice President is responsible for strategic leadership of a division that takes a fully coordinated approach to supporting students and their success across the student services and student engagement portfolios. The Vice President is responsible for leading the university's continued

development of student success and engagement strategies for enhancing access, retention, student learning, student success, and completion. The Vice President is charged with shaping and driving the strategic vision for student life and fostering a dynamic and inclusive campus culture that prioritizes student well-being and success.



LEADERSHIP AGENDA

The new Vice President will have the opportunity to reposition Student Affairs on the UHD campus through an exciting leadership agenda.

Keep students at the center of our work. The Vice President will serve on the President's Cabinet as a strong, knowledgeable, and collaborative leader who is prepared to advocate for students and the Division of Student Success and Student Life. The Vice President will also be an active contributor to discussions and collaborations focusing on institution-wide priorities. As the institution pursues its strategic plan—A New Paradigm—the university is seeking an experienced leader with leadership skills and energy to elevate the division to a new level that keeps the students at the center of our work.

Maximize student success through collaboration. The new Vice President will possess the collaborative skills, credibility, and knowledge to build connections between faculty and student affairs professionals to optimize student success. The Vice President will work closely with the Provost to strengthen the ties between the curricular and co-curricular areas of the university. With the focus on maximizing student success, there are multiple opportunities to enhance the student experience inside and outside the classroom. Demonstrated experience of successful collaborations with academic affairs, particularly as it relates to enhancing student success and retention is essential.

Build an inclusive and engaged student community. The Vice President will engage with students through transparent and authentic communication and will build meaningful relationships with faculty and staff colleagues

across campus. The Vice President will be accessible to students and participate in student organizations and programs when appropriate. The Vice President will lead efforts to enhance the co-curricular program offerings, establish meaningful campus traditions, and collaborate with off-campus partners to further engage students with Houston and the region. Furthermore, the Vice President will take advantage of the institution's location and develop downtown service-learning opportunities and community building where students begin to think about solutions to larger urban problems.

Develop a team who can support today's students. The Vice President will provide professional development opportunities that build the "bench strength" needed to support student success and life. This culture of professional development will help the Vice President recruit, attract, and retain the talent needed to reach the division's goals. The new Vice President will have the leadership skills needed to set elevated expectations for team members, make resources available to them, and provide coaching and support as needed.

Drive results and enhance processes. The incoming Vice President will facilitate a process with team members that yields an elevated vision for Student Success and Student Life along with programming and services that will be regularly assessed. The new leader will be expected to make data driven decisions and will organize the division to make the best use of the staff and resources available. The successful candidate will be an innovative and creative change agent who can start from day one to move the division to new levels of excellence and campus impact.



PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Oversee critical functions related to the support of student success, including, but not limited to, career, testing, accessibility, and tutoring and retention services; counseling and health services; veterans services; sports and fitness and student leadership and involvement; and the Dean of Students.
- Develop, manage, and support the growth of a divisional team with a reputation for caring, responsiveness, and flexibility.
- Work as a critical partner with the chief academic officer, academic leaders, and faculty to plan for, establish, and facilitate co-curricular offerings that align with the university curriculum.
- Integrate best practices in student success as appropriate for an HSI and MSI that serve a large first-generation population.
- Lead efforts in data analytics to continuously assess effectiveness of student services initiatives, processes, and procedures.
- Develop and maintain a culture of service excellence, communication, transparency, collegiality, and accountability.
- Continue the university's successful work in building campus spirit and traditions.

REQUIRED AND DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, AND ATTRIBUTES

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Master's degree from an accredited institution.
- Minimum of ten years of higher education leadership.
- Experience at the Dean and or Executive Director level or higher.
- Demonstrated experience with current educational trends, student success strategies, and a proven track record increasing student achievement and development, especially for historically underserved populations.
- Demonstrated experience with decision-making, data analytics and management skills in a complex organization.
- Expertise with current best practices in campus life and student engagement, and an awareness of emerging issues in student affairs and higher education.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Earned Doctorate in Higher Education Administration, Student Affairs Administration, Education, Organizational Leadership, or a closely related field from an accredited institution.

- A track record of recognizing, valuing, and supporting staff.
- Demonstrated experience in the development of institutional partnerships focused on improving student academic achievement through student-centered programs, services, and initiatives.
- Experience in developing or reimagining programming, planning, and delivery of extracurricular services to the student body.

ATTRIBUTES:

- Student centered with a deep passion for student success and the student experience.
- Strategic, forward thinking, innovative, and future-oriented mindset. A visionary, but realistic.
- An appreciation for serving the educational needs of an economically and demographically diverse population, particularly in urban settings.
- Open communication style with excellent interpersonal communication skills.
- A highly visible and accessible approach to leadership.



ASSISTING IN THIS SEARCH

University of Houston-Downtown is being assisted in this search by Ms. Maya Kirkhope, Vice President and Senior Consultant and Dr. Timothy Mottet, Senior Consultant; both at Academic Search. Applications should be submitted as two separate PDF documents and include: 1) a letter of application addressing how your experiences align with the articulated leadership agenda, 2) a current, long-form curriculum vitae (CV), showing relevant

administrative responsibilities and accomplishments. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be sent to UHDVP3SL@academicsearch.org. Please include the nominee's name, position, employer, and email address.

By university policy and search committee affirmation, all information from and about candidates will be kept in strict confidence in perpetuity. For full consideration by the search committee, applications should be submitted by **February 17, 2025**.

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting University of Houston-Downtown 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.

