

Position and Candidate Specification



Senior Associate Vice President and Dean of Students

THE OPPORTUNITY

The University of Virginia (UVA) seeks an accomplished, caring, and energetic leader to become the next **Senior Associate Vice President and Dean of Students** (herein referred to as the “Dean of Students”). This leader will join a strong and dedicated team committed to students’ intellectual, personal, and social development and to their physical and psychological well-being.

The Dean of Students is central to creating and nurturing opportunities for students to be hands-on leaders through UVA’s unique system of [student self-governance](#). They will play a key role in preserving student self-governance and the Honor System, both foundational underpinnings of the UVA experience, while charting new ground in preparing and empowering UVA students to become tomorrow’s leaders.

Serving as a strategic thought partner to UVA’s Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer, [Kenyon Bonner](#), the Dean of Students will be a key member of the senior leadership team in this student-facing role. They will bring to UVA a strong reputation of exceptional leadership, management, and team development and will have the ability to foster trust across all levels of the institution. Above all, they will have an overwhelming and enthusiastic commitment to students.

Broadly, the Division of Student Affairs advocates for students and supports their development as citizen-leaders. Six core values guide the work of Student Affairs in serving both undergraduate and graduate students: academic rigor, honor, student self-governance, service, wellness, and diversity. In addition to the vice president’s office, the Division includes the following units: Office of the Dean of Students (the office led by the SAVP and Dean of Students); Student Health and Wellness; the University Career Center; Housing and Residence Life; Policy, Accountability, and Critical Events; and the Office of African-American Affairs. The Division of Student Affairs works to create a living and learning environment in which students can maximize their academic potential. Their goal, consistent with the University’s mission, is to support student learning and interpersonal growth that creates engaged citizen leaders.

In November 2023, UVA named Kenyon Bonner as the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer. Since beginning the position on January 16, 2024, VP Bonner has emphasized key elements of the [University’s 2030 Plan](#) as important guideposts for the division of student affairs, including:

- Recruiting and supporting exceptionally talented, diverse, and service-oriented students, regardless of their economic circumstances.
- Promoting a culture of integrity, mutual respect, excellence, and collaboration.
- Strengthening an inclusive community of trust that consistently lives its values and supports belonging.
- Preparing students to be servant-leaders in a diverse, globally connected world.
- Providing outstanding student health and wellness care and support.
- Approaching learning as an opportunity for discovery.

The new students who enrolled this fall represent a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives. The 4,738 new undergraduates include 3,961 first-year and 777 transfer students. 20% are first-generation students, 68% come from the Commonwealth of Virginia, 23% qualify for federal Pell Grants, and 43% identify as students of color. The entering undergraduate class is likely the most socioeconomically diverse in UVA history. In President Ryan's remarks to the class during [opening convocation](#), he let students know that they were entering into an "incredibly caring community," and he encouraged all to be "curious, not judgmental."

THE ROLE

Reporting to the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer, the Dean of Students provides senior leadership and managerial direction for a fifty-person organization made up of the following student services:

[Office of African-American Affairs](#)

[Rotunda and University Events](#)

[Fraternity & Sorority Life](#)

[Multicultural Student Services](#)

[Orientation & Transition Programs](#)

[Hoos First](#)

[Student Engagement](#)

[Event Management](#)

The University's intention is to cultivate the most vibrant community in higher education; support exceptionally talented, diverse, and service-oriented students, regardless of their economic circumstances; and prepare students to be servant-leaders in a diverse, globally connected world. The Office of the Dean of Students fulfills these goals by facilitating a student experience that builds community and belonging; challenges and supports students to explore and build skills; and fosters a safe environment that promotes student well-being.

KEY PRIORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and Management

- Provide strategic leadership and vision for the team reporting to the Dean of Students, in coordination with the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer and the broader Division of Student Affairs leadership team.
- Recruit, develop, and mentor staff to achieve stated goals; promote collaboration and mutual care and support throughout the Dean of Student's direct reports and the entire Division.
- Manage the associated operations, including planning, personnel, and budget.
- Support fundraising efforts in partnership with the VPSA, Office of Advancement, and other University leaders.
- Maintain open communications with the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer to share information and engage in issue-spotting and creative problem solving to benefit the University community.
- Stay informed and educate the University community and stakeholders regarding issues and trends affecting the student experience and student affairs practice generally.
- Proactively identify opportunities to apply an entrepreneurial mindset, innovation, and creativity to address areas for improvement and growth.

- Play a key role in divisional planning, resource allocation, and policy formulation, ensuring compliance with federal and state laws including those which govern students' rights.
- Work collaboratively with units, departments, schools, and stakeholders within and outside the University to enhance the student experience.
- Represent the Vice President at meetings and events as needed; serve as chair or member of University, Vice Presidential, ad-hoc, and other committees.

Student Experience

- Together with the Vice President and Chief Student Affairs Officer and other colleagues, serve as an advocate for and liaison between students and University leadership. Advise and help problem-solve with students, staff and faculty, families, and others as needs arise.
- Design processes, practices, and programmatic interventions that empower the team to facilitate a vibrant, world-class student experience for all University students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional).
- Serve as an engaging and approachable leader who earns the trust and respect of students. Enrich on-campus life and social engagement for students of all backgrounds.
- Facilitate collaboration across all personnel and students to provide opportunities for students and student organizations to enhance a sense of community and belonging at the University.
- Engage personnel in promoting student involvement in university life, including supporting students in fulfilling the responsibilities delegated to them by the Board of Visitors and student self-governance, by creating a range of opportunities for students to partner with student affairs and other stakeholders to achieve goals and develop skills.
- Actively support a community that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion, and expect the same from all personnel.
- Serve as a key leader who maintains a calm demeanor in determining the University's crisis response and follow up, including outreach and support to students and their families.
- Promote and support opportunities and interactions that expose students to different experiences and viewpoints and that provide them with an opportunity to learn.
- Help determine and sustain policies and practices which promote a safe environment for students, and that support students' general well-being.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE AND CHARACTERISTICS

UVA's Dean of Students will be an experienced, student-centered, and energetic leader who embraces forward-thinking strategies to anticipate students' needs and support their wellbeing. They will be a collaborator and relationship-builder, expected to lead an accomplished and deeply experienced team, and work successfully with a wide range of constituencies across the University and the community. The Dean of Students will bring a passion for working with students and thrive in a fast-paced environment with competing priorities. The successful candidate will actively promote the values and practices of inclusion, diversity, equity, and belonging.

The ideal candidate will have the following experience and characteristics:

- A master's degree in a related field and a minimum of ten years of experience in roles demonstrating increasing levels of leadership in complex, demanding, higher education environments are required.
- Successful experience in organizational design, building and motivating effective teams, recruiting, supervising, coaching, retaining, and developing a diverse, happy, and high-performing staff and faculty.
- An exceptional history of extensive direct student engagement, understanding and commitment to student learning, development, and empowerment, and a true passion for all students.
- Ability to provide outstanding student advising and support.
- Proven and trusted strategic thought partner to senior leadership.
- Demonstrated mastery in calmly and strategically managing major crises.
- Exceptional ability to connect and build trust across numerous groups, including students, their families, faculty, staff, alumni, faculty, donors, and the greater community within which the University resides.
- Experience in communicating with public media, such as reporters for newspapers and television.
- Demonstrated ability to foster innovation and program improvement using methods informed by data.
- Knowledge of trends affecting student affairs practice, as well as legal and policy issues in higher education, including Title IX regulations.
- Knowledge of applicable Federal laws pertaining to students, such as FERPA.
- Success working with other student affairs leaders and units, as well as University and community constituencies; ability to build collaborative relationships characterized by mutual respect, trust, and commitment to shared goals.
- Budget, planning and forecasting experience.
- Highest level of integrity; ability to lead, listen and serve.
- Ambition with personal humility.
- Successful track record of building trust and creating a culture of collaboration and teamwork.
- Inspirational and enthusiastic, with great energy and sense of humor.
- Excellent emotional intelligence; calm under pressure.
- Highly effective communicator with all constituencies.

TO APPLY OR NOMINATE

UVA Executive Search Group, an internal search firm in the Office of the President, has been retained for the Senior Associate Vice President and Dean of Students search. To apply, please submit a letter of interest and a CV via [Workday](#).

Confidential inquiries and nominations should be directed to UVA Executive Search Group at dos-search@virginia.edu.

UVA is fundamentally committed to the diversity of our faculty and staff. We believe diversity is excellence expressing itself through every person's perspective and lived experiences. We are equal opportunity and affirmative action employers. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, marital status, military status, national or ethnic origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, veteran status, and family medical or genetic information.

University of Virginia

The University of Virginia (UVA) ranks as one of the leading Universities in the nation. A vibrant and student-centric institution, UVA is animated by the forward-looking spirit of its founder, Thomas Jefferson. In the 20 plus years since U.S. News & World Report began ranking public universities as a separate category, UVA has been in the top five, and it has consistently ranked in the Top 30 among the best of all national universities, public and private.

The Princeton Review ranked UVA as the No. 1 public school for financial aid for the fourth consecutive year. UVA also secured the No. 3 spot as the best value public university and No. 4 for career placement. Recognized for providing exceptional financial aid, health services, and strong alumni networks, UVA continues to deliver outstanding value and support to students. UVA remains one of the only public universities to meet 100% of every undergraduate student's financial need and offers admission to students with no consideration of a family's income.

UVA brings together a diverse global community of approximately 25,000 students, hailing from virtually every state in the nation and 111 countries. UVA encompasses twelve schools in Charlottesville, as well as the College at Wise, a small, liberal-arts college in Southwest Virginia, and its newest campus in Northern Virginia. In Charlottesville, the University employs nearly 30,000 people, including approximately 16,000 faculty and staff and approximately 12,000 UVA Health employees.

[Student Experience](#)

The UVA student experience is unique. That experience is punctuated by many distinct aspects of University life: the elegance of the architecture; the Honor System and the resulting community of trust; the Lawn and its residential community for faculty and students; the primacy of student self-governance; the diversity of the student body; the emphasis on service; and the beauty and history of the surrounding area. Founded on long-held values of academic excellence, this experience is also marked by retention (97% for first-years) and graduation (94%) rates, which are among the highest in the country. It is a warm, welcoming community, with generous and kind community members. These dimensions of the student experience—along with many others—shape our graduates to be driven, intellectually curious, and community-minded citizens of integrity and purpose. The current student body is made up of more than 17,000 undergraduate and nearly 7,000 graduate and professional students.

[A World Treasure](#)

In 1987, UNESCO named the University (in conjunction with [Monticello](#)) a World Heritage Site. This rare distinction has been bestowed upon only the world's most culturally significant landmarks, and UVA is the only U.S. university and one of only four worldwide designated as such. As a proud recipient of this honor, UVA is one of only two such sites still being used for its original purpose. Today, the original Academical Village continues to bring Jefferson's vision to life every day. The Rotunda – originally the University's library – still serves as the heart of the University. The eastern and western sides of the Lawn retain the unique pavilions and student living quarters as originally sketched. These buildings continue to play a major role in the University's community,

housing our most honored faculty and student leaders and enabling them to live and learn together. The University is more deeply exploring the critical and previously unrecognized role of the enslaved laborer in the construction of this historic landscape. The [Memorial to the Enslaved Laborers](#), 2020 winner of the *The Architect's Newspaper's Project of the Year*, sits within the borders of the World Heritage Site and seeks to formally acknowledge the work and the individual lives of the enslaved Black Americans who built and sustained the every-day life of the University. Student advocates played a crucial role in the creation of the memorial, which was completed in 2020.

[Leadership](#)

In August 2018, [Jim Ryan](#) became the 9th President of the University of Virginia. A respected and accomplished educator and legal scholar, Ryan earned his law degree from UVA and then served on the University's School of Law faculty for 15 years. From 2013 to 2018, he acted as dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Charles William Eliot Professor of Education. The President is advised by the academic deans and the cabinet. This leadership team is dedicated to advancing the University's academic mission, research enterprise, and strategic vision.

In March 2022, [Ian Baucom](#) became the Executive Vice President and Provost. Before becoming provost, Baucom served for eight years as the Buckner W. Clay Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences at the University. Baucom came to UVA after serving 17 years in Duke University's Department of English as a professor and as the director of the John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute. Baucom earned his undergraduate degree in political science from Wake Forest University and holds a master's degree in African studies and a doctorate in English, both from Yale University.

[2030 Plan](#)

After President Ryan's inauguration in 2018, the University set out on an inclusive process to define our strategic direction, which resulted in a new forward vision for the University. The [2030 Strategic Plan](#)—also known as The Great and Good Plan—provides a roadmap for the future of UVA as it enters its third century. The plan outlines our vision of becoming the best public university by 2030—and one of the very best in the world, whether public or private—and how we will achieve this. To succeed, we believe we must be great, but also good, recognizing that in the not-too-distant future, it will likely be impossible for a university to be truly great if it is not also good. To accomplish this, we must strive not just for excellence, but excellence for the purpose of advancing the common good within our community, Commonwealth, and world.

A glance at the [timeline of accomplishments](#) confirms that UVA has maintained a brisk pace when it comes to accomplishing strategic priorities. The "Great and Good" plan, of course, is a 10-year roadmap designed to make UVA the best public university in the country by 2030, and one of the best anywhere, public, or private. So, there's lots of work ahead, even with early momentum that hardly slowed during the COVID-19 pandemic. [UVA Today](#) recently caught up with President Ryan to find out how he thinks things are going so far, and what's to come.

[Research](#)

A Carnegie Research 1 university, UVA has strong partnerships with leading federal and state agencies and some of the world's largest companies across a wide range of industries. Sponsored research awards total \$449 million from all sources, including federal and state agencies, industry, and private foundations. In 2022, UVA researchers made 226 invention disclosures, with 53 patents issued. UVA's Licensing and Ventures Group helps bring innovative companies and products to market, making Charlottesville one of the most vibrant venture capital markets in the country. UVA has a large research park located near the Charlottesville airport.

Grand Challenges Research Investments - The University's Great and Good 2030 Plan identifies five priority focus areas for research: Democracy, Environmental Resilience and Sustainability, Precision Medicine/Health, the Brain and Neuroscience, and Digital Technology and Society. The Grand Challenges Research program is intended to make a substantial difference through large strategic investments—to move the needle and not just fund business as usual. We plan to focus on opportunities that will have high impact, such as significant research infrastructure or new faculty (cluster hires or key leaders). We do not plan to support routine research expenses or replace externally sponsored research funding. This transformative new investment is designed to expand and complement our current research portfolio.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

UVA believes strongly that diversity, equity, and inclusion are foundational pillars of excellence in delivering our academic and healthcare missions. The University implemented the [Inclusive Excellence framework](#) in 2020 to materially advance key components of the 2030 Great and Good plan. The Board of Visitors [endorsed goals](#) with specific actions to advance racial equity at the University. Through these institutional initiatives and many others at the school and unit level we are collectively committed to the ongoing work necessary to build the culture of care, respect, and community we all deserve.

Financial Stewardship

The University has developed an exceptionally strong financial foundation as exhibited by a \$12.8 billion net position on June 30, 2021, and a consensus triple-A bond rating. The three major rating agencies have noted the University's excellent reputation; student demand, highly selective admissions, and broad geographic reach; sponsored research prowess; superior wealth and liquidity management; exceptional strategic positioning supported by strong planning, risk management, and ongoing prospects to support programmatic investments; the Medical Center's prominent clinical reputation and ability to compete for patient care revenue; and remarkable donor support, among other factors.

The \$4.8 billion FY23 annual budget encompasses the Medical Center (\$2.7 billion), the Academic Division (\$2.1 billion), and the College at Wise (\$71 million). Significant revenue sources for the Academic Division includes tuition and fees (36%), externally sponsored programs (22%), endowment distribution (13%), state appropriations (11%), expendable gifts (9%), and sales and services (9%). The University and its associated organization have approximately \$13.6 billion invested in the University of Virginia Investment Management Company's (UVIMCO) long-term pool as of June 30, 2022, boosted by the long-term performance of UVIMCO, which has achieved an 11.0% return over the past ten years, compared to a benchmark of 7.3%. In recent years, UVA has transformed significant parts of its operations (HR and Finance) and implemented new cloud-based systems that will enable best-in-class analysis, services, and support in a rapidly changing environment.

Making a World Class Education Accessible to All

Now entering its third century, the University of Virginia offers an affordable, world-class education that is consistently ranked among the nation's best. UVA admits talented students from across the Commonwealth, the nation, and the globe, without consideration of their financial situation. UVA is one of two public universities that has a need-blind admission process that meets 100 percent of admitted students' demonstrated need. The University offers robust student scholarship support to attract the best and brightest students from all backgrounds, while protecting against excessive student debt.

Global Engagement

UVA is a global University with a strategic focus on preparing its students to become globally engaged citizen leaders after graduation and supporting its faculty as they discover solutions to leading global challenges, ranging from mitigating climate change to managing migration through combating infectious diseases to supporting democracy around the world. The University aims to support at least one global experience for every undergraduate student before graduation, with rapidly expanding study abroad opportunities and increasingly globally oriented curriculum, internships, and programming, even as we grow resources available for faculty pursuing global objectives.

Athletics

UVA has a strong history of athletic performance and is committed to developing our Cavaliers both academically and athletically. For the academic years that ended in 2023 and 2024, Virginia posted top-five finishes in the Directors' Cup all-sports rankings for more than 300 NCAA Division I programs. Those were the highest finishes of any Atlantic Coast Conference school during that period.

During its storied athletics history (through the summer of 2024), Virginia has won 34 NCAA team national championships, 153 Atlantic Coast Conference championships, and produced multiple NCAA and ACC individual champions. Most recently, the Cavalier women's swimming and diving program won its fourth consecutive national championships and sent six swimmers to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Head coach Todd DeSorbo was Team USA's women's head coach at the Games.

A total of 13 Virginia athletics programs have been ranked No. 1 in their respective sport at some point in their history. UVA student-athletes have gone on to win Super Bowls, World Cups, NBA Championships, baseball World Series and been inducted into multiple national Halls of Fame. Academically, UVA ranks among the nation's leaders in the NCAA's Graduation Success Rate and Academic Progress rate reports, well above the national averages. Virginia is also one of the top schools in the country for student-athlete graduation rates for minority students.

University Advancement and the Honor the Future Campaign

University Advancement is the primary driver of constituent engagement and fundraising efforts for UVA. It includes the Health System Development Office and comprises approximately 270 team members. University Advancement is charged with securing philanthropic support for pan-University priorities and strategic initiatives, and several UVA schools and units have established management partnerships with University Advancement for their development efforts. They work in close partnership with the independent foundations and fundraising offices associated with other UVA schools and units to form a holistic enterprise supporting shared strategic goals.

In support of its aspirations to be the best public university in the nation and among the best in the world, the University launched the *Honor the Future* capital campaign with a quiet phase beginning in the summer of 2017, followed by a public launch in October of 2019. UVA set an ambitious goal of \$5 billion with a target completion date of June 30, 2025, which was surpassed eighteen months ahead of the target due to the enormous generosity of alumni, parents, and friends.

UVA Health

UVA Health's vision is to be the nation's leading public academic health system and a best place to work — while transforming patient care, research, education, and engagement with the diverse communities it serves. UVA Health is an expansive network comprised of the UVA Medical Center, UVA Community Health

(including hospitals in Culpeper, Prince William, Haymarket and a community medical practice), UVA School of Nursing, UVA School of Medicine, University of Virginia Physicians Group, Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, and other strategic partnerships and alliances.

UVA Health has a long and storied history beginning almost two centuries ago. The School of Medicine was founded in 1825, six short years after Thomas Jefferson founded UVA, becoming the 10th medical school in the nation. UVA Health continues to expand at an incredibly rapid rate and to invest significant resources across all missions. Just over the past four years UVA Health has opened a new 84 bed tower, acquired a free-standing ambulatory surgery center, opened a 200,000 square foot orthopedic center, acquired three community hospitals as well as a physician's organization in Northern Virginia, became the #1 children's hospital in the state, and successfully achieved comprehensive status for its NCI designated cancer center.

Charlottesville

Located in Central Virginia just east of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and 100 miles south of Washington, D.C., Charlottesville offers stunning natural beauty, a thriving art, music, and food culture, and an ever-growing list of things to do. In the span of a single day, you can hike part of the Appalachian trail, attend a concert, enjoy a memorable meal at one of Charlottesville's many celebrated restaurants (we rank among the nation's top 15 places with the most restaurants per capita), stroll the historic Downtown Mall, and explore Monticello, tour the Fralin Museum, visit the Jefferson School African American Heritage Center, or enjoy world-class wineries in some of the most beautiful landscapes on the East Coast. Whatever you do, Charlottesville brings together the best of many worlds, offering the livability and community of a small city with the amenities and cultural attractions of a metropolis. For more information visit <https://www.visitcharlottesville.org/>.

UVA | Northern Virginia

Launched as part of UVA's 2030 [Great and Good Strategic Plan](#), the mission of [UVA | Northern Virginia](#) is to connect Grounds in Charlottesville with Northern Virginia and vice versa. UVA reimagined how the academic rigor of Charlottesville could be channeled north to create UVA | Northern Virginia – a knowledge tap of educational programs, research, mentorship, and events to support Northern Virginia working professionals in parallel with their careers. UVA | Northern Virginia is the center point of UVA's efforts to better serve the commonwealth by bringing new and existing academic programs across disciplines and modalities – in-person, online, and hybrid – to Northern Virginia.

UVA | Northern Virginia works across UVA units to promote over 35 degree and non-degree programs for working professionals in the region. Offerings include programs from the Darden School of Business, McIntire School of Commerce, School of Medicine, School of Engineering and Applied Science, School of Architecture, School of Continuing and Professional Studies, School of Data Science, School of Education and Human Development, and the School of Nursing. In addition, UVA | Northern Virginia continues to develop non-degree educational programs with governmental and corporate partners, highlights include a custom executive education program with Amazon and an open enrollment program for the Department of Defense. Lastly, The UVA | Northern Virginia Inspire Summer Program, offering in-person and online courses across disciplines such as programming and forensic science, serves local high school students in the Northern Virginia region.

To house these programs, UVA | Northern Virginia is [building a new 55,000-square-foot satellite campus](#) in Fairfax, VA to serve as the hub of all university activity in the region. UVA | Northern Virginia is led by Dean and CEO, [Gregory Fairchild](#).