

# SEARCH PROFILE:

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



FRIENDS  
UNIVERSITY

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## THE OPPORTUNITY

The Office of the President of Friends University invites nominations and applications for the position of Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA).

Friends University seeks to hire a VPAA to lead and direct all curricular efforts at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The VPAA will work closely with the President to fulfill and advance the unique mission of Friends University while continuing current efforts to enhance and strengthen the University's academic offerings, quality, and vitality.

This is a remarkable opportunity to be part of an exciting period in the history of Friends University. The University is currently experiencing consistent enrollment growth, establishing a strong financial foundation and pursuing greater state-wide and regional visibility.

The successful candidate will begin on a mutually agreed-upon date, no later than January 1, 2027.



## ABOUT FRIENDS UNIVERSITY

Friends University has been a part of the ever-expanding Wichita, Kansas, skyline since 1898. Founded by a wealthy Quaker businessman, the University was established to produce a different class of graduate—one that would lead with conviction and bring hope to a hurting world. Fueled by its founding DNA, the University's mission statement today reads: *Friends University, a Christian University of Quaker heritage, exists to equip students to honor God and serve others by integrating their intellectual, spiritual, and professional lives.*

Friends University comprises a [traditional undergraduate, adult undergraduate, and graduate college](#). It is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the National Association of Schools of Music. Friends is historically known for its excellent fine arts programs and performing groups, especially the touring Singing Quakers choral ensemble. It also boasts several nationally recognized programs, such as the bachelor's degrees in zoo science and cyber security, and the [Master of Arts in Christian Spiritual Formation and Leadership](#). Additionally, a [Doctor of Ministry in Formation and Soul Care](#) was recently added to the graduate program roster.

With a strategic vision to become the preferred Christian university in the region, Friends University is making its mark as the best Christian University in Kansas, according to Niche.com. The University is driven by a call not simply to bolster the local workforce but to develop the next generation of industry trailblazers, innovators, health care workers, creatives, and ministry leaders who can meet the community's needs with integrity and moral conviction. The professors, conductors, and coaches at Friends are more than just expert educators; they serve as mentors, cheerleaders, and problem-solvers, demonstrating genuine care for students, helping lead them to a deeper understanding of their God-given vocation. The campus is shaped by a set of R.I.S.E. values—ideals shared by the Friends community that influence behaviors and attitudes and help students find a sense of belonging before being propelled into a meaningful future. These values include Respect, Inclusion, Service, and Excellence. They encourage civility, a spirit of cooperation, a commitment to servant leadership, and thoughtful intentionality. Friends University strives to be welcoming to students of varying faiths or no faith, and commits to provide 100% of the traditional student population with scholarships to help cut down the cost of a private education.



## INSTITUTIONAL RECOGNITION AND OUTSTANDING PROGRAMS

Over the years, especially most recently, Friends University has been recognized by multiple outside agencies for its broad excellence across the institution. Here are a few of the recognitions for outstanding excellence:

- The University has been recognized as the Best Christian College and Best Value College in Kansas by *Niche.com* in 2026
- The [Master of Business Administration \(MBA\)](#) program has been recognized as the top program in Kansas by *MBASchools.org* for the second year in a row
- The Bachelor of Business Administration has been recognized as one of the top BBA programs in Kansas for 2025 by *BBADegree.org*
- The University's Online Cybersecurity program has been recognized among the top programs in Kansas for 2026 by *OnlineCybersecurity.org*
- The Master's in Information Systems and Technology program has been recognized as one of the top online programs by *Intelligent.com*
- The Marriage and Family Therapy Program has been ranked #1 in 2025 by *MarriageFamilyTherapist.org*
- The Athletics Department has earned the prestigious 2024-25 NAIA Champions of Character Five-Star Gold honor
- The Athletics Department has earned the KCAC Commissioner's Cup award five times and is on track to maintain a first place standing for the 2025-26 season
- The University was announced as one of the top 20 Christian colleges by *Education Insider* in 2024
- The University has been recently recognized as a [Military Friendly Institution](#) due to its high standards of service and attention to the unique needs of military veterans



## WICHITA AND THE GREATER CENTRAL KANSAS REGION

Wichita is a unique city offering a wonderful mix of small-town warmth with big-city convenience. Connections and friendships come easily due to its Midwestern openness. Residents experience short commute times and tout the affordable living options found throughout Wichita and the metro area. Wichita offers a comfortable pace of life with easy access to travel, culture, and professional opportunities.

Wichita and the greater central [Kansas](#) region host a variety of festivals, performances, and community gatherings throughout the year. These events bring residents together and highlight the region's arts, culture, and traditions.

Wichita Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport offers direct flights to major airline hubs and is located approximately 10 minutes from Friends University.

[Wichita](#) is Kansas' largest metropolitan area, with a population of nearly 700,000 and growing. Wichita is the commercial, financial, medical, cultural, and entertainment hub for the state.

Downtown Wichita is home to a diverse and exciting community boasting a strong arts & culture scene, dozens of tasty local restaurants, and countless events and activities.

## FACTS

Friends University serves roughly 1,500 students annually. Traditional undergraduate enrollment sits just shy of 1,000 students, but the institution also serves adult/continuing education students, graduate students, and high school students in the Early College Academy. More facts can be found in the [Fall 2025 Factbook](#). Other notable distinctives of Friends University:

- The University hosts more than 50 major areas of study and 30 minors
- The University has various 4+1 programs that allow students to earn both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in just five years
- The [Center for Enterprise and Community Engagement](#) offers students hands-on agency experience, providing services to local nonprofits, churches, and small businesses
- The [Center for Mission-focused Teaching and Learning](#) is instrumental in creating mission-centric academic initiatives to expand faith and learning opportunities
- The [Apprentice Institute](#) provides spiritually transforming education experiences for churches and individuals through the annual Apprentice Gathering conference, the Things Above podcast, and a new spiritual direction certificate program
- The University hosts various fine arts ensembles, including our nationally-recognized Singing Quakers choral ensemble, Concert Choir, Jazz Vocal Ensemble, Concert Band, University Orchestra, Concert Jazz Band, the Conjunto Latino jazz ensemble, and the Jazz Lab Band, in addition to opera workshops and chamber groups
- The Athletics Department supports 24 NAIA Division II [sports teams](#), supported by a growing number of athletes each year who maintain a 3.0+ GPA. Friends has the only college football program in Wichita
- The University hosts approximately 60 full-time faculty and 40 non-faculty staff members
- The endowment sits at \$74,550,000 as of February 2026



## LEADERSHIP AGENDA

The VPAA will report directly to the President and have responsibility for the institution's academic integrity. This individual will direct educational activities and develop academic policies and programs to ensure the stability of the University and attract interest in new program offerings. This position will oversee all faculty recruitment, retention, evaluation, professional development, promotions, and tenure processes. As a member of the President's Cabinet, the VPAA will participate in strategic planning and implementation, aligning goals with the overall mission of Friends University. This position will be responsible for

the academic budget and allocating resources among academic departments and programs. The VPAA will work closely with other senior leaders and contribute to decisions regarding campus planning, enrollment management, and student services. Direct reports include five department/division chairs for Fine Arts, Business, Education, STEM, and Theology & Humanities, as well as all full- and part-time faculty members. The VPAA will also supervise the directors for Graduate Workshops, the Center for Mission-focused Teaching and Learning, and the Center for Enterprise and Community Engagement.

## PRIORITY AGENDA ITEMS

- Continue the vision to become the preferred Christian University in the region by deepening and strengthening the Christian mission of the University
- Develop and lead efforts to emphasize and prioritize the integration of faith and learning as a central tenet of the classroom experience in collaboration with the Center for Mission-focused Teaching and Learning
- Strategically increase the profile of the academic component of the University, adding new market-demand programs to spur growth, while simultaneously championing the vital role of academic excellence
- Promote and prioritize financial resources for scholarship and research opportunities for faculty members and students, including the use of the Rockcleft Endowed Fund
- Regularly review program health and vitality to identify opportunities for curricular innovation, such as AI integration, and make strategic and financial revisions related to program offerings
- Work with the General Education Committee and division chairs to develop a robust plan to ensure the continued emphasis on High Impact Learning experiences with a focus on meeting the needs of today's learners and tomorrow's workforce



## REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Maintains a contagious Christian faith and walk
- Articulates a strong philosophical understanding of the importance of the integration of faith and learning within the context of a Christian university
- Holds a current membership in a local church in theological alignment with the University's historical faith position
- Holds an earned doctoral degree (Ed.D. will be considered)
- Has previous experience as an academic administrator
- Has classroom experience as a full-time instructor within a higher education setting
- Has broad higher education experience, preferably at a private institution
- Maintains a proven track record of budgetary experience with academic expenditures
- Has experience with accreditation agencies and their processes
- Understands and passionately embraces the critical role of representing the concerns and needs of the faculty to the president, the cabinet, and the Board
- Maintains a passion regarding the importance of the classroom experience as it impacts the minds and lives of the students
- Possesses an enthusiastic demeanor and high energy, and is open and accessible to faculty, students, staff, and the community
- Works with a diplomatic leadership style
- Possesses strategic thinking skills, seeking viable and creative solutions to problems that arise
- Possesses both strong verbal and written communication skills

## EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The next Vice President for Academic Affairs at Friends University must have strong academic credentials, including an earned doctoral degree (Ed.D. will be considered). Professional experience must reflect time as a classroom professor, a portfolio of presentations at various academic

gatherings, and a listing of publications or papers that align with the major discipline of study. It is also imperative that candidates for this position have experience as an academic administrator at either the chair, dean, associate vice-president, or vice-president level.



## NOMINATION AND APPLICATION PROCESS

Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Academic Search is partnering with Friends University for this search. When submitting a nomination, please include the nominee's full name, title, position, and email address.

Those who are considering applying are encouraged to schedule a confidential conversation with Senior Consultant Dr. Alan Cureton through his [Bookings Calendar](#) or email ([alan.cureton@academicsearch.org](mailto:alan.cureton@academicsearch.org)).

An application should include (in three separate PDF attachments): 1) a letter of interest that responds to the leadership agenda, 2) a full CV/resume, and 3) a list of five professional references, including email addresses and a brief note of the candidate's working relationship with each. All submissions will be treated in confidence and should be sent electronically to [FriendsVPAA@academicsearch.org](mailto:FriendsVPAA@academicsearch.org).

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

### DEADLINE

Although this position remains open until filled, applications should be received by **June 1, 2026**, for full consideration by the search committee. The next VPAA is expected to begin by January 1, 2027, or earlier. For more information about the position and responsibilities, please download the full position profile from the [Academic Search](#) website. For additional information about Friends University, please visit [www.friends.edu](http://www.friends.edu).

## EEO STATEMENT

*Friends University aspires to be a model of excellence in higher education. Rooted in our Christian mission and values, we seek to prepare students for success in a diverse and interconnected world through transformative learning experiences that respect and engage a range of viewpoints.*

*As we welcome individuals to join our Friends University community, we seek candidates who understand and support our Christian foundation while valuing inclusion as*

*part of our shared work. We invite you to join us as we foster a community where all can learn, grow, and contribute in ways that reflect our mission.*

*Friends University is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, disability, or protected veteran status.*

# ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Friends University in this work. For 50 years 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.

