

SEARCH PROFILE:

VICE PRESIDENT FOR INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT



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Wilson College invites nominations and applications for its next Vice President for Institutional Advancement (VPIA). The College seeks a creative, energetic leader of the institutional advancement staff who will be a valued, proactive partner for President Wesley R. Fugate, Ph.D. and the Board of Trustees. The successful candidate will be an experienced professional who will work with other members of the senior leadership team to ensure the College's vision for a sustainable future.

The previous decade has been a time of change and profound transformation for Wilson. The College recently completed its five-year *Future Wilson: The Phoenix Rises* strategic plan, which has led the institution to defy challenges presented to higher education in recent years. With the decision to become coeducational in 2013 along with the addition of online learning and new undergraduate and graduate degree programs, enrollment has increased 53% in the past three years. Most recently, Wilson announced its highest overall enrollment in its 156-year history with the Fall 2025 Census. President Fugate, who arrived in January of 2020, has initiated a dynamic era of creativity. Utilizing a newly approved three-year strategic plan, the new VPIA is expected to embrace and enhance the College's spirit of innovation.



THE COLLEGE

Wilson College is a private coeducational college rooted in the liberal arts and sciences. Located in [Chambersburg, Pennsylvania](#), on a historic 300-acre campus, the institution offers undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs and is committed to a transformative educational experience that balances academic quality, access, affordability, and supportive rigor. Recent federal data suggests the average cost for a student to attend Wilson College after all financial aid is \$2,300 less than that of a nearby public institution. Classes are offered in-person, online, and via hybrid modalities.

Throughout its long history, Wilson has responded to changing times. In 1982, the College was one of the first in the region to begin offering a continuing studies program to meet the needs of a growing population of adults seeking a post-secondary education. In 1996, the College was one of the first in the nation to offer on-campus, residential education for single parents with children. In 2022, the College launched [Wilson College Online](#), further embracing its focus on accessibility to underserved populations. A new campus in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania is scheduled to open in February 2026 to support hands-on lab immersion experiences for three new hybrid, accelerated graduate healthcare degree programs.

Donor philanthropy for Wilson remains strong. The [We Rise: United for Wilson's Future](#) three-year campaign concluded in 2025, surpassing all expectations. Donor gifts exceeded the initial \$16 million goal, totaling more than \$21.7 million in support of debt reduction, scholarships, growth initiatives, faculty and staff support, and unrestricted giving. For the sixth consecutive year, the Wilson Fund exceeded \$1 million annually.

ACADEMICS

Wilson's [academic programs](#) are designed to foster students' ability to think critically, solve complex problems,

and communicate effectively. With a 15:1 student-to-faculty ratio and an average class size of 16, Wilson features small, seminar-style classes and research opportunities that enable students to work closely with faculty and mentors. Wilson's 54 full-time faculty and 113 full-time staff are fully invested in students and committed to their success.

The College has made a concerted effort to diversify its academic offerings with expanded areas of study in education and nursing, as well as new programs in health science, criminal justice, medical humanities, esports, entrepreneurship, supply chain management, computer science and cybersecurity.

Wilson currently offers 34 undergraduate majors and 40 minors as well as 11 master's degree programs. In January 2026, the College will launch a hybrid, accelerated doctoral program in Occupational Therapy. Similar hybrid programs will launch in August 2027 for a master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology and a Doctor of Physical Therapy. In addition, Wilson welcomes students to its campus through a dual enrollment program with several regional high schools. The College is also known across the Commonwealth for its highly successful [Teacher Certification Program](#), offering teacher certification in Pennsylvania to individuals with a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution wishing to make a career change and join the teaching profession.

Academic programs are housed within two schools: The School of Arts and Sciences and The School of Professional and Graduate Studies. The College is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education and has state-accredited programs in education, veterinary nursing, and nursing, as well as pending accreditation for graduate programming from ACOTE (for an occupational therapy doctorate), CAPTE (for a physical therapy doctorate), and CAA (for a master's in speech-language pathology).

THE COLLEGE (CONTINUED)

ENROLLMENT

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Wilson College was considered the 25th fastest growing institution in the country. Like other colleges and universities, Wilson experienced a significant downturn in enrollment because of the pandemic lockdowns and unprecedented upheaval in the educational environment. Despite challenging headcounts, the College began to aggressively modify its recruitment strategy and student engagement initiatives in 2021. Today, thanks to the success of many of those projects and the overarching direction of the Future Wilson: The Phoenix Rises strategic plan, the College has reached its highest total enrollment in its history with 2,081 enrolled students at the Fall 2025 Census. Increases in first-time-in-college students, as well as growth in Wilson College Online, dual enrollment high school students, and the Teacher Certification Program have all contributed to a 53% increase in total enrollment over the past three years.

ATHLETICS

Wilson College currently sponsors 13 varsity-level athletics teams (six women's, five men's, and two co-ed). Student-athletes also compete in 8 esports games. Over 33 percent of Wilson students participate in a varsity sport. As a member of the NCAA Division III, the [United East conference](#), the Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association, and the Eastern College Athletics Conference Esports League, Wilson College's athletic program is considered an integral part of the educational environment. Students can participate in quality programs that contribute to the development of strong leadership skills and emphasize teamwork, fair play, and personal development.

CAMPUS FACILITIES

The 300-acre campus is on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. Seven buildings serve as student housing, with options for double, triple, and quad occupancy. There are several facilities for athletics and equestrian competition, including three athletic fields, tennis courts, a gymnasium, and a fitness center. Construction is underway now on a new artificial turf field at Kris's Meadow for use by the women's lacrosse and field hockey teams, as well as the women's and men's soccer teams. Completion is expected in time for the Fall 2026 athletic season. The [Penn Hall Equestrian Center](#) has three, 24-stall barns; two indoor arenas and an outdoor arena; cross-country jump course and turn-out fields. Phoenix Esports teams enjoy their own competition arena with newly upgraded, state of the art computers and equipment.

Wilson's historic campus has been evolving to meet the needs of today's modern students. In 2019, the [Breakfield Veterinary Education Center](#) with the Margaret Hamilton Duprey Center for Veterinary Excellence opened with 9,000 square feet of clinical suites, animal facilities, and educational space in support of the popular veterinary nursing program. Also in 2019,



VISION

Creating possibilities. Forging exceptional student success. Transforming lives.

MISSION STATEMENT

Wilson College empowers students to be confident and critical thinkers, creative visionaries, effective communicators, honorable leaders, and agents of justice.

We value:

Honor

Wilson upholds honesty and integrity as cornerstones of individual behavior – both public and private.

Discovery

Wilson believes inquiry leads to a deeper understanding of ourselves, our disciplines, and the world around us. We encourage the transformative exploration and risk-taking that produce personal and communal growth.

Inclusivity

Wilson cultivates a welcoming environment in which each individual or group is respected, supported, and valued. An inclusive climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions.

Community

Wilson thrives in a collaborative, relationship-centered culture where we support one another in the broad range of high-level learning and work activities that we endeavor to achieve.

Service

Wilson embraces its role as an intellectual and artistic center in the region by providing programming, institutional outreach, service learning, and volunteerism, preparing students to be active contributors in their communities.

in partnership with the Borough of Chambersburg, the College renovated and dedicated historic Henninger Field during its Sesquicentennial Celebration, kicking off the inaugural season of men's baseball. With the help of the [Wilson College Parents' Council](#), the fitness center was refreshed in 2023 with updated exercise equipment, an updated paint scheme and new athletic branding. Residence hall updates, a major renovation to the John Stewart Memorial Library and the introduction of the Lenfest Learning Commons, plus a renewal of Jensen Dining Hall and the introduction of the Phoenix Café at Sarah's Coffeehouse have all transformed the campus to allow for flexible group study spaces, smart classrooms, improved student living facilities, and welcoming extracurricular spaces.



FINANCES

The annual operating budget of Wilson College is approximately \$36.5 million with assets totaling \$146.0 million and liabilities of \$35.0 million as of the most recent fiscal year-end. The College has balanced its budget in each year of President Fugate's tenure. The College holds \$6.9 million in unrestricted reserves. Net tuition provides

approximately 46% of Wilson's operating expenses. While the FY25 budget was supported with an endowment spending rate of 7.00%, the FY26 budget projects 5%, with a goal of reducing the rate in future years. The College value of endowment and other investments valued on June 30, 2025, was \$84.9 million.

LOCATION AND COMMUNITY

Wilson College is located in [Chambersburg](#), Pennsylvania, which is centrally located within a few hours of major cities including Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., making it easy to access these urban hubs. This bustling community of 22,000 residents features an active downtown with shops, restaurants, and coffeehouses, as well as a vibrant art scene.

Chambersburg, the county seat of [Franklin County](#), is the historic and commercial center of a region characterized by small and mid-size industrial enterprises, rich

agricultural, and residential areas. With a multitude of amenities, the greater Chambersburg area is family friendly. As of the 2020 Census, the population of Franklin County was 155,832 and it is considered the 27th largest county in the Commonwealth. However, even with its growth, Chambersburg maintains its quality of life, affordability, and small-town charm—with easy access to metropolitan hubs, mountains, streams, farms, golf courses, and ski slopes.



INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

The new Vice President for Institutional Advancement will be called upon to demonstrate expertise in fundraising, alumnae and alumni engagement, and the promotion of the College. The VPIA will be a valued partner for President Fugate and the Board of Trustees, a creative thinker, a proactive, visionary leader of the institutional advancement staff and campus community, and an important member of the senior leadership team. To be successful the new vice president must share the resilient spirit of innovation that characterizes Wilson, be adaptable and embrace change, and value transparency.

Wilson College recently completed the *We Rise: United for Wilson's Future* three-year campaign, surpassing all expectations. Donor gifts exceeded the initial \$16 million goal, totaling more than \$21.7 million in support of debt reduction, scholarships, growth initiatives, faculty and staff support, and unrestricted giving. For the sixth consecutive year, the Wilson Fund exceeded \$1 million annually.

The new Vice President for Institutional Advancement will step into an Advancement operation characterized by strong momentum and positive energy. One of the central opportunities—and challenges—for the successful candidate will be to sustain and accelerate this momentum, ensuring that Wilson continues to build on its recent success.

The VPIA will lead a seven-person Advancement office, serving simultaneously as a productive fundraiser and an effective manager of staff, systems, and programs. The VPIA will work closely with and report directly to the President, leveraging the president's strong interest and skills in fundraising, to optimize institutional advancement efforts.

As a member of the senior leadership team, the VPIA

will serve collegially alongside peers who take pride in advancing Wilson's mission while stepping in wherever support for students and colleagues is needed. In this role, the VPIA will be expected to bring creativity, collaboration, and strategic vision to Wilson's fundraising and engagement initiatives.

Key priorities for the Vice President for Institutional Advancement include:

- Accelerating fundraising momentum following the completion of a successful comprehensive campaign
- Seeking creative ways to diversify fundraising methods, revenue streams, and constituent engagement
- Developing new approaches to engage alumnae and alumni across all classes and generations, recognizing the College's multiple institutional transitions since the 1970s
- Creating and executing a strategy to grow the Wilson Fund from \$1.5 million to \$2 million annually
- Reinvigorating the Conococheague Society, a heritage giving program, to increase estate and planned gifts
- Serving as a visible, articulate ambassador for Wilson College in Chambersburg and the surrounding region
- Introducing innovative uses of technology to enhance fundraising and strengthen relationships with community partners, corporations, and foundations
- Applying prior experience and insight to address the broader challenges facing higher education and the evolving role of philanthropy and volunteerism in Wilson's future

Throughout all aspects of the role, the VPIA will embody an enthusiastic, relationship-oriented approach to leadership and fundraising, engaging meaningfully with all Wilson constituencies.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT (CONTINUED)

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS

The successful candidate will bring a collaborative and servant-minded leadership style to the role, demonstrating a deep commitment to Wilson's students, faculty, and staff. The VPIA will be a hands-on leader who models dedication, integrity, and follow-through, contributing actively to the life of the campus.

The role calls for an individual who combines strategic thinking with practical execution and who brings both energy and authenticity to their work. Desired personal characteristics and skills include:

- A highly collaborative approach within the Advancement division, across campus, and with the senior leadership team

- A servant leadership mindset grounded in service to the Wilson community
- A strong work ethic and willingness to lead by example
- High energy and enthusiasm that align with Wilson College's dynamic ethos
- The ability to serve as a compelling and passionate spokesperson for Wilson's mission, values, and distinctive story
- Strategic thinking skills paired with the ability to translate vision into measurable outcomes
- A great sense of humor, along with humility, authenticity, and self-awareness

PREFERRED AND REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

Candidates must demonstrate a strong foundation in fundraising and advancement, along with the technical and strategic skills necessary to succeed in a complex higher education environment.

- Required experience in fundraising, with preference given to candidates with experience in higher education
- A demonstrated track record of successful fundraising across annual, endowment, capital, and campaign efforts

- Required knowledge of technological applications in Advancement and a data-driven approach to decision-making
- Familiarity with Raiser's Edge preferred
- An advanced degree preferred





APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Academic Search is assisting Wilson College in this national search. Confidential discussions about this opportunity may be arranged by contacting Senior Consultant Mike Maxey at WilsonVPIA@academicsearch.org.

Applications, nominations, and expressions of interest may be submitted in confidence to WilsonVPIA@academicsearch.org. The position is open until filled but only applications received by **March 2, 2026** can be assured full consideration.

Applications should include (in three separate PDF attachments) a substantive letter of interest, a curriculum vitae, and a list of five professional references with full contact information and a note indicating the nature of your working relationship with each. References will not be contacted without the explicit permission of the candidate.

It is the policy of Wilson College to provide equal employment opportunities without regard to race, ethnicity, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, marital/familial status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, having a General Education Development Certificate rather than a high school diploma, or any other protected characteristic applicable under law. Wilson College prohibits discriminatory harassment and sexual harassment, including sexual violence and any type of sexual misconduct.

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Wilson College 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.

