

SEARCH PROFILE:

PROVOST



NDSU NORTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY

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THE OPPORTUNITY

North Dakota State University (NDSU)—a student-focused, land-grant, research university established in 1890—invites inquiries, nominations, and applications in the search for the next Provost, who is expected to begin in January 2026. Reporting directly to [President David Cook](#), who was named NDSU's 15th president in 2022, and serving on the [President's Cabinet](#), the Provost serves as the University's chief academic officer and plays a central role in advancing a vision of transformative growth for the institution. Overseeing academic and student affairs and shaping the scholarly experience across campus, the next Provost will lead efforts to elevate educational and research excellence, foster student success, strengthen global partnerships, and enhance NDSU's reputation as a national and international leader in innovation.

This is an extraordinary opportunity to join a dynamic university—in a state that embraces innovation and located in a city built for entrepreneurship and technology. The institution is positioned for leading such growth and innovation. This [March 2025 article](#) from the NDSU Foundation explains the approach and tone that President Cook is taking, noting that he is “leading with purpose, integrity, and vision.” Through the recent [NDSU Transform initiative](#), the university articulated “a bold vision designed to meet the evolving needs of our students, North Dakota, the region and beyond.” The University thus expects the next Provost to be a visionary, experienced, collaborative, and decisive senior leader to join the President in shaping the next chapter of NDSU's impact and success.

Further details about [North Dakota State University](#), the position requirements, the leadership agenda for the next Provost, and the application process are provided in this profile.



NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

As the University's website notes, the [traditions and roots](#) of the institution now known as North Dakota State University began in 1890, with the founding of North Dakota Agricultural College, "the state's only land-grant institution dedicated to agricultural research and education." In 1960, that site explains, "after a 40-year effort, NDAC officially became North Dakota State University, reflecting the increasing field of study breadth."

Today NDSU enrolls students in more than 90 undergraduate majors, more than 90 minors and undergraduate certificates, and 110 graduate degree and certificate programs. The University "serves as an economic engine, conducting groundbreaking research, creating new knowledge and advancing technology that benefits the state and beyond." As one of the National Science Foundation's top 100 research universities and a Carnegie R1 institution, NDSU is recognized among the nation's highest-performing research universities. The University's mission is driven by purpose: translating research into real-world impact, creating pathways for student success, and forging partnerships that expand the horizon of possibility.

The expansive Main Campus has more than 90 buildings on 261 acres—a "welcoming blend of historic charm and modern innovation . . . [with] a balance of green spaces, state-of-the-art facilities, and a strong sense of community" ([Explore NDSU's Campus](#)).

As this [virtual tour video](#) shows, the campus is pedestrian-friendly and designed for easy navigation, featuring tree-lined, well-lit walkways and a connected environment that makes getting between classes and activities effortless. The Downtown Campus is home to programs in business, architecture, and the arts. Transportation between the campuses is offered through MATBUS, the area's public transit system.

Students at NDSU learn from world-class faculty, many of whom are ranked among the top 2% of most-cited researchers globally, fostering academic excellence across disciplines. In fiscal year 2023, NDSU had \$190.3 million in research expenditures, marking the University's fifth consecutive year of such increases. NDSU leads all research university performance in North Dakota, supporting impactful research in agriculture, materials science and engineering, food, energy and water security, cybersecurity and computer science, and life sciences. NDSU also has strong technology transfer accomplishments, with more than 100 patents issued, 47 annual invention disclosures, 117 active plant variety protections (PVPs), and licensing revenue of over \$1.2 million last fiscal year.

As North Dakota's land-grant institution, NDSU maintains a presence in all 53 counties through [NDSU Extension](#) and supports robust research and community education through seven research extension centers. That role now includes a broad range of topics: science-based education that

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY (CONT.)

improves the economic, health, and community conditions for North Dakotans by strengthening agriculture, stimulating communities, developing youths' potential, building strong families, and protecting the environment.

Located in Fargo—one of the Midwest's fastest-growing metro areas—NDSU stands at the intersection of innovation and opportunity. The University collaborates with global leaders such as Microsoft, Sanford Health, Aldevron, Bobcat, Case New Holland, and Caterpillar, leveraging the state's strengths in agriculture and energy.

NDSU is a proud member of the [North Dakota University System](#) (NDUS) and works closely with the system's 10 other institutions to strengthen higher education and expand opportunities across the state. The University also partners with neighboring institutions across the Red River—including Minnesota State University Moorhead, Minnesota State Community and Technical College, and Concordia College—to foster academic collaboration and regional innovation.



NDSU FAST FACTS (FALL 2024)

Total enrollment: 11,952
9,762 undergraduate;
1,980 graduate; 210
PharmD)

**Full-time undergraduate
enrollment:** 79.2%

**Number of
undergraduate
majors:** 92

**Top undergraduate
majors:**
engineering, business,
health professions,
agriculture, and family
and consumer sciences

**Number of graduate
programs:** 116

**Known race/ethnicity
of student body:**
78.8% White; 6.0% Asian;
4.7% Black; 4.5% Two
or More Races; 3.7%
Hispanic; 0.7 % Native
American (several tribal
communities)

**Gender of
undergraduate
student population:**
51.8% female,
48.5% male

**Pell-eligible
students:** 24%

**Geographic origin of
student population:**
40% from North Dakota,
45% from Minnesota; 8%
citizens from 46 other U.S.
states, D.C., and Puerto
Rico; 7% international
from 73 countries.

New student profile:
3.53 Average high school
GPA; 22.5 Average ACT

**Student-faculty
ratio:** 16:1

Average class size: 35

Number of faculty: 705

Number of staff: 1,868

**Number of athletic
teams:** 16 NCAA
Division I varsity sports

Number of alumni:
Approximately 96,000

Nickname: Bison

Mascot: Thundar

Colors: Yellow and Green

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY (CONT.)

NDSU plays a vital role in workforce development, graduating the largest number of bachelor's students in the NDUS. Notably, 86% of North Dakota and 45% of Minnesota high school graduates who attend NDSU stay in-state for their first job. With 95% of graduates employed or continuing their education within six months, NDSU maintains a strong career pipeline.

The University is also committed to a globally connected academic environment, prioritizing international student engagement, study abroad, and partnerships with leading research and academic institutions around the world.

Philanthropy at NDSU is also thriving. With strong support from alumni and donors, the [NDSU Foundation](#) has grown its endowment to over \$500 million, directly supporting scholarships, faculty research, athletics, and campus initiatives. Recent philanthropic and state investments have transformed the campus landscape, including Aldevron Tower, Sugihara Hall, Bolley Agricultural Laboratory, the Music Education Building, Nodak Insurance Company Football Performance Complex, [Peltier Complex](#), [Richard Offerdahl '65 Engineering Complex](#), and the Sanford Health Athletic Complex.

NDSU POINTS OF PRIDE

- NDSU ranks in the top 100 public research institutions with its fifth year of record-breaking expenditures (\$190.3 million in FY23).
- NDSU awarded 2,843 degrees from Summer 2023 to Spring 2024, graduating the largest number of bachelor's and doctoral students in the North Dakota University System.
- When they graduate, 86% of North Dakota students and 45% of Minnesota students stay in North Dakota for their first job.
- More than 275 student clubs and organizations at NDSU provide platforms for personal growth, skill development and the creation of lifelong connections.
- State support for higher education in North Dakota has remained strong, with advocacy for the impact of research and financial support that has allowed for competitive salaries.
- [NDSU Athletics](#) has a strong tradition of excellence. Bison student-athletes have earned 96 conference championships and 10 Division I football titles, reflecting the University's competitive spirit and commitment to success.
- Retention rates have increased from 77% (Fall 2023) to 78.5% (Fall 2024) for first-time, first-year students.





THE GREATER FARGO-MOORHEAD REGION

One of the appeals of this position is the opportunity to live, work, and lead in the greater Fargo-Moorhead region, one of the Midwest's fastest-growing metro areas. NDSU's main campus is located in the vibrant and growing city of Fargo, North Dakota's largest city; together with its sister city, Moorhead, Minnesota, directly across the Red River, this region is one of the largest metropolitan centers between Minneapolis and Seattle. With a population of more than 260,000, the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area combines a distinct, small-town friendliness with the enrichment and vibrance of a large, modern city. As this website about the [history of the Red River Valley](#) notes, "Our adventurous, pioneering spirit is alive and well. In our people, you'll find a unique mix of Midwestern gregariousness and quiet strength. Ingenuity, vision, and down-to-earth practicality define our distinct prairie soul."

Agriculture is still the main economic industry in the region, but education, healthcare, finance, government, and manufacturing also play key roles in the region's modern-day economy. Fargo has earned the label "Silicon Prairie" by those who see its "booming technology start-up industry that harnesses the spirit of the early pioneers" ([History of Fargo website](#)). A 2015 [Fortune.com article](#) labeled Fargo as "the most undervalued tech hub" in the United States, and such a distinction continues for individuals and corporations. *Forbes* and *CNN Money* have recognized Fargo as quickly becoming a top place for young entrepreneurs to live and work. And major organizations in the region, such as Bushel, have come to dominate in the tech field, alongside niche market leaders like Weather Modification Inc.

Several multi-billion-dollar, industry-leading businesses are located or headquartered in the region: Aldevron, Amazon, American Crystal Sugar Company, Bell Bank, Border States, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cass-Clay, Caterpillar, Doosan Bobcat, Gate City

Bank, RDO Equipment Company, Scheels, and Titan Machinery. Microsoft houses one of its largest campus and employment base in the world in Fargo, and there is great sector diversity in areas such as bioscience, energy, healthcare, medical technology, manufacturing, and agricultural technology.

As described on the [Live in Fargo website](#), the region's economic growth is remarkable: "The Greater FM (Fargo-Moorhead) economy has increased by 180% over a 20-year time-space from 2001 to 2021, growing from a GRP of \$6.03 billion to \$18.3 billion today. During this time, the labor force has grown by a significant 39%" which is 3 times the national average of 13%. With its low unemployment rate (2.5%), favorable tax structure, and cost of living 8.1% less than the U.S. average, Fargo is drawing people from all points in their careers. *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Fargo as the #1 City for Finding a Job ([Fargo Moorhead Economic Development site](#)). [Livability.com](#) includes Fargo as a Top City among its [100 Best Places to Live](#); *Forbes* lists Fargo on its list of [Best Places to Retire](#); WalletHub ranked Fargo as the 6th Happiest Place to live. With higher than the national average investment per student, Fargo is also proud of its public-school system.

Fargo clearly embraces its quirky label of "North of Normal" and is now recognized as an increasingly cosmopolitan area, with steady and notable growth over the past few years in its cultural and ethnic diversity. As this [virtual tour](#) shows, residents and visitors enjoy an active arts scene, including a symphony, civic opera company, museums, galleries, and a movie theatre; array of restaurants, craft breweries, wineries, and shopping options; and a newly refurbished [downtown district](#) that often hosts street fairs and parades. The area is abundant with natural beauty and activities for [outdoor recreation](#) as well.



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST AND ACADEMICS AT NDSU

The mission of the Office of the Provost clarifies the wide range of responsibilities in this area: “The Office of the Provost provides administrative leadership for all academic activities, by promoting, supporting, and sustaining excellence in teaching, research, creative activity, and service in all institutional academic units. Responsible for academic resources and budget, professional faculty matters, academic computing, and the University’s instructional curriculum, the Office of the Provost is committed to creating an environment conducive to good academic and institutional citizenship.”

As shown on this [organizational chart](#), the Provost leads many broad areas within the [Office of the Provost](#), including academics, administrative areas, student affairs and institutional equity, faculty affairs, strategic enrollment management, and access and opportunity.

ACADEMICS

More than 200 [academic programs](#) at NDSU (undergraduate, graduate, professional, and certificate) are offered within these academic colleges:

- [College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources](#)
- [College of Arts and Sciences](#)
- [College of Business](#)
- [College of Engineering](#)
- [College of Health and Human Sciences](#)
- College of [Graduate](#) and [Interdisciplinary Studies](#)

Candidates are encouraged to explore the full range of programs and their impact by looking closely at the websites for programs in each of the Colleges.



LEADERSHIP AGENDA FOR THE NEXT PROVOST

The next Provost will join NDSU at an exciting yet challenging time in the institution's history, as the University envisions its opportunities in changing industries and environments. The Higher Learning Commission reaccreditation process and the launch of the strategic planning initiative will begin in 2025, with the completion set for 2026. The Provost's active involvement in the strategic planning and demonstrated ability to lead and collaborate with faculty, staff and institutional stakeholders will be essential to the successful completion of this work. The Provost is expected to lead some of the collaborative efforts in the next phases of [NDSU Transform](#): "Grounded in our land-grant mission, this initiative focuses on enhancing student success, expanding groundbreaking research, and fostering innovative partnerships that drive economic growth and community impact. By investing in modern facilities, cutting-edge programs, and collaborative opportunities, NDSU is empowering the next generation of leaders, innovators, and problem-solvers."

Some of the "hard work of reductions and disruptions" in the NDSU Transform process has already been done or begun. Based on the broad participation among members of the [President's Councils](#), NDSU has focused on restructuring to have 5 instead of 7 colleges; rethinking academic programs; clarifying policies; and using and refining new budget models. The next stages of transformation include strategic

priorities that will guide President Cook, the Cabinet, and leaders in Academic Affairs in the years ahead:

- Enhancing enrollment, retention, and student success.
- Prioritizing NDSU's R-1 Carnegie classification status as a top research institution.
- Embracing NDSU's critical role as a land-grant university.
- Aligning programs with industry demand.
- Strategizing for enrollment and marketing.
- Aligning employee expertise for greater impact.
- Investing in professional development.
- Prioritizing industry collaborations and meeting workforce demands.

Because each of these strategic priorities is related to areas overseen by the Provost, they will also be critical parts of the agenda for the Provost in working with members of the Cabinet, other campus leaders, faculty, staff, and community partners. The University seeks a confident, experienced, collaborative Provost who can develop and sustain strong teams as they collectively drive progress from disruption to transformation and continuous improvement. Seeking input and communicating clearly about decisions will be essential in building trust and enthusiasm for achieving these priorities.

QUALITIES EXPECTED IN THE NEXT PROVOST

Based on pre-search listening sessions, surveys, and conversations about the desired characteristics for the next Provost, the following are the personal and professional qualities and skills that NDSU colleagues and stakeholders expect:

- Understanding of the historic role of land-grant universities and their impact across many areas of a state.
- Ability to tell the story of NDSU to a range of stakeholders, inspiring excitement about the campus and the impact of its research and student success.
- Demonstrated ability to foster an environment of trust.
- Ability to listen to stakeholders, welcoming a variety of perspectives and then communicating clearly about decisions.
- Curiosity and boldness in imagining roles and programs for NDSU at the intersection of business needs, technology (including AI), and learning.
- Willingness to take calculated risks to enhance the University's strategic position as a leader in higher education.
- Strategic approach to recognizing both strengths and challenges and finding opportunities within a complex organization.
- Demonstrated ability to build relationships with diverse campus and external groups in a collegial manner.
- Skill in negotiating and building consensus.
- A personable yet decisive leadership style that inspires trust and confidence.
- Exemplary oral and written communication skills.
- Awareness of the complex issues in higher education in the United States and globally, with interest in continued learning about initiatives and best practices for today's students.
- Ability to lead organizational change through balancing analytical expertise with respect for the people affected by choices.
- Resilience, flexibility, and persistence in the face of challenges.
- Emotional intelligence, including understanding of personal strengths as well as opportunities for self-evaluation.
- Impeccable character, integrity, and compassion.



REQUIRED AND PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

To ensure the integrity and quality of academic programs and initiatives and be effective in both transformative academic leadership and administrative management, the successful candidate for Provost **shall demonstrate all these required qualifications:**

- **Terminal Degree:** An earned terminal degree from an accredited institution in a discipline associated with North Dakota State University (as listed among the [academic programs](#)).
- **Academic/Scholarly Accomplishment:** A record of academic/scholarly accomplishment in full-time teaching, research, and/or service credentials appropriate for appointment with rank as a full professor in a discipline at NDSU, a top research university.
- **Academic Leadership Experience:** An strong record of progressively responsible academic leadership, serving in such roles as dean, associate dean, vice provost or other comparable positions that require financial management, personnel hiring, supervision, and allocation oversight.
- **Strategic and Visionary Leadership Experience:** A broad-based, inclusive record of guiding academic leaders, faculty, and others to develop and implement strategies for responsive, relevant, and innovative academic programs.
- **Experience in Working with Senior Teams:** Evidence of the ability to work with a broad team (including the President and Cabinet) and provide leadership in a dynamic, fast-moving, complex environment that involves taking calculated risks to enhance the University's strategic position as a leader in higher education.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

To ensure the integrity and quality of academic programs and initiatives and be effective in both transformative academic leadership and administrative management, the successful candidate for Provost **may also demonstrate some of these preferred qualifications:**

- A record of success in a shared governance environment, including a record of administrative leadership that advances academics by involving students, staff, and faculty in decision-making processes.
- Experience in high-capacity research institutions and ability to advance research as a champion for institutional goals and initiatives, fostering innovation, securing funding, and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration.
- Experience with, and responsibility for, faculty development and the evaluation of promotion and tenure at the college or school level.
- Evidence of a commitment to the broad range of disciplines and programs that comprise the mission of a globally connected land-grant university.
- Evidence of the ability to collaborate with the President, Cabinet, and the broader University community to co-create, articulate, and execute the University's strategic vision.
- Experience leading and managing academic and support units that report through the Provost's Office.
- A record of community, industry, and legislative engagement.
- Evidence of understanding the needs of regional and specialized accreditation across a range of fields.
- Experience with developing and sustaining industry partnerships and workforce development.



APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Academic Search is assisting North Dakota State University in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications will be held in strict confidence. To learn more about this opportunity and discuss your qualifications and interest, potential applicants are welcome to email NDSUProvost@academicsearch.org. You are encouraged to schedule a conversation with either of the Senior Consultants for this search, please email a draft of your CV to Dr. Ginny Horvath (ginny.horvath@academicsearch.org) or Ms. Lisa Ryan (lisa.ryan@academicsearch.org).

APPLICATIONS

Applicants should send these documents (three separate PDFs) and only these documents to NDSUProvost@academicsearch.org:

- A **detailed cover letter**, addressed to the search committee, expressing your interest in this position at NDSU and addressing how you meet the specific qualifications and expectations outlined in this profile.
- A **current curriculum vitae** that includes relevant responsibilities and accomplishments.
- A **list of five professional references**, including their names, titles, organizations, phone numbers, email addresses; indicate the perspective on your work that each reference could provide.

References will not be contacted until later in the search process and only with the candidate's permission. A full background check (including verification of identity, degrees, and employers; criminal background check; and sexual misconduct check) must be completed satisfactorily before any candidate can be offered this position.

NOMINATIONS

Although nominations are not required to be considered for this position, leaders who know of outstanding candidates are welcome to submit confidential nominations in an email to NDSUProvost@academicsearch.org. Be sure to include the nominee's full name and contact information. Academic Search will notify people of their nomination, provide details about the position, and encourage them to apply.

SEARCH TIMELINE

Although the position remains open until filled, for full consideration by the Search Committee, candidates should submit their applications materials by **September 2, 2025**. Finalists for the position are



expected to participate in campus interviews that will include a public presentation.

The timeline for this search includes screening and interviews for this position in Fall 2025, with an expected start date for the new Provost in January 2026.

NDSU LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We collectively acknowledge that NDSU, a land grant institution, sits on the traditional lands of the Oceti Sakowin (Dakota, Lakota, Nakota) and Anishinaabe Peoples in addition to many diverse Indigenous Peoples still connected to these lands. We honor with gratitude Mother Earth and the Indigenous Peoples who have walked with her throughout generations. We will continue to learn how to live in unity with Mother Earth and build strong, mutually beneficial, trusting relationships with Indigenous Peoples of our region (see www.ndsu.edu/inclusioncouncil/native_american_initiatives).

NDSU NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

NDSU does not discriminate in its programs and activities on the basis of age, color, gender expression/identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, participation in lawful off-campus activity, physical or mental disability, pregnancy, public assistance status, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, spousal relationship to current employee, or veteran status, as applicable. Direct inquiries to Vice Provost, Title IX/ADA Coordinator, Old Main 100, 701-231-7708, ndsu.eoaa@ndsu.edu.

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting North Dakota State 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.

