

SEARCH PROFILE:

DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF INDIGENOUS STUDIES



UNIVERSITY OF
ALASKA
FAIRBANKS

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THE SEARCH FOR A DEAN

The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) enthusiastically invites nominations and applications for the Dean of the newly founded (2023) College of Indigenous Studies (CIS). The UAF CIS is the nation's first and only such college within a public university. The Dean will be an inspirational and accomplished professional who provides visionary leadership as well as overall academic, administrative, and financial management of the College.

The CIS is dedicated to promoting the knowledge, cultures, and practices of Indigenous peoples, with an emphasis on those in Alaska and the Arctic. The College's primary goal is to deliver academic programs and research opportunities to prepare students for leadership roles in a variety of professions.

The CIS offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate degree programs that emphasize the importance of Indigenous languages, community development, and governance. It also supports the development of critical thinking and applied skills that equip students for careers creating impactful change.

The College is dedicated to transforming academia to create a supportive and inclusive environment for Indigenous students and faculty. By actively engaging with the broader university community and the public, the College aims to drive systemic change that promotes understanding and respect for Indigenous perspectives. Through collaboration with tribes and local Indigenous organizations, the College contributes to preserving and revitalizing Indigenous languages, aligning education with the values and priorities of Indigenous peoples in Alaska and beyond.

The College is a community-oriented workplace where people from diverse backgrounds and

disciplines collaborate to elevate Indigenous communities, voices, and perspectives.

While this position is based in Fairbanks, the service region of CIS is roughly the size of Texas. Fairbanks is the second largest city in the state, with a metro population of just under 100,000. While one does not have to be a rugged outdoors person to thrive in Fairbanks, the College seeks a Dean who will embrace the unique Alaskan environment. Fairbanks is in the Boreal ecoregion tucked between the state's Arctic, Subarctic, and Coastal ecoregions, with winters that offer little daylight and summers with fleeting darkness. Snowfall begins in early October, with spring melt in May. Yet, Alaskans enjoy the freedom of unmatched natural beauty and the wonder of a million stars in the night sky.

Throughout the year, there are plenty of sports and outdoor activities to enjoy, and both the university and the city boast lively cultural scenes. The Fairbanks Shakespeare Festival, the Fairbanks Arts Association, the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, and the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center, among others, kindle a winter warmth shared by community members. Summers in Fairbanks see very little rain, with temperatures that hover between 70 and 80 degrees. The presence of the midnight sun enhances the appeal, making Fairbanks one of the most pleasant in Alaska from late April through September.

Alaska is home to more than 229 tribes and recognizes 20 Indigenous languages as official languages. Our state is diverse not only in geography but also rich in culture. CIS is a place of education for Alaska's diverse community as well as globally.



A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD THIS WORLD-CLASS EFFORT

The CIS is committed to promoting and elevating Indigenous knowledge within academia as a distinct and intact knowledge system, equipping Alaska Native, Indigenous, and allied students with the skills needed in academic and professional fields vital to their communities. The Dean will lead efforts with profound community impact across the breadth of Alaska through research that has a worldwide influence on Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures alike.

The CIS at UAF offers an outstanding chance to help shape the future of Indigenous Studies in this global context. Interested candidates for this critical position of Dean should consider the following key elements of this exceptional opportunity.

STRONG COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND CULTURAL CONTINUITY

- The CIS is deeply committed to integrating Indigenous knowledge systems with academic disciplines and research units, ensuring that Indigenous worldviews, traditions, and languages are integrated and uplifted.
- The CIS is home to the [Alaska Native Language Center](#) (ANLC), whose research, resources, and programs are pivotal in supporting students and communities working to revitalize Alaska Native languages, as well as [the Alaska Native Knowledge Network](#), a platform dedicated to gathering and sharing information about Alaska Native knowledge systems and cultural practices.

DIVERSE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

- CIS offers a range of interdisciplinary degree programs that combine academic rigor and community relevance, such as baccalaureate degrees in Alaska Native Languages, Alaska Native Studies, Rural Development, Child Development and Family Studies; and graduate programs in Rural Development, Indigenous Studies, and One Health.

- Our Tribal Governance program is particularly well regarded, offering students the tools to become leaders in their communities and beyond.

STRONG SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

- UAF is a national leader in supporting Indigenous students. The CIS provides a nurturing environment where students from Alaska Native, Indigenous, and rural students thrive.
- Rural Student Services (RSS) is dedicated to addressing the needs of rural and Indigenous students by offering high-quality support to those who actively pursue higher education and its opportunities. RSS's holistic approach uniquely acknowledges students' efforts to achieve academic and personal balance, enriching the cultural diversity of UAF and beyond.
- The Rural Alaska Honors Institute (RAHI) is a bridging program that allows rural and Alaska Native students to experience college life. UAF's financial aid office also offers scholarships and funding opportunities for Indigenous students to help reduce barriers to higher education.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

CIS is woven into Indigenous communities in Alaska and beyond. The College partners with Tribal Nations and Indigenous serving organizations to offer educational programs that meet workforce needs.

The College's emphasis on community-engaged learning creates opportunities for applied research that directly impact communities. Thus, students gain academic knowledge while also making meaningful contributions to their communities.

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD THIS WORLD-CLASS EFFORT (CONT.)

LEADERSHIP IN INDIGENOUS RESEARCH AND POLICY

- CIS faculty are recognized leaders in Indigenous research and policy, contributing to scholarship on Indigenous governance, stewardship, cultural revitalization, and social justice. The College encourages students to engage in research that advances Indigenous futures.
- CIS's commitment to research on Indigenous issues is further supported by its [Center for One Health](#), which advances research that takes a holistic, systems approach to issues at the intersection of human, animal, and environmental health.

INCLUSIVE AND HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORT

- As a College, CIS provides comprehensive support services, including advising, tutoring, counseling, and career services.

IMPACTFUL GRADUATE PROGRAMS

- The [Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies](#) and [Master's in Indigenous Studies](#) programs prepare graduate students to become scholars and leaders in Indigenous governance, policy, and cultural revitalization.
- The [Master's in Rural Development](#) program focuses on Indigenous leadership development, organizational management, community development, program and project planning, and understanding Indigenous issues within a dynamic, cross-cultural setting.
- The [One Health Master's Degree](#) (OHM) trains students to adopt a constructionist approach to tackle challenges in the Circumpolar North, focusing on the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health. Graduates will be able to develop and implement management plans in collaboration with key stakeholders. The program attracts students interested in One Health issues and those aiming for medical or veterinary schools.

The CIS is proud of its rich academic offerings, its close relationships with Indigenous communities, and its dedication to preserving and revitalizing Indigenous cultures and languages. The College's interdisciplinary approach to Indigenous studies, robust student support systems, and leadership in research and community engagement are central to its mission of empowering Indigenous students and contributing to the sustainable development of Indigenous communities.

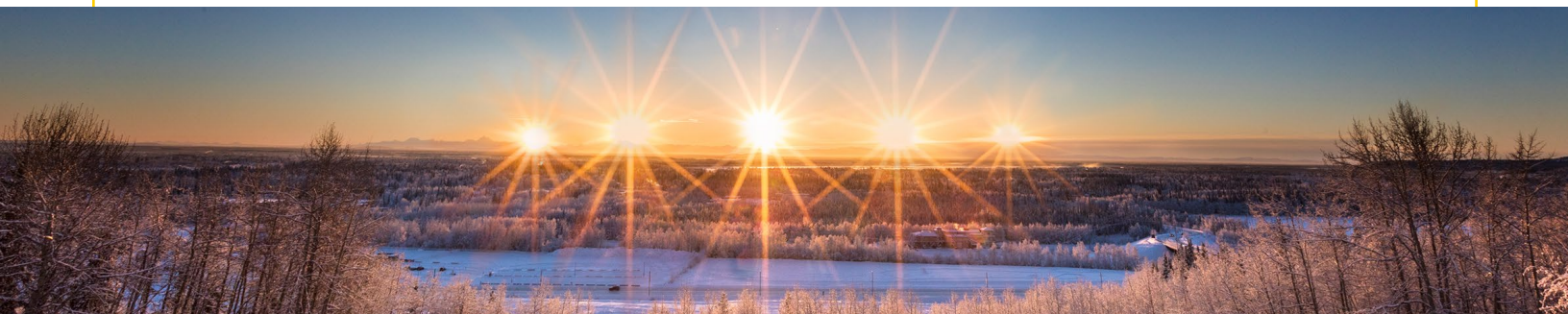
The new Dean for CIS will lead by:

- Listening first, inquiring before advocating, and demonstrating humility in seeking to understand diverse perspectives, experiences, and needs before acting.
- Recognizing and fostering a culture of connection inclusive of CIS employees at every level.
- Recognizing that CIS is a trailblazer in high-flex place-based programming, including distance learning, intensive courses, and certificates specialized in serving local villages and communities.
- Collaborating with faculty and staff to develop decolonizing and indigenizing structures, policies, approaches, and programs that promote accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Be a systems thinker who embraces the complexity of the CIS mission and works with faculty and staff to articulate and operationalize the mission's shared goals.
- Advocate for the CIS within the broader university with strategies that enhance resource allocation, advocate for rural student success, and contribute meaningfully to scholarship, economic development, and community vibrancy.
- Bring expertise in change management that collegially facilitates discussions and decisions regarding initiatives and programs.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the Alaska Native nations upon whose ancestral lands our campuses reside. In Fairbanks, our Troth Yeddha' Campus is located on

the ancestral lands of the Dena people of the lower Tanana River.





ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

Gold discoveries in the early 1900s brought sudden changes to the Tanana Valley. In 1906, the hill where UAF now stands, called Troth Yeddha by the local Indigenous people, became the location of a federal [Agricultural Experiment Station](#). In 1915, the U.S. Congress dedicated the station's land to a future school of higher education.

On May 3, 1917, Alaska Territorial Gov. John Strong signed a bill from the Territorial Legislature to create the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines, now called the University of Alaska. In 1922, the College opened its doors to six students with a faculty of seven offering 16 classes. The first commencement in 1923 was help for a single graduate.

In 1935, the Alaska Territorial Legislature changed the school's name to the University of Alaska to reflect its expanding role in research, teaching, and public service. By then, faculty and course offerings had grown to include a range of liberal arts, science, and engineering programs. Mining engineering was the most prominent program because the local and statewide gold mining industry provided many employment opportunities.

World War II changed Alaska more than even the gold rush. The only land battle on US soil was fought when Japanese forces attacked the Aleutian Islands. Because of Alaska's strategic importance, the Alaska Highway was built in 1942, connecting Fairbanks to British Columbia. The population of Fairbanks grew from around 4,000 before the war to nearly 20,000 by 1950.

The United States grew increasingly aware of the need for areas of research and national defense for which Alaska provided unique opportunities. Programs for high-latitude research in arctic marine and biology areas and launch facilities for NASA and the Department of Defense were created. The university awarded its first Ph.D. degree to a geophysics student in 1955.

NASA named UAF a Space Grant institution for aerospace research in 1991, making it a Land, Sea, and Space Grant institution. The university established an Arctic biological research field station, earthquake and volcano monitoring centers, a satellite tracking facility, and a center for Arctic research.

The University of Alaska was pivotal in Alaska's statehood. The Alaska Constitution was drafted in what is now Constitution Hall and signed in the home of UAF student service and administrative offices, now called Signers' Hall. Alaska became the nation's 49th state in 1959.

Over the years, the University has undergone several reorganizations. In 1975, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau campuses were assigned their own chancellors. In 1987, during a recession caused by lower oil prices, the administration of the community colleges moved from a statewide office to the three main campuses. The [Cooperative Extension Service](#), which has helped fulfill the university's public service mandate since 1930, also moved to UAF.

The [campus in Fairbanks](#) has continued to thrive, along with satellite campuses in [Bethel](#), [Dillingham](#), [Kotzebue](#), and the [Interior](#), and education centers in [Fort Yukon](#), [Delta Junction](#), [King Salmon](#), [New Stuyahok](#), [Togiak](#), and [Unalaska](#) to serve rural Alaskans.

One of the nation's great museums, the [University of Alaska Museum of the North](#), was expanded in 2006 with an additional 40,000 square feet of space.

Current enrollment is about 7,500 students enrolled from 49 states and 53 countries. Eighty-seven percent are undergraduates taught by 545 faculty with a student-faculty ratio of 10-1. The UAF has nine Colleges.

[College of Business and Security Management](#)
[College of Engineering and Mines](#)
[College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences](#)
[College of Liberal Arts](#)
[College of Natural Science and Mathematics](#)
[College of Indigenous Studies](#)
[Community and Technical College](#)
[Graduate School](#)
[School of Education](#)

On the sports field, UAF earned its 10th NCAA national rifle championship in 2008, and the hockey team went to the NCAA Division I national tournament for the first time in 2010.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE OF INDIGENOUS STUDIES

The College was established in 1972 and has expanded significantly since then with new programs and a new name. The College of Indigenous Studies was established in 2024 to address Indigenous communities' educational needs and aspirations in Alaska and the Arctic. The College's history and formation reflect a growing recognition of the importance of integrating Indigenous knowledge systems into higher education and supporting Indigenous students.

As UAF's response to the need for a more structured and comprehensive approach to Indigenous education emerged, the College of Rural and Community Development was transformed into the CIS. The College aimed to offer programs that honored Indigenous worldviews and practices, prepared students to be leaders in their communities, and promoted the sustainability of Indigenous languages and cultures.

The College is a center for research and academic exchange. It promotes the revitalization of Indigenous traditions while addressing contemporary issues facing Indigenous communities. By fostering partnerships with Indigenous organizations, the College contributes to the enhanced visibility and success of Indigenous peoples in higher education and society.

The variety of degree programs blends Indigenous knowledge with contemporary academic disciplines. Programs are available at the undergraduate and graduate levels providing students with a strong foundation in Indigenous studies, governance, and cultural preservation and equipping them with skills to navigate modern challenges in Indigenous communities.

IN-PERSON PROGRAMS

CIS offers courses in Applied Arts (APAR) in traditional crafts such as beading, clothing construction, basket-making, and other areas of Indigenous practice. (Fairbanks, Kotzebue, Bethel, Dillingham, Nome, AK)

[High Latitude Range Management](#), O.E.C. (Nome, AK)

[High Latitude Range Management](#), Cert. (Nome, AK)

[Iñupiaq Language](#), B.A. (Fairbanks, AK)

[Native Language Education](#), Cert., A.A.S. (Fairbanks, AK)

[Rural Human Services](#), Cert. (Fairbanks, AK and Bethel, AK)

[Rural Waste Management and Spill Response](#), O.E.C. (Anchorage, AK)

[Yup'ik Language and Culture](#), Cert., A.A.S., B.A. (Fairbanks, AK)

DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

[Alaska Native Studies](#), B.A. (in-person options in Fairbanks, AK)

[Child Development and Family Studies](#), B.A.

[Content Creation](#), O.E.

[Ethnobotany](#), O.E. (in-person options in Bethel, AK)

[Human Services](#), A.A.S.

[Indigenous Studies](#), M.A., Ph.D. (in-person options in Fairbanks, AK)

[Rural Development](#), B.A., M.A. (in-person options in Fairbanks, AK)

[Sustainable Energy](#), O.E. (in-person options in Dillingham, AK)

[Tribal Governance](#), Cert., A.A.S.

[Tribal Justice](#), O.E.

LOCATIONS

The College of Indigenous Studies is based at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Troth Yeddha' campus in Fairbanks, Alaska. However, many programs are offered in partnership with other University of Alaska campuses and through distance learning options, allowing greater access for students across the state and beyond.

Additionally, UAF maintains satellite campuses and community-based partnerships with local Indigenous communities in other parts of Alaska, such as the [UAF Community and Technical College \(CTC\)](#) and UAF's [Rural Campus Network](#).

RURAL AND COMMUNITY CAMPUS NETWORK

UAF has a network of campuses and learning centers across Alaska, including many that serve rural and Indigenous communities. These facilities support distance education, allowing students from remote areas to access courses and degree programs through technology and in-person visits.





LEADERSHIP AGENDA

COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND OFTEN WITH A COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

As the College's identity emerges from merging and melding various programs and units into a new College, concerns about organizational changes must be met with clear and frequent communication. The Dean will be an effective communicator, listener, and advocate with strong interpersonal skills and a commitment to sharing and eliciting information, ideas, and policy. The Dean will work to clarify policies, procedures, and decisions in structures and formats that facilitate shared purpose, transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness to feedback.

The Dean must be approachable, not only as a leader but also as a colleague eager to join a community that values kindness, inclusion, and good humor. The Dean will engage with genuine interest and curiosity all College and community stakeholders and students, enhancing a culture where people feel valued, respected, inspired, and allowed to think creatively and critically about College efforts. The Dean will be a leader in attracting, supporting, and retaining diverse faculty and academic staff.

CREATE A COMPELLING VISION FOR THE FUTURE WITH ENROLLMENT AND CURRICULUM PLANS

The Dean will lead the collaborative development and implementation of innovative strategic enrollment and curriculum plans to help the College and university further their aspiration for Research 1 status by growing the Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies program in the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies and working with the Center for One Health Research to expand the College's research portfolio. The Dean will also guide the development and revision of innovations in the modality, delivery, and duration of courses and programs, focusing on market demands, equity gaps, community engagement, and improved access.

DEEPEN PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS THE SERVICE AREA

The CIS is supported by an extensive network of community, business, industry, and university partners committed to the success of Indigenous culture and people. The Dean will collaborate with these entities, working closely with faculty and staff leaders to offer quality, value, and relevance in all programmatic offerings.

With a deep respect for high-quality academic programs incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, the Dean will build bridges with all constituent groups through unwavering integrity and respect for others.

USE AND ENABLE ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP TO CREATE SYSTEMS THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO CURRENT CONDITIONS

In this rapid and radical transformational period, the CIS requires leadership to engage College stakeholders in adapting to and flourishing through change so that the complex elements of the CIS can move toward greater holism and alignment. Drawing on the wisdom of faculty and staff, the Dean will lead the collaborative development and implementation of a strategic agenda that leverages the unique assets of the CIS. Focused on continuous improvement, the Dean will engage in shared governance processes that integrate and execute strategic priorities grounded in the College's core values of inclusion, equity, wellness, respect, and caring.

ENGAGE PROCESSES AND RESULTS WITH SYSTEMIC COLLABORATION

The Dean will be a systems thinker who skillfully navigates the complexity of a university system with nine separate Colleges, creating collaborative relationships with other institutional entities. Serving as a liaison who demonstrates the interdisciplinary value of CIS to university-wide colleagues, the Dean will help catalyze innovations in research, student success, service, and mission fulfillment for all university partners.

CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE WITH EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP SKILLS FUELED BY CARE FOR OTHERS

The Dean will be a bold change agent with a progressive vision that can elevate the College to national and international prominence while still serving the needs of Alaskan communities and employers. The Dean will be a strategic, trustworthy, and sound decision-maker who knows when to ask for help. The Dean will provide clear direction for College employees with cultural sensitivity, care, and emotional intelligence, modeling and leading others.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE DEAN

- Lead the College with a clear strategic vision that aligns academic programs with the mission to serve Indigenous communities, ensuring the College remains a pioneering institution in Indigenous education and research.
- Develop and implement academic plans prioritizing culturally responsive curricula and programs that address the specific educational and workforce needs of Indigenous and rural communities in Alaska.
- Oversee the recruitment, hiring, and retention of diverse and qualified faculty and staff, fostering a supportive environment for professional growth, continuous development, and high academic standards.
- Conduct faculty and staff evaluations, promoting professional development opportunities and maintaining a commitment to excellence in instruction, research, and community engagement.
- Establish and monitor policies to ensure compliance with accreditation standards and regulatory requirements, upholding the university's commitment to quality and accountability.
- Drive initiatives that increase the College's visibility and reputation within the broader academic and Indigenous communities, advocating for the College's mission and contributions on local, national, and international platforms.
- Act as a primary ambassador for the College of Indigenous Studies, fostering solid and sustainable relationships with Tribal Nations, community organizations, and Indigenous leaders to support community-based education and mutual goals.
- Develop and nurture cross-campus and external partnerships, collaborating with other university departments, educational institutions, and governance agencies to leverage resources and create impactful programs.
- Lead community engagement initiatives that promote Indigenous values and traditions, ensuring that academic and community programs are inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the diverse cultural backgrounds represented in Alaska and beyond.
- Promote and prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in all College activities and decision-making, creating an environment where all students, faculty, and community members feel valued and supported.
- Allocate and manage facilities and spaces to support academic and community initiatives, including workshops, cultural events, and collaborative projects, thereby enhancing the College's impact within Indigenous communities.
- Develop and manage the College's budget, ensuring the responsible allocation of resources to support strategic initiatives, academic programs, and student services in alignment with the College's mission.
- Secure and oversee funding from diverse sources, including grants, contracts, and external funding, to support program development, research initiatives, and student scholarships, ensuring financial sustainability and growth.
- Collaborative with university administration to align financial planning and resource allocation with the broader institutional priorities, advocating for the needs and goals of the College of Indigenous Studies.
- Oversee the College's daily operations, including budget administration, financial reporting, human resources, course management, and student accounts, ensuring compliance with university policies, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements.
- Lead the Business Office Shared Services in implementing efficient administrative systems that support the College's educational objectives, enabling faculty and staff to focus on academic and community responsibilities.
- Regularly review and assess operational practices to identify areas for improvement, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in administrative processes, resource management, and financial accountability.





MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- Master's degree required.
- At least five years in progressive leadership roles within higher education or equivalent experience.
- Demonstrated experience in budget management, program development, and compliance.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

- A terminal degree (Ph.D., J.D., or Ed.D.) is preferred for candidates applying for this role.
- In-depth understanding of rural Alaska's education and workforce needs.
- Extensive experience in culturally responsive leadership and education.
- Skilled in financial planning, resource allocation, and fiscal reporting.
- Experienced in strategic financial planning, particularly in an educational context.
- Proven ability to develop academic programs and support faculty through the tenure and promotion process.
- Experience in progressively responsible leadership roles within a post-secondary setting is essential. While a minimum of 5 years is preferred, equivalent leadership experience in other sectors will also be considered.
- Experience with fiscal and budgetary planning, management, and reporting.
- Experience working successfully with faculty, staff, students, and/or communities of diverse backgrounds.
- Experience with supporting the successful tenure and promotion of faculty.



PROCEDURES FOR NOMINATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

The University of Alaska Fairbanks College of Indigenous Studies is being assisted in this search by Academic Search. Nominations and inquiries may be sent in complete confidence to CISFairbanksDean@academicsearch.org. Initial screening of applications will begin immediately. The position is open until filled, and applications received by **January 31, 2025**, can be assured of consideration.

To be considered, please submit the following materials:

- A fully completed University of Alaska employment application (applications will only be accepted online through the University of Alaska Job Site).
- A current CV.
- A cover letter outlining your qualifications.
- A legible and updated set of unofficial transcripts.
- A diversity statement - A one page document describing your experiences and commitment to diversity. You may consider addressing the following areas in your statement (**upload as a supporting document*):

- Your personal values related to diversity.
- Your experiences working with diverse populations.
- Your future plans to promote diversity.
- Three professional references, including previous supervisors.

Nominators and prospective candidates may also arrange a confidential conversation about this opportunity with Rich Cummins, Senior Consultant, at rich.cummins@academicsearch.org. Application materials must be submitted directly to the University at ([HR website address](#)).

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting the University of Alaska Fairbanks 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.

