

SEARCH PROFILE:

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS



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Wayne State invites inquiries, applications, and nominations for Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), who is the senior administrative officer representing academic affairs and reports directly to the President. S/he is charged with academic leadership of the College and promotes excellence in teaching and service across all academic programs. The VPAA directs and coordinates all academic activities. For all degree and certificate programs s/he is responsible for ensuring compliance with academic accreditation requirements; advancing scholarly activity; and growing and supporting academic programs. The VPAA works closely with other vice presidents and administrators to support the College mission, vision, and objectives, and to ensure institutional effectiveness. The new VPAA is expected to take office in Spring 2026.



ABOUT WAYNE STATE COLLEGE

In 1891, Wayne State was founded as a Normal School, a teacher's college, became a state school in 1910, and was renamed Wayne State College by the Nebraska legislature in 1963. We have become a leading comprehensive college in Northeast Nebraska, with 15 academic departments within four academic schools and more than 130 career pathways.

Our newest undergraduate programs include engineering technology, accelerated nursing, and pre-public health. New master's programs include human performance and wellness management, criminal justice administration, and interdisciplinary studies. Wayne State also recently added three new certificate programs in the MBA (Human Resources, Supply Chain Management, and Leadership Management).

Wayne State offers more than 100 clubs and organizations in areas of academics, government, recreation and sport, religion, service, special interests, and social programs. Students are encouraged to join activities, clubs, and organizations that appeal to their interests. Club sports are incredibly popular, with many teams earning high ranks at regional and conference tournaments and later advancing to compete and place on a national level. Wayne State's newest club sports include esports, women's volleyball, wrestling, and disc golf. Athletics have enjoyed a rich tradition of success and have been an important part of the College since 1912. The College offers six men's sports and nine women's sports at the NCAA Division II level.

The College serves as a model of success for regional public higher education. Investments in infrastructure and facilities, expanded academic programs and partnerships, a campus-wide approach to recruitment and retention, and a commitment to strategic planning have yielded 28% growth in enrollment during the past six years, soaring to more than 4,500 students. This growth reflects the College's broad appeal, with approximately 85% of students coming from Nebraska and 15% from out of state, and nearly half identifying as first-generation reflecting our deep commitment to accessibility and opportunity.

Wayne State's cost of attendance is among the lowest in

ACADEMIC SCHOOLS

Arts and Humanities

- Art and Design
- Communication Arts
- History, Politics, and Geography
- Language and Literature
- Music

Business and Technology

- Business and Economics
- Computer Technology and Information Systems
- Technology and Applied Science

Education and Behavioral Sciences

- Counseling
- Educational Foundations and Leadership
- Psychology and Sociology
-

Science, Health, and Criminal Justice

- Criminal Justice
- Health, Human Performance, and Sport
- Life Sciences
- Physical Sciences and Mathematics

RECOGNIZED FOR VALUE AND EXCELLENCE

- No. 1 in Nebraska - Most Affordable College in Nebraska, *College Affordability Guide* (2024-25)
- Best College of Distinction - For excellence in student engagement, teaching, community, and successful graduate outcomes, *Colleges of Distinction* (2024-25)
- No. 9 in the U.S. - Most Affordable Online Master's Degrees, *Intelligent.com* (2025)

the Midwest among four-year colleges and universities. Our aggressive work to keep costs down while leveraging scholarships and aid has resulted in the average indebtedness for graduates decreasing each year for the past four years, from \$23,599 to \$18,088, while the percentage of students graduating with zero debt has grown to 35% from 31% during the same period.

Students learn from accomplished faculty. Several are

ABOUT WAYNE STATE COLLEGE (CONT.)

highly regarded as experts in their discipline and have been recognized with notable honors and awards. With a 19:1 student-to-faculty ratio, students receive an excellent education in a personalized setting and 82% of faculty hold the highest degrees in their fields.

The College's momentum is sustained by a data-driven blueprint that aims to inspire students, strengthen communities, and serve our region. Our goals are clear: continually improve retention and graduation rates; provide high-quality academic programs and campus facilities; support workforce and economic development in the region; maintain affordability and access; and manage resources for sustainability.

Our physical campus is beautiful and well-positioned to meet our needs. Careful planning and stewardship have brought about a newly built Center for Applied Technology, several completely renovated residence halls, academic buildings, and athletic facilities, and an inviting Campus Commons area at the center of a 128-acre campus that speaks directly to visitors about the pride we have in our history and traditions. The campus opened its first new residence hall in 55 years, in the Spring of 2025. Also completed this spring is a new athletic and recreation center. Since 2017, campus investments total more than \$90 million.

Alongside our commitment to the physical campus, the College's vision, mission, and core values precisely define our highest aspirations, our commitment to the students we educate, and the guidance we have set for ourselves and our important work.

Wayne State College is a member of the Nebraska State College System (NSCS) and is governed by a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor of Nebraska. The NSCS serves more than 9,000 students. Wayne State, Chadron State, and Peru State offer more than 200 degrees, certificates, and pre-professional programs that are accessible on campus, online, and in several locations around the state.

We are passionate, committed, and dedicated to helping our students fulfill their dream of earning a Wayne State College degree. The institution's core values around mutual respect, engaged learning, sustainability, innovation and agility, partnerships, and culture and community guide the strategies and the execution of the mission while serving as the foundation for Wayne State's work.

Wayne State students, staff, faculty, alumni, and friends hold this institution in high regard for a reason. The College was borne out of the hard work, tenacity, and grit of early leaders and has been sustained and advanced by the same spirit throughout its history. We invite prospective students and employees to join us on our mission. Learn more at www.wsc.edu.



VISION STATEMENT

Wayne State creates an environment of rigorous teaching, active learning, and meaningful service that engages students on a path to transformational leadership.

MISSION STATEMENT

Wayne State inspires students through access to affordable, high quality academic programs, personalized support services, and a culture committed to diversity, sustainability, and creativity. The College strengthens communities by engaging students in experiential learning and leadership opportunities. Wayne State serves the region through cultural opportunities, strategic partnerships, and innovative economic development programs.

ACCREDITATION

Institutional accreditation

- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
- Academy for Persistence and Completion
- Academy for Assessment of Student Learning

Specialized academic accreditations

- Association for Technology Management and Applied Engineering (ATMAE)
- Board of Certified Safety Professionals (BCSP)
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)
- Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)
- International Accreditation Council for Business Education (IACBE)
- National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD)
- National Association of Schools of Music (NASM)
- Nebraska Department of Education (NDE)

PRESIDENT MARYSZ RAMES

Dr. Marysz Rames was appointed the 13th president of Wayne State College in 2015. Her tenure has been marked by a strong focus on the future of the College's academic programs, partnerships, strategic enrollment planning, fundraising, raising the College's visibility, and constructing and renovating facilities to enhance student learning. Under President Rames' leadership, Wayne State's total enrollment has increased by 20% and academic programs have grown from 90 to 130 with a focus on degrees that align with the region's economic development needs. Additionally, there has been a focus on building relationships and solidifying partnerships with business and community leaders, the University of Nebraska system, community colleges, and school districts to provide students with seamless pathways to reaching their educational goals.

Dr. Rames earned her doctorate in adult and higher education from the University of South Dakota. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and communication studies, with a minor in economics, and her master's degree in educational administration from University of Northern Colorado.

She came to Wayne State from Dakota State University in S.D., where she had served as interim president since August 2014. Prior to her interim appointment, Dr. Rames served as the vice president for student affairs from 2000 to 2015 at South Dakota State University.





LEADERSHIP AGENDA

Wayne State College's next Vice President for Academic Affairs will be an essential partner in a forward-thinking institution with students as the primary focus. Working collaboratively with President Rames and her leadership team, the VPAA will engage faculty and other campus constituents to build on strengths and envision new innovative programming and modes of instruction for current and new student populations.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs supervises the Deans of the Schools of Arts and Humanities, Business and Technology, Education and Behavioral Sciences, and Science, Health, and Criminal Justice; the Director of the Center for Faculty Development and Innovation; and Academic Affairs Project Coordinator. The VPAA also oversees Records and Registration, Academic Success Center, Library, Assessment and Accreditation, Service Learning, Graduate Program, and Honors Program.

Major leadership agenda priorities include:

1. Creating environments that provide academic leadership, supervision, and management.

- Responsible for the successful operation of all academic areas at the College. Represent academic affairs with internal and external stakeholders.
- Develop an efficient process for developing and implementing academically-sound programs, which includes building a positive working relationship with the State College System office.
- Oversee and engage faculty in developing, evaluating, assessing, and revising curricula that support student achievement.
- Ensure compliance with the Higher Learning Commission and work with the Deans regarding the accreditation of program specific areas.
- Recruit and recommend to the President, with the advice of deans and college standing committees, appropriate faculty decisions such as appointments, salary, retention, promotion, tenure, and grievances and disciplinary actions.

- Participate in the negotiation of contracts for faculty.
- Work with academic deans to create and implement a faculty development agenda to meet the needs of faculty and program objectives.
- Monitor existing, emerging, and innovative technologies to improve teaching and learning as well as make appropriate recommendations for implementing such technology.
- Support and guide a robust continuing education program that includes online courses, hybrids, and off-site delivery.
- Ensure compliance with College and Board policies and procedures.
- Embrace the college-wide commitment to shared governance by working collaboratively with the Faculty, Professional Staff, and Student Senates.
- Create environments that promote the professional success and well-being of academic support staff, academic deans, and directors who comprise the Office of Academic Affairs.
- Promote partnerships with off-campus constituencies that enhance College and regional effectiveness which includes developing articulation agreements with other colleges and universities.

2. Advance Scholarly Activity and Service

- Enhance, promote, and support quality scholarly activity and service learning.
- Work with academic deans to clarify and promote the role that faculty scholarly activity plays throughout the College to support the achievement of institutional objectives.
- Encourage and facilitate pursuit of external funding, grants and contracts, and other resources that sustain scholarship and regional economic development.

3. Support Student Success and Engagement

- Create and support a campus environment that celebrates a wide spectrum of perspectives, fostering an atmosphere of acceptance and collaboration.

LEADERSHIP AGENDA (CONT.)

- Create and maintain a strong international education program.
- Support NCAA Division II athletics and student life.
- Collaborate with the Vice President of Student Affairs to develop, implement, and monitor a student success model that is strategic, and data driven.
- Provide academic input and support to the institutional undergraduate and graduate enrollment management efforts.
- Create, implement, and manage a robust Graduate Student Enrollment Management Plan in collaboration with the Vice President for Enrollment Management.

4. Provide Institutional Leadership, Planning, and Budgeting

- Support and participate in institutional governance and committee structure.
- Represent Wayne State's academic programs to external organizations, groups, and individuals to promote and develop support for the College's mission, vision, and goals.
- Serve as an active member of the President's Administrative team and work in collaboration with these leaders to make strategic decisions that advance the College's mission and vision.



- Collaborate with the President and Deans to identify priorities and when appropriate partner with the Chief Executive Officer of the Wayne State Foundation to secure philanthropic support for Wayne State College.
- Formulate and articulate sound policies and demonstrated ability to identify, resolve, and consult on a wide range of administrative and personnel issues with a clear sense of institutional needs and priorities.
- Ensure effective and transparent communication with constituents across the institution.
- Build collaborative relationships with the campus community and external stakeholders.
- Work with the other executive officers on development of the campus master plan, campus wide facilities planning efforts, and physical plant functions.
- Oversee development and implementation of academic strategic planning.
- Supervise the preparation and submission of annual budgets for areas of direct responsibility to ensure appropriate resource allocation to advance strategic priorities. Plan for long-term capital and operational resource needs; manage and monitor budgets on an ongoing basis.

QUALIFICATIONS

REQUIRED

- PhD, EdD, or other terminal academic or professional degree from an accredited institution.
- At least five years of directly related professional experience with three or more years of experience in an academic administrative position in roles that required management of faculty, accreditation, strategy, and budgets.
- Prior faculty experience in higher education.

PREFERRED

- Experience with higher education curriculum planning and program assessment, including graduate education and oversight.
- Committed to working collaboratively with the campus leadership team to create and develop innovative approaches to teaching and learning.
- Understand the global nature of an institution and respects the various units that support student success.
- Knowledge and experience with alternative delivery systems such as ITV, online, and off-site delivery. Understanding of the evolving role of technology in higher education.
- High degree of energy, passion, initiative, organization, and attention to detail.

- Ability to plan and implement impactful strategic initiatives.
- Understand, appreciate, and commit to the mission of Wayne State College, including dedication to serve first-generation students and traditionally underserved populations through an open-enrollment, inclusive environment.
- Dynamic and proactive leader who operates from a transparent communication model to foster collaboration and respect with faculty, student, and staff population.
- Committed to providing leadership to a student-centered comprehensive college and enhancing the quality of student learning at the graduate, undergraduate, and professional levels.
- Demonstrated commitment to collegiality and shared governance; experience with union environments.
- Experience with general studies, co-curricular and athletic programs.
- Budget and grant oversight experience.
- Proven record of working effectively with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and external constituents; ability to navigate the college system and satellite campuses.
- Experience in state funded higher education administration.
- Experience in collective bargaining environment.



APPLICATIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Wayne State College is being assisted by Academic Search. Confidential discussions may be arranged by contacting Dr. Pamela Balch, Senior Consultant, at pam.balch@academicsearch.org. Please include a copy of your CV to inform the conversation.

Applications should include (in 2 separate attachments): 1) a detailed cover letter addressing the priorities and desired qualities for the position and 2) a full current curriculum vitae (CV). Inquiries and applications should be sent to WayneStateVPAA@academicsearch.org. References will be requested later in the search.

When submitting a nomination, please include the nominee's full name, position, institution, and email address. This position is open until filled, but only applications received by **Monday, October 6**, can be given full consideration. More information about the institution may be found at www.wsc.edu.

Wayne State College is an equal opportunity institution and prohibits unlawful discrimination or harassment.

ABOUT ACADEMIC SEARCH

Academic Search is assisting Wayne State 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.

