



THE WRIGHT INSTITUTE

President Leadership Profile

September 2026



WittKieffer

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Executive Summary

The Wright Institute Board of Trustees seeks a visionary, relationship-oriented leader to serve as its third President. Following on the long and successful tenure of President Peter Dybwad, the next President will have the singular opportunity to honor The Wright Institute's distinctive heritage while guiding its future evolution.

The Wright Institute (the Wright) is a thriving independent graduate institution in Berkeley, California, serving approximately 530 students through its Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology and Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology programs. Its distinctive educational model is characterized by intensive faculty-student mentorship, early clinical engagement, reflective practice, and a deep commitment to preparing professionals who serve diverse and often underserved communities. Graduates are recognized for their professional competence, ethical leadership, and commitment to advancing mental health and well-being. Strong student outcomes, including exceptional professional licensure and internship placement success, reflect a culture of academic rigor and student support at the Wright.

The Wright stands at a defining moment in its distinguished history. Founded by renowned psychologist and educator Nevitt Sanford, the Wright was established on a bold vision: to prepare reflective, ethical professionals capable of addressing both individual and societal challenges through the integration of clinical practice, critical inquiry, and social responsibility. More than five decades later, that vision remains central to the Wright's identity and continues to attract students, faculty, and partners who seek to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

The next President will assume leadership of a graduate institution that combines mission-driven purpose with exceptional organizational strength. Through decades of thoughtful stewardship, The Wright Institute has built a strong financial foundation: The 2026-27 operating budget is \$18,750,000. The amount of the reserves and quasi-endowment is \$26 million. The Wright has no long-term debt and a history of prudent investment in programs, facilities, and strategic priorities. This financial stability provides a platform for innovation, growth, and long-term sustainability while preserving the values that have defined the Wright throughout its history.

The presidency comes at a pivotal and carefully planned moment. Following a multi-year succession strategy, the Board of Trustees has undertaken a thoughtful leadership transition process that includes Board renewal, broad stakeholder engagement, and a comprehensive national search. The Wright is intentionally positioning itself for its next chapter while maintaining continuity of mission, culture, and governance.

The next President will have the opportunity to build upon a highly regarded educational model, strengthen the Wright's impact within the mental health professions, foster a culture of inclusion and belonging, and navigate the opportunities and complexities facing higher education and behavioral health training. Equally important, the President will join a community deeply committed to reflective practice, collaborative engagement, and the preparation of ethical professionals capable of contributing meaningfully to society.

For accomplished leaders who are inspired by mission, energized by thoughtful dialogue, and motivated by the opportunity to advance both institutional excellence and social impact, the Wright offers a compelling and rare presidency. Beginning in the summer of 2027, the next President will lead an academically respected, financially strong, and values-centered institution uniquely positioned to shape the future of graduate education in psychology and counseling while continuing to fulfill its enduring mission of service to society. To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy on page 11.

Role of the President

Reporting to an effective and distinguished Board of Trustees, the Wright's next President will have the opportunity to build upon significant institutional progress while helping define its future strategic direction. The President manages an operating budget in the amount of \$18,750,000 (Fiscal Year 2026-27) and works in close collaboration with a dedicated senior team of direct reports, which includes the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Director of Clinical Program, Director of Human Resources, Director of the Counseling Program, Director of Institutional Research, Director of Admissions, and Vice President of Finance and Administrative Affairs.



Recent institutional priorities for the leadership team have included:

Advancing Academic Excellence

The Wright has maintained a strong commitment to rigorous academic standards, professional preparation, and measurable student success outcomes.

Strengthening Student Success

Support systems, mentoring structures, and experiential learning opportunities have helped position graduates for success in licensing, internships, and professional practice.

Investing in Facilities and Infrastructure

The Wright's acquisition and renovation of a dedicated Counseling Psychology campus created capacity for future growth and enhanced student experience.

Building Financial Sustainability

A decades-long commitment to responsible fiscal stewardship has resulted in exceptional financial resilience and flexibility for future investments.

Navigating Institutional Evolution

Looking ahead, the Wright seeks leadership that can thoughtfully navigate ongoing conversations regarding:

- Academic rigor and student support.
- Equity, inclusion, and belonging.
- Faculty engagement and shared governance.
- Enrollment management and program growth.
- Institutional effectiveness and assessment.
- The future of graduate education in mental health and counseling professions.

The next President will have a rare opportunity to lead an institution that is mission-centered, financially strong, and well-positioned for long-term success.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next President of the Wright will assume leadership of a distinctive graduate institution at a pivotal moment in its history. With a strong reputation for preparing mental health professionals, a deeply mission-driven culture, and a community committed to social justice and service, the Wright is well-positioned to build upon its strengths while identifying new pathways for innovation, growth, and impact.

As the Wright enters a new chapter following a period of long-standing and stable leadership, the next President will have a unique opportunity to help shape the institution's future, strengthen its visibility and influence, and ensure its continued relevance in a rapidly evolving higher education and healthcare landscape.

Provide Visionary Leadership for the Wright's Next Chapter

The Wright seeks a President who can articulate a clear, compelling vision for the future while honoring the values and traditions that have long defined the Wright. The successful candidate will engage the community in developing strategic priorities, fostering institutional alignment, and advancing a shared understanding of the Wright's role in preparing the next generation of mental health professionals.

This leader will help position the institution for continued success amid changing demographics, workforce needs, technological advancements, and increasing demand for accessible, high-quality mental health education and services.

Strengthen Institutional Cohesion and Community Engagement

The Wright's highly relational culture is among its greatest strengths. The next President will have the opportunity to further cultivate a sense of connection, collaboration, and shared purpose among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners.

An important opportunity exists to strengthen collaboration across academic programs, build greater institutional cohesion, and reinforce the Wright's collective identity while honoring the distinctive strengths and contributions of its various programs and constituencies.

Advance Financial Sustainability and Resource Development

The next President will build upon the Wright's stable foundation while positioning the institution for long-term financial strength and strategic growth.

This leader will be expected to enhance fundraising efforts, cultivate philanthropic partnerships, expand external relationships, and identify new revenue-generating opportunities that support the institution's mission and priorities. Increasing scholarship support, investing in faculty and academic programs, and expanding access to Wright's transformative educational experience will be important priorities.

Faculty and Staff Excellence

Faculty and staff play a central role in the Wright's reputation and impact. The next President will foster an environment in which faculty can thrive as educators, practitioners, scholars, and mentors, and staff can thrive as engaged professionals whose expertise, contributions, and commitment are valued across the institution. Opportunities exist to further strengthen professional development, mentorship, and pathways for advancement while continuing to attract and retain talented individuals committed to the Wright's mission and educational philosophy.

Enhance the Student Experience

Students consistently describe the Wright as a place where meaningful relationships, personal growth, and professional development intersect. The next President will build upon this foundation by ensuring students continue to experience a supportive, inclusive, and engaging environment. The successful candidate will prioritize student success, promote belonging across the community, and ensure that institutional practices continue to reflect the Wright's longstanding commitment to social justice, equity, and service.



Preserve and Strengthen Clinical and Community Partnerships

A hallmark of the Wright's educational model is its strong connection to professional practice and community engagement. The next President will have the opportunity to strengthen relationships with healthcare organizations, community agencies, clinical training partners, and professional organizations while reinforcing the Wright's reputation for excellence in practitioner preparation. As mental health needs continue to grow nationwide, the Wright is well-positioned to expand its impact through innovative partnerships and community-centered initiatives.

Lead with Transparency, Trust, and Accountability

Members of the Wright community seek leadership that is visible, communicative, and engaged. The next President will have the opportunity to foster trust through transparent decision-making, collaborative problem-solving, and open communication. Success will require balancing inclusive leadership with thoughtful decision-making to ensure that constituents feel informed, valued, and connected to the institution's future direction.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The Wright Institute seeks an accomplished and visionary leader who is inspired by the institution's mission and prepared to guide a highly distinctive graduate institution through its next era of growth and impact. The successful candidate will bring a combination of strategic leadership, operational expertise, relationship-building skills, and a genuine commitment to student success and community engagement.

While no candidate will possess every desired qualification, the following attributes and experiences are likely to characterize a successful contender:

Professional Qualifications

The successful candidate will bring a deep appreciation for the fields of psychology and counseling, and an understanding of higher education and the trends that small institutions are experiencing. A graduate degree is required; a disciplinary background in psychology and/or counseling is preferred. In addition, the next president will reflect many, if not all, of the following qualifications:

Leadership Experience

- A record of progressive leadership experience in higher education, healthcare, behavioral health, nonprofit organizations, or other mission-driven environments.

- Demonstrated success leading complex organizations through change, growth, and strategic planning initiatives.
- Experience building organizational alignment and fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholder groups.
- The ability to translate vision into action and achieve measurable outcomes.

Strategic and Organizational Leadership

- Demonstrated capacity to develop and execute long-range strategic priorities.
- An understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing higher education and professional graduate education.
- The ability to balance innovation and entrepreneurship with thoughtful stewardship of institutional culture and mission.
- Experience strengthening organizational effectiveness, accountability, and operational excellence.

Financial and Resource Development Expertise

- Strong financial acumen and experience managing complex budgets and institutional resources.
- Success in securing philanthropic support, cultivating donor relationships, developing partnerships, and advancing fundraising efforts.
- Experience identifying sustainable approaches to growth and organizational development.
- An appreciation for the importance of aligning financial decisions with mission and strategic priorities.

Understanding of Mental Health, Healthcare, or Professional Education

- Familiarity with psychology, counseling, behavioral health, healthcare, or closely related professional fields.
- Understanding of the evolving landscape of graduate and professional education.
- Knowledge of the importance of clinical training, licensure pathways, professional preparation, and workforce development.
- A commitment to advancing educational models that integrate academic rigor, applied learning, and community impact.



Commitment to Equity and Student Success

- A demonstrated commitment to fostering inclusive communities where individuals from diverse backgrounds can thrive.
- Understanding of the needs and experiences of graduate students and adult learners.
- A student-centered mindset and commitment to creating pathways for access, achievement, and professional success.

Personal Qualities

The next President of the Wright Institute will be:

- A visible, approachable, and highly relational leader who values genuine engagement with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners.
- An exceptional listener who seeks to understand before acting and who values diverse perspectives.
- A transparent communicator who builds trust through openness, consistency, and authenticity.

- A collaborative leader who brings people together around shared goals while maintaining the confidence to make difficult decisions when necessary.
- A person of integrity whose actions consistently reflect the institution's mission and values.
- Emotionally intelligent, self-aware, and respectful in interactions with others.
- An intellectually curious and lifelong learner who embraces new ideas while appreciating institutional history and tradition.
- Resilient, adaptable, and optimistic in navigating change and complexity.
- A champion for faculty, students, and staff who understands that institutional success is built through investment in people.
- Deeply committed to the public good and inspired by the Wright's mission to prepare professionals who contribute to healthier individuals, stronger communities, and a more just society.

The ideal candidate will combine strategic vision with humility, operational expertise with compassion, and decisive leadership with a genuine commitment to shared purpose. Most importantly, the Wright seeks a President who will embrace the institution's mission, honor its culture, and help lead it confidently into its next chapter.



About the Wright Institute

Overview

The Wright Institute was founded in 1968 by the distinguished psychologist Nevitt Sanford, a pioneer in the integration of social issues and clinical psychology. Sanford believed strongly in the capacity of adults to continue to learn and grow throughout their lives. His developmental approach and emphasis on the possibilities of lifelong learning form a key part of the foundation on which the Wright's educational programs are built.

Sanford was also influential in shaping American clinical psychology educational standards. In 1947, he was appointed by the American Psychological Association to the committee that established criteria for accrediting programs in clinical psychology. Under his leadership, the Wright Institute broadened the educational scope of clinical psychology training to include an emphasis on understanding the diverse society in which we live.

The Wright moved the program from a research-focused PhD program to a professional-focused PsyD program beginning with the Fall 1995 entering class. It was at this time that the Wright Institute's educational philosophy (mentioned above) was adopted. The philosophy and curriculum were an innovative approach to educating clinical psychology students, in which students begin clinical work in their first year. This was and remains a costly endeavor because the Wright had to build and fund its own field placements for the first-year students with no previous clinical background.

Mission

The Wright Institute educates students to become critical thinkers and ethical professionals who address community and societal needs and function effectively in a diverse society. The Wright prepares graduates to serve others with competence, integrity, cultural humility, and social awareness. This [mission](#), alongside [learning objectives](#), is essential to the integration of the Wright's educational [philosophy](#).

Foundational Principles:

The Wright's culture and educational philosophy continue to be shaped by four foundational commitments:

- Integrating social and clinical perspectives in understanding human behavior.
- Emphasizing a problem-solving and generalist approach to education.
- Supporting the personal and professional development of students and faculty.
- Recruiting and educating students from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

Institutional Values

The Wright Institute's mission is operationalized through commitments to:

- Educational excellence.
- Ethical practice and leadership.
- Respect for cultural and individual diversity.
- Lifelong learning.
- Service to society and underserved communities.
- Reflective practice and self-examination.
- Strong mentoring relationships between faculty and students.

The Wright's distinctive educational model emphasizes close faculty-student engagement, early clinical training experiences, critical inquiry, and professional responsibility.

Academics

The Wright enrolls approximately 530 graduate students across its PsyD in Clinical Psychology and MA in Counseling Psychology programs. Students represent a wide range of professional backgrounds, life experiences, ages, cultures, and identities, contributing to a learning environment rich in perspective and dialogue. Many students are pursuing psychology and counseling as a second career, bringing experience from fields such as education, healthcare, business, the arts, engineering, and community service. This diversity of experience enhances classroom discussions and reflects the Wright's longstanding commitment to preparing clinicians who can serve an increasingly complex and multicultural society.

At the heart of the student experience is an educational model that emphasizes intensive faculty engagement and early experiential learning. Students participate in small professional development seminars led by faculty advisors who serve as mentors throughout their academic journey. Clinical and counseling students engage in supervised practice early in their programs, applying theory to real-world settings while serving individuals, families, schools, and communities throughout the Bay Area. These experiences foster both professional confidence and a deep sense of social responsibility. The Wright's training clinics and community partnerships provide meaningful opportunities for students to make an impact while developing the skills required for successful practice.

Student outcomes reflect the strength of this educational approach. The clinical psychology program has achieved impressive internship placement results, with APA internship match rates averaging approximately 90 percent between 2020 and 2025, a critical indicator of program quality and student readiness. Graduates also demonstrate strong licensure outcomes and are highly regarded for their preparation, professionalism, and commitment to ethical practice. Across both programs, students benefit from a learning experience that combines rigorous academic preparation with practical training, positioning them for successful careers as psychologists, marriage and family therapists, counselors, educators, and mental health leaders. (WASC Self-Study Report; Institutional Data)

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Programs Offered:

- Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.) in Clinical Psychology
- Master of Arts (MA) in Counseling Psychology

Enrollment:

- Approximately 530 students overall
- Approximately 350 Psy.D. students
- Approximately 180 MA Counseling students

Student Outcomes:

- APA internship match rates averaged approximately 90% between 2020 and 2025.
- Strong professional licensure outcomes.
- Consistently positive student learning and professional placement results.

Facilities:

Located in Berkeley, one of the nation's most vibrant intellectual and socially engaged communities, The Wright Institute offers students access to an extraordinary ecosystem of academic, cultural, healthcare, and community-based organizations. The result is an educational experience that is both deeply personal and broadly connected to the societal issues students seek to address. For many students, the Wright is not simply a place to earn a

degree; it is a community dedicated to developing thoughtful practitioners, lifelong learners, and professionals committed to advancing individual and collective well-being.

The Wright Institute operates from multiple Berkeley locations:

- Administrative offices and the Clinical Psychology program near the University of California, Berkeley campus
- A dedicated Counseling Psychology facility in West Berkeley
- Community training clinics and related professional training facilities in downtown Berkeley

Financial Strength

The Wright enters this transition from a position of significant financial stability:

- Operating budget of \$18,750,000 (FY 2026-2027)
- Approximately \$26 million in reserves and quasi-endowment
- No long-term debt
- Net assets of approximately \$34.3 million
- Endowment reserves equal to approximately 118% of annual operating expenditures

Student Life:

Student life at The Wright Institute is shaped by a distinctive educational philosophy grounded in relationship-based learning, reflective practice, and service to society. Unlike many graduate institutions, the Wright intentionally cultivates a close-knit academic community where students are known as individuals and supported through meaningful faculty mentorship, small cohorts, and collaborative learning experiences. This personalized approach is central to the Wright's mission and creates an environment in which students develop not only professional competence, but also self-awareness, ethical judgment, and interpersonal skills essential for leadership in the mental health professions.

Leadership

The Board of Trustees uses the Wright Institute's mission statement and strategic goals as guideposts for board decisions. We focus on ensuring that the Wright continues to have a strong future, by fulfilling four responsibilities:

- Setting the Wright's strategic direction
- Ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations
- Accounting for both the financial stability and the future of the Institute
- Selecting, supporting, and evaluating the President



Board Chair: Hawlan Ng, PsyD, EdM: Dr. Ng received his doctorate at the Wright Institute in 2004 and has been a licensed psychologist in California since 2005. After working with condemned inmates at San Quentin State Prison, he transitioned to the world of organizational behavior, building a global assessment practice at Korn/Ferry International, the largest executive search firm in the world. In 2013, Dr. Ng joined the Saudi Electricity Company as an internal leadership coach, working with Saudi engineer leaders to develop their leadership capabilities, as well as advising the CEO on talent development and succession planning. He returned to the U.S. to serve as a partner with the leadership development firm RHR International, where he performed executive assessments, coached executives, and advised boards and C-suites on

succession planning. Since 2017, Dr. Ng has been in private practice in San Francisco as a therapist and independent executive coach. In 2021, he received a certificate of psychoanalysis from the Institute of Contemporary Psychoanalysis.

Dr. Ng lives in the East Bay with his wife. They have two children. He enjoys traveling, learning French, reading, and watching films and TV shows. An accomplished actor, Dr. Ng has appeared on stage, film, and television globally. An East Bay native, he continues to cheer passionately for all the professional sports teams that have left his beloved Oakland.

Before his time at the Wright Institute, he received his bachelor's degree in political science from Brown University and a master's in education from Harvard University. During his time at the Wright, he was voted by his classmates to represent them on the Institute Executive Committee and was the student representative on the Board of Trustees.

About Berkeley and the Bay Area:

Nestled in the heart of the San Francisco Bay Area, **The Wright Institute** enjoys a setting that mirrors the very values at the core of its mission: intellectual curiosity, social engagement, cultural diversity, and a commitment to improving society. Located in Berkeley, California, one of the nation's most influential centers of higher education, innovation, and public discourse, the Institute benefits from an environment where new ideas are cultivated, critical inquiry is celebrated, and community engagement is woven into daily life.



For generations, Berkeley has been recognized as a hub for academic excellence, civic leadership, and social progress. Home to a rich ecosystem of universities, healthcare organizations, nonprofit agencies, and research institutions, the city offers unparalleled opportunities for partnership, professional development, and service. The Wright Institute's students, faculty, and alumni actively engage with communities throughout the region, contributing to mental health services, education, public health, and social impact initiatives that address some of society's most pressing challenges.

The broader Bay Area is among the most dynamic and diverse regions in the world. Its global perspective, entrepreneurial spirit, and cultural richness create an environment where people from every background can thrive. Residents enjoy access to renowned museums, performing arts venues, culinary destinations, and vibrant neighborhoods that reflect the region's extraordinary cultural mosaic. Equally important, the Bay Area is home to one of the nation's most robust healthcare and behavioral health ecosystems, providing exceptional opportunities for clinical training, collaborative research, and professional engagement.

Surrounded by natural beauty, the region also offers an exceptional quality of life. From the redwood forests of the East Bay hills to the Pacific coastline, Napa and Sonoma wine country, and countless regional parks and open spaces, opportunities for recreation and renewal are never far away. This unique combination of intellectual vitality, cultural richness, professional opportunity, and environmental beauty makes Berkeley an inspiring place to live, work, and lead. For the next President, Berkeley provides more than a location. It offers a community that aligns deeply with The Wright Institute's commitment to educating reflective, ethical professionals prepared to make meaningful contributions to a diverse and evolving world.



Procedure for Candidacy

WittKieffer is assisting The Wright Institute in this search. Applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a curriculum vitae and a letter of interest addressing the opportunities and qualifications outlined in this leadership profile. For fullest consideration, candidates are encouraged to submit their materials by December 1, 2026

Please submit all applications, nominations, and inquiries through the WittKieffer Candidate Portal by clicking [here](#). New users should select “Register Here” to create an account before proceeding. After logging in, navigate to “Open Positions” and locate the role by entering The Wright Institute in the search field.

Nominations and inquiries may also be directed to:

Charlene Aguilar, Ed.M.
Melody Rose, Ph.D.
Sarah Seavey

theWright-President@wittkieffer.com

The salary range for the position is anticipated to be \$500,000 to \$550,000. The final compensation package will be commensurate with experience, qualifications, and leadership accomplishments.

The Institute prohibits discrimination based on race (including traits historically associated with race, such as hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, religion, creed, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, military or veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.