



Vice President for Student Engagement

Leadership Profile

February 2026



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Georgia State University (GSU) welcomes applications and nominations for an innovative and mission-driven leader to serve as **Vice President for Student Engagement**.

Blending academic rigor with a rich college experience since 1913, Georgia State transforms the lives of students, advances the frontiers of knowledge, and shapes future leaders. GSU is recognized as one of the nation's premier urban research institutions, enrolling one of the most diverse student populations in the country. The University offers a rigorous academic environment that integrates research and applied learning across all disciplines, providing educational opportunities at the certificate, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate levels. With six campus locations throughout the greater Atlanta area and a rapidly expanding online presence, Georgia State stands as the most comprehensive public university in the State of Georgia. The University enrolls more than 53,000 students in over 250 degree programs offered through twelve colleges, schools, and institutes. Its sixteen varsity athletic programs compete at the NCAA Division I level. Situated in the heart of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia State University offers exceptional experiential learning and co-curricular opportunities and serves as a catalyst for innovation in research, scholarship, and creative activity. For the past decade, the University has been consistently ranked among the most innovative institutions in the nation and is recognized as the national model for how novel, data-informed initiatives drive student achievement. Conferring degrees to 10,000-plus students each year, GSU has experienced one of the most dramatic graduation-rate increases of any university in the country since 2003. Georgia State remains deeply committed to expanding access to higher education, removing barriers, and helping students from all backgrounds achieve academic and career success.

As Georgia State continues to strengthen its national reputation as a model for student success, the Vice President for Student Engagement (VPSE) will play a central role in shaping a holistic, equity-driven student experience that supports learners from their first point of contact through graduation and beyond. The next VPSE will join a university deeply committed to serving one of the nation's most diverse student bodies and to creating environments where all students—regardless of background, pathway, or campus—can thrive academically, socially, and personally. Georgia State's scale, complexity, and urban footprint present a unique opportunity for an accomplished and visionary student affairs leader to drive innovation in how engagement, belonging, well-being, and co-curricular learning support student success at every level.

The VPSE will lead a large, multifaceted student engagement enterprise that spans six campuses, encompasses more than 5,000 residential beds, and includes hundreds of programs and services that shape the student experience. This leader will continue to strengthen the University's efforts to intentionally measure and connect co-curricular engagement to student outcomes—ensuring that involvement, belonging, wellness, leadership development, and campus vibrancy remain core components of Georgia State's nationally recognized student success strategy. With Georgia State well into the implementation of its strategic plan, *Blueprint to 2033*, the VPSE will help advance key initiatives centered on identity, placemaking, and belonging, as well as student success—further activating physical and cultural spaces across the University to foster community and connection.

The University seeks an experienced, collaborative, data-informed leader with a deep understanding of the transformative impact of student engagement. The next VPSE will work across academic and administrative units, serve as a trusted member of the President's Cabinet, and partner closely with the Senior Vice President for Student Success to ensure that student engagement is seamlessly aligned with institutional goals for recruitment, retention, progression, and graduation. In addition, the VPSE will steward significant operational, financial, and facility-related responsibilities; support student safety, wellness, crisis response, and conduct processes; and ensure a cohesive, equitable experience across the Atlanta Campus and the Perimeter College campuses.

This is an exceptional opportunity for a strategic and student-centered leader to join a forward-thinking institution and to shape the next era of student engagement at a university nationally recognized for eliminating achievement

gaps, scaling innovation, and redefining what is possible in higher education. The incoming VPSE will inherit a strong foundation, a talented and dedicated staff, and an institutional culture that believes deeply in the power of engagement to transform students' lives.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see **Procedure for Candidacy** at the end of this document.

Role of the Vice President for Student Engagement

The Vice President for Student Engagement (VPSE) serves as the chief student affairs officer for the University. This position reports directly to the [Senior Vice President for Student Success](#) and serves as a key member of the Senior Vice President's leadership team.

The VPSE manages the personnel and financial resources of the [Division of Student Engagement](#) to provide support that meets the holistic needs of GSU students. achieve the College's mission. The VPSE oversees a budget of approximately \$123 million (including reserves) and provides leadership to 284 FTE and 803 student workers within Student Engagement.

The VPSE will develop, deliver, and manage comprehensive university-wide co-curricular programs and activities that support student success, recruitment, retention, progression, and graduation as part of an integrated approach to student success and a lifelong connection to the university. The Vice President will provide administrative oversight to the following areas:

- University Housing
- Health & Wellness (counseling, health, recreation, intramural and sport clubs, nutrition, testing, access & accommodations)
- Student Life (student activities, fraternity & sorority life, student media, 500+ student organizations and SGA, student center operations, Cultures, Communities & Inclusion, Leadership & Service)
- Dean of Students Office (conduct, emergency assistance and CARE services, crisis management)
- Student Engagement Marketing & Media
- Student Engagement Administration, Data Planning and Assessment

See Appendix A at the end of this document for the Division of Student Engagement Organizational Chart

Essential duties associated with this position are:

- Serve as the Chief Student Affairs Officer for the University
- Oversee and enhance co-curricular and extra-curricular engagement across all campuses to promote positive student success and student development outcomes
- Support the Senior Vice President for Student Success and serve on the Division of Student Success leadership team to promote engagement, recruitment, retention, progression, and graduation outcomes
- Serve on the President's cabinet and multiple university-wide and shared governance committees
- Directly supervise four AVPs, the Executive Director of Housing, and the Manager for Data, Planning & Assessment; Indirectly support AVPs for College & Career Engagement and Division Administration

- Chair of the [Mandatory Student Fee Committee](#) and related budgets, with financial oversight in excess of \$75 million, including fundraising, scholarships, and grants
- Significant responsibilities for strategic plan initiatives, particularly related to the University's [strategic plan](#), [Blueprint to 2033](#), pillar of Identity, Placemaking and Belonging

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership



As a cabinet-level leader within one of the nation's most innovative and diverse universities, the Vice President for Student Engagement will play a pivotal role in advancing Georgia State University's mission and strategic priorities. Building on a strong foundation established through the integration of Student Engagement into the broader Student Success enterprise, the VPSE will lead a large, complex, and multi-campus portfolio that directly shapes the student experience for more than 53,000 learners across downtown Atlanta and five Perimeter College campuses.

The next VPSE will address the following opportunities and expectations:

- **Advance a compelling, data-informed vision for student engagement as a driver of student success**

Georgia State is nationally recognized for its transformative, data-driven student success outcomes. The next VPSE will articulate and lead a forward-looking vision for student engagement that strengthens this legacy and positions engagement as an essential lever for retention, progression, graduation, and post-graduation outcomes. Building on the great work already taking place in the Division of Student Engagement, this leader will further expand the University's ability to measure, analyze, and demonstrate the ROI of engagement experiences—helping students understand how co-curricular involvement, campus belonging, and experiential learning shape their academic and career trajectories. The VPSE will champion a vibrant, inclusive student life ecosystem that is deeply connected to the University's strategic plan, particularly the pillar focused on identity, placemaking, and belonging.

- **Ensure a cohesive, engaging experience across a large, urban, multi-campus environment**

With more than 18,000 Perimeter College students spread across five campuses, including a substantial online population, Georgia State requires a VPSE who can ensure that all 53,000 GSU students—associate through doctoral—benefit from a seamless, equitable, and high-quality engagement experience. The VPSE will partner closely with the Dean of Perimeter College and other campus leaders to unify engagement programs and services, integrate best practices across locations, and expand belonging and connection for diverse student populations. This includes strengthening pathways between Perimeter and downtown

campuses and ensuring that engagement contributes meaningfully to GSU's continued elimination of achievement gaps.

- **Lead a broad, complex portfolio that spans student life, wellness, conduct, and residential operations**

The VPSE oversees an expansive range of functions, including the Dean of Students, health and wellness, student engagement and leadership development, crisis response, conduct (serving as the appellate officer), and a large residential housing system of more than 5,000 beds. This leader must bring strong operational acumen, crisis management experience, and the ability to manage aging facilities and multibuilding portfolios across campuses. With Georgia State recently assuming management and operations of housing properties previously overseen by an external partner, the VPSE will provide seasoned leadership in facilities management, budget oversight, occupancy strategy, and collaboration with the Chief Operating Officer and system partners.

- **Strengthen partnerships across academics, athletics, and the University System of Georgia**

The next VPSE will be an adept collaborator who understands the critical intersections between student engagement, academic success, and institutional mission. This includes working closely with academic deans and faculty on issues ranging from student conduct to academic integrity to shared engagement initiatives that support learning. The VPSE must also be a strong partner to Athletics, helping integrate student life and athletic engagement more effectively. As part of a public university system, the VPSE will skillfully navigate system policies, approvals, and processes—recognizing that successful leadership at Georgia State requires working collaboratively and constructively with system-level stakeholders.

- **Champion an inclusive, high-impact student experience for one of the nation's most diverse student bodies**

More than 30% of Georgia State students are first-generation, over 60% are from low-income backgrounds, and there is no majority racial population at the University. Georgia State's next VPSE must be deeply committed to advancing outcomes, belonging, and well-being for all students. This includes supporting health and wellness efforts and developing strategies to continue to re-engage students in a post-COVID environment—particularly populations that may be disproportionately disconnected from campus life. The VPSE will guide teams in supporting programming and strategic initiatives that advance the University's unwavering commitment to student success, inclusion, and access.

- **Serve as a strategic steward of significant financial and physical resources**

As chair of the Mandatory Student Fee Committee, the VPSE manages the transparent and policy-aligned distribution of millions of dollars in student fees. The role requires exceptional judgment, communication, and decision-making, as well as the ability to articulate how fee investments advance engagement and success. The VPSE will also oversee budgets and operations across a large and multifaceted division, ensuring resources are aligned with strategic priorities and that facilities—from student centers to recreation facilities to residence halls—support a vibrant and student-centered experience.

- **Contribute as a trusted, collaborative member of the President's Cabinet and University leadership**

Reporting to the Senior Vice President for Student Success, the VPSE will be a visible and influential leader who contributes meaningfully to executive-level discussions and decisions. This leader will be expected to set a clear vision for Student Engagement, exercise broad managerial latitude, and serve as a thought partner to senior leadership across the University. The VPSE will embrace Georgia State's culture of collaboration, shared governance, and data-driven innovation, helping the institution continue to redefine what a public research university can achieve in supporting student success at scale.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The next Vice President for Student Engagement will have an extraordinary commitment to the student experience in the context of a student-centered community; be dedicated to expanding access to higher education, removing barriers, and helping students from all backgrounds achieve academic and career success; and have a distinguished record of leadership. To realize this opportunity, the following are required and preferred professional qualifications and personal qualities:

Required Qualifications

- Master's degree and five years of experience in leading Student Engagement or Student Affairs in higher education; or a combination of education and related experience.

Preferred Qualifications

- Ph.D. or equivalent terminal degree from an accredited program in Higher Education Administration, College Student Personnel, or related field.
- Seven or more years of progressively responsible administrative experience at the level of a department head or higher, including grant development; supervision of professional staff; and experience in budget administration involving multiple funding sources.
- Experience administering university-wide student conduct functions in a higher education setting including experience serving as an appellate officer.
- Experience administering or overseeing on-campus housing programs.
- Evidence of experience creating new programs.
- Experience working in a highly diverse, multi-campus environment.
- Experience working at a large, urban public university.
- Experience working at an institution within a larger public state system, such as the University System of Georgia.
- Evidence of strong written and oral communication skills.
- Experience supervising multiple departments.
- Experience with data and assessment.
- Demonstrated success in developing programs and services that engage students of diverse backgrounds and experiences.



About Georgia State University

Overview

Georgia State University (GSU) is a nationally recognized R1 public research university located in the heart of downtown Atlanta, Georgia. Founded in 1913, GSU has grown into one of the largest and most diverse institutions in the country, enrolling over 53,000 students from 155 countries and 49 states. GSU is widely celebrated as a national leader in student success, particularly for its ability to graduate students at the same rate regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status. Its innovative, data-driven approach to student support has become a model for institutions across the country. The National Institute for Student Success, created and housed at Georgia State, disseminates these evidence-based best practices to colleges and universities across the country and around the world.

The University is also known for its entrepreneurial spirit and rapid growth in research. According to U.S. News & World Report, GSU ranks #1 in the nation for its commitment to undergraduate teaching and as one of the top five most innovative public institutions for 11 years. Georgia State is also one of the fastest-growing research universities in the country. In total, GSU has invested more than 1.88 billion dollars in research over the last 10 years.

GSU offers more than 250 undergraduate and 180 graduate degree programs across 12 colleges and schools. Its urban location provides students with unmatched access to Atlanta's industries, cultural institutions, and government agencies. With a strong emphasis on equity, innovation, and impact, Georgia State continues to redefine what a public research university can achieve in the 21st century.

Mission Statement

Georgia State University, one of the largest, most innovative multi-campus public research universities, transforms the lives of students, advances the frontiers of knowledge, and strengthens the workforce of the future. With campuses in and around metro Atlanta, Georgia State readies students for professional pursuits, educates future leaders, and prepares citizens for lifelong learning. Enrolling one of the most diverse student bodies in the nation, Georgia State prioritizes student success, ensuring that students from all backgrounds graduate at high rates. The University provides outstanding experiential educational opportunities and exceptional support for students seeking degrees from the associate to the doctoral level.

One of the nation's fastest-growing research institutions, Georgia State's scholarship and research focus on solving complex issues ranging from the most fundamental questions of the universe to the most challenging issues of its day, while creative activities expand and enrich the world.

Strategic Plan

Georgia State University launched a bold 10-year [strategic plan](#) to guide its growth, innovation, and impact through 2033. The plan reflects GSU's identity as a diverse, urban, multi-campus institution committed to student success, research excellence, and community engagement. This strategic plan also reflects GSU's commitment to inclusive excellence, innovation, and social mobility, aiming to prepare students and faculty to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Colleges

Georgia State University is composed of 12 colleges and schools, each offering a wide range of academic programs and research opportunities. These units reflect the University's commitment to interdisciplinary learning, innovation, and student success:

- [Andrew Young School of Policy Studies](#)
- [Byrdine F. Lewis College of Nursing and Health Professions](#)
- [College of Arts & Sciences](#)
- [College of Education & Human Development](#)
- [College of Law](#)
- [College of Arts](#)
- [Institute for Biomedical Sciences](#)
- [J. Mack Robinson College of Business](#)
- [Perimeter College](#)
- [School of Public Health](#)
- [Honors College](#)
- [The Graduate School](#)

About the Division of Student Engagement



At Georgia State University, Student Success promotes student retention, progression, and graduation by implementing proactive, data-informed strategies that reduce barriers to completion and support students in achieving their academic and career goals. Within this division, the Student Engagement team delivers student-centered support that advances holistic growth, personal development, overall well-being and academic success through robust co-curricular programming and meaningful engagement opportunities tailored to a highly diverse student body.

Grounded in a national reputation for innovative approaches to student success, the division emphasizes research demonstrating that students who are actively engaged in their campus community are more successful academically. Through connections to resources in collegiate support services, cultural and community engagement, leadership development, wellness, and experiential learning, Georgia State reinforces its commitment to fostering belonging and empowering students to achieve both their academic and personal potential.

25 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2025



Students who attend more than **five** events achieve a **higher** first term GPA and have a **higher** retention rate than those who are less engaged.

1,323,117

people visited the Student Center on the Atlanta campus

5,810

total events hosted in the Panther Involvement Network (PIN)

5,769

associate-level students participated in events across our Perimeter campuses

3,000+

student attendance at signature events including: GSU Night at Six Flags, Spring Carnival, and the Student Involvement Fair

15,000+ hrs

of community service completed by students serving in campus and community projects

51,696 lbs

of products distributed to GSU students through Panther's Pantry



TOTAL STUDENT CHECK-INS AT EVENTS ACROSS ALL CAMPUSES

127,251

2024

2,813
2019



83

New Student Orientation events were provided across six campuses & online to onboard

8,012

new students and 7,378 guests

Increased University Housing resident satisfaction in 95% of survey factors from 2022 to 2024

Enhanced the commuter student experience through the launch of a new Commuter Student website in Fall 2024

Highlighted the hidden histories of our Atlanta campus via a brand new self-guided online tour

Proudly recognized as one of the 2024 All In Most Engaged Campuses for College Student Voting with a student voter rate over 10% higher than the national average

Around 500 Registered Student Organizations (RSOs)

32,498

RSO student members across all campuses

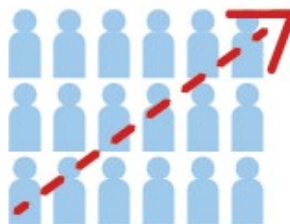


Expanded text care to provide 24/7/365 direct access to a live medical professional for all students including online learners

Opened an integrated Health Hub in 75 Piedmont bringing physical and mental health services together



Total Number of Individual Student Users in the Panther Involvement Network

1,228
201923,107
2024

Served a record 4,267 enrolled international students from 155 countries and sponsored 395 international faculty and researchers

Created division-wide consistency in student employment, using standardized job descriptions and pay levels, incorporating NACE competencies

Raised the base level salary for student employees in the Division to \$10/hour with consistent higher pay tiers based on skillset and role



Recreational Services

497,573

total student entries across all campuses

18,538

students participated in recreational programming (intramurals, sports clubs, recreation classes and outdoor trips) across all campuses

*Data is from August 2023 through July 2024 unless otherwise noted

Leadership

M. Brian Blake, Ph.D., President



As the eighth President of Georgia State University, Dr. M. Brian Blake leads the State of Georgia's largest university, spanning six campuses and a community of nearly 51,000 students and 8,000 faculty and staff. Georgia State is the most ethnically and socioeconomically diverse Research-1 institution in the nation. Dr. Blake introduced a strategic vision for Georgia State that emphasizes four pillars: Identity, Placemaking, and Belonging, Research, Scholarship, and Creativity, Student Success, and College to Careers. Georgia State's strategic plan, "The Blueprint to 2033 – Our Place, Our Time", sets a path for the University to continue to enhance its academic excellence and student success, scholarship and creativity, and campus vibrancy.

During Dr. Blake's tenure, Georgia State University has set several new milestones. With its increasing reputation, the University received the largest number of applications ever for admission to its fall 2023 entering class. In the same year, the research enterprise exceeded \$200 million in sponsored awards – the highest in history. Dr. Blake oversaw the acquisition of more than \$60 million in government support for a new 120,000 square foot Research Tower that broke ground in 2024 and will open in 2026. In FY22, the University also raised a one-year amount of more than \$107 million in philanthropic gifts for the first time in history. An advocate for campus experience, Dr. Blake is leading the effort to establish new interconnected green spaces and enhanced facilities to activate the center of Georgia State's downtown campus.

Prior to Georgia State, Dr. Blake had over 25 years of faculty and administrative experience across five comprehensive research universities, including Provost at George Washington University and Drexel University, Dean at the University of Miami, and Associate Dean for Research at the University of Notre Dame. During the first 10 years of his academic career, he was Professor and later Department Chair of Computer Science at Georgetown University. Dr. Blake serves on the Board of Directors for Grady Memorial Hospital Corporation, Metro-Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, Junior Achievement of Georgia, and the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Dr. Blake has been included on the 2022 and 2023 lists of the Georgia 500 – The State's Most Influential Leaders, as well as recognized as a 2023 Most Admired CEO. In 2023, he was also inducted into Georgia Tech's College of Computing Hall of Fame. In addition to several honorary degrees, Dr. Blake has a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology, a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering from Mercer University, and a Ph.D. in Software Engineering from George Mason University. Blake grew up in Savannah, Ga., and attended Benedictine Military Academy. He and his wife, Dr. Bridget Blake, have two sons, Brendan and Bryce.

Allison Calhoun-Brown, Ph.D., Senior Vice President for Student Success



Allison Calhoun-Brown is Senior Vice President for Student Success and chief enrollment officer at Georgia State University. She directs the university's efforts to increase enrollment, retention, progression and graduation by developing strategic initiatives and refining operational processes to support student success. Using data and analytics to establish proactive approaches to reduce educational risks, GSU has become a national model for undergraduate education. Over the past decade, the university has had one of the fastest-growing graduation rates in the country, has increased the number of undergraduate degrees that it confers by more than 80% since 2010, and has eliminated achievement gaps based on race, ethnicity and income. Dr. Calhoun-Brown has implemented new and innovative programming to

address issues of effective academic advising, unmet student financial need, curricular progression barriers, the connection between college and career, and support for at-risk students. Focused on the student life cycle from pre-enrollment to the start of a career, the Division of Student Success utilizes a comprehensive metrics-based approach that incorporates all aspects of enrollment management including admissions, student financial management, academic advising and support programs, registration, and co-curricular engagement to advance student achievement at Georgia State University. Dr. Calhoun-Brown graduated with honors from Oberlin College and earned an M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science from Emory University.

Atlanta, Georgia



Atlanta is a vibrant, diverse, and rapidly growing metropolitan hub in the heart of the Southeast. Known for its rich history, dynamic culture, and global influence, Atlanta offers a unique blend of Southern hospitality and urban innovation. As the capital of Georgia, it is home to major Fortune 500 companies, world-class healthcare and research institutions, and a thriving arts and entertainment scene.

The city is a center for higher education, with numerous colleges and universities contributing to its intellectual and cultural vitality. Atlanta's diverse population and international reach make it an ideal setting for inclusive learning and community engagement. Its location places it at the crossroads of rural, suburban, and urban communities, offering rich opportunities for educational partnerships and outreach.

With its temperate climate, expansive green spaces, and robust public transportation system, Atlanta is both livable and accessible. From historic neighborhoods and civil rights landmarks to cutting-edge innovation districts, Atlanta is a city that honors its past while shaping the future.

Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Georgia State University in this search. For fullest consideration, all materials should be received by March 18, 2026

Please direct all nominations and applications through the WittKieffer [Candidate Portal](#).

Additional inquiries can be directed to:

Jen Meyers Pickard, Ph.D., Christine Pendleton, Corin Edwards, and Bronwen Bares Pelaez, Ph.D.

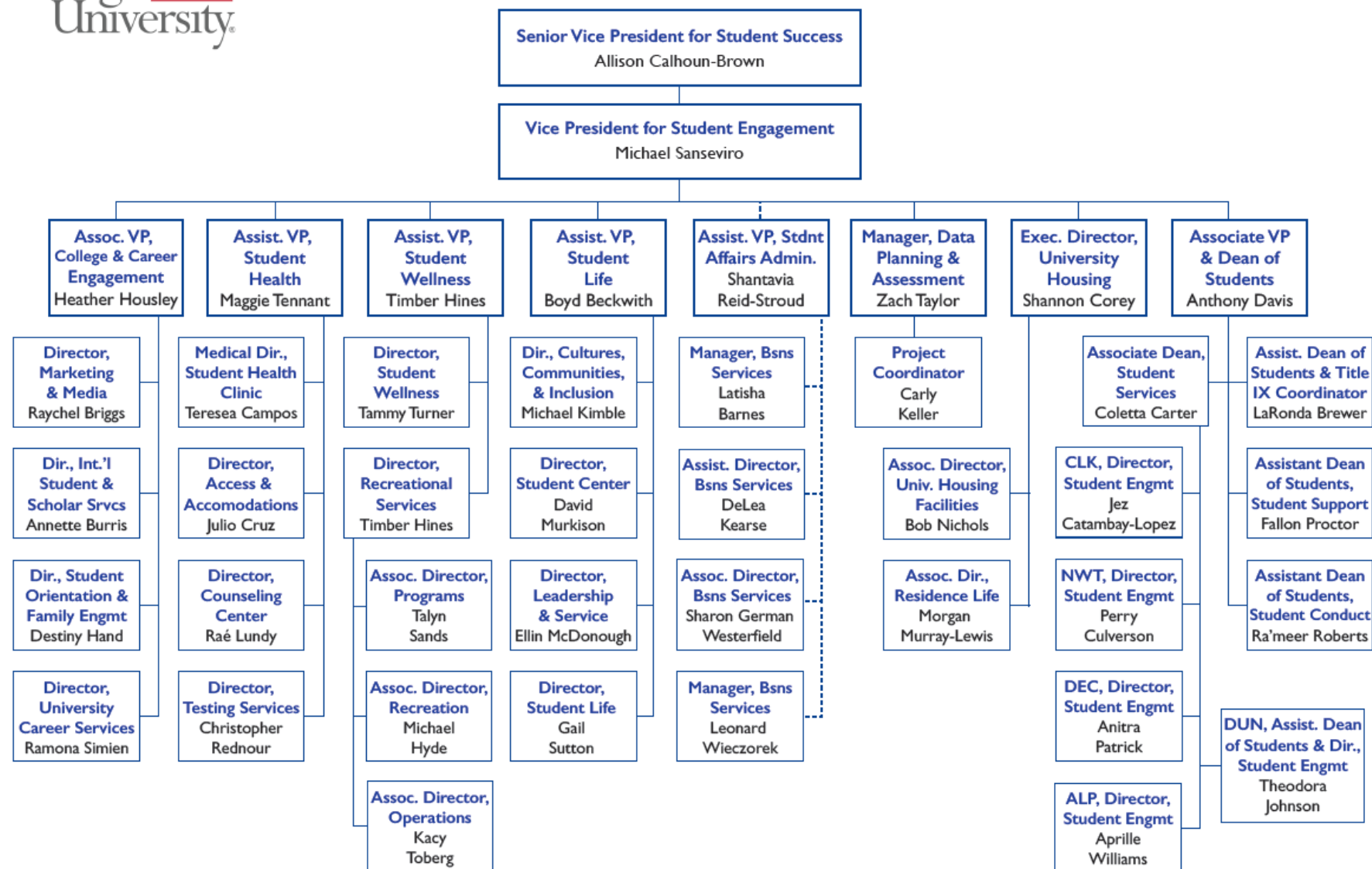
GSU-VPSE@wittkieffer.com

Georgia State University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate against applicants due to race, ethnicity, gender, veteran status, or on the basis of disability or any other federal, state or local protected class.

Appendix A: Division of Student Engagement Organizational Chart



Student Engagement Organizational Chart: Division Leadership



Last Updated: January 16, 2026

Positions with a dotted line have a split reporting structure to individual units within the division.