

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY



stem

College of Science, Technology,
Engineering & Mathematics

Associate Dean, College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Leadership Profile

Spring 2026



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Youngstown State University invites applications and nominations for the position of Associate Dean of the College of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM). This is an opportunity for a collaborative academic leader to help guide a complex, multi-site STEM enterprise through its next phase of innovation, enrollment momentum, and workforce alignment. The Associate Dean will serve as the Dean's principal partner for internal operations and academic excellence, enabling expanded external engagement and impact across the region.

Founded in 1908, Youngstown State (YSU) is a comprehensive public institution and an anchor for Northeast Ohio's educational and economic vitality. The University enrolls approximately 12,000 students, has achieved back-to-back enrollment growth through Fall 2025, and maintains an 18:1 student-faculty ratio. YSU is ranked #99 Regional Universities in the Midwest and #35 Top Public Schools. With accessible tuition and expanding online, graduate, and international enrollment, YSU continues to advance its mission of affordability, access, and student success.

Established in 2007, the College of STEM is Ohio's first and only dedicated STEM college, spanning 12 buildings across four locations and serving roughly 3,000 students. The College offers associate, bachelor's, master's, Ph.D. and workforce-aligned programs, engages undergraduates directly in research, and operates the Excellence Training Center (ETC) as a hub for advanced manufacturing, engineering technology, and industry training. YSU is also advancing a new Steubenville site, prioritized by the state to deliver career-aligned pathways beginning as early as 2026, further extending the College's footprint and mission.

The Associate Dean will lead internal operations, drive student success strategies in recruitment and retention, and strengthen workforce education through employer partnerships, internships, co-ops, and program expansion at new and existing sites. The role also includes facilitating faculty research and grant development, nurturing interdisciplinary collaboration, and supporting the launch and scale of innovative centers and academic offerings, positioning the YSU College of STEM as a statewide leader in applied research, innovation, and workforce alignment.

Candidates must hold a Ph.D. in a STEM discipline and tenure at the rank of Associate Professor or higher (with Full Professor preferred), plus three or more years of college-level teaching and a record of advising, mentoring, scholarly productivity, and/or externally funded work. The College values authentic, approachable, collaborative leadership, outstanding communication, equitable resource allocation, and skillful cultural stewardship, sustaining a well-known climate of trust and shared governance.

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 Associate Dean, College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Reporting to the Dean of the College of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM), the Associate Dean serves as a strategic, operational academic leader who will help guide Ohio's only dedicated STEM college through a period of expansion, innovation, and intensified workforce alignment. The Associate Dean will play a central role in supporting one of YSU's largest and most complex academic unit, spanning 12 buildings across four geographic sites and enrolling approximately 3,000 students. This position is designed to strengthen the internal operations of the college, enabling the Dean to prioritize external engagement, industry partnerships, and new campus development initiatives, including the emerging Steubenville campus scheduled to begin offering programs as early as 2026.

The Associate Dean will ensure the college's continued success across its broad academic program offerings, workforce development enterprises, and satellite locations, supporting a community known for its strong culture of trust, collegiality, and shared commitment to student and faculty success. This role requires a highly collaborative, student-centered, and analytically minded leader who can advance academic excellence, bolster enrollment and retention efforts, and foster innovation in teaching, research, and community impact.

Key Areas of Leadership

Academic Leadership and Internal Operations

The Associate Dean provides day-to-day management of academic and administrative functions across the College, ensuring that policies, procedures, and practices align with university standards and accreditation requirements, including ABET and HLC expectations. They will coordinate curricular processes, oversee program and assessment reviews, guide faculty and staff through planning and reporting cycles, and serve as an ex-officio member of key governance committees. As the College continues to grow, the Associate Dean will help maintain academic rigor, ensure effective workload distribution, and support faculty in mentoring undergraduate and graduate researchers, a priority in a college where undergraduates regularly engage in research, publish papers, and participate in conferences.

Student Success, Enrollment, and Retention

With enrollment challenges and the need to strengthen first-year retention, the Associate Dean will collaborate closely with department chairs, advisors, and the Dean to develop and implement comprehensive recruitment and retention strategies. This includes high-impact student engagement activities such as Penguin Preview Days, first-year orientation, and outreach programming. The Associate Dean will also counsel students, mediate academic or program-related concerns, and ensure data-informed decision-making through the use of analytics and technology.

Workforce Development and Industry Engagement

A distinguishing feature of YSU's College of STEM is its prominent role in regional and statewide workforce development, including the Excellence Training Center (ETC), workforce-aligned certificate and non-credit programs, and partnerships supporting manufacturing, aviation, and engineering technology initiatives. The Associate Dean will help shape strategic planning around workforce education, collaborating with the Dean, chairs, and external partners to strengthen internship pipelines, expand industry-aligned programs, and support the College's entrepreneurial, market-responsive mindset. As YSU continues to bring new facilities and regions online, including the new Steubenville location designed to provide high-quality, career-aligned pathways, the Associate Dean will help coordinate academic planning and operational readiness across these sites.

Research Advancement and Faculty Support

The Associate Dean plays an important role in facilitating research productivity, supporting grant development, and helping faculty identify external funding, including opportunities emerging from national labs, NASA, Intel, and other major high-value collaborations for the College. They will help cultivate a vibrant teacher-scholar environment where research is integrated with student learning and where faculty receive robust support for scholarly and creative activities.

Representation and Community Engagement

The Associate Dean represents the College at internal and external meetings, community events, recruitment activities, and workforce partnerships, serving as the Dean's delegate when appropriate. They will build positive relationships with students, faculty, staff, university leadership, employers, and regional partners. Given YSU's status as the largest employer in the region and its critical role in regional economic revitalization, the Associate Dean must be a visible, engaged, and trusted ambassador in the community for STEM education and innovation.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next Associate Dean of the College of STEM at Youngstown State University will join a dynamic, fast-evolving academic enterprise uniquely positioned at the intersection of research, workforce development, regional revitalization, and multi-site educational expansion. Key leadership priorities include:

Strengthen Operational Excellence in a Complex, Expanding STEM Enterprise

The College of STEM spans extensive academic programs, workforce initiatives, and multi-site operations, including the Excellence Training Center and the emerging Steubenville campus. The Associate Dean will streamline internal processes, improve cross-unit communication, and ensure alignment with accreditation standards and university policies. By strengthening operational capacity and efficiency, the Associate Dean enables the Dean to focus on external partnerships, fundraising, and broader workforce initiatives while ensuring the College remains agile and academically strong.

Enhance Recruitment, Retention, and Student Success

Addressing enrollment pressures and retention needs is central to the College and greater University's success. The Associate Dean will lead coordinated strategies to improve first-year retention rates, expand non-traditional and transfer pathways (especially for students affected by the Eastern Gateway closure). Success in this area will require data-informed decision-making, strengthened advising systems, and student support structures that promote success across all programs and student populations.

Advance Workforce Development and Align Programs with Industry Needs

Workforce development is a strategic priority for both the College and the University, guided by the State of Ohio's focus on strengthening students' workforce readiness. The Associate Dean will collaborate with employers and workforce partners to strengthen existing offerings, develop a forward-looking workforce education strategy, and support program expansion at satellite locations. A critical component of this work is ensuring that academic pathways remain aligned with evolving industry needs in advanced manufacturing, aviation, engineering technology, and emerging fields like artificial intelligence.

On February 27, 2025, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jim Tressel, and Ohio Department of Development Director Lydia Mihalik announced that Ohio will establish a new Innovation Hub in Youngstown to advance additive manufacturing technology in support of the national defense industry. The YSU STEM College is an official partner of the Youngstown Innovation Hub for Aerospace and Defense, led by America Makes. The

Associate Dean will assist the Dean in continuous engagement with the Youngstown Innovation Hub for Aerospace and Defense, focusing on internships, graduate students, and research opportunities.

Support Research Productivity and Faculty Scholarship

A strong research culture is at the core of the College's identity, with both graduate and undergraduate students actively engaged in scholarly work. The Associate Dean will help faculty pursue grants, strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration, and build infrastructure that supports research, scholarship, and creative activity. They will play a key role in attracting top faculty, increasing external research funding, and supporting innovative centers, laboratories, and student research initiatives, including connections with major partners such as NASA, national laboratories, and Intel.

Foster Collaboration, Innovation, and External Engagement

The College's longstanding culture of trust and collaboration requires a leader who is accessible, equitable, and committed to shared governance. The Associate Dean will sustain this positive environment, support faculty and staff needs, and build cohesion across departments and locations. At the same time, they will champion forward-looking initiatives, including Innovation Park, expanded workforce programming, new academic offerings, and future Centers of Excellence, while representing the College externally with professionalism and vision. Through strong relationships with industry, community partners, alumni, and policymakers, the Associate Dean will strengthen the College's regional impact and ensure alignment with community and workforce priorities.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Academic Credentials

- Ph.D. in a STEM discipline.
- Associate Professor (tenured) minimum, with 3+ years of college-level teaching and demonstrated success advising and mentoring students and faculty. Rank of full professor is preferred.
- Sustained scholarly achievement, research productivity, and/or externally funded work appropriate for senior academic administration.

Leadership & Administration

- Department chair or equivalent academic leadership experience within STEM.
- Proven ability to manage complex operations: workload planning, scheduling, staffing, HR processes, and compliance.
- Experience coordinating curriculum development, assessment, accreditation (ABET, HLC, or comparable), and academic program review.
- Capacity to work productively under administrative direction with sound judgment, tact, and discretion.
- Training/experience in crisis management and intervention.

Workforce, Research & External Partnerships

- Forward-looking vision aligned to regional workforce needs, including certificates, applied degrees, and non-traditional learners.
- Experience or strong interest in workforce development, industry partnerships, and market-responsive academic innovation.
- Ability to mentor faculty in grant development, identify funding opportunities, and strengthen research infrastructure.

- Exposure to national labs, NASA, Intel, and other high-impact partners; familiarity with AI and emerging fields.
- Experience enhancing grant-writing across units and connecting faculty to external sponsors.

Student Success

- Deep commitment to retention, degree completion, and equitable outcomes for students in STEM.
- Use of data-informed decision-making to guide recruitment, retention, and student support.
- Sensitivity to the needs of first-generation, non-traditional, and transfer students; ability to foster a welcoming, inclusive climate.

Operational & Cultural Leadership

- Exceptional organization and project management; ability to oversee multiple initiatives in a fast-moving environment and maintain operational continuity.
- Comfort with data systems, assessment tools, and technologies that support operational decision-making.
- Leadership rooted in authenticity, approachability, and collaboration, with strong communication (transparent, responsive, empathetic).
- Commitment to equitable resource allocation, shared governance, and a culture of trust; ability to navigate historical dynamics (e.g., the engineering-science merger) and promote cohesion across departments and sites.
- Understanding of multi-site operations (including the emerging Steubenville location) with the ability to adapt academic infrastructure to new environments.
- Entrepreneurial flair to anticipate market shifts and capture growth; experience with workforce education and certification frameworks.

About the College of STEM

Overview

The College of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) at Youngstown State University is Ohio's first and only college dedicated exclusively to STEM education, distinguished by its academic depth, applied research culture, and strong regional workforce mission. Established in 2007, the College has grown into one of the University's largest and most complex academic units, spanning 12 buildings across four geographic locations and educating approximately 3,000 students each year.

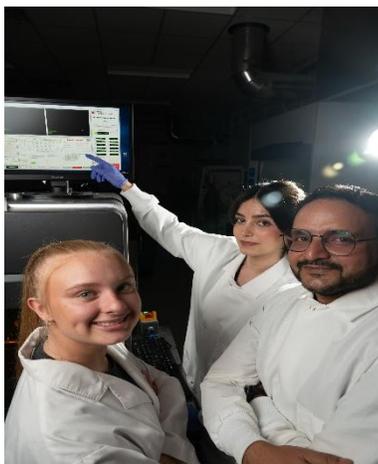
As a comprehensive STEM enterprise, the College offers programs ranging from associate degrees and workforce-aligned credentials to bachelor's, master's, Ph.D.s, and research-intensive pathways, providing students with opportunities to engage in cutting-edge scholarship, hands-on experimentation, and industry-relevant training. Faculty are both academic experts and working professionals whose research and professional experiences inform instruction and create opportunities for student involvement in laboratories, applied research projects, and industry settings.

Academic Excellence and Workforce Impact

The College plays a distinctive role in the region by combining rigorous STEM education with expansive workforce development initiatives tailored to employer needs across northeastern Ohio and beyond. Its ecosystem includes the Excellence Training Center (ETC), a centerpiece for advanced manufacturing, automation, engineering technology, and industry training, as well as a wide range of certificate and non-credit programs designed in partnership with local and statewide employers.

YSU STEM's applied mission is strengthened by strong employer partnerships, co-ops, and internships supported through STEM Professional Services, which focuses exclusively on placing students in experiential learning opportunities that build technical skills and professional readiness. This linkage between academic programs and workforce needs is one of the College's core differentiators within the state and region.

Research, Innovation & Experiential Learning



Research is central to the identity of the College of STEM. Faculty maintain active research portfolios across engineering, biological sciences, physical sciences, computer science, and environmental disciplines. Notably, undergraduate research is a hallmark of the College. Students routinely publish papers, present at conferences, and work directly in faculty labs, experiences that accelerate learning and prepare them for graduate study or immediate entry into technical professions.

Innovation is reflected in collaborative spaces which connect engineering, technology, and creative arts students to cutting-edge digital fabrication tools, including 3D printing, welding, and advanced prototyping. These interdisciplinary environments foster creativity, problem-solving, and entrepreneurial thinking skills, which are increasingly demanded by modern STEM industries.

Multi-Site Expansion and Regional Stewardship

The College is uniquely multi-site, with operations extending beyond the Youngstown campus into regional locations and specialized facilities, including sites at the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport and outreach centers that support community-based workforce and educational initiatives. A significant current endeavor is the establishment of a new YSU campus in Steubenville, built on the former Eastern Gateway Community College site. Programming at Steubenville is expected to begin as early as summer 2026, expanding access to two-year, and ultimately a full complement of STEM and workforce-aligned degrees for residents of southeastern Ohio. The state has emphasized the campus as a vehicle for delivering “high-quality, career-aligned academic pathways” that meet regional workforce needs.

This expansion underscores the STEM College's critical role in YSU's mission to serve as a driver of economic revitalization, educational access, and population recovery in the region.

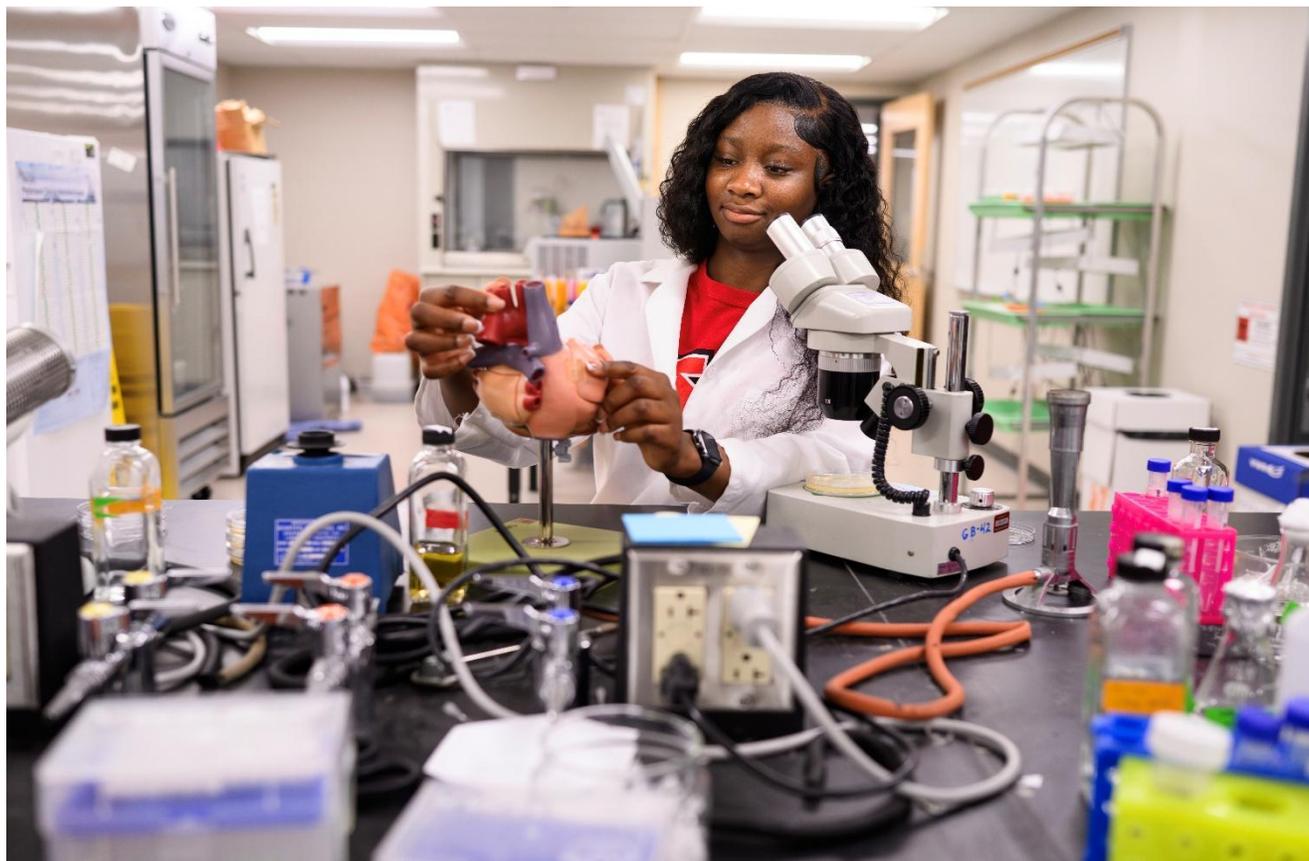
Academics

The College of Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) at Youngstown State University houses a diverse array of academic departments that together support the University's mission of delivering high-quality STEM education, applied research, and workforce-aligned programs. These departments span the full spectrum of scientific and technical disciplines, providing students with hands-on learning, cutting-edge facilities, and direct engagement in faculty-led research.

YSU's STEM College includes the following academic departments:

- **Department of Physics, Astronomy, Geology & Environmental Sciences:** This interdisciplinary department brings together the physical and earth sciences, offering programs in physics, astronomy, geology, and environmental sciences. Faculty expertise and student opportunities span observational and theoretical physics, planetary and space sciences, environmental research, and field-based geoscience experiences.

- **Department of Computer Science, Information & Engineering Technology (CSIET):** A rapidly evolving department at the forefront of computing and applied technologies, CSIET offers programs in computer science, information technology, and engineering technology. Students gain access to advanced computing laboratories, applied project opportunities, and experiential learning designed to prepare them for technology-driven industries across the region and beyond.
- **Department of Engineering:** Home to multiple engineering disciplines, including mechanical, industrial, civil, chemical, and electrical engineering, this department combines rigorous ABET-aligned curriculum with state-of-the-art facilities and strong partnerships with industry. Students engage in capstone design, applied research, laboratory experience, and co-ops that reflect the region's engineering and manufacturing strengths.
- **Department of Mathematics and Statistics:** This department provides foundational and advanced training in pure and applied mathematics, statistics, and data-driven problem-solving. Faculty support broad interdisciplinary research and offer essential quantitative coursework for STEM majors across the College. Programs prepare students for careers in analytics, academia, research, engineering, finance, and scientific modeling.
- **Department of Chemical and Biological Sciences:** One of the College's most research-active areas, this department provides programs in biological sciences, chemistry, and related fields. YSU is one of the few predominantly undergraduate institutions to house a state-of-the-art X-ray diffraction facility, offering students hands-on access to advanced instrumentation typically found at major research universities. Students participate in laboratory research, fieldwork, and faculty-mentored scholarly activity, often publishing and presenting their findings.



About Youngstown State University

Youngstown State University (YSU) is a comprehensive public university located in the heart of Northeast Ohio, serving as a vital educational, economic, and workforce anchor for the region. Founded in 1908, the University has evolved from a teachers' college into a multifaceted institution offering a broad spectrum of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs that respond to the needs of a modern, technology-driven economy. YSU occupies a 160-acre urban campus in Youngstown, Ohio, and is recognized for its affordability, accessibility, and commitment to student success.

With a total enrollment of nearly 12,000 students, the University attracts learners from across the region, nation, and globe. Enrollment has experienced back-to-back growth, with Fall 2025 marking the second consecutive year of increases, a notable achievement at a time when many institutions face declines. This growth includes a surge in first-year, graduate, online, and international students, reflecting YSU's expanding academic reach and global relevance.

YSU is ranked #99 among Regional Universities in the Midwest and #35 among Top Public Schools and maintains an 18:1 student-faculty ratio, offering students the benefits of a mid-sized institution with a personalized academic experience. The University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and offers more than 265 academic programs, including doctoral degrees in research, scholarship, and professional practice.

Access, Affordability, and Academic Excellence

Youngstown State University remains one of the region's most affordable four-year institutions, with in-state tuition and fees around \$10,791. Sixty-two percent of first-year students receive need-based aid, and the average net price for federal loan recipients is just over \$11,700, a testament to YSU's commitment to access and affordability. Completion rates are steadily improving, with degree awards reaching decade-high levels in 2024-2025.

The University's mission has long reflected its roots as a community-serving institution. YSU continues to support first-generation students, returning adults, and working learners while offering programs that prepare graduates for the realities of today's workforce. With a 76.9% first-year retention rate and strong early-career employment outcomes, 86% of alumni are employed within three years. YSU's impact extends well beyond the classroom.

Research, Innovation, and Community Engagement

YSU has a growing portfolio of applied research, technology-driven initiatives, and industry partnerships aligned with regional economic needs. The University plays a pivotal role in the economic revitalization of the Mahoning Valley, supporting advanced manufacturing, engineering, health sciences, education, and public service sectors. Investments in research, innovation spaces, and workforce education, such as those embedded in the College of STEM, demonstrate YSU's commitment to regional transformation and national relevance.

YSU's evolution parallels the economic and industrial shifts of Northeast Ohio, and the University continues to expand its footprint, including its strategic work to open a new campus in Steubenville. This development, supported by the state of Ohio, will deliver high-quality, career-aligned pathways to residents of southeastern Ohio, beginning as early as 2026.

A Supportive and Engaged Student Community

Youngstown State's student body includes a significant share of full-time, part-time, international, and online learners. More than 2,200 students are enrolled exclusively in online programs, with thousands more engaging in hybrid learning options. YSU's supportive environment, including faculty mentorship, advising, and dedicated student services, ensures that students can succeed whether they study on campus or remotely.

YSU offers a vibrant campus life with more than 200 student organizations, Division I athletics, and a growing array of cultural and community activities that strengthen ties between the University and the broader Youngstown area.

Shaping the Region's Future

From its origins as a teachers' college in 1908 to its current role as a multifaceted, workforce-aligned public university, Youngstown State University has demonstrated a deep commitment to serving its community, driving economic opportunity, and empowering students through accessible, high-quality education. As YSU continues to expand its academic offerings, workforce programs, research scope, and regional footprint, it remains firmly positioned as an anchor institution shaping the future of Northeast Ohio and beyond.



Leadership

Jennifer Adams, Provost

Dr. Jennifer (Pintar) Adams is the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Youngstown State University, where she leads the institution's academic mission, strategic planning, and faculty affairs. A member of the YSU community since 1999, she has served in roles spanning faculty, department chair, associate provost, and interim provost.

Dr. Adams holds a Ph.D. in Exercise Physiology, a Master of Public Health in Epidemiology, and a master's degree in exercise physiology from the University of Pittsburgh, along with a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Washington & Jefferson College.

As provost, she oversees academic planning, program development, faculty evaluation, and student success initiatives, including the university's Academic Master Plan. Her leadership emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and alignment between academic excellence and regional workforce and community needs.

Wim Steelant, Dean of the College of STEM



Dr. Steelant received a Bachelor's degree in Analytical Chemistry (1992) from St. Lieven College (Ghent, Belgium), followed by a Master's degree in Chemical Engineering (1993) from West-Brabant College (Etten-Leur, The Netherlands). He obtained his Ph.D. in Biology/Biochemistry/Biomedicine from the University of Amsterdam (The Netherlands) in 2000 and completed a postdoctoral training at the University of Washington, Department of Pathobiology, and the Pacific Northwest Research Institute with Prof. Sen-itiroh Hakomori.

In 2002, he accepted a tenure-track position at New Mexico Tech in the Department of Chemistry, with an emphasis on both teaching and the creation of a Biochemical and Biomedical research facility. He obtained his tenure and promotion as Associate Professor in Chemistry in 2008. After serving three years as Chemistry Department Chair at New Mexico Tech, he became Dean of the School of Science at St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida.

During that time, Dr. Steelant was also the founder of the nursing program and accepted the position of Founding VP for Research (2014) at this institution to shape the Office of Sponsored Research and support and develop the University's plan to seek more extramural funding. In 2016, he transitioned to a state university (Youngstown State University; YSU) where he now serves as Dean of the College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Professor of Chemistry.



Youngstown, Ohio

Living in Youngstown, Ohio, offers an appealing blend of affordability, community, and steady revitalization. Youngstown is consistently ranked among the most affordable cities in the United States. Youngstown is a community with deep resilience and a growing sense of momentum. The city and surrounding Mahoning Valley are experiencing ongoing reinvestment in education, healthcare, technology, and advanced manufacturing, sectors that shape both local identity and regional opportunity. Strong neighborhood ties, an emerging arts and culture scene, and accessible outdoor amenities define the area. Residents enjoy proximity to Mill Creek Park, one of the largest metropolitan park systems in the country, along with local museums, theaters, revitalized downtown spaces, and a cultural landscape supported by YSU's presence as a hub for learning and community engagement.



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 Youngstown State University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by **March 2, 2026**.

Application should be submitted through [Youngstown State University's jobs site](#).

Nominations, and inquiries can be directed to:

Lauren Bruce-Stets and Jess Cummings

YSU-STEM@wittkieffer.com

Youngstown State University is committed to a campus environment that values all individuals and groups and to non-discrimination and equality of opportunity in education and employment. University policy and federal and state law prohibit all forms of discrimination and/or harassment based on sex, race, color, religion, national origin (including shared ancestry), age, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability, or veteran/military status or any other basis protected by law.