



Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Leadership Profile

Spring 2026



WittKieffer

Executive Summary

[Norfolk State University \(NSU\)](#), a proudly urban, top-ranked HBCU renowned for transformative teaching, innovative research, and community impact, seeks an experienced, collaborative, and mission-driven leader to serve as its Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Founded in 1935, Norfolk State University is a comprehensive public, doctoral-granting institution committed to transforming students' lives through exemplary teaching, research, and service. With nationally recognized STEM programs and a diverse and robust liberal arts program, the University enrolls approximately 6,500 students across 64 undergraduate, graduate, and online programs. Norfolk State University garners over \$20M in annual grant expenditures, has an NCAA Division I athletic program with fifteen sports, and celebrates vibrant achievements, from eleven MEAC athletic championships to the Spartan Legion Band's 2023 Rose Parade appearance. Situated in the dynamic coastal city of Norfolk, Virginia, the University stands at an exciting juncture as it defines a new strategic plan, expands interdisciplinary partnerships, and modernizes its business systems, including an institutional investment in *Workday*.

Reporting to [President Javaune Adams-Gaston, Ph.D.](#), and positioned as a key member of the President's Cabinet, the Provost serves as the chief academic officer with responsibility for academic management and oversight of a comprehensive portfolio comprised of the University's seven schools and colleges, multiple centers, and University services. The Provost ensures that the University's high-quality programs, resources, infrastructure, and services are designed to deliver upon NSU's mission to "transform students' lives through exemplary teaching, research, and service," by providing leadership and support that enables the personal and intellectual growth of all members of the academic community, including students, faculty, and staff. The Provost has oversight responsibility for the University's promotion and tenure of its faculty, as well as the recruiting, hiring, and advancement of its academic administrators.

The ideal candidate will be a strategic and collaborative leader with a demonstrated commitment to academic excellence; a proven record of inspiring and leading faculty, staff, and students; and a reputation for nurturing an institutional culture of collegiality and participative governance. As a leader with deep commitment to the academy, the Provost will partner to support the professional growth and success of both faculty and staff; advance NSU as an inclusive learning community; and cultivate a culture of optimism, trust, and collaboration.

This Provost will bring an understanding of current and future trends impacting higher education; experience translating vision into action; demonstrated ability to promote an environment that encourages innovation; an unrelenting commitment to and reputation for developing student success initiatives and evidence of advancing research endeavors at their current institution in order to further NSU's academic and scholarly excellence.

In addition, the NSU community seeks in its next Provost a leader skilled in identifying and developing existing talent and ensuring that faculty and staff in the academic enterprise understand and are able to deliver on the needs of the population that NSU serves. An earned terminal degree in one of the disciplines represented at the University, and exemplary accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, research and professional service to qualify for a tenured appointment at Norfolk State University; a record of successful and progressive academic administration leadership at an institution of higher education of similar complexity as a current or former Provost, Associate/Assistant Provost or Dean with evidence of effectively leading across a comprehensive array of academic disciplines with a strong commitment to both a liberal arts education and professional programs are required.

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 Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

As the Chief Academic Officer, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs reports to the President and serves as a key member of the [President's Cabinet](#) with responsibility for furthering Norfolk State University's academic mission by providing leadership and support that enables the personal and intellectual growth of all members of the academic community, including its 380 full and part time talented faculty as well as students and staff. The Provost has oversight responsibility for the University's promotion and tenure of its faculty, as well as the recruiting, hiring, and advancement of its academic administrators.

The Provost serves as chief adviser to the President and faculty on academic affairs, formulating educational policies with faculty input, and collaborating with the Office of the President to spearhead strategic academic initiatives that enhance the intellectual and personal growth of all campus constituencies. Additionally, the Provost plays a critical leadership role in staffing the Academic and Student Affairs Committee of the [Board of Visitors](#). The Provost will demonstrate a strong business acumen and understanding of budgeting and institutional finances and work with the Vice President of Finance and Administration to ensure that strategic academic planning, faculty needs, and institutional financial planning go hand in hand. The Provost should also have the ability to clearly communicate how financial decisions are made to those in the academic enterprise

Core to the mission of the Office of the Provost is fostering excellence in teaching, scholarship, and research, driving curriculum development and the promotion of efficient instructional operations, ensuring the continued success and advancement of Norfolk State University's academic mission. By developing systems that support strong student learning outcomes and effective retention, the Provost helps create an environment where students and faculty thrive.

The following colleges, schools, centers, and units report to the Provost:

Colleges & Schools

- [College of Liberal Arts \(COLA\)](#)
- [College of Science, Engineering, and Technology \(CSET\)](#)
- [School of Business](#)
- [School of Education](#)
- [Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work](#)
- [School of Graduate Studies and Research](#)
- [Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College](#)

Centers

- [Center for Applied Research and Public Policy \(CARPP\)](#)
- [Center for Materials Research](#)
- [Consortium for Strategic and Global Studies](#)
- [Information Assurance Research Education and Development Institute \(IA-REDI\)](#)
- [NSU Innovation Center](#)
- [The Roberts Center](#)

Academic Administration & Support

- [Academic Effectiveness](#)
- [Academic Engagement](#)
- [Community Engagement](#)
- [Research and Innovation](#)
- [Global Learning and International Programs](#)
- [Faculty Ombudsman](#)
- [Library Services](#)
- [Title III Programs](#)
- [Virginia Beach Higher Education Center](#)

The following roles report to the Provost:

- Interim Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs
- Vice Provost for Academic Engagement
- Vice Provost for Academic Effectiveness
- Vice Provost for Research and Innovation
- Associate Vice Provost for Global Learning and Internationalization of Programs
- Associate Vice Provost for Community Engagement
- Academic Budget and Operations Specialist
- Executive Administrative Assistant (2)



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Norfolk State University's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will drive the mission of NSU by educating students for their future, equipping faculty with the resources and skills needed to be successful, and ensuring the integrity of academic programming.

In addition, the Provost will be expected to accomplish the following key priorities:

- **Partner with the President and Cabinet to Realize NSU's Strategic Vision**

As the driver of the academic enterprise, the Provost holds a significant and highly visible leadership role on campus. With the recent conclusion of the University's [*Strategic Plan 2019 – 2025, Forging Onward*](#), the new leader will join the University during a time when the community is imagining its future trajectory. As such, the Provost will work in close partnership with the President and other members of the cabinet to advance the University's emerging strategic priorities, with a focus on research and student success, that will both further distinguish NSU as a leader in STEM education and innovation and will have a lasting impact, enabling NSU to deliver upon its mission. This individual should bring an understanding of current and future trends impacting higher education; experience translating vision into action; demonstrated ability to promote an environment that encourages innovation; an unrelenting commitment to and reputation for developing student success initiatives and evidence of advancing research endeavors at their current institution in order to further NSU's academic and scholarly excellence.

- **Promote Operational Excellence Across the Academic Enterprise**

The Provost will work collaboratively with the University's Vice Presidents to foster shared accountability for operational excellence. This includes assessing opportunities to streamline key institutional and academic business processes and policies with a university-wide lens to support continued success, foster long-term academic capacity, and resilience. In addition, NSU has made a strategic investment in Workday as the institution's new ERP system. With the Human Capital Management module launching this year, the Finance module launching in 2027, and with Workday Student slated to launch in 2029, it is expected that the Provost will play a leadership role, in close partnership with the Vice President for Operations and Chief Strategist for Institutional Effectiveness and the Chief Information Officer in championing the change and successful adoption of the new system functionality across the University. In addition, the Provost will encourage the exploration and implementation of best practices and emerging technologies to support faculty in enhancing the learning experience of all students.

- **Advance Student Success Through Partnership and Academic Innovation**

The University has a long history of providing a supportive and empowering environment focused on student success. The Provost will play a pivotal role in enhancing outcomes for all students by collaborating with faculty and staff to assess, develop, and refine academic programs tailored to the needs of current and future students and the region. The Provost will be an active member of the community, learning the workforce needs in the area, and working to develop strategic partnerships with organizations that will create experiences and career opportunities for students. The Provost should be a collaborative partner with the faculty in assessing and, if appropriate, supporting revisions to the curriculum to enhance student learning.

The Provost will also work with the President, Deans, and the Division of Enrollment Management to improve academic preparation, engagement, and advising of students to prepare them for academic and post-graduation success and develop strategies to increase student retention and graduation rates.

- **Foster Faculty Engagement and Shared Governance**

The Provost will embrace and enhance a strong commitment to shared governance structures and principles. To realize this commitment, the Provost must quickly establish productive, collaborative relationships with key campus constituents. The Provost will foster a culture of mutual respect that acknowledges the expertise and commitment of faculty and staff to the University and its mission. The NSU community desires a leader who leads in a way that builds trust and confidence, who is transparent in their decision-making processes, and who regularly communicates the goals and outcomes of these processes to the campus community.

The next Provost will be committed to recruiting, retaining, and developing a diverse cadre of faculty and academic administrators that mirrors the student body, fostering creativity in which all viewpoints are valued and exchanged. The incoming Provost must be skilled in identifying and developing existing talent and ensuring that faculty and staff in the academic enterprise understand and are able to deliver on the needs of the population that NSU serves. As such, the Provost will bring an understanding and appreciation for the unique and complex needs of all faculty and demonstrate a steadfast commitment to supporting everyone. NSU faculty are deeply committed to teaching and students, active scholars in their field, and engaged participants in the University and local community. The Provost should have a record of enhancing teaching and research infrastructure and resources, supporting faculty professional development, advocating for an inclusive learning environment, and working across a wide range of academic disciplines.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

Norfolk State University is seeking a Provost who demonstrates inspirational, strategic leadership and engages productively with faculty, students, staff, alumni, and the broader community. The ideal candidate will possess the requisite experience, skills, and knowledge to enhance the University's reputation and support its evolving strategic direction. Intellectual vitality, collegial and transparent leadership, and a genuine commitment to academic advancement and student achievement are essential. As the institution's chief academic officer, the Provost will promote multidisciplinary collaboration to leverage NSU's strengths into innovative educational and research initiatives. Additionally, the Provost must advocate effectively for faculty, staff, and students, and cultivate an environment of academic excellence, collegiality, and participative governance.

The successful candidate will have experience with the following skills and experiences:

- **Academic Credentials and Experience:** An earned terminal degree in one of the disciplines represented at the University, and exemplary accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, research and professional service to qualify for a tenured appointment at Norfolk State University; a record of successful and progressive academic administration leadership at an institution of higher education of similar complexity as a current or former Provost, Associate/Assistant Provost or Dean with evidence of effectively leading across a comprehensive array of academic disciplines with a strong commitment to both a liberal arts education and professional programs.
 - **Academic Administration:** Demonstrated achievement in the management of curriculum, academic personnel, budget administration, grant administration, accreditation, and strategic planning.
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- **Academic Excellence:** A record of enhancing teaching and research infrastructure and resources and advocating for an inclusive learning environment; demonstrated commitment to the continued excellence of the educational and research programs of the University; experience promoting and assessing scholarship and teaching excellence across disciplines including recruiting, retaining, evaluating, developing, and supporting outstanding faculty; academic planning and curriculum development experience; experience leveraging technology and information systems to support teaching, learning/e-learning, research, and administration; and creative initiative and demonstrated experience in developing and implementing solid, forward-thinking programs.
- **Strategic planning:** Experience with strategic and academic planning, and with leading a plan to execution, including assessment and revision; a commitment to evaluation through data and data-based decision making within the construct of NSU's strategic objectives; inclination to work collaboratively with NSU constituents to develop a plan, while exercising considerable leadership in doing so; and ability to anticipate and resourcefully and collaboratively address challenges within the academic enterprise.
- **Collaborative and Transparent Leadership:** Dynamic leadership and a collaborative, transparent management style; commitment to the University's tradition of shared governance; ability to serve as an effective and collegial member of the President's leadership team and a desire to be part of an administrative structure in which all members contribute to the conversation about issues and policies across the University; ability to engage the academic community in open and collegial discussion and debate; strong political skills and commitment to relationship building across the institution; and excellent communication skills.
- **Fiscal Acumen:** Demonstrated experience in successful management of significant budget resources, especially in tight fiscal environments; the capacity to create and implement finance strategies to accompany long-range plans across academic affairs; and experience in resource generation, allocation, and prioritization in academic operations in order to create a viable, sustainable economic model.
- **Change Management:** Evidence of managing change collaboratively and transparently, with firmness, grace, and finesse; ability to implement change while managing multiple personality types and, sometimes, competing priorities; ability to innovate and be creative and to discern where such innovation is needed; ability to earn the trust of faculty, staff, and students, to work effectively with the President and senior leadership team, and to inspire and to galvanize others around the academic mission of NSU.
- **Managerial Courage:** Ability to speak with candor and to make difficult decisions; willing to act with incomplete information; timely decision making; holding others accountable and actively addressing performance issues; elevating alternative perspectives and concerns to leadership, and the ability to make unpopular decisions when necessary.
- **Personal Characteristics:** Collegial, inclusive, optimistic, energetic, able to communicate effectively with tact and wisdom; finds genuine pleasure in the company of faculty and students; demonstrates grace under pressure and a sense of humor.



About Norfolk State University

Overview

Norfolk State University is a comprehensive urban public, doctoral-granting institution committed to transforming students' lives through exemplary teaching, research, and service. The University is a top-ranked Historically Black College and University (HBCU) with nationally recognized STEM programs, complemented by a diverse and robust liberal arts program. It enrolls approximately 6,500 students in over thirty undergraduate and nineteen online & in-person graduate programs. Norfolk State University garners over \$20M in annual grant expenditures, has an NCAA Division I athletic program with fifteen sports, and eleven MEAC conference championships in the last three years, and a coveted marching band invitation for participation in the 2023 Rose Parade.

History

Norfolk State College was founded on September 18, 1935. The College, brought to life in the midst of the Great Depression, provided a setting in which the youth of the region could give expression to their hopes and aspirations. At this founding, it was named the Norfolk Unit of Virginia Union University. In 1942, the College became the independent Norfolk Polytechnic College, and two years later, an Act of the Virginia Legislature mandated that it become a part of Virginia State College. The College was able to pursue an expanded mission with even greater emphasis in 1956 when another Act of the Legislature enabled the institution to offer its first Bachelor's degree. The College was separated from Virginia State College and became fully independent in 1969. Subsequent legislative acts designated the institution as a university and authorized the granting of graduate degrees. In 1979, university status was attained.

Vision

Norfolk State University will be recognized nationally as a premier public institution with outstanding signature academic programs, innovative research, and community engagement opportunities.

Mission

Norfolk State University, a comprehensive urban public institution, is committed to transforming students' lives through exemplary teaching, research, and service. Offering a supportive academic and culturally diverse environment for all, the University empowers its students to turn aspirations into reality and achieve their full potential as well-rounded and resourceful citizens and leaders for the 21st century.

Values

- **Excellence:** We are dedicated to fostering a culture of excellence in all facets of the University through the highest educational standards for student achievement, stellar faculty teaching, innovative research, dedicated service, and creative co-curricular activities.
- **Student-Centered:** Students are our top priority, and we are committed to helping them become globally competitive in an enriching, stimulating, and supportive environment.
- **Diversity and Inclusiveness:** We foster a multicultural environment respecting all people, cultures, ideas, beliefs, identities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and perspectives. We train our students to become leaders in an ever-changing global and multicultural society.
- **Integrity and Civility:** We expect everyone to be accountable for his or her actions and to engage in honest, ethical behavior. We value the contributions of each person, treating all with respect and civility, and affirm our shared responsibility for institutional success.
- **Engagement:** We continually enhance the University's role and influence in the affairs of local and global communities by promoting educational attainment, cultural enrichment, and economic development.
- **Pride:** We display great admiration for the University and its rich history and legacy.
- **Financial Empowerment:** We aggressively pursue expanded and more diversified revenue streams.

Academic Programs

Norfolk State University offers more than 64 undergraduate majors, minors, and graduate programs that prepare students for careers or graduate school.

- [Undergraduate Programs](#)
- [Graduate Programs](#)
- [Online Programs](#)
- [Robert C. Nusbaum Honors](#)
- [Global Learning and International Programs](#)

Colleges & Schools

- **[College of Liberal Arts \(COLA\)](#):** The College of Liberal Arts embraces ten academic departments in the fine and performing arts, humanities, and social sciences. The departments are English and Foreign Languages, Fine Arts, General Studies, History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Mass Communications and Journalism, Music, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology.
 - **[College of Science, Engineering, and Technology \(CSET\)](#):** The College of Science, Engineering, and Technology (CSET) has over 2,000 students and presently comprises over 30% of the University's total
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student enrollment. Undergraduate students can select from a wide array of courses in eight academic departments: biology, chemistry, computer science, engineering, mathematics, nursing and allied health, physics, and technology. Effective and innovative support programs enhance the educational experience for students.

The College of Science, Engineering, and Technology has played a pivotal role in the University's eighty-year history. Faculty contributions in research, grantsmanship, service, and mentoring are exceptional. Graduates are securing outstanding jobs and are earning advanced degrees in record numbers. The College currently houses several research centers –Center for Materials Research (CMR), Center for Biotechnology and Biomedical Sciences (CBBS), Center of Excellence in Cybersecurity, Creative Gaming and Simulation Lab (CGS), Information Assurance –Research, Education, and Development Institute (IA-REDI), and numerous accredited programs. Graduate programs in the college include the master's degree in computer science, electronics engineering, and cybersecurity. A Ph.D. program in materials science and engineering was introduced in 2007.

- **School of Business:** The mission of the School of Business is to prepare students for careers in all types of organizations and for continued academic study. This is accomplished in a learner-centered community that promotes academic achievement, professional growth, and recognition of the importance of diversity, technology, globalization, and ethics in the workplace and society.
- **School of Education:** The School of Education is responsible for providing leadership, coordination, and evaluation of all teacher education programs at the University. Its central purpose is to provide pre-service and in-service educational programs to prospective teachers, in-service teachers, administrators, and others engaged in educational activities in schools and other agencies.
- **Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work:** The Ethelyn R. Strong School of Social Work provides social work education through its Baccalaureate Social Work (B.S.W.) Program, Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) Program, Doctoral (Ph.D.) Program, and continuing education programs. The School's mission is to provide social work education programs that prepare students with competence to develop and deliver services that strengthen and/or empower individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- **Robert C. Nusbaum Honors College:** The Honors College is designed to provide an enriched and challenging program of study for students who manifest exceptional academic potential, to improve the University's ability to attract such scholars, and to enrich the academic community.
- **School of Graduate Studies and Research:** The Graduate School administers the University's nineteen graduate programs in the School of Education, College of Liberal Arts, School of Social Work, and College of Science, Engineering, and Technology. The Graduate School is responsible to the Provost for the development and maintenance of high-quality graduate programs. The research enterprise is paramount at Norfolk State University. With a focus on finding practical solutions to complex problems, research permeates the curriculum and emphasizes minority student participation at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- **Office of Extended Learning:** The Office of Extended Learning works with all academic and administrative units, leveraging existing expertise and resources of the University to offer coursework through distance education, continuing education, and certificate programs.

Student Success

The Office of Academic Engagement offers an array of student success initiatives to promote the academic and holistic development of all students at NSU. These initiatives include Common Reader, Student Parenting Initiative, Student Pathways and Academic Formation, learning communities, the NSU Writing Center, the Undergraduate Research and Mentorship Program, and the Spartan Pathfinders program. Student Pathways & Academic Formation strategies focus on guiding students through attainable career pathways, integrating curricular and co-curricular learning experiences, and providing early intervention activities for enhancing post-graduate outcomes. The SPICA initiative collaborates with internal and external stakeholders, utilizing industry alliances to expose students to professional skills and workplace expectations. The NSU Writing Center extends support to students, faculty, and staff across disciplines, offering consultations to guide individuals through diverse writing projects. Additionally, the Undergraduate Research Program pairs students with faculty mentors, fostering research engagement and skill development with the potential to lead students toward Ph.D. programs.

- **Student Success Center:** The Dr. Patricia L. Stith Student Success Center at Norfolk State University is a central resource hub for promoting student, faculty, and staff success. The Center has evolved and expanded its advising approach with the adoption of the 2 + 2 academic advising model in 2016. The first two years are guided by the Dr. Patricia Lynch Student Success Center, while the latter two years fall under the Academic Department's guidance with professional advising. Additionally, the tutoring (peer, professional, and embedded), mentoring initiatives, such as Mentoring All Spartans 4 Success (MASS), First Year Experience (FYE), and Second Year Experience (SYE) programs, aim to enhance engagement, confidence, and performance for students who need additional support navigating the institution. The Office of Academic Engagement partners with schools and colleges to augment and further enhance these initiatives. In collaboration with the School of Business, the NSU Writing Center will pilot an Embedded Tutoring Program with the primary purpose of bolstering juniors' and seniors' writing skills and competencies before students enter internships and the workforce. In addition to the primary aim of the Embedded Tutoring Program, the Writing Center will supplement skill development through regular writing workshops and faculty professional development opportunities.
- **Research at NSU:** Norfolk State University generates upwards of \$20 million in grants and contracts annually. The Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) provides comprehensive support to the University community in advancing and supporting creative activity and scholarly research by working to support efforts to secure external funding, encourage internal and external collaboration, and ensure compliance with sponsored funding and research regulations, policies, and procedures. OSP supports faculty to seek, pursue, solicit, and manage funding opportunities for research and other sponsored program activities University-wide. OSP currently has 59 active research and development, training, and scholarship awards, totaling \$25,527,052 in funding received through federal, state, foundations, universities, and private organizations.
- **Sponsored Programs**
- **Foundations & Centers of Excellence**

Norfolk, Virginia

Norfolk is a city of some 235,000 residents and encompasses 66 square miles. As part of the “7 cities” of Hampton Roads, Norfolk has 7.5 miles of beach in the neighborhood of Ocean View and East Beach and a total of 144 miles of shoreline along our lakes, rivers, and the Bay. Norfolk is home to the world’s largest naval base and the North American Headquarters for NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).

USA Today called Norfolk one of the Top 10 booming downtowns, recognizing a decades-long housing, retail, and financial boom in Norfolk. Norfolk International Terminal has completed a 300-acre expansion, making it the largest inter-modal center in the U.S.



Norfolk, always known as a Navy city, features the world’s largest naval base. But over the past decade, its food and art scene has exploded, creating an eclectic, vibrant, and urban city along Virginia’s waterways. Norfolk is home to the Virginia Opera, the Virginia Stage Company, the Virginia Symphony, the Virginia Arts Festival, Chrysler Hall, the Chrysler Museum of Art, the General Douglas MacArthur Memorial, and Nauticus, the National Maritime Center.

Norfolk is a 2-hour drive from Richmond (capital of the Commonwealth of Virginia) and 3.5 hours from Washington, D.C. More information about Norfolk can be found [here](#).



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 the leadership profile.

WittKieffer is assisting Norfolk State University with this search. While applications will be accepted until this position is filled, expeditious application is strongly encouraged.

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

Additional inquiries can be directed to:

Sarah Palmer and Tyler Workman

NorfolkState-Provost@wittkieffer.com

NSU is committed to providing equal employment opportunities for all persons and applicants, without regard to age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, genetic information, race, religion, sexual orientation, sex (including pregnancy), or veteran status. NSU encourages and invites minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and veterans to apply.