Dean of the Interdisciplinary Schools

Leadership Profile

Winter 2025

WittKieffer

Executive Summary

Old Dominion University seeks a transformational leader to serve as its inaugural Dean of the Interdisciplinary Schools.

Old Dominion University (ODU), located in Norfolk, is Virginia's entrepreneurial-minded public doctoral R1 university. It serves approximately 24,000 students with its rigorous academics, energetic residential community, and robust initiatives that contribute $2.6 billion annually to Virginia's economy. ODU serves as a leader in complex discoveries, scholarship, and problem-solving, positively impacting local, regional, and national areas of expertise. The diverse student body includes approximately 54% students of color, and nearly 800 international students from 90 countries. ODU's commitment to both campus and online learning has led to national recognition for ensuring access to higher education and providing students with the opportunity for social mobility. Located near 15 military installations, ODU reflects the community's tradition of service; 25% of its student body are veterans or military-affiliated, with 4.5% of those on active duty.

Reporting to Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Brian K. Payne, Ph.D., the new Dean of the Interdisciplinary Schools will join enthusiastic and highly collaborative colleagues on the Dean's Leadership Council. As the Inaugural Dean, this leader will advocate for and manage Old Dominion's collaborative and cross-cutting schools, including the School of Cybersecurity, the School of Data Science, and the School of Supply Chain, Logistics & Maritime Operations. With a focus on academic rigor, strategic partnerships, interdisciplinary initiatives, enrollment growth, and civic engagement, the Dean must possess strong communication skills and the ability to work across academic units and disciplines. They will bring a clear vision for the schools that aligns with Old Dominion's mission and goals, along with strong decision-making skills. As the schools continue to grow, the new Dean must be strategic, offering a blueprint for curriculum development, innovation, and marketing, and be able to recruit and develop strong, dynamic faculty.

The Dean will be an experienced, student-centered, engaging, communicative, courageous, and proven leader who embraces forward-thinking strategies to anticipate and advance innovation in teaching, research, and service. The ideal candidate will have experience managing complex budgets, specifically integrating budget decisions into strategic planning. They will also have experience supporting faculty research and development needs at an R1 university. The Dean must be a proven collaborator with direct experience promoting excellence in education, as well as the networking, financial, and entrepreneurial skills required to work successfully with a wide range of individuals and constituencies across the University and beyond. The ability to collaborate with the Faculty Senate and faculty constituent groups, as well as across administrative/divisional units, is essential. The Dean must value tradition while also having a record of innovation. The Dean will have earned a terminal degree in a recognized university discipline and possess demonstrated scholarly achievements commensurate with a tenured appointment at the rank of full professor.

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 Dean of the Interdisciplinary Schools

Old Dominion University seeks a Dean to oversee the innovative, University-wide interdisciplinary programming that integrates scientific disciplines to address societal challenges that cannot be addressed within a single disciplinary pursuit. Home to more than 1,900 students, 36 faculty members assigned to the schools, and eight faculty members with joint appointments, the Interdisciplinary Schools have awarded 1,600 degrees since 2020. The Interdisciplinary Schools blend teaching, research, and community engagement to produce students who can enter a wide range of careers, generate scientific findings that advance key areas, and develop research insights that lead to the creation of new products, as well as foster community partnerships that synergistically strengthen all partners.

This unique opportunity for the inaugural Dean weaves together the School of Cybersecurity, the School of Data Science, and the School of Supply Chain, Logistics, and Maritime Operations. Each school is distinct while driven by the pursuit of integrating academic disciplines:

- The School of Cybersecurity offers both bachelor's and master's degree programs.   Launched in 2015, more than 1,700 students are enrolled in the degree programs, which encompass coursework in cybersecurity, philosophy, criminology, computer science, interdisciplinary studies, information technology, and other related fields. The School administers the Coastal Virginia Center for Cyber Innovation (COVA CCI) and received $11.8M in grants in FY25. The programs in the School have received National Security Agency Centers of Academic Excellence designations in Cyber Defense, Cyber Operations, Cyber Research, and Cyber Artificial Intelligence Program of Study Validation.

- The School of Data Science offers both bachelor's and master's degree programs. Launched in February 2023, the School of Data Science coordinates and houses all data science academic programming previously spread across the University's Colleges. The School of Data Science collaborates with over fifty faculty members across ODU, who teach or conduct research in data science-related fields, including but not limited to computer science, mathematics, statistics, engineering, psychology, criminal justice, education, business, information technology, history, and philosophy. In addition, the School of Data Science prioritizes enhancing research partnerships with federal research laboratories located in the region.

- The School of Supply Chain, Logistics, and Maritime Operations was created in Fall 2023 in response to needs expressed by regional leaders. Offering both bachelor's and master's degree programs, the School provides a central academic home to coordinate programming on supply chain, logistics, and maritime topics that had previously been included across the University's Colleges. ODU's locational proximity to the Port of Virginia, Naval Station Norfolk, NATO Joint Forces Command, the highest concentration of shipbuilding and ship repair facilities in the country, and a broader nexus of support systems for these industries (warehouse and distribution centers, intermodal transportation) – is unparalleled.

In addition to these three schools, the Center for Bioelectronics, the Maritime, Ports & Logistics Institute, and the Virginia Beach Data Science Institute are housed within the Interdisciplinary Schools. Currently, offerings include ten accelerated, asynchronous artificial intelligence certificates and three majors that are part of the undergraduate interdisciplinary studies degree.

Reporting to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean has responsibility for:
- Leading a team that represents different University-wide initiatives.
- Growing enrollment in programs offered and supported by the Interdisciplinary Schools.
- Representing the Interdisciplinary Schools on the Provost's Cabinet and the Dean's Leadership Council.
- Promoting new University-wide interdisciplinary academic and research pursuits.
- Supporting University faculty in interdisciplinary pursuits.
- Overseeing and/or collaborating on the development, implementation, and assessment of interdisciplinary academic programs that cut across multiple colleges.
- Leading and mentoring faculty, staff, and students to advance the ongoing success of academic programs and research centers housed in the Interdisciplinary Schools.
- Serving as the primary advocate for the Interdisciplinary Schools, representing them within the University and the broader community.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The new Dean joins ODU at an exciting time with opportunities for high impact. As the inaugural Dean, this leader will have unique and distinctive opportunities, along with the following expectations in the role.

Shape the future of the Schools and Old Dominion University: The Dean must provide a cohesive and forward-thinking strategy for next steps. They will provide vision for leveraging the distinct yet deeply complementary strengths of each school. As part of their leadership, the Dean will build a strong Interdisciplinary Schools brand—narrating a powerful story across ODU and beyond. They will position the Schools and their faculty for roles as thought leaders, research experts, advisors, and innovators, propelling the schools and ODU to even greater recognition. They will provide ODU's campus with strong examples of a successful interdisciplinary mindset, helping to build a culture of even greater interdisciplinarity across all of ODU's academic programs and centers.

Build Synergy and Foster Collaboration: Reflecting on how the fields of cybersecurity, data science, supply chain, logistics, and maritime operations intersect in the real world, the Dean will provide pathways for synergy across the schools, identifying and fostering cross-disciplinary learning and partnerships. In close collaboration with faculty, they will support the development of joint projects that expand research, create new programs, and forge new internal and external partnerships, as well as workforce-aligned programming. Aiding in that work, the Dean will be able to leverage the capabilities of MonarchSphere, a first-of-its-kind AI incubator created in partnership with Google https://www.odu.edu/article/old-dominion-university-and-google-launch-a-first-of-its-kind-ai-incubator-for-higher.

Provide Academic Innovation and Support Enrollment Growth: As a forward thinker, the Dean will look for ways to continue to build and harness interdisciplinary synergies. They will provide innovative and agile ideas that strengthen the value of the innovative programs, provide greater opportunities for postgraduate success, and contribute to the development of industry partnerships and solutions to industry problems. They will consider academic offerings, pathways, and certifications that strengthen and expand access for adult and non-traditional students, while also guiding the Schools toward establishing full sets of programs, inclusive of doctoral degrees. The Dean must also value and support ODU's values as a public University. Student success and access must be a priority; therefore, the Schools' student support structures and educational experiences, such as experiential learning, student research opportunities, and internships, should also factor into the Dean's vision.

Grow Research: In support of ODU's new R1 classification as well as novel research opportunities within and across fields, the Dean will provide opportunities to grow and strengthen research, including but not limited to improving and modernizing the research ecosystem specific to disciplines, and furthering and increasing research collaborations with disciplines throughout the University. Leveraging ODU's unique position, the Schools align with ODU's Strategic Research Areas https://www.odu.edu/research/strategic-research-areas. Improving the School's ability to compete for large grants and securing private and traditional funding will also be an opportunity for the next Dean.

Build and Refine Infrastructure: Because of the nascent nature of the Schools integration, the Dean will be expected to continue to develop a strong administrative infrastructure. Not only will the Dean need to forge policies and processes that reflect the complexity of academic appointments within the Schools, but they will also need to assess and address the continued integration of the Schools into the University and its processes. Some opportunities for the new Dean can be found in student support, faculty onboarding, faculty and staff development, budgeting and finance, marketing, and enrollment. The Dean will have the ability to assess and improve current organizational structures.

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The next Dean will have, at a minimum, an earned doctorate from an accredited institution in a discipline relevant to one of the Interdisciplinary Schools at ODU and a distinguished record of scholarship, teaching, and professional accomplishments that merit appointment as a Full Professor with tenure at Old Dominion University. The most successful candidates will also possess most, if not all, of the following attributes:

- Substantive and sustained administrative leadership involving strategic direction.

- A proven ability to design and implement initiatives that foster interdisciplinary partnerships and collapse academic silos, leading to innovative educational experiences.

- Experience developing interdisciplinary partnerships.

- Experience and success in managing resources, including budget and staffing needs.

- A commitment to fostering student success, including experience with student recruitment, retention, and engagement initiatives.

- A commitment to fostering faculty and staff success, including advocacy up, down, and across the organization.

- Strong communication skills that are grounded in transparency, consensus building, and the translation of complex technical ideas into compelling, accessible narratives.

- Experience collaboratively working with community and campus groups.

- Experience building and managing effective teams and working cooperatively with both internal and external collaborators toward shared goals.

- Experience in securing grants, contracts, industry-funded initiatives, and gifts.

- Entrepreneurial, innovative, and future-focused vision.

- Commitment to inclusive excellence and the values of access and equity.

- Integrity, humility, high levels of professionalism, respect for others, and fairness.

- Resilience, equanimity, and adaptability.

About Old Dominion University

Overview

Old Dominion University (ODU) began its tradition of excellence when it was founded in 1930 by the College of William and Mary, the second-oldest university in the United States. Established as an extension of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg, Virginia, ODU began educating teachers and engineers. The two-year school rapidly evolved into a four-year institution and was granted independence in 1962 as Old Dominion College. Proud of its past, ODU constantly looks to the future and prides itself on its continually expanding research and teaching programs. An ever-evolving university, ODU is an agent of change for its students, the region, and the nation it serves. Its waterfront campus in the coastal city of Norfolk, Virginia, home to Naval Station Norfolk, the world's largest U.S. Navy base, gives students internship and employment opportunities with some of the world's top companies and accessibility to great shopping and dining, as well as beautiful beaches and historic sites.

ODU is Virginia's entrepreneurial-minded public doctoral R1 university with approximately 24,000 students, rigorous academics, an energetic residential community, and robust initiatives that contribute $2.6 billion annually to Virginia's economy. The diverse student body includes approximately 54% students of color, nearly 800 international students from 90 countries, and 25% military-affiliated students. ODU has also been recognized among the region's and nation's top colleges. Students benefit from a 16:1 student-to-faculty ratio and are supported by over 900 dedicated and nationally recognized faculty members. The University is consistently ranked highly by U.S. News and World Report, both overall and for its students' social mobility. ODU was highlighted for having, among doctoral institutions, top undergraduate business and engineering programs. With more than 175,000 alumni across all 50 states and 67 countries, ODU pride is global.

ODU is also an excellent workplace for its faculty and staff. The University is the eighth-largest employer in Virginia, named one of America's Best In-State Employers 2024 by Forbes and Statista, and the only higher education institution in the state to be ranked as one of 2024's Healthiest Employers in Virginia.

Mission

ODU, located in Norfolk in the metropolitan Hampton Roads region of coastal Virginia, is a dynamic public research institution that serves its students and enriches the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world through rigorous academic programs, strategic partnerships, and active civic engagement.

Academics

ODU offers 228 degree programs, including 130 programs and certificates through online learning via ODUGlobal. The eight academic colleges confer 91 bachelor's degrees, 41 master's degrees, 22 doctoral degrees, and two educational specialist degrees.

The integration of Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) into ODU in 2024 created the largest portfolio of health sciences degrees in Virginia and substantially increased the University's already formidable community impact. Students benefit from the combined expertise and resources, with substantial support provided through new scholarship programs that emphasize need and merit and demonstrate a commitment to nurturing future healthcare professionals.

The newly named Macon & Joan Brock Virginia Health Sciences is comprised of five colleges and schools—EVMS, EVMS School of Health Professions, Ellmer College of Health Sciences, Ellmer School of Nursing, and the Joint School of Public Health—and serves as the hub for all health sciences programming and operations in order to foster interdisciplinary learning, innovative research, and comprehensive clinical training.

Colleges:

Batten College of Engineering & Technology

Darden College of Education & Professional Studies

Ellmer College of Health Sciences

Ellmer School of Nursing

Strome College of Business

College of Arts & Letters

College of Sciences

Graduate School

Joint School of Public Health

Patricia & Douglas Perry Honors College

ODU Interdisciplinary Schools

For more information on the various academic programs, please visit: www.odu.edu/academics.

Student Life and Athletics

With nearly 24,000 students, ODU is one of the largest and most diverse universities in the state of Virginia. Experience at ODU spans borders, languages, and time. Cultures converge, and viewpoints are respected.

On one of the most diverse campuses in Virginia, student life is rich in sports, music, art, culture, and activities. ODU fosters student success through campus engagement and experiential learning. Students can choose from more than 200 student organizations and 28 fraternities and sororities.

Residential students are offered a variety of living options and amenities with 14 housing options and 17 dining locations to meet every student's dietary needs. For more information on student life, please visit www.odu.edu/life.

In support of the ODU mission, the Department of Athletics recruits and develops a diverse population of highly skilled student-athletes who compete in 18 varsity sports, including 16 at the NCAA Division I level. ODU's commitment is to enable student-athletes to reach their full potential academically, athletically, and as citizens. Athletics enriches the campus experience and serves as a gateway to the University by enhancing its visibility and reputation. For more information on athletics, please visit odusports.com.

Leadership

Dr. Brian O. Hemphill, President

Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., Old Dominion University's ninth president, is an unwavering champion for access and opportunity as well as innovation and research, with a deep commitment to forward-focused leadership. President Hemphill is proud to lead ODU with a steadfast dedication to excellence, a firm commitment to accountability and transparency, and — most importantly — a strong focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as student success. President Hemphill looks forward to expanding existing partnerships and creating new opportunities to advance the institution, the region, and the Commonwealth of Virginia through entrepreneurial and innovative approaches.

A devoted public servant and steward of ODU and the Commonwealth, President Hemphill proudly serves on a variety of boards and commissions. He faithfully represents ODU on the national scale with active involvement in the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), including the Board of Directors, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association Presidential Forum. President Hemphill is equally dedicated to state and regional engagement through active membership on various councils and committees.

President Hemphill earned a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration and Policy Studies from the University of Iowa, a Master of Science degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Communication from Saint Augustine's College.

Dr. Brian K. Payne, Provost

Brian K. Payne is the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at Old Dominion University, where he is tenured in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. As Provost, he serves as the chief academic officer of the institution and is responsible for academic success and faculty affairs initiatives. He also oversees the College of Arts and Letters, Batten College of Engineering and Technology, College of Sciences, Darden College of Education, Darden College of Education, Perry Honors College, Strome College of Business, and University Libraries, as well as ODU's Graduate School and three Interdisciplinary Schools.

He is a former editor of the American Journal of Criminal Justice and past President of the Southern Criminal Justice Association and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. Dr. Payne is the author or co-author of more than 160 journal articles and seven books including White-Collar Crime: The Essentials (Sage), Family Violence and Criminal Justice (Elsevier, with Randy Gainey), Crime and Elder Abuse: An Integrated Perspective (Charles C Thomas), Introduction to Criminal Justice: A Balanced Approach (Sage, with Will Oliver and Nancy Marion). Dr. Payne led the development of three Interdisciplinary Schools at ODU – the School of Cybersecurity, School of Data Science, and School of Supply Chain, Logistics, and Maritime Operations – and was the founding director of the Coastal Virginia Center for Cyber Innovation. He has been PI or Co-PI on grants totaling more than $11 million.

Norfolk, Virginia

Old Dominion University's waterfront campus is in the heart of vibrant Coastal Virginia—a prime place to learn, work, and play. Approximately 1.75 million people live in the region, which is home to the cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach. Each city has its own unique attractions, events, and activities.

Norfolk, a metropolitan city, is home to the world's largest naval base and the North American headquarters for NATO. From internship opportunities with some of the world's top companies to great shopping and dining, to beautiful beaches, there is always something new to discover. Norfolk is also close to Colonial Williamsburg and NASA Langley, the birthplace of the U.S. space program.

Airlines serving the Norfolk International Airport provide convenient non-stop service to over three dozen destinations, including most major U.S. hub airports and several leisure destinations. Amtrak's Northeast Regional trains offer daily access from the region to Richmond, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. The ODU campus is served by Hampton Roads Transit, which provides local and regional service by bus and light rail.

For more information on Coastal Virginia, please visit www.odu.edu/about/visitors/coastal-virginia.

Procedure for Candidacy

WittKieffer is assisting Old Dominion University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by February 20, 2026.

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. Please visit the WittKieffer website for the search or contact the team, Charlene Aguilar, Robin Mamlet, and Sandra Chu at:

ODU-DeanInterdisciplinarySchools@WittKieffer.com.

It is the policy of Old Dominion University to provide equal employment, educational and social opportunities for all persons, without regard to race (or traits historically associated with race including hair texture, hair type, and protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists), color, religion, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), national origin, gender identity or expression, age, veteran status, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation or genetic information. Minorities, women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.