



## Vice President for Student Affairs Leadership Profile

March 2026



*WittKieffer*

## Executive Summary

The [University of St. Thomas](#) (UST) invites nominations and applications for the position of **Vice President for Student Affairs** (VPSA). This is a pivotal leadership opportunity at one of the nation's leading Catholic universities—an institution committed to educating morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully to advance the common good. As Minnesota's largest private university and among the country's most prominent Catholic institutions, St. Thomas serves nearly 10,000 students across eight schools and colleges on campuses in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Rome, Italy. The University benefits from net assets of \$1.2 billion, strong philanthropic momentum, an engaged Board of Trustees, and a vibrant alumni network of more than 115,000 worldwide.

St. Thomas is on an upward trajectory, marked by strategic academic expansion, rising national visibility, and bold investments in the student experience. The University's historic transition from NCAA Division III to Division I in 2021 continues to elevate enrollment, strengthen school spirit, and expand institutional reach. The recent strategic plan ushered in a dynamic period of growth—including significant enhancements to the campus residential environment, the expansion of the Morrison Family College of Health, and investments in facilities such as the Center for Well-Being and the Iversen Center for Faith. The new strategic plan, St. Thomas 2030, is built upon the University's Foundational Pillars and successes of the previous strategic plan.

Within this context of remarkable momentum, the next VPSA will play a central role in advancing a holistic, mission-aligned, and forward-looking student experience. Reporting directly to Executive Vice President and Provost Eddy Rojas serving on the President's Cabinet, the VPSA will lead a strong and long-tenured Student Affairs division that includes the Dean of Students, Student Engagement & Belonging, Residence Life, the Center for Well-Being, Retention and Student Success partnerships, and key co-curricular programs that shape campus life. The VPSA will steward and champion a student experience grounded in the Catholic intellectual tradition—one that prioritizes belonging, well-being, leadership formation, and whole-person development across undergraduate, graduate, international, and commuter populations.

This moment of institutional transformation offers exceptional opportunity. The next VPSA will help guide the University's evolving residential strategy—including the recently implemented two-year on-campus living requirement and continued investments in housing—and further integrate the Division I athletics transition into campus vibrancy and student engagement. Rising diversity across the student body, growth in international enrollment, and strong employer demand for St. Thomas graduates position the VPSA to meaningfully enhance retention, belonging, and student success in collaboration with Academic Affairs and key campus partners.

The ideal candidate will be a strategic, collaborative, and mission-committed leader with demonstrated success in student affairs administration. They will bring exceptional emotional intelligence, crisis-management skills, and the capacity to lead in a context of high expectations and deep institutional pride. The VPSA will partner closely with University leadership, faculty, staff, students, trustees, and families to advance a cohesive, data-informed, and student-centered vision. A forward-looking mindset—attuned to innovation, technological enhancement, and evolving student needs—will be essential to sustaining momentum and ensuring that every St. Thomas student experiences a deep sense of being seen, known, and loved, a hallmark of the institution's ethos under President Rob Vischer.

This is an extraordinary moment—for St. Thomas and for the next Vice President for Student Affairs—to shape the University's future through compassionate leadership, strategic vision, and a steadfast commitment to student flourishing.

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

---

## Role of the Vice President for Student Affairs

Reporting to the Executive Vice President and Provost, the VPSA is St. Thomas's chief architect of the student experience, advancing a mission-anchored, inclusive environment in which students are seen, known, and loved and are prepared to live, learn, and contribute to an intercultural society. The VPSA leads a holistic portfolio that integrates learning, belonging, well-being, and formation in alignment with the university's Catholic mission and convictions.

As a member of the president's cabinet and leading the Division of Student Affairs senior staff, the VPSA provides strategic and operational leadership for all Student Affairs units. The VPSA will oversee a \$13M operating and \$35M overall budget and portfolio of seven direct reports, 70 professional staff, 3 doctoral interns, 12 graduate student assistants, and over 400 undergraduate student employees in the following areas:

- Dean of Students and student support (conduct, care, crisis response, orientation, veterans resource center, family resources)
- Residence life and living-learning programs
- Student engagement, campus life, and student diversity and inclusion services, Anderson Student Center, and club sports
- Health, well-being, counseling, and prevention (Center for Well-Being)
- Student development and first-year experience (FYE), social media, and create[space]
- Student success, retention, and academic partnerships
- Career readiness and employer engagement
- Student Affairs planning, assessment, and operations
- University Action and Response Team (UART)

### Direct reports to the VPSA include:

- Dean of Students (Residence Life, Veterans Services)
- Executive Director, Student Engagement & Inclusion (Anderson Student Ctr, Club Sports, Campus Life, Student Diversity & Inclusion Services)
- Executive Director for Student Affairs Planning & Operations (Center for Well Being, Health Promotion & Counseling Services)
- Director, Student Development Strategy Co-Director FYE (Joint Report to Academic Affairs)
- Director of Retention & Student Success\* (Joint Report to Academic Affairs)
- Director Career Development Center (Career Education, Alumni & Graduate Career Services)
- Administrative Assistant

### Key Responsibilities of the VPSA

- Foster a student-centered campus environment that supports the personal, social and academic development of all students as well as a sense of student belonging, personal accountability and leadership.
- Design, implement and maintain an organizational structure with appropriate and sufficient staffing to effectively accomplish organizational goals and objectives through oversight of recruitment, training, supervision, professional development and evaluation of division staff.
- In collaboration with university leadership, develop a student culture where inclusive excellence and opportunity are expected, and where students learn to respect differences.

- Collaborate with leaders in Academic Affairs and faculty on campuswide student retention and degree completion initiatives.
- Establish and guide program development and assessment, strategic planning, and implementation of overall goals for all student affairs departments and the division as a whole.
- Provide leadership for the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and regulations pertaining to the Division of Student Affairs.
- Ensure alignment of student learning outcomes for student affairs programming with university academic learning outcomes.
- Coordinate University and -Student Affairs' response to major crises and other unusual events impacting students within the university community.
- Ensure careful and diligent stewardship of resources throughout the division.
- Serve as an advisor to the President and the Provost concerning student issues and student life, keeping university leadership fully informed at all times concerning current and evolving trends in student life and student affairs. Inform/advise the President and the Provost on policy questions and issues as appropriate.
- Advocate as appropriate on behalf of students and engage with the faculty, student, alumni and staff communities to foster collaborative relationships.
- Remain engaged and active in the student affairs profession. Represent the university at national, statewide and local meetings on student matters and maintain a visible profile both on campus and with external constituencies.
- Be qualified to participate at the highest levels of university decision making.
- Be adept at identifying and assessing future co-curricular needs of the University.
- Be qualified, willing and ready to assume crucial university projects in progress.
- Be skilled at effectively building and sustaining consensus for action among key stakeholders with sometimes divergent points of view.



## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The Vice President for Student Affairs will join St. Thomas at a pivotal moment in the University's evolution—one marked by a rapidly diversifying student body, a nationally distinctive residential model, and a deep institutional commitment to student success and Catholic mission. Building on a strong, mission-driven Student Affairs team and highly collaborative partnerships across Academic Affairs, the VPSA will be charged with advancing a holistic student experience that fosters belonging, supports retention, and integrates formation both inside and outside the classroom.

The following leadership themes will define the VPSA's early tenure and long-term impact:

- **Advance retention and student success for a changing student body**

UST's undergraduate population has become significantly more diverse—including growth in first-generation and BIPOC students—creating both the opportunity and the imperative to deepen data-informed, shared Student Affairs–Academic Affairs strategies that measurably improve retention and graduation. The VPSA will build on existing cross-divisional structures (e.g., joint retention work and a dual-reporting retention coordinator), align interventions with evolving student needs, and ensure success metrics are transparent and actionable.

- **Strengthen belonging and community through a two-year residential model**

With a new two-year live-on requirement and an expanding mix of residential, commuter, transfer, out-of-state, and international students, the VPSA can shape a holistic residential experience that fosters belonging and persistence. This includes leveraging and scaling living-learning communities, programming for commuters, and sustained attention to inclusive community-building as UST's geographic and demographic reach grows.

- **Elevate health, well-being, and holistic care**

The Center for Well-Being and a student-care model that stakeholders describe as “cutting edge” provide a strong platform for next-level prevention, counseling, and integrative support (including veterans and graduate students). The next leader will knit together clinical, wellness, and case-management efforts with divisional assessment to ensure access, outcomes, and student satisfaction continue to improve.

- **Lead with calm in crisis and communicate across highly engaged stakeholders**

This portfolio regularly addresses sensitive, high-visibility issues (e.g., student deaths, controversial speakers) in a context where parents are deeply involved. The VPSA must be unflappable, empathetic, and disciplined in communications, sustaining strong partnerships with the Provost, General Counsel, Campus Safety, and the Board while elevating student voice and confidence in institutional response.

- **Modernize assessment, data, and technology (including AI) to improve service and outcomes**

Stakeholders seek more robust assessment infrastructure and culture beyond compliance and interoperable systems that reduce student friction. The VPSA will champion a culture of evidence—aligning divisional data to retention and belonging—while piloting technology and AI solutions that streamline workflows, expand access, and personalize support at scale.

- **Deepen the Student Affairs–Academic Affairs partnership**

UST benefits from a notably collaborative culture between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs. The opportunity is to widen and formalize joint work—meeting faculty where they are, co-designing high-impact

learning outside the classroom, and ensuring student-success initiatives are integrated, scalable, and durable across organizational boundaries.

- **Guide residential strategy and facilities planning**

With new and renovated halls and the likelihood of an additional residence hall in the near term, the VPSA will be a key voice in aligning housing strategy—build/renovate decisions, sequencing, and student-experience design—with enrollment, D1 growth, and inclusion goals.

- **Integrate Division I momentum into the student experience**

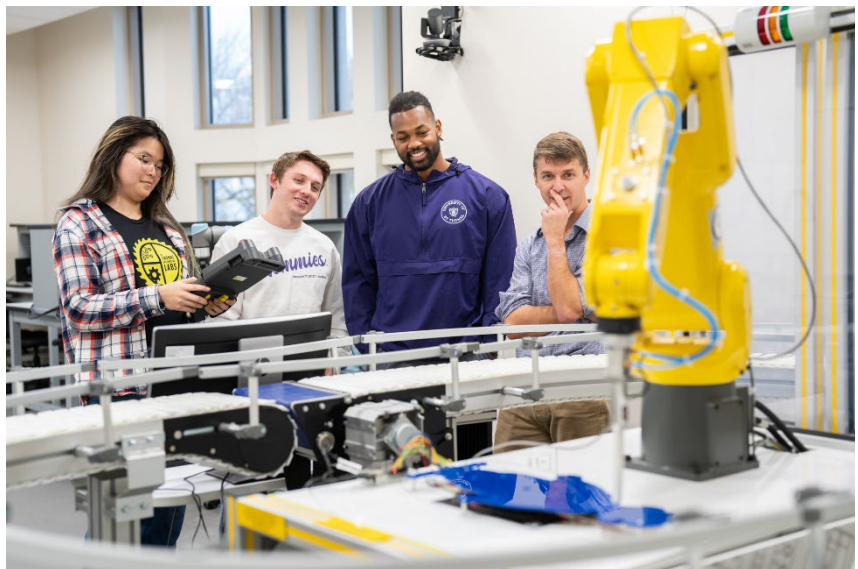
UST's move to NCAA Division I elevates national visibility, school spirit, and student engagement. The VPSA will partner closely with Athletics to enhance recruitment, student-athlete support, and community building, ensuring that D1 advances the holistic student experience for all students.

- **Clarify and enhance the graduate and international student experience**

As graduate and international student profiles evolve, the VPSA can set clearer service models, community spaces, and tailored programming that reflect different developmental needs—while ensuring these efforts complement undergraduate priorities and leverage campus partnerships.

- **Champion mission—making Catholic identity tangible in student life**

UST's Catholic mission and the school's emphasis on Best Practices for Student Affairs at Catholic Universities and the four cardinal virtues—prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance - create a distinctive frame for formation in and beyond the classroom. The VPSA will translate mission into student-facing programs and policies that feel welcoming to all, while articulating how virtue-driven leadership and ethical formation animate student success and campus culture.



- **Sustain a strong, long-tenured team while planning for succession**

Student Affairs is described as healthy, collaborative, and operating in a high-functioning manner. The next VPSA will focus development of the team to include thoughtful succession planning, professional development into cutting-edge student affairs competencies, and distributed leadership. The VPSA will delegate well, invest in staff growth, and protect the division's culture of trust and innovation with the ethos of giving "permission to try and fail smart."

- **Exercise resource discipline and fundraising partnership**

As higher education institutions face resource-constrained environment with rising expectations, the VPSA will prioritize high-impact initiatives, be willing to sunset initiatives or programs when necessary, and collaborate with Advancement to align cases for support (e.g., belonging, well-being, student success) with donor interest and institutional strategy. Board-ready communication and partnership with cabinet peers will be essential.

## Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The University of St. Thomas seeks an innovative, collaborative, and mission-driven student affairs leader to serve as its next Vice President for Student Affairs. The successful candidate will combine strategic vision with a student-centered ethos; demonstrate deft partnership with Academic Affairs; and embody humility, care, and high standards that align with St. Thomas's Catholic mission and values.

### Credentials

- Master's degree required; an earned doctorate or terminal degree in a relevant field is preferred.

### Successful and Extensive Student Affairs Leadership

- Progressive leadership experience in student affairs with a record of designing and implementing student-success, belonging, and well-being strategies across complex organizations; experience at a Catholic or faith-based institution—or clear mission fluency and alignment—is strongly valued.
- Demonstrated crisis leadership and campus-wide incident response experience; ability to be visible, composed, and empathetic amid sensitive, high-stakes matters and in partnership with the Provost, General Counsel, and other senior leaders.
- Depth in residential education (including two-year live-on models), health and well-being integration, student conduct/community standards, and student engagement—with evidence of improved outcomes for diverse student populations, including first-generation, BIPOC, international, commuter, and graduate students.

### Mission Alignment and Formation

- Embraces and advances UST's Catholic mission, integrating formation and ethical leadership through four cardinal virtues—prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance—and integrating them into student life through the Four Pillars Project, an initiative that promotes the virtues through classroom learning, campus events, and workshops, curriculum, campus activities, and other student-life programs in ways that are welcoming and supportive to all students.

### Strategic and Collaborative Leadership

- Proven cross-campus collaborator who partners effectively with Academic Affairs and faculty; brings concrete examples of collaborations that improved retention, progression, and graduation while strengthening a culture of belonging.
- Capacity to lead change with humility and credibility—meeting faculty “where they are,” navigating shared governance, and moving complex initiatives forward with clarity and care.
- Board-ready presence with the ability to communicate priorities, trade-offs, and impact to trustees and senior leadership.

### Management Acumen and Culture Building

- A team-first builder who develops, mentors, and retains talent; plans for succession; and sustains a healthy, high-performing division that has “permission to innovate and fail smart.”
- Demonstrated experience leading organizational assessment, aligning structures and roles to strategy, and fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and care

**Data, Assessment, and Technology Orientation**

- Strong commitment to assessment and evidence-based decision-making, with the skill to define divisional KPIs (e.g., belonging, service levels, retention impacts) and to act on findings.
- Comfort with technology and AI-enabled service improvement; ability to champion interoperable systems and process modernization to reduce student friction and enhance staff workflows.

**Resource Stewardship and Fundraising Partnership**

- Budget fluency and resource prioritization skills; ability to say “no” when impact is low; and to direct resources to high-value outcomes.
- Experience partnering with Advancement to align compelling cases for support (belonging, well-being, student success) with donor interest and institutional strategy.

**Athletics, Residential, and Facilities Collaboration**

- Experience collaborating with Division I Athletics and understanding its implications for community, belonging, and the holistic student experience.
- Insight into residential strategy and facilities planning—including build/renovate decisions and program design that align housing, enrollment, and inclusion goals.

**Communication and Presence**

- Unflappable, empathetic communicator who listens deeply, elevates student voice, and engages parents and external stakeholders with transparency and care.
- Ability to craft and deliver a compelling narrative about the value of the UST student experience to internal and external audiences.

**Personal Qualities**

- Humble, mission-rooted, student-centered leader who approaches leadership with diplomacy, fairness, and high expectations
- Innovative and forward-looking, energized by piloting new ideas and continuously improving services and outcomes.
- Approachable and visible in student life; actively present in campus events and accessible to student leaders and organizations.

## About the Student Affairs Division at the University of St. Thomas



### Mission-anchored Formation — “seen, known, and loved.”

At St. Thomas, the Division of Student Affairs designs holistic educational environments that prepare students to live, learn, and contribute to an intercultural society—grounded in Catholic social teaching, the university mission, and a community ethos where every student is valued. This means students encounter a campus where diversity of perspectives is explored in a respectful learning setting and where personal attention is a promise, not a slogan.

### From Day One: A Warm Welcome and Immediate Belonging

- [Orientation & Welcome Days](#) help students and families connect quickly with resources, traditions, and each other; students consistently report feeling welcomed, informed, and ready to engage.
- The [Dean of Students](#) team provides approachable guidance from the start—advocacy, “Tell Someone” referrals, food assistance, and emergency grants—so students know how to ask for help and get it.

### Where You Live Shapes How You Learn

- A nationally recognized [residential program](#) blends Living Learning Communities (LLCs) and a Second-Year Experience so that where students live fuels how they grow—socially, intellectually, and spiritually. LLCs build purpose and friendships; 93% of LLC students report stronger belonging and 96% are retained.

- Residential Connection Teams and RA one-to-ones (1,400+ conversations annually) translate accompaniment into everyday practice. Students describe halls as communities where they're supported and known.

## Campus Life That's Lively, Inclusive, and Student-Led

- [Students find their people through 130+ clubs, identity-affirming groups, and STAR traditions; Tommie Link makes it easy to discover what's happening and get involved.](#) The [Anderson Student Center \(ASC\)](#) functions as the campus living room—1.4M+ visits and thousands of events each year.
- [create\[space\]](#) invites hands-on creativity and collaboration with faculty and peers; club sports add competitive outlets with strong national results and community.

## Health, Well-Being, and Care Without Silos

- The [Center for Well-Being \(CWB\)](#) integrates counseling, primary care, nursing, and health promotion—shared records and warm handoffs mean students don't repeat their story to get comprehensive care. [Services](#) now include ADHD testing, a SANE nursing program, extended hours, and robust prevention education.
- Outcomes matter: thousands of clinical encounters annually and measured improvements in resilience and symptom reduction underscore a whole-person care model aligned with St. Thomas convictions of dignity and personal attention.

## Belonging, Identity, and Intercultural Growth

- [Student Diversity & Inclusion Services \(SDIS\)](#) and divisional partners foster identity-affirming spaces and leadership pathways—REAL, Linkages, DEASE—and coordinate campus-wide IDI development for student leaders so students build intercultural competence alongside community.
- Efforts like Undocu-Ally UST, Respectful Conversations, and Muslim Student Success initiatives invite dialogue, reduce barriers, and center the dignity of every student.

## Proactive Support for Progress, Purpose, and Careers

- The [Center for Student Achievement, Retention & Student Success](#), and Academic Affairs partner on early alerts, Tommie Check-In, and positive Tommie High 5 notes so students get timely encouragement and outreach.
- The [Career Development Center](#) integrates mentoring (St. Thomas Connect), fairs, treks, and courses into the student journey—helping Tommies convert involvement into internships, networks, and purpose-driven work.

More information is available at [Departments in Student Affairs | University of St. Thomas - Minnesota](#)

# About the University of St. Thomas

## Overview

Founded in 1885 by Archbishop John Ireland to serve Catholic immigrants facing social and economic hardship, St. Thomas Aquinas Seminary began as a high school, college, and seminary with just 62 students and five faculty members. Rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition and a commitment to liberal arts education, the institution has grown into Minnesota's largest private university—now known as the University of St. Thomas.

In its early years, students pursued classical and theological studies. Over time, the original institution gave rise to three distinct entities: St. Thomas Academy, the Saint Paul Seminary, and the College of St. Thomas, each developing its own mission and campus. After 92 years of all-male undergraduate enrollment, the College became coeducational in 1977, reflecting a broader commitment to inclusive excellence.

The expansion of graduate programs led to the renaming of the institution as the University of St. Thomas in 1990, followed by the opening of a Minneapolis campus in 1992. Today, the University serves nearly 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students from 48 states and 104 countries across three campuses located in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Rome, Italy.

St. Thomas offers more than 150 undergraduate majors and minors and over 55 graduate degree programs across eight academic divisions:

- [College of Arts and Sciences](#)
- [Dougherty Family College](#)
- [Morrison Family College of Health](#)
- [Opus College of Business](#), which includes the [Schulze School of Entrepreneurship](#)
- [Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity](#)
- [School of Education](#)
- [School of Engineering](#)
- [School of Law](#)

The University employs approximately 1,135 staff, 430 full-time faculty, and 461 part-time faculty. All classes are taught by faculty, and 98% of graduates are employed or enrolled in graduate school within six months. St. Thomas is a top choice for Minnesota's leading public companies—80% actively recruit its students.

St. Thomas educates students of all faiths and backgrounds. Its academic programs are designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in their chosen fields, contribute meaningfully to society, and respond thoughtfully to the challenges of contemporary life. The University fosters lifelong learning, encouraging students to find meaning and satisfaction in knowledge and to use it as a foundation for personal growth and service to the common good.

The undergraduate experience is anchored in a robust core curriculum that includes coursework in theology and philosophy, English, fine arts, historical analysis, language and culture, natural sciences, quantitative analysis, and social scientific analysis. Students also complete interdisciplinary coursework that integrates the humanities, emphasizes changemaking and writing across the curriculum, and explores global perspectives and issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. A first-year experience and a culminating signature work further enrich the academic journey.

St. Thomas emphasizes active, inquiry-based learning, service-learning through global and local engagement, and faculty research and scholarship that directly support student learning. Community engagement is central to the St. Thomas experience. Through the Center for the Common Good, students contribute over 80,000 hours annually to service and civic initiatives. The University partners with community organizations, Fortune 500 companies, and its 115,000+ alumni network to connect students with internships and career opportunities.

St. Thomas is nationally recognized for academic excellence and innovation:

- Ranked a Top National University and Best Value School by U.S. News & World Report
- Named a Top 11 Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Program by The Princeton Review

- Recognized as a First-Gen Forward Institution for its commitment to first-generation student success
- Ranked No. 82 Best College for Veterans by U.S. News & World Report
- Ranked #1 in Minnesota and #7 nationally for undergraduate study abroad participation by the Institute of International Education

St. Thomas is also a leader in sustainability, earning a Gold rating from the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), recognition in The Princeton Review Guide to Green Colleges, and a spot among the Top 100 Most Sustainable Colleges in America by Sierra Magazine. It is also a Top 10 Zero Waste Campus in the U.S., as assessed by PLAN's Atlas Zero Waste Certification™ Program.

Today, the University thrives thanks to its enduring mission, a talented and devoted community, a generous Board of Trustees, and strong philanthropic support. On January 1, 2023, Rob Vischer became the University's 16th president, ushering in a new era of leadership and innovation.

Learn more about the University's rich history here.

## Mission-Driven Momentum

As the largest private university in Minnesota and one of the largest Catholic universities in the nation, St. Thomas is guided by a powerful mission:

*Inspired by Catholic intellectual tradition, the University of St. Thomas educates students to be morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully to advance the common good.*

The St. Thomas Board of Trustees unanimously approved its current [mission statement and convictions](#) in 2004. The current strategic plan, [St. Thomas 2030](#), is in its first year of implementation and will usher in a period of remarkable transformation and growth.

Over the past five years, St. Thomas has achieved historic levels of donor support and fundraising success, while maintaining strong regional enrollment. The transition to Division I athletics has elevated school spirit and expanded national visibility. Major initiatives include the expansion of the Morrison Family College of Health and the launch of the Susan S. Morrison School of Nursing, advancing the University's commitment to health equity and holistic care.

To enhance the student experience, St. Thomas introduced a two-year on-campus housing requirement and invested \$220M in residence hall construction and renovation since 2020. New student-centered resources, such as the Center for Student Achievement, the Center for Well-Being, and the Paul and Sarah Karon Veterans Resource Center, reflect the University's deep commitment to student success and belonging.

The opening of the Schoenecker Center for STEAM Education marked a bold investment in interdisciplinary learning and innovation. Meanwhile, a growing portfolio of federally funded research projects highlights the University's rising national profile and expanding impact.

## Governance

St. Thomas is governed by an independent Board of Trustees, currently composed of 39 distinguished members. This diverse group includes national and global corporate executives, entrepreneurs, leaders in law and accounting, and prominent figures from nonprofit, educational, and church communities. The Board convenes for an annual retreat each fall, complemented by three regular meetings throughout the fiscal year.

To support its oversight responsibilities, the Board operates through ten standing committees:

- Academic Affairs

- Audit/Finance
- Conflict Management
- Executive
- Governance
- Institutional Advancement
- Investment
- Mission
- Physical Facilities
- Student Affairs



The University president, who serves as chief executive officer, reports directly to the Board and holds office at its discretion. The president's leadership is guided by the University's governing documents, which are approved by the Board. Administrative leadership is structured into a senior staff and cabinet, whose composition and areas of responsibility are outlined in the organizational chart provided in Appendix A

Supporting the University's academic and operational mission are more than 2,000 full-time and part-time faculty and staff, all dedicated to advancing student success and institutional excellence.

The University of St. Thomas embraces a model of shared governance that reflects a deep commitment to collaboration among the Board of Trustees, the administration, and the faculty. This approach ensures that each partner brings its unique expertise and perspective to advancing the University's mission. In practice, shared governance at St. Thomas fosters a culture of mutual trust, respect, transparency, and accountability, with open communication as a cornerstone. Through this system, strategic decisions are informed by broad engagement and collective responsibility, strengthening the institution and enhancing its ability to serve students and the wider community.

## Faculty Profile

The University of St. Thomas employs 430 full-time faculty, supplemented by approximately 461 adjunct faculty, many of whom are full-time professionals bringing real-world expertise into the classroom. Of the full-time faculty, 46% are women and 21% identify as people of color. Faculty are recruited nationally, contributing to a diverse and accomplished academic community. The student-faculty ratio is 13:1, with average class sizes of 21.6 for undergraduate courses and 16.4 for graduate courses.

St. Thomas invests in faculty development through direct budgetary support for scholarship, an endowed Center for Faculty Development, and dedicated offices that assist with securing grants and contracts from government agencies, corporations, and foundations.

## Enrollment and Student Profile

St. Thomas currently enrolls approximately 6,534 undergraduate students in its four-year programs, 216 students in the two-year Dougherty Family College, and 3,126 graduate students. About 30% of undergraduates are first-generation college students, and 38% of first-time, first-year undergraduates and 25% of graduate students identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

In Fall 2025, the University proudly welcomed its largest-ever first-year class of 1,677 students from 30 states and over 60 countries, with a noticeable increase in new first-year international students, in part spurred by a new agreement with the United World Colleges.

All first- and second-year students are required to live on campus, with exceptions granted for commuting students. Approximately 47% of undergraduates participate in study abroad programs—far exceeding the national average of about 10%. The University offers more than 300 study abroad opportunities in over 50 countries, making global engagement a hallmark of the St. Thomas experience.

The most frequently awarded degrees include:

- Bachelor of Arts
- Bachelor of Science
- Master of Science
- Post-Baccalaureate Certificate
- Master of Arts
- Master of Business Administration
- Juris Doctor
- Master of Social Work

Students also benefit from a vibrant campus life, with access to special-interest housing, service-learning opportunities, and more than 140 student clubs and organizations. Extracurricular offerings include musical ensembles, campus ministry, volunteer activities, athletics, and more.

## Athletics

Varsity intercollegiate athletics have been part of St. Thomas since 1904. Hundreds of students also participate in club and intramural sports, alongside the University's 21 varsity teams. The Tommies competed in the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) from 1920 to 2020 and in NCAA Division III since 1973, building a tradition of excellence both on the field and in the classroom.

In 2021, St. Thomas became the first and only university to be reclassified directly from Division III to Division I by the NCAA. The Tommies now compete in four Division I conferences:

- The Summit League (18 teams)
- Pioneer Football League (football)
- Women's WCHA (women's hockey)
- CCHA (men's hockey)

Looking ahead, the men's hockey team will join the National Collegiate Hockey Conference (NCHC) beginning in the 2026–27 season.

## Financial Overview

The University's fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. Its budgeted operational revenue, which excludes most gifts and investment returns, for FY 2025 was \$297 million. St. Thomas is largely tuition-driven, with tuition and fees comprising 70% of its FY 2025 revenues. The majority of the balance is related to meal plan and

residence hall revenue. Compensation and benefits comprise the majority of the University's expenditures, approximately 75% in FY 2025.

At the close of Fiscal Year 2025, the University's total assets had increased to \$2 billion (net assets \$1.2 billion), with \$1 billion in invested assets and an endowment of \$820 million (of which \$89 million is unrestricted).

At the end of FY 2025, the University had bonds payable totaling \$477 million. The University most recently issued \$159 million of bonds in 2024 for the construction of the Lee and Penny Anderson Arena. This new arena is the on-campus home of both hockey and basketball. As of the most recent review, performed by Moody's in 2025, the University's long-term bond rating is A2 stable. This outlook affirms both the strength of the University's financial resources, prudent fiscal management, strong reputation and programmatic diversity while also acknowledging thinning operating margins and an increasing debt load.

## Campus and Physical Plant

The University of St. Thomas spans three campuses:

- St. Paul Main Campus: The 78-acre campus includes the original 45 acres established in 1885, five acres of adjacent properties, and 28 acres transferred through an affiliation agreement with The Saint Paul Seminary and the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. The Seminary retains ownership of land and buildings adjacent to the south campus, some of which are used and maintained by St. Thomas under the agreement.
- Minneapolis Campus: Opened in 1992, this urban campus now covers approximately three city blocks and houses the School of Law, Schulze School of Entrepreneurship, School of Education, and Dougherty Family College.
- Bernardi Campus in Rome, Italy: Established in 2000, this residential campus serves as a home base for students studying abroad.

The current value of the University's physical plant is approximately \$1 billion.

## Construction Projects

St. Thomas has invested more than \$500 million in new construction since 2020. Major projects include:

- A new Arena
- An interdisciplinary STEAM building (Schoenecker Center)
- Two residence halls
- Renovations of Ireland, Dowling, and Brady Halls
- Construction of the Iversen Center for Faith and renovation of the Chapel of St. Thomas Aquinas
- Opening of the Center for Well-Being, integrating health and wellness services

In February 2024, the University opened the Schoenecker Center, a cutting-edge academic complex focused on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math). This interdisciplinary space fosters collaboration across fields, emphasizing human, digital, and technical literacy.

In October 2025, St. Thomas opened the Lee and Penny Anderson Arena, a state-of-the-art facility for men's and women's ice hockey and basketball, complete with advanced practice spaces.

Currently under construction is an expansion of the Center for Microgrid Research, supporting renewable energy and military readiness research within the School of Engineering.

These three projects, along with a campus quad have transformed south campus.

## Leadership

### Rob Vischer, President

Robert K. Vischer became the [16th President](#) of the University of St. Thomas on January 1, 2023, following a unanimous selection by the Board of Trustees. Prior to this role, he served as interim president beginning June 1, 2022, and dean of St. Thomas' School of Law from 2013 to 2022. Vischer joined the University in 2005 as an associate professor of law.



As president, Vischer has advanced the University's key priorities while reinforcing St. Thomas' commitment to its mission of whole-person formation and fostering what Pope Francis calls a "culture of encounter." A central tenet of his leadership is helping the University community aspire to ensure every member of the St. Thomas community, without exception, has the unmistakable experience of feeling seen, known, and loved.

To build community and help faculty, staff, and students "lift their gaze," Vischer launched the Claritas Initiative, aiming to cultivate the transcendental values of truth, beauty, and goodness within the University community. This initiative encompasses a series of discussions, performances, and experiences designed to explore and nurture these values across campus.

Vischer's academic background includes a Bachelor of Arts, summa cum laude, from the University of New Orleans, and a Juris Doctor, cum laude, from Harvard Law School, where he served as an editor of the Harvard Law Review. Before entering academia, he practiced corporate litigation at Kirkland & Ellis in Chicago and clerked for three federal judges.

Vischer serves on the board of the Association for Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU). He serves on the executive committee of GREATER MSP and as a board member of the Minnesota Business Partnership and the Greater Twin Cities United Way. He is also a member of the Coalition for Transformational Education (CTE) and the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration.

### Eddy Rojas, Executive Vice President and Provost



Dr. Eddy Rojas is executive vice president and provost. He oversees student affairs, academic affairs, schools and colleges and other academic-related units. As provost, he plays a critical role in ensuring the success of St. Thomas' strategic plan to propel the university forward to a new level of academic excellence and impact. His collaborative style is rooted in his dedication to inclusive leadership and diversity.

At St. Thomas, Dr. Rojas has advanced a comprehensive vision of institutional innovation that has strengthened graduate and honors programs, elevated faculty and staff creativity, enhanced enrollment strategy, and expanded research capacity, thereby fostering a culture of excellence and adaptability. He founded the Institute for AI for the Common Good, positioning the university at the forefront of ethical and socially impactful artificial intelligence, launched St. Thomas Online as an integrated strategy to expand access through

high quality distance education, and spearheaded the Four Pillars Project to deepen character formation through the cardinal virtues. In addition, he has further propelled institutional innovation through the Faculty and Staff Innovation Fellows program, engaging more than 20 multidisciplinary teams, while championing faculty diversity, with half of all new hires since 2021 coming from underrepresented groups.

Prior to joining St. Thomas in 2021, Rojas served seven years as dean of the School of Engineering at the University of Dayton where he oversaw undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs. During his tenure as dean, he raised student retention rates, championed gender equity among faculty, and increased new faculty hires from historically underrepresented groups. Rojas spent four years as director of the Durham School of Architectural Engineering and Construction at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He began his academic career at the University of Buffalo followed by the University of Washington.

A native of Costa Rica, he holds a civil engineering undergraduate degree from the University of Costa Rica and received his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in civil engineering from the University of Colorado Boulder. A lifelong learner, he also has an M.A. in economics from the University of Colorado Boulder, an M.Ed. in higher education from Penn State and an M.P.S. in the psychology of leadership, also from Penn State.

## Minneapolis and St. Paul

The Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis offer a dynamic blend of urban energy and natural beauty, with two vibrant downtowns, nationally acclaimed parks, and a rich cultural scene. At the University of St. Thomas, students benefit from a unique campus experience that combines the best of both worlds.

St. Thomas students attend classes on two main campuses—St. Paul and downtown Minneapolis—each offering a distinct atmosphere. The St. Paul campus, nestled in a residential neighborhood along the Mississippi River, provides a classic collegiate setting. The Minneapolis campus places students in the heart of a thriving urban center, steps away from major corporations, startups, nonprofits, and cultural institutions. A third campus in Rome, Italy, offers immersive international learning experiences.

Living and studying in the Twin Cities gives students unparalleled access to professional opportunities, including internships and jobs at Fortune 500 companies and local businesses. Beyond academics, students enjoy a vibrant arts, food, sports, and entertainment scene with theaters, music venues, museums, and award-winning restaurants just minutes away.

For those seeking outdoor adventure, the St. Paul campus connects to miles of scenic trails along the Mississippi River and Minneapolis' renowned chain of lakes, offering opportunities for biking, running, kayaking, and quiet reflection in nature. Minneapolis was ranked third and St. Paul fifth in the 2025 ParkScore Index.

Whether exploring city life or enjoying the outdoors, students at St. Thomas find themselves in an ideal environment for learning, growth, and connection.



## 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 the University of St. Thomas in this search. For fullest consideration, all materials should be received by April 13, 2026.

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

Additional inquiries can be directed to:

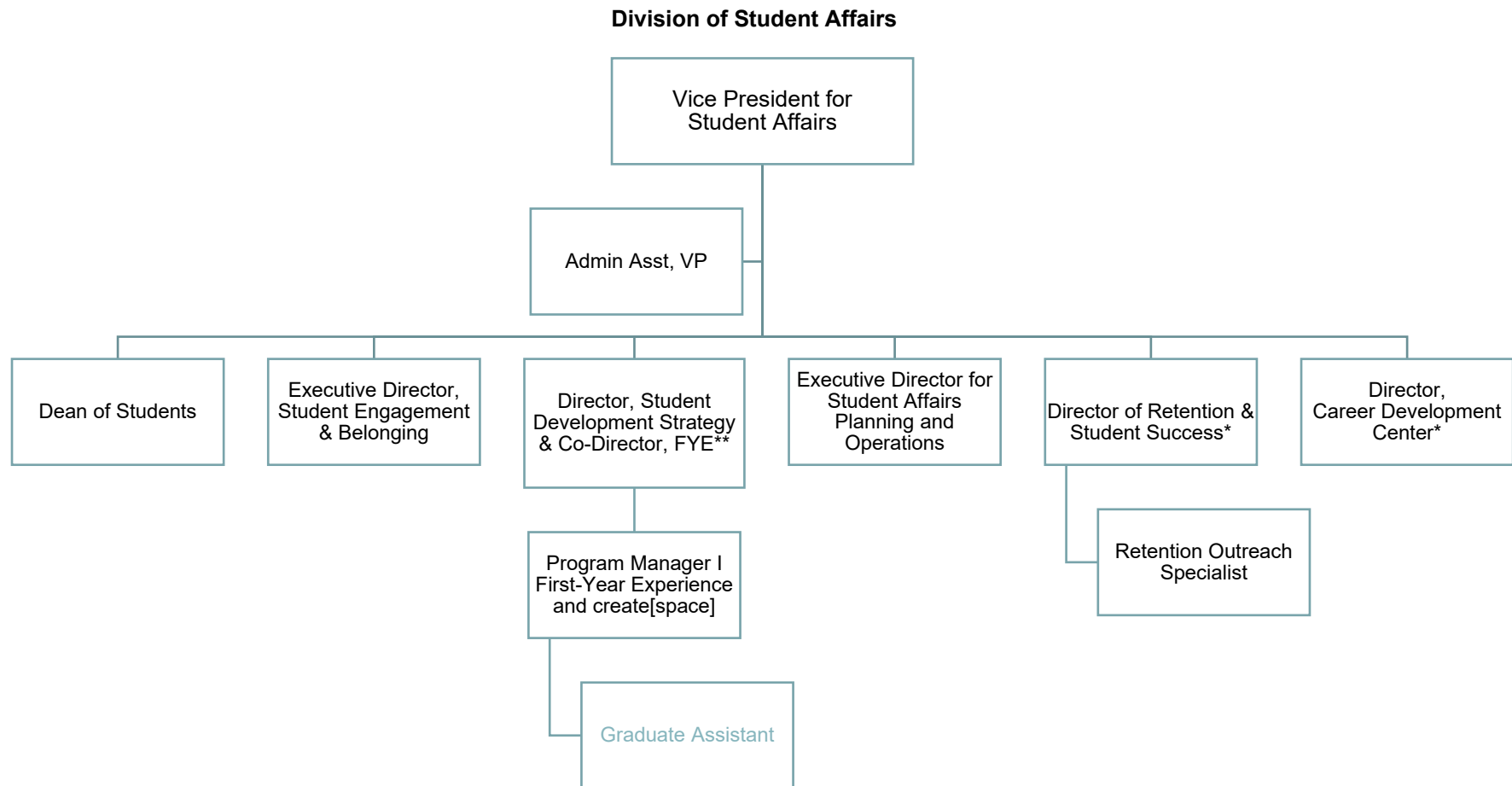
Jen Meyers Pickard, Ph.D., and Christy M. Pratt, M.A.

[\*\*UST-VPSA@wittkieffer.com\*\*](mailto:UST-VPSA@wittkieffer.com)

*Salary Range: \$230,000 – \$240,000. The University of St. Thomas has provided a salary range that represents its good faith estimate of what the University may pay for the position at the time of posting. The specific salary offered will be determined based on factors such as the qualifications of the selected candidate, departmental budget, internal salary equity considerations, and available market information. The University of St. Thomas offers a competitive and comprehensive benefits program, which includes:*

- *Tuition Remission for employees, spouses, and dependents*
- *Generous Retirement Contributions to support your future*
- *Comprehensive Health Coverage, including medical, dental, and vision*
  - *Fully Paid Insurance: disability, life, and AD&D*
  - *Paid Parental Leave to support growing families*

*The University of St. Thomas embraces diversity, inclusion and equality for all. Our convictions of dignity, diversity and personal attention call us to embody and champion a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. We welcome applicants of diverse races, ethnicities, geographic origins, gender identities, ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, sexual orientations, religions, work experience, physical and intellectual abilities, and financial means. We are committed to building a team that represents a variety of backgrounds, perspectives and skills.*



\*Joint report to Academic Affairs

\*\*FYE Co-Director role is a joint report to Academic Affairs