Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Digital Education  
Duke University  
Durham, North Carolina

THE SEARCH

Duke University, one of the nation’s leading universities, seeks nominations and applications for the position of Vice Provost for Learning Innovation and Digital Education (VPLI). Reporting directly to the Provost, the VPLI is a newly created position that will have primary responsibility for setting Duke’s digital education strategies (including leveraging technology to bolster online, hybrid and in-person offerings); as well as advancing Duke educational experiences for undergraduate, graduate, professional, K-12, alumni and other lifelong learners through the application of innovative teaching methods and supporting technologies. On an operational level, the VPLI delivers internal consultative and programmatic services via two direct reporting units—Duke Learning Innovation and Duke Continuing Studies—and in conjunction with its strategic partner, Duke’s Office of Information Technology (OIT).

This is a critically important appointment for Duke University. The VPLI will be a key driver for the development and execution of Duke’s continuing education, lifelong learning, pedagogical innovation, and digital education strategies in collaboration with the Provost, senior administrative colleagues, academic leaders, and faculty from across the University. The VPLI will couple a deep commitment to academic excellence with significant technological, pedagogical, and managerial experience. The successful candidate will bring a commitment to continuous learning and to advancing Duke’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. They will also bring an experimental, creative mindset and a team-based ethos to joint endeavors, always looking to diffuse successful pilots across Duke’s schools and other educational units. Additionally, the VPLI must be adept at communicating with and cultivating buy-in among a range of university stakeholders with varying degrees of willingness to embrace technological enhancement in the context of the University’s teaching and learning mission. Furthermore, the VPLI should demonstrate an ability to lead diverse teams with trust and transparency, to work collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders and strategic partners, and to provide forward-thinking strategic counsel to other University administrative and academic leaders.

Duke University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.
THE ROLE

The VPLI will be an academic innovator with extensive knowledge of trends in technology and higher education and current research on digital teaching and learning, online learning pedagogy, and the emerging platforms and tools for delivering digital education. The VPLI will also be a savvy and experienced executive who connects with the mission, culture, and business of higher education and who can lead strategic planning, testing and implementation of business plans for both degree and non-degree program offerings.

The VPLI serves as one of 8 Vice Provosts who, along with the Executive Vice Provost, comprise the Provost’s senior leadership team. In addition to the Office of the Provost and academic leaders representing the University’s colleges and schools, the VPLI will be a close collaborator with, and resource for, the senior leaders of the University including, but not limited to, the President, Executive Vice President, Chancellor for Health Affairs and Vice Presidents within the University Administration.

The VPLI has direct supervisory responsibility for two reporting units—Duke Learning Innovation and Duke Continuing Studies. Each unit has its own staffing and leadership structure with a combined team of 51 staff members across both units.

Duke Learning Innovation has primary responsibility for building Duke’s ecosystem of education technology tools and working with faculty and staff to use them effectively. Learning Innovation supports, conducts and disseminates teaching and learning research, evaluates education technology tools, and partners with instructors to support student-centered, active learning for more equitable, accessible and inclusive learning experiences.

Learning Innovation also manages Online Duke, a searchable catalog of Duke’s publicly offered online courses and non-degree programs and hybrid master's and doctoral degree programs offered by Duke's professional schools.

Duke Continuing Studies is the hub for non-degree undergraduate and graduate studies, professional certificate programs, professional development for Duke employees, summer academic enrichment youth through Duke Youth Programs, and lifelong learning for adults in Durham and beyond through the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Beyond these two direct reporting units in the VPLI’s portfolio, there are a wide range of interdisciplinary academic and experiential learning programs active across the University. The VPLI serves as a key resource for and driver of innovation and collaboration across this broader programmatic landscape. Current programs related to academic innovation and experiential learning include:

Bass Connections, the university’s interdisciplinary research initiative, which offers teams of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students the chance to work directly with faculty members to solve a pressing societal problem. Bass Connections has been recognized by Duke's peers as a model for experiential education.

Coursera for Duke gives Duke students, staff, and faculty free access to over 2,000 online courses and Specializations on Coursera. There are also 70+ Coursera courses taught by Duke faculty and instructors, based on their on-campus courses and scholarly work. These courses
were developed at Duke, with support from Duke Learning Innovation, using learning science and best practices in online course design to create engaging, effective learning experiences.

**Data+** a ten-week summer research experience for undergraduates and master’s students interested in exploring new data-driven approaches to interdisciplinary challenges. Data+ students join small teams (a maximum of three undergraduates and one master’s student) and work alongside other teams in a communal environment learning how to marshal, analyze and visualize data, while gaining broad exposure to the field of data science.

**+DataScience (+DS)** a Duke-wide program, operating in partnership with departments, schools, and institutes to enable faculty, students, and staff to employ data science at a level tailored to their needs, level of expertise, and interests. +DS provides online (digital) and in-person training modules and learning experiences grounded in generalizable data science content, while partnering with individual units or groups to develop additional specialized content.

**DukeEngage** which gives undergraduate students the opportunity to engage in service-learning in communities around the world; more than half of Duke’s matriculating applicants mention this program as their reason for choosing Duke.

**The Rhodes Innovation Initiative at Duke (iiD)** an interdisciplinary program designed to increase "big data" computational research and expand opportunities for student engagement in this rapidly growing field.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

The VPLI will be a critically important strategic and operational leader for Duke University. The VPLI will a key thought-partner, creative catalyst, and pedagogical innovator for the University overall, and academic program units in particular.

The primary opportunities and challenges for the VPLI will include but are not limited to the following:

**Develop a comprehensive strategic plan and viable go-to-market strategies for Duke’s digital education initiatives**

The VPLI will survey the current landscape of digital, hybrid, and select in-person education initiatives at Duke—those currently being managed by Duke Learning Innovation and Continuing Education as well as initiatives at the school, department, and program levels—to evaluate current offerings, identify synergies and opportunities for support and collaboration, and to facilitate the development of a comprehensive strategic plan for digital education initiatives at Duke. This plan could include credit and non-credit, and degree and non-degree, course and program offerings. The core academic mission of the University and the consistent high-quality of all instructional offerings that carry the Duke brand must drive the digital education strategy. Attention must also be paid to the brand and network extension, relationship enhancement, and revenue generating possibilities of a comprehensive and synergistic digital education strategy for the University.
Promote an institution-wide culture of innovation, as well as readiness to embrace technological enhancement as a core resource for the educational enterprise

The VPLI will be responsible for cultivating and strengthening connections among people across the University who are passionate about learning, sharing ideas and contributing to education innovation at Duke. The VPLI will serve as a visible and adept relationship builder with a demonstrated capacity to cultivate trust and partner effectively with administrative leaders, faculty, staff, and students. The VPLI will advance educational innovations by supporting, conducting, and disseminating teaching and learning research, evaluating and building Duke’s ecosystem of education technology tools and working with faculty and staff to use them effectively. The VPLI, in collaboration with faculty and academic leaders throughout the University, will serve as a catalyst for the development and promotion of digital education offerings that expand access, offer flexibility, and provide meaningful educational opportunities for current and future learners across the Duke ecosystem. The VPLI will partner with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to build and support the tools and the infrastructure necessary to support such an ecosystem at Duke.

Actively engage stakeholders within the Duke ecosystem and across higher education and technology-related sectors to advance Duke’s standing as a leader in digital education and innovation

The VPLI will serve as Duke's primary liaison with business partners related to digital education activities to lead the evaluation and adoption of new programmatic approaches to the development and delivery of Duke-hosted content, including individual courses and various multi-course programs. The VPLI will represent Duke’s digital education initiatives to groups internal and external to Duke, such as the Board of Trustees, and representatives from other universities, businesses, and foundations. Furthermore, the VPLI will serve as a visible participant in professional networks and actively engage nationally as a leader in innovative approaches to digital education.

Facilitate the development and delivery of new course offerings, as well as degree and non-degree programs.

The VPLI will cultivate opportunities for expanding the University's programming in creative ways through interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation in content development, curation, packaging, and delivery. The VPLI will partner with Duke OIT and other University centers (e.g., Center for Computational Thinking) to refine, market, and promote the use of the co-curricular and other online materials produced through those units for continuing education, lifelong learning, executive education, and other non-degree program offerings. Harnessing the academic resources of the university, the VPLI will work with faculty members and academic leaders to build and deliver best-in-class curricular offerings that can be delivered in a variety of ways (short modules, certificates, pathways to degrees) to a variety of audiences (pre-college, current students, alumni, professionals, lifelong learners) via various modalities (virtual, in-person, hybrid).

Identify opportunities for collaboration, synergies, and points of integration between Learning Innovation and Continuing Studies

The VPLI role is a new position with leadership responsibility for two existing units that have previously operated under separate organizational and leadership structures in different areas of the institution. Learning Innovation has historically served as an internal service unit to Duke schools
and academic programs while Continuing Studies has developed and managed externally facing programs for the wider community and world. While much of the primary missions of these two units remain active and viable, the VPLI will work to align both portfolios to leverage both internally- and externally facing pedagogical innovation and digital education efforts in a manner that is strategically aligned, scalable, financially viable, and of consistently high quality in line with the Duke brand across all offerings.

**Lead, support, and further develop a highly skilled, innovative, and service oriented team**

The VPLI will be an experienced and effective senior leader with strong management skills and high emotional intelligence to build, develop, and support high performing teams of skilled professionals oriented toward the highest standards of customer service, continuous improvement and measurable impact. The VPLI will work to foster a culture of collegiality and a shared sense of purpose within and across the Learning Innovations and Continuing Studies teams.

**PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

Duke seeks the best candidates nationally. All candidates will possess steadfast commitment to the values of the university: unimpeachable integrity and ethical compass; and demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In addition, candidates will bring many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experience, and personal qualities:

- A deeply experienced leader and driver of innovation in digital education with the credibility to serve as an internal and external champion of value of technology as a tool to advance and transform teaching and learning
- Leadership skills appropriate for guiding a large unit responsible for innovative course design and delivery, an effective delegator with experience managing staff across complex work teams, and ability to define and implement effective management structures and systems undergirded by high performance standards and a culture of excellence and responsiveness
- Excellent project management skills and demonstrated ability to solve complex problems, define goals and assess effectiveness of projects and programs
- Marketing and business development skills, and the ability to develop productive relationships with campus and external constituents
- Demonstrated capacity to communicate broadly across an institution conveying and teaching technically complex information and concepts in accessible terms to a broad array of stakeholders, and to form collaborative academic partnerships across the University
- A commitment to the principles of universal design to ensure that the procurement of digital tools, the development of digital learning environments, and the use of instructional technology in classrooms is accessible and inclusive of all learners.
- Experience working with budgets that include both expense and revenue targets and adjusting priorities / programs to successfully meet budget targets
- A team player with a collaborative working style; strong interpersonal skills and diplomacy; superb listening and influencing skills; the ability to cultivate and sustain trust and credibility
with colleagues, and build unity around difficult issues; an active listener, facilitator, convener, and mediator

- A liveliness of intellect and a commitment to engage collaboratively with and be accessible to colleagues and community members, and to respond effectively to their needs and concerns
- A sophisticated understanding of the University's mission and an eagerness to serve as a humble steward of its resources
- Maturity, sound judgment, presence, resilience, optimism, and good humor
- A master's degree or equivalent combination of education and experience required (Ph.D. or other terminal degree preferred)

TO APPLY

Duke University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications will be held in strict confidence and should be directed to:

Ponneh Varho, Partner
Ernest A. Brooks III, Managing Associate
Isaacson, Miller

https://www.imsearch.com/8251

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Duke University prohibits discrimination and harassment, and provides equal employment opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, age, or genetic information. Duke is committed to recruiting, hiring, and promoting qualified minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and veterans.

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DUKE UNIVERSITY

Duke’s shared values — respect, trust, inclusion, discovery, and excellence—are the foundation of the university’s culture. They also guide and inform the strategic direction of the institution, as Duke seeks to adapt to and shape the course of a changing world.

Duke was created in 1924 with a gift from James Buchanan Duke to Trinity College. Today, it is universally regarded as one of the leading American and global research universities. Duke prides itself on an exceptionally diverse, engaged, and talented student body. Students represent a broad range of intellectual, cultural, and demographic perspectives that create a well-rounded learning and living community. The leadership at Duke has committed to a campus life experience that is welcoming to all students while providing the experiential education needed for student success. Since the 1960s, Duke has become increasingly diverse, and building a more inclusive campus community is a major priority for the administration. Over the past several decades, the university has sought to diversify its students, faculty, and staff, acknowledging the importance of these efforts in creating a rich intellectual community of scholars and teachers from different cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds.

Most recently, Duke has enrolled over 6,800 undergraduates and over 10,000 graduate and professional students across ten schools (Trinity College of Arts & Sciences, Fuqua School of Business, Divinity School, Pratt School of Engineering, Nicholas School of the Environment, Graduate School, School of Law, Sanford School of Public Policy, and the Schools of Medicine and Nursing). In recent years, Duke has welcomed more than 3,500 international students representing 70+ countries of primary citizenship. Students of color and women make up more than half of the undergraduate and graduate student body, and nearly one in five students hail from first-generation or limited income backgrounds. The undergraduate student population is approximately 88 percent domestic, including students from 50 states, Armed Forces Pacific, and Puerto Rico, and 12 percent international, representing 76 countries. In addition to its main campus, the university also operates the Duke University Marine Lab in Beaufort, NC, Duke Kunshan University (a partnership with Wuhan University and the city of Kunshan), and the Duke-NUS Medical School (a partnership with National University of Singapore). There are approximately 180,000 Duke alumni living around the world, and roughly 25,000 live in the Triangle region.

Duke has developed a distinctive educational identity that integrates undergraduate teaching with front-line research and wide access to the professional schools. The commitment to undergraduate education combined with a pervasive interdisciplinary culture and world class graduate and professional schools sets it apart from peer institutions. Duke students typically exercise a breadth of academic choice in the context of a rigorous liberal arts program with interdisciplinary majors, minors, and concentrations, blending that with civic engagement, both local and global, on issues large and small. Since its founding as a university in 1924, Duke University has been dedicated to a liberal and broad-based education at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional levels and the ethical pursuit of knowledge that advances humankind. Today, Duke is universally regarded as one of the leading research universities and academic medical centers in the world. Duke offers a distinctive educational identity that integrates undergraduate teaching with a collaborative research culture, with fifteen associated Nobel Laureates and fifty Rhodes Scholars; it fosters a diverse, inclusive and exceptionally talented campus community, boasting a vibrant arts culture and an
internationally-renowned athletics program; it is also home to a health system that serves as a vital hub for the region and is a leading center of innovation in research and health-care delivery.

As the university prepares to celebrate its centennial in 2024, the VP-LI will be instrumental to fulfilling Duke’s founding mission of providing "real leadership in the educational world.”

Leadership

**Vincent Price** is the 10th President of Duke University, where he is also Walter Hines Page Professor of Public Policy and Political Science in the Sanford School of Public Policy and Trinity College of Arts and Sciences. A leading global expert on public opinion, social influence, and political communication, President Price came to Duke in 2017 and has since developed *Toward our Second Century*, a comprehensive strategic framework based on five core principles: empowering people, transforming education, building community, forging partnerships, and engaging Duke’s global alumni network.

In 2018, the Board of Trustees created four Strategic Task Forces to align with major aspects of the President’s strategic framework and provide strategic insight. The task forces, which included trustees, faculty, staff, and students, focused on four core issues: Activating the Global Network; Advancing Duke Science and Technology; Next Generation Living and Learning Experience; and The Future of Central Campus. Executive summaries on the reports from each of the Strategic Task Forces are available online.

President Price has also overseen a series of major reform efforts at Duke, including initiatives to study the legacy of the university’s history, support the continued development of Duke arts and culture, update university facilities for the next generation of students and faculty, and reorganize the governance structure of the Board of Trustees.

**Sally Kornbluth** was appointed Duke University Provost on July 1, 2014. She serves as the chief academic officer, responsible for the university’s teaching and research mission, developing the institution’s intellectual priorities and overseeing their implementation. Prior to her appointment as Provost, Kornbluth served as Vice Dean for Basic Science at Duke University School of Medicine from 2006-2014. She joined the Duke faculty in 1994 and is currently the Jo Rae Wright University Professor. Kornbluth received a B.A. in Political Science from Williams College and a B.S. in Genetics from Cambridge University, England where she was a Herchel Smith Scholar at Emmanuel College. She received her Ph.D. from The Rockefeller University in Molecular Oncology and went on to postdoctoral training at the University of California, San Diego. She is a member of the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Inventors, and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences.

The Campus and Location

Durham is a vibrant small city, with an entrepreneurial culture and thriving arts, food, and music scenes. The region is home to the Research Triangle Park, the nation’s largest research park with more than 300 companies in the technology, biomedical, and engineering sectors. Duke also enjoys a rich collaborative relationship with the other major research universities in the region, including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, and North Carolina Central University, which are each a short drive away.
Downtown Durham is just two miles from Duke, and the Research Triangle Park is ten miles away. The area is served by an international airport approximately twenty minutes from campus, with daily direct flights to London, Paris, and every major city in the United States. Duke’s proximity to the Mid-Atlantic Region, and Washington, D.C. in particular, provide easy access to federal funding agencies, policy makers, and many other collaborators that advance the research and education missions. Duke has deep community ties and has been a key partner in the development of the region, developing more than one million square feet of laboratories and offices in downtown Durham.

The university has recently completed unprecedented capital investments, including opening a new state-of-the-art Student Health and Wellness Center, a new Arts Building, and two new undergraduate residence halls and making major renovations or upgrades to Perkins Library, the East Campus Union and West Campus Union, Page Auditorium, Baldwin Auditorium, Duke Chapel, all major athletics facilities. Over a three-year period that ended in June 2017, the university spent over a billion dollars on facilities-related enhancements on campus.

**Research & Innovation**

Duke’s sponsored research enterprise is robust and internationally-renowned—approximately $1 billion a year, ranking second in the nation. While sponsored research has been principally driven by the School of Medicine, the Pratt School of Engineering, Trinity College of Arts and Sciences, the Nicholas School of the Environment, and the Sanford School of Public Policy have all developed increasingly strong research activity in the past decade. Moreover, Duke leads the nation in industry-sponsored research, much of it in the Duke Clinical Research Institute, the university’s innovative medical research organization.

**Finances**

Duke University is in a stable and strong financial position, with approximately $5.7 billion in operating revenues and $5.5 billion in operating expenditures. Over the last year, Duke University’s endowment grew to a record size of $12.9 billion on a return of 55.9%.

At every phase of Duke’s growth, the leadership, including trustees, alumni, administration, and faculty, has attended carefully to Duke’s financial strength. There are now over 175,000 very loyal alums. Duke Forward, the largest fundraising campaign in Duke University history, concluded on June 30, 2017, raising $3.85 billion over the previous seven years. Record giving by more than 315,000 donors and foundations helped propel Duke Forward past its original goal of $3.25 billion. The comprehensive campaign, which began in 2010, benefitted all 10 of Duke’s graduate and undergraduate schools, Duke Athletics, Duke Libraries, Duke Health and a range of university-wide initiatives and programs. It transformed the physical campus and funded priorities such as financial aid, faculty development, research and patient care, and hands-on learning opportunities for students. The University is now at work planning an even more ambitious campaign to coincide with its centenary in 2024.

**Faculty**

The quality and commitment of the faculty has been essential to Duke’s success, and the university has had a tradition of distinguished scholars. The Duke faculty consists of more than 3,700 members including 1,687 tenured or tenure-track professors. Throughout its history, 15 Nobel laureates have been affiliated with Duke—the most recent was the 2019 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine,
awarded to Duke alumnus and current Trustee Dr. William G. Kaelin, Jr. Currently, 32 Duke faculty are members of the National Academy of Sciences, nine are members of the National Academy of Engineering, and 37 are members of the National Academy of Medicine.

Over the course of its first century, the university invested carefully in faculty, building strength in selected departments and schools. The transition to a Responsibility Centered Management budget model increased the incentive for professional schools to build their revenue streams and their faculties. In the last 15 years, the schools and the college have frequently cooperated in joint programs and joint hires, with shared resources between programs, centers, and schools. Fittingly, Duke’s faculty is known for a collaborative research culture, one that also supports a vibrant undergraduate liberal arts education.

President Price has identified the recruitment and retention of world-class faculty members as one of his highest strategic priorities, particularly in the sciences and technology.

Staff

Duke employs nearly 40,000 staff members in the university and health system. The university has fostered a reputation as a supportive employer committed to the personal and professional growth of its employees, offering generous benefits and a competitive salary across job functions and levels. In recent years, the administration has put a particular emphasis on employee health and well-being, reflecting a broader strategic commitment to building a healthier campus community.

Comprehensive Strategic Planning

In the past several years, Duke has undertaken three comprehensive strategic planning initiatives: an academic strategic plan, Together Duke; a plan for the health system, Advancing Health Together; and an institution-wide presidential strategic framework Toward our Second Century. These plans share a focus on collaboration across schools, disciplines, and units; innovative thinking in teaching, learning, research, and the delivery of health care; and leadership in service to the university’s immediate region and the wider world. The university's ability to make these investments in its future will require fiscal discipline and the achievement of maximal returns on its investments.

To further facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation, the university has launched an initiative in Science and Technology—which spans multiple schools and includes the new Center on Science and Technology Policy. These efforts, which seek to make Duke an international leader in technology research, are bolstered by nearly three quarters of a billion dollars in recent investments.

Duke’s global ambitions, which date to the founding of Trinity College, now encompass a range of programs and activities. The university oversees Duke-NUS Medical School, a joint-venture graduate-level medical research and education institution in Singapore; and Duke Kunshan University, an innovative joint-venture university in Kunshan, China that enrolled its first class of undergraduates in 2018. Duke Kunshan currently awards graduate degrees in business, global health and other subjects, and has become a center for research on the environment, public policy, and public health.

Duke Health

Duke Health, encompassing the Schools of Medicine and Nursing and the Duke University Health System (DUHS), is one of the university’s strongest strategic assets and will continue to be central to
its second century. Duke has had a very successful clinical care and research enterprise since the 1930s, and DUHS is one of the nation’s foremost healthcare delivery systems. The School of Medicine is at the forefront of research in many fields, as is Duke’s highly regarded School of Nursing. With excellent leadership, a new state-of-the-art physical plant, and strong demand for its services, DUHS is very well positioned for future success. DUHS had $3.0 billion in total operating revenue in fiscal year 2019, with an operating margin in excess of $350 million; DUHS fiscal year 2020 performance is projected to meet or exceed that of fiscal year 2019.