



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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Search for the Vice Provost for International Affairs

Senior International Officer

University of Minnesota

Minneapolis, Minnesota

THE SEARCH

The University of Minnesota (University)—one of the most prestigious, comprehensive, public land-grant research universities in the nation—seeks a visionary, collaborative, and entrepreneurial leader to serve as its next Vice Provost for International Affairs (VPIA). As the VPIA and Senior International Officer (SIO), this position drives the University's global strategy and advances the global dimensions of teaching, research, and engagement across all campuses of the University of Minnesota.

The University of Minnesota has a long and distinguished history of global engagement and is a recognized innovator and leader in the field of international education. International students first enrolled in 1874, and alumni have gone on to serve as prime ministers, ambassadors, and leaders within academia and across industries. The pioneering and nationally recognized "Minnesota Model" of study-abroad curriculum integration has led to more than 30% of undergraduate students having an experience abroad before they graduate. The University was among the first in the country to create positions dedicated to internationalizing the curriculum; international health, safety, and compliance; and mental health in study abroad.

The VPIA provides leadership and administrative oversight to the units within the [Global Programs and Strategy Alliance \(GPS\)](#), including the largest units—International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) and the Learning Abroad Center (LAC). With approximately 115 staff, these units play a critical role in driving the University's global strategy and connecting faculty, staff, and students with the resources and expertise needed for personal and professional success. The VPIA reports to [Executive Vice President and Provost Gretchen Ritter](#), serving on the provost's senior leadership team and convening the University's International Programs Council (IPC). The VPIA will consult with the vice provosts on educational and enrollment matters, and with the vice president for research and innovation on fostering international research partnerships.

This is an exciting opportunity to play a pivotal role in enhancing the University's reputation as a world-class research and education institution and a destination of choice for international scholars, faculty, and students. The VPIA will cultivate national and international partnerships, expand research and

education collaborations, support international student recruitment and alumni engagement, and promote a welcoming, inclusive, and globally diverse campus culture. To be successful in this role, the VPIA will address the following opportunities and challenges, outlined in greater detail starting on page 3 of this document:

- Guide a comprehensive internationalization strategy for the University
- Foster greater collaboration and enhance operational efficiency across units on campus
- Develop, diversify, and strengthen programming, partnerships, and funding streams to promote global engagement in educational and research activities
- Promote a welcoming, inclusive, and globally diverse campus culture for students, faculty, and staff

The University of Minnesota has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist in this important search. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed in confidence to the University or search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ROLE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The VPIA will join a strong university deeply committed to a global mission with an established reputation in the field of international affairs and global education. The new VPIA will serve as a key strategic and visionary leader for developing and driving the University's global strategy and the ability to engage a multidisciplinary group of administrative leaders, faculty, staff, and students.

The next VPIA will be a recognized leader in the field, with a compelling record of successfully building and maintaining strong, transnational partnerships and productive relationships with people from a range of disciplines and cultural backgrounds. The next VPIA will be an experienced leader with a broad knowledge of higher education, theories, and concepts in international education and modern global affairs, and the experience to handle high-level administrative matters such as legal agreements and negotiations. This role provides visionary and strategic direction for all international affairs, represents the University at national and global forums, and serves as a key partner within the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost (OEVPP), across the University, and throughout the State of Minnesota. Externally, the VPIA represents the University at national and international associations, boards, and councils, such as NAFSA: Association of International Educators, Institute of International Education (IIE), Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), and Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) SIO Affinity Group.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VPIA

Guide a comprehensive internationalization strategy for the University

As the senior international officer, the VPIA will lead the development, execution, and continuous refinement of the University's comprehensive internationalization strategy, with emphasis on positioning the University as a sought-after international partner and a magnet for global talent. The VPIA serves as a critical thought partner and trusted advisor to the executive vice president and provost and other University senior leadership on global trends and emerging issues in the internationalization of higher education and their implications for institutional planning and policy. The VPIA is expected to act as a strong collaborator with various stakeholders on campus—University senior leadership, faculty, student affairs leaders, and administrators—to support international education programs, study abroad initiatives, and globally-focused academic offerings and partnerships. The VPIA is the public-facing leader on matters of internationalization, including at global conferences, summits, and strategic forums. A strategic and visionary leader, the VPIA will foster alignment of international partnership agreements with the University's mission, strategic plan, and research initiatives. The VPIA will also be expected to strategically engage in donor cultivation, stewardship, and other fundraising activities as appropriate.

Foster greater collaboration and enhance operational efficiency across units on campus

Providing strategic leadership and guidance for GPS Alliance units, the VPIA will ensure all the units are fulfilling their missions and appropriately supporting the global dimensions of teaching, research, and engagement across all the University's campuses. This includes collaborations on finances, communications, human resources, international health and safety, and general operations, where the VPIA will model as a collaborative leader to promote greater synergies working as one team across units and improving operational efficiency whenever necessary. The VPIA should possess strong financial management skills in overseeing overall budgets and resources, ensuring alignment with institutional goals and fiscal responsibility. Under the current changing environment, the VPIA must sustain student mobility and ensure robust support systems for international students, faculty, and researchers, including immigration services, orientation programs, and cultural integration resources. In coordination with campus and college representatives, the VPIA will create partnerships and processes that drive enhanced study abroad participation of students from both the University and partner institutions participating in the University's programs. The VPIA further supports strengthening the overall programming, country-specific local activities, and institutional engagements under the Advancing Science, Innovation, and Academics (ASIA) Initiative.

Develop, diversify, and strengthen programming, partnerships, and funding streams to promote global engagement in educational and research activities

Building upon the University's reputation in the internationalization of higher education, the VPIA must continue cultivating and stewarding high-impact, sustainable institutional partnerships with leading universities, research institutes, non-profit organizations, industry, and foundations around the world. At the same time, the VPIA will be innovative in identifying and developing global educational and research opportunities for faculty and students, including co-teaching, seed funding initiatives, interdisciplinary consortia, and research mobility, while ensuring management of critical risks and compliance related to these activities. This role oversees the GPS Alliance compliance reviews and facilitates broader risk analysis and mission alignment assessments for proposed international partnerships and programs. The VPIA will coordinate with academic and research leaders to negotiate and oversee international MOUs and collaborate agreements to facilitate joint educational programs, dual-degree programs, faculty and student exchanges, research collaborations, and global internships as well as international grant development and compliance in collaboration with Sponsored Projects Administration. In response to an evolving and financially complex landscape, the VPIA will lead a united effort on campus to ensure the University remains at the forefront of global engagement, and strategize on ways to diversify revenue and funding streams for the GPS Alliance.

Promote a welcoming, inclusive, and globally diverse campus culture for staff, students, and faculty

All members of the University should feel valued, respected, and empowered as members of the University of Minnesota community. The VPIA's office has an important role in cultivating a welcoming and inclusive culture and climate. The VPIA formally and informally champions a globally welcoming campus climate through inclusive policies and practices and supports efforts to partner to infuse global perspectives into curricula, co-curricular activities, and institutional priorities. The VPIA will lead, engage, advocate for, and empower students, faculty, and staff, bringing people together and building mechanisms for trust, continuous improvement, transparency, collaboration, and partnerships across diverse units.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal attributes:

Minimum qualifications include:

- Graduate or professional degree in a field related to, or substantial experience in, international education or international affairs/relations;
- Experience working in higher education or a closely related education environment;
- Demonstrated collaborative and inclusive leadership, management, and advocacy of global programs on and off campus;
- Experience leading interdisciplinary initiatives and strategic planning within a large, complex institution;
- Demonstrated commitment to global workforce development and the ability to work with a multicultural and international constituencies;
- Comprehensive understanding of financial and academic policies, risk management, and stewardship of institutional resources.

Preferred qualifications include:

- Significant research, teaching, outreach, or institution-building experience abroad or within international contexts;
- Experience serving in a similar role at an institution of higher education, government agency, non-profit organization, or industry;
- Broad understanding of global dynamics and how they impact the University's global strategy;
- Experience generating internal and external funding to support global initiatives;
- Experience in assessing and addressing risk factors that impact the development of international partnerships.

COMPENSATION

The vice provost for international affairs is a full-time, renewable, 12-month academic administrative position. Salary is commensurate with education and experience, with an anticipated salary range of \$245,000–\$275,000.

The University of Minnesota offers excellent benefits. Please visit the [Office of Human Resources](#) website for more information regarding benefit eligibility.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the [Isaacson, Miller website](#). Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Sean Farrell, Silvia Cheng, and Drew Chang
Isaacson, Miller | imsearch.com

The University recognizes and values the importance of diversity and inclusion in enriching the employment experience of its employees and in supporting the academic mission. The University is committed to attracting and retaining employees with varying identities and backgrounds. The University of Minnesota provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. To learn more about [diversity at the University](#).

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the University of Minnesota. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by University of Minnesota would supersede any conflicting information in this document.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The University of Minnesota is a comprehensive, land-grant public research university ranked among the world's most respected institutions of higher learning. The University has scholars of national and international reputation and a strong tradition of education and public engagement. With 68,000 students enrolled across five campuses located throughout Minnesota—Crookston, Duluth, Morris, Rochester, and Twin Cities—the University advances discovery and innovation to improve society for all. The University is a proud member of the Association of American Universities (AAU) and has the special distinction of being both a globally engaged R1 research institution and Minnesota's land-grant university, creating a unique capacity and responsibility to improve the lives of Minnesotans and drive the state forward.

The University of Minnesota is situated and built within the homelands of the Dakota, the Ojibwe, and scores of other Indigenous peoples. It is important to acknowledge the peoples on whose land we live, learn, and work as we actively seek to improve and strengthen relations with the 11 sovereign tribal nations of Minnesota. The University also acknowledges that words are not enough. The University provides support, resources, and programs that increase access to all aspects of higher education for American Indian students, staff, faculty, and community members.

The University's [five distinct campuses](#) serve all regions of the state. Each campus has [unique strengths](#), enriched by its surrounding communities. The chancellors of the University of Minnesota campuses report directly to the president and work in close collaboration with the provost to achieve University-wide goals. The University staff and faculty focus on meeting the needs of each student, supporting them through world-class programming, academics, and hands-on experiences. The University's mission and work extends beyond the campuses, as community engagement is a vital part of the University of Minnesota's mission. From community-partnered research and outreach centers and extension offices to community-based field projects, health clinics, and environmental and agricultural projects, UMN faculty, students, and staff are working hand in hand with communities throughout Minnesota and the globe.

The University continues to build on its legacy of excellence in education, research, and service. Whether through the Duluth campus's recent designation as an Age-Friendly University, Crookston's recognition as a top performer in the latest sustainable campus index, Morris's unwavering commitment to undergraduate education as reflected in their recognition as a College of Distinction, or leading the workforce preparedness of healthcare workers at Minnesota and beyond at Rochester, the provost will work with chancellors to further embody the University's singular vision of excellence and a unified drive to serve.

In fall 2025, President Rebecca Cunningham presented the University's proposed [strategic roadmap](#) to the Board of Regents. The roadmap is guided by five strategic imperatives:

- Prepare students to be fully engaged and active in the state, nation and world
- Innovate to transform the future of learning

- Serve communities through knowledge creation and exchange in the arts, health, healthcare and the economy
- Advance its excellence to lead in the discovery and application of sustainable solutions, improving environmental, human, plant and animal health
- Secure and strengthen its future as a world-class university by strategically investing in a talented workforce, operations, and facilities

People and Programs

Nearly 55,000 students are enrolled on the flagship [Twin Cities](#) campus in the heart of Minneapolis-St. Paul, which is the 16th largest metropolitan area in the country. A major research university of exceptional breadth and depth with expansive interdisciplinary opportunities, the Twin Cities campus advances education, research, and outreach across 16 [schools and colleges](#): Biological Sciences; Continuing and Professional Studies; Dentistry; Design; Education and Human Development; Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Sciences; Law; Liberal Arts; Management; Medicine; Nursing; Pharmacy; Public Affairs; Public Health; Science and Engineering; and Veterinary Medicine. Additionally, there is a robust Extension arm, with offices located in each of Minnesota's 87 counties. The University of Minnesota is one of only four institutions in the country with schools of agriculture, engineering, law, medicine, and veterinary medicine on a single campus; and is one of the few land-grant leading research universities positioned in a vibrant metropolitan city with more than 25 Fortune 500 companies. The University of Minnesota has consistently advanced the land-grant mission with exceptional vigor—distinguished by a comprehensive commitment to integrating public engagement deeply into teaching and learning, research, and discovery.

At the heart of the University are its essential staff members and its more than 4,000 faculty members. Faculty are considered some of the best in their respective fields. UMN currently boasts 26 Nobel Prize-winning faculty, recipients of prestigious awards such as Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellowships, and many National Academies and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences members. The staff, more than 14,000 strong, are known for their dedication to the institution and its communities.

Students come to the University of Minnesota from all 50 states and 148 countries. The Twin Cities campus enrolls more than 30,000 undergraduates and 14,000 graduate and professional students across more than 150 undergraduate majors and more than 550 graduate and professional programs. The University of Minnesota has more than 600,000 living alumni worldwide.

Research & Innovation

The University averages over \$1.35 billion in research expenditures annually, ranking 12th nationally among public universities in the United States. The University's technology transfer work has been recognized for its excellence in several national and global rankings, including *World's Most Innovative Universities* (Reuters), where UMN ranked 22nd globally and 2nd among Big Ten public institutions; and

Universities Granted U.S. Utility Patents (National Academy of Inventors), where UMN ranked 16th in the world and 4th among Big Ten public institutions.

Executive Vice President and Provost

Dr. Gretchen Ritter joined the University of Minnesota in summer 2025 as the University's executive vice president and provost, assuming the roles of chief academic officer for the University's five campuses and provost for the Twin Cities campus.

As executive vice president, Dr. Ritter is responsible for faculty promotion and tenure approval, as well as the development, revision, and approval of academic programs and management of their operational intricacies to bolster faculty, student, and staff success. She also plays a collaborative leadership role in the University's academic planning and budgeting process, use of educational technology, and capital planning. As provost, Dr. Ritter leads the deans of the colleges, schools, and academic units of the Twin Cities campus and is responsible for advancing its academic mission. She will guide the implementation of components of the systemwide strategic plan and participate in a long-established collaborative and inclusive culture to promote the recruitment and retention of faculty, students, and staff.

Dr. Ritter joins the University from Syracuse University, where she was the inaugural vice president for civic engagement and education. Dr. Ritter was also a professor of political science in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs and a faculty affiliate with the Program for Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration, having previously served as the vice chancellor, provost, and chief academic officer at Syracuse University from 2021 to 2024. Prior to her time at Syracuse University, Dr. Ritter was the executive dean and vice provost of the College of Arts and Sciences at The Ohio State University, the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Cornell University, and the vice provost of undergraduate education and faculty governance at the University of Texas at Austin, accompanied by numerous faculty appointments.

THE TWIN CITIES — MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL

The University's flagship Twin Cities campus is in the heart of a dynamic metro area that is a global economic leader, a hub for education and culture, and renowned for its abundant cultural and natural resources. The Minneapolis-St. Paul metro is home to the 4th-largest concentration of Fortune 500 companies in the country as well as thriving entrepreneurial and small-business sectors. Ranked as one of the country's leading "creative economy" communities, the Twin Cities is renowned for its arts and nonprofit sectors, as well as its many lakes and parks and wealth of recreational and entertainment opportunities. Spanning locations in both Minneapolis and St. Paul, the Twin Cities campus is part of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. It is a place that offers strong work-life balance, low cost of living compared to similarly sized metro areas, and high rates of health coverage—in short, a place that ranks highly in quality of life surveys.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL PROGRAMS AND STRATEGY ALLIANCE (GPS)

As the central international office for the University of Minnesota, the Global Programs and Strategy Alliance (GPS) drives the University's global strategy and connects faculty, staff, and students with the resources and expertise needed for personal and professional success.

Led by the VPIA, the GPS Alliance includes the [following units and initiatives](#) that facilitate the University's global learning, teaching, research, and engagement: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition; China Center; GO Minnesota; Advancing Science, Innovation, and Academics (ASIA) Initiative; International Health, Safety, and Compliance; International Student and Scholar Services; Learning Abroad Center; UMN Passport Office; and Shared Services.

In FY 24–25, the GPS Alliance oversaw a \$40 million budget, with \$20 million allocated to study abroad pass-through costs, leaving a net operating budget of \$20 million. This funding supports various operational areas (units), each with unique revenue streams and financial responsibilities. Unit leaders collaborate with GPS Alliance Finance and Human Resources to build and maintain budgets that will allow the unit to fulfill their missions and drive key strategic initiatives.

In 2018, as part of the University's Driven fundraising campaign, the GPS Alliance identified [three key strategic goals](#) that still help frame its work: Empower Students for Global Success, Bring the World to the U, and Ignite Global Innovation. In 2018, leadership in the GPS Alliance created a belief statement to reflect its values and purpose: *We believe people's lives are enriched through global connections and understanding.* It is noteworthy that the new VPIA will join the University and GPS Alliance in launching a new strategic planning process for the GPS Alliance.