Northwestern University

Vice President for Research
Leadership Profile
Summer 2023

Northwestern University seeks to appoint a Vice President for Research to provide leadership in supporting and advancing a world-class research enterprise. With $924 million in sponsored research funding in FY 2022, Northwestern is recognized globally for its high-impact research spanning academic disciplines and contributing to society through the commercialization of new products and services. This performance is part of a larger growth trajectory, with the University’s overall research funding increasing nearly 82 percent since 2012. Such growth has furthered the societal impact of Northwestern’s research while consistently elevating the University into the top 10 in national rankings.

In the context of this ongoing growth, the Vice President will develop, socialize, and implement a vision for support services and infrastructure across the University’s schools, centers, and institutes that encompasses infrastructure, systems, administrative resources, policy, compliance, and strategic investments. The Vice President for Research jointly reports to the President and Provost of the University.

THE OFFICE FOR RESEARCH

As steward of Northwestern University’s research enterprise, the Office for Research provides the infrastructure essential for faculty excellence in basic and translational research, supports the formation and work of thematic research communities, and collaborates with stakeholders to identify and support research priorities. The Office for Research actively partners with senior leaders and administration across Northwestern’s schools to address programmatic, operational, financial, and strategic issues in all of the Office’s domains.

The Office for Research plays a strategic role in developing the best research programs and facilities, attracting exceptional faculty, and helping to administer annual funding from federal agencies, foundations, and corporations. The Office supports Northwestern’s research success in various ways, including:

• Providing guidance for administering proposals and conforming to federal compliance requirements
• Enabling alignment with best practices in ethical research and safety practices
• Managing space and training in select shared and core facilities
• Bringing academic innovation to market to grow the impact of Northwestern’s discoveries

The Office for Research oversees the Innovation and New Ventures Office (INVO) which is responsible for maximizing the societal impact of the University's intellectual property assets by shepherding them
through critical processes that get them from campus to market, including patent application, prosecution, licensing, compliance, and enforcement, enabling commercial investment in and licensing of inventions and discoveries flowing from Northwestern’s research. INVO’s broad portfolio includes several initiatives, such as the Querrey InQbation Lab and The Garage. The Querrey InQbation Lab is a University incubator that provides support and resources for the early stages of company formation, allowing the University to immediately enable near-term opportunities and increase the pipeline of startup companies. The Garage serves Northwestern undergraduate, graduate, and professional students through programs, funding, and mentorship to allow them to build the knowledge, strategies, and networks for bringing new ideas to life.

Beyond providing support for all school- and unit-based institutes and centers, the Office for Research also oversees University Research Institutes and Centers (URICs). Bridging disciplines across school boundaries, URICs are knowledge hubs that spur high-impact, collaborative discovery with great social benefit. Numbering more than 50, Northwestern’s URICs continue to drive research innovation across domains as varied as nanotechnology, biological sciences, energy and sustainability, policy, and more.

Functions and services delivered by the Office for Research include:

- **Research Operations**
  - Sponsored Research
  - IRB Office
  - Animal Care and Use:
    - Center for Comparative Medicine
    - Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) Office

- **Strategy**
  - University Research Institutes and Centers Administration
  - Core Facilities Administration
  - Research Analytics
  - Research Development
  - Facilities and Planning
  - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
  - Innovation and New Ventures: INVO

- **Compliance**
  - Research Safety
  - Research Integrity
  - Export Controls and International Compliance
  - Research-Related Conflict of Interest

- **Internal Administration**
  - Research IT
  - Administrative Services
  - Financial Administration
  - Communications
THE POSITION

In the context of Northwestern’s established and emerging strengths, the Vice President for Research (VPR) is responsible for fostering and supporting Northwestern’s research ecosystem. In this role, the VPR is charged to provide excellent, efficient, and effective operational service and support; ensure institutional compliance and provide expert guidance on policy; and advise University leaders on research strategy. The VPR works closely with deans and associate deans for research, as well as with the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, who oversees central finance, facilities, human resources, and business services.

Some 750 full-time employees of the University work in the Office for Research. The Office’s overall operating budget is roughly $143M. The current organizational chart includes the following VPR direct reports:

- Senior Associate Vice President for Research
- Several Associate Vice Presidents for Research
- Associate Vice President for Innovation and Executive Director of Innovation and New Ventures (INVO)
- Executive Director of Research Finance and Administration
- Senior Director of Corporate Engagement
- Director of Development, Research Centers & Initiatives
- Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion for the Office for Research
- Director of Research Communications
- Office for Research Advisory Council

The VPR presents periodically to committees of the Board of Trustees, including the Committee on Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As Northwestern’s 17th President, Michael H. Schill, sets forth strategic research areas, the Office for Research, led by the VPR, will play a key role in advancing and supporting research in those key areas in close partnership with faculty and University leadership. Additional strategic priorities and opportunities for the VPR and Office for Research include the following:

- Cultivate operational excellence across all areas within the Office for Research
- Maintain and develop institutional strengths in key areas, through University Research Institutes and Centers (URICs)
- Develop an ecosystem that supports increased translation and impact
- Develop the best environment for cutting-edge research (cores and instrumentation)
- Support a workplace culture that advances staff excellence, innovation, and inclusion
- Restructure research development to cultivate and support large and complex programs
- Grow industry-sponsored research for clinical and engineering areas
- Prioritize disciplinary areas for investment in partnership with the provost and deans
- Deepen collaboration between Northwestern and Illinois research universities, businesses, government, and the civic community to build the regional and state economy
- Define a strategic approach to international research alliances
- Represent Northwestern in select external partnerships, including the Chicago Biological Consortium, the University Industry Demonstration Partnership, and Argonne National Laboratory

QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Vice President for Research will be a distinguished scholar with a broad grasp of research and research policy, and the ability to lead a large administrative and service organization in support of the University’s research mission. The candidate will have had a successful career as a researcher and will want to turn (or will have already turned) to championing others’ research. They will be an action-oriented leader who nonetheless consults judiciously and who balances institutional and individual considerations.

The VPR will have a broad familiarity with research fields in the sciences and social sciences and will also be conversant in new fields and intersections between research fields so as to be able to champion innovation in a faculty-led environment.

Qualified candidates will possess a PhD and scholarly achievements worthy of appointment as a full professor with tenure at Northwestern. Strong preference will be given to applicants that are tenured faculty members at Northwestern.

The VPR will have the ability to work effectively with a wide range of internal and external constituencies, including faculty members, research staff committee members, deans, administrators, clinical affiliates, business partners, and federal agencies.

PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDACY

Applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include a CV and letter of interest addressing the priorities in this profile.

Application materials, nominations, and inquiries can be submitted to the Office of the Provost at VPRsearch@northwestern.edu.

Candidate review has begun and will continue until the position is filled. Priority consideration will be given to applications submitted by August 1.

Northwestern University is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer of all protected classes, including veterans and individuals with disabilities. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply.