Executive Summary

Northwestern University seeks an experienced, innovative, strategic, and collaborative leader as its next Dean of Students.

Northwestern is a comprehensive research university that is interdisciplinary across multiple schools and units. Committed to excellent teaching, innovative research, and the personal and intellectual growth of its students in a diverse academic community, Northwestern provides a rigorous academic environment with a robust mixture of theory and practice and an emphasis on top-tier research, new knowledge, creative expression, and practical application. Northwestern’s innovative, collaborative, and multidimensional community delivers an impact that is rare in higher education. The University’s campuses are based in Evanston, and Chicago, Illinois and Doha, Qatar. One of only four U.S. universities ranked in the top 20 across all graduate education categories and in the top 10 overall, Northwestern is proud to enroll 21,000 students (8,200 of whom are undergraduates) across its 12 schools and colleges with more than 3,700 full time faculty members.

A key priority of the Northwestern Division of Student Affairs is to expand upon existing student wellness programs while delivering services and influencing policies that promote mental, physical, and emotional health, resilience, and wellbeing through inclusion, justice, and equity lenses. As such, the dean of students serves as a nexus point for the Northwestern community, strategically connecting Student Affairs to key constituencies across the campus as well as into the Evanston and Chicago communities. The dean of students will facilitate a campus-wide, collaborative approach to student wellness that will seamlessly connect proactive, on-going student support, student development needs, crisis management and post-crisis recovery. Simultaneously, the dean of students will work to create, engage in, and evaluate student-centered initiatives that support and improve the student experience. Overall, they must actively promote an institutional culture rooted in justice and equity for all Northwestern students.

Reporting directly to the vice president for student affairs, the dean of students will provide vision and leadership for the planning, development, management, and evaluation for the $2.2 million portfolio of key wellness and wellbeing functions that includes Parent and Family Programs, Community Standards, AccessibleNU, Off Campus Life, Student Assistance and Support Services, CARE, and the Dean of Students Office. The dean of students will excel at working in a decentralized institutional environment and demonstrate a deep understanding of the complexities and challenges in the daily lives of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. The next dean of students will model leadership and bring experience advancing institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion; support the organizational health and wellness of a team in a fast-paced, high-pressure environment; and engage and inspire stakeholders across the division and campus to organize policies and services that amplify and maximize the conditions for student success. The successful candidate will have a Master’s degree in higher education administration, student affairs, or a related field.

To nominate an individual or express personal interest in the opportunity, please see the “Procedure for Candidacy” section at the end of this document.
Role of the Dean of Students

Reporting directly to the vice president for student affairs and serving as a key member of the Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT), the dean of students serves as a nexus point for the Northwestern community, strategically connecting Student Affairs to key constituencies across the campus as well as into the Evanston and Chicago communities. The dean of students plays a critical role in facilitating a campus-wide, collaborative approach to student wellness and wellbeing that will seamlessly connect proactive, on-going student support, student development needs, crisis management, and post-crisis recovery. Simultaneously, the dean of students will work to create, engage in, and evaluate student-centered initiatives that support and improve the student experience.

The dean of students provides vision and leadership for the planning, development, management and evaluation of key wellness and wellbeing functions in Student Affairs, including Parent and Family Programs, Community Standards, AccessibleNU, Off Campus Life, Student Assistance and Support Services, CARE, and the Dean of Students Office. This $2.2 million portfolio encompasses 23 full time professional staff (see the organizational chart in the appendix of this document), so the dean of students will display expert competencies in understanding and addressing organizational health structures and components. Additionally, the dean of students serves on the Behavioral Consultation Team, the University Crisis Management Team, the Undergraduate Council, and the Council on Athletics and Recreation.

The dean of students will work in close partnership with other Student Affairs departments, most notably Student Engagement, Counseling and Psychological Services, and Residential Services as well as the Office of General Counsel, the Office of Equity, and the University Police in managing critical student issues. The dean of students will also forge very strong partnerships with their academic affairs colleagues within the Office of the Provost; their counterparts within each school and their teams who act in student-facing capacities; with student leaders – both undergraduate and graduate, and faculty and staff across the campus.

Additional responsibilities include:

- Provides strategic leadership for the wellness and support initiatives within the Division of Student Affairs, including strategic planning, evaluation, facility oversight and implementation of wellness, wellbeing, support, behavioral guidance, and crisis response for all students — undergraduate, graduate, and professional. This should be done through lenses of inclusion, equity, and justice.

- Recruits, hires, trains, supervises, and evaluates leaders of the various units within the dean of students' portfolio.

- Cultivates and maintains key relationships in service to the wellness and wellbeing of students including serving as the primary division liaison with counterparts in each academic school — undergraduate, graduate, and professional — and with Athletics and Recreation.

- Responds to various constituents such as undergraduate, graduate, and professional students; parents; faculty; and other stakeholders.
- Plays a key role as a member of the Behavioral Consultation Team, Threat Assessment Team, Student Affairs Leadership Team and Emergency Management Team in managing and resolving situations that threaten the safety and well-being of individual students and/or the campus community.

- Serve in the vice president for student affairs’ stead in their absence as needed or required.

- Performs related duties as required or assigned.

**Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership**

The next dean of students will be a thought leader with the imagination and energy to advance holistic wellness efforts for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students through the frames of inclusion, equity and justice. While this role serves as the primary manager of student crisis, the next dean of students will skillfully balance and prioritize creating a supportive environment in which all students can thrive academically and developmentally. The successful candidate will be a strategic, creative, and highly relational leader whose student-centered philosophy not only develops meaningful student relationships that advance student success, but also finds it an honor to walk alongside students during their most difficult and vulnerable moments.

Working closely with the vice president for student affairs and the Student Affairs Leadership Team, the new dean of students will engage with the following issues, ideas, and opportunities at Northwestern University:

**Innovate and execute on a compelling, inclusive, and unifying strategic vision for the dean of students portfolio**

The dean of students will lead, articulate, and implement a vision and strategic direction for the broad areas that comprise the portfolio but are united in their common theme of supporting student health, wellness, and development. The dean of students area has grown rapidly over the last five years to respond to changing student needs, functioning as a campus-wide triage center when new student issues or trends present themselves. This triage element has, of course, been further heightened by our current pandemic context. As the scope of the area's portfolio stabilizes, the next dean of students will have the opportunity to imagine and define proactive strategies and services to further bolster, link, and refine current wellness and student success efforts on campus.
Through an inclusive, transparent, and collaborative process that includes stakeholders from across campus, the next dean of students will develop a vision that aligns and connection to the division's strategic plan. They will operationalize a set scope of welcoming, culturally competent, innovative, and holistic services for undergraduate, graduate and professional students alike. This process will be informed and bolstered by the myriad forms of data that Northwestern and Student Affairs has at its disposal and that accurately reflect the perspectives and experiences of current students. The dean of students will assess existing strategies; identify gaps and/or redundancies in policies, programs, services, and resources; and collaboratively propose strategies to refine services, ensuring the unique needs of future student populations are creatively incorporated. The dean of students will also ensure streamlined communication to both students and the campus community as a whole regarding their strategic direction and resulting policy and service delivery recommendations and changes.

**Cultivate and strengthen partnerships**

The dean of students' role and the team of professionals within the portfolio are viewed as exceptional partners by faculty, staff, and students across the Northwestern campus and in the Evanston and Chicago community. In particular, many feel the dean of students' team truly celebrates the academic mission of the schools, and the schools in turn value the role that the dean of students plays in supporting student academic progress and success. In a decentralized university environment, the new dean of students will continue to act as a bridge between multiple areas within the university, engaging in intentional and ongoing relationship building-efforts to ensure that a deep and interconnected commitment to student wellness and engagement efforts and policies is felt across the institution. The dean of students will possess the gravitas and skill to communicate with university leadership on student and staff needs and in conjunction with the vice president for student affairs, advocate for said needs. Reflecting experience and success in developing and valuing partnerships with faculty members, deans, academic affairs administrators, advancement, athletics, institutional leadership, and local and state entities, the dean of students will work across boundaries to improve policies and services that promote resilience and wellbeing for all Northwestern students.

**Support a diverse student population and advocate for their needs**

A key priority for the Division of Student Affairs, and Northwestern as a whole, is to collectively impact the campus climate for diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice with an emphasis on students who are first generation, low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ students, and other students with marginalized identities so that they may thrive at NU. In recent years, Northwestern successfully increased the diversity of the undergraduate student body resulting in an awareness and need to continually examine and redesign policies, procedures, and services to ensure equity across
student populations. Examples of some complex processes in need of review via the lens of equity include student health insurance, medical leave of absence, case management, and financial aid. The complexity of navigating these areas in the context of both Northwestern’s high-achieving student body and rigorous quarter system has created significant barriers for some students, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds.

The next dean of students must be a fierce advocate and ally in support of creating a sense of belonging for all students, but especially cognizant and centered on the impacts historically white institutions have on the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of marginalized student populations. The dean of students will be well versed in the health, wellness and engagement opportunities and challenges for Northwestern’s diverse populations and have a track record of success in designing and implementing strategies that center on and benefit marginalized students.

**Supporting students at all levels — undergraduate, graduate, and professional**

Northwestern’s students are looking forward to welcoming a dean of students who is visible and available and an administrator, and one with whom they can build authentic relationships. Students, along with the Northwestern community, want a dean of students for all students — not just undergraduates — who is connected to and knowledgeable of their respective needs. While Northwestern’s graduate and professional colleges and programs often have separate and distinct student support systems and policies, the campus requires a fully integrated partnership with the dean of students to bolster the system of interventions for graduate and professional students. Ongoing support and interaction with the dean of students’ team is highly desired and necessary for graduate and professional populations on both the Evanston and Chicago campuses.

The dean of students will be a transparent, empathetic, and supportive student-facing administrator who will balance upholding community standards while acknowledging the experiences of students in a non-adversarial manner. The new dean of students will listen, reflect, and mediate challenging interactions between the students and the broader university as they arise while also engaging students in ongoing dialogues around critical campus and national issues.

**Cultivate an outstanding team**

Given Northwestern’s strong commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, the dean of students must be dedicated to and effective at advancing a culture of inclusion and transparency that fosters the Division of Student Affairs’ strategic themes of social justice and organizational health. The new dean of students will advance a team that attends to issues of power and privilege within a work culture,
furthering an environment which enables creative ideas to emerge from all; provide leadership around equity and social justice to ensure an environment where cultural competencies, appreciation of difference, and awareness of the range of experiences for students and the team are continuously reflected in policy and in action; and will draw on these principles when engaging in hiring processes and offering professional development opportunities. The dean of students will proactively work to retain and recruit a diverse team of professionals who engage differences as strengths in an environment that ensures equity of access, opportunity, representation, and participation.

The dean of students' team is known across campus as being a strong and cohesive group and constituencies truly value their interactions with and guidance from this group. High-functioning groups such as this are frequently asked to engage in an increasing number of initiatives and special projects. The dean of students will be cognizant of these well-intentioned pressures to do more, acting as a strong champion, advocate, and voice for the dean of students' team within the division and at the university level while also modeling and supporting professional boundaries to ensure the organizational health and wellness of the team members, individually and as a whole.

**Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities**

Northwestern's dean of students will be a deeply experienced, student-centered, energetic, and innovative leader who embraces forward-thinking strategies to anticipate key wellness and wellbeing needs of contemporary students through social justice lenses. The dean of students will also be a proven leader, manager, and collaborator with the networking and entrepreneurial skills required to work successfully with a wide range of individuals and constituencies across the university and into the community. The ideal candidate must have the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

**Minimum Qualifications:**

- A Masters’ degree in higher education administration, student affairs, or a related field.
- Demonstrated 7 years of increasingly responsible experience in student affairs in higher education, with specific experience in advocacy, crisis management, and community standards work.
- Demonstrated success leading crisis management and intervention teams on a college or university campus.
- A demonstrated understanding and commitment to student learning and development and a passion for working with students.
Minimum Competencies (Skills, knowledge, and abilities):

- Contemporary understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues impacting students, particularly those from marginalized communities, and how these issues manifest in the overall wellness and wellbeing of students.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in leading a team in collaborative, strategic, and operational planning and achieving associated results.
- Direct experience in program planning design, implementation, evaluation, and reporting.
- Direct experience in recruiting, selecting, supervising, coaching, retaining, and providing professional growth opportunities for a diverse staff.
- Direct budget planning and management experience.
- Achievement in fostering change management, process improvement and the development and implementation of data-informed, effective, and efficient policies and processes.
- Direct experience navigating emergency situations and adjusting work priorities accordingly.
- Direct experience with strategic planning at the division or university level.

Preferred Qualifications:

- A doctoral level degree in higher education administration, student affairs, or related field.
- Demonstrated 10 years of increasingly responsible experience in student affairs in higher education, with specific experience in advocacy, crisis management, case management, and wellness/wellbeing initiatives.
- Prior administrative management and leadership experience in the context of a highly selective college or university.
- Direct experience working with graduate/professional students and graduate/professional school academic partners.

Preferred Competencies (Skills, knowledge, and abilities):

- A demonstrated commitment to and record of leadership in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion, and exemplary skill in communicating and collaborating with diverse groups.
- Demonstrated skill in creating collaborative networks and maintaining key strategic relationships over time.
- Demonstrated skill in creating access and relationships between students and upper-level administration.
- Demonstrated understanding of the complexities surrounding the health, wellness, and wellbeing of today’s college student population — undergraduate, graduate, professional, and specifically with first-generation and low-income students.
- Experience and/or desire to engage in fundraising efforts on behalf of key student needs and initiatives.

About the Division of Student Affairs

Nearly 30 departments make up the Division of Student Affairs at Northwestern, from housing to food services, career services to counseling, the student center to student organization advising, and so much more. Student Affairs enriches the Northwestern experience both in and outside of the classroom. This division engages students in activities and culture on campus and in the surrounding communities. Student Affairs offers support to students in need and creates an environment that makes Northwestern students Wildcats for life.

Vision statement

We will be full partners in the student learning experience.

The division of Student Affairs partners with the academic schools/colleges and other University divisions in alignment with the University's vision and mission to advance student learning and success.

Mission statement

The mission of the Northwestern University Division of Student Affairs is to educate students, engage the community, and enrich the Northwestern experience.

We pursue our mission by providing learning programs, services, and mentoring to maximize students’ potential; removing barriers to learning; strengthening readiness to learn; and sustaining a safe and healthy Northwestern community.

Division Priorities 2020-2022

In an annual review of the division's strategic plan, the Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT) recommitted to the vision, mission, and strategic themes for the division. For the fiscal years for 2020 through 2022, the priorities were revised to reflect the data, climate, and environment for students. The
priorities were adjusted with safety, wellness, care, and compliance in mind. In a time of budget constraints, the division of Student Affairs remains committed to consistently and efficiently delivering upon their mission through these priorities:

- Expand upon existing student wellness programs while delivering services and influencing policies that promote mental, physical and emotional health, resilience, and wellbeing.
- Collectively impact the campus climate for diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice with emphasis on first generation, low-income, and marginalized students.
- Ensure students develop an integrated sense of personal identity, self-efficacy, and a personal code of ethics; and develop healthy, respectful, and collaborative relationships with others.
- Focus on organizational health and workforce planning as supported by the division's human resources strategy.
- Leverage the two-year live-on requirement as a conduit to continue building community on campus.
- Contribute to the university's comprehensive seven-year strategy to enhance facilities and spaces for students.

Leadership

**Dr. Julie Payne-Kirchmeier, CASP, Vice President for Student Affairs**

Dr. Julie Payne-Kirchmeier (she/her/hers) is a senior student affairs professional with over 20 years of progressively responsible and expansive leadership across institutional types and functional areas. Julie spearheads institution-wide initiatives rooted in equity and inclusion, and based on professional expertise in strategic planning and assessment, cross-functional collaboration, student development, and innovative problem-solving. She demonstrates a history of creating and supervising high-performing teams that deliver results for the institution while also serving and advocating for students.

Julie currently serves as the vice president for student affairs at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. In this role, Julie leads over 30 departments, and her responsibilities include providing leadership to the division of Student Affairs to accomplish its goals of being full partners in the student learning experience and fulfilling the mission of educating students, engaging the community and enriching the Northwestern experience. She leverages administrative connections and campus partnerships to uphold student wellbeing, advance social justice, and foster student learning and community. Julie earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Genetics and her Master of Education degree in Student Affairs Administration from Texas A&M University-College Station and her doctoral degree from Indiana State University. A recipient of state, regional, national, and international awards for her service to the profession, most recently, she was awarded the Parthenon Award from ACUHO-I, one of the association’s highest honors for her work in Housing and Residence Life. Julie will serve as the Board Chair for NASPA in 2021-2022.
Before joining Northwestern University, Julie served in various student affairs leadership roles, including as the director of Housing for the University of Southern Indiana, the assistant provost for the University College at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) and concurrently, as SIU’s director of University Housing. She is currently a faculty member in the Master of Science for Higher Education program in the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern. Her research focuses on feminism and women’s issues in higher education, social media use in student affairs, and on organizational management in student affairs/higher education.

**Procedure for Candidacy**

WittKieffer is assisting Northwestern University in this search. All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited.

Applications should include, as two separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by April 26, 2021.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer’s candidate portal.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Jen Meyers Pickard, Ph.D.
Jessica Herrington

NorthwesternDOS@wittkieffer.com

Northwestern University values diversity and is committed to equal opportunity for all persons regardless of age, color, disability, ethnicity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other status protected by law.
Interim Dean of Students

Program Coordinator

Administrative Assistant

Asst Dean & Director of Community Standards
  - Assistant Director
  - Assistant Director
  - Assistant Director of Residential Life for Conduct & Community Standards

Sr. Associate Dean & Director of Student Assistance & Support Services
  - Assistant Dean
  - Assistant Dean

Associate Dean & Director of AccessibleNU
  - Associate Director
  - Program Assistant

Director of Sexual Violence Response Services & Advocacy
  - Assistant Director of Sexual Violence Response Services & Advocacy
  - Assistant Director of Prevention & Masculine Engagement

Senior Program Coordinator Parent & Family Programs

Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Off-Campus Life

Assistant Director

Assistant Director

Assistant Director

Assistant Director of Residential Life for Conduct & Community Standards

Assistant Dean

Assistant Dean

Assistant Dean

Assistant Director

Access & Testing Coordinator

2020-2021 Organizational Chart

Updated 02.15.2021