Vice President for Enterprise Planning and Operational Excellence

[Wayne State University](), a premier urban public Carnegie R1 research university in the heart of Detroit, a revitalized city on the move, seeks a collaborative leader who is a proactive communicator and tireless connector to serve as the inaugural Vice President for Enterprise Planning and Operational Excellence (VP).

Reporting directly to the President, the Vice President (VP) for Enterprise Planning and Operational Excellence provides vision and University-wide leadership in the development of systems and processes that will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of planning, analysis, reporting, and decision-making across administrative and academic divisions. In advancing the state of these activities across the University, the Vice President will play a formative role in creating new institutional capacity and will help leaders and managers allocate resources and measure the use of resource in ways that will increase operational efficiency, maximize return on investment, and guide future strategic planning for success.

Wayne State University (WSU) is Michigan's only urban public research university and holds the Carnegie Foundation's highest rankings for both research intensiveness and community engagement. It has world-class research programs in the biomedical and life sciences, engineering, social sciences, education, law, and humanities. In fiscal year 2023, the University's research and development expenditures totaled nearly $251 million, and based on NSF data, Wayne State ranked 75th among public universities and 112th among all universities in FY22 research expenditures.

The VP will play a leadership role in developing capacity, business practices, and systems that will enable new kinds of data-informed planning, decision support, and process modernization across the university. Assuming responsibility for enterprise technology services, developing tools and systems that will elevate business intelligence, and guiding the creation of institutional data strategy, the new Vice President will on many fronts help Wayne State pursue the goals and objectives established in its 2022-2027 strategic plan, *[Our Moment In Time]()*.

Vice President for Enterprise Planning & Operational Excellence

Wayne State president Dr. Kimberly Andrews Espy conceived of the role as, early in her tenure, she took up the University's *Our Moment In Time* strategic plan and articulated Wayne State's Community [Prosperity Agenda]() to achieve it. The University's Board of Governors approved the creation of this re-aligned VP position in late 2023, supporting President Espy's vision that this new executive leader will envision and lead the development of enabling tools, practices, and expert resources that will inform the work of administrative units, whether academic or business, across the university. Led by this new Vice President, the Enterprise Planning & Operational Excellence organization will become a strategic partner to executive and academic leadership and their staffs in collaboration with faculty, staff, and students, to continuously improve the effectiveness of University operations.

Creating the Vice President role has entailed both reimagining the role of existing functions and organizing activities that exist only in and for a handful of departments across the University. The VP will both integrate and elevate these local best practices into an enterprise function. Through the

reorganization and the realignment of distributed activities, the VP's portfolio will comprise Computing & Information Technology Systems; Institutional Research & Data Analytics; and Enterprise Process Improvement.

Computing & Information Technology Systems, which is the University's central IT function, and Institutional Research & Data Analytics have been part of Academic Affairs: the goal in integrating them within the new Enterprise Planning & Operational Excellence portfolio is to broaden the lens, improve consistency, and enable improved University-wide application. Enterprise Process Improvement is a new central function that is expected to develop in a matrixed way, leveraging pockets of expertise and activity across the University to effect scale, synergy, and coordination.

Together, these units enable the VP to pursue an integrated and strategic approach to data strategy, planning, analytics and reporting, and operational excellence by:

- Advancing the use of enterprise information and computing systems for improved student/faculty experience and streamlined University operations across academic, business, and other functional areas
- Incorporating University-wide data, reporting, and analytics to support better campus-wide decision making and improve strategic impact
- Using systems and metrics to enable systematic planning, business-process reinvention, and digital transformation to advance faculty, staff, and student needs

The VP serves as a thought partner to colleagues across the University, helping divisions and schools to develop and execute plans for their process and operational needs. The VP also engages and collaborates extensively with units and colleagues throughout the University in the collection, sharing, and analyzing of data, which provides strategic decision support to the leaders and stakeholders of the University. This analysis facilitates the work of the president, provost, deans, vice presidents, and other leaders in their planning, policymaking, resource allocations, and key University activities.

The VP will establish and foster a culture of trust, collaboration and continuous improvement, enhance the delivery of shared services, and elevate data and information-technology and systems governance across the University. To do this, the VP will work with their staff and collaborate with colleagues to catalyze cultural and organizational change, co-create and implement new business processes, provide for efficiencies in the face of resource constraints, overcome data and organizational silos, improve alignment between goals and resources, and balance University-level and unit-level roles and responsibilities.

Opportunities and Priorities

- To serve as a strategic advisor to the president, provost, and University leaders on a wide range of issues, including implementing systems, processes, and tools to support long-range planning of programs, organizations, and structures that support the mission of the University

- To create an enterprise-wide systems-thinking capacity, supported by best-in-class information systems and advanced by a cadre of business analysts who may work locally but who think in institutional frameworks and deploy a coherent set of tools and practices
- To develop and support enterprise resource-utilization tools and programs across the University's mission areas of education, research, patient care, and public service that enable their leaders to track and enhance the optimization of resources
- To partner with campus source-system stewards, business-process owners, offices of record, system users and constituency groups, information technology partners, and third-party vendors and consultants to design, implement, maintain, and streamline University data, business-intelligence, and reporting solutions
- To advance technology systems across campus that support and enable the operations and processes utilized by divisions, schools, and colleges
- To gather colleagues together in order to establish campus data-integration services, analytical and reporting tool development, and support; the VP and their team will deliver user-support and training to campus-wide data stewards, explore trends for resource analysis and reporting tools, implement a comprehensive data literacy strategy, and provide recommendations for future enhancements and system migrations
- To foster an ecosystem of business-intelligence analysts across the University in order to provide support and professional development, encourage sharing of best practices, and codify institutional data standards and policies
- To provide periodic and on-demand strategic financial data gathering, synthesis, analysis, and reporting, including feasibility and ROI analysis of significant potential University initiatives as requested by administrative and academic leaders
- To collaborate with campus stakeholders at all levels to evaluate, plan, finance, and deliver business information services across the University that efficiently and effectively advance its educational, research, and service missions
- To gather and provide leadership to a matrixed business-analysis support cadre in service to the campus at large through sustained and effective operations and University-wide programs to build expertise and increase effectiveness

To develop and implement multi-year roadmaps intended to ensure continued growth/ improvement of planning, program management, and change management competencies across the University in a "center of excellence" model in which resources and expertise are leveraged across organizational lines

Knowledge, Skills, Abilities, and Qualifications

The University seeks a committed, talented, and experienced professional with a deep understanding of the academic mission who will bring high-level, strategic analysis skills and proactive leadership abilities to the position. The VP will be an effective and generous collaborator who will serve as a thought partner to colleagues across the University and will bring best-in-class expertise in the core areas of the VP portfolio to elevate Wayne State's ability to make strategic use of its resources and to evaluate its progress against established goals and aspirations. Working as much through influence as positional authority, the VP will lead and support colleagues across the University.

The successful candidate will support technology and systems adoption and implement effective service management practices across the university. To contribute fully to Wayne State University's future success, this position requires active listening, nuanced and empathetic leadership skills, strategic vision, a commitment to collaboration and innovation, and a focus on impact.

The ideal candidate will bring many if not all of the following competencies and qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree and graduate or terminal degree required
- Experience in the management of ongoing technology infrastructure acquisition and expansion, to include the identification and integration of suitable emerging technologies, while mitigating security risk and optimizing services required
- The ability to develop a plan for growth within existing organizational constraints, and to lead change within a large, complex organization through influence as much as through positional authority
- Experience engaging the full range of University stakeholders and convening diverse groups of constituents to work toward a common goal
- The ability to be entrepreneurial in a judicious way to identify and pursue an area of analysis that can benefit university decision-making
- High level of intellectual curiosity and deep knowledge of the critical issues and trends in higher education
- Extensive experience or advanced knowledge of institutional analytics and operational intelligence practices, programming, and one or more subject area sufficient for strategic planning, technology assessment, and organizational maturity development; relevant subject areas include enrollment management, student success, finance or business affairs, research contracts and grants, fundraising, point of sale, or other areas unique to higher education
- Excellent project management skills with demonstrated track-record for completing information development projects on time with a high degree of data quality and customer support
- Excellent critical thinking, persuasion / negotiation, and problem-solving skills
- Experience in successfully leading change management activities and managing their impact across multiple areas; proven ability to quickly evaluate complex issues and identify multiple options for resolution
- Excellent communication skills across multiple modes and channels, with the ability to effectively present technical topics to large groups with potentially varied levels of technical sophistication
- The ability to foster a collaborative and inclusive work environment that values diversity, equity, and inclusion, and encourages open communication and trust
- Demonstrated ability to lead, motivate, mentor and influence others, developing and maintaining high standards of customer service
- Creative problem-solving capacity and a commitment to respect the contributions of diverse team members and to support their growth

Wayne State University

Founded in 1868, WSU has remained committed to educational opportunity, research, and community enrichment. It serves a critical role in Michigan's higher education landscape. Just as the city of Detroit is undergoing a renaissance, the University itself is in a time of significant transformation, strengthening its ability to serve students from Michigan and around the world and to contribute to the renaissance of one of America's great cities.

As an anchor institution in Detroit, Wayne State has an established leadership role in the ongoing [revival and revitalization of the City](). It is one of the City's largest employers, with a nearly $2.75 billion annual economic impact.

The campus, located in the cultural center and historic district in the heart of Detroit's Midtown neighborhood, encompasses approximately 200 acres. Wayne State enrolls nearly 24,000 students, making it the third largest among Michigan's 15 public universities. Along with the other R1s in the state, Michigan State University and the University of Michigan, it forms the [University Research Corridor](). The institution boasts the most diverse student body among Michigan's public universities, with students of widely diverse backgrounds from nearly every U.S. state and 79 countries. Wayne State University embraces its urban research mission by providing access and opportunity to a top-tier, R1 college experience for students of all backgrounds. This commitment has made Wayne State a national leader in social mobility, ranked as Top Tier by the think tank *Third Way*. This commitment also helps nurture the next generation of professionals who will use their education to advance social and economic prosperity for all threads of society to help meet the needs of the Detroit metro and the State of Michigan.

Wayne State University is Detroit's seventh-largest employer, with more than 7,600 regular employees and more than 2,000 student employees. Wayne State has 2,701 faculty members — 1,729 of whom are full-time — and nearly 5,000 staff members. Wayne State University has more than 300,000 alumni throughout the country, with about 75% living and working in Michigan.

In January 2022, the Wayne State Board of Governors approved the University's 2022-27 strategic plan, [*Our Moment in Time*.]() This plan reaffirms WSU's core mission, builds upon its highly successful 2016-21 strategic plan, focuses on key elements of scholarship and engagement, and incorporates lessons learned from the pandemic. In keeping with the heart of everything the University does, *Our Moment in Time* prioritizes student success and the impactful engagement with the city of Detroit and surrounding communities, as well as academic excellence, research that tackles real-world problems, interdisciplinary collaboration, and more. The plan focuses on WSU's long-term vision and goals in the following key areas: research and discovery; teaching, learning and student success; outreach and engagement; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and financial sustainability and operational excellence. For more information about WSU, visit www.wayne.edu.

To Apply

Wayne State University has retained [Opus Partners]() to support this recruitment. Craig Smith, Senior Partner, Kenna Boyd, Associate Partner, and Marisea Rivera, Senior Associate, are leading the search. Inquiries, applications, and nominations should go to [marisea.rivera@opuspartners.net]().

The search process will unfold with the greatest possible attention to candidate confidentiality. Required application materials include a resume and cover letter that addresses the responsibilities and qualifications of the role.

Wayne State's deep-rooted commitment to excellence, collaboration, integrity, diversity, and inclusion creates exceptional educational opportunities preparing students for success in a diverse, global society. Wayne State University encourages applications from women, people of color, and other underrepresented people. WSU is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

Wayne State University is an equal opportunity employer. No person will be discriminated against or harassed in employment because of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, familial status, marital status, arrest record, height, weight, sexual orientation, qualified Vietnam era veterans, qualified special disabled veterans, recently separated veterans and other protected veterans, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or state law.

University policy requires certain persons who are offered employment to undergo a background check, including a criminal history check, before starting to work. Prior to an offer of employment, the University will inform applicants if a background check is required.