



Leadership Profile President

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Leaders Connecting Leaders

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December 2019

This Leadership Profile is intended to provide information about Governors State University and the position of president. It is designed to assist qualified individuals in assessing their interest.

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Opportunity and Summary of Position

Governors State University (GSU) is in many ways a model for public universities in today's challenging higher education environment. Founded as an upper-division institution 50 years ago, in the current decade the University has converted to a full-fledged university that provides transformative undergraduate and graduate education to both traditional and adult learners.



As the University celebrates 50 years of contributions to its students and the communities it serves, GSU seeks a president to build upon its record of success and to catalyze GSU's ongoing evolution.

Governors State's mission and service territory are compelling. Serving a local and regional population that spans from Chicago's South Side, to its south suburbs, to rural communities far beyond the city, GSU has throughout its history played a seminal role in improving the lives of its students. The University has long partnered with the region's robust community colleges, and its innovative Dual Degree Program encourages students who start in the community college system to persist to attainment of a bachelor's degree at GSU; 60% of GSU students transfer from community colleges. Fully 54% of GSU students are Pell eligible, and 27.5% are adults (age 30+) returning to complete a degree. The average age of a GSU student is 29.

With local communities, nonprofit organizations and corporations enthusiastically engaged to provide experiential and service learning opportunities and employment, and with the City of Chicago and its robust philanthropic community literally on the University's horizon, Governors State is exceptionally well positioned to thrive in the evolving environment of higher education. Building on this compelling base, to realize GSU's full potential requires a president with a comprehensive understanding of higher education and the current circumstances of the sector. The successful president will galvanize the University community around a vision and a plan for its future, and will have the ability to lead the execution of that plan. The candidate of choice will focus unrelentingly on and will motivate both the University and external communities to contribute to student success.



The University seeks a leader with intelligence, strategic acumen and a demonstrated commitment to inclusive excellence, who must possess the ability to engage and inspire internal and external stakeholders in such a manner that will ensure its success. To this end, GSU seeks a leader who will marshal the contributions of the entire community and will successfully engage partners and investors in current and innovative emerging programs and pedagogy to secure that success. An earned terminal degree and a record of teaching,

scholarship and service commensurate with an appointment to the GSU faculty at the rank of professor is preferred. Leaders from within and outside higher education demonstrating a notable track record of success will also be considered.

Throughout its history, Governors State University has responded to the needs of its students and communities with innovative approaches and the ability to evolve with the times. The new president will have the opportunity to build upon this enviable record and thus to thrive in the current competitive environment.

GSU's service territory includes some of the region's most affluent communities as well as some of the most economically challenged. The student body reflects the area's economic diversity, providing opportunities for the new president to engage in the local community and develop relationships and opportunities that benefit students and the region. The University's new and still developing athletics program provides even more ways to attract and engage students and community members.

Recruitment will continue until the position is filled. Information regarding the process for nominations and applications for this opportunity may be found on Page 12 in the section entitled "Procedure for Candidacy."



Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The following represent some of the immediate opportunities that the new president will address during the first two to three years in office. They are presented here in no particular order.

Thoroughly review the current platform

Governors State has changed markedly in the past decade. Since 2014, the University has expanded its academic and co-curricular offerings to enfranchise first- and second-year students within an institution that was founded solely as an upper division university. As might be expected, change on this scale has been and continues to be challenging for the

institution and its population, particularly as the University experiments with different strategies and tactics to recruit, retain and fulfill the expectations of students across its undergraduate and graduate programs. Among these recent initiatives have been the additions of residential life, intercollegiate athletics and student health services. All of these changes have been taking place in an environment of limited resources from the state government, requiring difficult decisions around the allocation of those resources between the University's legacy and emerging programs.

The new president will immediately begin to take stock of the entirety of the curricular and co-curricular programs to determine where resource investment should be adjusted to ensure maximum success. A fresh, objective analysis is required. The new president will be expected to listen carefully to the full complement of stakeholders in an effort to illuminate the institution's potential for success. This mechanism will help guide the new president to develop the most promising areas for investment and expansion.

Execute a strategic plan to build upon success

The Governors State Board of Trustees, administration and University community are currently engaged in the development of the institution's next strategic plan with the expectation that the plan will be approved in spring 2020. The president will lead the implementation of the 2020-25 strategic plan, while continuing to strengthen the recent initiatives on campus that are still maturing. The president will immediately become immersed in the newly adopted 2025 Strategic Plan, particularly in regard to the development and allocation of resources among the University's existing programs and any proposed new initiatives. The new president will work with the Board of Trustees and the campus community to prioritize the actions called for in the plan and to make adjustments to the plan over time to accommodate for shifting circumstances.

Significantly expand GSU's reputation

While Governors State University finds itself on the cutting edge of higher education's efforts to be more responsive to students of all types, it is nonetheless among the less well-known and understood universities in the region. The new president will immediately begin to raise the institution's profile among people and institutions of influence. One critical metric for the University's and the president's efforts in this regard will be improvement among the institution's estimation in various public media, both in regard to the institution as a whole and its many academic programs. The president will also ensure that the University and each of its academic programs maintain the highest level of professional accreditation.



Of particular import will be establishing positive relationships among potential partners in the external community, especially those with the capacity and resources to play a direct role in student development and success. As would be expected, a significant portion of the new president's time and energy must be dedicated to developing relationships that lead to

investment in the institution. GSU's president is and must be the University's chief fundraiser and will be expected to begin immediately upon assumption of office to connect with potential funders, including GSU's champions in the Illinois State Legislature. Success in this endeavor will require balancing the time and attention allocated to local and regional supporters with efforts to raise both GSU's profile and investment from corporate, civic and philanthropic leaders in the greater Chicago area.

Communicate, communicate, communicate

Governors State University has been in a near-constant state of change for a decade or more. The University has experienced planned fundamental change even while the higher education marketplace has been in upheaval. Compounding the challenges has been the State of Illinois, which itself has gone through a political and budgetary crisis. While the University has always and continues to run in the black, difficult decisions have been made about resource allocation and institutional priorities that have upended the *status quo ante*. Experimentation with curricular and co-curricular programming has had mixed results, and much remains to be done to solidify the sort of undergraduate experience — particularly in the first and second year — that both traditional and non-traditional students value.

With the State's financial circumstances seemingly stabilizing, higher education funding is being slowly restored under a new Governor. Many of the difficult decisions of the past decade



have led to changes that are beginning to show promise and positive results. Governors State University is now able to address the rapidly evolving higher education marketplace from a position of strength. A new Board of Trustees is in place to govern the University, and a new chief executive officer will have the opportunity from the outset to engage the University community in exciting and progressive ways that will further enhance the success of the University. The new president will be expected to be as transparent and communicative as possible to engage and energize the entire community by his or her vision.

Qualities and Qualifications of the Ideal Candidate

The president of Governors State University will be a creative and entrepreneurial leader with the energy, enthusiasm and optimism necessary to build on an era of significant change at the University. A superior communicator (both oral and written) and relationship-builder, the president will demonstrate a significant track record of success as the leader and manager of an enterprise of similar or greater complexity, preferably in higher education. Superior strategic thinking is required, as is a demonstrated track record as an institution builder and manager of change. Candidates with a history of transparency in decision-making and proactive communication will be at a decided advantage.

Above all, the president will both personally demonstrate and perform the duties of the presidency with the highest level of ethical behavior and personal and professional integrity.

Resonance with GSU's mission and values is *sine qua non*. The president will be particularly attuned to the perspectives and needs of the full range of GSU students, including adult learners, traditional-aged undergraduates, international students and graduate students of every type and background. Committed to shared governance, the ideal candidate will have experience dealing with unions and their collective bargaining units, as well as experience with volunteer and/or politically-appointed governing boards. An earned terminal degree is preferred, as is a track record of teaching, research and service activities commensurate with an appointment to the Governors State University faculty at the rank of professor. Candidates with compelling histories of leadership in other endeavors — both within and outside higher education — will also be considered.

Candidates with experience in the development and implementation of strategic plans are highly encouraged to apply, as are leaders with superior financial and business skills. Experience working with elected officials and other institutional funders is strongly preferred, as is successful experience raising philanthropic gifts. Candidates with experience in the creation of symbiotic public-private partnerships and those with significant and positive experience with town-gown relationships will be at a particular advantage.

Committed to social justice and to nurturing a diverse and inclusive community, the president will be unrelentingly focused on student success. Authentic, self-aware, confident, willing to take calculated risks, with superior diplomatic skills, a tolerance for ambiguity and a sense of humor, the new president will be the face of Governors State University, both internally and externally.

Market

Governors State University has strong relationships that extend beyond town-gown alliances to the region and across the state. These partnerships empower the University to realize its mission to create an intellectually stimulating public square, serve as an economic catalyst for the region and lead as a model of academic excellence, innovation, diversity and responsible citizenship.

The University benefits from its location — in northern Will County approximately 30 miles from Chicago, situated at the intersection of urban neighborhoods, suburban villages and rural towns. It is less than a half-hour's drive from cities like [Kankakee](#) and [Joliet](#) as well as northwestern [Indiana](#). The main campus is located on a 750-acre wooded landscape with several lakes and nature trails.

[Established in 1969 on land donated by the family of developer Nathan Manilow, the University was founded in an area known as Park Forest South](#) (PFS), which had been created with federal dollars as a new community to promote racial integration.

In 1984, the area was renamed University Park to reflect the area's major assets — Governors State University and a 100-plus acre Gateway Industrial Park — located just to the south and west of campus.

Strategically located in an asset-rich area, Governors State sits in Will County, at the very southern tip of Cook County 4 miles from the Stuenkel Road/University Parkway exit off Interstate 57. Metra's (Chicagoland's regional commuter rail system) University Park station on its Electric District is conveniently located across the street from the far end of the campus.

The area surrounding GSU has historically been home to businesses in the manufacturing industry and has become an important logistical hub for the country in more recent years. Several of the nation's largest railroads have developed industrial corridors here, supporting an increasing number of distribution centers, manufacturers and logistics centers.

As the number of manufacturing jobs diminished over the past few decades, the Chicago Southland economy followed. While the local area was impacted by the national economic slowdown roughly 10 years ago, forcing some communities to increase their real estate taxes in order to be able to provide basic municipal service, more recent economic development activity suggests that businesses are aware of the benefits of operating in the region. New interstate highway interchanges in the region have been constructed to support these new business interests, and is a favorable sign for the long-term viability of the area.

In 1981, the [Will County Center for Economic Development](#) (CED) was created to develop a long-term economic development program that would spawn jobs, new investment and a diversified economy for Will County, home to nearly 700,000 residents.

In its most recent midyear report, the CED indicated that the County saw an increase of 8,450 new jobs from 2018 to 2019, including 400 at a recently opened Amazon distribution-order Fulfillment Center, located within 6 miles of Governors State, and Avatar Corporation, one of the new tenants in the Gateway Industrial Park.

Governors State proudly partners with the CED to promote economic growth throughout Will County and the region, in accordance with the University's mission.

Additionally, in Cook County, Governors State is represented on the steering committee of the [South Suburban Economic Growth Initiative](#) (SSEGI), created to bring together community, industry and government interests to reestablish the South Suburbs as an economic powerhouse.

In November 2019, the SSEGI launched the Southland Development Authority which has identified the area's seven strategic asset segments for growth:

- Transportation, distribution and logistics
- Metal, machinery and equipment manufacturing
- Chemicals and related materials manufacturing
- Food and beverage manufacturing and packaging
- Blue-Collar business-to-business services
- Health services
- Tourism

In terms of the tourism segment, Governors State University itself draws many visitors each year to its 750-acre campus, which is home to the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park (named for the real estate developer whose family donated land to the state for GSU), which began with one piece in 1969 and has since become one of the nation's most significant outdoor collections. Two significant works in the award-winning park are the massive 50-foot frame of "Yes! For Lady Day," made of re-purposed materials and the 30-foot fiberglass "Paul," by Tony Tasset.

Additionally, over 50,000 people attend productions each year at GSU's Center for the Performing Arts. The Center presents more than 50 performances each year in its 1,171-seat theater, including special shows for area schoolchildren.

With regard to the transportation, distribution and logistics segment, GSU is well poised to help meet the demands of employers: GSU's MBA in Supply Chain Management prepares student for this growing field in the South Suburbs.

Governors State University: An Overview

As Governors State University celebrates its 50-year anniversary in 2019, innovation, leadership and excellence are intertwined with the University's history.

Illinois legislators launched Governors State in the Chicago Southland in 1969, the same week Apollo 11 launched for the moon. Amid revolutionary firsts and shifting and changing values, Governors State University was conceived as an upper division university without walls to serve as a new model for transforming lives through education.

In the 50 years since, GSU has transformed itself into a full-service, four-year institution serving the Chicago Southland by living its [mission](#) to be an "intellectually stimulating public square." Today, Governors State looks forward to serving as a 21st century model of excellence in the next 50 years.

Diversity in Governors State DNA

Governors State University reflects a full diversity of age, race, faith and culture. Conceived as an upper division institution to offer adults students the opportunity to complete



their postsecondary education, Governors State continues to boast an average student age of 29 years old. [An estimated 55% of students identify as minority; 42% are first-generation students and 60% qualify for grants and scholarships. Twenty countries are represented on campus.](#)

GSU's faculty reflects the diversity of its students. Its full-time faculty minority percentage is more than two times higher — and three times higher for African American faculty — than the national average of American

post-secondary institutions (NCES, 2017-144). Reflecting GSU's commitment to the student experience, all freshmen are taught by members of the University's full-time faculty.

Sixty-four percent of GSU's faculty are tenure/tenure-track professors, associate professors, assistant professors or instructors; 34% are lecturers or senior lecturers. During fall 2019, only 7.8% of classes were taught by adjuncts.

Governors State University's Board of Trustees, faculty, staff and leadership are guided by the institution's mission to offer an exceptional and accessible education that prepares students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed in a global society.

CORE VALUES:

1. *Invest in student success through a commitment to mentoring and a deliberate University focus on student achievement of academic, professional and personal goals.*

Through peer-to-peer mentoring relationships across campus, Governors State recognizes students are often best qualified to help other students succeed. These relationships are especially important in the [First Year Writing Program](#), [Center for Junior Year](#) and the [Dual Degree Program](#). The [Honors Program](#) is uniquely modeled to play to students' success and this year admitted a record 35 new freshmen who will join a robust group who have presented at national and international conferences as undergraduates.

2. *Provide opportunity and access to a first-class public education to residents of our surrounding communities and all those traditionally underserved by higher education.*

From inception, Governors State has been moved by the needs of the community that surrounds the institution. When adults needed a place to finish their education, Governors State provided it. Then, when high school graduates expressed a need for affordable education, Governors State transformed itself. The University meets the needs of the community and the region by ongoing and intentional engagement. Through formal agreements and [College Pathway programs](#) with area high schools, University staff and students form a bridge to college and, ultimately a brighter future.

3. *Serve as an economic catalyst for the citizens of the State of Illinois and our larger Midwest region, so that our communities grow and flourish.*

As part of a state-wide initiative to boost Illinois' economy through entrepreneurship, research and workforce development, [Governors State University recently established a Supply Chain Innovation Center and Business Incubator \(SCICBI\)](#). The Business Incubator will provide resources to entrepreneurs to commercialize their ideas. SCICBI also will offer a co-working space on campus for members to utilize and access valuable resources.

SCICBI is one of [many partnerships](#) Governors State engages to establish and foster a sound economy in the region and provide a highly qualified workforce.

4. *Prepare stewards of our future to thrive in the global economy, to contribute to ongoing innovative research and to serve as stewards of the environment.*

Founded as an innovative experiment, Governors State thrives as an experiential learning environment where research and technology are key drivers. Biology majors research the environment, wildlife and sustainability in its [Biology Field Station](#) right on campus.

5. *Demonstrate inclusiveness and diversity to encourage acceptance of wide-ranging perspectives among students, staff, faculty and members of the broader community.*

As a Minority Serving Institution and an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution, GSU has been selected to participate in the [Illinois Equity in Attainment Initiative](#) (ILEA), and is committed to achieving equity and inclusive excellence by building internal capacity to address inequities in student outcomes and eliminating equity gaps, and by implementing evidence-based interventions for improving student learning and success.

6. *Promote quality of life, which encompasses civic, personal, professional and cultural growth.*

Because learning goes beyond the classroom, Governors State ensures students have opportunities to take in life's lessons with robust [Global Brigades](#) and [Study Abroad](#) programs. Faculty and staff promote deeper learning by infusing art and writing across the curriculum.

The [Faculty in Residence Program](#) allows faculty and students to call the [Prairie Place Living and Learning Community](#) home. The signature program provides opportunities for faculty and students to develop relationships outside of the classroom that will enhance the student experience and bolster success.

Academic Excellence

Governors State University serves nearly 5,000 undergraduate and graduate students with 64 degree and 24 certificate programs that prepare them for success in business, industry, healthcare, the arts and education. As a state university with a regional focus, Governors State is committed to providing high-quality, accessible and responsible higher education opportunities. Located just 30 miles south of Chicago in University Park, Governors State offers one of the most affordable undergraduate tuition and fees in the state.

College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) is the largest college with 25 programs and 23 minors led by scholars engaged in University and community service. Current active grants awarded to faculty and staff total \$368,780. CAS is home to both the Virtual Reality Lab and the award-winning Digital Learning and Media Department.



College of Business (COB) holds the gold standard accreditation of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business ([AACSB International](#)) for its nine programs and eight minors. The COB's online MBA program is top ranked for quality, accessibility and flexibility (2018, OnlineMBAToday). Governors State is leading the state's only hub for Supply Chain Management to help promote innovation and best practices.

College of Education (COE) seeks to prepare Governors State University students to be reflective lifelong learners; advocates for diversity and social justice; and prepares engaged, effective, transformative educators and mental health professionals with nine programs and three minors. COE is home to the [Family Development Center](#), which provides an outstanding

pre-school education for children of GSU students and the community for children aged 6 weeks to 12 years, and has a state-of-the-art [Psychology Counseling Lab](#).

The COE offers two of the University's five doctorate degrees: [Education in Interdisciplinary Leadership](#) and in [Counselor Education and Supervision](#).

College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) houses 13 programs and two minors. The departments of Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy programs offer three of the University's five doctorate degrees. Faculty and staff are proud that the vast majority of graduates stay in the area, improving the lives of patients and families close to home.

Alumni Engagement

With 57,000 graduates over 50 years, Governors State is recognized as one of the top Illinois public universities for a positive return on investment.

More than 90% of graduates report accepting job offers within six months of graduation and 98% report they remained in Illinois to live, work and play.



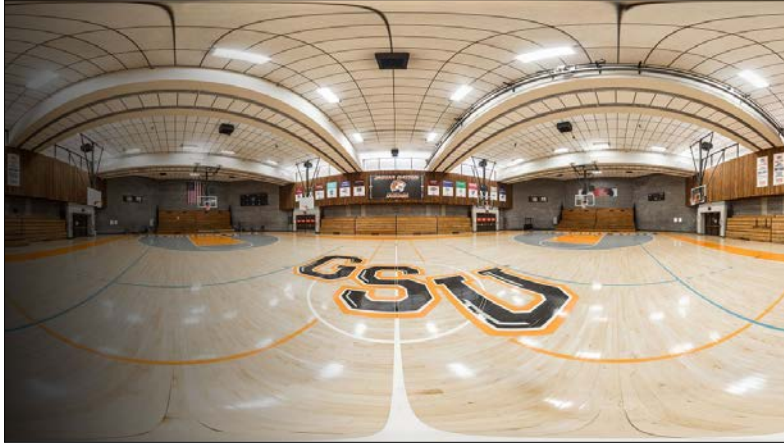
World Engagement

Governors State takes pride in its diverse campus, where more than 20 countries of origin are represented. Through the [Office of International Services](#) (OIS), the University recruits students from India and Vietnam and is now building relationships in Saudi Arabia and South Africa. The South African Consular General recently visited campus to speak with students about the nation's history and culture.

Additionally, dozens of students travel abroad each year to learn about other cultures, economies and customs and to participate in service opportunities. Upcoming trips available to GSU students include a Public Health Brigade to Ghana and a program in Tel-Aviv, Israel, with a cybersecurity emphasis. In 2020, the Honors Program will travel to Rome to study mindfulness and cultural resilience.

GSU joined the Generation Study Abroad initiative, a campaign to increase student travel. Numbers have been growing each year and the Office of International Services hopes that 100 students will take advantage of travel opportunities by the end of the current academic year.

Athletics



Part of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, [GSU student-athletes](#) shine on the field and in the classroom. In 2018, the men's basketball team took home a CCAC championship — the first in the University's history.

In 2019, the University added Men's and Women's Soccer to its nine-team roster led by Jax the Jaguar.

Procedure for Candidacy

Inquiries, nominations and applications are invited. For formal consideration, applicants should submit a curriculum vitae, names and contact information for at least five references and a cover letter in response to the opportunities and expectations described within this Leadership Profile to GSUPresident@wittkieffer.com. Confidentiality will be respected and references will not be contacted without informing the candidate. For optimal consideration, application materials should be received by February 3, 2020.

Material that must be mailed may be sent to:

President
Governors State University
c/o WittKieffer
Attention: Dennis M. Barden, Sheila Murphy and Jeff Compher
2015 Spring Road, Suite 510
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Confidential inquiries and questions may be directed to the Witt/Kieffer consultants supporting this search at 630-575-6152.

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