



Vice Provost & University Librarian Position Description

Washington University in St. Louis seeks nominations for and expressions of interest in the position of Vice Provost and University Librarian. Reporting to the Provost, the University Librarian will be expected to expand the reach and access to print and digital collections and programming in support of research, teaching, and learning; foster internal and external partnerships and collaborations; collaborate with the communities of scholars on and off campus; recruit and nurture a diverse, professional staff; and garner and manage resources toward strategic goals.

The Washington University Libraries are a system of 10 campus facilities featuring vast print and electronic collections; and expert librarians, curators, archivists, and staff. The centerpiece of this system is the John M. Olin Library, a 220,000-square-foot research library housing humanities, social sciences, science and engineering, and special collections; a technology center; a dual-purpose café and extended-hours study space; reading rooms; lounges; and small-group studies. The Olin Library includes a recent expansion to increase special collections exhibition and storage capacity; improvement of the quantity and variety of seating, study, and research spaces; addition of a new north entrance for seamless access; and enhancement the accessibility and visibility of specialized research services and special collections.

The Libraries as a whole house more than 5 million eBook and print titles, journal titles, and database subscriptions. The main Olin Library houses over 1.5 million volumes. The collections consist of materials in a number of languages; after English, the top languages collected are German, Spanish, French, and Chinese. Of particular note among the Libraries' collections are the Film & Media Archive's [Henry Hampton Collection](#), an archive of unique materials documenting the civil rights movement and other aspects of American history, the [Eames & Young and Russell Sturgis architectural photograph collections](#), the [Modern Graphic History Library](#) devoted to illustration and cartooning, and the Modern Literature Collection which is part of the [Manuscript Collection](#). Other distinctive collections include contemporary German literature; the [Shimeon Brisman Collection in Jewish Studies](#); Third Reich, Islamic Studies, and [Sheet Music](#) collections; popular literature; and U.S. Government publications. As an U.S. [government documents depository](#), the Libraries provide access to federal information in a variety of formats.

[Digital Library Program Services](#) provides tools and services to support the WashU community's scholarly publishing and digital scholarship and the University Libraries' digital collections and assets. Scholarly Publishing offers support to scholars creating digital projects, and promotes, houses, and preserves these projects. The Libraries [Data Services](#) unit makes [Geospatial Information Systems](#) and data visualization available to the entire university community. In recent years, the Libraries have significantly expanded external funding from gifts and grants to support new initiatives, including those to support public service and community engagement initiatives that address social justice challenges in disadvantaged or underserved communities. For example, the Andrew M. Mellon Foundation has funded [Documenting the Now](#) and, under the aegis of the [Center for Humanities at Washington University](#), the [Divided City Initiative](#). These two projects focus respectively on the ethical collection, use, and preservation of social media data and the history and current reality of urban segregation in St. Louis and in a range of global cities. The Libraries are also home to [Documenting Ferguson](#), a freely available resource to preserve and make accessible the digital media captured and created by community members following the shooting death of Michael Brown in 2014.

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The Libraries of Washington University in St. Louis are a member of the [Association of Research Libraries](#), the [Center for Research Libraries](#), the [HathiTrust](#), the [Greater Western Library Alliance](#), and [MOBIUS](#) (an alliance of 75 Missouri libraries), among other organizations. St. Louis is also home to an extraordinary set of other libraries and archival collections: the [Peter R. Raven Library of the Missouri Botanical Garden](#), the [St. Louis Mercantile Library](#), the [Steedman Architectural Collection at the St. Louis Public Library](#), and the [Library and Research Center at the Missouri Historical Society](#).

The Opportunity

Over the past two decades, Washington University has significantly enhanced the undergraduate student experience, broadened and deepened its ties to the local community, and risen from regional to national prominence as a highly selective, elite educational institution. The next University Librarian will join the leadership team of the University at a time of considerable achievement as well as opportunity. In the Autumn of 2019 at his inauguration as the new Chancellor of the University, Dr. Andrew Martin highlighted as priorities the need to enhance the research and scholarly enterprise of the faculty, to build upon the foundation of excellent teaching by carefully assessing and improving the University's curriculum and pedagogy, to broaden access to education for students regardless of their background or previous opportunities, and to strengthen the community of St. Louis. He concluded his speech with the vision that "20 years from now, we can confidently say that Washington University is:

- A place that continues to be world-renowned for cutting-edge research, transformative and values-oriented education, and compassionate patient care;
- A place that has opened its doors widely and freely to anyone with talent who wishes to receive a Washington University education;
- A place that has been a leader in the continued growth and prosperity of the St. Louis region;
- And a place that has helped lead—and perhaps even transformed—higher education to meet the demands of our society."

A new leadership team is coalescing around Chancellor Martin including Dr. Beverly Wendland who joined the University as Provost in July 2020. Provost Wendland sets the academic strategy for the university in close collaboration with the chancellor, deans, faculty, and others across campus. She convenes the deans of the major academic units, as well as the leaders of numerous centers, programs, and institutes, and works closely with them to promote academic excellence and scholarly activity, facilitate cross-disciplinary connections, foster improvements and innovations in research, and further enhance Washington University's deep commitment to student learning and success at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Reporting to the Provost, the next Vice Provost and University Librarian will be joining the leadership of Washington University at a pivotal moment. In March of 2021, the University announced the launch of an 18-month [strategic planning process](#) to develop a roadmap that will guide the institution's direction over the next decade. The University Librarian will have the opportunity to play a defining role in enhancing the University's academic distinction, supporting research, and strengthening educational experience through the library community. This position requires a leader with strategic vision and familiarity with the evolving role of 21st century libraries in support of research, teaching, and learning.

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The Vice Provost and University Librarian oversees 140 staff members and is responsible for an annual budget of \$27 million. The libraries' [organization](#) includes 5 Associate University Librarians, 25 subject librarians, and 12 curators/archivists.

The next University Librarian will be expected to provide intellectual and strategic leadership in the curation, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge at a time when Washington University in St. Louis seeks to sustain the excellence of its undergraduate education while further strengthening its graduate and professional programs. Through the ongoing development of the general collections and the building of special collections, the University Librarian must support the teaching and research mission of the university in partnership with the faculty and university leadership. The University Librarian must have a strong vision for the position of the Library in the digital age and support the Libraries extension of knowledge and services in curating and preserving various forms of research data such as data sets, 3D renderings and visualizations, software artifacts and other materials emerging from today's technological landscape.

The University Librarian must lead the staff and manage the business operations of the libraries; evaluate and prioritize the needs for and then invest in relevant technology; implement space allocations and designs for the modern library era; strengthen ties and build coalitions with allied institutions and internal partners; and advocate for the libraries and their missions. The Library enjoys strong philanthropic support, and the University Librarian is expected to work closely with the Library National Council and University Advancement to raise funds for the library. The University Librarian will be expected to foster and lead the libraries in accordance with the Chancellor's framework for [diversity and inclusion](#).

Qualifications

The successful candidate will possess expertise in an academic discipline and/or the field of library/information science; a record of setting and achieving strategic goals; a deep understanding of the changing nature of scholarly communication; a vision for the new roles academic research libraries will play; demonstrated success in integrating technology to support and improve services, build collections, and enable innovative programming; a proven record managing resources effectively; a commitment to developing best practices for the acquisition, preservation, and use of printed materials; and an uncompromising commitment to academic excellence, to the highest ethical standards, and to the creation and support of a vibrant and broadly diverse community of faculty, students and staff across the University. A relevant graduate degree is required.

The University

Washington University in St. Louis is a global leader in research and education with approximately 15,000 students divided evenly between undergraduate and graduate/professional programs. The university has 4,000 full- and part-time faculty members and almost three-quarters of a billion dollars in annual research awards. Founded in 1853, the University is an independent, Research 1 institution. The University's undergraduate program is currently ranked 16th overall by U.S. News and World Report and nineteenth in admissions selectivity. Washington University attracts students and faculty from all 50 states and more than 100 countries. The University is organized into seven academic units: the McKelvey School of Engineering, the School of Medicine, the Olin Business School, the Brown School of Social Work, the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, the School of Law, and the School of Arts & Sciences. The University just launched WashU's new strategic planning process to guide the university's direction over the next decade. The University's endowment currently stands at \$8.5 billion.

The City

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Greater St. Louis is the 19th-largest metropolitan area in the United States with a population of approximately 3 million. Thanks in large part to Washington University, other regional universities, and key Fortune 500 corporations, St. Louis is a national hub for important research and business development, especially in the fields of medicine, biotechnology, and science. The University is an active partner in growing St. Louis as an innovation and start-up hub, recently helping to create the new [Cortex Innovation Community](#). The university's Danforth Campus is located 7 miles west of downtown St. Louis and is surrounded by a number of vibrant neighborhoods, such as University City's Delmar Loop and the [Central West End](#), named one of the American Planning Association's best neighborhoods in the country. Consistently ranked among the nation's best places to live and raise a family, the St. Louis region offers affordable neighborhoods and high-quality schools, in addition to all the amenities of a major city. The city provides numerous opportunities to enjoy professional sports, attend cultural events, and participate in a wide range of recreational activities, including the world-renowned St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team. Bordering the university campus is Forest Park, one of the largest urban parks in the U.S., and home to many of the region's major cultural institutions including the St. Louis Art Museum, the Missouri History Museum, the St. Louis Science Center, and the St. Louis Zoo, all of which are free to the public.

The Search

Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Although the search will remain open until the position is filled, review of candidate materials will begin immediately. Candidates should provide, in confidence, a curriculum vitae, and a letter of application that highlights administrative acumen and leadership experience, and the names and contact information of five references. *References will not be contacted without prior knowledge and approval of the candidates.*

Materials should be sent electronically via e-mail to the university's consultant, Dr. Jonathan Fortescue of Park Square Executive Search, at wustl.ul@parksquare.com. Documents that must be mailed may be sent to Jonathan Fortescue, Ph.D., Managing Partner, or Kyle Meingast, Principal, Park Square Executive Search, LLC, 225 Franklin Street, 17th Floor, Boston, MA 02110. Phone: 617-401-2991.

Washington University in St. Louis is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Washington University welcomes difference on our campus in the form of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, geography, socioeconomic status, age, politics, religion, philosophy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and veteran status. All applicants who share this goal are encouraged to apply.



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