Northern Illinois University
Your Future, Our Focus

DEAN, LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES
Leadership Profile
The Opportunity

Northern Illinois University (NIU) invites applications and nominations for the position of **Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences**. NIU seeks a visionary, dynamic leader, and skilled administrator to build upon the college’s strengths while embracing the university’s longstanding commitment to diversity and excellence.

About NIU

Chartered in 1895, Northern Illinois University first opened its doors in 1899 as the Northern Illinois State Normal School solely to prepare college-educated teachers. NIU has developed into a world-class university that attracts undergraduate and graduate students from around the globe while still primarily serving Illinois. Two traditions established Sept. 12, 1899, remain paramount today. The university has always been deeply committed to preparing teachers and providing excellent and affordable higher education to Illinois families, including many that have never sent a child to college before, thus, ensuring upward mobility and community advancement.

A demand for more – and better – public schools is what prompted then-Illinois Gov. John Peter Altgeld to expand the “normal school” system he always had championed. For the 146 women and 27 men in the inaugural class, their first vision of Altgeld Hall must have seemed like a dream: A European-style castle built on the vast Midwestern plains for a cost of $230,000.

Over the next century, enrollment grew 145-fold as the campus spread to 755 acres and became home to nearly 60 major buildings. World War II and the wars in Korea and Vietnam accelerated enrollment as returning veterans put their GI Bill benefits to work.

Northern became Northern Illinois State College on July 1, 1955, and Northern Illinois University on July 1, 1957. The Illinois General Assembly granted NIU its own governing board in 1996. Regional education centers in Hoffman Estates, Naperville, and Rockford were built to offer many of NIU’s programs at times and locations designed to accommodate the needs of its vital service region.

NIU has a long, rich tradition of academic excellence with a breadth of programmatic offerings that meet modern and evolving workforce demands. The nationally and internationally recognized faculty are not only dedicated to advancing their academic disciplines, but focused, on providing meaningful, student-centered curricular and co-curricular experiences that create well-rounded graduates prepared for professional success. A fiercely proud alumni base of well over 200,000 boasts accomplished careers in a diverse array of fields and professions.
NIU Today

NIU is classified by the Carnegie Foundation as a Research University/High Research Activity and is a member of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities. Furthermore, it is noted as an institution dedicated to engaged learning and to community engagement. The Association for Public and Land-Grant Universities awarded NIU its “place” award for leadership in innovative practices contributing to economic prosperity in a given region. According to a report from the Brookings Institution, NIU is among a select group of the nation’s public universities cited for simultaneously producing important research while also extending social mobility opportunities from low-income households. NIU builds on its research strengths and Chicagoland’s place as a world leader in innovation, while continuing to engage undergraduate students and graduate students in faculty-driven and student-initiated research, public service, and artistry. The university is an hour from downtown Chicago and is a short drive from the vibrant western suburbs and Rockford metropolitan area. The university’s close proximity to Chicago and Rockford allows for strong collaborations with regional/national labs and local innovation spaces that foster research internships and entrepreneurship opportunities across disciplines. NIU research programs extend beyond the Illinois region with faculty conducting cutting-edge research across many disciplines and around the world.

Since NIU first opened its doors in 1895, it has grown into a superlative, regional public research institution that attracts students from across Illinois, the country and the world. NIU’s main residential campus is located just 65 miles west of Chicago in one of the most dynamic regions of the country. Three regional centers are located in Naperville, Rockford, and Hoffman Estates. According to the NIU “Fast Facts”, the institution currently boasts a diverse and international student body of approximately 16,500 with a current faculty and staff of approximately 3,300. The university contains 42 schools and departments within seven colleges: Business, Education, Engineering and Engineering Technology, Health and Human Sciences, Law, and Visual and Performing Arts, as well as Liberal Arts and Sciences. These seven colleges provide amazing learning opportunities in over 100 fields of study. NIU offers 56 undergraduate majors, over 69 graduate degree programs and 50 specializations. It also offers 24 doctoral programs and the Juris Doctorate.
Through internships, research, and study abroad, over 300 student organizations, and more, NIU’s award-winning faculty and staff work hard to provide students with life-changing opportunities. An NIU education is nationally recognized in quality, nationally ranked in value, and aimed at providing personal, career, and life success. In FY19, our faculty secured more than $35 million in sponsored funding with research funding totaling over $16 million. A list of the university’s Facts-at-a-Glance is available at http://www.niu.edu/at-a-glance/fastfacts.shtml.

**NIU’s Strategic Enrollment Management Plan**

NIU’s strategic enrollment management plan aims to stabilize the university’s enrollment within the next five school years, to expand online course enrollment and to diversify the student population. The goal is to have 18,000 students at the institution by fall 2023 as part of a plan to stem years of largely demography-linked enrollment decline. Steps include new recruitment and branding efforts in an increasingly competitive environment, implementation of best practices for retention, identifying more financial aid initiatives, and improving the equity gap for students from diverse backgrounds. For more information, see [http://niu.edu/enrollment-plan/index.shtml](http://niu.edu/enrollment-plan/index.shtml)

**The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences**

Organized in 1959 from 14 departments, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences originally contained biological sciences, chemistry, earth sciences, English, foreign languages, history, journalism, library science, mathematics, philosophy, physics, psychology, social sciences, and speech. In 1961, the departments of economics, political science, sociology, and anthropology replaced the social sciences departments. Numerous other changes and transitions occurred in subsequent years.

Today, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Northern Illinois University is the largest of the university’s seven colleges. It consists of 18 academic departments and seven centers that encompass 435 faculty and nearly 4300 majors. The college spans the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences and has fostered a strong commitment to interdisciplinary education and scholarship. The dean is responsible for managing an annual budget of $44 million in addition to $16 million in sponsored projects. By the nature of its mission, it touches virtually every new student to the university, regardless of their major, through a wide array of general education courses housed within its departments. The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is committed to furthering the learning opportunities of its students including through engaged learning. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has recognized NIU as one of the best universities in the nation for engaged learning and engaged learning initiatives.

Engaged learning is a type of learning that takes place outside of the classroom, allowing students to get their hands-on experience in practicing the discipline that they are studying. It draws on and reinforces classroom programs of study and is shaped by NIU faculty and staff. For more details about the college, see [http://niu.edu/clas/about/index.shtml](http://niu.edu/clas/about/index.shtml).
College Mission Statement

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences fosters the generation, dissemination, and preservation of knowledge as the foundation of a liberal education. The mission of the college is to provide high-quality education that contributes to the intellectual growth, self-discovery, and enhanced expertise of all members of the university community. The college makes available to the widest possible audience the rich cultural and scientific legacy represented by the disciplines that make up the liberal arts and sciences. Because bodies of knowledge do not exist in isolation, the college promotes interdisciplinary inquiry and is committed to the integration of teaching, scholarship, and service. The research and scholarship in the college permeate teaching and service, generating a wide range of opportunities for faculty and students to work together in transmitting, expanding, and applying knowledge. The college programs are designed to serve the university, its students, and the residents of the region, the country, and the world. These programs link basic and applied research and scholarly endeavors to the interests and needs of individuals and society.

Shared Governance

NIU operates based on a formal and institutional system of shared governance, in which faculty and the administration jointly shoulder responsibility for making decisions and negotiate to achieve consensus. At the top, NIU is organized around 14 administrative units that report directly to President Lisa Freeman. The dean of CLAS sits on the council of deans, which represent all seven colleges and reports directly to Executive Vice President and Provost Beth Ingram. The colleges are unified by their instructional and scholarly orientation. They are responsible for promoting the spirit of the teacher/scholar, nurturing a climate conducive to inquiry, fostering intellectual freedom, and stimulating the pursuit of excellence in the transmission of knowledge. The colleges provide the essential community – the framework for intellectual interaction and that part of the organizational structure that makes the academic enterprise operational. The colleges, then, are a basic mechanism through which the faculty discharges its prerogatives and responsibilities.

College Office

The dean is the senior administrative representative of the college in dealing with officers of the university and of other colleges. The successful management of the college is made possible by a multi-layered staff of 16 people that work directly or indirectly with the dean. Three associate deans provide supervisory support in the areas of academic administration, undergraduate affairs, research and graduate affairs, and undergraduate and research and graduate affairs. Additional college support is provided by the dean’s administrative assistant, the associate deans’ office administrator, the business administrative associate and staff, the college communications director and office manager, a team of development and alumni relations staff, and three network and technical support staff.

Faculty

The professoriate of the college is composed of 435 regular faculty members, over two-thirds of whom are tenured; approximately another 97 are instructors and 51 serve as adjuncts. In addition, the vibrancy of NIU’s research community has brought national and international recognition to college scholars. For instance, NIU is a member of the Universities Research Association, a prestigious consortium of universities across the country that supports the work of important national laboratories such as Fermilab and Argonne National Laboratory in partnership with the Department of Physics. NIU’s Center for Southeast Asian Studies is part of the college and is a world-class resource on Southeast Asia. Students can explore Southeast Asia with award-winning faculty associates in anthropology, art history, history, languages and cultures, music and political science. They may also learn one of five Southeast Asian languages taught at NIU: Burmese, Indonesian, Khmer, Tagalog and Thai.
The college faculty is also recognized for its outstanding teaching achievements. Excellence in research supports excellence in teaching. Research-active scholars across all disciplines come together with students in the classroom, from freshman through senior and graduate courses.

**Students**

A substantial portion of the enrollment at NIU occurs in the college of liberal arts and sciences. The student population within the college is diverse, with both traditional and non-traditional students, and a large commuter sector.

The college not only offers 33 baccalaureate majors leading to the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science, but also provides the majority of general education courses for undergraduate students from across the university. Pre-professional students can focus on programmatic study that supports submission to schools of dentistry, law, medicine, osteopathy, optometry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, and physics and engineering. Undergraduates can also choose from five Certificates of Undergraduate Study in the areas that range from actuarial science through women’s and gender studies to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender studies. The college is also home to 12 Ph.D. programs and 21 master’s programs, including the Master’s in Public Administration, recognized in 2019 by the U.S. News and World Report as one of the top graduate programs in the country.

More information on Northern Illinois University may be found at its Website: [www.niu.edu](http://www.niu.edu).

**About DeKalb**

NIU and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is in a dynamic location that is within the orbit of the Chicago region, contiguous to suburban regions, and close to rural areas. Building on its long history within the state, the City of DeKalb is located 65 miles west of Chicago, 29 miles northwest of Aurora, and 40 miles southeast of Rockford. DeKalb offers ready access to the I-88 and I-39 tollways and is less than 15 miles from the Chicago Metra commuter rail line. The historic Lincoln Highway (Illinois Route 38) runs through the heart of DeKalb’s downtown.

The City of DeKalb is an urban community with a vital industrial and commercial base within a rural setting. DeKalb and nearby cities host diverse neighborhoods that offer a variety of housing options to residents of different economic, ethnic, and lifestyle backgrounds. Its highly educated workforce finds plentiful opportunities for fulfilling work. The community offers a high quality of life with excellent city services, easy mobility around the community, and access to cultural, sports, and educational activities.
The Role of the Position

The dean reports directly to the executive vice president and provost of the university. The dean is the chief advocate for the mission and purpose of liberal arts education and sciences, both internally and within the state of Illinois, helping define it in a manner that sets NIU apart from other institutions in the state. The dean provides leadership in curriculum and academic program development, as well as faculty hiring, tenure and promotion.

The dean oversees the operating and capital budgeting process in the college, recommends priorities to the executive vice president and provost, and oversees expenditures during the budget year. The college office includes associate deans for Academic Administration, Research and Graduate Affairs, and Undergraduate Affairs, a senior staff that include directors of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, College Communication and Business Administration, and highly qualified staff support.

The primary areas of responsibility for the dean include:

- Strategic planning and implementation;
- Promotion of the university and the college;
- Collaboratively working with the public, other institutions, and the corporate community;
- Recruitment, retention, and evaluation of faculty and professional staff in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences;
- Resource development, including fund-raising and cultivation of strategic partnerships to augment the college’s programs;
- Faculty development;
- Partnering with the provost and other college deans to provide academic leadership across the university;
- Leadership regarding the college’s mission of excellence in research;
- Oversight and development of curriculum and academic policies;
- Frequent and collaborative interaction with senior leadership and the other colleges;
- Partnering with the Division of Research and Innovation Partnerships and the Graduate School in advancing the college’s research and artistry missions, and
- Interaction with students and parents.

Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

Northern Illinois University’s new dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will build upon current strengths and take advantage of many opportunities for constructive change. In particular, the new dean will do the following:

Establish and Implement a New Vision for the College

With the university currently engaged in a major strategic enrollment planning process, the new dean will play a vital role by taking over the lead in developing and formulating an overall vision for the college and for directing the implementation of that vision. The new dean, working closely with university leadership and college faculty and staff, will be expected to fashion a creative and distinctive vision for the future growth and direction of the college, and to set measurable goals for strategic growth and corresponding allocation of resources.

The college requires a planner and builder who will bring a model for moving the college and university...
forward, yet who also is a good listener, willing to adjust and further develop that scholar model based on
the input of experienced colleagues in the college. The new dean should offer a willingness to listen to
those outside the college including business leaders and alumni. As a leader, collaborator and scholar, the
dean should focus on identifying, developing, and sustaining the college’s areas of greatest strength,
greatest external funding potential, and greatest opportunities for regional, national, and international
distinction. The new dean will need to expand the college with innovation and creativity in areas that will
bring strong growth in resource development, scholarly status and public profile, with high profile areas of
excellence reaching their full potential. The ability to create and foster links with other colleges and
institutions will be critical to further develop and expand these areas of excellence. The ability to represent
these areas of excellence, compellingly, to private and corporate donors will be a vital component of
growth and sustainability.

Clear vision, focused effort, and collaborative leadership will be essential to this effort.

**Build Resources in Support of Excellence through Fund-raising**

Maintaining and expanding a strong college will require substantial resources. The dean will be proactive in
identifying priorities and seeking the resources to support them, both through personal involvement in
fund-raising and by engaging others. A senior development officer, an associate director of advancement,
an office manager and advancement interns are assigned to the Dean’s Office. They can assist with
prospect identification, cultivation strategy, and proposal development. In fiscal year 2019, gifts and
commitments reached a record $4.5M in the college, a 71 percent increase over its three-year average.

**Provide Collaborative Leadership in an Environment of Shared Governance, Advancing both
the Needs of the College and the University as a Whole**

The new dean is expected to serve as one of the university’s senior leaders, while also advocating
effectively for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Deans at NIU work in close partnership with faculty
in a shared governance structure. Certain resources and decisions, however, are institutional. The deans
are a strong collegial group, collaborating on many projects, sharing information and decision making, and
working as a team to provide academic leadership across the university. The dean will advocate effectively
in the context of this highly collegial setting.

The new dean must have outstanding communication skills, able to listen, adapt and persuade. The dean
will need to communicate the college’s strengths and needs to others, including the legislature, university
leadership, external donors, and alumni. The dean will need to employ strong negotiating skills combined
with the ability to be a team player in support of the university as a whole.

**Manage with Skill and Delegate Authority**

The new dean will walk into a well-respected, effective office staffed by talented and dedicated
professionals. Creating an organizational context for delegated decision making and continuing to develop
and recognize the staff will be essential to allow the new dean to focus on the bigger picture. As hiring
opportunities arise, the dean will need to assess the staffs’ strengths and organizational needs to structure
the organization’s roles in a manner that optimizes the office’s effectiveness, in support of the dean’s
vision, agenda, and priorities as well as the needs of students, faculty and staff.

**Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership (cont’d.)**

The preferred candidate will have a Ph.D. and will have earned tenure, with a record of scholarship and
teaching that would qualify for appointment at the rank of full professor. The preferred candidate will also
have substantial leadership experience in higher education administration, with a full understanding of the
mission of a public university and evidence of the ability to work successfully with senior leadership,
department chairs, and faculty.

The dean must demonstrate:

- A deep commitment to the mission and values of a public university, including the three-pronged mission of teaching, research and engagement;
- A commitment to faculty and academic excellence, along with the dynamic leadership required to support faculty who are engaged in scholarship, teaching and service;
- An ability to effect change within a structure of strong shared governance;
- An ability to serve as a bold and energetic champion of the college both within the university and externally to extend its reputation and achievements for addressing the need of the society at large with well-prepared students;
- A strong commitment to diversity, as well as the ability to guide the college to a greater number of diversity hires in its faculty;
- A collegial, consultative management style coupled with the ability to be a decisive decision maker;
- The ability to work effectively with department chairs and staff of the Dean’s Office, and to carry out the many responsibilities of the office including planning, fund raising, resource allocation, budget allocation and supervision, and faculty personnel decisions;
- An entrepreneurial stance coupled with experience in development and implementing academic policies and programs;
- An understanding of enrollment management concepts, opportunities, and challenges within the university context;
- Familiarity with both undergraduate and graduate programs and issues, and the capacity to build the college’s quality and recognition at both levels;
- Capacity to identify leadership potential and to develop the skills of faculty for leadership as department chairs, directors, assistant and associate deans, and other key personnel;
- Experience in evaluating, recruiting, and retaining top quality faculty;
- Substantial sophistication and experience in financial management; and
- Experience and/or a high level of comfort in representing the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences externally to foundations, donors, alumni, and other key constituencies.

The following personal qualities are sought in the Dean of College of Arts and Sciences:

- The ability to participate at the leadership level of the institution, guiding and advocating for the college while always promoting the whole;
- The ambition and energy necessary to move forward with change while respecting and appreciating NIU’s history and culture;
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, an ability to see an issue from multiple perspectives, and an inclination to frame problems in a way that facilitates their resolution;
- A collaborative leadership style and commitment to shared governance as well as open and respectful dialogue with all members of the college and university;
- Decision-making abilities and communication skills that are seen to be transparent and in the best
interests of the college and of the university as a whole;

- Excellent listening, oral and written communication skills;
- A deeply rooted respect for persons of all lived experiences, and
- Honesty, integrity, diplomacy, enthusiasm, vision, a strong leadership presence, exceptional strength of character, and a sense of humor.

**Opportunity Summary**

The opportunities for Northern Illinois University’s new dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences are substantial in the current environment of the university. The successful candidate, whose leadership is eagerly sought at the university, can make a personal difference in the institution and the state. The new dean will be presented with the opportunity to achieve the following professional and personal goals:

- Occupy a leadership seat at the table of an internationally-respected institution of higher learning;
- Shape the vision and strategic direction for the largest college within the university, making a personal difference for the institution and for the state;
- Rebuild the college’s professoriate: This is a watershed moment in the life of the college and the university, with several new and highly energized faculty members, as well as a portion of the faculty that is nearing retirement;
- Work closely with a superb college staff that is widely recognized across the university for its excellence and dedication;
- Interact with a vibrant and diverse student body and highly respected faculty; and
- Live and work in a dynamic, growing region with increasing opportunity for expansion; a small college town that is home to a land-grant university.

**Salary**

The salary is competitive and commensurate with qualifications and experience.

**Applicant Review**

Applications and nominations are now being accepted. Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and will continue until the completion of the search process.

**How to Apply**

A complete application will include a letter describing relevant experiences and interest in the position; current curriculum vitae; and the names of five references with titles, mailing addresses, business/home telephone numbers, and email addresses. Individuals who wish to nominate a candidate should submit a letter of nomination, including the name, position, address, telephone number, and email address of the nominee. Greenwood/Asher & Associates, an executive search firm, is assisting NIU in the search.

Applications and letters of nominations should be submitted to:

Betty Turner Asher, Partner
Patricia J. Gibbs, Senior Executive Leadership Consultant
Greenwood/Asher & Associates, Inc.
42 Business Centre Drive, Suite 206, Miramar Beach, Florida 32550
Phone: 850-650-2277 / Fax: 850-650-2272
Email: bettyasher@greenwoodsearch.com
Email: patriciaqibbs@greenwoodsearch.com

For more information about NIU, please visit http://www.niu.edu/.
For more information about the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, please visit http://niu.edu/clas/index.shtml/.

Northern Illinois University is an equal opportunity institution and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, marital status, national origin, disability, status based on the Victims’ Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA), or status as a disabled or Vietnam-era veteran. Further, the Constitution and Bylaws of Northern Illinois University provide for equal treatment regardless of political views or affiliation, and sexual orientation. Inquiries concerning application of Title IX, Section 504, and other statutes and regulations may be referred to the Affirmative Action and Diversity Resources Center, 1515 W. Lincoln Highway, DeKalb, IL 60115, telephone 815-753-1118.