Executive Summary

Western Washington University invites applications for the position of Provost and Executive Vice President. Reporting to President Sabah Randhawa, the next Provost will join a talented team of leaders at an exciting moment. At the midway-point of the strategic plan, Western’s next Provost will provide critical leadership in achieving the aspirational goals of advancement of inclusive success, increasing Washington impact, and enhancing academic excellence. They will also play an instrumental role in shaping the next strategic plan.

Since 1893, Western has educated students to explore widely, think critically, communicate clearly, and connect ideas creatively to address its most challenging needs, problems, and questions. Offering more than 200 academic programs on its main campus in Bellingham, Washington and seven satellite sites around the Puget Sound area, Western serves more than 15,000 students and has been the top master's-granting institution in the Pacific Northwest for 22 years. Western is small enough for one person to make a difference and large enough for that difference to have an impact.

Western is recognized nationally for its successes, from being named the top master's-granting institution in the Pacific Northwest for 22 years in a row by U.S. News & World Report — which also named WWU as one of the best public schools in the west for veterans — to its recognition as one of the most sustainable, green campuses in the nation by the Sierra Club. In 2021, Western became one of only seven universities — and the first in the Northwest — to have adopted the Okanagan Charter and joined the United States Health Promoting Campuses Network, which calls on higher education institutions to embed health into all aspects of campus culture and to lead health-promotion action and collaboration locally and globally.

Western seeks a Provost and Executive Vice President who brings strategic and innovative leadership and broad experience in academic administration. A record of accomplishment will serve the next provost well as they manage change in a dynamic environment and engage with the community. The incoming Provost will bring superb communication skills, experience in building collaborations, passion, and strong commitment to promoting the success of Western’s increasingly diverse students, faculty, and Vice President will provide primary administrative leadership, direction, and evaluation for all academic activities and faculty affairs of the University with a commitment to curricular and administrative leadership within a collaborative and shared-governance environment. Chief among the Provost’s responsibilities will be working effectively with the President and senior leadership to execute the University’s strategic plan. The Provost will collaborate with campus leadership to identify and implement transformational initiatives that will further strengthen the University and community.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see the Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.
Role of the Provost and Executive Vice President

The Provost and Executive Vice President (Provost) is the chief academic officer of the University, providing primary administrative leadership, direction, and evaluation for all academic activities and faculty affairs of the University. The Provost reports directly to the President. The Provost conducts the duties of the Office of President of the University when the President is unable or unavailable. Western seeks a strategic and innovative leader with broad experience in academic administration and a record of accomplishment for managing change in a dynamic environment with superb communication skills, experience in building collaborations, and passion for/strong commitment to promoting the success of Western’s increasingly diverse students, faculty, and staff.

The Provost has leadership and oversight responsibilities over a broad and complex portfolio of activities that are central to the educational, scholarly, and research mission of the University. This includes developing and maintaining relationships with key internal and external Western stakeholders.

The Provost must have the ability to adapt to Western’s culture that values tradition, inclusion, service, and shared governance while being astute in challenging the status quo in service to the educational mission and priorities of the institution. The Provost will help to open doors the University community has not explored previously, using wisdom, intellect, compassion, and warmth to move the University forward in alignment with its strategic priorities.

Western has a commitment to accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion and promotes an environment responsive to the diverse groups represented at Western. The Provost must be able to demonstrate a commitment to promoting and enhancing principles, practices, and policies focused on eliminating structural inequities, exclusionary actions, and barriers to access.
Teaching and Learning: The Provost provides strategic direction for the University’s core academic mission and provides broad oversight to the institution’s strategic priorities and academic activities. This includes undergraduate education, graduate education, outreach and continuing education, the Honors College, Western Libraries, academic programming at Western on the Peninsulas and other sites away from Bellingham, and global engagement.

Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity: The Provost has the overall responsibility for creating a culture of collaboration and support to advance research, scholarship, and creative activities. The Provost provides general oversight of research activities through the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs as well as administrative oversight of several centers and institutes, including the Marine and Coastal Science Program.

Academic Personnel: The Provost is responsible for the interpretation and implementation of University policies and procedures on appointment and retention of the faculty. This includes setting direction for faculty recruitment and retention activities as well as faculty evaluation and awarding of tenure and promotion in accordance with the Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA).

The Provost also provides oversight for the administration and implementation of the entire faculty CBA and works closely with faculty union leadership (United Faculty of Western Washington-UFWW) in this process.

Budgets and Infrastructure: The Provost has broad budgetary authority over decisions that affect the academic mission of the University. Together with the Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, the Provost is responsible for developing and setting institutional budget and resource allocation strategies. The Provost is responsible for academic facilities planning and a comprehensive array of information technology services, including academic technology support, cyber security, and enterprise-level software applications. Through the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, the Provost’s Office is responsible for creating and providing accurate data collections, analysis, and research.

Governance: The Provost is an essential partner in Western’s shared governance. The Provost provides leadership on academic and budget matters through active participation in the Faculty Senate and other shared-governance bodies. The Provost works closely with the Faculty Senate to develop and implement academic policies and meaningfully consults with faculty in the shared-governance process.

The Provost is a key participant in Western’s Board of Trustees activities, attending all formal public sessions and serving as lead staff for the Board’s Student Success Committee. Along with the Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services, the Provost works closely with the Student Success Committee on a broad range of academic and student-related matters.

The Provost works closely and in partnership with the University President to advance Western’s mission, vision, and strategic priorities. The Provost is a member of the Cabinet, the senior executive leadership team, charged to assess and advance University-wide matters.

Working collegially with academic deans and directors and leaders of other academic entities, the Provost leads on academic planning, evaluation and assessment of instruction, programs, student academic support and learning, and student retention programs and provides guidance on advancement activities.
The Provost represents Western on academic matters to appropriate external bodies and provides oversight to the regional accreditation process through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

The Provost’s direct reports include:

- Deans of seven academic colleges
- Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Research
- Dean of Western Libraries
- Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice Provosts for:
  - Undergraduate Education
  - Outreach and Continuing Education
  - Information Technology
- Directors:
  - Honors College
  - Marine and Coastal Science Program

**Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership**

The Provost would be joining the Western Washington University at an exciting time. Western is recognized as the best master’s-granting comprehensive institution in the Pacific Northwest and one of the best in the nation for the quality of its academic programs and because of its emphasis on social mobility, research, and public service.

Recognizing the challenges facing our society, the University has developed an ambitious strategic plan (Strategic Plan 2018-2025) to advance inclusive student success, increase impact in Washington state and beyond, and enhance academic excellence. In addition to fulfilling the current strategic plan, the Provost will play an instrumental role in shaping the next strategic plan and the next capital campaign for the University.

**Lead efforts to advance inclusive student success:** Advancing inclusive student success requires a rigorous focus on achieving truly exemplary persistence and graduation rates and eliminating achievement gaps. Furthermore, equity of access requires that the student body at Western mirrors the changing population demographics in the state and the nation and increasing opportunities to Western’s degree programs in areas outside Bellingham where educational access can make a difference, particularly on the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas. Western has not reached its aspirational goals in persistence and graduation rates. Additionally, with the exception in percentage of students and faculty of color, Western’s achievement gaps for students from underrepresented groups and Pell-eligible students have been relative small but persistent during the current strategic plan. To these ends, the Provost will lead and coordinate efforts across the University to achieve Western’s aspirations in these areas.
Develop and execute plan for increasing graduate education: Despite its excellent academic brand, the scope of Western’s graduate offerings falls short of the institution’s aspirations. Recently, the University has added two applied doctorate degrees in audiology and education to its graduate portfolio. However, there are significant opportunities for the University to increase the scope and size of its Masters’ programs to better serve the workforce demands in the state and the region while concurrently strengthening support for faculty’s research activities. The Provost is expected to play a key role in strengthening and advancing graduate education at Western.

Strengthen excellence and innovation: In conjunction with increasing opportunities for graduate education, the Provost will develop a collaborative vision for strengthening the University’s portfolio for research, innovation, and creative activities. The Provost will support excellent teaching and learning through continuous faculty development. Working with academic leadership, they will think strategically and creatively on how to recruit and retain excellent and diverse faculty across all programs and locations. They will lead continued development of the Honors College, attracting the best and brightest minds to Western. The Provost will oversee further efforts to internationalize the University community by supporting increased faculty and student experiences outside the United States and work with other areas of the University to recruit students and faculty from other countries. The successful candidate will model and promote a culture where diversity, inclusion, and equity are embedded in University life and operations, including strong global engagement, practice, and culture. The Provost will help Western adapt to the changing trends in higher education and actively address evolving workforce needs in the state, including developing outreach and continuing education activities to serve the learning and development needs of different populations in the state.

Establish strong operational and budget processes to support Western’s growth and success: In close collaboration with the Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, the Provost will develop and execute operational and fiscal models that best support Western’s academic mission. As Western continues to grow in size and complexity, the Provost will work with appropriate administrative units to advance processes and practices that optimize the use of information technology, physical infrastructure, and library resources. Working with the Vice President for University Advancement/CEO of the WWU Foundation, the Provost will help identify fundraising goals to support the University’s academic enterprise and will partner in developing a culture of philanthropy to increase private support for students, faculty, and programs.
Western Washington University

Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The successful candidate will be an experienced academic leader with a high level of energy, enthusiasm, and drive to advance Western’s aspirational strategic goals. The next Provost and Executive Vice President will have a strong track record in managing change in a dynamic environment with superb leadership and communication skills, sound organizational acumen, and experience in building collaborations. The Provost must have the ability to adapt to Western’s culture that values tradition, inclusion, service, and shared governance while being astute in challenging the status quo in service to the educational mission and priorities of the institution.

Western Washington University has a commitment to accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) and promotes an environment responsive to the diverse groups represented at Western. The Provost must be able to demonstrate a strong record of promoting and enhancing ADEI.

In addition, candidates will possess at a minimum the following:

- A Ph.D. or other terminal degree and a strong record of academic teaching, research, and scholarship suitable for an appointment as a tenured full professor at Western.
- A successful track record in academic administration and significant leadership and management experience in a decentralized higher-education environment.
- Demonstrated experience incorporating transparency, equity, and inclusion into policy, strategy, and financial management.
- Demonstrated experience with shared governance, academic freedom, and a commitment to Western’s public mission.
- Demonstrated experience in advancing accessibility, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI);
- Leadership skills to develop and sustain a high-performance team, including establishing and executing goals and priorities and developing internal and external collaborations and partnerships.
- An understanding of contemporary higher-education culture and environment, nationally and globally, including an understanding of the challenges facing public universities.
- Strategic and data-driven thinking with experience in assessment and outcomes measurement, accreditation processes, and policy design and implementation.
- Superb written and oral communication skills that both are respectful of diverse viewpoints and can inspire stakeholders both inside and outside Western Washington University.
- A commitment to academic excellence and a high degree of integrity and trustworthiness.
- Demonstrated ability to develop and nurture collaborative and productive relationships with internal and external stakeholders.

WittKieffer
An understanding of advancement efforts, philanthropy, and experience working with advancement professionals, specifically in fundraising.

Preferred qualifications include:

- An understanding and appreciation of using an interest-based approach towards labor relations and working with collective bargaining partners.
- Experience working with advancement professionals, specifically fundraising.

About Western Washington University

Overview

As the third largest university in the state of Washington, Western Washington University enrolls more than 15,000 students and offers more than 200 academic programs on its main campus located in Bellingham and at additional sites in Anacortes, Bremerton, Everett, Port Angeles and Poulsbo. Western is small enough for one person to make a difference and large enough for that difference to have an impact.

Western is recognized nationally for its successes, from being named the top master’s-granting institution in the Pacific Northwest for 22 years in a row by U.S. News & World Report — which also named WWU as
one of the best public schools in the West for veterans — to its recognition as one of the most sustainable, green campuses in the nation by the Sierra Club. In 2021, Western became one of only seven universities – and the first in the Northwest – to have adopted the Okanagan Charter and joined the United States Health Promoting Campuses Network, which calls on higher education institutions to embed health into all aspects of campus culture and to lead health-promotion action and collaboration locally and globally.

Western is ranked 20th in the nation among more than 600 master’s-granting institutions by Washington Monthly. Kiplinger’s ranks Western among the top 100 public colleges and universities in the nation that offer the best quality and affordability. Western is also known for being a top producer of prestigious National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Hollings Scholars, Fulbright Scholars, and Peace Corps volunteers and is nationally ranked for the number of graduates who go on to earn research doctorates. Western is classified as a Carnegie Community Engagement University and has been designated a “Military Friendly School,” for six consecutive years by G.I. Jobs Magazine. The Chronicle of Higher Education’s Academic Workplace report named Western as one of the best colleges in the nation to work for, winning honors in two categories: teaching environment and tenure clarity and process.

The main campus of Western Washington University is located on 212 picturesque acres in Bellingham, Washington, a city of about 90,000 people located between Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, British Columbia. Nestled in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains and adjacent to the beautiful San Juan Islands, Bellingham is nationally recognized for quality of life, outdoor adventure, and environmental stewardship.

Western’s main campus is situated on the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish Peoples who have lived in the Salish Sea basin all throughout the San Juan Islands and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial. To honor our shared lands, the University is in the design phase of a new Coast Salish Style Longhouse, “House of Healing,” having secured state funding for its design and construction in the 2020-21 legislative session.

Western provides an active student-centered learning environment with a liberal arts and sciences foundation and robust co-curricular, internship, research, creative, study abroad and service-learning opportunities. There is a widely shared vision of Western as a higher-education leader in a culturally responsive 21st century learning environment, applying its critical strengths to societal issues as well as creating a welcoming community for a diversity of people, ideas, and programs. To that end, Western has embraced a style that is collegial, transparent, and timely in its engagement and communication with on- and off-campus stakeholders. Western is particularly proud of its position as
Western Washington University is a leader in multidisciplinary environmental education and sustainable campus operations. In addition, Western is not only committed to the academic growth of its students, but to empowering them to be engaged and active agents of positive change in the world.

**Academics**

Western Washington University is composed of seven colleges and the Graduate School:

- College of Business and Economics
- College of Fine and Performing Arts
- College of Humanities and Social Sciences
- College of Science and Engineering
- Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies
- College of the Environment
- Woodring College of Education

The University’s Strategic Plan, completed in 2018 with broad campus participation and support, defines aspirational goals for Western over the next several years around three core themes: advancing inclusive success, increasing Washington’s impact, and enhancing academic excellence. The strategic plan makes good on Western’s commitment to an equitable and transformative education for all students and its commitment to increasing Western’s impact in the state and beyond.

In 2017 Western adopted its Sustainability Action Plan to honor the way sustainability is interconnected with the University’s core values around social and economic justice. The vision is for sustainability to be embraced by the Western community and put into practice at the University as well as in the homes, communities, and lives of its students, faculty, and staff. The plan reflects Western’s values and vision for the kind of world we want to live in and help create.

**Leadership**

**Sabah Randhawa, President**

"Western and higher-education institutions across the country have a moral imperative to expand access to higher education, particularly for students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. But we have an added responsibility that goes beyond access; we need to ensure success is attainable for all students as well. Advancing access and success for all students is one of the most courageous and concrete ways to ensure equity, inclusion, and opportunity."  Sabah Randhawa

Sabah Randhawa began service as the 14th President of Western Washington University on August 1, 2016. He draws on more than three decades of distinguished service in higher education as an educator and an academic leader.
Before coming to Western, Randhawa served as Provost and Executive Vice President at Oregon State University from June 2005 through July 2016. Previous to becoming OSU’s provost, Randhawa was Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and International programs at OSU from 2001 to 2004 and interim dean of OSU’s College of Business from 2001 to 2002. Prior to that, Associate Dean For Operations in the OSU College of Engineering from 1999 to 2000 and department head of Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering from 1993 to 1999.

During Randhawa’s tenure, OSU experienced a period of extraordinary growth. Student enrollment surged, the campus and educational programs expanded, and many new facilities were built. The OSU-Cascades Campus was developed, and the University’s first comprehensive fundraising initiative, the Campaign for OSU, raised $1.14 billion.

Randhawa’s academic background includes a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering in 1976 from the University of Engineering and Technology in Pakistan. He earned his master’s degree in industrial engineering from OSU in 1980 and his doctorate from Arizona State University, also in industrial engineering, in 1983. His scholarship focuses on applications of operations research, simulation, and decision sciences.

Randhawa’s top priority at Western has been advancing student success and inclusive excellence. Among the many things that drew him to Western are its strong retention and graduation rates, which he sees as a foundation for advancing the success of more underrepresented students in the State of Washington and beyond.

As a first-generation college student, Dr. Randhawa has witnessed the transformative power of higher education in his own life and is committed to making it more accessible, affordable, and attainable to people in the State of Washington, the region, and around the globe.
Whatcom County and Bellingham

Bordering British Columbia, Canada and the Bellingham Bay, Whatcom County combines local industry, various outdoor activities, the savvy of a college town, and a robust lifestyle dating back to 1854. The area is filled with magnificent scenery; a culture of outdoor recreation; environmental activism; the Alaska Ferry; the Canadian border; Mt. Baker and the Cascade Mountain Range; the Salish Sea; and local food, spirits, art, and music. These are all part of the genuine Whatcom County experience.

Whatcom County and the Pacific Northwest have some of the most scenic views in the country. Where else are there views of the ocean, islands, lush greenery, forests, and mountains – and some properties have all four views! Combine that incredible landscape with a temperate climate and no wonder Whatcom County continually ranks high in “best places to live” surveys.

With a population of 89,000, Bellingham is a welcoming and safe community offering the advantages of a larger city and charm of a coastal town. Western calls Bellingham an adventure, a breath of fresh air, and a great place to call home. A vibrant downtown, thriving arts and music scenes, and an easy drive to Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. all make Bellingham an ideal college town. Whether a bike rider, bus rider, or a pedestrian, the city is never more than fifteen minutes away from campus. Bellingham is host to an endless number of activities to discover.
Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Initial screening of applications will begin immediately and continue until an appointment is made.

Application materials should include as three separate documents:

1. Letter of interest that addresses how the candidate’s experiences match the position requirements.
2. Resume or curriculum vitae.
3. Diversity statement. Western’s strategic plan places Access, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) as a core value and a core goal of the institution. Please address what the role the provost has in advancing ADEI. In addition, please share an example of how your work has advanced ADEI at a previous institution or workplace.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer’s candidate portal. Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Charlene L. Aguilar, Ed. M. and Sandra Chu

WWUProvost-EVP@wittkieffer.com

Western Washington University (WWU) is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer committed to assembling a diverse, broadly trained faculty and staff. Women, minorities, people with disabilities and veterans are strongly encouraged to apply. In compliance with applicable laws and in furtherance of its commitment to fostering an environment that welcomes and embraces diversity, WWU does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy and parenting status), disability, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status or genetic information in its programs or activities, including employment, admissions, and educational programs.