Search for the Dean of the Honors College

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

SEARCH SUMMARY

Georgia State University (GSU) invites inquiries, nominations, and applications for the executive leadership position of Dean of the Honors College. Georgia State is a highly diverse R-1 research university that sits in the heart of downtown Atlanta. GSU is well known nationally as a key leader in student success for graduating students at the same rate without regard to race, gender, or socioeconomic status. GSU is highly entrepreneurial in its approach, ranking as the second most innovative university in the country and third in undergraduate teaching by U.S. News & World Report. It ranks among the most diverse universities in the country and draws students from every state and 159 nations. The University offers over 60 undergraduate majors and over 200 distinct academic programs, many of which are nationally ranked.

GSU is committed to and recognized for being one of the nation’s leaders in educational innovation. Its mission is to be a national leader in expanding access and improving student learning by increasing its research portfolio, global connections, and geographic diversity to ensure students from all backgrounds graduate at high rates and succeed in a rapidly changing world. Over the last decade, GSU has developed and deployed a model utilizing predictive analytics, innovative student advising, and targeted financial supports that have helped students from all backgrounds and circumstances graduate. This effort has become a national model. Over the past decade: graduation rates are up 23 points; GSU graduates 2,800 more students a year than just five years ago; it has reduced the time to degree by half a semester; and eliminated achievement gaps based on race, ethnicity, or income.

The Honors College taps into faculty and programmatic resources from across 11 of the University’s academic units to serve the rapidly growing population of high-ability undergraduates, 1,734 of whom are currently members of the four-year seeking students enrolled in the Honors College’s Atlanta Campus. This fall, over 300 new students enrolled into the Honors College with an average SAT score of 1380 and an average high school GPA of 3.91. Additionally, there are 874 two-year honors students enrolled at the Perimeter College across five other campuses outside of Atlanta.

This is a remarkable opportunity for an academic leader, well versed in cutting-edge approaches to pedagogy and scholarship, to build upon the College’s strengths within a university undergoing exciting growth and progress. The new Dean will have the opportunity to build upon pioneering academic and professional initiatives that continue to attract highly motivated students, eager for the preparation that will make them leaders in an increasingly complex, interdisciplinary, and comprehensive world.
Georgia State University has retained the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this critical recruitment. Instructions for inquiring, nominating, and applying for the position can be found at the end of this document.

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY

History and Current Context

Founded in 1913, and a public research university since 1995, Georgia State University is now the largest institution in the University System of Georgia. Its 2016 consolidation with the Georgia Perimeter College increased its total enrollment to more than 53,000. Georgia State offers more than 250-degree programs in 100 fields of study, taught by more than 1,600 faculty members who generate groundbreaking research and educate one of the most diverse student populations in the nation.

Twelve schools and colleges constitute the university: The Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, the Byrdine F. Lewis School of Nursing and Health Professions, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of the Arts, College of Education and Human Development, the College of Law, the Honors College, the Institute for Biomedical Sciences, the School of Public Health, the J. Mack Robinson College of Business, Perimeter College, and the newly formed Graduate School. GSU offers over 300 degree and certificate programs in over 100 fields of study. In FY 2021, GSU conferred 10,362 degrees, including certificates, contributing to a total of 288,626 degrees conferred since 1913. Georgia State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Strategic Planning

GSU’s current strategic plan, adopted in 2011, sets forth five goals:

1) Become a national model for undergraduate education by demonstrating that students from all backgrounds can achieve academic and career success at high rates.

2) Significantly strengthen and grow the base of distinctive graduate and professional programs that assure the development of the next generation of researchers and societal leaders.

3) Become a leading public research university addressing the most challenging issues of the 21st century.

4) Be a leader in understanding the complex challenges of cities and developing effective solutions.

5) Achieve distinction in globalizing the University.

In each of these areas, GSU has made significant accomplishments. Looking ahead, the University will embark on a new strategic planning process that will build off of the success of the past years and also chart a new path that will address its current needs and circumstances. Additional information about the strategic plan can be found at https://strategic.gsu.edu/gsu-strategic-goals/.
Faculty

The total full-time instructional faculty for fall 2020 was 1,435. PhDs and professional degrees were held by 80% of the total full-time instructional faculty, and Master’s and Specialists degrees were held by 20%. Full-time instructional faculty with tenure comprised 55% of the total faculty with 16% on a tenure track.

Students

Approximately 53,700 students were enrolled as of fall 2020. Out of the total students enrolled, 32,999 identified as female and 20,738 identified as male. Students who identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native totaled 48, as Asian 6,503, as Black/African American 21,335, as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 28, as Hispanic 6,983, as Multiracial 2,921, as White 12,515, as Non-resident alien 2,758, and students who chose not to report their race totaled 163. The undergraduate two-year enrollment was 17,395 students, the undergraduate four-year enrollment was 28,771, the graduate enrollment was 6,856 students, and the professional enrollment was 715 students.

Research and Experiential Learning

Over the past decade, GSU’s research profile, expenditures, and infrastructure have grown significantly. Research expenditures have increased by more than 153%, making GSU one of the fastest-growing research institutions in the nation. For the past three years, the University has been the highest-ranked research institution without an engineering, medical or agricultural school.

GSU’s urban campus embraces experiential learning, providing students a wealth of practical experiences in Atlanta. The University has expanded experiential learning opportunities for students and they currently work, learn, and enjoy career-boosting access to dynamic urban, corporate, nonprofit, and government internship opportunities. This access and network of organizations offer important and often life-changing educational advantages for undergraduate and graduate students. Students and faculty provide organizations and companies throughout metro Atlanta with perspectives drawn from the latest research as well as creative energy that helps foster a dynamic environment of growth and development. This reciprocal relationship defines Georgia State’s well-earned reputation as a campus without borders.

Georgia State University’s Commitment to Equity and Degree Completion

Thanks to a campus-wide commitment to student success and more than a dozen strategic initiatives implemented over the past several years, GSU’s equity gaps are gone. The institutional graduation rate for bachelor degree-seeking students has improved by more than 20 points since 2003—among the largest increases in the nation over this period. Rates are up 37 points for Hispanics (to 59%), and 25 points for African Americans (to 54%). Pell-eligible students currently represent 55% of GSU’s undergraduate student population, and this year they graduated at the same rate as non-Pell students. In fact, over the past five years, African-American, Hispanic, and Pell-eligible students have, on average, all graduated from Georgia State at or above the rates of the student body overall—making Georgia State the only national public university to attain and sustain this goal. In short, race, ethnicity, and income level are no longer predictors of success at Georgia State. In addition, the percent of bachelor’s students graduating within four years is improving even more rapidly, up 12 percentage points (52%) over the past three years alone.

Finances

GSU’s total revenue for FY 2019 was approximately $1 billion, and approximately $285.2 million (28.52% of total revenue) came from the State of Georgia. Expenditures for instruction were approximately $330.9
million (33.09% of total expenditures) and expenditures for research were approximately $175.2 million (17.52% of total expenditures).

**Location**

Atlanta has a unique culture all its own with a diverse population, a vibrant city center packed with urban parks and amenities, and famously walkable neighborhoods. GSU’s Atlanta Campus, in the heart of the city, provides students and faculty with close access to Fortune 500 corporations, government offices, nonprofit organizations and professional firms. The University’s urban campus embraces experiential learning, providing students a wealth of practical experiences in Atlanta. The University has expanded experiential learning opportunities for students, and they currently work, learn, and enjoy career-boosting access to dynamic urban, corporate, nonprofit, and government internship opportunities. Students and faculty provide organizations and companies throughout metro Atlanta with perspectives drawn from the latest teachings and research as well as creative energy that helps foster a dynamic environment of growth and development. This reciprocal relationship defines Georgia State’s well-earned reputation as a campus without borders.

**Perimeter College**

Georgia State’s consolidation in 2016 with Georgia Perimeter College, a two-year institution with five campuses in metro Atlanta, raised its student population to more than 50,000, making it the largest university in Georgia and one of the largest in the nation. Georgia State’s Perimeter College operates campuses in Alpharetta, Decatur, Dunwoody, Clarkston and Newton, serving more than 18,000 students.

For more than a half-century, the Perimeter College has been a gateway to higher education for the Atlanta region and beyond. More than 7,500 freshmen started their college journey here in fall 2019, studying on five campuses and online and taking advantage of our support and small classes to build a solid academic foundation. Our students are succeeding. Since the consolidation with Georgia State University, our three-year graduation rate has more than doubled, and — according to The Chronicle of Higher Education — our students are staying the course, completing programs, and transferring to other institutions at higher rates than students at other two-year colleges. Perimeter proudly partners with its students and its communities.

**Current Leadership**

**Dr. M. Brian Blake**, executive vice president for academic affairs and provost at George Washington University, became Georgia State University’s president on August 9, 2021. Blake, the first Black president in the University’s 114-year history, is Georgia State’s 8th president.

Prior to joining George Washington in 2019, Blake was executive vice president for academics and the Nina Henderson Provost at Drexel University. Blake also was vice provost for academic affairs and dean of the Graduate School at the University of Miami. He was an associate dean for research and professor at the College of Engineering at the University of Notre Dame. Prior to Notre Dame, Blake was on the faculty of Georgetown University where he was chair of the Department of Computer Science. Blake spent six years as a software architect with Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, and The MITRE Corporation.

Blake has a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology, a master’s degree in electrical engineering from Mercer University, and a Ph.D. in information and software engineering from George Mason University. His research has received more than $12 million in funding, and he is an author of more than 200 scholarly publications.
Ms. Wendy Hensel became Provost of Georgia State University in 2019. Prior to this, she served as interim and then permanent dean of the College of Law from 2017 to 2019, as well as the first Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development from 2012-2017. In these leadership positions, she spearheaded the development of academic programming and curriculum to meet the needs of the future, expanded online course development and teaching excellence, grew interdisciplinary research and scholarship, and created a comprehensive system of faculty development and research support.

Hensel teaches and writes about disability law, policy, and ethics in American society. She is an expert on employment discrimination and special education and her work has appeared in leading books, peer-reviewed publications, and law reviews. Her work has been cited by courts, national media outlets, and interdisciplinary scholars, both nationally and internationally. Hensel received her B.A. from Michigan State University, graduated with honors from Harvard Law School, and clerked for Judge Orinda Evans of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia.

More information about Georgia State University can be found at https://commkit.gsu.edu/university-overview-for-candidates/.

THE HONORS COLLEGE CURRENT CONTEXT

Working with affiliated faculty from across the University, the Honors College is passionately committed to the success of its 2,608 students. Its mission is to engage a diverse and talented community of undergraduate scholars in experiences that prepare them for a lifetime of leadership and achievement. Striving to be a national model, the College seeks to develop undergraduate scholars into global citizens whose accomplishments and contributions to society are recognized throughout their lives. The College is made up of incredibly talented and highly motivated students—students who are leading the way both on and off-campus and who are challenging themselves to dream bigger and achieve more. The Honors College offers students the experience of a highly selective small college combined with the breadth of programs and opportunities of a large public research university in a dynamic and thriving city.

Once admitted to the Honors College, students pursue degrees in any of Georgia State’s 62 undergraduate majors, with enhanced opportunities for academic achievement, research, housing, cultural programs, advisement, preparation for graduate or professional school, and mentoring for prestigious national undergraduate and postgraduate scholarship and fellowship competitions.

The Honors College collaborates closely with the Perimeter College and since the consolidation in 2016, the Honors College made a commitment to serve both four-year and two-year degree-seeking students, providing them with smaller, more engaging classes, dedicated advisers, and priority course registration, and unique opportunities for academic and career development. The Honors College has created a scholarship program to help two-year honors students at the Perimeter College successfully transition to being four-year honors students on the university’s Atlanta Campus. Thirty-six Perimeter Honors College students transitioned to the Honors College’s Atlanta Campus in the academic year 2019-2020. So far this academic year, nearly 50 Perimeter Honors students have transitioned to the Atlanta Campus.

Opportunities for Honors College students include:

- The Honors College offers an Accelerated Bachelor’s/J.D. program in coordination with the College of Law and an Honors Experience in Business with the J. Mack Robinson College of Business.
- Honors College students are encouraged to work toward a special honors recognition that awards their mastery of the honors curriculum. Honors recognitions are recorded on transcripts and
acknowledged during the Honors College graduation ceremony and the university’s commencement.

- The **Undergraduate Research Program** provides honors students the opportunity to engage in research across campus. Some work in labs, others compose music, serve as editors and build business plans. Honors College undergraduates from all majors have the opportunity to embark on experiential learning journeys.

- The **London Experience**, sponsored by the Honors College, provides students from all majors with the exciting opportunity to intern in London and the United Kingdom. Internships are available in a wide range of areas, including hospitality, finance, fashion, the arts, media, and the sciences. These internships help students gain an international perspective, global experiences, and valuable career-related insight.

- **University Assistantships** through the Honors College match select students with mentors who supervise them during work studies or research projects that interest them. Students are matched with a research department or professional office to work on special projects.

- The **Beckman Scholars Program** gives high-performing undergraduate students in the fields of biology, chemistry, and neuroscience the opportunity to conduct independent laboratory research under the mentorship of select, expert faculty mentors. Beckman Scholars benefit from additional professional development opportunities and are well-positioned to pursue their graduate educations and careers in science. The Honors College will name two Beckman Scholars each spring semester for three years, starting in 2021.

- **Georgia State Presidential Scholars** are tomorrow’s leaders and innovators, committed to performing significant work in their chosen fields—profit or nonprofit, industry, media, government, education, health care, art, science, or technology. Presidential Scholars imagine a different world for themselves and others; one in which they use their passion and integrity to set positive examples for others and drive solutions to today’s most pressing social and economic problems. They engage in the Honors College, the broader Georgia State community, and the world, excelling academically in and out of the classroom, contributing to the College and University through service and leadership, and learning about the history and future of Atlanta and the world through internships and study abroad.

*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

The Committee for the Advancement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CADEI) serves as the Honors College’s organizing body to ensure its practices and policies promote a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community of students, staff, faculty, and alumni. Its goal is to celebrate, affirm and serve the full spectrum of identities within the College, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, age, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, educational background, veteran status, and varying abilities. Through support programming, educational activities, and assessment, CADEI will:

- Increase the visibility of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the Honors College

- Identify and create opportunities for education and advocacy to dismantle systems of oppression

- Promote and retain diverse groups of students, staff, and faculty

For more information about the CADEI, please visit [https://honors.gsu.edu/about/cadei/](https://honors.gsu.edu/about/cadei/).

To learn more about the Honors College, please visit [www.gsu.edu/honors](http://www.gsu.edu/honors).
THE ROLE AND LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

GSU seeks a skilled and creative administrator and an excellent scholar who is excited to continue and expand the growth and success of the College. The Dean will report directly to the Provost and will be responsible for all aspects of administering the Honors College, including engaging and inspiring affiliated faculty, hiring, curriculum development, programming, advisement, international and interdisciplinary initiatives, and budget. The Dean will oversee a budget of about $2 million and a talented academic team that is comprised of two associate deans and an experienced administrative staff focused on admissions, development, finance and administration, communications, and student and alumni engagement. The Dean will represent the College to various constituencies both within and outside the University and will contribute significantly to recruitment and fundraising efforts in the area.

This is a complex and collaborative role that requires vision, intellectual curiosity, professional courage, administrative talent, financial acumen, and a commitment to transparency. To be successful, the Dean will address a key set of opportunities and challenges, which are as follows:

**Craft a vision to strategically broaden and deepen innovative academic programming.**

The Dean will work with faculty to develop a vision to advance high-impact scholarship that aligns with the University’s goals as a competitive public university. This requires substantive experience supporting the growth of academic programming, and a record of providing greater opportunities for students to be engaged in these activities. The Dean will build strong collaborations across the College and University to provide opportunities for and support interdisciplinary collaborations. The Dean will ensure undergraduates have access to excellent and relevant academic degree programs, support services, and co-curricular opportunities. To that end, they will work to enhance faculty advising, oversee education abroad, internships, and other experiential learning initiatives, and provide additional programs aimed at enhancing students’ professional and intellectual development. Furthermore, the Dean will help define the unique advantages of the College and differentiate its programming to position the College for continued enrollment growth.

**Strengthen the identity of the Honors College and amplify awareness of its programs and resources.**

The Honors College is primed for innovation and growth. One task for the Dean will be to invest upfront in connecting with colleagues throughout and articulating their vision for the College. The Dean will bring exceptional communication skills to build awareness of the strategic priorities of the College and to articulate the implementation of initiatives throughout campus leadership with varying perspectives and environments. Collaborating with their academic peers and senior leaders, the Dean will implement and support and promote honors programs among GSU’s administration, deans, chairs, administrative teams, faculty, and student leaders. The office of the Dean will provide both high-level strategy and boots-on-the-ground engagement to help create sustainable action and activities that will generate transformational academic opportunities in and outside of the classroom, playing a pivotal leadership role in making GSU an innovative leader in academic excellence.

**Attract, support, and retain excellent students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.**

As GSU aspires to grow, the Dean must work to develop comprehensive recruitment strategies continuing to draw and provide access to top students from the State of Georgia and across the country. The Dean will also focus on increasing affordability and will work to maximize both retention and graduation rates. The Dean will serve as an advocate for affiliated faculty and staff and recognize and broadcast their contributions and achievements to the senior administration, the Board of Visitors, and amongst one
another. Furthermore, the Dean will work to enhance teaching and learning support, helping to secure funding for scholarships, team teaching, instructional support, and training.

**Inspire faculty, staff, and students to build community in both the Atlanta campus and the Perimeter College.**

The Dean will provide inspiring management and leadership and will work to strengthen the College’s sense of community and shared sense of purpose with the Perimeter College. They will set a tone for decision making, prioritization, and strategic resource allocation in a transparent manner. The Dean will help to build greater cohesion and collaboration by refining the faculty and administrative staffing structure of the College, enhancing communications and shared governance practices, and through strong personnel management.

The Dean will be a visible leader and advocate for the College while also serving as a strong collaborative partner throughout GSU’s multiple campuses. To that end, the Dean will foster existing and new partnerships with other faculty in academic units across the University, to build more cross-disciplinary connections.

**Grow, leverage, and managing resources.**

The Dean will be tasked with strategic, effective, and creative management of existing resources and new resource development. This includes savvy budget management with an eye to enrollment and program growth. Additionally, The Dean will be expected to fundraise and build support from a widening circle of friends, supporters, and alumni. The Dean will be involved in enlarging the donor base by enhancing relationships with individuals, public and private sector institutions, and other mutually beneficial partners over time to ensure the College’s continued success.

**PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

While no one person possesses all the qualities listed below, the ideal candidate will have most of the following professional and personal characteristics:

- A superb and dedicated teacher with a record of scholarship qualifying for tenure at the rank of Professor in a department at Georgia State University
- Demonstrate a deep commitment to and a track record of working effectively with high-ability students
- Possess significant leadership abilities and the creative vision to guide the Honors College through a period of dynamic transformation and expansion
- Have strong administrative experience, including the skills necessary to run a college, to hire and develop staff, and to work collaboratively with chairs, administrative offices, other deans, and the Office of Undergraduate Admissions
- Ability to coordinate Honors curricula across the University
- Display strengths in building excellent academic programs, including experiences with interdisciplinary and international initiatives
- Possess the knowledge and energy to lead campus-wide efforts promoting undergraduate research
- Support students in their pursuit of national and international scholarships and fellowships
- Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of multiple dimensions of diversity within the Honors College and campus-wide
• An exceptional communicator, able to convey the value of honors education to current faculty and students, prospective students and their parents, and the general public
• Show strong interest and skills in developing donor and alumni relations

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INQUIRING, NOMINATING, AND APPLYING

Interested applicants are invited to submit their curriculum vitae and/or resume and cover letters to:

Jackie Mildner & Tiffany Weber
Isaacson, Miller
1300 19th Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036

Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Electronic submissions are strongly preferred and can be made at www.imsearch.com/8148. Inquiries and nominations for this position should be made via the same web address.

Georgia State University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate against applicants due to race, ethnicity, gender, veteran status, or on the basis of disability or any other federal, state or local protected class