THE SEARCH

The University of Minnesota seeks a visionary and dynamic leader to serve as Vice President for Equity and Diversity, a role that will lead and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the system’s five campuses. The Vice President for Equity and Diversity (VPE&D) will serve as a champion of a transformative vision for the continued efforts to bring diversity and equity to all aspects of academic advancement, collective decision-making, and resource allocation. The ideal candidate will spearhead the development of action-oriented policies and practices that produce progress and improve the experience for students, faculty, and staff at the University of Minnesota through establishing a culture that appreciates and respects the differences that diversity brings to the University.

Reporting to the President and serving in close collaboration with senior academic and administrative leadership, the VPE&D will implement diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives aligned with the strategic plan set forth by the University. This work will be carried out by the Office for Equity and Diversity (OED) led by the VPE&D, reaffirming and nurturing a community and campus climate that values the “collective voice.” The University of Minnesota understands that these efforts must extend beyond the walls of the institution and into the community that continues to hold the University as a leader around issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Drawing on the strength and resources throughout the University, the VPE&D will galvanize the team within OED and will serve as a trusted advisor and thought leader, bridge builder, strategic leader and partner, enabling leaders across the University of Minnesota System to conceptualize and implement tangible change in the areas of, diversity, equity, inclusion, community, assessment and accountability, economic development, and educational and employment equity. The ideal candidate will be a visionary and empathetic leader, who can inspire. They will also leverage the importance of incorporating the voices and lessons of alumni to help enrich the experience and solidify the success of the future.

The University has made equity and diversity a top priority. For this search, the University of Minnesota has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national search firm, to assist in the search for the next VPE&D. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

The University of Minnesota was founded in 1851 and is an AAU and R1 public research university that is ranked among the world’s most renowned institutions of higher learning and one of the most preeminent research universities in the United States. The University has scholars of national and international reputation and continues to advance discovery and innovation to improve the lives of Minnesotans and beyond. The flagship Twin Cities campus has the special distinction of being both a globally engaged R1 institution and Minnesota’s land-grant university, and the Twin Cities campus is one of the few major land-grant research institutions situated in a major metropolitan area.

The University strongly embraces equity, diversity and inclusion and made both central to its strategic planning across the entire system. Students on the Twin Cities campus include 25% students of color and 10% international students, and 25% of all undergraduates are first-generation students. The University ranks ninth nationally for students learning abroad and offers study abroad programs in more than 70 countries. In 2017, the Twin Cities campus received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award from Insight into Diversity for the seventh consecutive year. The University was ranked by Forbes as one of the country’s 20 best educational employers.

The University remains at the epicenter of social and racial discourse with traumatic murders of black and brown at the hands of law enforcement such as George Floyd in 2020, most recently Amir Locke, and countless others not far from campus. There is a shared commitment and heightened urgency around the need for this work at all levels of the institution. This is a pivotal moment for an innovative and collaborative leader to have a real impact at an institution committed to doing this difficult work. The University is driven by the conviction that diversity and equity are inextricably linked to excellence and are essential if the university is to remain a preeminent voice for innovation.

The University has an annual operating budget of $4.2 billion a year and generates an economic impact of $9 billion for the Minnesota economy. The University, the state’s sixth-largest employer, has over 27,000 faculty and staff; it enrolls 65,000 students from 130 countries – 52,000 on the flagship Twin Cities campus, and has over half a million alumni living around the world. The University of Minnesota has schools and colleges in the fields of biological sciences; liberal arts; dentistry; design; education and human development; food, agriculture, and natural resource sciences; law; engineering; medicine; nursing; public affairs; public health; and veterinary medicine. The University averages over $1 billion in research expenditures annually, and its faculty and experts are considered amongst the best in their fields. The University consistently advances the land-grant mission and is committed to integrating public engagement into the advancement of learning, research, and discovery.

The Twin Cities campus is in an economically vibrant region at the heart of an increasingly diverse Midwest, with 11 federally recognized Tribal nations; the largest urban Native American population in the country; a dynamic African American community; and growing African, Latinx,
and Asian American populations. The Twin Cities has the largest number of people of Somali descent outside Somalia and the nation’s largest urban Hmong population. Located on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous people, the university acknowledges its complex and layered history. The University is committed to ongoing efforts to recognize, support, and advocate for Native American Nations and peoples. The University continues to be dedicated to multiculturalism and equity in both education and employment. These core values are the foundation upon which the Office for Equity and Diversity was established. This office is located on the Twin Cities campus and works collaboratively across the system with diversity, equity, and inclusion leadership on each of the five campuses—Twin Cities, Crookston, Duluth, Morris, and Rochester. Learn more about the unique distinction of each of the system campuses [here](#).

**UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP**

Joan T. A. Gabel is the 17th president of the University of Minnesota and its first woman president in the University’s 167-year history. Gabel comes to Minnesota after serving as the executive vice president for academic affairs and provost at the University of South Carolina. Previously, she served as dean of the University of Missouri’s Trulaske College of Business for five years. While at Missouri, Gabel was named a “shining star” by the Wall Street Journal and is the recipient of numerous awards. Under her leadership, the U of M has undertaken its first system-wide strategic plan designed to serve students in the classroom and beyond; drive research and solutions that impact the world; advance equity, diversity, and community; amplify the University’s outreach and engagement efforts; improve fundraising; and cultivate efficiency and transparency.

President Gabel has expanded campus diversity and inclusion efforts, which include recruitment and the support of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff, as well as the creation of inclusive programs and forums to measurably improve the campus experience. In May 2020, in the aftermath of George Floyd’s tragic death, President Gabel took vital steps towards establishing a more equitable and just climate at the University. It remains a priority for her to continue equity and diversity efforts through shared governance and community engagement.

**MPact 2025**

The Board of Regents approved the system-wide strategic plan, *MPact 2025*, in July of 2020. This plan reflects the system’s deepened commitment to research, teaching, service, open access to opportunity, and forward-thinking innovations to advance the University’s land-grant mission and impact the world. Over the years, there has been much work by, various committees, champions and allies across the system to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion through both informal and formalized mechanisms. The plan highlights key strategic priorities that are specific to diversity, equity and inclusion including: 1) representation, 2) climate, and 3) partnership. The plan also includes action items to assess the campus climate, increase job satisfaction, recruit and retain diverse students, faculty, and staff, and reduce the disparities among underrepresented groups.
The University of Minnesota embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion as highlighted in the strategic plan and as part of the system-wide agenda. Students, faculty, staff, and the administration share the responsibility to foster a welcoming community that values belonging, equity, diversity, and dignity in people and ideas.

More detailed information about MPact 2025 can be found here.

THE OFFICE FOR EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

At the University of Minnesota, the notion that “we all share responsibility for equity and diversity – it’s everybody’s everyday work” is the underlying theme that drives the mission. The Office for Equity and Diversity (OED) is comprised of seven offices that work together and collaborate with faculty, staff, students, and administrators systemwide, to serve and inform all members of the University community. Under the leadership of the outgoing Vice President for Equity and Diversity, Dr. Michael Goh, OED has been able to prioritize and strengthen connections between the University and communities throughout Minnesota, while expanding their efforts to provide greater support to the system at large.

It is the goal of OED to recognize that equity and diversity should drive the decision-making process and remain at the helm of recruitment, retention, and support a diverse population at the University. The office is committed to social justice and the following values:

- Access and Inclusion
- Community
- Education and Learning
- Sustainable Transformation
- Accountability

OED is comprised of seven distinct offices, each working to fulfill the mission towards progress and trackable evidence within the equity and diversity sphere.

**Office for Business & Community Economic Development (OBCED):** The Office for BCED contributes to the overall economic growth of the Minnesota communities through collaborative partnerships with government, private enterprise, and community organizations. It offers capacity building and socioeconomic empowerment assistance for business owners from historically underrepresented communities.

**Office for Conflict Resolution (OCR):** The Office for Conflict Resolution provides an integrated management system for dealing with conflict. They handle workplace concerns and issues that affect student life.

**Disability Resource Center (DRC):** Partnering with the University community, the Disability Resource Center promotes access and equity for all students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University. They design innovative learning and work environments, along with collaborative education.
Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (EOAA): Through education, programming, and services, EOAA is committed to eliminating individual and systemic barriers to equity at the University of Minnesota. There is a focus on policymaking and the development of issue identification.

Gender and Sexuality Center for Queer and Trans Life (GSC): GSC fosters the improvement of campus climate for all University students, staff, faculty, alumni, and visitors by developing and supporting more inclusive understandings of gender and sexuality. It works to build communities that affirm and welcome, where people can be their whole selves and be embraced by an experience of acceptance.

Multicultural Center for Academic Excellence (MCAE): MCAE develops and fosters inclusive learning for undergraduates at the University through educational support programs and community engagement. It promotes a culture of achievement that values equity, diversity, excellence, and social justice.

Women's Center: The Women’s Center advances equity for women who are students, staff, faculty, and alumnae across identities. Through leadership programs, events, workshops, and consultations; the center advocates for change connecting women to information, scholarships, and organizations.

There are also key programs and initiatives that OED offers:

Campus Climate. The Campus Climate initiatives support a welcoming campus climate in which all people are treated with respect.

College MADE. The College MADE (Multicultural Access, Diversity, and Equity) Initiative provides individual colleges with data-driven approaches to increasing representational diversity, improving campus climate, and creating partnerships to effect positive change.

Community Outreach, Retention, and Engagement (CORE) Program. The CORE program is a community-based initiative committed to empowering students, families and communities with the knowledge to reach their educational goals.

Diversity Community of Practice. The DCoP is a grassroots community of faculty and staff across who leverage personal and professional expertise to ensure the successful implementation of equity and diversity goals at the University of Minnesota.

Equity and Diversity Certificate Program. The Equity and Diversity Certificate helps participants develop tools necessary for advancing equity and diversity in all aspects of their personal and professional lives.

Institute for Diversity, Equity and Advocacy. IDEA is a research initiative that convenes scholars from the University of Minnesota and from around the world to collaborate across disciplines, departments, colleges and campuses.
Louis Stokes North Star STEM Alliance. The Louis Stokes North Star STEM Alliance is a partnership of 16 Minnesota colleges and universities and two community organizations (the Science Museum of Minnesota, and the Minnesota High Tech Association) committed to supporting underrepresented minorities in STEM fields.

THE ROLE OF VICE PRESIDENT OF EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

The Vice President will oversee the Office for Equity and Diversity and have a budget of $17 million. The OED is comprised of seven offices and seven major initiatives with approximately 120 staff members that provide critical services and support to students, faculty, and staff. This office provides consultation, educational resources, student scholarships, and guidance to leadership – including the newly established systemwide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Leadership Collective – and departments systemwide. Additionally, OED provides financial support to affinity groups with an aim to make the University of Minnesota a more welcoming and inclusive place for all members of the community.

The ideal leader will serve through both influence and authority and possess the ability to evaluate the progress of the University toward its vision for equity and diversity. The VPE&D must be able to work effectively with people at all different levels, including the Board of Regents, state legislatures, senior leadership, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the surrounding community. The VPE&D will need to be nimble, able to pivot and adjust strategy when new circumstances arise. The VPE&D also must impress on the community that the University’s progress in equity and diversity will be the result of a shared endeavor. The Vice President must foster an inclusive environment, creating equitable and collaborative partnerships that reach outside the University and affect change for the greater community of Minneapolis and beyond. In addition, the VPE&D must have extensive knowledge of existing research and best practices to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education. This role also requires the demonstrated ability to apply and contribute to national best practices, and an appreciation for shared governance.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

Serve as a trusted advisor and thought leader

As a trusted advisor and thought leader, the VPE&D will bring subject matter expertise and have proven leadership experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion. This individual will serve in an advisory capacity to leaders throughout the University of Minnesota. This will require creative and adroit communication skills, including crisis management, and the ability to work across a diverse range of constituents with varying levels of fluency around DEI work, along with the ability to influence at all levels of the institution, and with an emphasis on action and accountability.

Coordinate and advance a systemwide diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy across the University of Minnesota system
The Vice President for Equity and Diversity will shape the strategy and coordinate system-wide efforts around diversity, equity, and inclusion. This individual will help craft and execute a vision for diversity, equity, and inclusion that is unique to the University of Minnesota community, influenced by its history and context. This will include, but is not limited to, formulating policy, evaluating progress, identifying opportunities and areas of concern across the campuses, and uniting the existing efforts to align with the vision, capitalize on resources, and increase overall effectiveness. The VPE&D will coordinate to ensure that a consistent and clear DEI strategy can be implemented and assessed across the system. The VPE&D will coordinate, lead, and embed a cohesive DEI strategy across the University and galvanize the ongoing commitments and talents of faculty, students, and staff engaged in existing efforts and initiatives. The VPE&D will have the opportunity to bring together key faculty, staff, and students in coordinating bodies to leverage resources, learn from one another, and provide consistency across the University.

**Promote a culture of transparency and collaboration in a complex and distributed campus system to coordinate DEI efforts and initiatives**

The University of Minnesota is a highly decentralized institution with campuses across the state, each with unique needs related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The ideal candidate will exhibit superior interpersonal communication skills across varied constituencies and recognize the diversity within each campus and understand the nuances of interdivisional and system-wide collaboration. It will be necessary for the VPE&D to leverage institutional priorities and enhance the student experience while working closely with academic and administrative leaders in Minnesota’s schools and colleges, as well as other relevant University-wide stakeholders.

It will be essential that the VPE&D facilitate the sharing of information across divisions by breaking down silos and developing a transparent process for the use of communication methods and tools across the University, to provide opportunities for a clear articulation of priorities, accomplishments, and next steps. This includes recognizing individuals and units which successfully influence or impact the University’s diversity, equity, and inclusion goals, and celebrate and leverage their contribution to further strengthen the University’s climate and culture.

**Develop and formalize a data-driven framework for continuous improvement to meet diversity, equity, and inclusion goals**

The VPE&D will establish systems of accountability and promote the evaluation and continuous improvement of institutional and unit-level diversity and inclusion goals using data-driven metrics to measure success and disseminate information systemwide. It will be necessary for the VPE&D to formalize a system that will provide a central location to house data related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The VPE&D will establish priorities for the institution by planning collaboratively with each division to support and sustain a campus culture of inclusiveness, including overseeing the creation of appropriate metrics for assessing those goals over time and implementing consistent and regular climate surveys to benchmark and monitor progress toward those goals.
Creating an inclusive environment is not the responsibility of one person or a single office alone. As a champion for lasting systemic change, the individual in this position will collaborate with all areas of the institution to develop ambitious goals, practices, and measurable outcomes. This person will play an important role in examining progress and determining what financial or human resources the University or external organizations can provide to continue the most critical and effective elements of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will bring a political astuteness to the work, a strategic vision, and a proven track record of advancing equity and diversity initiatives. While no single candidate will have all the qualifications, the search committee seeks candidates with a well-rounded combination of the following abilities:

Essential Qualifications

- Ph.D. or comparable terminal degree
- Demonstrated record of successful senior administrative experience in higher education or within a large, decentralized, complex organization
- Demonstrated leadership skills and ability to influence and motivate constituencies which span multiple organizational boundaries
- Experience in effectively managing a unit’s fiscal, organizational, and human resources, including managing a large and diverse staff and managing effectively through others
- Demonstrated ability to determine priorities based on what is most important to the University’s success, manage multiple initiatives simultaneously, and get things done
- Substantial higher education experience in designing and leading efforts relating to institutional access, diversity, inclusion, multiculturalism, and education and employment equity, including fluency with the current scholarship in each of these areas
- Record of working collaboratively with academic and administrative colleagues at all levels in a large-complex institution, as well as with diverse external communities, to facilitate positive and collaborative processes and initiatives
- Exceptional interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills and the ability to communicate effectively with multiple and diverse constituents
- Crisis management experience and the ability to provide intellectual and emotional leadership, bringing communities together during challenging and sometimes high profile circumstances

Preferred Qualifications

- Understanding, or working knowledge of, the role of a public research, land-grant institution
- Demonstrated visionary skills and the ability to oversee strategic planning and organizational development efforts relating to institutional change
- Demonstrated experience advocating for, and leading change efforts related to, institutional practice and policy as a member of a complex institution’s senior leadership team
Interested candidates must submit a letter of interest and a current resume or curriculum vitae to be considered for the position. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and application materials should be directed to:

Keight Tucker Kennedy, Partner  
Donna Cramer, Partner  
Alycia Johnson, Senior Associate  
Ivy Couch, Associate  
www.imsearch.com/8328

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