



## Vice President for Student Affairs

### Leadership Profile

December 2024



*WittKieffer*

## Executive Summary

The University of Northern Colorado invites nominations and applications for the leadership position of Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA). The next VPSA will join UNC at a pivotal moment in its history and will work to establish a learning and inclusive and equity-minded Division of Student Affairs to realize the institution's "Students First" commitment.

Founded as a teacher's college in 1889, the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) has graduated generations of educators, more than any other Colorado university. While UNC's roots remain strong as a leader in preparing teachers and school administrators, the university has diversified its academic portfolio to include programs that prepare students to be leaders in a variety of fields, including health sciences, business, the humanities, and performing and visual arts. Today, the university is a public, doctoral research and educational institution that is home to approximately 9,000 students and more than 200 undergraduate and graduate programs housed across five colleges: Education and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, Monfort College of Business, Natural and Health Sciences, and Performing and Visual Arts. In response to a current and growing need for new doctors, the university is also pursuing the creation of a sixth college that is on track to welcome its first class as early as 2026: the University of Northern Colorado College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Recognized as a top university for social mobility, UNC is committed to supporting its students and providing them with a high-quality education and a community where they can thrive. The university's expert faculty and tradition of research and hands-on learning give students exceptional opportunities and a personalized education. UNC is proud to be Colorado's newest Hispanic Serving Institution and to be recognized by the Colorado Department of Higher Education as a First Generation-Serving Institution. The university's 260-acre main campus is located in the city of Greeley, a vibrant town of nearly 115,000 in the heart of northern Colorado. According to 2020 census data, Greeley is one of the fastest-growing locations in the country ranking the first fastest in Colorado and the fourth fastest in the nation. Through the university's Extended Campus, students also have access to a UNC education online or at off-campus centers located in Denver and Loveland.

Reporting directly to President Feinstein and serving as a member of the President's Cabinet, the VPSA will join UNC at an exciting time as President Feinstein launched in July 2024 the next phase of the [Rowing, Not Drifting 2030](#) strategic plan, which articulates a comprehensive vision and desired outcomes for the university's future. At its core are five vision elements, each of which describes an institutional priority: Students First, Empower Inclusivity, Enhance & Invest, Innovate & Create, and Connect & Celebrate. The university seeks an innovative leader to join in partnership with President Feinstein, the senior leadership team, and all members of the university community to continue to make progress toward these strategic priorities.

The VPSA will be an action-oriented and innovative leader who will bring to the university a deep knowledge of best practices and a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of student affairs. The VPSA will have served in progressively responsible supervisory and administrative positions. They will understand the culture of student life on a campus that includes both residential and commuting students, traditional-age students, and adult learners all with a wide array of academic and personal interests and ambitions which inform the work of the division and the university. The VPSA will support the professional development of a talented staff and work well in a culture that values the appropriate use of data to inform decision making.

The Division of Student Affairs is a forward-thinking student success operation committed to its role as custodian of the student experience at UNC. The division grounds its work as an organization in a curricular model with well-articulated learning outcomes associated with its programs and services. Under the leadership of the VPSA, all staff members within the division are expected to positively contribute to the shared commitment of supporting students in the co-curricular environment and to providing an experience that inspires students academically, intellectually, personally, and emotionally.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.

## Role of the Vice President for Student Affairs

The VPSA serves as the senior student affairs officer responsible for planning, leading, and collaboratively implementing the strategies for student experiences, services, and support for all University of Northern Colorado students. Reporting directly to President Feinstein and serving as a member of the President's Cabinet, the Vice President for Student Affairs will serve as a trusted advisor and highly visible representative with responsibility for direct involvement with students and engagement in their campus experiences outside the classroom.

The VPSA serves as collaborative, transparent, inspirational, and approachable student-centered leader and community builder providing vision and leadership to efforts to foster a campus culture that values and actively promotes the academic achievement and personal development of all students while working, in particular, to raise awareness of the needs of underserved student populations. The Vice President for Student Affairs will play a lead role in providing a safe, welcoming, and educationally supportive campus environment for all students and must nurture collaborative relationships among constituents across the university and in the local community through a curricular approach to student affairs.

Additionally, the Vice President provides leadership and general management of all units in the division, including:

- Assault Survivors Advocacy Program
- Campus Recreation
- Center for Student Wellbeing
- Counseling Center
- Cultural and Resource Centers
  - Asian Pacific American Student Services
  - César Chávez Cultural Center
  - Gender & Sexuality Resource Center
  - Marcus Garvey Cultural Center
  - Native American Student Services
  - Veterans Services
  - Center for Women's and Gender Equity
- Dean of Students Office
  - Community Standards and Conflict Resolution
  - Student Outreach and Case Management
- Dining Services
- Disability Resource Center
- Housing & Residential Education
- Health Promotion
- New Student Orientation
- Scholarships & Leadership Programs
- Student Activities
  - Fraternity & Sorority Life
  - University Program Council
  - Student Government Association
- Student Affairs Administrative Service Center

The Vice President provides oversight and is charged with the planning, budgeting, and operational management of all units within the Division of Student Affairs. The person in this position establishes personnel and budget guidelines, organizational structure and development, staffing patterns, and hiring practices for the division, and advances organizational and professional development opportunities that support an innovative, effective, inclusive, and collaborative team.

The Vice President for Student Affairs works with members of the President's Cabinet, key partners across the university, and external stakeholders to help define, develop, communicate, and implement the university's strategic priorities and objectives, including those defined in the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan and other relevant strategic plans, from a student affairs lens. The person in this role also promotes collaborative, consultative, and meaningful partnerships among Student Affairs and university constituents, as well as community-based constituents in the interest of advancing student success.

More can also be found online here: <https://www.unco.edu/student-affairs/>

## Primary Responsibilities

Develop and oversee the implementation of a comprehensive strategy for the student experience aligned with the university's strategic plan and institutional priorities.

- Lead and supervise student affairs units in the development of intentional initiatives, programs, and policies that align with student learning outcomes and enhance the quality of student life. Facilitate access to institutional support services and other opportunities that facilitate the link between formal academic learning and student life experiences in alignment with UNC's strategic priorities and objectives.
- Foster an inclusive university community through strong relational leadership and a commitment to equity and belonging. Facilitate a work environment that encourages knowledge of, respect for, and development of skills to engage with individuals from various cultures and backgrounds through diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and social justice frameworks. Lead by example to guide institutional practices around intercultural competence, policy development, and performance management to enhance the quality of student life on campus.
- Advise and inform the President, senior leadership, and other university administrators and faculty on matters pertaining to student affairs, student services, and student initiatives and programs.
- Advance positive student relations by maintaining effective lines of communication with students, student organizations, and student leaders, advocating for student learning and co-curricular needs of students. Collaborate with the student community, including the Student Government Association, to address issues and topics such as student engagement, campus climate, and conflict.
- Provide direct leadership to advancing the university's strategic plan and ensure divisional alignment with goals and objectives by engaging in long-term planning within the Division of Student Affairs. Support student learning and service outcome assessment.
- Oversee budget and resource allocation for the Division of Student Affairs. Provide sound fiscal stewardship and oversight of financial reporting, as well as revenue enhancing and cost-saving initiatives for auxiliaries. Manage and be accountable for a multi-million-dollar budget, including donor, grant-funded, auxiliary, cash, student fee, and state general funds.
- Maintain an awareness of the latest findings, trends, technology, insights, and policy conversations in the field of student affairs. Participate in professional associations and contribute to local and national discussions of best practices in the field.

## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The Vice President for Student Affairs provides a talented, ambitious leader the opportunity to transform an institution by taking a nascent division to the next stage of development and integration with the whole university—work that has the great potential to have a positive, transformational impact on the university and its students.

The Vice President for Student Affairs will address the following critical leadership issues, among others:

### **Enhance partnerships across campus to increase the coherence of the educational experience and to realize a "Students First" commitment**

The university strategic plan, *Rowing, Not Drifting 2030*, has generated considerable enthusiasm and support for its "Students First" focus and commitment to position the university as an engaged, community-minded, and "student-ready" organization. The VPSA will be a key leader of the collective effort to ensure that a deep commitment to the student experience and student success, as expressed through the "Students First" philosophy, is the shared goal of all staff and faculty members across the organization. The VPSA will have demonstrated experience building strategic and successful partnerships with colleagues across the organization with particular emphasis on close work with the faculty and academic affairs administrators in support of student success. The university is proud of its richly diverse community of students at various stages of their personal, academic, and professional endeavors. The VPSA will engage on campus and through communication channels as a champion of the student experience and an advocate for programs and policies to support the strategic plan and the work of the division.

The VPSA will provide strategic leadership in facilitating efforts to ensure that a deep commitment to the student experience is recognized as a shared goal across the institution, and that the potential for meaningful learning outcomes from outside-of-the-classroom offerings are well understood. Reflecting experience and success in developing and valuing campus-wide partnerships, the VPSA will work collaboratively on efforts to eliminate barriers to student engagement and success, and to foster a culture and climate of care. The issues on which the Division of Student Affairs has established programs and/or expertise and competency (e.g., disability services; student mental health; social justice and equity; violence prevention; and other student services) will be widely publicized and shared broadly with colleagues in a spirit of partnership and collaboration.

### **Embed a deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion across the student experience**

The University of Northern Colorado fosters an inclusive, welcoming environment that encourages individuals and groups to learn and work within and across diverse communities. Approximately 27% of the student body identify as Hispanic/Latine and 44% of UNC students are the first in their family to attend college. The university emphasizes awareness, respect, and education about cultural identity, and recognizes its goal to serve and embrace the diverse backgrounds and experiences of all students, faculty, and staff, and the Division of Student Affairs is a key partner in this work.

The VPSA will lead the reintegration of UNC's seven cultural and resource centers into the Division of Student Affairs, where they had previously reported until a leadership transition in 2021. Realigning the centers within the division provides the opportunity to bring together the leaders and co-curricular programs and services that strengthen networks of support for students and foster diverse, inclusive communities. Through demonstrated expertise in and deep commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and justice, the VPSA will lead efforts to ensure work across the division is aligned with the "Empower Inclusivity" vision element of the university's strategic plan. The VPSA will also help position the division as a strategic leader and partner for university-wide efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Continue co-curriculum programs and developmentally sequenced, coherent learning plans**

The VPSA will support and continue the development of student educational opportunities tied to student learning outcomes that are within the division's purview, including an assessment plan for student learning around self-awareness, wellness, equity, career readiness, interpersonal engagement, and leadership. The VPSA must be able to work across boundaries and demonstrate the mutually beneficial outcomes that result from effective communication and resource sharing.

## Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

The Vice President for Student Affairs will be a confident, high-energy leader who has most, if not all, of the following characteristics, qualities, and experiences:

### Minimum Qualifications

- A master's degree in a relevant field from an accredited institution is required; a terminal or doctoral degree is preferred.
- Substantial and proven record of broad, progressive administrative management and leadership experience in higher education over a period of at least ten years.
- Full-time experience supervising professional staff for a minimum of five years.
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills that reflect effective listening, humility, authentic engagement, approachability, and transparent leadership with a wide array of constituencies.
- Demonstrated ability to build consensus and inspire trust on initiatives and a wide variety of issues.
- Experience in providing response and assistance to students in crisis situations and proven ability to create a climate responsive to student concerns.
- Ability to satisfactorily solve problems commonly found within the higher education environment.
- Demonstrated commitment to promoting a vibrant university culture with proven strength in fostering an environment that promotes, supports, and values diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Experience as a leader who delivers results by empowering staff to reach personal and professional goals through a supportive work environment, positive staff development, effective change management, and calculated, innovative risk-taking.
- Proficiency in organizing and managing complex functions and the ability to gain the trust and confidence of students.
- Ability to serve as a strong, positive representative of the university addressing concerns and facilitating resolutions through public speaking and personal interaction with internal and external constituents including students and their family members/support systems, faculty, staff, community members, and others.
- Ability to skillfully engage in healthy conflict resolution.
- Demonstrated financial acumen, effective budget management, and evidence-based resource allocation with the ability to address fiscal constraints collaboratively and creatively.
- Demonstrated ability to use data and analytic strategies to measure outcomes and guide resource allocation in alignment with institutional priorities.

- Demonstrated ability to manage sensitive information and maintain privacy in alignment with laws, policies, ethical principles, and professional standards.

### Preferred Qualifications

- Deep understanding of the higher education landscape, including trends, challenges, and opportunities facing public universities.
- Deep understanding of the mission of regional public universities with high levels of community engagement.
- Previous experience as a senior student affairs officer, dean, or assistant vice president in student affairs.
- Demonstrated experience in utilizing institutional data to benchmark and promote accountability that aligns with institutional mission and supports/creates institutional change.



# About the University of Northern Colorado

## Overview

Set in an ideal location, 50 miles north of Denver, 50 miles south of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and 50 miles east of Rocky Mountain National Park, the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) has maintained a strong tradition of serving the community and the state as one of the original educational institutions in Colorado. Founded in 1889, UNC is a public, doctoral research university offering more than 200 undergraduate and graduate programs, many of which are nationally recognized. UNC is currently home to five colleges: Education and Behavioral Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, Monfort College of Business, Natural and Health Sciences, and Performing and Visual Arts. The university is also pursuing the creation of a sixth college: the University of Northern Colorado College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNC COM).

The university's just-right size; expert faculty; and tradition of scholarship, active learning, and inclusive pedagogy give students exceptional opportunities and a personalized education. UNC offers a 14:1 student-to-faculty ratio with a strong focus on innovative teaching, learning in and outside the classroom, and individualized encouragement and support.

UNC welcomes an increasingly diverse student body of approximately 9,000 students, including over 2,300 graduate students. Among the undergraduate population, 39% identify as underrepresented minorities, 41% are Pell-eligible, 44% identify as first-generation, and 27% identify as Hispanic/Latine. In March 2024, UNC achieved designation by the U.S. Department of Education as a Hispanic Serving Institution. The recognition follows a consistent, steady increase in the number of Hispanic/Latine students in recent years, and it acknowledges the significant work the university has done to celebrate and support cultural diversity and create a sense of belonging for all students.

## Strategic Plan

*Rowing, Not Drifting 2030* is the university's ten-year strategic plan that was developed following an extensive, collaborative process with a wide array of stakeholders. Launched in 2020, the plan articulates a comprehensive vision and set of outcomes to pursue over the course of a decade. At its core are five vision elements, each of which describes an institutional priority: Students First, Empower Inclusivity, Enhance & Invest, Innovate & Create, and Connect & Celebrate.

Since the strategic plan was introduced, UNC has made steady progress toward the 2030 outcomes by pursuing distinct priorities set out in two-year phases. Each phase includes several key actions, along with specific tactics to achieve each action, in support of the university's overall vision. The first phase of the plan focused on building a strong foundation by investing in the people, processes, technologies, and tools necessary to support efforts in subsequent phases.

The second two-year phase built on the foundational work and achieved significant accomplishments across each institutional priority. This work was led by a newly formed Institutional Planning Group charged by the President, led by the Provost, and composed of leaders across the institution with the charge to coordinate work across efforts tied to the strategic plan. In addition, a focus of the second phase was the implementation of a more robust approach to measuring progress toward UNC's 2030 vision and outcomes.

Now in the third phase, UNC is poised to build on the momentum generated during the first four years of implementation. Evidence of the university's momentum is visible in many ways, from achieving designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution to strengthening enrollment guided by the goals of the university's Strategic Enrollment Management Plan to realizing UNC's most successful year of fundraising to date — thanks, in large



part, to the more than \$200 million raised through a transformational gift by The Weld Trust and the historic investment by the state of Colorado to support the UNC COM.

## Division of Student Affairs

The University of Northern Colorado's Division of Student Affairs was established in 2019. At that time, a number of units that had previously been within the divisions of Academic Affairs and Campus Community and Climate were unified to better serve students and promote their success. While its leadership and composition have continued to evolve, the division has remained steadfast in its focus on centering student experiences and embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion as foundational values.

An example of UNC's enduring commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is its seven cultural and resource centers and the Stryker Institute for Leadership Development. For example, the César Chávez Cultural Center first opened its doors in 1985. The Marcus Garvey Cultural Center was established in 1983 in response to the unique needs of students who identified as Black and/or African American. The Center for Women's and Gender Equity (formerly the Women's Resource Center) was opened in 1994. Between 2021 and 2024, the Cultural and Resource Centers were part of a Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. With the search for a VPSA, and a parallel search to fill the position of Chief Diversity Officer, the centers will return to the Division of Student Affairs, where they were housed prior to 2021.

The Division of Student Affairs is also home to a number of student resources and support offerings that enhance the student experience and scholarship and leadership programs that enrich student learning. With this strong foundation, the Division of Student Affairs is poised to become a model for how to deliver programs and services that foster an inclusive campus culture and provide an academically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally inspiring student experience.

## Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the grounds upon which our university stands are inextricably tied to the history and culture of indigenous peoples. The University of Northern Colorado occupies the lands in the territories of the Ute, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Lakota peoples. Further, we acknowledge the 48 tribes that are historically tied to the state of Colorado. Consistent with our values of community and inclusion, we have a responsibility to acknowledge the land we inhabit and to honor and pay respect to those who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.

## Leadership



### President Andy Feinstein

Since becoming the 13<sup>th</sup> president of the University of Northern Colorado (UNC) in 2018, Dr. Andrew "Andy" Feinstein has spearheaded transformative initiatives to strengthen the university's impact in Colorado.

During his first year as president, Dr. Feinstein initiated a collaborative process to articulate a new shared direction for UNC, which led to the creation of the university's ten-year strategic plan, *Rowing, Not Drifting 2030*. The first phase of the plan focused on building a strong foundation by investing in the people, processes, technologies, and tools necessary to support efforts in subsequent phases. The second two-year phase built on the foundational work and led to significant accomplishments across each institutional priority. Now in the third phase of implementation, President Feinstein is leading UNC to realize a bold set of strategic priorities to ensure the university continues its strong trajectory of success.

Under Dr. Feinstein’s guidance, UNC has made remarkable progress toward establishing Colorado’s first public osteopathic medical college, addressing critical healthcare workforce needs and earning him recognition as a 2024 Powerbroker by the *Denver Business Journal*. This includes securing a \$25 million transformational gift from The Weld Trust and a historic investment by the state of Colorado of nearly \$170 million to support construction, startup, and accreditation expenses. In total, Dr. Feinstein has led UNC to raise over \$200 million for the project.

Central to his “Students First” vision, Dr. Feinstein’s leadership for the establishment of the UNC Tuition Promise, which offers free tuition to Colorado high school graduates from families earning under \$65,000, and the Colorado First-Year Admission Guarantee, which qualifies eligible students for automatic admission, expanded access to higher education for students from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, Dr. Feinstein led UNC to achieve federal designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution, reflecting his commitment to inclusivity and support for all students.

Throughout his presidency, Dr. Feinstein has sought to enhance the fundamental characteristics and commitments that make UNC a great place to live and learn. As UNC’s president, Dr. Feinstein has recommitted the university and its leadership to design and activate new approaches that honor and celebrate diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that the university sustains a nurturing and supportive environment where all students, faculty, and staff thrive.

Emphasizing transparency, communication, and collaborative decision making, Dr. Feinstein meets frequently with the Student Government Association, Faculty Senate, Professional Administrative Staff Council, Classified Staff Council, and other organizations serving UNC’s students, faculty, and staff. He also regularly travels throughout the state to meet alumni and friends, higher education leaders, legislators, and policymakers.

His positive influence over higher education in Colorado extends well beyond UNC. Through an active agenda to coordinate efforts among the presidents and chancellors of Colorado’s public colleges and universities, Dr. Feinstein has helped to ensure institutions advocate for the needs of higher education with one voice. The result has been increased state support for higher education — benefitting institutions and students across the state.

Dr. Feinstein’s career in higher education spans 25 years. He most recently served five years as Provost and Senior Vice President at San Jose State University. Prior to that, he served in roles including Professor, Department Chair, Associate Dean, Dean, and Senior Advisor to the President at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. He has published numerous journal articles and books on topics such as student success, strategic management, simulation modeling, purchasing, and foodservice operations. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from UNLV and a Ph.D. from The Pennsylvania State University.

## Greeley, Colorado

UNC’s history has been intertwined with Greeley’s since the creation of the State Normal School in 1889, when the town’s citizens recognized the value that increased access to education would bring to their community.

Greeley is a vibrant, friendly, and genuinely diverse community of nearly 115,000 residents in the heart of northern Colorado. According to 2020 census data, Greeley is one of the fastest-growing locations in the country ranking the first fastest in Colorado and the fourth fastest in the nation. Economic growth and development provide an abundance of opportunities for an active lifestyle, along with emerging career opportunities for UNC’s graduating students. UNC and the city of Greeley have been active partners in revitalizing the neighborhoods and businesses around campus for over a decade, establishing a University District in 2009 and the Greeley Creative District in 2014. The sun shines more than 300 days a year, summers are pleasant, and winters are picturesque. Situated along the Front Range Urban Corridor, Greeley is about an hour north of Denver and an hour east of Rocky Mountain National Park.

## Procedure for Candidacy

All applications, nominations, and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting the University of Northern Colorado in this search, which will remain open until an appointment is made.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Mercedes Chacón Vance and Jenna Brumleve

[UNCoVP@wittkieffer.com](mailto:UNCoVP@wittkieffer.com)

### Compensation and Benefit Information

Compensation range: \$225,000 - \$245,000

Benefits: The University of Northern Colorado provides a wide range of benefits for its employees. Information on University benefits programs, including eligibility, is available at <https://www.unco.edu/human-resources/employee-resources/benefits/>

*UNC is an equal opportunity/affirmative action/Title IX employer committed to a culturally diverse staff, faculty, and student body. In accordance with established laws, the University prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, marital status, or political affiliation for employees in all aspects of employment and for students in academic programs and activities. Please visit <https://www.unco.edu/institutional-equity-compliance/> to learn more.*

*Commitment to Job Application Fairness: Applicants are not required to provide age or age-related information and may redact information related to age, date of birth, or dates of attendance at or graduation from an educational institution from any submissions during the initial application process.*

