



UNIVERSITY OF
ST. THOMAS

JANUARY 2026



Vice President for Academic Affairs

Executive search conducted by EMA Partners/Trinity Executive Partnership



The University of St. Thomas (UST) announces a national search for the position of Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). As the University strives to enhance its standing as a major institution of Catholic higher education on the national stage, UST seeks a VPAA to steward and develop its academic programs and help guide UST's strategic growth while staying true to its distinctive mission. Under the new leadership of its 10th president, Dr. Sinda Vanderpool, on the brink of celebrating its 80th anniversary, and a new Archbishop in the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and UST alumnus Archbishop Joe S. Vásquez, UST is seeking an academic affairs leader energized by the vibrancy of UST's unique culture and Catholic identity, right in the heart of Houston.

The **University of St. Thomas**, located in the Midtown area near downtown Houston, TX, is the only Catholic university in Houston and the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Committed to the proliferation of faith and reason, UST aims to form the hearts and minds of its students in accordance with the truth of the human person as taught by the Catholic Church, faithful to the Magisterium, and in accordance with Ex Corde Ecclesiae. UST gladly welcomes students of all faiths and backgrounds, and its student body closely reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. A proud Cardinal Newman Guide Recommended College, UST touts several Catholic Identity Special Recognitions. UST also celebrates the inclusion of many cultures and faith traditions among faculty, staff and students to encourage a fruitful dialogue highlighting the dignity of the human person.

The Congregation of St. Basil, with the collaboration of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, founded the University in 1947, fulfilling the dream of establishing Catholic higher education in Houston. They are committed to UST, where they remain closely engaged in campus ministry and the Board of Directors.

UST's careful attention to the formation of students includes a strong Core Curriculum grounded in the liberal arts, the integration of faith and reason, exceptionally talented and dedicated faculty, and innovative co-curriculum programs grounded in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. UST attracts students near and far, enrolling over 4,300 students who come from 43 states and 45 countries.

UST is governed by a Board of Directors that includes Basilian representatives, along with members drawn from the business, medical, philanthropic, and cultural communities of Houston and beyond.

The UST campus is located in the beautiful Montrose neighborhood, immediately adjacent to the Menil collection and the Rothko chapel, with easy access to some of the best shopping, restaurants, museums, music, and art that the city has to offer. UST's campus features a central quad and many adjacent buildings, including the historic Link-Lee Mansion, once the largest home in Houston. The mansion now houses the offices of the president and vice presidents, and serves as a gathering place for campus events, meetings and luncheons.

In this school year, 2025-26, UST is currently celebrating its 10-year reaffirmation of accreditation, recognition as the No. 1 University in Texas for Social Mobility in *U.S. News and World Report*, and No. 13 in Texas by *Military Times* 'Best for Vets: Colleges'. Its motto "Crescamus in Christo," May We Grow Together in Christ, allows UST to serve its students with a keen sense of its identity in Jesus Christ and the flourishing of the common good.



MISSION

We are University of St. Thomas, the Catholic university in the heart of Houston. We are committed to the Catholic intellectual tradition and the dialogue between faith and reason. By pursuing excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service, we embody and instill in our students the core values of our founders, the Basilian Fathers: goodness, discipline and knowledge. We foster engagement in a diverse, collaborative community.

University of St. Thomas is a comprehensive university, grounded in the liberal arts. Committed to the unity of all knowledge, we offer programs in the traditional liberal arts, professional, and skill-based disciplines. Graduates of University of St. Thomas think critically, communicate effectively, succeed professionally, and lead ethically.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS



UST offers 51 undergraduate degrees, 20 graduate degrees and multiple pre-professional programs across its schools, centers, and institutes.

- ◆ Cameron School of Business
- ◆ Carol and Odis Peavy School of Nursing
- ◆ School of Arts and Sciences
- ◆ School of Education and Human Services
- ◆ School of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary
- ◆ William J. Flynn Center for Irish Studies
- ◆ Center for International Studies
- ◆ Center for Thomistic Studies
- ◆ Nesti Center for Faith & Culture
- ◆ St. John Paul II Institute
- ◆ Center Semillero
- ◆ Honors Program
- ◆ Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Health Programs

The University recently updated its core curriculum by adding a stand-alone Core department to create a stronger common culture among students and faculty continuing the liberal arts tradition of the University while accommodating majors in other fields. UST offers a distinctive breadth of academic programs rooted in its Catholic intellectual tradition, from the Honors Program and robust undergraduate opportunities in engineering, nursing, business, philosophy and theology to unique and exceptional graduate offerings including the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing and the Master of Arts in Catholic Women's and Gender Studies.

The University is served by over 400 dedicated faculty, the majority of whom are full-time, 37% are tenured, and 84% possess terminal degrees in their respective fields.

UST's accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges was recently reaffirmed for the next decade. UST is a Newman Guide school, reflecting its commitment to a strong Catholic identity, and is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and the American Chemical Society.



For more information,
please visit UST's website: <https://www.stthom.edu/>

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

The **Vice President for Academic Affairs** (VPAA) is the Chief Academic Officer of the University, reporting directly to the President. The VPAA's primary responsibilities focus on stewardship of the University's academic mission in Catholic higher education, strategic development of academic programs, mission-focused faculty development, oversight of program quality/effectiveness and achievement of UST strategic goals for its academic programs. The VPAA serves as a key member of the University's leadership team.

Stewardship and Strategic Role Responsibilities:

- Assure that all academic programs are aligned with the University's mission and grounded in the tradition of the Basilian Fathers and that they are effectively communicated to all constituents, integrated into the work of every program, and regularly reviewed and re-affirmed as needed.
- Support the UST President's strategic and operational priorities, integrating these into the University's academic mission and planning processes.
- Guide strategic development, implementation, and evaluation of UST's academic programs in alignment with the University's strategic goals.
- Facilitate the conditions and relationships that support creativity, innovation, formation, and development of faculty, staff, and students.
- Maintain and develop the internal and external partnerships that support the achievement of the University's academic mission.

Support/Oversight Responsibilities – Deans and Faculty:

- Facilitate the strategic and operational effectiveness of the deans, department chairs, and faculty in alignment with the Catholic intellectual tradition.
- Chair the Deans' Council and facilitate its role as a leadership body responsible for stewarding the mission, strategic development of academic programs, support for innovation within and across schools and programs, and the growth and sustainability of initiatives.
- Collaborate with the Faculty Senate leadership, Advisory Council, and established governance structures to ensure a faculty voice and effective shared governance decision-making and accountability.
- Oversee processes associated with dean/department chair/director status, including recruitment, appointment, contracts orientation, performance evaluation, grievance/complaints, promotion, and tenure.
- Oversee processes associated with faculty status, including recruitment, appointment, contracts orientation, performance evaluation, grievance/complaints, promotion, tenure sabbaticals, leave of absence, and designation of emeritus status.
- Facilitate the development and implementation of plans and resource distribution for faculty engagement in scholarship fostering, in particular, scholarship and dialog that address contemporary issues in light of Church teaching, the harmony of faith and reason, and the dignity of the human person.
- Create, implement, and evaluate processes and procedures essential to an effective and collaborative institution of Catholic higher education.

Support/Oversight Responsibilities – Academic Programs:

- Support deans and faculty in monitoring and improving academic program quality and student learning outcomes.
- Collaborate with deans, faculty, staff, and colleagues in Finance, Enrollment Management, Student Affairs, Institutional Advancement, Marketing, and Human Resources to develop and support programs that contribute to sustainable growth and high-quality learning outcomes.
- Oversee the development and orientation of deans, department chairs, and faculty in light of the Basilian heritage and the Church's teaching on higher education.
- Facilitate growth and enhancement of academic programs through support for sponsored research, grants, and partnerships.
- Serve as Dean of Graduate Studies.

Support for UST President and Board of Directors:

- Provide leadership at the University level as a member of the President's Council and as liaison to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Directors and other Board committees as directed.
- Assure that academic program reports and proposals presented to the President and Board of Directors meet appropriate quality standards to support effective review, decision-making, and implementation of Board action.

Administrative and Regulatory Responsibilities:

- Facilitate the work of deans, administrators, department chairs, faculty, and staff in assessing and continuously improving infrastructure, resources, and operations that support academic programs.
- Oversee resource acquisition and budget management in a manner consistent with Catholic social teaching.
- Assure compliance with regulatory requirements and reporting associated with academic programs for SACSCOC and specialty accreditations.
- Assure that academic and faculty policies relevant to the educational mission are developed in congruence with university and regulatory requirements, reviewed and updated regularly, and distributed and communicated clearly to faculty, staff, students, and the University community.



QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

Education:

- Doctoral degree, preferably a PhD in a liberal arts and sciences or professional discipline or STD (Doctorate in Sacred Theology) from an accredited institution.

Experience and Essential Attributes:

- 6-7 years of progressively increasing responsibility as a senior academic leader at the VP or dean level including demonstrated experience in accreditation, program review, curriculum design, and assessment; and a proven record of positive creative results and accomplishments.
- Must be an active member in good standing in the Catholic Church and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.
- Familiarity with the contributions of the Catholic intellectual tradition to higher education and the Church's commitment to the harmony of faith and reason.
- Proven ability to inspire, collaborate and negotiate with diverse constituencies, even in resource-constrained circumstances. The individual must be able to lead and inspire the faculty to new levels of engagement to champion innovation and embrace a growth mindset while fostering the University's Catholic mission.
- Experienced leader with a clear, focused commitment to teaching, learning and academic excellence to promote student success.
- Seasoned professional with experience in governance who fosters unity and a sense of working together for the good of the University.
- Demonstrated knowledge, skills, and abilities in academic administration including regulations, laws, and other general related policies.
- Proven experience of fostering excellence in teaching and learning through the use of innovative and effective technology.
- Demonstrated record of fiscal responsibility and accountability.
- Demonstrated ability to attract, recruit, onboard and develop a strong faculty.
- Recognized as having an academic vision with attention to the future of higher education and emerging trends.
- Be highly ethical, trustworthy, credible and respectful of diverse views and opinions and as someone who is known for building consensus and being a good listener.
- Possess highly effective communication skills.

The University of St. Thomas is committed to the religious, ethical, and intellectual traditions of Catholic higher education. As permitted by law, practicing Catholics who will advance the mission of the school are preferred for this position. However, the University invites all qualified applicants to apply.

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To apply, interested and qualified candidates should submit a comprehensive letter of interest and complete CV to:

info@trinityexecutivepartnership.com

Applicants will be reviewed immediately and accepted until the position is filled.

The University of St. Thomas-Houston is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

