



**COLUMBIA  
SOUTHERN**  
UNIVERSITY

ANNOUNCING A NATIONAL SEARCH FOR

**VICE PROVOST  
FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**



**Columbia Southern University**, a pioneer institution of online learning in higher education, seeks a highly regarded, dynamic, and innovative leader to serve as **Vice Provost for Academic Affairs**. The university invites letters of application and nominations for this opportunity.



### The University

Columbia Southern University, located in Orange Beach, Ala., was founded in 1993 by Robert Mayes Sr. and has become one of the nation’s premier online universities. The privately owned distance learning university maintains a student-first philosophy within a family-oriented culture of caring and respect among staff and faculty.

While providing educational opportunities to non-traditional students through distance learning, CSU focuses on building long-term relationships while providing an exceptional student experience, affordable tuition, and a flexible learning format. CSU has more than 1,000 faculty and staff who diligently focus on continually improving CSU’s academic programs, services, and operations

while maintaining an exceptional standard of student service.

Instilled in every initiative, service, and program are CSU’s core values of organizational health, humility, exceptional service, flexibility, and relationships. The university offers 27 online degree programs at the associate, bachelor, master, and doctorate levels across three colleges: Arts & Sciences, Business, and Safety & Emergency Services. Seventeen undergraduate and graduate certificate programs provide focused training in specialized areas, such as finance, human resources management, sport management, and information technology.

Recognized as one of the top universities for active-duty military members and veterans, CSU currently serves nearly 13,000 military men and women stationed in more than 30 countries, representing almost half of the university’s 28,000-member student body. Over its 25-year history, 24,837 military students have graduated from CSU.

Student satisfaction is outstanding. In a 2017 survey of all CSU graduates, 96 percent said they would recommend CSU programs or courses, and 97 percent stated they were satisfied with their studies at CSU.

## Columbia Southern University Mission Statement

Columbia Southern University is a private institution that provides diverse learning experiences and affordable, flexible distance education programs at the certificate, undergraduate, and graduate levels to a global student body, delivered by qualified, student-centered faculty committed to teaching and student learning. The university is dedicated to providing exceptional academic and student support services.

### Vision

The vision of Columbia Southern University is to change and improve lives through higher education by enabling students to maximize their professional and personal potential.

## Jeffrey Barksdale, Ph.D.

### Provost and Chief Academic Officer



Dr. Jeffrey Barksdale has served more than 30 years in higher education. Prior to joining Columbia Southern University, he served as a Professor of clinical laboratory sciences and biology and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs at Auburn University at Montgomery (AUM).

During his tenure at AUM, Dr. Barksdale achieved numerous professional accolades, including Distinguished Teaching Professor, first recipient of the School of Sciences Junior Faculty Achievement Award, Spring 2007 Commencement speaker, and professor emeritus. He is a board certified medical technologist by the American Society of Clinical Pathologists, a member of the Board of Directors of the Robert B. and Jean G. Adams Foundation, and member of the American Association for Clinical Chemistry. He holds membership in the academic honor societies of Phi Kappa Phi and Omicron Delta Kappa.

He earned his bachelor's degree in medical technology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and his master's degree in toxicology and doctorate in pharmaceutical sciences from Auburn University..

An accredited member of the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC), the university has maintained accreditation since it was initially granted on January 15, 2001. CSU's most recent renewal of accreditation is through January 2021. All CSU programs have been reviewed and approved by DEAC. The DEAC is listed by the U.S. Department of Education as a nationally recognized accrediting agency and is a recognized member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

CSU partners with various educational institutions to ensure acceptance of its credits for potential transfer. These articulation agreements allow for a smooth transition for CSU graduates seeking further education. In turn, the partnership helps graduates of other institutions transfer credits to CSU's academic programs.

CSU is the sister university to Waldorf University, based in Iowa. Both institutions are considered subsidiaries

of Columbia Southern Education Group. CSU also partners with the Center for International Training Cooperation in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where it offers hybrid and online degree programs with its in-country partner.

### The Leadership Opportunity

The new Vice Provost for Academic Affairs will join CSU as it enters its 25th year of online learning. The VPAA will promote academic excellence for the institution and ensure academic quality and course content to meet the ever-changing needs of employers who hire CSU graduates. The VPAA has primary responsibility for academic programs, faculty, and faculty development.

Reporting directly to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, the VPAA is responsible for the academic integrity of the university and supports innovation in academic program methods of online instruction and delivery that respond to a rapidly changing higher education environment. The VPAA also is tasked

with analyzing program and course metrics to optimize course completion rates supporting student persistence to graduation while working with academic leadership to optimize the utilization of operational reporting, academic outcomes assessment, academic program reviews, and advisory board reviews to evaluate curricula and recommend curricula change.

Positions reporting to the VPAA include the Assistant Provost and Dean for the College of Business, Assistant Provost and Dean for the College of Safety and Emergency Services, Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences, the Director of Faculty Development, Services and Support, the Director of Curriculum Planning, and the Director of Instructional Design and Technology. The VPAA appoints qualified individuals to faculty, academic administrative, and staff positions within the Academic Affairs division, fostering an environment of shared academic governance and ensuring a high level

of substantive faculty engagement with students through an integrated faculty monitoring process. This officer will facilitate faculty and academic leadership development and training.

In addition to responding to student concerns and complaints, the VPAA will stay abreast of best practices in distance education and motivating faculty and leadership to emulate such practices.

### Qualifications and Qualities

Candidates should possess an earned doctorate and a minimum of five years of experience in academic higher education leadership at the dean level or above. Candidates must have demonstrated experience in curriculum development, shared governance, accreditation and academic assessment. Experience in online education, including leading online programs and oversight of off-site faculty, is preferred.

The VPAA will model a collegial and collaborative environment through effective communication, transparent and inclusive decision-making, and faculty, staff, and student engagement. The VPAA will apply an understanding of technology and how it drives education in an online environment while guiding academic compliance with accreditation standards and other related academic regulations.

### Orange Beach, Alabama

CSU's hometown of Orange Beach, Alabama, and the neighboring city of Gulf Shores feature miles of beautiful beaches along the Gulf of Mexico. The two cities are located just east of Mobile, Alabama, and west of Pensacola, Florida, along the I-10 corridor in Baldwin County, one of the state's fastest-growing counties. The area offers many attractions and amenities as well as quality schools and a low-cost of living with a high quality of life.



### Applications & Nominations

Confidential inquiries are welcomed; nominations are invited.

#### 1. Application packet must include:

- Letter of interest
- Current curriculum vitae
- At least three references with full contact and e-mail information (References will not be contacted without applicant's consent.)

#### 2. Submit application packet to [ColumbiaSo-VPAA@myersmcrac.com](mailto:ColumbiaSo-VPAA@myersmcrac.com) Applications will be accepted until position is filled.

Submit nominations to [ColumbiaSo-VPAA-nominate@myersmcrac.com](mailto:ColumbiaSo-VPAA-nominate@myersmcrac.com) with contact and e-mail information on the individual being nominated.

**Kenny Daugherty**, President of **Myers McRae Executive Search and Consulting**, is assisting Columbia Southern University with this search.



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*CSU adheres to all federal and state civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in public institutions of higher education. CSU will not discriminate against any employee, applicant for employment, student, or applicant for admission on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, pregnancy, ethnicity, national origin (including ancestry), physical or mental disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, veteran or military status, predisposing genetic characteristics, or any other protected category under applicable local, state or federal law, including protections for those opposing discrimination or participating in any resolution process on campus or within the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or other human rights agencies.*