



## **Vice President for Research and Economic Development Position Profile**

Georgia Southern University (GS) invites applications and nominations as well as expressions of interest for the position of Vice President for Research & Economic Development (VPR&ED). The University seeks a dynamic, visionary and entrepreneurial leader and scholar who will partner with Dr. Carl Reiber (Provost & Executive Vice President – Academic Affairs) and Dr. Kyle Marrero (University President) in implementing a comprehensive new vision for the future of research growth and development at Georgia Southern University.

### **The University**

Since 1906, the University's hallmark has been a culture of engagement that bridges theory with practice, extends the learning environment beyond the classroom, and promotes student growth and life success. Central to GS's mission is the faculty's dedication to excellence in teaching and the development of a fertile learning environment exemplified by a free exchange of ideas, high academic expectations, and individual responsibility for academic achievement.

In 2018, Armstrong State University and GS University consolidated creating an institution that retained the GS University name and comprises eight academic colleges on three campuses: the Statesboro Campus, the Armstrong Campus in Savannah, and the Liberty Campus in Hinesville. The University serves more than 25,000 students from all 50 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico, as well as 102 nations. GS offers an attractive campus environment that encourages learning, discovery, and personal growth.

GS provides transformative learning opportunities to meet the needs of a diverse student population through its legacy of commitment to academic excellence and personal attention. Through the shared resources of its multiple locations, the University creates vibrant learning environments that foster an inclusive, student-centered culture of engagement designed to prepare students for lifelong service as scholars, leaders, and responsible stewards of their communities. The University enhances the quality of life and drives economic development in the Coastal Georgia region, the State of Georgia, and beyond by supporting collaborative efforts in technological innovation, scientific advancement, education, health services, artistic creativity, and cultural enrichment. Faculty, staff, and students embrace the values of integrity, civility, kindness, respect, sustainability, citizenship, and social responsibility in every facet of the University. For more information about GS, please visit <https://www.georgiasouthern.edu/>.

As a public Carnegie Doctoral/R2 institution with a [Public Impact Research](#) mission that focuses on community engagement, economic support, and professional development, GS is the state's largest and most comprehensive center of higher education south of Atlanta, offering 141-degree programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. As the University continues to build upon the existing momentum in its research and scholarship capabilities, GS's expert faculty can be found at the forefront of investigating, engaging, and discovering new methods for addressing many of the challenges facing the world today. In support of these efforts, the University strives to further elevate its Public Impact Research mission by partnering with

industry, businesses, government agencies, and non-profit organizations to make meaningful and sustainable differences in the local, regional, and global communities it serves.

### **Position Summary**

Reporting to the Provost & Executive Vice President – Academic Affairs and working closely with the President, cabinet and college deans to align research with GS's overall academic mission, the VPR&ED is responsible for developing institutional research policies and procedure, coordinating and providing oversight of research, scholarship, and creative activity at GS, and serving in a crucial leadership role in defining and meeting the emerging research opportunities of the future. The position supervises five direct reports within the Office of Research who manage the pre-award, research development, compliance and security, administrative operations, and innovation, tech transfer, and commercialization functions of the unit. The VPR&ED also supervises the daily operations of the GS Research and Service Foundation.

The VPR&ED will lead the University in achieving the goals of its research and economic development agenda including: promoting interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary research; integrating research and education at both the graduate and undergraduate levels; ensuring the integrity of research processes and policies; stewarding the physical and computational infrastructure necessary for research leadership; establishing collaborative research partnerships between the University and key stakeholders at the local, regional, national, and international levels; participating in federal and state policymaking regarding research and economic development; and engaging a broad range of individuals in research, scholarly, or creative activity that strengthen the University's research enterprise.

The VPR&ED will also promote and facilitate intellectual property development and commercialization by supporting translational research to help move discoveries from the conceptual stage through the start-up phase. In addition, the VPR&ED will play a critical role in fostering increased business engagement, entrepreneurship, and economic development opportunities by leveraging business development and technology transfer.

### **Opportunities and Challenges**

GS's VPR&ED must be an accomplished researcher as well as an experienced leader and manager. The VPR&ED will be charged with providing the vision, skill, and expertise to initiate new directions for research, scholarship, and creative activities, as well as the commercialization of intellectual property and stewardship of the research enterprise. It is essential that the successful candidate have an appreciation for the research requirements of scholars in all disciplines and the ability to collaborate with others to increase research capacity, stimulate innovation, and enhance intellectual property development and commercialization across the University. With this in mind, opportunities and challenges for the next VPR&ED include:

- **Establishing and Promoting a Bold Vision** – The VPR&ED will promote a broad view of creative activity and research that engages all disciplines. The VPR&ED will help elevate GS' research profile by promoting a culture of research, innovation, and scholarly excellence. The VPR&ED will also guide GS in applying for the Carnegie Community Engagement classification, and membership into the Georgia Research Alliance. The VPR&ED will strategically position the University for rapid research growth and plan for expanding GS' research impact areas. Through planning and developing a corporate engagement strategy to articulate and support research, innovation, and

commercialization goals, the VPR&ED will also identify and leverage key partnerships to sustain high-impact research.

- **Increasing Research Productivity** – The VPR&ED will help accelerate GS’ research activity and scholarship to better position select faculty and programs to be nationally competitive for significant federal and corporate funding opportunities. The VPR&ED will also strategize ways to expand research and scholarship capacity for existing degree programs. The VPR&ED will also collaborate with the University deans to implement three new Ph.D programs (Environmental Science, Engineering, and Applied Computing) and support the creation of additional PhD programs in the social sciences, humanities, health sciences, and natural sciences. The VPR&ED will also enhance the physical and personnel infrastructure to support and sustain advanced research programs and enterprise.
- **Supporting Faculty Recruitment and Development** – The VPR&ED will partner with the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, deans, department chairs, and center/institute directors to accelerate research activity and scholarship to levels of national prominence in the Research Impact Areas. Through a collegial, transparent, and collaborative leadership style, the VPR&ED will help foster a culture that attracts world-class scholars and ensures they remain vibrant and productive members of the GS community. The VPR&ED will also help build the infrastructure to enable GS faculty to pursue federally funded sponsored projects and adopt evaluation metrics to increase scholarly citations and raise impact factors for faculty publications. By building partnerships with national laboratories and research networks, the VPR&ED will bolster faculty research opportunities. Through the Office of Research, the VPR&ED will build and providing institutional investment (seed funds, accelerator awards) to support proposals for higher levels of funding in the Research Impact Areas, significantly increase the number of postdoctoral researchers in appropriate areas, and enhance corporate engagement to support impactful fundamental research and commercialization projects.
- **Maintaining, Renovating, and Developing Infrastructure** – The VPR&ED will serve as a major partner in continuing capital projects to enhance University research facilities. The VPR&ED will also manage the expansion of core labs to create more institutional efficiency in management, identify financial resources and budget for capital equipment repair, lab renovations and repairs, and space conversion. The VPR&ED will also recruit research administrative staff in the areas of research security, research development, communications, and tech transfer. The VPR&ED will also oversee the evaluation of organizational alignment of research accounting/post-award and hire non-faculty research staff needed to manage core research centers and labs.
- **Economic Development and External Partnerships** – In leading the Office of Research, the VPR&ED will lead the University in establishing and maintaining relationships with various external partners, such as federal and state agencies, foundations, non-profit organizations, universities, and industry representatives. These partnerships can lead to consortiums, multi-institutional and collaborative research efforts, funding opportunities, and knowledge exchange.

For a more comprehensive overview of the challenges, opportunities, strategic overview, and research goals at GS, please refer to “Attachment A” included at the end of this profile.

### **Qualities and Characteristics**

The successful candidate should hold national/international recognition as a scholar, researcher/practitioner, and educator with the accomplishments expected for appointment as a tenured professor. Academic experience (professional and administrative) is strongly desired. Exceptional candidates who have demonstrated a high degree of national or international scholarly and administrative success outside of academia will be considered. The VPR&ED must exhibit substantial administrative leadership experience at a research university or comparable setting. The successful candidate will have the following:

- Leadership/knowledge/understanding of the relationship between research and entrepreneurship/economic development programs/strategies.
- Extensive scholarly interest and the understanding of and commitment to promoting the full spectrum of research, interdisciplinary research, creative work, and engagement at the University.
- A record of service on or with national organizations relevant to providing input into research policy at the national level.
- An understanding of the importance of compliance and regulatory matters to the research enterprise, and ability to develop an effective and efficient organization to manage them.
- Extensive knowledge of and experience with research funding issues.
- The ability to administer a large research-support enterprise, including exercising fiscally sound oversight of the budget.
- The ability to promote integration of the research and educational missions of the University.
- The ability to create and lead faculty development programs centered around research and economic development.
- The ability to create and lead federal and industry research partnerships with the University.
- The ability to represent the University's research mission to a variety of constituencies, external and internal.
- The ability to delegate, to manage people effectively, to foster the professional development of subordinate staff, and to make sound decisions regarding personnel.
- The ability to build teams for interdisciplinary research.
- A demonstrated history of successfully effecting change.

### **Preferred Qualifications**

- The ability to engage various academic units (e.g., schools, departments, programs, centers, etc.) to promote increased collaboration, multidisciplinary partnerships, and interdisciplinary research.
- An awareness of the revolutionary potential of technology in the research enterprise and a commitment to oversee intellectual property development and commercialization.
- Demonstrated commitment to supporting undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity.
- The ability to foster an inclusive environment that solicits input, seeks innovative solutions, and enables the implementation of new ideas.
- Knowledge of professional and local resources that can be utilized to support scholarly endeavors.
- A track record of success in fundraising and securing private support from donors.

- A record of success in leading through innovative organizational change in a transparent and inclusive manner.
- Experience working in a multi-campus environment and addressing diverse stakeholder needs across the organization.
- The ability to build and sustain collaborative partnerships and business, industry, philanthropic organizations, state agencies, and other universities.

### **Application Process**

The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications immediately and will continue to accept applications and nominations until the position is filled. Applications should include a current curriculum vitae and a letter of interest describing relevant experience and interest in the position. Submission of materials via email is strongly encouraged. Nomination letters should include the name and contact information of the nominee. Applications and nominations should be sent to:



**Alberto Pimentel, Managing Partner**

**Matthew Herrera, Senior Associate**

Email: [apsearch@spaexec.com](mailto:apsearch@spaexec.com)

Refer to code "GSU-VPR" in subject line

SP&A Executive Search

6512 Painter Avenue

Whittier, CA 90601

*Georgia Southern University seeks to recruit individuals who are committed to working in diverse academic and professional communities and who are committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and professional service within the University and beyond. The names of applicants and nominees, vitae, and other non-evaluative information may be subject to public inspection under the Georgia Open Records Act. Georgia Southern University is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity institution. Individuals who need reasonable accommodations under the ADA to participate in the search process should contact Denise Gebara, Director of Talent Acquisition and Employment Services, at [dgebara@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:dgebara@georgiasouthern.edu).*

## **Attachment A**

### **Soaring to Research Excellence**

Georgia Southern University is committed to becoming a preeminent national leader in knowledge discovery, application and translation. As we soar to research excellence, our journey will be purposeful and evolutionary, preserving both individual scholarly excellence among faculty and our tradition of teaching distinction. Through amplified academic programs, enhanced research capacity, active commercialization efforts, and leveraging institutional strengths, we will soar to new heights.

### **Why?**

Georgia Southern University is engineered to meet the needs of the communities it serves, and must meet its designation as a national research university.

We are responding to the imperative for a robust research university to support the rapid economic and social development of the region – home to one of the country’s largest economic development projects in the Hyundai Meta Plant. We also are following our 2019 strategic plan – *People. Purpose. Action: Growing ourselves to grow others!* – “to advance knowledge, foster creativity, inspire innovation, and improve quality of life” through the teaching and research expertise of our faculty. In alignment with the strategic plan and building on a legacy of strong community partnerships as well as its core mission as a comprehensive, public university, Georgia Southern has used its public impact research agenda to support the discovery, application, and dissemination of new knowledge to engage with the pressing challenges of the people living around us.

Our flight to research excellence is the next iteration of this process, and will reap untold benefits for the university and its surrounding communities, including enhancing our prestigious reputation, improving our students’ experience, strengthening our knowledge power and increasing our impact.

*“The community, region, and state benefit from the research activity of the university. This is especially true for public research universities. Research also contributes directly to economic development, clinical, commercial, and business opportunities. Resources brought into the university through grants and contracts support faculty, staff, and student salaries, often adding additional jobs, contributing directly to the tax base. Research universities, through their expertise, reputation, and facilities, can attract new businesses into their communities or states....”*

*“Research is essential to advancing society, strengthening the economy, driving innovation, and addressing the vexing and challenging problems we face as a people, place, and planet. It’s through research, scholarship, and discovery that we learn about our history and ourselves, understand the present context in which we live, and plan for and secure our future. Research universities are vibrant, exciting, and inspiring places to learn and to work. They offer opportunities for students that few other institutions can match....”*

---"The Role of Research at Universities: Why It Matters," David Rosowsky, *Forbes*, March 2, 2022.

### **How do we get there?**

A long-term investment of time, resources and personnel is needed to increase research activity and impactful scholarship at Georgia Southern. Starting points and goals are based upon an analysis of the university's current standing as a research university using the nationally recognized standards and metrics of the Carnegie Classification system. Our path toward research excellence builds upon our designated *research impact areas* – areas of existing institutional strength that could be strategically leveraged immediately – to increase our research capacity and make meaningful and sustainable differences in these academic fields:

- *Logistics and Supply Chain Innovation*
- *Coastal Resiliency*
- *Holistic Fitness and Wellness*
- *Advanced Materials and Manufacturing*
- *Vibrant Communities*

These *research impact areas* are not comprehensive of *all* areas of research at the university, nor do they pretend not to be inclusive of the breadth of individual scholarly excellence among our faculty. Rather, they represent substantive areas of potential research excellence for the institution given its faculty and resource strengths, current partnerships, and strategic alignments.

Georgia Southern's path to research excellence will include the following steps:

**Stage 1 Goal:** Accelerated movement to better position select faculty and programs to be nationally competitive for significant federal and corporate funding opportunities.

**Milestone:** *Sponsored research expenditures must surpass Institutional investment*

#### **Altimeter Points:**

- Annual sponsored research exceed \$30 million in expenditures (~ \$7.5 million at end of FY'23)
- Annual federal expenditures exceed \$20 million (~\$4 million at end of FY'23)
- NSF ranking in the Top 200
- Admission of 20 – 25 Ph.D. students per year
- Annual recovered facilities and administrative (F&A) costs of more than \$10 million

**Stage 2 Goal:** Gain altitude through a sustained culture of research, innovation, and scholarly excellence.

**Milestones:** *Sponsored research expenditures average above \$85 million (3-year average) and confer more than 50 research doctorates a year.*

**Altimeter Points:**

- Annual federal expenditures regularly surpass \$50 million per year.
- Consistently rank in the top 25 percent of institutions by earned doctorates (NSF).
- Admitting students into 8 - 10 different PhD programs.
- Annual recovered F&A costs of more than \$30 million.

**Stage 3 Goal:** Attain Carnegie/ACE designation for research excellence (currently Research-Doctoral with Very High Research Activity)

**Milestone:** *Carnegie Basic Classification Report – The sky is the limit*

**What are the objectives?**

1. Accelerate research activity and scholarship to levels of national prominence in the Research Impact Areas.
  - Increase federally funded sponsored projects to a compatible level with peer institutions.
  - Adopt evaluation metrics to increase scholarly citations and raise impact factors for faculty publications.
  - Develop partnerships with national laboratories and research networks to strengthen faculty research opportunities.
  - Enhance corporate engagement to support impactful fundamental research and commercialization projects.
  - Significantly increase the number of postdoctoral researchers in appropriate areas.
  - Provide more institutional investment (seed funds, accelerator awards) to support proposals for higher levels of funding in the Research Impact Areas.
2. Develop and implement new Ph.D. programs
  - Expand capacity in logistics and supply chain management degree program.
  - Successfully implement the three new Ph.D programs (environmental science, engineering, and applied computing).
  - Create additional PhD programs in social sciences, humanities, health sciences, and natural sciences.
  - Continue to enhance the physical and personnel infrastructure to support and sustain advanced research programs and the overall enterprise.



3. Continue capital projects to enhance research facilities.
  - Expand core labs to create more institutional efficiency in management.
  - Identify financial resources and budget for capital equipment repair, lab renovations and repairs, and space conversion.
  - Continuing building out research administrative staff to reflect organizational structures at peer research universities, especially in areas of research security, research development, communications, and tech transfer.
  - Strategically evaluate organizational alignment of research accounting/post-award.
  - Hire non-faculty research staff needed to manage core research centers and labs.
  
4. Align faculty recruitment, evaluation, and retention with nationally recognized, disciplinary standards of research excellence where appropriate.
  - Develop a cluster-hiring plan for tenure line faculty to support the research impact areas and PhD programs.
  - Scrutinize research expectations within the disciplines and articulate clear metrics for research and scholarly excellence, which are aligned with other national research universities.
  - Establish endowed research chairs to support growth and mentorship in PhD programs.
  - Develop a university-supported postdoctoral scholar program with the appropriate administrative support for postdoctoral researchers.
  
5. Strategically position the university for rapid growth in the research enterprise.
  - Reevaluate institutional metrics based upon new Carnegie/ACE Classification criteria (2024)
  - Gain membership in the Georgia Research Alliance.
  - Apply for Carnegie community engagement classification.
  - Begin planning for expansion of research impact areas.
  - Plan and develop a corporate engagement strategy to articulate and support research, innovation, and commercialization goals.
  - Identify and leverage key partnerships to sustain high-impact research.