



**MURRAY STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

# Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

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## Position Description



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# The Opportunity



**Murray State University** is seeking an innovative and forward-thinking **Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs** to partner with President Ron Patterson in shaping the University's future. As Murray State enters a new era of leadership, the Provost will play a pivotal role in advancing academic excellence, expanding opportunity, and ensuring that Murray State continues to serve as a regional leader in higher education. This is an exciting time for Murray State University, with \$200 million in capital projects allocated toward new facilities, including a School of Nursing and Health Professions Building, Veterinary Sciences building, and Learning Commons/Residence Hall.

The Provost serves as the University's chief academic officer and provides vision, leadership, and strategic oversight for all areas of Academic Affairs. This includes guiding academic programs, advancing research and creative activity, supporting faculty development, strengthening student success, and stewarding academic budgets and resources. The Provost will be expected to foster a culture of collaboration and innovation, working closely with faculty, staff, students, and external partners to build on Murray State's proud tradition while positioning the University to thrive in a rapidly evolving higher education landscape.

The portfolio of Academic Affairs is broad and dynamic, encompassing the Colleges of Business; Education and Human Services; Humanities and Fine Arts; Science, Engineering and Technology; the School of Agriculture; and the School of Nursing and Health Professions. Additional areas of responsibility include the Center for Adult and Regional Education, University Libraries, Faculty Development Center, Honors College, Institutional Effectiveness, Institutional Review Board, McNair Scholars, Office of the Registrar, Office of Sponsored Programs, and Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activities. Through these units, the Provost will champion academic innovation, new program development, and a commitment to high-impact practices that prepare students for meaningful careers and engaged citizenship.

The next Provost will be a visible and trusted leader who values transparency, cultivates strong relationships, and brings fresh ideas to advance Murray State's mission. With the momentum of new presidential leadership, this is a defining opportunity to shape the academic enterprise, expand access, and deliver transformative educational experiences that meet the needs of today's students and tomorrow's communities.



# The Opportunity



## Opportunities and Expectations

### ▀ Champion relational and collaborative leadership

Murray State seeks a Provost who leads by building trust, fostering collaboration, and engaging authentically with faculty, staff, students, and community partners. As the University enters a new era of innovation and growth under President Ron Patterson, the Provost will play a vital role in uniting stakeholders around a shared vision for academic excellence.

### ▀ Academic program development and portfolio management

The Provost will be an experienced academic leader with a demonstrated ability to manage and grow a complex academic portfolio. This includes leading the development of new programs, supporting continuous improvement in existing offerings, and ensuring that the University's academic programs align with workforce needs and strategic priorities.

### ▀ Accreditation and professional program leadership

Murray State is expanding its impact with the launch of new professional programs in dental hygiene and veterinary medicine, both of which require specialized accreditations. The Provost will provide leadership in shepherding these programs through the accreditation process, supporting the work of recently hired founding deans, and guiding the selection of an additional founding dean. With several other programs under review, the Provost must bring direct experience and

proven success in accreditation and program approval processes. The next Provost will also oversee compliance and accreditation for the University broadly, including ensuring the continued strength of institutional accreditation.

### ▀ Faculty and student success

The Provost will foster a supportive environment that empowers faculty and staff to thrive in teaching, research, and service, while ensuring students receive a high-quality education and transformative academic experience. Faculty recruitment, retention, and professional development will remain key priorities.

### ▀ Budget stewardship and resource alignment

The Provost will be a skilled manager of resources with strong financial acumen. Partnering with University leadership, the Provost will oversee academic budgets, align resources with strategic priorities, and ensure fiscal accountability across all academic units.

### ▀ Change leadership

Murray State is in a period of transformation, with new programs, leadership, and opportunities on the horizon. The Provost must be an adaptable leader capable of managing change effectively, balancing innovation with stability, and leading the academic community through transitions with clarity and confidence.

# The Opportunity



## Personal Qualities and Professional Qualifications

- A Terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., or appropriate terminal degree) from an accredited institution.
- A Scholarly record (peer-reviewed publications/creative activity) commensurate with appointment at the rank of full professor with tenure in an academic department.
- A relational and collaborative leader who listens, communicates effectively, and inspires trust.
- Minimum of five years of academic administrative experience with responsibility for program development, accreditation, and budget oversight; direct experience with professional program accreditation strongly preferred.
- Demonstrated success in managing complex academic portfolios and leading change with positive outcomes.
- Deep commitment to academic excellence, student success, and faculty development.
- Strong financial skills and proven ability to align resources with institutional priorities.
- Evidence of transparent and inclusive decision making that engages faculty, staff, and students.
- Experience hiring, supporting, and mentoring academic leaders, including deans and senior administrators.
- A proven track record of advancing new academic initiatives, securing program approvals, and managing accreditation processes.
- Personal qualities of integrity, empathy, adaptability, and optimism.
- Commitment to Murray State's mission of access, innovation, and service to the region and beyond.



# Nomination and Application Process



Greenwood Asher & Associates is assisting Murray State University in this search. Applications and nominations are now being accepted. Inquiries and nominations should be directed towards **Jeremy Duff** and **Lois Stetson** with Greenwood Asher & Associates.

## **Jeremy Duff**

**Vice President of Executive Search**

**850.869.9986**

**jeremyduff@greenwoodsearch.com**

## **Lois Stetson**

**Senior Executive Search Consultant**

**850.598.3303**

**loisstetson@greenwoodsearch.com**

## **How to Apply**

- Application materials should include:
  - A letter of interest that clearly states the applicant's qualifications for the position
  - A current curriculum vitae/resume

Please submit full application packets (cover letter and CV/resume) at

➡ **Murray State University – Provost Search Application**

**For best consideration, please submit materials by February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

## **LEARN MORE ABOUT MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY:**



[View on mobile](#)



# About Murray State University



Founded in 1922, Murray State University is a four-year, state-supported public institution located in Murray, Kentucky. Known as the Racers, the University blends the broad educational opportunities of a larger research institution with the close-knit, student-centered culture of a smaller university. With its mission rooted in student learning, excellent teaching, and real-world application, Murray State provides an academic environment that nurtures intellectual curiosity, creativity, and global awareness.

Known for its welcoming community and dedication to student success, Murray State offers students the opportunity to engage in mentored learning, research, and creative activity while preparing for meaningful careers and leadership roles. With a proud tradition of academic excellence, innovation, and service, Murray State continues to be a cornerstone of education, discovery, and public service across its 18-county service region and beyond.

## ***Mission Statement***

Murray State University places our highest priority on student learning and excellent teaching, blending the range of educational opportunities often found at research institutions with the nurturing student-teacher interactions usually found at smaller universities.

## ***Our Strategic Attributes***

- Student learning and success first
- Academic excellence across disciplines
- Global awareness, and intellectual curiosity
- Collaboration in research, scholarship, and creative activity
- Community engagement and public service
- Innovation and real-world application



One of the top universities in Kentucky



**#1 BEST VALUE - SOUTH REGION** - U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

**TOP 50 SAFEST COLLEGE TOWNS** - SAFewise

**BEST BANG FOR THE BUCK** - WASHINGTON MONTHLY

# About Murray State University



## Students & Community By the Numbers

**10,035**

**total enrollment**

(students from 49 states, 53 countries, and 111 Kentucky counties)

**1,562**

**first-time freshmen** (Fall 2024)  
with an average **3.57 GPA**

**44%**

**of freshmen** ranked in the top 25% of their high school class

**75%**

**freshman retention rate** (Fall 2023 → Fall 2024)

**64%**

**six-year graduation rate**

Student body: **63% female / 37% male**

**\$136 million**

in financial aid & scholarships awarded

**99%**

of new, full-time freshmen received aid in Fall 2023

**#1**

among all Kentucky Public Universities for percentage of graduates with no student debt



## President Ron K. Patterson Quick Facts

🛡 **Joined Murray State:** July 1, 2025 (15th President)

🛡 **Higher Ed Leadership:** 25+ years of experience

🛡 **Previous Roles:**

- President, Chadron State College
- Senior Enrollment & Student Success Leader, University of North Alabama

🛡 **Leadership Highlights:**

- Launched new academic and workforce-ready programs
- Guided institutions through accreditation and strategic planning
- Led 14 consecutive terms of record enrollment growth
- Secured millions in philanthropic and government support

🛡 **Academic Credentials:**

- Ed.D., Higher Education Administration & Leadership, Creighton University
- M.A., Marietta College
- B.S., University of Tennessee – Southern
- A.A., Northeast Mississippi Community College

🛡 **Leadership Style:** Collaborative-servant leader focused on access, affordability, and innovation

# About Academic Affairs



## Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs provides vision and leadership for Murray State University's academic mission. As the chief academic officer, the Provost oversees all academic colleges and schools, as well as key units that support teaching, learning, research, and student success. The office ensures the delivery of high-quality academic programs, advances faculty development and scholarly activity, and manages accreditation and academic budgets.

### College & Schools

- [Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business](#)
- [College of Education and Human Services](#)
- [College of Humanities and Fine Arts](#)
- [Hutson School of Agriculture](#)
- [Jesse D. Jones College of Science, Engineering and Technology](#)
- [School of Nursing and Health Professions](#)

### Research Centers

- [Watershed Studies Institute](#)
- [Chemical Services Laboratory](#)
- [Hancock Biological Station](#)
- [Mapping Applications and Resource Center](#)
- [Breathitt Veterinary Center](#)
- [The Office of Scholarly and Creative Activity](#)

### Undergraduate fields with the highest enrollment:

- **Nursing**
- **Elementary Education**
- **Business Administration**
- **Psychology**
- **Animal Health/Pre-Vet Medicine**
- **Agricultural Science**

# About Academic Affairs



**6**

academic colleges & schools

**5**

regional campuses:

Paducah, Hopkinsville,  
Madisonville, Henderson, Fort  
Campbell

**8**

residential colleges on the  
main campus

Extensive **online learning** options

**\$10M+**

in grants

for research and hands-on  
learning

## Academic Excellence

**29**

undergraduate  
certificates

**6**

associate programs

**60**

bachelor's programs

**25**

graduate certificates

**36**

master's programs

**4**

specialist degrees

**3**

doctoral programs

**16:1**

student-to-faculty  
ratio

**18**

average class size

**450**

full-time instructional  
faculty

(77% with terminal  
degrees)



# About Murray, KY



The city of **Murray, Kentucky** and Murray State University share a unique partnership built on mutual pride, hospitality, and community spirit. Students, families, and visitors often remark that Murray instantly feels like home, offering both the safety of a small town and the vibrancy of a university community.

Murray is located in a convenient area of western Kentucky and is within driving distance of many major cities locally and out of state in Tennessee, Illinois, Indiana and Missouri.

The relationship between Murray and Murray State is dynamic and mutually enriching. Community members regularly enjoy on-campus cultural opportunities, including art exhibitions, theater productions, concerts, and athletic events. In return, students, faculty, and visitors benefit from Murray's wide range of locally owned restaurants, shops, and family-friendly amenities.

Families are especially drawn to the area's high-quality schools, with both Calloway County Schools and Murray Independent Schools offering strong academics, athletics, and extracurricular programs. Many Murray State graduates and employees choose to make Murray their permanent home, a reflection of the city's welcoming atmosphere and quality of life. In 2025, the city of Murray was ranked among the top four small college towns in the United States, according to a USA Today online readers poll.

Whether engaging with the University's cultural and academic offerings or enjoying the charm of a close-knit community, Murray exemplifies the spirit of a true college town—safe, friendly, and deeply connected to the success of Murray State and its people.

 **Population:** ~20,000

 **Recognition:**

- *Friendliest Small Town in America* – Rand McNally/USA Today
- *Top 50 Safe College Towns* – SafeWise

 **Community:** Family-friendly, welcoming, and deeply connected to Murray State

 **Culture:** Local residents enjoy on-campus art galleries, theaters, concerts, and athletic events

 **Lifestyle:** Wide variety of locally owned restaurants, specialty shops, and community events

 **Education:** Excellent schools through **Calloway County Schools** and **Murray Independent Schools**

 **University Partnership:** Murray and Murray State share a proud, collaborative relationship that makes the community feel like home



**Greenwood Asher & Associates**  
850-650-2277  
[greenwoodsearch.com](http://greenwoodsearch.com)

Murray State University endorses the intent of all federal and state laws created to prohibit discrimination. Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, veteran status, disability, or political or social viewpoint in employment or application for employment, admissions or the provision of student and employee services and provides, upon request, reasonable accommodation including auxiliary aids and services necessary to afford individuals with disabilities equal access to participate in all programs and activities.