Opportunity Profile: 
Vice President for Student Life

The Institution:

Founded in 1889 as a missionary training institute in Boston, Gordon College has emerged as one of the country’s top Christian liberal arts colleges and the only nationally ranked Christian college in New England.

Gordon is strategically located along what has been termed the “I-95 power corridor” as it is only a few hours away from the financial and political capitals of the Western world (New York and Washington, D.C.). Just north of Boston, with its renowned universities and vibrant industries in finance, technology and health care, Gordon is well positioned to expose students to world-class learning and professional opportunities. Faculty members have ready access to vibrant intellectual and research communities, providing connections that energize their scholarship, teaching and mentoring. This facilitates a commitment to lifelong learning among our students, and a significant majority of Gordon graduates earn advanced degrees.

At the same time, Gordon’s magnificent campus of 485 wooded acres—just three miles from the Atlantic Ocean—retains a quintessential New England charm. The College’s proximity to the beautiful, historic areas of Salem and the North Shore, to the woods and beaches of Cape Ann, and the mountains of Vermont and New Hampshire also creates rich opportunities for recreation and personal growth. This is a great place to live and work with significant public investments in education and social support.

Gordon’s Christian identity is broadly evangelical. Gordon is one of only three nationally ranked institutions where everyone on campus professes to be a Christian, and more than 40 denominations are represented among our students, faculty and staff. At Gordon, a commitment to biblical Christian faith is no impediment to the pursuit of truth; in fact, a deeply rooted faith both inspires and orders this pursuit. Gordon students freely examine complex issues and hear diverse opinions within a coherent framework of faith, growing in the moral imagination and critical-thinking skills required for faithful leadership that serves the common good. Gordon faculty are both academic and spiritual mentors, equipping students to lead ethically and effectively in their chosen professions. Gordon staff also play a foundational role in student development, and many mentor students or advise student clubs. Staff and faculty alike enjoy a collegial, Christ-centered workplace.

Gordon’s vibrant life of the mind is evident not just in its curricular offerings but also extends through the College’s academic centers and institutes as well as its partnerships with professional and scholarly organizations. In recent years, Gordon has launched the Global Honors Institute through a transformational investment by an anonymous donor and the Career and Connection Institute through

Gordon College Snapshot

- Strategically located 25 miles north of Boston, the global capital of higher education
- Parklike campus environment
- Dedicated faculty members, engaged and enthusiastic staff, and world-class student body
- Nearly 1,500 undergraduate students representing 40 denominations
- Opportunity to impact the lives of the next generation of Christian leaders
multi-million-dollar gifts recently received. This builds on the strong philanthropic results of recent years, which has produced successive years of record fundraising—including the completion of the Faith Rising campaign, which raised $187 million in four years. We invest these resources in the next generation, in developing leaders for the global church. Gordon College values the Christian tradition of openness to inquiry and truth—of “freedom within a framework of faith,” to cite a phrase frequently heard on campus. This is a place that takes the life of the mind and the life of faith seriously.

Consistent with its founding vision, Gordon’s identity and reach are worldwide. A high percentage of students take advantage of Gordon’s well-regarded global experiential programs, gaining the essential personal and professional skills needed in a world that is increasingly interconnected. Gordon alumni are best-selling authors, business leaders, visionary entrepreneurs, effective public servants, Broadway actors, scientists, Ivy League professors, and faithful pastors—to name just a few vocations—in virtually every region of the world. The combined blessings of location, heritage, scholarship and global vision continue to inspire the mission of Gordon College: to graduate women and men distinguished by intellectual maturity and Christian character, committed to lives of service and prepared for leadership worldwide.

The Opportunity:

In recent years, the College has enjoyed banner years in terms of campus diversity, sponsored research, fundraising, athletic success and faith expression on campus. The Vice President for Student Life will join an experienced senior leadership team that serves the largest Christian community (over 20,000 including students, faculty, staff and alumni) in the global capital of higher education. This is an exciting, strategic place to serve in advancing the mission of God.

The Vice President for Student Life leads the entire co-curricular dimension of the Gordon experience for undergraduate students and works closely with the academic division to integrate with curricular programs. Recognizing the value in a holistic student experience, particularly one supported by a strong Christian community, the Vice President for Student Life provides thoughtful, strategic leadership for all initiatives that contribute to students’ social, spiritual and vocational development and formation. This position provides oversight to Student Life, the First-Year Experience, Chapel Office, the Counseling Center, the Health Center, Residence Life, the La Vida Center for Outdoor Education and Leadership, the International Student Organization, the Multicultural Initiatives Office and the Career and Connection Institute (which houses several other programs including the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership), Campus Events Council, the Bennett Center, Athletics, and all student programming including student activities, recreation/intramurals and leadership development.

MAJOR ROLES FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT LIFE

Development and Formation. The Vice President for Student Life will leverage his/her expertise to catalyze the social, spiritual and vocational development and formation of Gordon students. The Vice President will lead all Student Life teams and embody a “player-coach” mentality (as a working administrator) that models for the entire campus how to live and work in a Christian community. Live Out Shalom. The Vice President for Student Life will provide leadership and support for diversity and the College’s commitment to advancing intercultural literacy among students as outlined in the Shalom Statement. Organizational Culture Design. The Vice President for Student Life builds a campus culture that recognizes, rewards, challenges, and develops staff members to expand their skills and effectiveness to provide the best support and opportunities for Gordon students. He or she engenders and embodies hospitality, integrity, collaboration and celebration.
In engagement, programming and relationships, the Vice President will demonstrate and equip students to have healthy civic engagement, to practice listening, respect and interdependence even amid disagreements. He or she will foster an environment of trust, hospitality, integrity, collaboration and celebration. The Vice President for Student Life will focus on three critical areas of formation and discipleship: intercultural competence (healthy relationships among the Body of Christ), embodied discipleship (healthy relationship to God and self), and civic engagement for the common good (healthy relationships with those outside the Body)—with the ultimate goal of equipping the next generation of Christian leaders to engage with the issues of the day.

As Gordon has increased its academic offerings to include more graduate programs and fully online degrees, specifically for adult learners, the definition of a student is evolving beyond the traditional, residential, undergraduate profile. The Vice President for Student Life will envision and enact care for a new kind of student body comprised of diverse ages and locations.

The Vice President for Student Life reports to the President and serves as a key member of the President’s Cabinet. Responsibilities of the Vice President for Student Life include the following:

- Guides the College on all matters of Student Life.
- Provides leadership and support for diversity and the College’s commitment to advancing intercultural literacy among students as outlined in the College’s Shalom Statement.
- Serves as the final arbitrator and decision maker on Title IX rulings that are appealed.
- Recruits, hires, reviews and leads personnel in Student Life, including all relevant departments; makes recommendations for salaries, promotions and terminations.
- Provides leadership and administrative supervision for Student Life, including the First-year Experience, Chapel Office, the Counseling Center, the Health Center, Residence Life, the La Vida Center for Outdoor Education and Leadership, the International Student Organization, the Multicultural Initiatives Office and the Career and Connection Institute (which houses several other programs including the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership), Campus Events Council, the Bennett Center, Athletics, and all student programming including student activities, recreation/intramurals and leadership development.
- Working collaboratively with the Chaplain, provides broad oversight to the Chapel Office in the development of worship, ministry and service opportunities to enrich the spiritual growth of students.
- Advises and counsels students.
- Recommends and annual budget for campus life to the President and Senior Working Group and oversees its implementation.
- Evaluates and identifies student facility needs and makes recommendations regarding use, renovation or construction.
- Completes other responsibilities as assigned by the President.

What makes working at Gordon great?

This is a campus that loves God, and strong Christian values infuse every aspect of our workplace.

The vibrancy of smart, faithful college students, two-thirds of whom work on campus every year. As Gordon senior leaders, we interact on a daily basis with the future leaders of the church and the College provides release time for you to have the chance to mentor and support them in a variety of ways.

A generous benefits package, which includes ample paid vacation and sick leave, a weeklong holiday break between Christmas and New Year’s that requires no additional vacation time, and competitive medical and dental benefits packages that include an array of provider options.

A beautiful, park-like campus environment with hundreds of acres of woods and lakes to walk and explore. Great coffee shops and restaurants are close by and the vibrant arts, sports, shopping, and cuisine culture of the city of Boston is an easy drive away.

A mission-led organization that wants employees to deepen in their professional, personal, and spiritual strengths and is committed to colleagues’ growth.

Tuition remission for you and your family members, including opportunities at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and other Christian institutions across the nation.
The Candidate:

We are looking for an energetic, irenic, thoughtful leader who feels called to serve the next generation through student development leadership. We recognize that God has gifted every person with unique gifts and backgrounds, and while the selected candidate may not meet every qualification, we believe there are several things that are important for Gordon’s Vice President for Student Life, including the following:

- A Christian leader who professes faith in Jesus Christ as Lord; accepts Gordon’s Statement of Faith; practices Christian values in daily interactions with students, faculty, staff and the public as outlined by Gordon’s Life and Conduct Statement; works to advance Gordon’s mission through this position; and is actively involved in Christian ministry and local church life.
- A collaborator who reflects godly character, excellent work ethic, an optimistic outlook, confident humility and impeccable integrity.
- An articulate, positive communicator who can collaborate, motivate and delegate among a team of high-energy colleagues.
- A bridge builder who can naturally develop and maintain relationships at both the individual and institutional levels.
- A firm commitment to the highest ethical standards and the ideals for Christian living and leadership.
- An inspiring, magnetic leader who can win the trust and confidence of the College community and develop alignment around the College’s priorities.
- A wise decision-maker who can both seize opportunities and thoughtfully manage complex issues.
- A resourceful entrepreneur who can stretch limited resources for maximum impact.
- A trustworthy diplomat who maintains confidences, exercises confidentiality when necessary, embodies sound judgment in complex situations and engenders extraordinary trust.

All campus leaders at Gordon must exhibit strong interpersonal and communication skills, and we are looking for a senior colleague who can take Student Life to a new level. In essence, we seek a gifted leader, not merely an effective manager. As a result, we are looking for someone with a high level of initiative, a compelling vision for what Student Life looks like in the future, and a deep commitment to serving others. The candidate will need to be able to set the proper tone—one of urgency and high expectations, but one that is also ethical, collaborative, and Christ-honoring in all things. Senior leaders at Gordon have a track record of exceeding professional goals and managing multiple responsibilities in a high-volume, fast-paced environment. We want to build a distinctively Christian workplace where goals are regularly met and exceeded, and people are cared for. And because we want the Gordon campus to reflect the shalom of God’s Kingdom, the senior leaders at Gordon seek to show an appreciation of, a sensitivity to, and a respect for a diverse environment that draws people from many different social, economic, cultural, ideological, racial and ethnic backgrounds. As a result, the Vice President for Student Life should be committed shepherding that kind of student body as well.

The ideal candidate will fully embrace the unique mission of Gordon College and the ethos of collaborative decision-making that sets higher education apart from other sectors. We believe the best leaders at Gordon also embody a liberal arts mindset that thinks across domains of knowledge and forges connections across ideas, people, and organizations.

The Vice President will need to embody sound judgment, the highest ethical standards, and a commitment to the ideals for Christian living and leadership. We would prefer for the candidate to have extensive experience in leading student development at diverse organizations. The ideal candidate has a track record of successful collaboration and excellent communication. Because Student Life often happens outside the regular work day, the Vice President for Student Life must be able to work nights and weekends, as needed.

The Vice President for Student Life will hold a bachelor’s and master’s degree and a record of professional distinction. A doctorate or equivalent experience is desired. She or he will have leadership and management
experience and affinity for the unique culture of a Christian college that prizes academic rigor, collaboration across campus, and exceeding goals.

The Vice President for Student Life, like all Gordon faculty and staff, is expected to live in a vital relationship with Jesus Christ, and, in being a senior leader of Gordon College, to be grounded in biblical wisdom, a church community and ongoing spiritual practices. The selected candidate will have a record of active involvement in Christian ministry and local church life and can enthusiastically support the College’s Statement of Faith, Life and Conduct Statement, and Philosophy of Education. The candidate will reflect godly character, an excellent work ethic, an optimistic outlook, confident humility, and impeccable integrity.