Associate Vice President for Academic and Enterprise IT Solutions

[Rice University](#) invites nominations and applications for the newly created position of Associate Vice President for Academic and Enterprise IT Solutions (AVP). Reporting to the University's Vice President for Information Technology & Chief Information Officer (VP-CIO), the Associate Vice President is a pivotal senior-level technology leadership role designed to drive excellence across technology services that directly enable the University's academic and administrative operations. The new position sits on the leadership team of the Office of Information Technology (OIT) that the Vice President leads as a unit within the University's Division of Operations, Finance & Support (OF&S).

Information Technology at Rice

The Office of Information Technology is the University's central technology provider, supporting research, academic and administrative systems, and other core applications as well as voice, network, and computing infrastructure for the Rice community. OIT is an integral part of Rice and is committed to supporting the University's mission through innovative uses of technology and service excellence. The University's Vice President for IT & Chief Information Officer leads OIT, reporting to the Executive Vice President for Operations, Finance, & Support.

In the 2023-2024 academic and fiscal year, building on extensive work to stabilize its implementation of the Oracle ERP platform, Rice completed a technology maturity assessment and developed a plan to reconceive its enterprise IT portfolio to align services and solutions by customer rather than by platform. The VP-CIO shared the vision for this new paradigm, dubbed the Service-Oriented Operating Model, in March 2024 and set in motion a wave of organizational changes called for in the implementation plan, along with a re-conception of IT governance that will create institutional scaffolding to sustain this new paradigm.

The elements of this new vision for OIT come together in its [IT Excellence](#) portfolio, which establishes OIT as a strategic partner across the University by enhancing IT services, technology infrastructure, and operational processes, fostering data-informed decision-making, and driving innovation to elevate customer experience and support the success of divisions, departments, and units. A central premise of the IT Excellence portfolio is collaboration – among teams across OIT and with clients and partners across campus. The program is one component of the strategic plan of the [Division of Operations, Finance & Support](#).

As it moves through its reorganization and its appointment of new leaders and a replenished layer of senior management, OIT is organized in six areas, each headed by a direct report to the VP-CIO:

- Academic and Enterprise IT Solutions
- Technology Platforms

- Information Security
- Research Computing
- Finance and Administration
- Strategy and Innovation

The University's end-user community comprises approximately 3700 faculty and staff and 9000 students. OIT employs some 150 professional staff and students (mostly in help-desk roles providing front-line tech support); its FY2025 budget is $30M.

While OIT is the largest IT organization on campus, it operates as only one part of a broader network of IT organizations and practitioners known as IT @ Rice. IT @ Rice is a collaborative and diverse community of technology providers organized to advance the University's mission. The term IT @ Rice includes the University's entire ecosystem of information technology people and systems. This community includes people in IT roles in schools, administrative units, and central IT organization. A group of campus IT leaders meets monthly as the Information Technology Leaders to coordinate services and projects across Rice. The faculty advises on IT prioritization through the IT Council. IT projects and investments are prioritized and approved by the University Committee on Information Technology. The IT Committee of the Board of Trustees provides governance over Information Technology.

The recruitment of the AVP for Academic and Enterprise IT Solutions is a key step in creating the new organizational vision for OIT and of the new value it provides to Rice.

Position Summary

Reporting to the University's Vice President for Information Technology & Chief Information Officer, the Associate Vice President for Academic and Enterprise IT Solutions (AVP) is responsible for Student Lifecycle & Academic Technologies, Core Operations Technology Services, and Data & Analytics. Like every other OIT leadership position, in the context of the IT Excellence initiative the AVP leads their part of OIT in an important paradigm shift whereby they are responsible for enabling the success of all Rice customers – faculty, staff, and students advancing the University's mission in education and research – through the development, delivery, and ongoing optimization of enterprise applications. The strategic focus is now on the customer and the ease, efficiency, and security with which they do the University's work.

The AVP and the Academic and Enterprise IT Solutions team enable excellence in academic and business operations by supporting and continuing to enhance the core management applications of the University. Enterprise business functions supported by the Academic and Enterprise IT Solutions unit include central administrative systems, the University's ERP platform, and student lifecycle technology services.

The AVP's area currently comprises of three teams:

- Student Lifecycle & Academic Technologies manages systems and services to equip students and those who teach/support them with tools and services that promote their success and wellbeing

- <u>Core Operations Technology Services</u> manages enterprise systems to meet business technology needs for central and departmental units including Finance and Human Resources
- <u>Enterprise Data Analytics</u> supports current ERP/HCM solution by providing dashboards and data analysis

Partnering with administrative and technology leaders across Rice University's central and local (school-based) business functions, the AVP cultivates key executive stakeholder relationships, serves as a thought-leader and strategist, and ensures the delivery of superior technology solutions that immediately meet expectations and advance operations.

Within OIT, the AVP works closely with colleagues who lead Research Computing; Security; Strategy & Innovation; and Infrastructure. Beyond OIT, the AVP will collaborate actively with the campus community who are building capacity in data analytics, strategic planning, and change management to co-create and implement this exciting vision of a transformed and transformative enterprise IT organization.

Essential Functions

- With colleagues across OIT and OF&S, co-design and co-create the new paradigm for enterprise solutions that enable users across Rice to perform their work efficiently, effectively, confidently, and securely
- Design and lead efforts to align enterprise architecture and customer experience with business objectives that enable the Rice mission
- Lead strategic planning for enterprise solutions across OF&S in collaboration with the VP-CIO and other leaders
- Manage relationships with academic and administrative departments to ensure service excellence
- Collaborate with various departments to implement innovative solutions
- Enhance technology services to improve user experience and operational efficiency
- Ensure high-quality service delivery through the effective use of KPIs and SLAs
- Partner with platform engineering to select appropriate infrastructure options and disaster recovery strategies
- Guide on security, scalability, and reliability for various technology solutions
- Promote technology services that support accessibility
- Refine and manage the service catalog to meet evolving needs

Competencies and Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have a proven record of managing innovative, service-oriented, and collaborative teams as a creative thinker, problem solver, and leader. They will also have deep experience and knowledge of enterprise resource planning systems for integrating and managing core business processes along with demonstrated ability to leverage data analytics to drive decision-making and service improvements.

Competencies
The qualities, competencies, and experiences candidates should bring will ideally include a combination of the following key characteristics:

Trust Building and Stakeholder Engagement
- Foster trust across the campus by being transparent, reliable, consistent, and solution-oriented in communication and execution
- Ensure clear, consistent, and timely communication with all constituents, maintaining a service-oriented mindset and addressing challenges with integrity

Collaboration and Cross-functional Leadership
- Lead through collaboration, working across departments and with external partners to achieve shared goals
- Cultivate strong, collaborative relationships with academic, research, and administrative units to develop and implement IT solutions that enhance institutional success
- Establish intentional periodic check-ins to support active collaboration efforts

Agility and Responsiveness
- Be adaptive and responsive to the dynamic needs of the university community, ensuring swift, effective service delivery
- Anticipate challenges and pivot quickly to address issues, with a focus on creating seamless and user-friendly experiences

Operational Excellence and Continuous Improvement
- Maintain a culture of continuous improvement in all IT operations to ensure efficient and effective service delivery
- Regularly assess and optimize processes, systems, and technologies to enhance performance, scalability, and user satisfaction

Qualifications
Minimum qualifications:

- An undergraduate degree and seven or more years of progressively responsible experience in strategic planning, process improvement, change management, or related activities, including proven experience in leading technical teams and implementing technology-based initiatives
- Experience leading successful implementations of major enterprise systems in functional areas such as finance, HR, or student services

- At least five years of experience leading and supervising personnel
- Experience in managing cross-functional teams and fostering a collaborative work environment
- Experience with various continuous integration/deployment models for large organizations, along with the acumen needed to adopt and integrate such practices into a dynamic academic environment
- A record of experience in technology support models and IT service management
- A demonstrated history of building and maintaining effective teams as well as successfully leading and driving strategic change in complex, distributed organizations
- A mature grasp of the principles of change management

Preferred/additional qualifications:

- Relevant credentials or certifications in service delivery such as the ITIL Framework
- An advanced degree in a related technology or management field
- Technology leadership experience in higher education
- Experience with Banner and/or Oracle
- Professional activity at the national level

Rice University

Founded in 1912, William Marsh Rice University is a comprehensive research university located in the heart of Houston, Texas adjacent to the Texas Medical Center, the Museum District, and Hermann Park. Boasting a 300-acre tree-lined campus, Rice University is consistently ranked among the nation's top 20 universities by *U.S. News & World Report*. Rice has a 6-to-1 undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio, and a residential college system, which supports students intellectually, emotionally, and culturally through social events, intramural sports, student plays, lectures series, courses, and student government. Developing close-knit, diverse college communities is a strong campus tradition, which is why Rice is highly ranked for best quality of life and best value among private universities.

Rice is committing to unparalleled excellence as they work to become the premier university in the world for teaching and research. They won't do it like any other institution. They will do it with humanity for the good of humankind. They will do it on a personalized scale as only Rice can.

The Rice Experience is their excellence and their culture of care — the close interactions between faculty and students, the interdisciplinary connectedness of their fields of study, the commitment and ownership to Rice and their community. Learn more about Rice University's newly launched ten-year strategic plan *Momentous*.

Rice has 671 full-time and 210 part-time instructional faculty members and a student population of approximately 3,800 undergraduate and 2,800 graduate students. The University has eight schools: the Shepherd School of Music, the School of Architecture, the School of Social Sciences, the School of Humanities, the George R. Brown School of Engineering, the Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Business, the Wiess School of Natural Sciences, and the Susanne M. Glasscock School of Continuing Studies.

In [FY2024](#), Rice reported revenues of $1.16B. As of June 30, 2024, its endowment was valued at $8.66B.

To Apply

Rice University has engaged [Opus Partners](#) to assist this search. [Craig Smith](#), Senior Partner, and [Thomas Lapierre](#), Senior Associate, are leading the search. For additional information or to nominate qualified candidates, please email Thomas at thomas.lapierre@opuspartners.net. To be considered for the position, candidates must formally apply via Opus Partners and must provide a resume and a cover letter that addresses the responsibilities and qualifications of the AVP role.

Rice [Benefits Overview](#). Rice [Mission and Values](#).

Rice University is committed to ensuring Equal Employment Opportunity and welcoming the fullness of diversity into our candidate pools. Rice considers qualified applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, genetic information, disability, or protected veteran status. Rice also provides reasonable accommodations to qualified persons with disabilities. If an applicant requires a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application or hiring process, please contact Rice University's Disability Resource Center at 713-348-5841 or adarice@rice.edu for support.