



Associate Vice President for Technology Platforms

[Rice University](#) invites nominations and applications for the role of Associate Vice President for Technology Platforms (AVP). Reporting to the University's Vice President for Information Technology & Chief Information Officer, the AVP will be responsible for infrastructure architecture, collaboration platforms, performance, availability, incident, capacity, configuration, and change-management processes and for the tools to support 24x7 uptime and availability SLAs. With a vision for core technologies that foregrounds the user experience and emphasizes reliability, efficiency, scalability, and sustainability, the AVP will pursue an optimal balance of innovation and standardization in the technologies that enable Rice to operate, its constituents to accomplish their work, and the University to advance its mission. The AVP will be a strategic leader who can navigate the complexities of a university environment while also being a pragmatic manager who ensures the smooth, efficient, and accountable delivery of enabling technologies and supporting services.

Information Technology at Rice

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) 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 Finance & Administration.

In the 2023-2024 academic and fiscal year, building on extensive work to stabilize its implementation of the Oracle cloud 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 VPIT-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 middle management, OIT is organized in five areas, each headed by a direct report to the VP-CIO:

- Constituent Technology Services
- Technology Platforms
- Information Security
- Research Computing
- Finance and Administration

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. For additional information about OIT and about IT at Rice more broadly, go to <https://oit.rice.edu>.

While OIT is the largest IT organization on campus, it sees itself 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. 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.

Position Summary

Reporting to the University's Vice President for Information Technology & Chief Information Officer, this Associate Vice President (AVP) position is responsible for Platform Engineering & Infrastructure and Network & Connectivity. The AVP leads teams dedicated to technology and support services in two portfolios:

- Platform Engineering & Infrastructure: managing and modernizing platforms that improve OIT's operation and service delivery, such as collaboration and email platform, storage, and compute
- Network & Connectivity: maintaining the University network and sustaining connectivity, where resources include the data center, network infrastructure, and telecom

Through these teams, the AVP is responsible for infrastructure architecture, performance, availability, incident, capacity, configuration, and change-management processes and for the tools to support 24x7 uptime and availability SLAs.

With a focus on reliability, efficiency, scalability, and sustainability, the AVP will pursue an optimal balance of innovation and standardization in the technology that enables Rice to operate and its constituents to accomplish their work. They will provide leadership in the design and development of network, storage, collaboration, and compute architectures, pinpoint problem areas, uphold product quality, and drive innovation and design with constant engagement across a variety of University stakeholders. First and foremost, they and their teams will engage the IT @ Rice community to understand, align, and advance.

While in many technology and service areas such as network infrastructure and telecom, OIT is the provider of institution-wide technologies, in other areas – notably in collaboration platforms such as email and calendaring – there are disparate systems supported by different user communities. By building trust and advancing conversations about sustainability, efficient support, and security within the framework of IT governance, the AVP will guide the ongoing integration of enterprise technology platforms and infrastructure, as OIT advances a value proposition measured by user experience.

The AVP will manage an expense budget of \$6M and lead a staff of 40 FTEs comprising engineers, technicians, supervisor, and managers.

Qualifications and Competencies

The AVP is a leadership role that will touch all facets of infrastructure operations, partnering with colleagues across OIT, notably in Information Security, and with members of the IT @ Rice collaborative. Success in this role involves understanding user needs and aligning user expectations and experiences in a coherent, sustainable set of solutions and services that advance institutional goals in a constituent-rich environment. The AVP will succeed through their ability to align interests across the University's IT ecosystem through their domain expertise, their ability to position their team as partners in and enablers of University operations, their awareness of the role IT plays in advancing the academic mission, and their sound business sense. An excellent leader in this context must be a visionary who can navigate the complexities of a university environment, while also being a pragmatic manager who ensures the smooth and efficient operation of IT services. The AVP will balance technical expertise with mature interpersonal and strategic skills.

The ideal candidate will have a proven track record of managing innovative, service-oriented, and collaborative teams as a creative thinker, problem solver, and leader. They will also have experience delivering large-scale, enterprise-class platforms and infrastructure in a decentralized or distributed organization.

Competencies

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

- *Technical Proficiency*: a deep understanding of IT systems relevant to Rice and the ability to sustain continuous learning for themselves and their team
- *Strategic Vision*: long-term planning to align IT strategy and investments with the University's overall mission and goals, advanced through innovation and execution
- *Effective Communication*: ability to communicate complex technical concepts to a range of audiences and soliciting and acknowledging the hopes and concerns of the University community and the OIT team
- *Focus on User Experience*: prioritizing the needs of students, faculty, and staff in the design and implementation of IT services, ensuring that they are user-friendly and accessible; regularly seeking and acting on feedback from users across the University to continuously improve IT services
- *Collaboration and Relationship Building*: sustaining open and reciprocal relationships with other departments to ensure IT initiatives support the broader goals of the University, and fostering a

collaborative and trusting environment within Technology Platforms and the broader OIT organization

- *Ownership and Accountability*: sustaining full responsibility for challenges that arise within the organization, whether they are technical issues, project delays, or unforeseen obstacles; establishing and supporting a culture of accountability and continuous improvement through their team; responding to adversity by focusing on the immediate problem while also seeking to address root causes
- *Decision-Making and Problem-Solving*: making informed decisions based on data analysis and evidence, considering both immediate and long-term impacts, and effectively managing unexpected issues with focus on University security and operations
- *Adaptability and Flexibility*: leading with agility and responding wisely to acute or chronic changes in the University enterprise and the IT landscape, and welcoming and supporting change that advances the University's mission or enhances University operations
- *Ethical Leadership*: upholding the highest standards of ethical behavior, especially in managing sensitive data and ensuring cybersecurity, and ensuring that IT policies and practices are fair and transparent and support the diverse needs of the University community
- *Mentorship and Development*: investing in the professional development of the team, providing opportunities for training, mentoring, and career advancement; sustaining a commitment to personal and professional growth that sets an example for the team
- *Resilience*: remaining calm and effective under stress, especially during critical situations such as system outages or security breaches; remaining determined to achieve key strategic and operating objectives
- *Proactive Problem Anticipation*: looking ahead with colleagues and customers to identify potential future problems, monitoring agreed-upon KPIs, and regularly seeing customer feedback
- *Foresight*: an excellent IT leader doesn't just wait for problems to arise; they actively anticipate potential issues before they become critical; establishing policies that effectively guide issue resolution in the Platform Technologies technology and service library

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
- At least five years of experience leading and supervising personnel
- Experience in managing cross-functional teams and fostering a collaborative work environment
- Demonstrated understanding of infrastructure development best practices and methodologies to optimize for quality and efficiency
- 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
- 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 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 that 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 campus tradition, which is why Rice is highly ranked for best quality of life and best value among private universities.

Known for fostering diversity and an intellectual environment that produces the next generation of leaders and advances tomorrow's thinking, 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.

As a leading research university with a distinctive commitment to undergraduate education, Rice aspires to path-breaking interdisciplinary research, unsurpassed teaching, and contributions to the betterment of our world. It advances these goals by cultivating a diverse community of learning and discovery that produces leaders across the spectrum of human endeavor, advances interdisciplinary initiatives in research and education, enhances innovation in learning, prepares students for leadership, carries scientific breakthroughs into social purpose, and provides opportunities for growth and recognition for students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

In [FY 2023](#), Rice reported revenues of \$989M. As of June 2023, its endowment was valued at \$8.23B.

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 Lapierre 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 an Equal Opportunity Employer with commitment to diversity at all levels and considers for employment qualified applicants without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, genetic information, disability or protected veteran status.