

California Lutheran
UNIVERSITY

SEARCH PROSPECTUS
PROVOST AND CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

Fall 2026



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THE OPPORTUNITY

California Lutheran University President Dr. John A. Nunes invites inquiries, nominations, and expressions of interest for the position of Provost and Chief Academic Officer. The next Provost and Chief Academic Officer will join an institution deeply rooted in its heritage, clear-eyed about the changing realities of higher education, and prepared for thoughtful, decisive academic leadership.

Like many independent, faith-based liberal arts institutions across the country, Cal Lutheran is engaged in an intentional process of renewal to ensure its long-term health and academic distinction. Rather than reacting defensively to sectorwide challenges, the university is actively positioning its programs and resources for the future. The Academic Affairs division has recently undertaken an evaluation designed to foster closer cross-departmental collaboration, eliminate administrative barriers, and ensure that resources directly support the core educational mission.

Under the leadership of President Nunes, the university seeks an intellectually distinguished executive who will partner with the faculty and broader campus to translate these institutional priorities into a shared vision for educational quality. For a transformative, forward-thinking leader who thrives in an innovative and collaborative environment, honors the principles of shared governance, and champions the power of a comprehensive liberal arts undergraduate, graduate, and seminary education, this search presents a remarkably impactful leadership opportunity.



AN INSTITUTION IN REFLECTION AND TRANSITION

Founded in 1959 on land donated by Richard Pederson, the son of Norwegian immigrants, California Lutheran University opened its doors to a small, dedicated cohort of students with a vision of blending rigorous intellectual inquiry with a spirit of global service. Over the subsequent decades, the institution expanded its footprint, adding critical graduate programming and professional schools, and establishing a multi-campus presence that stretches from Southern California up to the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley.

Today, Cal Lutheran operates within a more complex higher education ecosystem. The modern landscape demands that small, private, tuition-dependent universities balance historical traditions with market-responsive adaptations. Cal Lutheran recognizes that navigating the current demographic cliff and shifting student consumer mindsets requires a sophisticated approach to academic planning and a willingness to engage in creative, data-informed program development.

The "Rooted and Open" Tradition

As an institution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Cal Lutheran embraces an educational philosophy described as “rooted and open.” The university fosters a learning environment in which students are encouraged to be open minded about ideas, people, and faith as they grow as individuals. This identity is not restrictive; rather, it serves as the foundation for deep hospitality, intellectual freedom, and a commitment to global justice and service. Our “Lutheran” middle name is a promise that education will form each student as a whole person, spanning academic disciplines and asking hard questions about meaning, justice, and purpose. At Cal Lutheran, students are known, challenged, and shaped by an educational tradition that sets them free to discover their calling and use their gifts for the good of the world. The next Provost and Chief Academic Officer must appreciate this tradition — understanding how a faith-informed liberal arts core can enrich modern vocational preparation.

Hispanic-Serving Mission

Officially recognized as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) since 2016, California Lutheran University treats this designation as a vital engine of its academic mission and institutional excellence. Serving a diverse student population is a point of pride across all learning landscapes. The university’s HSI identity is fully integrated into its rigorous undergraduate, graduate, professional, and seminary programs. The incoming Provost and Chief Academic Officer will provide forward-looking leadership to expand equity-minded frameworks that champion student outcomes, ensuring that inclusive practices directly fuel the university’s high academic standards.



THE ACADEMIC ENTERPRISE/PROGRAMS

California Lutheran University delivers its educational mission across six academic units, offering a personalized classroom experience characterized by close faculty-student mentorship, small class sizes, and a focus on undergraduate research and applied graduate scholarship.

- **The College of Arts and Sciences** is the largest academic unit. The College provides the historical, intellectual, and liberal arts foundation for all undergraduate education. The College offers 45 majors and 48 minors spanning disciplines across the humanities, creative arts, natural sciences, and social sciences that foster critical thinking, creative expression, and scientific literacy.
- **The School of Management** offers five undergraduate majors, five minors, and 10 graduate programs, as well as certificate programs. Accredited by The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs, the School of Management is home to three centers: the Center for Economic Research and Forecasting (CERF), the Steven Dorfman Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (HUB101), and the Center for Economics of Social Issues (CESI).
- **The Graduate School of Education** offers seven graduate programs to prepare teachers, counselors, and administrators for careers in education. Accredited by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the GSOE assists in the initial and advanced preparation of teachers and counselors and offers doctoral programs in Educational Leadership for K-12 and Higher Education.
- **The Graduate School of Psychology** comprises three academic graduate programs — Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (accredited by the American Psychological Association), Master of Science in Counseling Psychology (Marital and Family Therapy), and a Master of Science in Clinical Psychology — and a Community Counseling Center that offers quality counseling services to individuals, couples, families, adolescents, and children while providing intensive clinical training for Cal Lutheran students.
- **The School for Professional and Continuing Studies (SPCS)** recognizes the unique needs of adult and nontraditional learners and provides accelerated, flexible learning pathways through its Bachelor's Degree for Professionals program, alongside hosting the Center for Nonprofit Leadership and the Center for Lifelong Learning.
- **Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary**, located in Berkeley, California, is one of seven seminaries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and a founding member of the Graduate Theological Union. The seminary provides theological education for the training of clergy and lay leaders and offers ordination, nonordination, and research-level degrees and certificates in a fully online format.



CAMPUS LIFE, STUDENT PROFILE, AND ATHLETICS

The Student Profile

Cal Lutheran is home to a dedicated learning community serving more than 3,000 students, comprising approximately 2,100 undergraduate and almost 1,000 graduate learners who represent 49 countries and a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. The student body is diverse and reflects California's demographic composition: 58% of traditional undergraduate students come from underrepresented groups, and 34% of incoming freshmen are first-generation college students. To foster an inclusive environment of learning, the university's faculty is composed of 38% people of color.

Student Life & Campus Engagement

Student life at Cal Lutheran is designed to cultivate holistic individual growth, community responsibility, and leadership skills. Reflecting a deeply residential campus identity, approximately 57% of traditional undergraduates reside on campus in 15 modern, well-appointed residence halls. Cal Lutheran offers three living-learning communities within the residential curriculum that are co-supported by Residence Life and select faculty members: University Honors, Global Leaders, and STEM. Campus engagement is driven by more than 60 student-led clubs, academic honor societies, media organizations, and student government associations that keep the campus vibrant outside of regular instructional hours. The university also maintains a robust spiritual life infrastructure through the Campus Ministry office, which welcomes students of all faith backgrounds and nonbeliefs to engage in regular worship, interfaith dialogue, and local or global service-learning initiatives.

A Championship Athletic Tradition

Intercollegiate athletics are a massive source of pride and campus cohesion at Cal Lutheran. The university's student-athletes compete at the NCAA Division III level as proud members of the Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SCIAC). Cal Lutheran sponsors 23 varsity sports, offering a balanced array of men's and women's programs:

- **Men's Varsity Sports:** Baseball, basketball, cross-country, football, golf, soccer, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, volleyball, and water polo.
- **Women's Varsity Sports:** Basketball, cross-country, flag football, golf, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, volleyball, and water polo.

Cal Lutheran athletics has achieved immense national distinction. During the 2023–2024 academic year, the university reached a historic high mark when both the **Regals Women's Soccer** team and the **Kingsmen Men's Volleyball** team captured NCAA Division III National Championships, solidifying the university's reputation for cultivating elite student-athletes who excel equally in the classroom and on the national stage.



REGIONAL FOOTPRINT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Thousand Oaks Community

Cal Lutheran's 225-acre main campus is located in Thousand Oaks, California, a picturesque, mountain-rimmed plateau in the Conejo Valley sitting 900 feet above sea level. Situated halfway between Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, the campus is only 40 miles northwest of downtown L.A. and a short 25-minute drive from the Pacific Ocean. Thousand Oaks is a vibrant city of 123,000 residents that is consistently rated by the FBI as one of the safest cities of its size in the United States, offering an ideal, secure environment for academic pursuit, family life, and community integration.

Deep Institutional Connections

Anchored by its main campus in Thousand Oaks and a regional hub in Santa Maria, alongside the PLTS campus in Berkeley, Cal Lutheran continues to serve as a vital economic, cultural, and intellectual cornerstone for Ventura County and the broader Southern California region. Some examples include:

- [Community Counseling Center](#)
- [Autism and Communication Center](#)
- [Fredrickson Family Early Childhood Center](#)
- [Center for Nonprofit Leadership](#)
- [Center for Economic Research and Forecasting](#)
- [Center for the Economics of Social Issues](#)
- [Steven Dorfman Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#)
- [The Elton and Janice Gallegly Center for Public Service and Civic Engagement](#)
- [KCLU Radio](#)
- [Center for Lifelong Learning](#)
- [Fifty and Better program](#)
- [Kingsmen Shakespeare Company](#)
- [East County Family Justice Center](#)



LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE, AND DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE

University Leadership

Dr. John A. Nunes, President

The Board of Regents permanently appointed Dr. John A. Nunes as the university's ninth president, effective June 1, 2025, following a highly successful tenure as interim president. A respected scholar, ordained Lutheran minister, and former president of Concordia College New York and Lutheran World Relief, President Nunes brings over three decades of mission-focused leadership to the university. He holds degrees from Concordia College, Ann Arbor (BA), Concordia Seminary (MDiv), and the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (ThM and PhD). Under his collaborative cabinet leadership, the university is entering a period of renewed operational transparency, strategic momentum, and an unyielding commitment to institutional excellence.



Academic Affairs Portfolio & Reporting Lines

The next Provost and Chief Academic Officer will inherit a fully integrated, streamlined reporting structure resulting from recent administrative evaluation and restructuring. The direct reporting lines to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer encompass three distinct leadership categories:

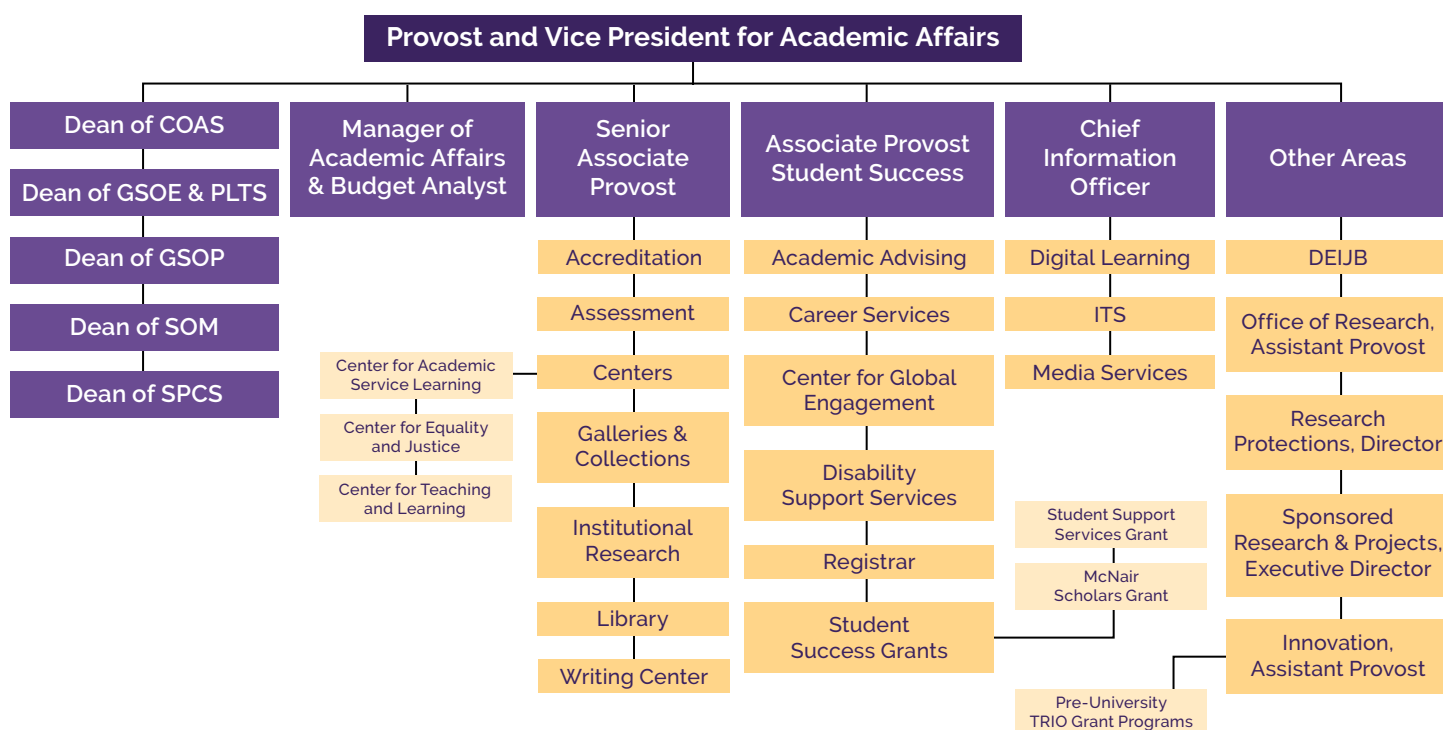
- **Academic Unit Deans:**

- » The Deans of the *College of Arts and Sciences*, *School of Management*, *Graduate School of Education* and *Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary*, *Graduate School of Psychology*, and the *School for Professional and Continuing Studies* all report directly to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer.

- **Divisional Executive Leadership:**

- » *Senior Associate Provost*: Provides executive leadership and oversight for institutional effectiveness, quality, and assets, directly managing **Accreditation**, **Assessment**, **Institutional Research**, the **Pearson Library**, the **Writing Center**, **Galleries and Collections**, and the university's core **academic centers** (including the Center for Academic Service Learning, the Center for Equality and Justice, and the Center for Teaching and Learning).

- » *Associate Provost for Student Success*: Manages the university's centralized student success ecosystem, including **Academic Advising**, **Career Services**, the **Center for Global Engagement**, **Disability Support Services**, the **Registrar**, and key **student success grants** (such as the Student Support Services Grant and the McNair Scholars Grant).
 - » *Assistant Provost for Academic Innovation*: Serves as a strategic advisor on institutional initiatives spanning academic programs, enrollment pipelines, and community engagement. Directs and provides administrative support for Upward Bound and TRIO Talent Search programs. Leads Cal Lutheran's innovative summer programs including the Pre-College Summer Academy, Camp CLUE (K–8), and Micro-Credential Programs for TK–12 educators and administrators, cultivates relationships with school districts, community organizations, and regional partners to strengthen educational access and pathways into higher education, and designs high school outreach engagement initiatives.
 - » *Assistant Provost for Research*: Provides leadership and coordination for academic year and summer research programs, advises students on research opportunities and graduate school pathways, leads faculty research mentorship programs, provides overall leadership for major campus research events including the Student Research Symposium and Festival of Scholars, and partners with **University Advancement** to strengthen and coordinate donor engagement.
 - » *Chief Information Officer (CIO)*: Manages the technological infrastructure supporting the academic enterprise, including **Information Technology Services (ITS)**, **Digital Learning**, and **Media Services**.
 - » *Manager of Academic Affairs and Budget Analyst*: Serves as the division's principal operational and financial partner, managing the Office of the Provost staff, its comprehensive academic budgets and financial analysis while overseeing faculty contract compliance, hiring logistics, and strategic planning support on behalf of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer.
- **Additional Portfolio Work:**
- » Academic DEIJB Initiatives: Leads divisionwide frameworks that operationalize diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and belonging within the curriculum, faculty recruitment, and academic policies, ensuring alignment with Cal Lutheran's HSI designation.
 - » University Research: Beyond the work of the *Assistant Provost for Research* in the **Office of Research**, **Sponsored Research** (grant acquisition and extramural funding) and **Research Protections** (compliance, institutional review boards, and research integrity) serve to champion faculty and student scholarship.



THE LEADERSHIP AGENDA:

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES

At California Lutheran University, an enduring Lutheran educational heritage forms the foundation for a comprehensive liberal arts and professional curriculum. Rather than viewing career readiness and intellectual exploration as competing priorities, Cal Lutheran integrates both to foster deep personal vocation, ethical inquiry, and community engagement. The university's educational model is structured to ground academic discovery in civic responsibility, preparing graduates to navigate an increasingly complex global landscape with purpose and clarity.

The incoming Provost and Chief Academic Officer arrives during a period of intentional academic and administrative renewal. Guided by a newly established leadership team, the university is actively evaluating its academic enterprise to ensure long-term institutional health, market relevance, and mission alignment. This transition demands a chief academic officer who will collaborate transparently with President Nunes and the faculty to direct rigorous, data-informed program reviews. The mandate requires balancing structural and fiscal sustainability with unwavering advocacy for educational excellence, student success, and the vitality of the faculty.

To lead the academic division through this pivotal evolution, the next Provost and Chief Academic Officer will focus on several critical strategic priorities:

- **Driving Curricular Innovation and Market Relevance:** The incoming Provost and Chief Academic Officer will inspire faculty to champion forward-looking curriculum development and creative instructional delivery methods across undergraduate, graduate, professional, and seminary spaces. In close collaboration with the newly appointed Assistant Provost for Academic Innovation, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer will drive strategic initiatives that expand academic programs and enhance enrollment pipelines. This dynamic partnership will address contemporary educational realities by advancing AI literacy, navigating a shifting federal regulatory landscape, and embedding career preparedness within a rigorous liberal arts framework. Together, they will lead innovative summer programs, including the Pre-College Summer Academy and Micro-Credential Programs, while cultivating strong relationships with school districts and community organizations to strengthen educational access and pathways into higher education. These efforts will ensure Cal Lutheran remains at the forefront of academic excellence and community engagement.
- **Leading Empathetic Change and Fostering Collaboration:** Managing a successful institutional evolution requires an emotionally intelligent leader who communicates with exceptional transparency. Acting as a collaborative bridge-builder, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer will work to not only dissolve historical operational silos but also foster interdisciplinary collaboration and team-based teaching. Emphasizing the role of teachers as coaches and mentors, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer will realign compensation and reward systems to support these innovative models. Engaging authentically with the Faculty Senate, Faculty Assembly, Staff Senate, and academic deans, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer must adeptly handle organizational complexity, manage conflict constructively, rebuild institutional trust, and advocate for a new shared governance model that promotes shared risk and reward with all stakeholders and the university.
- **Elevating Academic Excellence and the Scholar-Teacher Model:** Grounded in a commitment to redefining academic excellence, the leader will provide the intellectual oversight necessary to ensure robust regional (WSCUC) and specialized accreditations, while maximizing the impact of federal student success grants. The Provost and Chief Academic Officer will elevate the scholar-teacher model by setting high standards for academic distinction across faculty, departments, and interdisciplinary programs. By clearly defining professional growth and expected returns on investment, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer will ensure that resources such as sabbaticals, trainings, and leadership development are used strategically to drive innovation and excellence. This entails identifying innovative structural synergies between the undergraduate and graduate divisions, securing funding sources, defining high-impact teaching methods, and encouraging financially sustainable faculty research that is rooted in the Lutheran liberal arts tradition of critical inquiry, is vocationally guided, and aligns with the university's mission of educating leaders for a global society.

- **Practicing Data-Informed Fiscal and Resource Stewardship:** Partnering closely with the Academic Affairs financial and management team, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer must leverage sophisticated financial acumen to navigate complex institutional budgets. This requires the capacity to make objective, data-informed choices regarding resource allocation to ensure the long-term vitality, efficiency, and mission alignment of all academic programs. Furthermore, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer will think entrepreneurially to cultivate new revenue streams, collaborating with University Advancement to capture corporate partnerships, foundation grants, and sponsored research funding.
- **Advancing a Vibrant Institutional Identity:** Rooted in Lutheran tradition, Cal Lutheran cultivates critical inquiry, humility, and equity while developing the whole person, preparing leaders equipped with character and conviction to discover their purpose and tackle societal challenges. Cal Lutheran attracts a diverse student body and supports their success through personalized engagement and innovative programs like our Pathways Program, which prepare students for careers and lives of leadership, advocacy, and purpose. The Provost and Chief Academic Officer will be instrumental in advancing this vibrant identity while also leading a campus that is deeply intellectual, agile, and responsive to evolving needs of students. This can be achieved, in part, through interdisciplinary collaboration, increasing academic programming opportunities centered on intellectual exchange, enhancing shared governance practices to promote collective responsibility in attaining institutional goals, and guiding strategic initiatives that align with the university's mission and vision. Through these efforts, the Provost and Chief Academic Officer will ensure that Cal Lutheran continues to make an impactful contribution to society through scholarship and experiential learning, while remaining steadfast in its commitment to prepare graduates for lifelong success.



EXPECTATIONS AND DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

To advance California Lutheran University's academic mission, the university seeks an innovative and strategic leader who prioritizes academic excellence and institutional differentiation. The next Provost and Chief Academic Officer will be a transformative presence across the campus community — one who fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, champions innovative pedagogical practices, and leverages academic and co-curricular synergies to enhance student success. Desired attributes, requirements, and qualifications include:

- An earned doctorate or terminal degree and a record of scholarly achievement meriting the rank of a tenured full professor at California Lutheran University.
- Successful, progressive higher education administrative leadership experience (e.g., Dean, Associate Provost, Provost) with a deep, expert understanding of faculty affairs, student affairs, research, service, and teaching across both undergraduate and graduate models.
- Proven capacity for effective change management within a complex academic ecosystem, including a demonstrated track record of successfully guiding stakeholders toward innovative pathways and leading through ambiguity and organizational change.
- Exceptional financial acumen and strategic planning skills with evidence of the ability to oversee a significant portfolio of academic programs and drive pedagogical change by partnering with faculty to assess and scale innovative instructional models that modernize teaching practice, align with market demand, and enhance academic rigor and institutional reputation.
- A commitment to the principles of shared governance, proactive faculty collaboration, and inclusive decision-making, with strong leadership skills and the ability to listen and align stakeholders toward common goals.
- A visible, accessible, and relational leadership style defined by active listening and the capacity to serve as an effective leader and champion for students, faculty, staff, and administrators, building authentic partnerships across regents and external communities.
- Demonstrated experience recruiting and retaining talented faculty and staff, combined with a clear vision for ensuring student success through innovative academic programs, responsive and accessible support services, and opportunities to build meaningful community on and off campus.
- A deep passion for the value of a Lutheran liberal arts education centered around Cal Lutheran's commitment to serving students of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and faiths.



PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDACY

Applications, nominations, and inquiries can be directed in confidence to the university's executive search firm partners, AGB.



