



U.S. Steel Dean, Swanson School of Engineering

Position Description

The University of Pittsburgh invites nominations and applications for, as well as confidential expressions of interest in, the position of U.S. Steel Dean of the Swanson School of Engineering.

The University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) seeks an eminent, energetic, strategic, driven, and collaborative leader to serve as the dean of the Swanson School of Engineering. The dean is responsible for all aspects of Engineering research activities, academic programs, fundraising, finances, outreach, and other operations. The dean is charged with the responsibility of maintaining the highest standards of research, scholarship, and teaching and of fostering meaningful relationships with institutional, industry, and community partners. As a member of the University of Pittsburgh academic leadership team, the dean works closely with faculty, staff, students, the provost, and the chancellor, to manage the engineering programs and resources in furtherance of the University's academic and institutional goals.

The University of Pittsburgh first awarded engineering degrees in 1846, making it one of the oldest engineering programs in the world. In 2007, the school received a generous naming gift from alumnus John A. Swanson and became known as the Swanson School of Engineering. Today, the Swanson School has 130 tenured/tenure-stream faculty, 50 full-time appointment stream faculty, and 2,640 undergraduate and 800 full-time graduate students. The six departments of the school (Bioengineering, Chemical and Petroleum Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Industrial Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science) cover a broad range of disciplines and conduct world-class research as demonstrated by impressive increases in research activity and expenditures over the past five years. In fiscal year 2023, the total research expenditure of the school exceeded \$61 million. The school boasts 10 programs accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (some have been continuously accredited since 1936), recently completed its self-study process with a very successful site visit, and the school anticipates a positive outcome for each of its 10 programs in summer 2024.

The Swanson School engages in numerous efforts to support faculty and students. The [Center for Faculty Excellence](#) is dedicated to the professional development and success of faculty in the school, with a particular emphasis on supporting junior faculty. With support from the school's [Office of Research](#), early-career faculty in the school have won 22 NFS Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) awards since 2016. For more than a decade, the [Engineering Education Research Center](#) has been working to expand engineering education research and develop approaches to learning that engage students. The school's [Office of Diversity](#) seeks to enhance inclusion and belonging across the school for pre-college students, undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty and staff members. In addition, the Swanson School is globally engaged, hosting more than 2,300 international students since 2015, sending more than 1,400 students to study abroad in more than 200 programs, and engaging in 15 currently active international agreements across 10 countries including a particularly long-standing and successful partnership with Sichuan University in China, known as [SCUPI](#). The school is home to four National Science Foundation Centers, as well as the [Center for Energy](#), and the [Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation](#), which leads sustainability research and education across the University.

A member of the prestigious Association of American Universities, Pitt ranks in the top cluster of U.S. public research universities. The University boasts a long history of [achievements](#) and has received

numerous accolades. Pitt ranked in the top three institutions in funded projects from the National Institutes of Health in 2022 and topped \$1.1 billion in external research expenditures in fiscal year 2023. *U.S. News & World Report (USNWR)* ranks Pitt 45th on its list of the best global universities, placing it in the top three percent of institutions worldwide. Moreover, all programs within the Swanson School of Engineering are ranked within the top 60 in *USNWR* discipline-based graduate rankings, including Bioengineering (21), Industrial Engineering (27), and Chemical Engineering (34).

With a new Chancellor having started in July 2023 and a provost search underway, the University of Pittsburgh is in an exciting period of transition. The next Swanson School dean will have the opportunity to join a coalescing leadership team and to think creatively about how the school can evolve to ensure a bright future for engineering at the University of Pittsburgh. The dean will be expected to develop excellent working relationships with the faculty, staff, students, trustees, and alumni on strategic efforts to advance the academic enterprise; to enhance the quality of undergraduate education and strengthen graduate programs; to navigate the opportunities and challenges presented by emerging instructional technologies; to confront the challenge of decreasing college affordability; and to forge stronger collaborations with other divisions of the University and external partners.

University Leadership

Joan Gabel became the University of Pittsburgh's 19th chancellor on July 17, 2023. Previously, Gabel served as president and chief executive of the University of Minnesota System and Twin Cities campus. Prior to joining the University of Minnesota System, she served as executive vice president for academic affairs and provost at the University of South Carolina and as dean of the Robert J. Trulaske, Sr. College of Business at the University of Missouri. Gabel is the recipient of numerous research, service and teaching awards, including recognition as a Fulbright scholar. She currently serves as chair of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' Council of Presidents, vice chair for the Council on Competitiveness, and on the boards of the American Council on Education and Fulbright (CIES), among others. She holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Haverford College and a Juris Doctor from the University of Georgia School of Law.

Chancellor Gabel has initiated a search for the next provost of the University of Pittsburgh. Working with a search committee, she expects to identify the next permanent incumbent of the role in early 2024.

The U.S. Steel Dean of the Swanson School of Engineering will join Pitt as it reimagines and implements its strategic plan — the Plan for Pitt — which identifies how and where the University wants to grow and improve. Through the reimagined strategic plan, the University will: drive student success; propel scholarship, creativity and innovation; be welcoming and engaged; promote accountability and trust; and act on the “moonshot” opportunities that are possible at Pitt. In addition, Pitt anticipates a forthcoming comprehensive fundraising campaign. The Swanson School dean will lead the school's alignment with University priorities and implementation of strategic initiatives, while also spearheading efforts that advance the school and its community.

The Position

To secure the Swanson School of Engineering's competitiveness for the future, rigorous investment and strategic planning are imperative. Identifying key opportunities demands a comprehensive understanding of emerging trends in engineering education and research. The dean must strategically allocate resources to sustain faculty excellence, enhance research initiatives, and fortify academic programs. This involves fostering collaborations within the school and across the University, as well as leveraging the vibrant Pittsburgh ecosystem for strategic partnerships with industry and research organizations. Furthermore, a forward-looking approach is crucial to navigate the evolving academic landscape, addressing effective adoption of modern instructional technologies and ensuring the quality and modality of degree programs

align with industry demands. Concurrently, the dean should explore innovative graduate programs, emphasizing industry applications, while maintaining a commitment to excellence in doctoral education. The dean of the Swanson School of Engineering reports to the provost and will be expected to fulfill the following leadership opportunities:

Sustain faculty excellence and enhance research and scholarship within Engineering: The Swanson School has highly regarded faculty and programs and competes with other institutions for talent. The dean will need to ensure that the Swanson School remains competitive and attractive to current and prospective faculty, students, and staff and will need to partner with school and University leadership to foster research productivity including garnering funds for large-scale centers and institutes.

Advance undergraduate education: The University of Pittsburgh has a demonstrated commitment to a holistic student experience with substantial investments in advising, co-curricular professional experiences, and international programs. The dean needs to sustain and augment existing efforts to ensure the school's academic quality and student success and experience.

Foster innovation in graduate education: The dean must work with faculty to maintain excellence in doctoral education and grow and develop existing and new innovative graduate and professional programs that are responsive to students' needs and their future career prospects.

Provide leadership in a rapidly changing academic landscape: The dean will be asked to develop and execute strategies to address a variety of critical academic issues, including the quality and modality of degree programs at all levels, the nature and extent of interdisciplinary programs, the configuration of curricular offerings, and enrollment across all academic areas.

Build internal collaboration: There continue to be important opportunities for collaboration across the departments/programs within the school and across schools within the University, including the University's highly regarded health sciences schools. The dean should foster curiosity and dialogue throughout the campus community, enhance current collaborations, support existing University-wide strengths that reside within the school, seek out new opportunities and facilitate their exploration and establishment, and effectively leverage and deepen the excellence in the University's other schools for mutual benefit.

Leverage the surrounding community to strengthen external partnerships: The location of the University offers access to a host of opportunities for strategic initiatives with industry partners and research organizations such as UPMC, Pittsburgh-based federal laboratories, and numerous local robotics and artificial intelligence companies. Commercialization and industrially sponsored research are important revenue streams that will be advanced by cultivating relationships that support the translation of research and ideas into industry. An entrepreneurial dean will reinforce these ties and seek out creative ways to engage local and global partners.

Lead and foster diversity, equity, and inclusion: Diversity is key to academic excellence and institutional strength. The dean will need to support the school's [existing efforts](#) to enhance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging among faculty, staff, and students and lead in the development of new initiatives. The dean should also embrace higher education's role as an engine of economic mobility.

Increase resources through fundraising: The dean will be expected to dedicate significant time and attention to strategic fundraising efforts that increase the school's visibility and appeal to potential donors, funders, and collaborators and secure resources for sustained growth. The dean, working with the Board of Visitors and the Pitt's advancement team, will need to develop a cohesive strategy to position the Swanson School at the forefront of academic excellence and innovation and increase the breadth and depth of the donor pool to ensure that the school is positioned to maintain strong philanthropic relationships in the years to come.

Manage resources to ensure a strong financial future: The dean must work strategically with University and school leaders and the Swanson School community to continue to manage resources transparently and wisely, maintaining sound budgetary controls and principled resource allocation, in order to fulfill the school's mission.

Serve as one of the University's senior leaders, advocating effectively for the Swanson School of Engineering in institutional settings: Deans at the University of Pittsburgh have autonomy within their schools to enact their strategic visions and initiatives. For institutional resource decisions, such as budgetary allocations and capital facilities investments, the dean needs to be an effective advocate in University-wide settings to ensure the Swanson School of Engineering has the resources it needs for the highest success.

Candidates will be expected to have the following professional qualifications and personal characteristics:

Academic stature: Distinguished academic accomplishments, commensurate with appointment at the rank of full professor with tenure in the Swanson School, and appropriate to the leadership of a school with a tradition of excellence in research, teaching, and service;

Academic leadership: Proven ability in fostering and the strong commitment to the continued excellence of research and educational programs, enhancing faculty visibility and recognition, respect for the dedication of an outstanding faculty and staff, and the flexibility to adapt to the rapidly changing academic landscape;

Vision and execution: Demonstrated ability to develop a shared vision and lead its successful execution;

Strategically collaborative: Experience in building partnerships locally and globally, increasing visibility and impact, and advancing economic development and meaningful connections with industry;

Visibility and compelling presence: Ability to be a strong, visible, and accessible presence within and on behalf of the school and to galvanize enthusiasm and unity around a strategic vision;

Strategic decision-making and effective communication: Skill in consolidating the requisite information to make timely and well-informed decisions and the communication abilities to convey decisions and other key information to faculty, senior administrators, trustees, staff, students, alumni, donors, and other constituents, transparently and with empathy;

Management experience and stakeholder understanding: Experience with the management of complex organizational structures, especially the ability to work effectively in a

matrixed decision-making environment, and a strong grasp of the needs of students, faculty, industry, and alumni to drive collaborative success;

Financial acumen: Proven ability in financial management of budgets involving personnel, facilities, programmatic resources, research initiatives, and student success; and

Fundraising skill: Prior experience in development is strongly preferred. The dean serves as the primary fundraiser for the Swanson School of Engineering and must provide vibrant leadership to engage others often and as appropriate on behalf of the school.

Strong candidates must have an earned doctorate and the academic qualifications commensurate with appointment at the rank of full professor with tenure in one of the school's departments, and be recognized for research excellence, leadership, and scholarship in an area relevant to the Swanson School. Additionally, they should have a compelling vision for the future and integration of diverse disciplines, be able to lead and advance a world-class research enterprise, have a strong commitment to holistic education, and have a demonstrated dedication to mentoring and developing faculty and staff. Ideal candidates will have developed center-scale research programs, led successful research collaborations across departments and schools, participated in the development of novel curricula, and have a record of academic and professional leadership. Excellent organizational, interpersonal, and communication skills are required.

The University

Since 1787, Pitt has never stopped pushing the edge of what's possible. From research achievements to the quality of its academic programs, the University of Pittsburgh ranks among the best in higher education. With an enrollment of over 29,000 students on the Pittsburgh campus, Pitt is internationally respected as a center for learning and research.

Faculty members have earned such prestigious honors as the National Medal of Science, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation "genius grant," the Lasker-DeBaakey Clinical Medical Research Award, and election to the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Engineering, the National Academy of Inventors, and received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation. In 2023, Pitt was ranked 16th in the U.S. for patent production. Staff members' enthusiasm, talent and dedication to the University's mission ensure smooth and effective institutional operations and an exceptional student experience. Students come to Pitt from all 50 states, three territories, the District of Columbia, and more than 110 countries.

With four regional campuses in Bradford, Greensburg, Johnstown, and Titusville, Pitt offers a vast array of opportunities and more than 650 degree and certificate programs. More than 14,000 faculty members, research associates and postdoctoral associates, and staff members are employed on the Pittsburgh campus, and another 700 work at the University's four regional campuses. Pitt offers generous [benefits](#) and values [work-life balance](#).

The 132-acre Pittsburgh campus, in the vibrant and beautiful Oakland neighborhood, is home to the Cathedral of Learning, a renowned and popular landmark that, at 42 stories, is the tallest academic building in the Western Hemisphere. The Cathedral houses 31 Nationality Rooms, each designed to reflect and celebrate the cultures of the diverse communities of Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh campus is also home to the University's health sciences schools and is co-located with the highly ranked UPMC (formerly University of Pittsburgh Medical Center) and its flagship medical facilities. Pitt has served as an integral partner and a key player in driving the growth of the education and health services super sector in the Pittsburgh metropolitan region.

The City

The University views the city of Pittsburgh as an extension of its campus, and Pittsburgh is no ordinary college town. The city is transforming from an industrial capital to a center of education, research, and innovation. Pitt actively engages with the surrounding community through its [Community Engagement Centers](#), community-driven partnerships and volunteer service. The city hosts a high concentration of influential nonprofits and, as an international center of emerging information technology, is home to companies such as Duolingo, one of Google's national offices, and over 140 robotics companies. The city also has a long history in banking and manufacturing and is becoming a leader in advanced manufacturing technologies and nanotechnology.

The city's reinvention since its days as a smoky steel town has received national acclaim and garnered numerous [accolades](#). Pittsburgh is a vibrant, approachable, midsize city with world-class arts and cultural institutions. Wrapped in rivers, intertwined with trails, and packed with parks, Pittsburgh is a green and outdoor city with fantastic urban views and a famed downtown skyline. In the eyes of its many visitors, Pittsburgh offers a surprising and unexpected experience, with natural beauty, unique terrain and diverse offerings at every turn.

The Search

Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Although the search will remain open until the position is filled, review of candidate materials will begin immediately and materials should be submitted by January 22, 2024, for fullest consideration. Candidates should provide, in confidence, a curriculum vitae, a letter of application that highlights the leadership opportunities and professional qualifications and personal characteristics described in this document, and the names and contact information of five references. References will not be contacted without the prior knowledge and approval of the candidates.

Materials should be sent electronically via email to the University's consultant, Dr. Jonathan Fortescue of Park Square Executive Search, at PittEngineeringDean@parksquare.com. Documents that must be mailed may be sent to Jonathan Fortescue, PhD, Managing Partner, or Kyle Meingast, Partner, Park Square Executive Search, LLC, 225 Franklin Street, 17th Floor, Boston, MA 02110. Phone: 617-401-2991.

The Swanson School of Engineering is fully committed to a diverse academic environment and places high priority on attracting female and underrepresented minority candidates. Candidates from these groups are encouraged to apply for the position.

The University of Pittsburgh is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer and values equality of opportunity, human dignity and diversity. EOE, including disability/vets.



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