



## Assistant Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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### The Opportunity

Valparaiso University invites inquiries, nominations, and applications for the position of assistant vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion (AVP for DEI).

With a campus in the heart of Valparaiso, Indiana, Valparaiso University is a forward-thinking private university committed to strengthening society through engaged teaching, learning, and scholarship. At Valparaiso University, small classes, direct access to faculty, and guaranteed opportunities for real-world projects ensure that its community of learners — 3,100 students in more than 70 majors—all graduate with the ability to think critically and are equipped with the practical skills that today's employers demand. It's why US News and World Report ranks us among the best for undergraduate teaching and value. Click [here](#) for demographic information on our students and faculty.

### The Position

Reporting directly to President José Padilla, the AVP for DEI is charged with shaping, articulating, and enabling Valparaiso University's strategies for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the campus community. DEI is broad in scope with issues regarding age, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, LGBTQ, socioeconomic status and first generation students. At Valpo, DEI seeks to ensure that our students, faculty and staff are treated equitably and fairly, are given opportunities to grow and are made to feel welcome, respected and loved. As a member of the president's cabinet and president's council, this senior leader partners with and influences a broad range of internal and external campus stakeholders. The AVP for DEI advises Valparaiso's senior leadership and Board of Directors on the adoption of strategies that actively support a diverse and inclusive campus community. To this end, the AVP for DEI works collaboratively with the cabinet and council to establish systems of accountability and evaluation, including the continuous monitoring and improvement of institutional DEI goals, using data-informed metrics to measure success and ensure that initiatives are substantively and authentically aligned with Valparaiso University's mission, vision, and values.

The AVP for DEI's scope of responsibility spans the entire university, collaborating with the provost, school deans, academic and administrative departments, and student representatives on enhancing efforts across units of the university through the review and evaluation of current and emerging DEI strategies, programs, practices, and policies.

### Opportunities and Challenges of the Role

The assistant vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion must be a seasoned and enthusiastic champion of DEI work in the context of higher education. It is important that the

AVP for DEI be an experienced leader with the capacity to manage complex issues, committed to diversity at the highest level, and equipped to contribute at both a strategic and operational level.

Within this context, there are several aspects of the AVP for DEI role in which the successful candidate will need to lead after a period of acclimatization and relationship building. These include:

**Thought Partner:**

The new AVP for DEI is joining a strong and collegial president's cabinet and council; all members are respected and experienced leaders in their own right. The president and all council colleagues seek a thought partner to engage with them on moving Valparaiso University towards becoming an actively inclusive and equitable community. The AVP for DEI will also be a member of the Strategic Planning Committee.

**Collaborator:**

The AVP for DEI will be expected to work with administrators to develop and administer strong, collaborative development programs to enhance responsiveness to issues of racial and cultural diversity in the workplace.

**Action Agenda for Promoting Racial Equity and Inclusion (the "Action Agenda"):**

Next to the President, the AVP for DEI will be the chief motivator on campus to inspire, coach, and oversee the University in executing the Action Agenda. This will be "job one" for the AVP for DEI. By coordinating and developing the needed structures and processes, along with a dynamic process of educating the community, the AVP for DEI will facilitate an environment that equips people across campus to lead with inclusive excellence at the forefront of their thinking and action. (The Action Agenda contains five agenda items and is our call to critically examine inequity and a vehicle by which we assist to lay out the strategic vision we will use for working toward a more equitable campus community.)

**Chief Connector:**

There are high expectations that the new AVP for DEI will exemplify a culture of collaboration and partnering, as a clear and transparent communicator and uniter, across all schools and departments of study on our campus. It will be crucial that the new AVP for DEI act as a 'chief connector' by quickly reaching out to all constituencies across the campus to build solid and mutually beneficial relationships that support positive momentum on the Action Agenda and also support the president and his leadership agenda.

**Building a Diverse Student Body:**

The AVP for DEI will partner with enrollment management, academic affairs, and student life colleagues to refine and deepen institutional planning for DEI work in multicultural programs and the recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation of a diverse student population.

**Title IX:**

The AVP for DEI will be expected to establish formal communications and a collaborative relationship with VU's Title IX Coordinator. Together the AVP for DEI and Title IX Coordinator co-chair the BIAS Incident Team. The AVP for DEI also co-chairs the President's Commission for an Inclusive Valparaiso Community (CIVC).

**Engaging with Students:**

The AVP for DEI must actively engage with students and alumni in an authentic manner, be highly visible throughout the campus, and be regarded as a role model, exemplifying what it means to be a fully-engaged member of the campus community. As with many institutions, the retention and graduation of students is a top priority and, therefore, holistic attention must be paid to the experience of students not only during the enrollment cycle, but well beyond as they enroll, transition, and progress to graduating and becoming engaged alumni.

**Community Outreach:**

The AVP for DEI will serve as a liaison with the local and regional communities on matters related to advancing DEI, and will develop relationships with community influencers responsible for the design and execution of equity-based initiatives, all with the goal of establishing mutually beneficial objectives around equity and inclusion.

## Qualifications and Characteristics

The ideal candidate will be a nationally recognized diversity practitioner with a track record of advancing, promoting, and building capacity for diversity, equity, and inclusion in a complex environment. This individual will demonstrate ability to work collaboratively with internal and external partners and stakeholders; expertise in the areas of strategic planning, assessment, compromise, and evidence-based decision making; knowledge of best practices in diversity education and training; strengths in coaching, mentoring, and conflict resolution; and exceptional communication and interpersonal skills. An advanced degree (PhD, EdD, or JD preferred) and at least eight years of relevant experience are required.

The next AVP for DEI will be a persuasive collaborator and inclusive convener with the ability to build bridges and consensus among faculty, staff, and students. Candidates will be evaluated based on their record of successfully initiating and leading large-scale DEI programs and projects; experiences in strategic planning, data-informed decision making, assessment, and talent development along with demonstrated knowledge of best practices, laws, rules, and regulations that impact the work of a chief diversity officer.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate a substantive understanding of theories of DEI capacity building and strategy for organizations, as well as professional expertise gained through practice, advocacy, scholarship, and/or research. The search committee is particularly interested in candidates who have a track record of integrating their passion for DEI and promoting organizational change in the context of a faith-based institution such as Valparaiso University.

The successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences, skills, and attributes:

- A sophisticated understanding of the national conversation around diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education and a keen sense of best practices and emerging issues;
- Experience leading institutional initiatives, building programs, and promoting diversity and inclusion in a complex institution;
- Ability to guide the development and implementation of strategic plans for diversity and inclusion, establishing metrics, measuring progress, promoting accountability, and ensuring continuous improvement while remaining compliant with state and federal laws;
- Ability to work collaboratively and interact effectively with multiple campus partners, including faculty, staff, and students, with diverse experiences and perspectives;
- Excellent interpersonal and public communication skills, including effective messaging to multiple and diverse audiences, through multiple media formats;
- A strong sense of optimism, entrepreneurship, and the willingness to explore innovative ways of creating change;
- Ability to anticipate and address challenges proactively, with system-level thinking and working toward institutional change;
- Key leadership attributes, including but not limited to considerable emotional maturity, unimpeachable integrity, intelligence, exceptional judgment, creativity, diplomacy, humility, the ability to inspire, and gravitas necessary to achieve ambitious goals;
- Qualifications that meet the [standards of professional practice](#) for chief diversity officers as outlined by the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.

## Overview of the Assistant Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Position

Previously titled, Assistant Provost of Diversity and Inclusion, the AVP for DEI position was established in 2014 to serve as a catalyst for institutional DEI commitments, amplifying long-standing efforts across the university community. The 2019-20 academic year institutional planning processes—including the strategic action planning process and Action Agenda development—reaffirmed these values and institutional direction.

Valparaiso University has a long history of being a University that strives to exemplify its Lutheran values by its commitment to diversity and inclusion. A critical next step in the University's progression is to solidify the University's commitment through a diversity, equity, and inclusion statement. This statement serves as the University's guiding statement for its collaborative equity infrastructure (OIR, OIP, OMP, etc.), University's current Action Agenda for Promoting Racial Equity and Inclusion (2020).

### **Valparaiso University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement**

Valparaiso University is a welcoming community, grounded in the Lutheran tradition, built on values of mutual respect, positive regard, freedom, and reliant on grace. We strive to boldly

include all individuals and groups who contribute to the life of our campus in a mutually beneficial way. Difference is a strength and reason for celebration, and we affirm that we are most inclusive when we bring groups together to make decisions in collaborative, equitable ways. Our values do not support language or behavior that demeans members of our campus based on age, appearance, ethnicity, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, biological sex, disabilities (visible and invisible), ideological/political positions, intellectual perspective, socio-economic status, immigration status, veteran status, and national or regional origin. Actions and behaviors based on positions or perspectives that inherently marginalize, oppress, or deny full dignity to all are not tolerated. As such, we will consistently and vigilantly assess our academic and co-curricular offerings and our admissions, hiring, and promotion policies in reflection of these values

The AVP for DEI will oversee the Office of Multicultural Programs in addition to co-chairing the [CIVC](#) committee and the BIAS Incident Team:

- *Office of Multicultural Programs (OMP)*: Acts as a hub for diversity and inclusion with a focus on supporting underrepresented student populations, increasing the participation amongst all students, and creating avenues of leadership that will increase the representation among our student body. OMP provides a safe atmosphere, a support structure and equips students with an academic plan when needed.

The AVP for DEI will partner with Student Affairs to support inclusion in all areas of students' experiences and to enhance student belonging. Working alongside administrative leadership and Human Resources to facilitate the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty and staff. The AVP for DEI will oversee, support, and coordinate the work of several committees, programs, and offices ensuring the DEI work and organizational structure are aligned in order to maximize impact.

Creating and implementing strategies and content for training to support diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives for the campus community is an essential function of this position. The AVP for DEI will provide training on cultural competencies, building a climate of equity and inclusion and other topics designed to increase awareness and value within the campus. The AVP for DEI must be malleable, innovative, and committed to fluidly adding value in areas outside of their core area of expertise and experience. Collaboration is often achieved through consultative relationships within the university community and the surrounding communities. Because of the broad nature of this role, the possible relationships, projects and committees to bring value are endless. Projects such as the "[The Welcome Project](#)" have gone a long way to move the needle at Valpo forward in building a more understanding and empathetic community.

The AVP for DEI will not only help the community to understand best practices as they relate to inclusion, diversity, equity, and justice, but the AVP for DEI will also advocate for and lead change management initiatives in order to implement those practices across the campus. In

addition, they will also advocate for those community members who need support, and be a trusted resource in the face of challenging moments.

## Institutional Overview



If you've heard of Valparaiso University, you're probably on a first-name basis with us. Valpo. And we like it that way. That's because warm and friendly is our thing. Since 1859, we've been an independent Lutheran school with a reputation for not only incredible academics, but a bright, energetic spirit that attracts students that truly want to make a difference in this world. The freedom to pursue truth wherever it leads is at the heart of Valpo's sense of community, uniting its academic and spiritual missions. The university

aims to foster in its students a lifelong commitment to this search for truth, encouraging the development of a sense of personal vocation as well as the intellectual and professional skills needed to pursue it.

An active, inclusive community and an accomplished faculty prepare Valpo graduates to choose and navigate their own paths through life. Life at Valpo offers students a model of community participation, personal responsibility, and respectful concern for others.

- The student-initiated [honor system](#) relies on each student to maintain standards of academic integrity.
- A [collaborative system of university governance](#) assigns students considerable responsibility for residential and social life.
- The [Office of Volunteer Programs](#) and the Community Research and Service Center exemplify a commitment to learning through service that results in Valpo students' logging more than 247,000 hours of community outreach and service-learning each academic year.
- Extensive [Study Abroad programs](#) and a commitment to institutional diversity deepen students' understanding of the world's variety of cultural and religious traditions.

Guided by a strong sense of ethics and informed by a broad understanding of the scientific, religious, and cultural heritage of human society, Valpo alumni have assumed leadership roles in their communities, churches, social institutions, the nation, and the world.

## About Valparaiso

Valparaiso, Indiana, the home of Valparaiso University, is a city of nearly 34,000, attractively situated in a rural setting at the edge of the busy industrial district of Northwest Indiana. Its most celebrated event is the annual Popcorn Festival, honoring the heritage of the famous agronomist and businessman Orville Redenbacher, who made Valparaiso his home. A number

of community organizations in Valparaiso have mutually beneficial relationships with the University, offering sites for service learning and community service.

Just an hour's drive from campus is the city of Chicago, offering almost limitless resources for culture and entertainment. Chicago is easily accessible by bus or train, and the University often charters buses so that students and faculty can take advantage of the theatres, museums, and other educational benefits of this great city.

Fifteen miles to the north, on the shore of Lake Michigan, are the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and Indiana Dunes State Park, important recreational and scientific resources that offer a combined 17,000 acres of varied natural landscape.

## Leadership



As the nineteenth president at Valparaiso University, a Lutheran institution, José D. Padilla began the charge of reviving the university. A dynamic innovator, thinker and natural leader, Padilla brings many skills, experiences and accomplishments in higher education which are ideally suited to the university's needs today and in the future.

Padilla joins Valpo as the culmination of a long and successful career in higher education. Most recently, he served as Vice President, University Counsel and Secretary to the Board of Regents of the University of Colorado System. Prior to that, he served 15 years successfully in a number of senior leadership roles at DePaul University in Chicago, the most recent role as Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary at DePaul University.

Padilla is widely respected nationally in the higher education space as having superior business acumen and as a man of faith. His broad experience ranges from undergraduate student, to graduate student, alumnus, donor, lecturer, administrator, member of the president's cabinet and board member. His leadership experiences provide the background to address the University's current needs and, moving forward, the strong desire to increase enrollment and attract a more diverse student body.

Padilla received his Bachelor of Education in elementary education from The University of Toledo and his juris doctorate from the University of Michigan Law School.

## Application Instructions:

Qualified candidates should submit a cover letter (with salary requirements), resume and contact information for five references at [www.valpo.edu/hr](http://www.valpo.edu/hr). Candidates should include in their cover letters a demonstrated interest in and understanding of Valparaiso University, and evidence of how their experience and skills can help make the institution a more diverse,

equitable, and inclusive campus community. Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled.