



Position Profile

Purdue Research Foundation
President



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Company: Purdue Research Foundation
Role: President
Reports to: Board of Directors
Location: Indianapolis or West Lafayette, IN

THE SEARCH

In its next President, Purdue Research Foundation (“PRF” or “the Foundation”) seeks an entrepreneurial, commercially savvy, business leader to continue and accelerate the momentum and expansion of its transformational efforts throughout the City of West Lafayette and throughout the State of Indiana. Established in 1930 as a 501(c)(3), PRF operates on behalf of and in close partnership with Purdue University (“Purdue” or “the University”) to accept gifts; administer trusts; fund scholarships and grants; acquire and manage property; protect and commercialize intellectual property; manage Purdue’s \$4B endowment; and promote a vast array of entrepreneurial activities on behalf of the University. The President will join PRF amidst a season of incredible growth and impact to execute the ambitious vision of university president, Mung Chiang.

The silent engine of Purdue, PRF forges the future of the University—moving groundbreaking scientific inquiry and innovation to the public via startups, licensing agreements, and technology transfer; and provides a sense of belonging and shared enterprise amongst entrepreneurs, industry partners, and families via vibrant, intentional placemaking. In 2020, the IPWatchdog Institute ranked Purdue third nationally in startup creation and in the top 20 for patents. The Foundation received the 2019 Innovation and Economic Prosperity Universities Award for Place from the Association of Public Land-Grant Universities <https://www.prf.org/about/index.html>. Purdue University researchers rank 4th among U.S. universities—5th in the world—in U.S. patents received in 2023, with 201 patents. At present, Boilermaker innovation can be found in all 50 U.S. states and in more than 100 countries, benefitting millions of people.

Reporting to the PRF Board of Directors, the President serves as a cabinet member of the president of the University and heads an executive team comprising nine senior leaders: Senior Vice President of Alliances & Placemaking, Chief Financial Officer & Treasurer, Chief Human Resources Officer, Vice President of Information Technology, Vice President Marketing & Media, Senior Vice President Purdue Innovates, Senior Vice President & Chief Building & Facilities Officer, Vice President Economic Development & Corporate Counsel, and the Chief Innovation & Collaboration Officer. S/he provides strategic leadership to an organization of 125 people. In addition to managing and growing the real estate portfolio in Discovery Park District and Purdue’s Research Parks, and forging new symbiotic relationships with the business community, chief amongst President Chiang’s prerogatives for the new president, beginning in 2025, will be increasing the number of PRF related start-ups that receive Series A funding from the venture capital community.

JM Search has been retained to assist in this recruitment. Please direct all confidential expressions of interest, nominations, and inquiries to them as indicated at the conclusion of this document.

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Purdue University is a public, land grant research institution demonstrating excellence at scale. An R1, ranked among top 10 public universities and with two colleges in the top four in the United States, Purdue discovers and disseminates knowledge with a quality and at a scale second to none. More than 105,000 students study at Purdue across modalities and locations, including nearly 50,000 in person on the West Lafayette campus. Committed to affordability and accessibility, Purdue's main campus has frozen tuition 13 years in a row. Learn more about how Purdue never stops in the persistent pursuit of the next giant leap—including its first comprehensive urban campus in Indianapolis, the Mitch Daniels School of Business, Purdue Computes and the One Health initiative here: <https://www.purdue.edu/president/strategic-initiatives>.

PURDUE RESEARCH FOUNDATION | ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

[Purdue Research Foundation](#) is a private, nonprofit foundation created to advance the mission of Purdue University. It transforms groundbreaking scientific inquiry into tangible impact—driving commercialization, supporting startups, and fostering strategic partnerships. It also manages Purdue Innovates, Purdue Office of Technology Commercialization, Purdue Research Parks, Discovery Park District, and Purdue Technology Centers.

Its Discovery Park District is evolving into a dynamic live-work-play community, merging cutting-edge innovation with an exceptional quality of life. Meanwhile, the Purdue Research Park in West Lafayette, one of the largest university-affiliated research parks in the U.S., provides state-of-the-art office and wet lab spaces, as well as land development opportunities for businesses of all sizes. Committed to driving progress and facilitating success, it is fueling the innovations and strategic collaborations that will change the world.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES & DUTIES:

- Lead the on-going evolution of the Foundation to execute strategies in support of Purdue University's mission.
- Establish strategic priorities.
- Communicate the strategic priorities so the Foundation's mission is clear and understood.
- Model the culture and behaviors expected for the Foundation.
- Balance the health and existence of the Foundation with the needs of supporting the University's strategies.
- Ensure a strong senior leadership team with succession plans is in place.
- Delegate leadership of Foundation placemaking, licensing, monetizing, and venture equity transactions to appropriate Foundation leaders with transactional authorization limits.
- Lead complex transaction teams spanning Purdue University and Foundation external entities.
- Deliver well completed tactical projects, including managing financial budgets that include both revenues and costs, to deliver the strategic priorities.
- Prepare for and lead board meetings.
- Lead media events.

SKILLS & ATTRIBUTES:

The successful candidate will have significant executive level experience in a similar size or larger enterprise; be capable of effectively operating in a complex organizational environment; have an appreciation for the higher education model of shared governance and how that informs collaboration with university faculty and staff; and be a proven leader of people in terms of culture, vision, and strategy.

The candidate will ideally possess the following:

Critical Thinker and Persuasive Leader

- Possessing both strong intellect and strong people skills, the candidate must be characterized by a participative leadership style - engaging and including others in decision-making.
- Evidence of success working across multiple divisions and silos, and ability to persuade and influence without hierarchy.

Entrepreneurial Leadership

- Prior experience supporting entrepreneurial ecosystems and/or startups must have prepared the candidate to cast the vision and set strategy for a productive entrepreneurial culture.
- Keen understanding and history of commercial transactions in the domains of tech transfer and commercialization, licensing, and patents; Sophistication with and network of corporate, venture capital, and private equity investors especially attractive.

Business Development

- The candidate must have experience that demonstrates the ability to lead complex business development initiatives that encompass stakeholders across the foundation, the university, industry, and local, state, and federal entities. These initiatives are related to research partnerships, economic development, real estate, community engagement, intellectual property licensing, monetization, and litigation.
- Proven ability to uncover corporate needs and navigate the university to meet those needs in the areas of additional research, talent, and educational support.

Business Acumen

- Prior executive level experience must have prepared the candidate to be visionary and an effective strategic leader, focused on business results with a strong fiduciary mindset.
- The candidate must be capable of providing appropriate leadership of pertinent financial and business policies and procedures, including both the endowment and regular business operations.
- Track record of convening and negotiating with broad range of stakeholders including municipal, state, and federal elected officials, legislators, and policy makers.
- Portfolio of economic development and P3 initiatives involving business, civic, and government leaders.
- Familiarity with and appreciation for the shared governance model of higher education and how it informs partnership across the university.

Collaboration and Team Orientation

- The candidate must be a builder of healthy coalitions, able to find common ground and a way forward in complex situations to meet objectives. The candidate must be highly collaborative with a keen ability to identify, influence and integrate the interests of numerous stakeholders. Transparent and consistent communication and collaboration between PRF leadership and university leadership is imperative.
- A natural ability to focus on the mission and the team (the broader Purdue team and the PRF team) are keys to success. A service mindset that builds healthy partner relationships to advance the mission of the university.

APPLICATIONS, NOMINATIONS, & INQUIRIES

JM Search has been retained to partner with the Purdue Research Foundation Board of Directors in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and résumés accompanied by thoughtful letters of interest should be submitted electronically to PRF_President@JMSearch.com.