

Dean, School of Health and Natural Sciences

Mercy University invites nominations and applications for the position of Dean of the School of Health and Natural Sciences. The University seeks a leader that will motivate and inspire, driving the mission of transforming student lives through high-impact education. The Dean will work collaboratively with faculty, staff, and administration in the School of Health and Natural Sciences (SHNS), support student success, and establish and execute the strategic priorities for the School in alignment with the [University's strategic plan](#).

For fall 2022, the School of Health and Natural Sciences enrolled over 1,685 students, including 1,262 undergraduates and 423 graduate students. In fall 2023, the University welcomed its largest freshman class in 12 years to its Westchester, Manhattan, and Bronx campuses. Over 75% of the students in the School of Health and Natural Sciences identify as people from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education and approximately 75% of undergraduates are first-generation college students. The 2023-2024 incoming class is currently estimated at over 1,200 students of which over 230 have identified a major in the School of Health and Natural Sciences.

THE POSITION

Reporting to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean of Health and Natural Sciences serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of the School. The Dean provides leadership to more than 58 full-time faculty, 97 adjunct faculty, approximately 21 staff, and 1,685 students (423 Graduate students and 1,262 undergraduate students as of Fall 2022) located on two campuses (Dobbs Ferry and Bronx).

The Dean will be an experienced leader with a record of accomplishments and progressive experience in higher education:

- a demonstrated commitment to student success;
- a strong commitment to supporting a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment;
- demonstrated ability to manage a complex academic organization;
- the ability to understand the scope and complexity of the School of Health and Natural Sciences and Mercy University;
- experience with the self-study/reaffirmation processes for the accreditation of academic programs;
- the ability to encourage and support research and scholarship activities among faculty;
- an interest in generating new revenue streams through fundraising, grants, and external partnerships;
- experience in successfully preparing for and developing growth opportunities, including new undergraduate and graduate programs; and
- demonstrated success in working with alumni, donors, and the community to develop and support internships and career opportunities.

QUALIFICATIONS

The successful candidate will have the following professional and leadership attributes, among others:

- a student-centered ethos with a commitment to the mission of Mercy University;
- a demonstrated record of advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and access;
- experience building academic departments through the effective recruitment and development of faculty and staff;
- a terminal degree with adequate qualifications to obtain tenure and hold the rank of associate or full professor;
- experience with writing a professional accreditation self-study and hosting a site visit with an accrediting body;

- experience in engaging external partners across diverse areas of healthcare, science, foundations, corporations, and government, including building relationships and agreements that support clinical placements and research endeavors;
- a record of progressive leadership experiences in a complex academic setting;
- experience supporting faculty excellence in teaching, research, and service;
- significant accomplishments demonstrating visionary leadership;
- fiscal experience overseeing operating budgets for academic departments and grants;
- a demonstrated capacity to succeed in external fundraising;
- a management style of consensus-building and teamwork;
- experience in curriculum development and assessment;
- strong communication skills; and
- the highest personal integrity.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND NATURAL SCIENCES

The School of Health & Natural Sciences provides premier health and natural science undergraduate and graduate educational programs to equip students with the intellectual, technical and professional competencies they need to excel and advance as science specialists, health care providers, health promotion experts, and science/health educators. Biology, Health Sciences, Exercise Science and Clinical Laboratory Science programs prepare undergraduate students for a range of clinical, community agency or research careers. Health Professions programs include graduate programs in Communication Disorders, Occupational Therapy, Physician Assistant, and Physical Therapy (doctoral), and undergraduate programs in Occupational Therapy Assistant and Veterinary Technology. The School's goal is to prepare students to use their knowledge and abilities in the health and natural sciences to be compassionate and caring health care providers and inquisitive scientists.

RESEARCH AND GRANTS

The School has worked closely with the Office of Sponsored Programs to identify and apply for grants to support student success initiatives and to foster faculty research and development. Recent successes involving SHNS faculty members, or focused on SHNS students, include:

- US Department of Education Title V Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions grant, \$2,996,375 (2020–2025) for [Advancing Curricular Change to Enhance Student Success](#) (ACCESS) (Project supports students in Anatomy and Physiology courses and the Weekend Second Degree Nursing program). Faculty Emerita is PI; multiple faculty members from SHNS and the School of Nursing serve as activity directors.
- [Langston University](#) Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Institutions provided a subaward (\$25,000/year) to Mercy College (2013–present) to focus on institutional research capacity building and a mentoring program crafted to hone disability and rehabilitation research and grant-gaining prowess. To date, four faculty have completed their fellowship, resulting in multiple publications and grant submissions and one funded external grant (below).
- [National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research \(NIDILRR\) Field Initiated Projects Program: Minority-Serving Institution \(MSI\) – Research](#), \$600,000 (2018–2021) (Co-PI is Communication Disorders faculty Shari Berkowitz, along with faculty for Social Behavioral Sciences and Nursing).
- [TEAM-STEM](#), \$4,029,505 (2016–2023) US Department of Education Hispanic Serving Institutions STEM and Articulation Program supports students from groups typically underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields through mentorship, advising, and professional development. Several biology faculty members are activity directors for grant components focused on Biology majors.
- [Howard Hughes Medical Institute \(HHMI\) Inclusive Excellence grant](#), \$1,100,000 (2018–2023). PI is Biology Program Director; multiple faculty members are engaged in grant activities.

- [US Department of Education Institutional Resilience and Expanded Post-Secondary Opportunity \(IREPO\) grant](#), \$2,100,000 (2021–2023). SHNS and Nursing faculty members are activity directors creating telemedicine simulations to improve telehealth education for students.
- [US Department of Education STEM Ready grant](#), \$4,928,344 (2021–2026). Two Biology faculty members are activity directors, one for project-based learning integration into the curriculum and the other for a summer STEM career academy.
- [US Health Resources and Services Administration Interdisciplinary Health Education Learning Program \(iHELP\) grant](#), \$1,900,000 (2021–2023). Provides fellowships for graduate occupational therapy (OT) students to integrate behavioral health care into primary care settings. The OT Program Director is an activity director.
- [National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates \(NSF-REU\) grant](#), 416,382 (2020–2024). Biology faculty member is co-PI with a colleague from Albert Einstein College of Medicine. The grant provides paid summer internships for students in a leading scientific laboratory in neuroscience.
- [Westchester County Department of Health Advancing Health Literacy to Enhance Equitable Community Responses to COVID-19 subaward grant](#), \$455,905 (2021–2023). Two SHNS faculty and a Nursing faculty were involved in developing the intervention curriculum, training Westchester residents to deliver the intervention, and collecting and analyzing data as part of the process and outcome evaluation.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

Mercy University is a thriving and financially stable independent, coeducational, comprehensive, and student-centered institution serving the New York Metropolitan region. Mercy's mission is to provide motivated students the opportunity to transform their lives through higher education by offering liberal arts and professional programs in personalized and high-quality learning environments, thus preparing students to embark on rewarding careers, to continue learning throughout their lives, and to act ethically and responsibly in a changing world. The University's Strategic Plan focuses on four goals that directly tie to the mission: Teaching and Learning, Student Success, Affordability and Financial Health, and the University Community.

Mercy students come from communities traditionally underserved by higher education and are often the first or second generation in their families to earn a higher education degree. The University is the region's largest private, non-profit minority serving institution (designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) by the federal government). Mercy's over 8,500 students (75% undergraduates) are exceedingly diverse: undergraduates are 70% female, 44% Hispanic and 25% Black, 73% Pell grant eligible, and 31% aged 25 or older; graduate students are 79% female; 26% Hispanic and 22% Black.

Affordable tuition rates, a nationally recognized advising program, focus on student success, and over 100 academically rigorous programs in fields ranging from Adolescence Education to Veterinary Technology make Mercy a regional leader in preparing the next generation of professionals, citizens, and scholars. Guided by the Mercy Student Success Toolkit, our talented and student-centered faculty and staff deliver Mercy's educational experience grounding their work on evidence-based practices taken to scale, designed to result in equitable outcomes. Due to this campus-wide commitment to student success, equity gaps at Mercy have significantly narrowed over the last 10 years, positioning the University as a leader in equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging in higher education.

Mercy University has three campuses in the New York metropolitan area to serve our mix of students, who commute or live on campus (9% participate in residential life, including 22% of the freshman class).

- The Dobbs Ferry campus, situated in Westchester County 20 miles north of New York City, encompasses 65 acres along the picturesque Hudson River. The campus features eight programmatic and residential buildings, along with athletics facilities, an artificial turf field, indoor gym, fitness center, and outdoor

recreational courts. The library at the main campus serves as a resource and informal gathering hub. Recently renovated academic facilities provide state-of-the-art teaching technology to facilitate in-person and hybrid instruction, as well as specialty spaces for hands-on learning including: [health professions simulations labs](#), a variety of dedicated teaching and research laboratory spaces in the core sciences, and specialty labs including: a cadaver lab, a veterinary technology lab, an exercise science lab, and a modernized anatomy and physiology laboratory equipped with virtually-immersive Anatomage technology. The campus has two residence halls with a capacity of over 625 residents.

- Mercy's Manhattan Campus is in the heart of Midtown, at Herald Square (West 34th Street and Sixth Avenue). The campus features innovative learning environments, expanded academic offerings, and a new 130-bed residence hall. The high-tech space provides resources that prepare students for careers in emerging fields such as cybersecurity and business analytics.
- Centrally located in the Hutchinson Metro Center, the Bronx Campus is situated in a rapidly developing complex of corporate and healthcare organizations and businesses in eastern Bronx. The campus provides state-of-the-art facilities for the health professions programs, including simulation labs with multiple high-fidelity mannequins and health assessment labs to simulate exam rooms, along with several science teaching and research laboratories, an Anatomage-equipped anatomy and physiology lab, and a Business Incubation Center.

Mercy University offers associates and bachelor's degrees to incarcerated men at the Sing Sing Correctional facility in Ossining, New York, in collaboration with Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison. The program has enabled students to make a positive impact on their own lives, their families, and communities. The program's alumni have lower rates of recidivism and higher rates of employment, and many have gone on to make significant contributions to community regeneration, cohesiveness, and reciprocity.

Mercy University has benefitted from strong financial stewardship and management and has a healthy financial outlook. Its 'A' credit rating was reaffirmed by Standard & Poor's Rating Services (S&P) for higher education in 2022, a rating maintained since Mercy first achieved it in 2012.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1950, Mercy College (as it was then called) became a four-year institution offering programs leading to the baccalaureate degree in 1961. Mercy College was first accredited by the Middle States Association's Commission on Higher Education in 1968 and has maintained continuous accreditation since then.

By the 1970s, Mercy College became an independent and coeducational institution. It doubled the size of the existing physical plant and initiated the first of many community outreach efforts through the establishment of extension centers and branch campuses throughout communities in Westchester County and New York City. This expansion enhanced the College's reach to the traditional College market and positioned the College to be on the leading edge of higher education for those who were the first generation in their families to seek higher education degrees and the adult student market.

In August 2023, the College became Mercy University in compliance with the regulations of the New York State Education Department (NYSED) Board of Regents.

GOVERNANCE

The University is governed by Mercy's Board of Trustees led by a Chair, Vice Chairs, and up to 25 additional Trustees who serve the University through their work on committees, supporting events and initiatives, and by providing expertise, guidance, and support. The Faculty Senate, which meets regularly and convenes several

committees, represents the Full-Time Faculty and provides shared governance in academic matters, while also serving as consultative partner to the University's administration.

The Dean of the School of Health and Natural Sciences reports to [Dr. Eva Fernández](#), Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs. In July 2023, [Susan L. Parish](#), Ph.D., M.S.W. began her role as the 13th president of Mercy College. The selection of President Parish followed a comprehensive search for a leader to succeed President Timothy L. Hall, who retired on June 30, 2023.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Mercy's experienced and highly qualified faculty comprises approximately 230 full-time members, 40% of whom are tenured or on the tenure track. In addition, approximately 1000 part-time faculty members provide a high level of expertise and professionalism. The faculty includes board certified clinicians, fellows of national professional associations, published authors, and national authorities dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, and clinical practice. As experts and national and international leaders in their fields, they bring timely, relevant, real-world experience into the classroom, blending theory with practice. The University's more than 450 staff members are distinguished by their dedication and loyalty to the institution's mission and students.

ACADEMICS

Mercy's over 100 academic programs are designed, delivered, and assessed by faculty in departments organized across six schools, including the School of Health and Natural Sciences.

- The [School of Business](#) provides students the opportunity to be mentored by faculty with real-world experience. Classes are taught by former executives, CEOs, CFOs, CPAs, and entrepreneurs—industry leaders from Wall Street to Main Street—who bring their extraordinary professional experience into the classroom. Students learn through hands-on experiences, often for real clients, and internships. Students learn about investment in an actual trading room equipped with Bloomberg terminals and a stock ticker, and the curriculum includes opportunities for Bloomberg and Excel certification. Abundant networking opportunities aid undergraduate and graduate students in standing out when seeking employment.
- The [School of Education](#) prepares students to become teachers or school leaders. The School offers master's degrees and certificates, all of which are nationally recognized and accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Professionals (CAEP). Students work with an outstanding faculty and participate in fieldwork and teaching practica. The School offers innovative, flexible, and accessible online and in-person programs of study. Mercy's School of Education was the first institution in the United States to be awarded initial national accreditation by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, CAEP's predecessor.
- The [School of Liberal Arts](#) provides the cornerstone of a University education, through courses and programs that prepare students with life-long skills including problem-solving, critical thinking, effective communication, creative expression, and mathematical and computational literacy. The liberal arts afford students meaningful opportunities for higher-order learning, essential for real world problem solving and requiring skills that employers are seeking now more than ever, as well as providing preparation for jobs that do not yet exist. The School also offers professional programs in diverse fields such as Journalism, Cybersecurity, and Design and Animation.
- The [School of Social & Behavioral Sciences](#) provides an education that can lead to a career of caring in an environment of success in our global community. With access to world-renowned faculty and innovative programs, students are prepared to become part of a global environment and make a difference in their communities. With a degree in the Social or Behavioral Sciences, students pursue breakthrough scientific research, study diverse cultures, and prepare for diverse professions including Criminology, Psychology, and Social Work.

- The [School of Nursing](#) was launched in July 2023 to further enhance the University's nursing programs, better serve its students and help meet the growing need for nurses in the Tri-State area and across the nation. The School of Nursing houses Mercy's full suite of nursing programs, which were previously part of the School of Health and Natural Sciences; these include traditional four-year undergraduate prelicensure programs and an accelerated second-degree program for those with existing bachelor's degrees in other fields, and master's programs in Nursing Education, Nursing Administration and Family Nurse Practitioner studies.

Mercy's [Libraries](#) provide our students and faculty with a robust library system featuring significant holdings (physical and electronic) and services. Librarians are available online and on-site at all three campuses to provide research assistance, consultations, and information literacy instruction. Users have access to the libraries' online catalogs, e-books and databases through the Mercy University libraries' website.

ACCREDITATION

Mercy University is accredited by the [Middle States Commission on Higher Education](#), which reaffirmed the University's accreditation in 2015; the next Self-Study Evaluation is in 2023-2024, and a group of close to 100 faculty, staff, and students are currently collaborating on developing a self-study document and a comprehensive inventory of supporting evidence, in preparation for a site visit in spring 2024.

The University holds professional accreditations with:

- [Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education \(ACOTE\)](#) of the [American Occupational Therapy Association \(AOTA\)](#)
- [Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant \(ARC-PA\)](#)
- [Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs \(CAAHEP\)](#) and the [National Strength and Conditioning Association \(NSCA\)](#)
- [Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education \(CAPTE\)](#) of the [American Physical Therapy Association \(APTA\)](#)
- [Commission on Accreditation \(COA\) of the Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#)
- [Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education \(CCNE\)](#) of the [American Association of Colleges of Nursing \(AACN\)](#)
- [Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities \(CVTEA\)](#) of the [American Veterinary Medical Association \(AVMA\)](#)
- [Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation \(CAEP\)](#)
- [Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology \(CAA\)](#) of the [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\)](#)
- [National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Science \(NAACLS\)](#)
- [National Association of School Psychologists \(NASP\)](#)

The majority of our accredited health professional programs have received accreditation for the longest period possible by the accrediting agency, speaking to the quality of the programs offered.

ADVANCEMENT

The Advancement team focuses primarily on planned giving, special events, corporate and foundation grants, an annual fund, and alumni engagement. There are over 70,000 Mercy alumni of record located across the globe.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND CAMPUS LIFE

Mercy University offers a robust campus life experience for both its commuter and residential populations. Students participate in over 50 student clubs and 15 honor societies. The University's Student Government Association is a

highly dedicated group of students who advance the general welfare of the institution by fostering collaboration and meaningful dialog between students, faculty, and administration.

Mercy University sponsors intercollegiate athletics in 10 varsity sports at the Division II level. The University is a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the East Coast Conference (ECC). Varsity men's programs include baseball, basketball, lacrosse, and soccer. Women's athletic teams compete in basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, and volleyball.

In addition to the [PACT mentor program](#), students have access to a robust suite of student support services at each campus, including career hubs, accessibility services, health office, mental health counseling, and tutoring. The Mav Market food pantry serves over 1,240 student members across our Bronx, Dobbs Ferry, and Manhattan campus locations. Since its inception in 2017, it has provided over 20,000 meals to members and their families through the donations and service of community volunteers.

The University has a long tradition of initiatives that celebrate and promote community service and engagement through international medical missions in Africa and Latin America, clean-up and recycling projects, reading clinics, and crop harvesting for local food pantries. Students partner with a variety of organizations including the Afya Foundation, the American Cancer Society, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Hearing Loss Association of America, and Volunteer Center of the United Way.

UNIVERSITY DISTINCTIONS

Mercy consistently ranks as a top school—in the nation and in New York State—for affordability, online excellence, and the quality of student and academic programs. The University is nationally recognized for providing innovative programs that help students achieve success.

- Recipient of the *Seal of Excelencia*, 2022. The first private University in the nation and the first Hispanic-Serving Institution in New York to receive the award.
- Recognized in three categories: Top Performers for Social Mobility and Best Regional Universities North, Best Undergraduate Nursing Programs, 2023, *U.S. News & World Report*
- Top-100 school for undergraduate and graduate students, *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*
- Top Veteran-Friendly School, 2021, *U.S. Veteran's Magazine*
- Best College, 2019, 2020, and 2022, *Westchester Magazine*

REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

All nominations and applications shall be confidential. Although the search remains open until the position is filled, for full consideration by the Search Committee, candidates should submit a cover letter and CV by November 1, 2023.

For more information on Mercy University and its programs, please visit www.mercy.edu Mercy University is an AA/EEO/M/F/Veteran/ADA employer.