Position Specification

University at Albany, State University of New York

Vice President for Research and Economic Development

Private and Confidential
University at Albany
Established in 1844, the University at Albany (UAlbany) is one of four flagship research universities in the 64-campus State University of New York (SUNY) system. With more than 23,000 members within its campus community, UAlbany is home to 9 colleges and schools and over 50 research centers and institutes across 3 campuses. It has been one of the nation’s 131 elite Carnegie Classified “R1” doctoral degree granting universities since 2005. In addition to its very high research activity, it is distinguished for its many academic strengths and close ties to government and industry, and for having one of the most diverse student populations in the SUNY system, with 43 percent of the student body identifying as underrepresented minorities.

With its nationally respected programs, top-ranked professors, and strategic location in New York’s capital, UAlbany offers a world-class education to 13,176 undergraduates and 4,505 graduate, doctoral and professional students, as of Fall 2020. The University is home to more than 1,000 instructional faculty.

UAlbany is a leader in undergraduate and graduate education, offering over 150 undergraduate academic programs and over 125 doctoral and graduate level programs. In 2020, UAlbany received reaccreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. U.S. News & World Report gives high rankings to many of UAlbany’s graduate programs.

Notably ranked among the top universities in Forbes’ “America’s Best Public Colleges,” UAlbany has also achieved an impressive array of awards and honors for the value of the education provided as well as its highly regarded programs; commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and career preparation and social mobility. The University received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine in 2018, 2019, and 2020, and it was highlighted as a national leader in advancing racial equity in 2020 by Education Trust. In terms of social mobility, U.S. News and World Report listed UAlbany among the top 7% of performers (2021), Education Reform Now listed UAlbany among the top 6% (2020), and CollegeNET listed UAlbany among the top 2% (2020).

Signature Academic & Research Strengths
The University at Albany has a wide array of academic and research strengths spanning three distinct campuses—the Uptown (Main) Campus, the Downtown Campus, and the Health Sciences Campus.

UAlbany is widely recognized for its longstanding academic and research strengths in atmospheric and environmental sciences, biological sciences, business, computer science, demography, economics, education, history, math, political science, public administration and policy, public health, psychology, sociology, and social welfare. In addition, the University has made significant investments in emerging and new strategic areas of strength and opportunity including weather and climate sciences, health sciences, minority health disparities, emergency preparedness, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence, as well as engineering and computer science as described below.

The University’s expertise and state-of-the-art research in climate science draws upon many disciplines, including emergency management, engineering, natural sciences, social sciences, social welfare, public policy, public health, the arts, and the humanities. UAlbany’s globally acclaimed Atmospheric Sciences Research Center, the Department of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, and the nationally acclaimed NYS Mesonet highlight its strengths and impact in the area of weather and climate.
UAlbany’s longstanding strength in health sciences—punctuated by a unique 35+ year partnership with the New York State Department of Health—has been highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. With prominent research and leadership in critical surveillance testing and contact-tracing programs, a collaboration was established between the University’s pioneering RNA Institute and its leading School of Public Health— the only school of public health in the nation jointly created and operated by a university and a state health department.

A critical differentiator within the health sciences is UAlbany’s leadership in health equity and minority health disparities, which resulted in a prestigious $10 million NIH endowment grant as well as a $1 million gift from the Hearst Foundations to expand the Health Disparities Fellows program within the University’s nationally acclaimed Center for the Elimination of Minority Health Disparities. The Center is actively working to diversify health sciences research and education. Also, within UAlbany’s health equity work, mental health is a critical and growing area of focus where the School of Social Welfare plays an important role in concert with the School of Public Health, the School of Education, and the College of Arts and Sciences. In recognition of its faculty’s expertise in health equity and minority health disparities, New York State commissioned UAlbany to conduct research on the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on communities of color.

UAlbany’s growing expertise and reputation in emergency management, with a strong focus on cybersecurity and artificial intelligence, creates an unparalleled area of strength and opportunity. Research and teaching excellence in the nation’s first standalone College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security, and Cybersecurity is complemented by longstanding research and teaching from business, public health, engineering, public administration and policy, geography and planning, history, and criminal justice. For example, the School of Business has a strong portfolio of research in cybersecurity, which, combined with cybersecurity research in other colleges, has resulted in NSA accreditation to the University as a Center of Excellence in Cybersecurity Research.

UAlbany’s College of Engineering and Applied Sciences is one of the youngest and most vibrant engineering and computer science schools in the United States. Its faculty members are engaged in research activities that are at the forefront of technologies shaping the world around us. The College’s approach is innovative, multidisciplinary, and bold, a result of being a young school not saddled by the burdens of legacy. Since its inception in 2016, the College and its faculty have the fastest growing research portfolio at UAlbany. For example, the College has landed eight NSF CAREER Awards, including at least one each of the past four years, with two this year. Three of the four most recent winners are women.

Strongly supporting every leading public research university are strong and vibrant academic programs in the arts and humanities. UAlbany proudly offers a rich and diverse spectrum of academic programs in the arts and humanities housed within the College of Arts and Sciences, in recognition of their critical importance. Researchers and scholars within these disciplines boast an array of internationally recognized awards and prizes including notable awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, Fulbright awards, and a recent Guggenheim award in the Fine Arts.
The University at Albany is also home to the NYS Writers Institute, founded in 1982 by Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist William Kennedy. The NYS Writers Institute celebrates literature, writing, and performance by attracting some of the leading authors and voices across the nation to campus and is recognized as one of America’s premier sites for promoting the art of the written word.

A Focus on Interdisciplinary Research
Significant research and scholarship across the University focuses on interdisciplinary research—one of the campus’s signature strengths. This scholarly work includes multidisciplinary research addressing a broad spectrum of complex societal challenges, such as environmental justice, weather-climate resilience, minority health disparities, demographic change and migration, the impact of technology in government and society, clean air, and renewable energy, among others. Accentuating the critical importance of interdisciplinary within intramural research across campus, UAlbany investigators are successfully pursuing interdisciplinary extramural pursuits as well. In 2020, there were 182 active awards demonstrating investigators’ multidisciplinary research efforts supported by extramural funding.

Community-Engaged Research
Another signature strength of UAlbany is publicly engaged research, scholarship, and creative expression. Researchers and faculty serve as critical partners to numerous public and private sector organizations in studying and addressing an array of societal challenges. For more than a decade, UAlbany has celebrated this commitment through the President’s Awards for Exemplary Public Engagement. Health equity, climate resiliency, sustainable communities, and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic are just a few examples of the ways faculty scholars and students advance community-engaged research. In 2020, the University joined a select group of colleges and universities to receive the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, recognizing higher education institutions committed to public engagement.

2018-2023 Strategic Plan
Under President Rodríguez’s leadership, UAlbany continues to advance its 2018-2023 Strategic Plan across multiple areas of strength and opportunity campus-wide. The University’s core strategic priorities include student success, research excellence, diversity and inclusion, internationalization, and engagement and service. Collectively, these priorities express UAlbany’s unique assets—and its shared aspirations for the future, which will anchor the next chapter in the University’s 177-year history. Through strengthening research, scholarship, and creative pursuits, UAlbany is addressing some of today’s most significant societal challenges, advancing human knowledge, and driving innovation and discovery in new and unprecedented ways.

A Growing Spirit of Philanthropy
UAlbany recently concluded the most ambitious and successful fundraising campaign in its history. This Is Our Time: The Campaign for UAlbany inspired more than 34,000 alumni and friends to contribute $162 million, surpassing the campaign’s $150 million goal. Together, their gifts secured UAlbany’s mission of providing a life-changing education to hardworking, ambitious students and reinforced its role as a force for positive change.
Strategic Location in New York’s Capital City

UAlbany’s location in Albany, NY and close proximity to state government continues to contribute to the campus’s academic and research distinctiveness. Since the University’s founding in 1844, the state’s capital city has shaped UAlbany’s educational and research mission in transformative ways.

This strategic location continues to provide UAlbany with a unique opportunity—providing a unique competitive advantage to enhance the campus’s reputation, influence, and impact. The benefits of being located in the state’s capital city are truly far-reaching, from impacting public policy and practice, to transforming science and technology, to advancing public health, and spurring economic development and job creation.

Research Productivity – Total Expenditures

UAlbany reported over $181.5 million of combined intramural and extramural research expenditures as highlighted in the last report of the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) survey in 2019. In FY 2019-20, extramural research and training expenditures generated through the SUNY Research Foundation totalled $94.7 million, which represents an increase of nearly six percent since FY 2015-16.

Graduate and Undergraduate Education – An Emphasis on Research

Recognizing the importance of experiential learning, UAlbany affords students a wide array of opportunities to complement the classroom experience through research, scholarship, and creative activities on campus, in the community, and within the public and private sectors. In recent years, UAlbany enhanced its focus on student research with the establishment of the Center for Undergraduate Research and Creative Engagement (CURCE). It also created The Graduate School with a focus on promoting collaborative, innovative, and interdisciplinary opportunities to secure new knowledge, advance discovery, and solve societal problems.

Research Infrastructure

UAlbany spans a multi-billion dollar physical infrastructure across three distinct campuses—the "Uptown (Main) Campus," the "Downtown Campus," and the "Health Sciences Campus" just across the Hudson River. Over the past two decades, the University has made significant capital investments into its research infrastructure including:

$110M Life Sciences Research Building (LSRB) – Opened in 2004, this 194,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art R&D facility on the Uptown Campus supports interdisciplinary research across a broad spectrum of life sciences disciplines. In 2009, the first brick-and-mortar RNA Institute in the country was constructed in the LSRB, dedicated to conducting ribonucleic acid-based research aimed at the discovery of new treatments for disease.
$45M Gen*NY*Sis Cancer Center – Completed in 2005, this 113,000 square-foot R&D center, including laboratory and office space, is dedicated to advancing biomedical and cancer research. Located on the Health Sciences Campus—and adjacent to the School of Public Health—the Cancer Center is part of a larger campus footprint, which incorporates 500,000 square feet of existing lab, office, and support space in East Greenbush, NY.

$64M School of Business – Completed in 2013, the 96,000 square-foot School of Business—located on the Uptown Campus—is dedicated to supporting business education, innovation, entrepreneurship, and excellence in research. It features technologically advanced classrooms and meeting spaces for team projects and collaborative research.

$180M ETEC building on the Harriman Campus – Set to open in Summer 2021, UAlbany will unveil a pioneering 245,000-square-foot R&D complex known as ETEC. This facility, adjacent to the Uptown Campus, will bring together the University’s internationally recognized weather and climate enterprise together with the nation’s first College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity, as well as the College of Engineering and Applied Science’s unique Department of Environmental and Sustainable Engineering—all under one roof.

With its unique 35-year partnership with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), the School of Public Health is a prime example of the power of UAlbany’s strategic location to state government. Over 100 scientists from the state’s renowned research-intensive public health laboratory—the Wadsworth Center—have academic appointments in the School.

Future research opportunities for collaboration with the NYS Department of Health and its Wadsworth Center continue to emerge. The Wadsworth Center has received a state capital appropriation to build a $750 million R&D laboratory complex on the State Harriman Campus, which will centralize all of the Wadsworth’s laboratories in one location. Adjacent to UAlbany, this ground-breaking R&D facility, within walking distance to researchers on the University’s Uptown Campus, will create new opportunities for future joint research, training, and development across the institutions.

Accordingly, the proximity of UAlbany’s location to the Governor, the State legislature, and the executive agencies in Albany, New York provides exceptional access to elected officials and public policy leaders. This is truly a unique and competitive advantage for growing the University’s future research portfolio. No other public doctoral research university in New York State has this level of access and strategic advantage to attract and grow extramural research funding. For example, Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and
Policy faculty members are engaged with NYS agencies through many different research, consulting, and training projects.

Support for the University’s Research Enterprise
The Division for Research provides a number of financial supports to investigators and academic/research units across the University. From intramural funding programs, conference and journal support, and bridge and seed funding to pre-submission peer review, incentivization funding, and Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) back to units, the Division for Research returned to the University research community an amount equivalent to approximately 30 percent of total ICR (or $3.77M) in FY 2020.

Division for Research leadership and staff also work closely with faculty and researchers to provide a wide array of supports such as grants development, pre-award proposal submissions, negotiating awards, finalizing grants and contracts, post-award expenditures, research and regulatory compliance, animal laboratory, intellectual property, commercialization, and economic development. In total, nearly 80 staff across 7 offices provide administrative and sponsored funds support services to UAlbany investigators throughout the entire lifecycle of an externally sponsored project.

SUNY Research Foundation
The Research Foundation for The State University of New York (RF) is the largest comprehensive, university-connected research foundation in the country. It exists to serve SUNY by providing essential administrative services that enable SUNY faculty to focus their efforts on the education of students and the performance of life-changing research across a wide range of disciplines. The RF works with the academic and business leadership of SUNY campuses to support research and discovery through administration of sponsored projects and technology transfer and management of intellectual property for public benefit and economic growth. The RF comprises a central office and operating units at 30 state-operated campuses across New York State. RF operations managers at the 30 state-operated campuses are appointed by the RF president on the recommendation of the respective campus president. The RF president delegates to each operations manager the authority to execute the powers and duties necessary to conduct RF business at the campus in a manner consistent with the RF’s policies and overall system of controls.
The Role
Reporting directly to the President, the Vice President for Research and Economic Development (VPR ED) will lead a university-wide effort to advance UAlbany’s regional, national, and international reputation as a leading research university and engine of economic development. In partnership with academic deans, senior university leaders, academic colleagues, and external constituencies (including, but not limited to, members of the SUNY Research Foundation, State legislature and executive agencies, New York State Department of Health, Wadsworth Center, New York delegation in Congress, and federal agencies), the VPR ED will strategically focus on multidisciplinary research initiatives of great societal and economic consequence while expanding research and enhancing standards of scholarship across disciplines. As the Division for Research is currently structured, the VPR ED has 12 direct reports.

Key Priorities:
▪ Lead the creation of a shared research vision and strategic plan, in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders;
▪ Propose, evaluate, and implement new models and large-scale initiatives that will lead to significant expansion of the University’s research enterprise;
▪ Partner with deans and academic units to advance research and to enhance extramural funding across the schools and colleges from all sources (corporate, foundation, state, federal, and philanthropic);
▪ Revisit and strengthen research infrastructure to better support investigators in their pre- and post-award activities;
▪ Be committed to research protections and the University’s research integrity programs;
▪ Provide leadership to the University’s administrative units and regulatory bodies responsible for providing oversight of regulatory research compliance and animal welfare programs;
▪ Support faculty and research development for early-, mid-, and senior-level career investigators;
▪ Create and advance intellectually stimulating and rewarding interdisciplinary collaborations among faculty, researchers, and students;
▪ Increase visibility of UAlbany research, promoting accomplishments internally and externally, in conjunction with the Office of Communications and Marketing;
▪ Foster public and private sector research and development partnerships; and
▪ Spur economic development and entrepreneurship across UAlbany’s research community.

Candidate Profile
The successful candidate for the Vice President for Research and Economic Development will demonstrate passion for research discovery, appreciate the importance of different types of research and scholarship across many different disciplines, and demonstrate experience building inclusive partnerships with diverse constituencies internally, externally, and across organizations. Candidates should have a strong reputation for interdisciplinary collaborations and high-impact research. The successful candidate will also have a proven record in securing funding from external organizations, such as federal agencies, industry, and/or foundations. Demonstrable experience building relationships with corporate partners is important.

The Vice President for Research and Economic Development must be an innovative, entrepreneurial, visionary, and collaborative leader. The successful candidate will have had prior administrative and leadership experience at a research organization, whether university, industry, or agency. The next VPR ED
must have a demonstrated record of leading significant change. The most viable candidates will understand both the scientific and business consequences of decision-making and will be willing to actively engage in their new role.

The successful candidate will be a strong communicator, enhancing UAlbany’s external visibility and reputation while increasing awareness of research opportunities and successes internally. Being receptive to input and feedback from others is essential. The next VPR ED will be a creative problem solver—who is willing to take risks—with unassailable personal and academic integrity.

University at Albany Leadership

Havidán Rodríguez, President
Dr. Havidán Rodríguez was appointed by the State University of New York (SUNY) Board of Trustees as the 20th president of the University at Albany in June 2017. He took office in September 2017 after more than 25 years as a leader in higher education.

Before joining UAlbany, Dr. Rodríguez served as the founding provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV). He also served as president, ad interim and provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Texas - Pan American (UTPA). Dr. Rodríguez played a key leadership role in the creation of UTRGV—which resulted from the consolidation of UTPA and the University of Texas Brownsville—and the creation, from the ground up, of UTRGV’s School of Medicine.

Prior to UTPA, Dr. Rodríguez served in various leadership roles at the University of Delaware, including deputy provost, vice provost for academic affairs and international programs, and director of the Disaster Research Center (DRC), the oldest and one of the leading social science disaster research centers in the world. He also held several administrative positions while on the faculty at the University of Puerto Rico-Mayagüez (UPRM) for over a decade. Dr. Rodríguez currently serves as a Commissioner on the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

Dr. Rodríguez has received funding from the National Science Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the National Institute of Mental Health, FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the UPRM Sea Grant Program, among others, for a number of research projects focusing on the social science aspects of disasters and for projects aimed at providing hands-on research training and mentoring to undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty.

Dr. Rodríguez earned a B.S. in psychology from the University of Maryland, an M.A. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Carol H. Kim, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dr. Carol H. Kim joined UAlbany on August 1, 2019, as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. Dr. Kim came to Albany from the seven-campus University of Maine System, where she served in a number of academic and administrative roles, most recently as associate vice chancellor of academic innovation and partnerships.
A molecular virologist and professor of microbiology, Dr. Kim pioneered the use of the zebrafish model for innate immune response to infectious diseases. She held a variety of posts at the University of Maine, including dean of the Graduate School, vice president for research, and director of the Graduate School of Biomedical Science and Engineering. She joined UMaine in 1998 as an assistant professor in the Department of Molecular and Biomedical Sciences, rising through the academic ranks to full professor in 2010. Her own research has been supported by numerous federal and state funding agencies, including the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Agriculture and NASA.

Dr. Kim promoted academic achievement in her role as advisor of more than 120 Honors, undergraduate, and graduate students. She was recognized for her personal support of faculty development as recipient of the Rising Tide Center’s Excellence in Faculty Mentoring Award. Dr. Kim supported international educational efforts by serving as PI for the Mandela Washington Fellowship, the flagship program of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). She has been a member of New England Commission on Higher Education evaluation teams, performing comprehensive accreditation reviews of several New England universities. Dr. Kim also served on multiple study sections for NIH and scientific review panels for USDA and NASA.

Dr. Kim holds a B.A. degree from Wellesley College in philosophy and biological chemistry and a Ph.D. degree in microbiology from Cornell University.

Nomination and Application Process
Inquiries, nominations, and applications are invited. Interested candidates should confidentially submit—in electronic format (Adobe PDF files preferred)—a curriculum vitae and letter of interest to UAlbany.VPRED@russellreynolds.com.

Although materials will be accepted and reviewed until the position is filled, for fullest consideration, materials should be received as soon as possible and preferably by May 17.

University at Albany is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer. The University actively encourages applications and nominations of women, minorities and persons with disabilities and applications from candidates with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Contact
Jett Pihakis, PhD
Russell Reynolds Associates
1700 New York Avenue, NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20006-5208
Direct: +1-202-654-7870
jett.pihakis@russellreynolds.com