



**VICE PRESIDENT FOR INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT**

**MCMURRY UNIVERSITY**

**Abilene, Texas**

[McMurry University](http://www.mcmurry.edu)



The Aspen Leadership Group is proud to partner with McMurry University in the search for a Vice President for Institutional Advancement.

The Vice President for Institutional Advancement will serve as the chief advancement officer for the university and will be responsible for the design and implementation of a comprehensive institutional advancement program as well as the recruitment and development of a talented team focused toward the ultimate goal of significantly increasing constituent involvement and fundraising outcomes. Areas of oversight include annual fund, corporate and foundation relations, major gifts and gift planning, endowment, capital campaigns, alumni and constituent relations efforts, stewardship, and advancement services.

Founded in 1923 as a United Methodist institution, McMurry University is a vibrant and comprehensive center of undergraduate education. McMurry has a national reputation for excellence and value through the achievements of its faculty, students, and graduates. The university enrolls more than 1,100 students and has an 11:1 student-to-faculty ratio. No graduate assistants teach courses and 77% of its professors have achieved the highest degree in their academic discipline.

Offering a diverse academic curriculum, students can choose from 45 majors in the arts, business, education, and the sciences as well as pre-professional programs in medicine, dentistry, engineering, law, pharmacy, physical therapy, among others. The three-week May term gives students an opportunity to explore a subject outside their major, and the Servant Leadership Program teaches students about ethics and helps develop leadership qualities.

McMurry is guided by its core values: Christian faith as the foundation of life, personal relationships as the catalyst for life, learning as the journey of life, excellence as the goal of life, and service as the measure of life. Its students are equipped to exceed expectations and go on to make their mark in the world, by leading lives of leadership, service, and professional success.

McMurry University has achieved national recognition for its outstanding academic programs including #1 in the State of Texas for highest percentage of graduates with jobs 10 years after graduation by *Zippia*; second best among all public and private universities in Texas by *College Consensus*; #19 nationally, joining other universities such as Texas A&M, Purdue, University of Southern California, and The Ohio State University in the Top 20 by College Consensus survey of the *Best Colleges for Veterans for 2018*; #8 in small colleges for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math-related (STEM) program by the *College Best Degree Programs* website; #12 in Western Region in *US News and World Report* rankings; #6 in ethnic diversity in the Western Region in *US News and World Report* rankings; #7 in Great Schools, Great Prices in the Western Region in *US News and World Report* rankings; and #9 in Best Colleges for Veterans in the Western Region in *US News and World Report* rankings.

## **MCMURRY UNIVERSITY CORE VALUES**

McMurry University is shaped by Christian principles. As a United Methodist institution grounded in traditions of intellectual achievement and vital piety, McMurry nurtures and cares for students as they face the many challenges of higher education. The institution provides the support necessary to encourage students to grow as whole persons – spiritually, emotionally, morally, intellectually, socially, and physically. The McMurry community expresses its Christian principles through hospitality and gracious interactions with those who do and those who do not identify with the Christian faith. The institution encourages connections between people of varying circumstances, cultures, languages, and beliefs.

McMurry challenges students to examine the complex world from multiple perspectives. The goal of a McMurry education is to provide the foundation for an examined, informed, and purposeful life. To that end, academic programs encourage students to build on the broader curricular experience and integrate the various disciplines' core ideas while developing fundamental skills in communication, analysis, and reasoning. McMurry strives to create an environment in which students can examine their own and others' perspectives to become, not simply consumers of knowledge, but sophisticated producers of knowledge connected to a global world.

McMurry prepares students for lives of leadership, service, and professional success. Through its curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, McMurry gives students practical experience in leadership and service. The institution places particular importance on servant leadership, an approach that focuses on empowering followers by encouraging and supporting the growth of others. The university develops servant leaders who seek to transform communities through listening first, emphasizing excellence and empathy, and inspiring an attitude of service. McMurry graduates have a solid basis for achievement in their religious, civic, professional, and family communities. McMurry expects its alumni to perform as servant leaders in diverse and complex environments and to use their leadership skills for the betterment of community and society.

## **REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS**

The Vice President for Institutional Advancement will report to the President, Dr. Sandra S. Harper. The Vice President will oversee a team of seven including five direct reports: the Executive Director of Donor Relations; Director of Alumni Relations; Director of Leadership Gifts for the McMurry Fund; Director of Advancement Services/Administrative Assistant; and Events Coordinator.

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

*McMurry University is positioned to meet the national moment. The student population looks like America and we strive to create an educational experience that prepares women and men of all backgrounds to engage others in working toward the common good.*

*We believe the following elements are especially relevant as you consider joining our McMurry academic community:*

- *McMurry Momentum, the university strategic plan, passed by the Board of Trustees in 2014, identifies three Centennial Imperatives with accompanying metrics of success that provide the guidance for all university decisions and activities.*
- *Financial statistics, characterized by the retirement of debt in December 2020 and the Council of Independent Colleges Financial Indicators Tool, place McMurry in the top 15% nationally regarding fiscal stability for private universities in the baccalaureate and master's Carnegie classifications.*

- *An exciting targeted capital campaign to renovate the University Student Center is just in the planning stage. The new VPIA will have the opportunity to be the primary architect of this fundraising campaign.*
- *A senior leadership team which is relatively new. The team is enthusiastic about welcoming a new colleague who will be an important component in achieving our institutional aspirations.*
- *The opportunity to work with an experienced president who understands the critical importance of institutional advancement in achieving the core mission of the institution.*
- *The recent reaffirmation of accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, which is in effect until 2029.*
- *The recent acquisition of three federal grants related to our Hispanic Serving Institution status, which provides the foundation of some important potential fundraising projects as new majors of cybersecurity, sustainable and renewable resources, and engineering physics are developed.*

*The Board Chair and the university President have drafted a document entitled “The Next Thirty, The Next Three,” which seeks to identify major trends in higher education that will transform the way we think about higher education through the lenses of 2050 and 2023, our centennial year. The global pandemic has only accelerated the need for both crisis management and short and long range planning. The institution that thrives in 2050 will have built a culture of philanthropy that supports the significant initiatives and support needed to guide McMurry students to fulfill their academic goals. The new VPIA will be a principal player in this important effort. In twenty years, you will be proud of the transformation that you helped create. I hope your interest in McMurry is heightened enough so that we can visit about the position in more detail. Whichever candidate emerges to receive the appointment, that leader will be joining a caring community of learning and love. Best wishes on your decisions regarding this search.*

–Dr. Sandra S. Harper, President

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION**

McMurry University is one of the most ethnically diverse private schools in the State of Texas. The student body is 48% Caucasian, 28% Hispanic, 15% African American, and 9% International/Native American/Asian/Pacific Islander. Half of the student body is Pell eligible and a significant number of its students are the first generation in their family to attend college. The university also defines diversity broadly to include not only ethnic diversity, but also spiritual/religious diversity, gender identity, differentially abled, and diversity of thought. After the national events in 2020 that brought social justice issues to the forefront, the university established a Diversity Council and sponsored seminars with nationally recognized consultants to have crucial conversations with faculty, staff, and students regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. One senior leader describes the institutional goal for diversity in this way, "I want McMurry to be a place where anyone from any nationality, gender, sexuality, economic background, cultural, race, skin color, religion, political ideology, etc. can feel safe and welcomed and feel like they have a spot on the team."

### **PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Vice President for Institutional Advancement will

- advance the mission, vision, and short- and long-term goals of the university in concert with the President and senior administrative colleagues;
- work closely with the President in all phases of her advancement and campaign leadership activities;
- serve as a member of the Leadership Team and maintain close working relationships with members of the Board of Trustees and key alumni/parents/friends;

- maintain a dynamic portfolio of high net worth individuals and secure major, capital, and planned gifts, as well as advanced annual gifts and endowment support;
- participate in strategic discussions and develop programs to strengthen the financial resources of the university;
- create and execute fundraising plans that utilize best practices in annual, major, and planned gift programs to meet fundraising goals;
- ensure dynamic processes in all phases of donor qualification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship;
- develop annual plans and budgets for Alumni and Parent Relations, Annual Fund, Gift Planning, Comprehensive Campaigns, Major Gifts, Grants Development, Stewardship, and Advancement Services;
- engage schools, programs, and divisions, and enhance the culture of philanthropy, maintaining cooperative working relationships with faculty, coaches, and campus departments whose cooperation is essential to effective outreach and fundraising;
- serve as the staff liaison for Institutional Advancement to the Board of Trustees and the Board Committee on Advancement and the Board Committee on Trusteeship;
- provide leadership to constituent relations programs in the areas of alumni relations, parent relations, and other key constituent relations;
- serve as an exemplary university advocate in the community, with local leaders, religious organizations, business and corporate partnerships, and other leaders, and build relationships that closely link the community with the university;
- be active and involved in the advancement profession and keep McMurry visible among higher education peer institutions;
- embody values of caring, compassion, justice, integrity, competence, and affirmation;
- treat members of the campus community with fairness, dignity, and respect, seeking a spirit of unity and harmony to achieve a common mission; and
- prepare for the upcoming campaign through comprehensive and effective campaign planning and execution.

#### KEY COLLEAGUES



**Dr. Sandra S. Harper**  
**President**

Dr. Sandra Harper, a native of Dallas, Texas, is the President of McMurry University in Abilene, Texas. Prior to her McMurry appointment, Dr. Harper served as the President of Our Lady of the Lake College (now named Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and as the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Communication at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Harper's other administrative posts included serving as the Vice President for Academic

Affairs at Oklahoma City University and as the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at McMurry University.

Harper received her BS degree from Texas Tech University and her MS and PhD from the University of North Texas. Harper completed the Harvard Management Development Program and the Governor's Executive Development Program at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas. Harper serves on the Board of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas, the North American Association of Methodist Schools/Colleges/Universities, the University Senate of the United Methodist

Church, and is the chair-elect of Board of Directors of the Educators and Institutional Insurance Administrators (EIIA). Harper also serves on the boards of the Abilene Industrial Foundation and the Abilene Chamber of Commerce.

In 2011, Harper was named a Distinguished Alumna by the Texas Tech University College of Education. Harper has also been recognized as the Carol Luthman Meritorious Service Award winner by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges in 2020, as a Woman of Power and Purpose by the Regional Victim Crisis Center in 2018, as a Woman of Outstanding Achievement by the American Association of University Women Abilene Chapter in 2017, as a Management Excellence Award Winner by the Society for Advancement of Management in 2005, and as a Y Women in Careers Award Winner by the YWCA in Corpus Christi in 2000.

She is married to Dave Harper and has two sons, two daughters-in-law, and six grandchildren.



**Dr. Matt Draud**

**Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty**

In his role as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty, Matt Draud serves as the advisor to the President in matters relating to curriculum and instruction, faculty selection and management, and programmatic initiatives supporting and enhancing the student learning experience.

Prior to McMurry, Draud served as the Dean of the College of Arts and Science at Siena Heights University in Adrian, MI. Before Siena, he headed up the biology department at Armstrong State University in Savannah, GA. He began his career at Long Island University, where he was a tenured professor, chair of the biology department, and director of the graduate program. Draud's key professional posts includes serving as a Peer Corps Reviewer for The Higher Learning Commission and he previously served as a research analyst at the Office of Technology Assessment for the United States Congress in Washington, D.C.

Draud has a keen interest in business development and entrepreneurial start-ups. He has been involved for the past several years with Upstart Adrian, a visionary group very similar to many of Abilene's business incubators, which has developed a program that focuses on building awareness of the entrepreneurial skills necessary for people that want to start new businesses in Adrian.

Draud earned his PhD in biology from Lehigh University. He has his master's of science in biology from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and a bachelor of arts in biology from Thomas More University.

Draud lives in Abilene with his wife, Michelle who is a nurse with expertise in high-risk obstetrical care, and he has two young adult children, son Travis who recently completed a master's degree in biology from Eastern Michigan University and daughter Savannah who is working on a doctoral degree in biology at University of Mississippi.



**Lisa Williams, CPA**

**Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief of Staff**

Lisa L. Williams serves as Vice President for Finance & Administration/Chief of Staff at McMurry University, Abilene, Texas. As VPFA/COS her responsibilities include the management of all business and financial functions of the university, as well as supervising all departments within the Finance & Administration division. She is a member of the President's Cabinet and assists with strategic planning for the university.

Williams has served as a vice president in higher education for 15 years and previously served as controller for five years. She is certified by the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy and serves as a financial evaluator for SACSCOC.



**Dr. Sam Ferguson**

**Vice President for Student Affairs and Intercollegiate Athletics**

Dr. Ferguson oversees the War Hawks' 21-sport intercollegiate program, while also supervising student affairs at the President's Cabinet level. In 2017, he was named McMurry University's "Most Outstanding Administrator" in recognition of his contributions to the campus community.

Ferguson oversees a staff of 18 that include student activities, residence life, security, student health, and counseling. The work of this staff, in cooperation with other campus stakeholders, has led to unprecedented retention rates. The first time full-time cohorts in 2019 and 2018 retained at a higher rate than in any of the last 10 years. In the spring of 2020, Ferguson was charged with coordinating the University's response to COVID-19 and creating the necessary protocols designed to keep the campus community safe.

Prior to McMurry, Ferguson served as Averett University's director of athletics for five years from 2006-2011, supervising a 14-team athletics department that included approximately 300 student-athletes and nearly 40 full and part-time employees.

Ferguson has experience with the Clement & Wheatley Law Offices in Danville, Virginia, and currently serves on both the Abilene Convention & Visitor's Bureau and United Way Board of Directors. He has also served on the executive committee of both the Danville, VA Big Brothers Big Sisters and Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors. Ferguson was a member of the Riverview Rotary Club and was chair of the Danville's Riverview Rotary Christmas Parade.

Ferguson graduated from Averett University and earned a Master of Science degree in Sports Management from Nova Southeastern University in 2006 and then a Doctor of Education from East Tennessee State University in 2019.

Ferguson is married to the former Kimberly Parker, who is an elementary school administrator. The couple have two fabulous sons, Angelo and Kaden. They are members of Beltway Park Church.



### **Robin Daniels**

#### **Vice President for Marketing and Communication**

Robin Daniels is a passionate marketing and communications professional who thrives in mission-driven organizations. Feeling blessed with her successes and motivated to impact others' future, she was drawn to higher education. Her West Texas values and common sense are amplified by broad work experiences in strategic planning, marketing, communications, and development departments. Her focus on building authentic relationships allows her to connect genuinely with those around her, sharing her insights with others and learning from them.

As McMurry University's Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Daniels is responsible for building brand awareness by creating effective messaging that resonates and connects customers to its mission. She is working to establish and centralize the marketing and communications team to support the university's strategic initiatives and support enrollment growth.

Previously, Daniels served as a Vice President of Methodist Health System Foundation; she had oversight for strategic planning, operational management, Golden Cross Board management, and finance. She also served as Assistant Vice President for Methodist Health System external relations, providing leadership and stability during departmental transitions and restructuring. Notably, she led the communications rollout for the Mayo Clinic Care Network launch; the communications strategy for the construction and opening of the new emergency department and Charles A. Sammons Trauma Tower; and the internal and external crisis communications during the Ebola crisis.

As President and Creative Director of SONUS, a national public relations and marketing boutique agency, Daniels directed agency operations, oversaw business development, and managed client services. Daniels also served in leadership roles in the Press Club of Dallas. She began her career at the American Cancer Society, where she progressed through increasingly responsible communications roles to directing activities for a top 10 media market and the 50+ counties in Northeast Texas.

Daniels holds both an MBA and BFA from Southern Methodist University (SMU). She also completed the Tuck- WBENC Executive Program at Dartmouth College and the Community Minority Business Advancement Program at The University of Texas at Austin.

### **PREFERRED COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

McMurry University seeks a Vice President for Institutional Advancement with

- a record of leadership and accomplishment in advancement with a proven track record of fundraising success, especially with campaign planning/execution and major gift solicitations;
- strong organizational, supervisory, and leadership capabilities;
- a track record of successful solicitations of numerous major and principal gifts;
- a history of building an advancement program and increasing fundraising performance;
- exemplary interpersonal skills and the ability to affect favorably sophisticated volunteers and donors;
- an ability to work effectively with many diverse constituencies within a university environment;
- a strong work ethic, competitive nature, personal integrity, emotional intelligence, a sense of humor, excellent communication skills, and strategic thinking and planning skills;
- evidence of a commitment to lifelong learning and professional growth; and
- experience in a private higher education environment (preferred).



A bachelor's degree is required for this position as is at least seven years of experience in a senior level advancement position.

#### **SALARY AND BENEFITS**

McMurry University offers a competitive salary and [benefits package](#).

#### **LOCATION**

McMurry University is located in Abilene, Texas. The McMurry alumni base is located primarily in Abilene and in Dallas, Texas, which is a three hour drive to the east of Abilene.

#### **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

All applications must be accompanied by a cover letter and résumé. ***Cover letters should be no more than two pages in length and responsive to the core values of McMurry University as well as the responsibilities and qualifications presented in the position prospectus.*** Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the successful candidate has been selected.

*To apply for this position, visit:*

[Vice President for Institutional Advancement, McMurry University.](#)

*To nominate a candidate, please contact Don Hasseltine:*

[donhasseltine@aspenleadershipgroup.com.](mailto:donhasseltine@aspenleadershipgroup.com)

*All inquiries will be held in confidence.*