

A SEARCH FOR THE  
President of Southern Connecticut State University





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chancellor of the Connecticut State College & Universities (CSCU) invites nominations and applications for the position of President of Southern Connecticut State University (Southern) in New Haven, CT.

With an ambitious strategic plan and a comprehensive campaign in progress to provide a framework for action, Southern seeks a President to lead the university on its exciting journey. Since its founding in 1893 as the New Haven State Normal School, Southern has grown and evolved into a modern, diversified center of higher learning, expanding well beyond its original mission of outstanding teacher preparation to entirely new fields of study and research. It has also developed a strong sense of its role to serve the community and to meet the educational needs of the region

A partially residential university on a 172-acre campus four miles from downtown New Haven, a thriving diverse city in southern Connecticut, Southern currently enrolls approximately 9,377 students, 7,252 of whom are full- and part-time undergraduates and 2,125 of whom are full- and part-time graduate students. A longstanding strength of Southern is its faculty of teacher/scholars who are focused on students and who provide individual academic advising, out-of-class instruction, and personal attention. Eighty-seven percent of Southern's 410 full-time faculty holds a doctorate or other appropriate terminal degree. A strong cadre of 566 part-time faculty members, many of whom are practitioners in their fields, adds breadth and depth of experience to the classroom.

The heart and soul of Southern is its mission, the cornerstones of which are academic excellence, access, social justice, and

service for the public good. Southern is a truly student-centered campus that provides for the students an educational experience that is equal to what they would find at more elite institutions. These cornerstones of Southern's mission form a unity: providing an excellent education available to all who can benefit from it at an affordable price is Southern's primary contribution to social justice. More information about Southern may be found at <https://www.SouthernCT.edu/>

The President of Southern serves as its Chief Executive Officer and reports to the Chancellor of the Connecticut State College and University System. The presidents of all Connecticut state universities, Connecticut State Community College, and Charter Oak State College are responsible for ensuring that CSCU institutions collectively provide affordable, innovative, and rigorous programs for students to achieve their personal and career goals as well as contribute to the economic growth of Connecticut. The President of Southern is expected to be a full partner in ensuring the success and prominence of both the University and the system and to serve the region's and state's administrative and legislative leaders, state residents, and businesses.

Southern seeks in its next president the vision; organizational leadership experience; integrity; commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion; and the communication and interpersonal skills to further guide the university on its path to success. The ability to lead the university's fundraising efforts is essential. An advanced degree is required.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy on page 15.



## ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

The President is the Chief Executive Officer of Southern Connecticut State University and has broad responsibilities, including:

- Advising the CSCU Chancellor and Board of Regents on the needs of the campus and its students
- Overseeing university-wide delivery of strong academic programs, equitable and outstanding educational student experiences, and administrative strategies that lead to sustainability and effectiveness
- Implementing university-wide strategic goals
- Advocating for state funding and policies that support public higher education
- Overseeing the achievement of university-wide performance goals in accordance with their adopted performance accountability plans
- Providing academic, administrative, and student affairs leadership to the campus
- Providing the Board of Regents with updates at its regularly scheduled meetings and outside the meeting schedule whenever appropriate

In conjunction with the Southern community and the CSCU Chancellor, the Southern President is expected to evaluate, adjust if necessary, and implement the university's strategic plan

with particular focus on the university's financial sustainability and return on investment to the State of Connecticut. The President is responsible for collaborating with other universities, colleges, the System Office, and external partners to advance public higher education in Connecticut. The President is expected to work tirelessly to strengthen the university's financial health, modernize infrastructure, invest in both physical and human capital, advance Southern on its pathway to excellence, and improve educational outcomes and experience for students.

Reporting to the President are the following members of Southern's Presidential Cabinet:

- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Finance and Administration/Chief Financial Officer
- Vice President for Student Affairs
- Vice President for Institutional Advancement
- Vice President, Technology and Chief Information Officer
- Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Vice President for Enrollment Management
- Presidential Assistant



## OPPORTUNITIES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

The next President will join Southern at a time of exceptional development and change – a time during which Southern increasingly makes good on its promise to provide exemplary, transformative, and accessible education; to strengthen the University-wide culture and infrastructure that nurtures creativity and innovation; to further expand and enhance its facilities; to promote community well-being, economic growth, and social justice by serving and leading in local and global communities; and to steward the University’s human, financial, technological, and physical resources in an ethical manner. Specifically, the President will be expected to address the following priorities:

### A vision for excellence

Southern Connecticut State University is excited about its future and seeks a president who can lead the institution forward with an energetic, aspirational vision for excellence. With a history of excellent undergraduate education and the most graduate and doctoral programs in the CSCU system, Southern benefits tremendously from its location, mission of equity and social justice, and longstanding reputation for strong

liberal arts and professional programs, especially in teacher education and the health sciences. The University expects to expand its graduate offerings and research capacity in coming years, as well as its leadership in community partnerships and service. The next president will be expected to galvanize the community in building on Southern’s strengths to lay a path for a successful future.

### Continue implementation of the strategic plan

Southern’s new strategic plan, “Leading the Way: 2023-2028 Priorities,” was launched in 2023 with a five-year planning horizon to focus the institution on strategies and actions that will have immediate and sustainable impacts on recruitment, retention, persistence and completion, and equity. The plan also includes broader aspirational goals and strategies that focus on a longer-term horizon. The University is currently moving aggressively in several directions—building a stronger emphasis on social justice; developing academic programs that meet regional needs and establishing effective partnerships; increasing fundraising; increasing faculty research and research funding; and improving student support and success.



As Southern approaches year two of the strategic plan, the next president must assist the entire community in developing a structure and process for fulfilling the plan's goals and delivering results. The next president will want to emphasize and ensure success in four key areas:

- Enrollment stability – Recent results of targeted recruitment efforts of both undergraduate and graduate students are promising and indicate that, with continued focus and strategic investment, the plan's goal of 5% annual growth to achieve over 10K students by 2028 is within reach.
- Graduate education and research growth – The University's growing graduate and research profile – with R-2 research status pending - offers an opportunity for the president to engage the community in exploring and realizing a vision for Southern as both a teaching and research institution. Growth in graduate education and research suggests numerous implications from funding to infrastructure and facilities that need to be addressed in order to attract, support, and retain a cadre of talented graduate students and productive researchers.
- Justice, Equity, and Excellence – Southern has long exemplified a commitment to social justice and success for all students and is considered a role model for accessible, outstanding public higher education in the State and region. It is essential to this community that the president and the University continue to advance programs and services that embody these values.
- Community Engagement – Southern occupies a prominent role in the greater New Haven community as a driver of socioeconomic well-being. The university has forged valuable and strategic partnerships with entities such as the City of New Haven; Yale New Haven Health, which employs approximately 2000 alumni; the public school system; and other universities in the area to sponsor initiatives and joint programs that meet the needs of the region. The next president will be expected to continue exploring strategic partnerships and relationships that benefit the community, new and growing industries, Southern's students, and its graduates.



### Financial sustainability

Southern has benefitted from decades of effective financial stewardship and is in a solid position to confront and plan for the fiscal and demographic realities of the State of Connecticut. The CSCU system institutions and leadership are working actively to develop remedies to state budget challenges while continuing to advocate for state investment in faculty excellence and student success. Like many public universities, Southern's campus is home to both state-of-the-art facilities and aging buildings and equipment that need upgrading or replacement. In October 2024, the CSCU Board of Regents passed a resolution requiring each of CSCU's six institutions to develop a five-year financial sustainability plan with realistic enrollment and financial projections and metrics for achieving results. For SCSU to be successful, the next president must ensure superb financial leadership and analysis across the institution, continuous systemic financial planning and evaluation, effective organizational structures, optimal resource utilization, a realistic campus master plan, and new diversified revenue streams. Southern's next president must work effectively with the University's constituents, campus and system leadership, and other presidents to ensure that public higher education is utilizing its resources responsibly to yield positive student outcomes.

### Comprehensive campaign

Southern is in the early stages of the first comprehensive campaign in its history. With the assistance of the SCSU Foundation board, the President's Advisory Council, the Alumni Association and a large population of alumni in the region, the opportunity is ripe for increasing Southern's fundraising results as well as for strengthening its brand. The president will be expected to commit time and resources to cultivating the relationships necessary to achieve success.

### Campus culture

Southern Connecticut State University has been able to attract and retain talented faculty, staff, and students because of its emphasis on individual attention, a strong sense of community, and its rich, diverse campus. Staff and faculty go above and beyond expectations to ensure students are successful. Both labor and management contribute to an environment of respect, collaboration, communication, and shared governance in which consultative problem-solving is the norm. The members of the SCSU community understand the challenges ahead and seek a president who will honor and tap their commitment to working together to identify and implement effective solutions. The next president will be a steadfast advocate for the students, faculty, and staff, who have collectively created a dynamic and inclusive environment that represents a diverse blend of experiences, cultures, and backgrounds. They must work diligently to support and uplift the dedicated faculty and staff: a remarkable university relies on exceptional individuals, and SCSU's next president will foster an environment that promotes equity, professional development, and personal success for all employees.



## PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

Southern Connecticut State University seeks in its next president a leader with a distinguished track record of progressive leadership in higher education. The ideal candidate will have demonstrated the ability to enhance student success, academic quality, financial performance, and organizational effectiveness. An advanced degree is required.

In addition, the university seeks a leader with the following attributes:

- Experience engaging and leading a complex organization through change
- A humanity-centered, shared leadership philosophy
- Collaborative and collective approach to problem-solving
- Ability to inspire others to overcome challenges and find a path to success
- Courage and resiliency
- Ability to catalyze the entire community to deliver on strategic goals
- Operational, fiscal, and budgetary sophistication
- Zeal for external relations, fundraising, and nourishing connections that benefit the university
- Experience working within a collective bargaining environment
- Passion for Southern's social justice mission
- Deep interest in and enthusiasm for student success with Southern's diverse population of students
- Outstanding team leadership skills coupled with the ability to recruit, retain, and engage a high-performance team
- Empathy, authenticity, sincerity
- Able to communicate meaningfully with different groups of people
- The ability to advocate for Southern and public higher education
- Transparent communication style
- Strong analytical and data-based decision-making skills
- Forethought, respect, logic
- Ability to work effectively and achieve progress within a shared governance environment
- Intellectual curiosity
- An understanding of effective models of public university systems

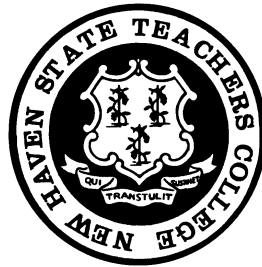


THE LIBRARY AND READING ROOM



## SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY HISTORY

Founded in 1893 as the New Haven State Normal School, Southern was designed to deliver strong teacher preparation – a hallmark of the University throughout its history. In 1937, it became a four-year college – New Haven State Teachers College – with degree-granting powers. Ten years later, it joined with Yale University’s Department of Education to offer a graduate program leading to a master of science degree and assumed full responsibility for the program in 1954. In 1959, six years after the institution had moved to its present location, state legislation expanded the institution’s offerings to include liberal arts curricula leading to bachelor’s degrees in the arts and sciences and subsequently renamed it Southern Connecticut State College. A board of trustees overseeing Connecticut’s four state colleges was established in 1965, and in 1983, Southern Connecticut State College became Southern Connecticut State University, part of the Connecticut State University System. Through the years, Southern has continued its growth as a modern, urban, diversified center of higher learning, expanding both its undergraduate and graduate programs and opening up entirely new fields of study and research. It has also developed a strong sense of its role to serve the community and to meet the educational needs of the region.



## CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Connecticut State Colleges & Universities (CSCU) is a system of six colleges and universities: four state universities; CT State Community College (12 locations); and Charter Oak State College, an online degree completion institution. CSCU offers a mix of 2-year and 4-year institutions, online and on-ground programs, and 17 locations across Connecticut.

As one of four comprehensive universities within CSCU, Southern maintains strong relations with its System peers, especially its sister institutions: Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, and Western Connecticut State University in Danbury. The president of each university serves as the institution’s chief executive officer and is accountable to the CSCU Board of Regents, through a direct-reporting relationship with the CSCU Chancellor for the management of the university within Board policy.

The 21-member Board of Regents (15 voting members) is the governing authority of the CSCU System. Its responsibilities include setting system-wide tuition and student-fee policies; establishing financial-aid policies; reviewing, licensing, and accrediting academic programs; and, in collaboration with institutional stakeholders, conducting searches for and selecting campus presidents and the CSCU Chancellor. The Board also holds broad responsibilities for the development and coordination of statewide higher education policy.





## SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY TODAY

A partially residential university, Southern currently enrolls approximately 9,377 students, 7,252 of whom are full- and part-time undergraduates and 2,125 of whom are full- and part-time graduate students (*Fall '24 census*).

A longstanding strength of Southern is its faculty, who are teacher/scholars focused on students and who provide individual academic advising, much out-of-class instruction, and personal attention. Southern students are taught and mentored by 410 full-time faculty members, 87 percent of whom hold a doctorate or other appropriate terminal degree. A strong cadre of 566 part-time faculty members, many of whom are practitioners in their fields, adds breadth and depth of experience to the classroom.

The heart and soul of Southern is its mission, the cornerstones of which are academic excellence, access, social justice, and service for the public good. Southern is a truly student-centered campus that provides for the students an educational experience that is equal to what they would find at more prestigious institutions. The cornerstones of Southern's mission form a unity: providing an excellent education available to all

who can benefit from it at an affordable price is Southern's primary contribution to social justice.

Southern faculty members are actively engaged in scholarship, research, and other creative activity as well as the supervision of undergraduate and graduate research. With strong administrative support, the faculty have dramatically increased the level of sponsored research they seek and receive. At the same time, a sustained commitment to personalized teaching and learning permeates campus culture. Many faculty members oversee internships, graduate and undergraduate theses, special projects, and independent studies. Most also serve as academic advisors.

A strong network of collective bargaining units represents nearly every constituent group within the Southern family. As a result, a clear set of policies, procedures, and agreements, resulting from open negotiations, is widely understood, and shared governance is an important part of Southern's culture.



## THE COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

Southern consists of the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, the College of Education, the College of Health and Human Services, and the School of Graduate and Professional Studies. Together, they offer more than 225 academic programs. These include bachelor's and master's degrees as well as sixth-year professional diplomas and doctoral degrees in business administration, counselor education and supervision, educational leadership, nursing education, and social work. In addition to traditional in-class pedagogy, Southern offers a broad array of online and hybrid courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- **The College of Arts and Sciences** includes undergraduate majors and graduate programs in 22 departments. All SCSU undergraduate students spend a minimum of one third of their collegiate careers in carefully chosen arts and sciences courses that serve as the core for their academic life at the University. The College thus plays a central role in ensuring that Southern's mission permeates the student experience.

- **The AACSB-accredited School of Business** offers undergraduate programs in: accounting, economics and finance, management and international business, marketing, business information systems, and public utilities management. Graduate programs include the traditional and accelerated MBA, along with the new STEM MBA and STEM Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) programs. The School of Business opened its new state-of-the-art business building in Fall 2023, the First Net Zero Energy (NZE) building constructed by the state of Connecticut in terms of its carbon footprint. Thanks to Southern's urban location and proximity to other major cities, internship and employment opportunities for business students abound, complementing their in-class experiences.



- **The College of Education** consists of five departments: counseling and school psychology, curriculum and learning, educational leadership and policy studies, information and library science, and special education. Southern plays a leadership role in developing Connecticut's next generation of educators. Through its nationally-accredited programs, the College also prepares students for careers in educational leadership, clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, and school psychology. The Barack Obama University School for K-4 students, developed on the Southern campus and in partnership with the New Haven Board of Education, offers Southern's students in education an on-campus venue for their student teaching and an opportunity to partner in elementary school activities and curriculum.
- **The College of Health and Human Services** includes the following departments: communication disorders; marriage and family therapy; nursing; public health; recreation, tourism and sport management; health and movement sciences; and social work. These disciplines share a mission of compassionate care within a professional framework, and each awards highly-regarded master's and doctoral degrees. The programs emphasize hands-on learning, with numerous opportunities for internships and clinical rotations. The new Health and Human Services state-of-the-art physical facility opened in Fall 2022 to address the demand for well-trained health and human services professionals.
- **The School of Graduate and Professional Studies** serves as administrative support for Southern's graduate students and works closely with the other colleges and schools. With more than 100 degree- and certificate-granting programs, it is one of the most significant public graduate education centers in the Northeast. The University produces the largest number of graduates in health and life sciences, education, and social and public services in the CSCU system. The school is also home for the Office for Workforce and Lifelong Learning (OWLL), Southern's continuing education and professional development programs.



## CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Complementing Southern's traditional academic disciplines are several nationally recognized centers. Included among them are the:

- Werth Center for Coastal and Marine Studies
- Center for Community and School Action Research
- Center for Communication Disorders
- Center of Excellence on Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Center of Excellence on Teaching and Learning
- Center for Research on Interface Structures and Phenomena (CRISP)
- Center for Excellence in Math and Science (CEMS)
- Center for Educational and Assistive Technology (CEAT)
- Center for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability Education (CELSE)

The Connecticut State University Center for Nanotechnology is a crucial element of a system-wide collaborative initiative to support a graduate certificate in nanotechnology. The Office of STEM Innovation and Leadership (STEM-IL) is providing synergy to the institution's many STEM-related initiatives and clearly reflects Southern's commitment and leadership in STEM

education, research, and outreach. The Center for Excellence in Mathematics and Sciences has developed programs reflecting strong local involvement. In addition, Southern's distinguished Women's and Gender Studies program conducts a bi-annual conference that draws renowned scholars from around the world.

## SOUTHERN'S FUTURE

Southern Connecticut State University looks to the future with a renewed sense of commitment to elevating educational attainment in our region and the state. We will achieve that with academic programs that confront the most pressing environmental and health issues through innovative research and cultivating a community of entrepreneurial and inventive leaders and educators for Connecticut's workforce.

Elevating students beyond their current socio-economic status is at the heart of Southern's academic mission. Southern's new strategic plan, "Leading the Way: 2023-2028 Priorities" was rolled out with a two-fold purpose: 1) A 5-year planning horizon to focus the institution on strategies and actions that will have immediate and sustainable impacts on recruitment, retention, persistence, and completion, and equity; and 2) Broader



aspirational goals and strategies will have Southern focus on the future as the longer term horizon becomes clearer and as advances are made on the immediate goals of stabilizing and growing enrollment. The University is currently moving aggressively in several directions—a stronger emphasis on social justice; developing academic programs that meet regional needs and establish effective partnerships; increasing fundraising; increasing faculty research and research funding; and improving student support and success.

The foreseeable future at Southern will be a time of exceptional development and change – a time during which Southern increasingly makes good on its promise to provide exemplary, transformative, and accessible education; to strengthen the University-wide culture and infrastructure that nurtures creativity and innovation; to further expand and enhance its facilities; to promote community well-being, economic growth, and social justice by serving and leading in local and global communities; and to steward the University’s human, financial, technological, and physical resources in an ethical manner.

## THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Southern is a community truly focused on its students. Faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents, and community members all play a role in the educational enterprise. Multiple voices are welcomed at the table to ensure student success, and many campus members play multiple roles— as mentors, coaches, advisors, teachers, and co-researchers. The sense of camaraderie this approach engenders is palpable and creates a deeper experience of community.

Ninety-six percent of Southern’s students are from the State of Connecticut, both as residential students in nine traditional residence halls and apartments and as commuter students. Special efforts are made to connect the residential and commuter populations in meaningful ways and to make the campus an inviting place to be in the evenings and on weekends. In addition to supporting its blend of residential and commuter students, Southern deeply values its commitments to access and inclusion. The University welcomes traditional and non-traditional students.

It shares with its sister CSU institutions the determination to provide an upward path for people of talent. The University’s

effective tutoring, counseling, advising, and career development programs are complemented by cutting-edge adaptive technologies. These offerings, coupled with an array of intercultural activities and events, ensure that Southern's students achieve their goals, feel a strong sense of belonging, and remain engaged in the life of the University.

Southern is truly "in" and "of" its geographic region. With the great majority of its students from Connecticut and 90 percent of its graduates remaining in the state following graduation, the University and its more than 98,000 alumni are, without question, shaping the workforce and citizenry of Connecticut. Southern has a defining role to play in articulating those areas of strength for which the state will be known.

Southern students are engaged in activities outside the classroom, participating in approximately 100 student clubs and organizations, myriad community service activities, fraternities and sororities, campus media, musical ensembles, theater and dance groups, athletic teams, and a robust offering of intramural and club sports.

Southern's NCAA Division II athletic program is a member of the Northeast-10 Conference as well as the Eastern College Athletic Conference. It supports eight men's teams and 11 women's teams. The Owls have a long history of athletic excellence. Their ten team championships and 81 individual championships place them among the top ten Division II athletic programs in the nation. There is also a robust community-service emphasis, and student athletes volunteer a great deal of their time to the community.

## A GROWING CAMPUS

Southern continues to develop its modern, 172-acre campus with dramatic new additions and enhancements in the last ten years.

- A 135,000-square-foot addition to Buley Library coupled with a total renovation of the original building has doubled the size of the library's footprint;
- A \$50 million, 103,608-square-foot academic science and laboratory building houses teaching and research laboratories for Southern's programs in the STEM disciplines, which have seen enrollments increase by nearly 27% in recent years;
- Construction of a new \$70 million facility for the College of Health and Human Services was completed in 2022;
- The new School of Business opened in fall 2023.



- The University's commitment to sustainability is strong, with approximately 5 megawatts of energy produced on campus utilizing solar arrays and fuel cells. This commitment is reflected in expanded staff and programming offered through the Office of Sustainability. Moreover, in order to meet Connecticut's stringent environmental standards for state funding eligibility, each construction or renovation project totaling \$5 million or more will meet a minimum LEED Silver rating. The campus has thousands of solar panels that generate about 15% of the campus electricity.
- Two fuel cell installations are in design.

## PROCEDURE FOR CANDIDACY

All applications, nominations and inquiries are invited. Applications should include, as separate documents, a CV or resume and a letter of interest addressing the themes in this profile.

WittKieffer is assisting SCSU in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by [application deadline].

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's candidate portal.

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:  
Lucy Leske and Luis Bertot  
[SCSUPresident@wittkieffer.com](mailto:SCSUPresident@wittkieffer.com)



SCSU is an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity employer. The University seeks to enhance the diversity of its faculty and staff. People of color, women, veterans, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.



Southern Connecticut  
State University