POSITION OF ACADEMIC DEAN

GENERAL INFORMATION

Reports to: Principal
Employment status: Full time
Works closely with: Faculty, Registrar and Director of Admissions and Records, The Directors of Interreligious and Indigenous Studies, Vice-Principal and CFO, Librarian and the Principal’s Council (PC)
Relates to: All academic programs and offices; Development, Communications, Finance, Emeriti and former faculty

POSITION SUMMARY

The Academic Dean is the Chief Academic Officer of Vancouver School of Theology (VST) and as such is a leader with responsibility for the academic life of the school. The Dean ensures that VST’s educational programs, services and experience meet a very high standard of quality and integrity. The Academic Dean champions, advances, oversees, and ensures the delivery of VST’s academic operations including admissions, registration and student record functions. The Dean leads in the utilization of educational technologies and records integration. In doing so the Academic Dean provides leadership and support for the faculty and the student body.

VST is called to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders in conversation with the Indigenous Church and people of other faith traditions. Reporting to and working closely with the Principal, the Academic Dean establishes and strives to achieve clear priorities, goals and objectives for academic operations at VST based upon the school’s mission and strategic plan. Progress against these priorities, goals and objectives are used in the evaluation of both the position and the incumbent.

View VST Vision, Mission, and Values on page 5.

The Academic Dean is a member of Principal’s Council (PC). The Dean collaborates closely with other members of PC to ensure the planning and delivery of academic programs, services and initiatives are integrated with external relations, budgeting and administrative functions.

The Academic Dean is a member of the VST Faculty Association and a member of the teaching faculty. The Dean may also be Chair of Faculty Council. The Dean also convenes DAC (the Dean’s Advisory Committee) for matters related to student discipline and FSRC (Faculty Student Review Committee), which regularly reviews student progress for, among other things, denominational reporting.

The Academic Dean fulfills a leadership role model within the VST community and in representing the school to the public.
SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic
• Advances innovation in academic programming through partnering, creativity and continuous approaches to quality improvement (like current initiatives with Sauder, Huron and St Mark’s).
• Under the leadership of the Principal, serves on Faculty recruitment committees.
• Encourages positive conditions for Faculty research and professional development.
• Arranges and oversees Faculty student groups, in conjunction with the Registrar.
• In co-operation with program directors (ISP and IP) and faculty, ensures that overall program delivery is coherent and achievable within the resources available.
• Attends to quality assurance processes and facilitates the regular evaluation of all academic programs and standards.
• Innovates, oversees and supports new initiatives in program development.
• Liaises with Directors of Denominational Formation and others as appropriate to ensure that formational goals of programs and denominational requirements are met.
• Oversees policies and practices regarding non-credit programs and continuing education offerings.
• Provides oversight of admissions into all programs through consultation with Registrar.
• Listens and provides advice to students in an advisory capacity.
• Promotes open communication between faculty and students, and ensures processes are in place to support this.
• In matters of student discipline and assessing appropriate penalties, ensures that the appropriate policies are upheld and that the authorized process is followed, in conversation with DAC (Dean's Advisory Committee).
• Takes a lead role in planning and organizing convocation.

Leadership
• Actively participates on the Principal’s Council (PC).
• Provides leadership, supervision and accountability to the Faculty.
  • Participates in periodic reviews for tenure and promotion.
  • May chair Faculty Council, providing Agenda, Minutes, and any additional materials.
  • Works with Principal for sabbatical planning and coverage.
• Oversees all academic programs with the approval of the Principal on campus, distance, or extension.
• Oversees the contracting of sessional and summer school instructors along with the instruction and information documents.
• Participates in the worship life at the school.
Administration
• Leads, develops and maintains efficient and effective systems and processes, utilizing the latest technologies.
• Oversees the work of the Academic Office, including supervision of the Registrar and Coordinator of Admissions and Academic Records.
  • Conducts regular staff meetings.
  • Provides supervision and accountability.
  • Oversees vacations, coverage and scheduling.
  • Conducts annual reviews.
  • Conducts exit interviews.
  • Revises position descriptions, in consultation with review teams and the Principal.
  • Supervises the production and publication of the School’s Calendar by January 30th of each year.
• Ensures timely and accurate communication with inquirers, applicants and students.
• Maintains contact, as required, with the Ministry of Advanced Education (BC) in collaboration with the Vice-Principal.
• Maintains contact, as required, with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), and ensures that the standards of accreditation that relate to the work of the Academic life of the school are sustained.
• Takes a leading role in preparing for ATS comprehensive assessment visits.
• Ensures the recording and application of appropriate policies and procedures of the Academic Life of the school and reviews on a regular basis.
• In consultation with the Vice-Principal and CFO, prepares and oversees the annual budget and financials for the Academic Department, including all sub budgets.
• Writes various announcements.

Governance
• Recruits, coordinates and publishes the membership of all academic committees.
• Attends committees as ex officio member, as required.
• As a member, and possibly Chair, of Faculty Council the Dean participates in the delegated governance of the school.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS
• A Ph.D. in Theology or Ministry, with a specialization in an area required by the curricular needs of the school (at present these are: Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, Ethics, Canadian Church History, Field Education).
• Associate Professor rank.
• Interest and demonstrated leadership in Academic Administration.
• Dedication to the Academic Mission of the School and capacity to support development of technological initiatives for the strengthening and expansion of this mission.
• Strong strategic thinking.
• Exceptional interpersonal and conflict management skills.
• Committed to the pastoral care of students.
• Outstanding oral and written communications skills.
• Excellent computer skills and knowledge of student information systems.
• Highly motivated, high energy, takes initiative, is persistent and diligent.
• Personal attributes and skills (e.g. integrity, maturity, diplomacy, openness) to work collaboratively in a theological school with students, faculty, staff, and administration.
• VST is committed to nurturing a faculty complement that is inclusive and diverse.

View VST Policies: https://vst.edu/vst/vst-about/policies/policies

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS

• Ordained member of the United Church or Anglican Church of Canada, or one of its related partners, in North America or abroad (in keeping with Canadian immigration requirements the posting will be directed first of all to Canadian applicants).

APPOINTMENT AND TERMS

• The appointment of the Academic Dean is by recommendation of the Principal to the board after consultation with the Faculty Association. The initial appointment is for a three (3) year period. The incumbent must be reviewed in the year prior to completion of this term, unless either party has indicated an intention not to renew.
• The candidate's academic discipline and experience will not be known until a short list of candidates is achieved. An academic position description will be made for the finalist once their field is known. The faculty position will be governed by the terms of the Faculty Handbook.
• Any separation from the position of Academic Dean must have six (6) months’ notice, or as mutually agreed. The Principal will have the right to terminate for cause without notice after consultation with the Board.

TEACHING

• The Academic Dean will have course relief and the specific number of courses will be negotiable between the Principal and the Academic Dean on an annual basis, normally this will be two degree-level 3 credit courses annually.

For more information or an informal conversation about the position, please contact:

The Rev. Dr. Richard R. Topping
Principal of the College
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Phone: 604-822-9808
Vision (what we strive for)
- The Vancouver School of Theology is called to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders.

Mission (what we offer)
An education at VST invites:
- Faithful discernment of the demands of Christian service.
- Rigorous engagement with Christian tradition and contemporary learning.
- Hospitable and respectful collaboration with Indigenous spiritualities and other cultures and faith traditions for the good of all creation.

Values (our commitments)
As a community of faith, we commit to:
- Theological education (theological, biblical, pastoral, ethical, historical, Indigenous and inter-religious studies) and formation for the flourishing of God's people
- Inspiring lives of discerning Christian discipleship within and outside this community
- Respect for the dignity of every person
- Learning and scholarship undertaken with diligence and openness
- Encouraging prophetic speech and just action for the love and welfare of creation