



## **Founding Dean, College of Nursing and Health Sciences**

Excelsior College invites nominations and applications for the role of Founding Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (CNHS). Following a long and successful history of leadership in nursing education, Excelsior has committed to an ambitious and innovative path forward that centers around the expansion of its health sciences offerings to include a wider array of cutting edge health professional programs and educational opportunities.

This exciting opportunity to join an academic executive leadership team comes at a time when Excelsior's reputation as a leading provider of online education has achieved significant recognition. In 2022, Newsweek ranked Excelsior among the top 10 online colleges and universities in the nation. The new Founding Dean of CNHS will join a prestigious online university and a team of talented leaders to architect a bold future in online health professional education.

The launch of the new College of Nursing and Health Sciences coincides with a landmark event in the history of Excelsior College. On August 1, 2022, Excelsior College will officially become Excelsior University. This moment of pride and accomplishment in Excelsior's evolution will enable the University to expand globally and offer doctoral degrees across a wide range of academic and professional programs. Key to the College's strategy is to build on its long history of excellence in educating more than 60,000 nurses and expand upon its health sciences offerings.

### **ABOUT EXCELSIOR**

Excelsior College is an accredited, not-for-profit, distance learning institution founded in 1971 and focused on providing educational opportunity to adult learners. With its main offices located in Albany, NY, Excelsior today enrolls over 16,000 students and employs approximately 600 adjunct faculty and 380 full-time faculty and staff. Comprised of three schools and 40 degree programs across six areas of study (business, health sciences, liberal arts, nursing, public service, and technology), Excelsior offers associate, baccalaureate, certificate, and master's programs and has a current annual operating budget of close to \$70M.

During its early years, the College initially achieved its mission to provide adult learners with a flexible and affordable pathway to a credential through the assessment of learning and the aggregation of credit earned from inside and outside the classroom. It soon added credit by examination, which allows students to study independently and take exams to validate their knowledge. Thirty years later, in the 2000s, the College was among the first institutions to develop and offer online courses. With a continuous commitment to innovation and a steadfast resolve to meet students where they are – academically and geographically – Excelsior pioneered many of the assessment and online instruction practices now standard for distance education.

In 2021, Excelsior was recognized as No. 1 for best online associate degrees and No. 3 for best online bachelor's degrees by OnlineU. The designations are part of OnlineU's list of 2021 Best Online Colleges for Return on Investment, which ranks schools by graduates' salaries and debt payments for 10 years after graduation, accounting for standard salary growth and interest on debt payments.

The College continues to grow and evolve to meet opportunities for delivering education and the changing needs of adult learners. At Excelsior, a focus on student success and meeting their learning needs has led to the creation of an integrated ecosystem that includes instructor-led and self-paced courses, independent study for credit by examination, prior learning assessment, and stackable credentials.

**Mission** – Excelsior College provides educational opportunity to adult learners with an emphasis on those historically underrepresented in higher education. The College meets students where they are — academically and geographically, offering quality instruction and the assessment of learning.

**Vision** – Excelsior College is a provider of choice for adults seeking access to higher education and academic success, and it is a model for addressing societal and workforce needs.

**Values** –

- **ACCESSIBILITY AND COMPLETION** - Excelsior provides programs and services that meet students where they are academically and geographically, and provides support services needed for completion.
- **AFFORDABILITY** - Excelsior prudently manages its resources to invest in people and offer high-quality education credentials at an affordable price.
- **EXCELLENCE** - Excelsior expects a collaborative effort and full engagement from all to develop and provide programs of exceptional value to students and employers.
- **TRUSTWORTHINESS** - Excelsior values and practices integrity and honesty in our relationships with students, each other, and the communities we serve.
- **EQUITY AND INCLUSION** - Excelsior practices inclusion by welcoming and valuing all students, staff members, and faculty members in our learning community, and providing them with educational opportunities.
- **COLLABORATION** - Members of the Excelsior community work together to develop, deliver, and sustain high-quality academic products and services for students.

## **HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

Founded in 1971 by the New York State Board of Regents, Excelsior College was originally known as the Regents External Degree Program (REX). This unique and highly innovative program was designed to address the needs of students underrepresented in higher education. Students then were primarily adults who had gone to college but had not finished degrees. The initial development of the College was funded by major grants from the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation.

From 1971 until 1998, Regents College (as it became known in 1986) operated as a program of the Board of Regents (which also served as its board of trustees) and under the authority of The University of the State of New York by which degrees and diplomas were awarded during that period.

In April 1998, the Board of Regents granted the College a charter to operate as a private, nonprofit, independent institution, and on January 1, 2001, Regents College changed its name to Excelsior College. In the early 2000s, Excelsior was among the first institutions to develop and offer courses via fully online instruction.

Today, an independent [board of trustees](#) composed of prominent individuals in the fields of education, business, and the professions from across the United States governs Excelsior College, ensuring the College delivers upon the promise of its mission, vision, and values.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING AND STRATEGIC CHANGES**

The [Excelsior College 2020-2023 Strategic Plan](#) identifies the following (3) strategic goals:

- (1) **Create an academic ecosystem that supports innovative approaches to learning that provide high-demand credentials for life, work, and degree completion.** Integrate instructor-led and self-paced courses, prior learning assessment (PLA), credit by exam, and stackable credentials with emerging technologies and virtual services to create a personalized and immersive educational experience.
  - a. Objective 1 – Academic ecosystem flexibility integrates instructor-led and self-paced courses, credit by exam, Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), and stackable credentials.
  - b. Objective 2 – Rapid (virtual, just in time) CARES serve students.
  - c. Objective 3 – Academic excellence and continuing accreditation.
- (2) **Strengthen an agile and sustainable business model and organizational culture in an increasingly dynamic and diverse environment.** Maintain financial stability, serve our increasingly diverse students, prioritize inclusive practices, and strategically invest in enterprise systems/pricing models that improve our operational responsiveness, flexibility, and financial stability.
  - a. Objective 1 – Achieve an improved, more nimble, and sustainable business model.
- (3) **Expand the size and diversity of the student body.** Target strategic growth and emerging markets to meet student needs and expand market share.
  - a. Objective 1 – Strengthened brand awareness and expanded business development in targeted areas.
  - b. Objective 2 – Identify and target potential growth areas and establish new markets: A) consistent with market demand, and B) to underrepresented populations in higher education.

## **ACADEMICS AND STUDENTS**

To ensure the highest quality student experience at Excelsior College, each staff and faculty member contributes to the student experience. Even those of us who may not interact with students are vitally important to creating a positive and successful outcome. The following guiding principles, collectively known as Excelsior CARES, shape the environment in which we work and set the standard to which we hold ourselves. Each Excelsior employee is Compassionate, Agile, Respectful, and committed to Excellence and Service.

- *Excelsior is Compassionate* – Listening to and understanding the needs of students and open to all perspectives.

- *Excelsior is Agile* – Creating an environment that promotes innovation to improve the student experience and committing to continuous quality improvement.
- *Excelsior is Respectful* – Believing in our staff and faculty, investing in their capabilities, and empowering them to be collaborative problem solvers, to create a foundation of trust, and to ensure an excellent student experience.
- *Excelsior is Excellence* – Believing in the transformative power of education.
- *Excelsior is Service* – Serving students with joy, enthusiasm, and dedication.

Of the 16,371 students at Excelsior, 53 percent are male and 47 percent are female with an average student age of 36 years old. Eighteen percent of students identify as Black or African American, 13 percent as Hispanic, and 60 percent as Caucasian. Almost 71 percent of students work full-time in addition to taking courses at the College, 36 percent actively serve in the military, and 15 percent of students are veterans, serving in all branches including the US Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and National Guard. Excelsior is also comprised of military family members and military spouses. [The Center for Military and Veteran Education](#) as well as the [Lt Col Bryant A Murray Veterans Center](#) provide resources for military students.

To meet the demands of changing student demographics and an evolving landscape in higher education, Excelsior has focused on meeting students' learning needs by creating a learning ecosystem that fully integrates all credit-bearing offerings that include instructor-led and self-paced courses, independent study for credit by examination, prior learning assessment, and stackable credentials. Excelsior also offers degree pathways and skill-based professional development opportunities developed in partnership with employers. The College also offers generous credit acceptance practices. Learners can transfer academic credit from previous college experiences and receive credit for military and workforce training, professional licenses and certification, CLEP, DANTES, and other approved exams.

Student career success is also critically important at Excelsior. Undergraduate students take a Cornerstone course that equips them with the skills, resources, tools, and mindsets critical for academic and career success, and they engage with [general education career competencies](#) throughout their degree programs. Similarly, the graduate experience includes core competencies that ensure students become effective and highly ethical leaders upon earning their degrees. All students complete a culminating capstone experience to demonstrate their achievement of program outcomes.

### **Accreditation and Recognitions**

Excelsior College is accredited through the year 2022 by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. At the programmatic level, the bachelor's and master's nursing programs are accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Excelsior College's nursing programs are also programmatically accredited by the New York State (NYS) Board of Regents, State Education Department Office of the Professions (the Regents).

Excelsior College has received specialized accreditation for its Bachelor of Science in Business and Master of Business Administration programs through the [International Accreditation Council for Business Education \(IACBE\)](#). The College's Bachelor of Science degrees in Electrical Engineering Technology, Nuclear Engineering Technology, and Information Technology are all accredited by the appropriate commissions of [ABET](#).

The National League for Nursing (NLN) designated Excelsior College's School of Nursing a [2016-2021 Center of Excellence in Nursing Education](#), in recognition of the School's sustained achievements in creating environments that promote student learning and professional development. This is the fourth consecutive designation. The National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security designated Excelsior as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education for its Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity program.

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

Excelsior College values students, instructors, employees, and all members of its worldwide community, and actively develops practices and policies that promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Excelsior College strives to integrate the dynamic concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of the College, including through the recruitment and retention of students, faculty, and staff who reflect the society in which we live; curriculum development, instructional design, and academic advising; the delivery of services; the encouragement of volunteerism among our faculty, staff, and alums; and participation in educational programs, training, cultural events, celebrations, and other awareness activities.

The President's Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (PCDEI) was established to promote diversity and assist the president of the College in creating and maintaining an inclusive environment for the Excelsior community. The PCDEI has provided educational and training programs that enhance employees' ability to work in a multicultural environment and serve diverse students, recommend to the president ways to reach out to diverse populations to enhance name recognition of Excelsior College both locally and nationally, collaborate with all offices and units of Excelsior College to be of assistance on issues of inclusion, foster a sense of belonging for all, and create and sustain a diverse community in an environment of equity and inclusion for employees that embraces diversity as a strength and is inclusive of all perspectives and backgrounds.

As part of its transition to University status, Excelsior is launching a Center for Social Justice (CSJ). Its overall goal is to facilitate the University's evolution into a Multicultural Organization, one that values justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) as assets to decision making and performance, an organization that owns responsibility for the inclusive and equitable engagement of all stakeholders, and an organization that seeks to improve its performance and competitive advantage through a focus on JEDI. The initial agenda of the Center will focus on five key strategies: the introduction of a JEDI framework to build leadership and staff capacity, the implementation of identity/allyship communities to support the equitable engagement of Excelsior's diversity of students and stakeholders, the integration of JEDI across Excelsior's curricula, quarterly facilitated unit-level JEDI conversations, and the development of underrepresented-student-enrollment and JEDI-thought-leadership partnerships.

## **THE ROLE OF THE DEAN**

The College of Nursing and Health Sciences prepares graduates for positions in nursing, nursing informatics, medical office administration, health insurance services, community health, long-term care, medical billing, human resources, and more. Excelsior's online courses give students the tools to help people overcome obstacles to wellness by applying strategies that support the health of individuals and communities.

The College's advanced degree programs in nursing, health science, and health care management prepare students for success and teach them how to lead and motivate teams, research electronic documents, analyze and propose new policies, handle conflicts of interest, and solve problems on the job in health care settings. The College offers associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees and certificate-based programs in the areas of Health Sciences and Healthcare Management.

Reporting to the Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs of Excelsior, Christopher Cassirer, the Founding Dean will oversee all operations and academics of the new College of Nursing and Health Sciences and will be responsible for setting a forward-looking vision, creating an inclusive and high-performing culture, and seeking to expand programmatic opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate level. The Dean will also be responsible for academic quality, accreditation and assessment standards, and ensuring strong outcomes regarding clinical placements and success in licensure exams across all disciplines. The current composition of the School will consist of the following: School of Nursing, School of Allied Health, and School of Mental Health Counseling.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

- **Setting Strategic Priorities:** Given the founding of the new College, the Dean will set strategic academic priorities, as well as build a team and administrative structure to manage and support the growth of the College. The undergraduate and graduate programs provide a great foundation for growth and expansion, and the new Dean will build upon this energy and determine appropriate directions for further program development. The Dean will also collaborate across the academic divisions at Excelsior to create and deliver innovative and relevant program offerings. The Dean will work closely with the President, Provost, senior leadership, other Deans, faculty, and community partners to advance the needs of the College by establishing a strategic vision informed by the institution's strategic plan.
- **Guiding the Growth of New Programs:** Excelsior has introduced new programs and continues to look for offerings that serve student interests and community needs. The Dean will play a central role in promoting the College's newer programs like the dual degree LPN to BS in Nursing while growing flagship program areas. With the new university designation, Excelsior is prioritizing the expansion of enrollment both domestically and internationally. The Dean will also support the accreditation and re-accreditation processes for all existing and newly eligible programs. The development of the new College of Nursing and Health Sciences and the institutional move to become Excelsior University present an entrepreneurial Dean with the opportunity to expand the academic portfolio of programs at the College and look at ways of developing professionally focused doctoral programs.
- **Identifying Resources and Partnerships to Support Growth:** To help realize the College's vision and key goals, the next Dean will be expected to establish a strong record of seeking and obtaining private and public resources to support students, faculty, and programs. In addition to securing external resources, the Dean will also be charged with expanding enrollment pipelines to new markets (both domestically and internationally). The next Dean will play an essential role in effectively engaging alums, community leaders, and other constituencies in support of strategic priorities. The ability to form successful partnerships will be critical for this Founding Dean. There will be ample opportunities to develop new partners for CNHS to support new program

development aligned with the needs of industry and healthcare organizations and to enhance career opportunities for students.

- **Promoting and Fostering Student Success:** The Dean shall examine curricular offerings and student success measures that will meet students where they are and be flexible to meet their unique learning goals. With a rigorous focus on retention, persistence, and career outcomes, the Dean will set and drive key performance indicators on all student success metrics.
- **Strengthening Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Excelsior is deeply committed to the values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. The Dean will be a strong advocate for the recruitment and retention of diverse students, faculty, and staff that reflect the society in which we live. In addition, the Dean will lead efforts in fostering an inclusive academic and work environment where each member of the community is valued and feels a sense of belonging, and where each of them has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

## **DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

Reporting to the Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. The Dean will be responsible for setting an innovative vision for the College that sustains Excelsior's focus on accessible and flexible learning opportunities for students and that drives forward Excelsior's reputation for leading at the forefront of innovation in higher education.

The successful candidate will demonstrate many of the following professional and personal attributes:

- An understanding of and commitment to the unique mission of Excelsior College and the students it serves;
- A record of accomplishments and progressive leadership experience in higher education, educational technology, or a complex healthcare organization;
- An innovator who will not be afraid to take appropriate risk, experiment, and explore new ideas;
- Strategic and visionary leadership with the capacity to envision a future state and marshal the energy, talent, and resources of the Excelsior community to advance its mission of student success;
- An understanding of current trends in adult, professional, and online education and knowledge of and experience in online and technology-enabled learning;
- Knowledge of health professional education and clinical requirements including accreditation and licensing of different health professional education programs and certifications;
- An understanding of the unique needs of Excelsior's students and how to support them through the completion of their academic goals;
- A true collaborator and strategic partner that understands the importance of working as a team;
- The ability to generate new revenue streams through fundraising, grants, and external partnerships;
- An understanding of the diverse students Excelsior College serves and the emotional intelligence and cultural competencies to foster an equitable and inclusive learning environment for students;
- A team builder and people leader with high emotional intelligence and the ability to work with an increasingly diverse community of stakeholders;

- Experience in successfully preparing for and developing growth opportunities, including new undergraduate and graduate programs;
- A strong commitment to supporting a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment;
- Demonstrated success in working with alums, donors, and the community to develop and support internships and other career opportunities for students; and
- A strong commitment to student success.

A doctoral/terminal degree in nursing, the health sciences, or a related field is required for this position.

All applications and nominations will be held in confidence. For full consideration, please send a cover letter and CV to:



Ruth Shoemaker Wood, Ph.D., Managing Director  
Fiona Jaramillo, Ed.D., Senior Associate  
Brian Bustin, Senior Associate  
Storbeck Search  
[ExcelsiorHealthDean@storbecksearch.com](mailto:ExcelsiorHealthDean@storbecksearch.com)

*Excelsior College is committed to providing a learning and working environment that is free from illegal discrimination based upon an individual's race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, marital status, familial status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, genetic information, or military or veteran status. Illegal discrimination in any form will not be tolerated at the College.*