



**LA ROCHE**  
UNIVERSITY

## **President**

### Leadership Profile

October 2023



*WittKieffer*

## Executive Summary

La Roche University is seeking its eighth president. This leader will succeed Sister Candace Introcaso, who sadly passed away in May 2023 and left a legacy of almost 20 years of extraordinary accomplishments.

Founded and sponsored by the Congregation of the [Sisters of Divine Providence](#), La Roche University is a private, Catholic co-educational institution located on a 40+ acre campus north of Pittsburgh in McCandless, PA. The University fosters global citizenship and creates a community of scholars from the region, the nation and worldwide. The University integrates liberal arts and professional education in creative ways, empowering all members of the community to become lifelong learners, achieve success in their chosen careers and promote justice and peace in a constantly changing global society. La Roche invites inquiries, nominations and applications for president of this welcoming institution committed to students of all religions, ethnic origins and talents.

What began as a school for religious women in 1963 with seven students in its first graduating class is now a university that offers 66 undergraduate programs of study, six master's degrees and one doctoral degree, with particular strengths in education, business, criminal justice, psychology, nursing, health and medical sciences, interior architecture and design, as well as graphic design. Undergraduates may choose from more than 50 majors, including the top 10 majors most in demand among today's college students. La Roche combines a quality educational experience with clubs, athletics, social and community volunteer activities, spiritual well-being and more to prepare students for life in a constantly changing global society. This residential university provides a vibrant campus community for nearly 1,200 men and women, enjoying 30-plus student organizations and an exciting NCAA Div. III athletics program. The University's 15,000 plus alumni live in every state in the U.S. and in 65 countries around the world.

La Roche offers high-quality educational opportunities that reflect its Catholic heritage and the mission of its founding and sponsoring congregation, the Sisters of Divine Providence, to "co-create a world of compassion, justice and peace." That commitment to peace and justice permeates all aspects of the University - spiritual, academic, social, intercultural and community service. That commitment is reflected in the University's global focus, which provides the entire La Roche community with the opportunity to reach across the political, cultural and economic divides and work toward becoming a true global community.

For La Roche's next president, there is a meaningful, mission-driven leadership opportunity to move the University into its next phase of growth through an established strategic plan called [LRU:NXT](#). "NXT" is meant to imply a readiness and belief in the University's ability to create its own future. The La Roche mission, vision and values will define the strategic themes animating the current plan through 2026, when the president will have the opportunity to refresh and expand upon LRU:NXT. Chief among the next president's priorities is to strengthen La Roche's financial future by diversifying revenue streams, enhancing student success and increasing fundraising.

Mr. Lyle D. Albaugh, J.D., vice chair of the La Roche University Board of Trustees, is the founder of several successful companies and a strategic and operational management consultant. Mr. Albaugh chairs the search for La Roche's next president. In its next president, La Roche University seeks a leader who possesses the spirit of accessibility, collaborative style, strategic and operational leadership, creativity and

innovative spirit, exceptional communication skills and energy and integrity to inspire and unite the community around a common vision for the future consistent with the history of the University. The president must be familiar with and compatible with the Catholic tradition and values and must be committed to working with the Sisters of Divine Providence to maintain a vital relationship.

Education/Qualifications:

- Significant academic and administrative leadership experience is required.
- Understand global political and social issues.
- Significant experience in a diverse community.
- Ph.D. or other advanced degree preferred.

To submit a nomination or express personal interest in this position, please see Procedure for Candidacy at the end of this document.





## Opportunities and Expectations for Leadership

The next president will be expected to address the following leadership priorities, among others:

- **Secure La Roche's financial future by diversifying revenue streams and strengthening academic programs:**

Like many private universities today, La Roche is highly tuition-dependent and increasingly concerned about the rising costs of education, coupled with higher expectations for academic quality, access, state-of-the-art facilities, technology adoption and student services. In addition, the issues that have emerged from COVID-19 pose myriad challenges that will continue to constrict the University's resources. As such, La Roche must think critically about several complex issues that impact the University's financial model. The University's long-term viability requires that it embrace change, adapt, respond to new opportunities, create and enhance programs and navigate economic challenges effectively. To do this, the new president will work with the Board of Trustees to create a financial plan focusing on diversifying and developing new revenue sources to ensure the institution's long-term fiscal health. By generating new opportunities and forming strategic partnerships, La Roche will be in an advantageous position to respond to evolving job market demands and be more agile in offering the education students and employers seek. Among the signature successes of recent years have been the creation of nine new academic programs. Specific areas of new growth include graduate programs and healthcare and technology education. The new president will work with constituents across the institution to ensure that the entirety of the academic portfolio serves the mission of the institution educationally, intellectually, developmentally and spiritually.

- **Advance the 2026 strategic plan and envision the future:**

La Roche's goal is to become the Catholic teaching institution of choice in Pennsylvania. To achieve this aspiration, the University underwent an extensive strategic planning process and identified the following four strategic themes:

- Innovate and Align the Portfolio of Academic Programs
- Maximize Student Recruitment and Persistence
- Be Entrepreneurs, Be Bold and Diversify Revenues
- Align & Optimize Physical & Human Resources

The next president will play a key role in honing and advancing these priorities and ensuring alignment with the strategic themes while continuing to look toward the future as La Roche pursues its aspirations of achieving a level of excellence, impact and reputation. The new president must be a visionary who can build upon the historic strengths of La Roche while setting priorities and aligning resources to help the University achieve its future goals.

- **Enhance student success and increase enrollment:**

In an increasingly competitive higher education landscape, the new president must lead efforts to communicate the unique value proposition of a La Roche education effectively to prospective students and their families and to support measures that prioritize improving student retention and graduation metrics. The president will engage in University-wide conversations that identify barriers potential

students may encounter during the admissions and enrollment process and work collaboratively across the institution to improve student outcomes.

Among the top agenda items for the next president will be ensuring the University is responding to post-COVID-19 programmatic trends and demands by readying itself for each new generation of students by presenting a vision and plan for how the University can best support the academic and co-curricular pursuits of a diverse student body and ensuring the curriculum is reflective of the University's mission and values.

- **Increase fundraising and engage alumni:**

As La Roche's chief fundraiser, the president will be a compelling storyteller to share the unique educational experience the University provides to students of diversity, engaging with alums, parents, friends of the University and foundations to raise funds to advance La Roche's mission and values. The president will deftly share and communicate La Roche's successes and aspirations in a way that draws on its unique history, cherishes its Catholic faith, social impact and transformative education, and inspires, motivates and galvanizes support from diverse constituent groups. Growing annual fund contributions, as well as cultivating transformational gifts, will enable the University to carry out important work and allow La Roche to lay the roadmap for its future. The next president will work in close collaboration with the Board of Trustees and staff to scale up the University's fundraising, marketing and communications efforts.

- **Elevate visibility and connection on and off campus:**

The president will have the opportunity to grow the University's stature and visibility in meaningful and substantive ways, influencing the dialogue on issues that are important to the La Roche community and the world. The president will pursue strategic opportunities to publicly represent the University – regionally, nationally and beyond – and passionately communicate the vital role La Roche and Catholic colleges more broadly play in American higher education.

La Roche is a loving and welcoming community that thrives because of its people and their commitment to one another. The La Roche community expects a president who will engage authentically and enthusiastically with the campus community around its teaching, student activities and strategic initiatives. The president will be expected to be an inclusive, empathetic leader with a demonstrated record of building a supportive and integrated community where faculty, staff and students want to work and thrive together as one.

Additionally, the next president will be expected to extend this ethic of care and support outside of the University, extending the values of La Roche to broader audiences. In so doing, the president will raise the visibility and reputation of the University across the region and nationally, positively impacting enrollment, giving and friend-making.

- **Advance La Roche's mission and values:**

La Roche was founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Divine Providence and shares the Sisters' desire to "co-create a world of compassion, justice and peace." As such, advocacy for social justice is a true way of life at La Roche and is evidenced in unique classroom experiences and cocurricular opportunities for students. The president should bring an understanding of the institution's Catholic

mission and social teachings and champion a campus culture that welcomes all and impacts the holistic development of the entire community. The incoming president must be prepared to further the work of promoting peace and justice through shared programs and projects, reflecting La Roche's common bond and Catholic heritage.

The president will set the tone for the community regarding the value of belonging and the criticality of providing an inclusive, equitable environment for all and will hold the institution accountable for progress in this regard. Given that the University is an institution of higher education with a fundamental commitment to Sisters of Divine Providence ideals, the new president will need to invest in and promote an awareness, understanding and appreciation for diversity, equity and inclusion across the University community and beyond. At its core, this commitment must focus on preparing students to be citizens of a just and equitable world.



## Professional Qualifications and Personal Qualities

La Roche University seeks a president with vision, intellectual stature, a collaborative leadership style, exceptional communication skills and the energy and passion needed to advance the institution's mission and core values. The new president will embrace and be guided by La Roche's Catholic values and mission and will embody and articulate these values in ways that offer compelling evidence of the distinct character of the education and impact the University fosters in the world. A strong desire and willingness to engage in on-campus activities while also participating in a significant level of fundraising will be essential. The president will have experience as a leader of an organization of similar scope, vision and complexity. The ideal candidate will demonstrate many of the following characteristics:

- **Academic credentials:** An earned doctorate or terminal degree is preferred. There is an openness to nontraditional candidates who, through previous experience and leadership in transformational undertakings and commitment to excellence in higher education, would garner the respect of the campus and broader communities.
- **Leadership and vision:** A dynamic, innovative leadership style exhibiting unimpeachable integrity, excellent judgment, decisiveness, courage of conviction, compassion, humility and the ability to put others before themselves; a strong, visible and engaged presence and interpersonal agility to inspire and galvanize a community around a shared, inclusive, forward-thinking vision; a successful record of accomplishment in recruiting, supporting and retaining strong leaders and of developing them into successful leadership teams; the ability to lead through and empower teams and to delegate, as well as the ability to lead by influence, with a character and purpose that inspire and empower.
- **Commitment to mission:** Familiarity with and an intuitive grasp of the University's Catholic character, rooted in the charism of the Sisters of Divine Providence; the ability to warmly articulate Catholic social teachings and the Catholic intellectual tradition, which includes a commitment to social justice and the defense of the dignity of all people in a diverse community.
- **Business acumen:** Superior knowledge and a record of successful engagement with the business and financial operations of a complex organization; outstanding fiscal acumen, including a record of sound budgetary stewardship and resourcefulness in developing ways to generate revenue through new avenues.
- **Enthusiastic and effective fundraiser:** A high aptitude and enthusiasm for fundraising; superb communications and interpersonal skills; the ability to authentically and easily express excitement to tell the stories of La Roche and its students, faculty and programs to engage both internal and external audiences and make a compelling case for philanthropic support.
- **Understanding of academic issues and trends:** An acute understanding of the dynamics of the higher education landscape, including knowledge of changing university financial models, enrollment trends and student retention.
- **A champion of diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice:** A demonstrated record of accomplishment and impact in advancing issues related to diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice and true belonging; leadership with an authentic lens of social justice and equity in decision-making;



experience encouraging a culture of diverse thought and comfortably participating and leading conversations about social issues that impact the community, as well as a successful track record in removing barriers to inclusion and affirming diversity in all its forms.

- **Authentic and dynamic engagement skills:** A proven history of productive and collaborative relationships with internal and external constituencies; a true “people person” with high emotional intelligence and the energy and desire to be a visible leader on campus and in the external community.





## About La Roche University

### Overview

A private liberal arts University in the North Hills area of Pittsburgh, La Roche University offers 66 undergraduate programs of study, six master's degrees and two doctoral degrees, with particular strengths in education, business, criminal justice, psychology, nursing, health and medical sciences, interior architecture and design, as well as graphic design. The residential University provides a vibrant campus community for nearly 1,200 men and women enjoying 30-plus student organizations and an exciting NCAA Division III athletics program. Founded by the Sisters of Divine Providence in 1963, La Roche embraces its Catholic heritage while welcoming people of all faiths and backgrounds. With a legacy of Catholic social justice and a commitment to international exchange, La Roche educates students to be lifelong learners and achievers in an increasingly diverse and global society.

In keeping with the global compass of its mission, the University recruits students from both its traditional home base in western Pennsylvania, numerous other states and many foreign countries. The University strives to enroll students of diverse religious, ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, and ensures that students with lesser preparation are furnished the assistance they need to enable them to achieve academic and career success.

#### Enrollment (Fall 2023)

- Undergraduate: 790
- Graduate: 318
- English as a Second Language: 31
- Total: 1,139
- Undergraduate Minority Students: 17%
- Undergraduate International Students: 16%
- Graduate Minority Students: 23%
- Graduate International Students: 23%



The Princeton Review has ranked La Roche among the Best Northeastern Colleges for 20 consecutive years. La Roche is a College of Distinction, a Catholic College of Distinction and a Pennsylvania College of Distinction. La Roche is part of the Yellow Ribbon Program and has earned the Military Friendly Colleges distinction. Most recently, La Roche was among U.S. News & World Report's 2024 Best Colleges, ranked among Best Regional Universities North.

### Mission

La Roche University, a Catholic institution of higher learning, founded and sponsored by the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence, fosters global citizenship and creates a community of scholars from the region, the nation and around the world. The University integrates liberal arts and professional education in creative ways, empowering all members of our community to become lifelong learners, achieve success in their chosen careers and promote justice and peace in a constantly changing global society.

## Values

La Roche University shares the core values of its founders, the Sisters of Divine Providence:

- **Inclusiveness** – We are an inclusive community that seeks to understand, respect and include all.
- **Integrity** – We are a community that values honesty, ethical behavior and doing what is right, even if it is not popular or if no one is watching.
- **Determination** – We are a community founded through determination shown by the Sisters of Divine Providence. We seek to exemplify this core value, to steadfastly thrive even when facing the most difficult of odds.
- **Compassion** – We are a community that gives personal attention to its students and extends compassion and kindness to all.
- **Inspiration** – We are a compassionate community, but also one that challenges and inspires our students to be the best that they can be, to be the best for the world.
- **Justice & Peace** – We are a community that strives to promote peace and justice for all, but especially those who need it most.





## Academics



La Roche is characterized by programming that addresses the changing needs of our nation and world, attracts a student body with a strong international presence and exhibits a renewed commitment to the Pittsburgh metropolitan area that is its home. Fully accredited by several national governing bodies, the University offers more than 66 undergraduate programs of study, six master's degrees and two doctoral degrees, with particular strengths in education, business, criminal justice, psychology, nursing, health and medical sciences, interior architecture and design, as well as graphic design.

Additionally, the Study Abroad + Study USA program, established in 2010, offers a unique experience for qualified La Roche students to broaden their horizons and marketability in an ever-expanding global workplace. The program offers a value-added component of studying abroad or in a multicultural setting in the United States as part of a La Roche education for students meeting certain criteria.

With a faculty of award-winning scholars, researchers and industry-connected professionals, students receive quality instruction with a real-world approach. Individualized attention from faculty is one of La Roche's key benefits. A 12:1 student-faculty ratio ensures that students receive personalized attention, and professors are dedicated to helping students achieve their academic and career goals.

La Roche also is home to the Introcaso Center for Lifelong Learning, an intergenerational community designed to help learners of all ages discover the joy of learning while expanding their social networks through shared intellectual experiences. The Introcaso Center offers a variety of engaging and interactive classes, workshops and programs for adults 50 and better, youth and professionals at various stages in their careers and lives.

Becoming La Roche University was the fulfillment of a vision that many on campus shared for several years and recognition of how far La Roche has come. La Roche now offers 66 undergraduate programs of study, six master's degrees and two doctoral degrees. More than 15,000 alumni live in every state in the U.S. and in 65 countries around the world. University status supports a growing student population and new academic programs, and it helps La Roche market its offerings to students unfamiliar with its reputation, both domestically and abroad.

La Roche continues to make major improvements across campus, including the Zappala Campus Center and Palumbo Science Center.

In 2015, the Square in the Zappala Campus Center was renovated to accommodate the changing needs of the University community and encourage optimum interaction among students, faculty and staff. The renovations expanded to the information desk in the main hallway of Zappala the following year in 2016. The space is bright and welcoming to the campus community and guests.



To support the growing number of STEM students, renovations were made to the Palumbo Science Center in 2019. The second-floor renovation was unveiled in January 2020 and features new state-of-the-art laboratories, classrooms, common areas and faculty offices that are conducive to the changing nature of STEM education.

Additionally, the first floor of the Palumbo Science Center is now home to the Anthony J. Battaglia Clinical Simulation Center, completed in the spring of 2020. The Center provides nursing students with a variety of opportunities to practice assessment skills and critical thinking to prepare for live patient care in clinical settings.

In collaboration with the Sisters of Divine Providence, the University's oldest partnership and prime relationship, La Roche issued an RFP to conduct a campus master planning process that considers each property separately but also determines ways in which each could meet the other's needs. The first phase began in summer 2021 as the University moved several offices to the Motherhouse, creating space on campus for the following departments: Freshman Admissions, University Advancement, Alumni Relations and Mail and Printing Services. Phase II was put into effect in spring and summer 2022 and focused on creating the Admissions Welcome Center and transforming the library into the Learning Commons. The University is currently in Phase III of the Campus Master Plan which included removing the modular units from campus in summer 2023.

## Sisters of Divine Providence

The [Sisters of Divine Providence](#), formerly St. Peter Province, Pittsburgh, founded La Roche College in 1963. The Sisters have sponsored and supported the University since its inception. The University's name honors Marie de la Roche.

Mahler Hall, a residence building, is named for *Sr. De la Salle Mahler*, the University's third president. The majestic Providence Heights, a structure which dominates the North Hills landscape, was designed and built in 1927 in the style of a Bavarian castle. Providence Heights Alpha School, a private elementary school accommodating grades one through eight, is located in the building along with administrative and faculty offices, as well as classroom space, for La Roche University. The Sisters moved to their new home, The Commons at Providence Heights, in 2022.



Through contributed services, rent and outright gifts, the Congregation has provided over \$20 million to the University over the years. The 60 acres of land which make up the Congregation's campus include: The Commons at Providence Heights; Ketteler Hall; Kearns Spirituality and Conference Center; several private residences; a barn; storage buildings and a number of garages. The cemetery and a woodland sanctuary are located on the eastern portion of the CDP campus.

The spirit of the University emanates from the spirit of the Congregation, and the University's mission is an extension of the Congregation's mission.

Through the years, more than 100 [Sisters of Divine Providence](#) have served the University as trustees, faculty, officers, administrators and staff. Currently, approximately three sisters minister at La Roche in full- or part-time capacities. In addition, seven sisters serve on the board of trustees.

For more information about the [Sisters of Divine Providence](#), please visit the Sisters of Divine Providence website at [cdpsisters.org](http://cdpsisters.org).

## **The Spirit of Providence**

La Roche University has undergone a number of transformations in its history to become the vibrant institution that it is today – one with genuine international impact. From its scenic campus in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, La Roche reaches out to students from across the United States and from many nations, offering the promise of more fruitful lives for individuals and the hope of a better world for all.

One thing that has remained constant throughout its history is the spirit that brings life to the institution. It is the same spirit that has animated the Congregation of Divine Providence since its founding more than 150 years ago. It is that spirit that will lead La Roche University for many decades to come.

## **Leadership**

### **Board of Trustees**

La Roche University is governed by its Board of Trustees, which is comprised of no fewer than 20 and no more than 42 trustees. The Board of Trustees has primary oversight for the business and affairs of the University. Its primary functions are policymaking and responsibility for sound resource management of the University.

La Roche has a two-tiered board with a number of powers that are reserved to the founders of La Roche, the Sisters of Divine Providence, and are delineated in the bylaws of the University. Four members of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence serve on the Board and are appointed by the provincial director.

Dione Graswick '93, CPA, is currently chair of the La Roche University Board of Trustees. A distinguished alumna, Ms. Graswick is a partner with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in their National Quality Office, where she is responsible for leading the learning and development programs for the PwC US Trust Solutions. She is actively involved in the community and with La Roche, having served on the board since October 2018. Previously, she served as Vice Chair and Finance Committee Chair at La Roche. She also served on the Board of Directors for the Pittsburgh Technology Council and the Women's Leadership Council of the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. She earned a Bachelor of Science in accounting from La Roche.

**Academic Senate**

The Academic Senate is comprised of all full-time faculty members. The faculty have primary responsibility for the curriculum and for personnel decisions regarding contracts and promotions. They make recommendations on these matters which then come to the president and Board, which has the ultimate authority. Associate Professor Rishi Bahl, Ph.D., is Chair of the Academic Senate.

**Student Government Association**

The Student Government Association (SGA) is the elected representation of La Roche students. They are recognized and authorized by the President and the Board of Trustees. SGA's structure and authority allow it to recognize and oversee all student organizations. Mohammed Massad is the president of SGA.

**President's Executive Council**

Persons designated by the president as members of the President's Executive Council are in charge of major organizational units of the University including: Academic Affairs, Student Life, Enrollment Management, Finance and Administration, University Advancement, Marketing and Media Relations, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and other areas as may be established from time to time at the discretion of the president.





## Student Life

Students find a tight-knit community with opportunities to meet new people and explore various topics of interest through more than 30 student clubs and organizations. Home to the Redhawks, La Roche also offers 14 NCAA Division III athletic teams. Men's sports include baseball, basketball, cross-country, golf, lacrosse and soccer. Women's sports include basketball, bowling, cross-country, lacrosse, soccer, softball, tennis and volleyball. La Roche teams have won 26 Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference (AMCC) Tournament Championships in various sports, and the Redhawks have had 22 NCAA tournament appearances. The Redhawks baseball team reached the Division III national "Final Four" in 2016.







## McCandless, Pennsylvania

Situated in McCandless Township in Pittsburgh's North Hills, La Roche University's 40+ acre campus offers students the best of both worlds: a residential setting, but with big-city amenities. With downtown Pittsburgh only a 15-minute drive away, students can reap the benefits of the city's cultural and business districts, global corporations, famous museums, exciting nightlife and professional sports teams.

La Roche students also have the convenience of employment and entertainment opportunities within walking distance to campus. Across the street is McCandless Crossing, a neighborhood district and town center, featuring everything from a movie theater, shops and restaurants to a pharmacy, bank and grocery store. Just a short drive away is the scenic North Park of Allegheny County, which offers opportunities for outdoor sports, exercise and various other forms of recreation.



## 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. The entire search process provides confidentiality to all candidates. References will not be contacted until after first round interviews and not without prior knowledge and approval of candidates.

WittKieffer is assisting La Roche University in this search. For fullest consideration, candidate materials should be received by January 2, 2024.

Application materials should be submitted using WittKieffer's [candidate portal](#).

Nominations and inquiries can be directed to:

Melody Rose, Ph.D., Alejandra Gillette-Teran and John Thornburgh

[LaRochePresident@wittkieffer.com](mailto:LaRochePresident@wittkieffer.com)

*It is the policy of the University to promote equal opportunity to all qualified individuals regardless of race, color, creed, age, religion, gender, national or ethnic origin, veteran status, or non-job-related disability.*

*This includes all aspects of the employment relationship including, but not limited to, recruitment, employment, job assignment, transfer, promotion, demotion, compensation, training and development, employee benefits, layoff, termination, and general working conditions.*