



Dean, Paul H. O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs
Indiana University
Position Description

The Opportunity

Indiana University invites nominations and applications for the next Dean of the Paul H. O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, a core school with major campuses at IU Bloomington and IU Indianapolis.

The O'Neill School is one of the nation's defining schools of public affairs and environmental education. It is the largest school of public administration and public policy in the United States, with more than 37,000 alumni, a nationally recognized faculty, a broad portfolio of undergraduate, graduate, online, executive, and professional programs, and an unusually strong record of preparing students for leadership in public service, policy, nonprofit, environmental, healthcare, arts, criminal justice, public safety, and management-oriented fields.

The next Dean will lead one O'Neill School across two IU core campuses. Bloomington and Indianapolis each have important standing in the school's mission and future. Bloomington brings the strengths of IU's flagship residential campus, AAU and Big Ten context, broad academic ecosystem, doctoral education, and deep student discovery market. Indianapolis brings an urban R1 research setting in the state capital, proximity to government, employers, community partners, health sciences, public safety, nonprofit leadership, executive education, and applied policy work. The new Dean will also have access to IU's recently launched Capital Campus in Washington, D.C. The opportunity is to treat these assets as one cohesive public affairs platform, with investments and priorities presented as shared school strategy.

The next Dean will inherit a highly successful school with strong faculty, well-regarded programs, and significant momentum from recent program growth, faculty hiring, research productivity, philanthropy, community engagement, executive education, and expanded national and global activity. The Dean will be expected to advance O'Neill's national standing while helping IU colleagues work together on interdisciplinary societal challenges and increase shared impact. Many collaborations already exist. The next step is to make those connections easier, more visible, and more ambitious, including environmental and sustainability work, public health and health policy, arts and nonprofit leadership, science and technology policy, criminal justice and public safety, international and national affairs, public management and finance, and the civic uses of data and artificial intelligence.

The successful candidate will bring international scholarly credibility, administrative skill, political judgment, external presence, and a deep belief in public service. O'Neill's next era will require a Dean who can sustain excellence, build resources, protect quality, strengthen faculty and staff development, grow distinctive programs, and translate the school's two-campus reputation into new partnerships, new student pathways, and greater public impact in Indiana, Washington, D.C., and beyond.

About the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs

Founded in 1972 as the School of Public and Environmental Affairs, the Paul H. O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs is a world leader in public and environmental affairs and the largest school of public administration and public policy in the United States. The school has built a distinctive model at the intersection of public policy, management, environmental science, civic leadership, nonprofit work, healthcare, public safety, criminal justice, arts administration, and global public affairs.

O'Neill is a core school with presence in both Bloomington and Indianapolis. At IU Bloomington, O'Neill enrolls more than 2,600 undergraduate students, more than 500 master's students, and approximately 70 doctoral students. Bloomington programs include Public Affairs, Environmental Science, Environmental and Sustainability Studies, Healthcare Management and Policy, Arts Management, the Master of Public Affairs, Master of Public Policy, Master of Science in Environmental Science, Master of Environmental Sustainability, Master of International Affairs, Master of Arts in Arts Administration, online degrees, certificates, and dual-degree pathways.

At IU Indianapolis, O'Neill serves an urban student population through undergraduate programs in Criminal Justice, Management and Civic Leadership, Public Policy, Public Safety Management, Sustainability Practice and Policy, and Community and Organizational Leadership Studies, as well as graduate programs in Public Affairs, Criminal Justice and Public Safety, Leadership and Organizational Systems, certificates, and executive education. Its Indianapolis setting creates direct lines to public agencies, nonprofits, employers, community partners, health and public safety systems, and policy work in the state capital.

The school is nationally known for both scale and quality. O'Neill Bloomington's MPA is ranked No. 1 overall by U.S. News & World Report for 2026-27, with No. 1 specialty rankings in Environmental Policy and Management, Nonprofit Management, Public Finance and Budgeting, and Health Policy and Management, and additional top-10 rankings across Public Management, Policy Analysis, Local Government, Social Policy, and Urban Policy. O'Neill Indianapolis received its highest-ever MPA ranking in 2026, No. 31 overall among 266 schools, with five specialties ranked in the top 25, including No. 2 in Nonprofit Management.

Recent years have brought meaningful growth and renewal. Under former Dean Sian Mooney's leadership, O'Neill maintained its top national ranking, expanded its graduate portfolio, secured APSIA and CAHME accreditations, grew research productivity and external funding, launched the O'Neill Center for Leadership in Public Service, added Executives in Residence, expanded global engagement, advanced programs in national defense, created new career supports, and helped launch the Environment, Society, and Sustainability Institute with the College of Arts and Sciences. The school also hired 53 new faculty members and increased scholarship and fellowship support through philanthropy.

O'Neill's two-campus platform is matched by statewide, national, and international reach. Bloomington and Indianapolis provide complementary homes for teaching, research, and public engagement. Washington, D.C. connections, executive education, alumni leadership, global partnerships, and policy-facing research extend the school's work beyond Indiana. The next Dean will have the opportunity to join these assets into an even stronger public affairs enterprise.

The Role of the Dean

The Dean reports directly to the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor of IU Bloomington and serves as the chief academic and administrative officer of the O'Neill School. Although the formal reporting line is through IU Bloomington, the role should be understood as a shared Bloomington-Indianapolis leadership assignment for a core school on both campuses.

The Dean is responsible for the school's academic vision, faculty and staff leadership, research enterprise, student experience, budget, advancement, external partnerships, rankings strategy, program quality, and long-term institutional health.

The Dean works closely with fellow IU deans, school executive leadership, faculty, faculty governance leaders, staff, students, alumni, donors, IU Bloomington and IU Indianapolis leaders, community organizations, government and nonprofit partners, policy leaders, employers, and peer institutions. The role requires a visible leader who can sustain a high-performing organization while encouraging the next level of ambition.

The Dean will be expected to protect and extend O'Neill's national reputation, recruit and retain excellent faculty and staff, support rigorous standards for faculty development and performance, strengthen student recruitment and outcomes on both campuses, and align the school's programs with emerging needs in public service, environmental sustainability, healthcare, nonprofit leadership, arts administration, management, public safety, criminal justice, and public policy.

Leadership Agenda

The next Dean will be expected to:

Lead one school across two core campuses. The Dean must treat Bloomington and Indianapolis as key drivers of O'Neill's mission, reputation, and future. This includes creating a shared strategy for program growth, faculty hiring, staff support, research development, student services, advancement, executive education, and external partnerships, while recognizing the different strengths and markets of each campus.

Sustain and extend O'Neill's national leadership. The school enters this search from a position of strength. The Dean must protect the quality, visibility, and results that support O'Neill's top rankings, while ensuring that rankings reflect real excellence in scholarship, teaching, student outcomes, public service, and external impact across both campuses.

Use the two-campus platform (+ the Capital Campus) as a shared advantage. Bloomington and Indianapolis, along with a burgeoning D.C. presence, give O'Neill a rare combination of flagship academic breadth and capital-city applied reach. The Dean should turn that combination into a clearer value proposition for students, faculty, alumni, donors, employers, public agencies, national partners, and peer institutions.

Work with IU partners on societal challenges and shared impact. O'Neill already has many natural collaborations across IU. The Dean should help those partnerships become easier to launch, easier to sustain, and more visible externally. Priority areas include environment and sustainability, public health and health policy, arts and civic leadership, science and technology policy, public safety and criminal justice, international and national affairs, public finance, nonprofit leadership, management, and the

uses of data and artificial intelligence.

Understand and grow student markets on both campuses. O'Neill must recruit nationally among its peer set while serving students who discover interests in public affairs, management, administration, policy, environment, healthcare, nonprofit work, arts administration, criminal justice, public safety, or international service after arriving at IU. The Dean should understand student choice patterns in Bloomington and Indianapolis, including the overlap with business, management, civic leadership, and policy interests, and should communicate the value and career power of O'Neill programs clearly.

Build the next chapter of graduate, online, executive, Indianapolis, and D.C. engagement. Graduate education in public affairs faces a competitive and changing market. O'Neill has strong assets in residential graduate education, online programs, executive education, Indianapolis public-sector and employer connections, Washington, D.C. opportunities, and applied leadership experiences. The Dean will need to make strategic choices about where to grow, where to protect quality, and where O'Neill can lead nationally.

Support faculty excellence and organizational discipline. The school has strong faculty expectations, rigorous standards, and meaningful faculty development pathways. The Dean should reinforce those assets, support high-performing faculty and staff, recruit exceptional new talent, and ensure that workload, evaluation, mentoring, and resource allocation practices support excellence and fairness throughout both campuses.

Generate resources for a high-performing school. O'Neill is a successful unit making a case for continued investment. The Dean will need to work with Advancement, alumni, foundations, government, employers, policy organizations, community partners, and external funders to grow philanthropy, sponsored activity, executive education, and other mission-aligned revenue sources.

Represent O'Neill to Indiana, the nation, and the world. The Dean should strengthen O'Neill's Bloomington and Indianapolis homes while using Indiana state relationships, Washington, D.C. connections, alumni leadership, global partnerships, and public-facing research to expand the school's influence and opportunities for students and faculty.

Qualifications and Experience

Indiana University seeks a Dean with the scholarly stature, administrative experience, public presence, strategic judgment, and integrity required to lead one of the nation's most visible and successful schools of public affairs and environmental education.

A terminal degree is required. Candidates must have a record of scholarly, scientific, policy, or professional accomplishment meriting appointment as a tenured full professor in a discipline represented in, or closely related to, the O'Neill School.

While no one candidate will embody every desired attribute, the strongest candidates will bring many of the following qualifications, experiences, and qualities:

- A distinguished record of scholarship, research, policy work, public leadership, or professional accomplishment, with credibility among faculty in public affairs, public policy, environmental science, management, economics, nonprofit studies, health policy, arts administration, criminal justice, public safety, international affairs, or related fields.

- Successful senior leadership experience in a complex academic organization, preferably including responsibility for faculty affairs, budget, strategy, research, graduate education, undergraduate education, advancement, external partnerships, and organizational growth.
- A record of sustaining excellence in a high-performing academic unit, including the ability to build on current momentum.
- Experience leading across campuses, locations, or complex organizational boundaries, with the judgment to respect local strengths while advancing one cohesive enterprise.
- A clear understanding of the national public affairs education market, including student demand, graduate education trends, online and executive education opportunities, rankings dynamics, and the value proposition for students and families.
- Demonstrated ability to connect academic programs with real public needs, including government, nonprofit, environmental, healthcare, arts, policy, civic, public safety, criminal justice, and management-oriented sectors.
- Experience recruiting, retaining, developing, evaluating, and supporting excellent faculty and staff in an environment with clear expectations and rigorous standards.
- A record of supporting high-impact research, applied scholarship, policy engagement, external funding, and graduate education.
- A strong commitment to undergraduate education, student success, experiential learning, career outcomes, and the recruitment of students across traditional disciplinary boundaries.
- Evidence of financial stewardship, including experience managing complex budgets, setting priorities, allocating resources, and aligning growth with capacity and quality.
- Demonstrated capacity to generate resources through philanthropy, grants, public and private partnerships, executive education, new programs, entrepreneurial activity, or other mission-aligned revenue sources.
- Experience building interdisciplinary partnerships across schools, campuses, research centers, employers, government partners, nonprofits, foundations, and civic organizations.
- Commitment to academic freedom, free inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and the open exchange of ideas.
- Respect for shared governance, paired with the ability to make timely decisions and hold units accountable for performance, quality, and sustainability.
- Political acumen, emotional intelligence, resilience, kindness, and the ability to build trust in a large, high-performing, and highly visible academic community.
- Excellent written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills, with the ability to represent O'Neill to internal and external audiences with clarity, warmth, and force.
- A deep commitment to the mission of public higher education and to O'Neill's service to Indiana, the nation, and the world.

About Indiana University

Founded in 1820, Indiana University is one of the nation's leading public research universities, with a mission to expand access to undergraduate and graduate education, advance research and creative activity, support outstanding academic and cultural programs, and serve Indiana, the nation, and the world.

IU's core campuses are IU Bloomington, the university's oldest and largest campus, and IU Indianapolis, an urban campus in the heart of the state capital. IU also includes seven regional campuses, nine School of Medicine campuses across Indiana, a Capital Campus in Washington, D.C., and global connections that support research, teaching, study abroad, and international partnerships.

The Bloomington campus enrolls more than 48,000 students from all 92 Indiana counties, all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and more than 130 countries. Its academic enterprise includes a broad range of highly regarded schools and programs in the arts and sciences, business, education, global and international studies, informatics, law, medicine, music, nursing, optometry, public affairs, public health, social work, and other fields. IU Bloomington is home to world-class collections, libraries, museums, performance venues, research centers, and student experiences that make Bloomington one of the nation's most recognizable college towns.

IU Indianapolis has emerged as a premier research university and a driving force in the state and local economy—innovating across industries, serving as the city's leading Research 1 institution, and preparing Indiana's future workforce to lead with purpose and integrity. Through more than 380 academic degree and certificate programs and a broad and strong network of partnerships with leading corporations—such as Salesforce, Eli Lilly, and Amazon—nonprofits, government agencies, and educational institutions statewide, the campus is equipping its more than 20,000 students to make an immediate impact where Indiana needs them most.

The two core campuses give IU unusual reach. IU Bloomington offers the scale, academic breadth, residential experience, AAU context, and Big Ten visibility of a flagship research campus. IU Indianapolis offers an urban R1 research environment connected to state government, employers, health sciences, community engagement, industry, and the civic infrastructure of Indiana's capital city. Together, they create a powerful platform for schools whose missions cross academic, professional, public, and applied domains.

IU's work is organized through IU 2030, a strategic framework focused on student success and opportunity, transformative research and creativity, and service to the state and beyond. O'Neill's mission sits directly within that agenda: preparing leaders, advancing policy-relevant research, improving communities, supporting economic and civic life, and helping IU solve problems that require more than one discipline, campus, sector, or method.

Application Process

Applications should include an updated curriculum vitae, a letter of interest addressing the candidate's qualifications, vision for the O'Neill School, and experience with fundraising and alumni engagement, and the names and contact information for five professional references. Please direct all inquiries and applications to Parker Executive Search.

The priority deadline for applications is **Tuesday, January 5, 2027**. Review will continue until an appointment is made.

The anticipated start date for this position is **Summer 2027**.

Porsha Williams, Vice President and Managing Director, Higher Education

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Nominations, including self-nominations, and inquiries may also be directed to the IU Executive Search Group at exesrch@iu.edu. IU Executive Search will facilitate the process in partnership with the external firm. Inquiries and nominations will be handled with appropriate confidentiality.

Before a conditional offer of employment with tenure is finalized, candidates will be asked to disclose any pending investigations or previous findings of sexual or professional misconduct. They will also be required to authorize an inquiry by Indiana University Bloomington with all current and former employers along these lines. The relevance of information disclosed or ascertained in the context of this process to a candidate's eligibility for hire will be evaluated by Indiana University Bloomington on a case-by-case basis. Applicants should be aware that Indiana University Bloomington takes matters of sexual and professional misconduct very seriously.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Indiana University is an equal opportunity employer and provider of ADA services and prohibits discrimination in hiring. [See Indiana University Notice of Non-Discrimination here which includes contact information.](#)

Campus Safety and Security

The Annual Security and Fire Safety Report, containing policy statements, crime and fire statistics for all Indiana University campuses, is [available online](#). You may also request a physical copy by emailing IU Public Safety at iups@iu.edu or by visiting IUPD.