POINT 1902 LOMA
NAZARENE UNIVERSITY

Associate Vice President for Information Technology Services

Point Loma Nazarene University | San Diego, California

SEARCH PROSPECTUS



CARTERBALDWIN EXECUTIVE SEARCH

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University Overview

Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) is a Christian liberal arts institution accredited by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC), an NCAA DII school with 11 athletics teams, and a Christ-centered community committed to whole-person education.

Founded in 1902 as Pacific Bible College in Los Angeles, the University relocated to the Point Loma peninsula in San Diego in 1973 and was renamed Point Loma Nazarene University in 1998, and it has been affiliated with the Church of the Nazarene since its founding. What began as a single campus has grown into a university that serves more than 4,600 students across Regional Campuses in San Diego County and Bakersfield and through an expanding online and hybrid portfolio, alongside the flagship Point Loma campus.

As a Christian liberal arts university, PLNU is committed to shaping students' academic, personal, and spiritual growth. The mission at PLNU isn't simply to prepare students for a career after they graduate — though that's part of it — but to shape them into thoughtful, service-minded, and engaged members of their communities and world. In short, PLNU is committed to helping students become who they are fully called to be.

PLNU believes this happens when students critically explore various fields of thought across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities — such as their Foundational Explorations general education curriculum — with a concern for serving others and an openness to God's grace at work in our communities, nations, and lives.

PLNU's faculty members are known for their excellence as teachers and scholars in their respective fields, as well as for their commitment to forming relationships with students built around mentorship and accountability to help students thrive academically, professionally, and spiritually.





At PLNU, the small student-to-teacher ratio of 14:1 really does mean students can have one-on one relationships with professors who are just as concerned with who students are becoming as they are with how students are performing. They encourage students to move beyond a one dimensional education and toward one that fosters vigorous and rewarding academic exploration through summer research programs, study abroad programs, graduate field experience projects, honors programs, and more. For the 10th straight year, PLNU earned the NCAA Presidents' Award for Academic Excellence, given to Division II schools with an Academic Success Rate of at least 90%.

Every year, a number of athletic teams compete annually at the regional and national level tournaments. Recently, men's baseball placed second in the NCAA Division II finals, and in 2023 women's soccer earned the national champion title.

Through faculty mentorships and a host of academic opportunities, students develop the perspective, knowledge, wisdom, and experience necessary to pursue a purposeful career after they graduate.

In addition to more than 60 undergraduate areas of study, PLNU offers graduate, doctoral, and undergraduate degree completion programs, serving over 4,600 students across several campuses throughout San Diego County and Bakersfield, California.

Finally, PLNU is a proven vibrant partner in the San Diego community. The PLNU President has served on the Board of the Economic Development Association and San Diego of Chamber of Commerce. Uniquely, PLNU also participates in the annual Kyoto prize through the Inamore Foundation, helping to host leaders and laureates in San Diego each spring. Awards are given in advanced technology, basic sciences, and arts and philosophy.

Location

PLNU’s flagship undergraduate campus is located in Point Loma, a coastal community of San Diego, while the University’s broader presence includes exceptional Regional Campuses throughout San Diego County and in Bakersfield, as well as a growing portfolio of online and hybrid programs. San Diego is the eighth largest city in America and the second largest in California.

There are more than 30 museums in San Diego. Many of those are located within Balboa Park, the nation's largest “urban cultural” park.

The city is also home to the world-famous San Diego Zoo, the Padres, some of the best beaches in the world, and an airport adjacent to a thriving downtown (which is a mere four miles from PLNU's campus).

San Diego is an exciting, growing economic hub. It's home to a highly educated population, full of many individuals pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors.



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MISSION

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service is an expression of faith.

VISION

Discovering Vocation, Expanding Horizons, Deepening Faith, Transforming Communities

CORE VALUES

Being of Wesleyan-Holiness heritage, we are a learning community where:

- Truth is pursued
- Grace is foundational
- Holiness is a way of life

The Opportunity

Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) has finished a decade of foundational technology work and is ready for what comes next. The ten-year migration to Workday is complete. The institution runs a largely centralized technology organization on stable cloud infrastructure, with a security and compliance program built patiently over many years and a service culture that campus partners trust. The trains run on time. What the University wants now is a leader who helps it use what it has built.

That foundation now has to hold for a university that is less and less defined by one campus. Regional Campuses across San Diego County and in Bakersfield, and a fast-growing online and hybrid footprint, mean a rising share of PLNU's students and employees experience the University without ever walking the Point Loma quad. Technology is what makes that a consistent PLNU experience no matter where someone is.

The clearest example is artificial intelligence. Academic leadership is shaping how AI belongs in the classroom. Operational leadership is shaping how it creates capacity everywhere else. Both want a technology partner at the center of that conversation, and the University has said plainly that doing this work through a Wesleyan-Holiness lens is a genuine differentiator for PLNU, not a constraint. The next Associate Vice President will guide that direction, mobilize colleagues who are curious but unsure where to start, and put an institutional plan underneath the pockets of good work already happening.

The second opportunity is partnership. Deans, vice presidents, and program leaders across PLNU are asking for a thought partner who will sit with them, learn how they actually use their systems, and bring ideas to their door. They are not asking for a gatekeeper. A leader who can hold that posture while still setting institutional direction will find an unusual amount of room to lead here.



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The Role

The Associate Vice President for Information Technology Services reports to Dr. Jeff Bolster, Vice President for University Services, and serves on the Strategic Leadership Council, the University's senior leadership body. The AVP leads an organization of roughly 35 professionals through five directors whose portfolios cover systems and DevOps, client and field services, information security, enterprise systems development and reporting, and project and technical services. The seat is responsible for academic and administrative technology University-wide, across every campus, program, and delivery modality. This is an in-person role based on the San Diego campus.

PLNU moved technology into the University Services organization and has experienced increased efficiencies, coordination and collaboration, and service as the first question. Access does not run through the chain of command. The AVP meets with the Vice President every other week, sits on the monthly Strategic Leadership Council, presents to the President's cabinet and the provost's council throughout the year, joins the CFO's leadership group alongside accounting, finance, and enterprise risk, and reports to the Board of Trustees at least annually. Information Technology Services also sits alongside facilities and public safety under University Services, a structure that has produced four years of joint capital planning and a shared multiyear forecast for major projects.

Key Responsibilities

- Set the vision for how information technology advances PLNU's academic and administrative mission and maintain an IT strategic plan that reflects where the University is actually going.
- Guide the University's direction on artificial intelligence, working with academic and operational leaders to move pockets of experimentation toward an institutional plan for platforms, governance, and responsible use.
- Serve as a thought partner to deans, vice presidents, and program leaders, understanding how each area uses technology and bringing forward ideas that expand capacity.
- Steward the central platform portfolio, including Workday, the student information system, the learning management environment, cloud infrastructure, and identity, and lead the institutional decisions those platforms require.
- Provide executive oversight of the information security program, vendor risk management, and compliance, and communicate the university's security posture clearly to senior leadership and the board.

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Lead, develop, and protect a capable, cohesive leadership team, continuing a culture of professional development, healthy work-life integration, and direct access across the institution.

Own the technology budget with discipline, bringing cost-benefit judgment to decisions where the price of doing it right and the price of doing it now are not the same number.

Support the University effort to rebuild institutional risk management alongside colleagues in University Services and across campus.

Serve every student and employee of the University, including the many who never set foot on the Point Loma campus, and help campus colleagues think in those terms.

Partner with graduate and professional studies on the systems that carry the University's growth, including the online programs and the admissions processes for non-standard programs, where volume is rising faster than the systems were built for.

Build, with colleagues in finance, a working model of what each new program, student, and employee costs the University from a technology standpoint, so growth decisions carry a realistic support number.





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Leadership Priorities

PRIORITY	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Lead the AI conversation	Bring academic and operational AI efforts into one institutional plan, consolidate platform spend, and set governance that the PLNU community can actually follow.
Innovate through partnership	Build the relationships and the cadence that turn IT from a service desk into a source of ideas, so proactive conversations about what is possible become normal.
Steward the core	Carry the pending identity platform decision, close the gap between security and identity capability, and keep the technology backbone ahead of a growing institution.
Lead a strong team	Take the priority calls that free five capable directors to do their best work, protect the culture they have built, and take project and resource management to its next level.
Serve the whole University	Hold service quality to one standard regardless of location, and make parity a leadership metric rather than an aspiration.

The Ideal Candidate

PLNU's next Associate Vice President will be someone the five directors can talk shop with. This is a technically fluent group with deep tenure, and they want a leader who can sit in the room and go deep on infrastructure, security, and data design without needing a translator. Before this person proposes a new direction, they will take the time to understand why PLNU built things the way it did.

The senior culture at PLNU is warm and relational. People are direct but respectful, and authority is taken seriously. The AVP does not need to dominate a room to be effective here, but does need to be able to take something technical and make it make sense to a cabinet member or a trustee. Because so much of this job runs on influence rather than reporting lines, the ability to move work forward with colleagues outside the AVP's direct authority matters more than almost anything else. Multiple people brought this up unprompted.

This is also someone who finishes what they start. PLNU described its own culture as process-oriented and people-first, and the person they hire should match that: clear about the goal, clear about what done looks like, and reliable about getting there. Given how visible this role is, being a strong presenter to cabinet and the Board carries real weight, alongside the technical leadership itself.

Finally, this AVP is a steward of the university's resources. Security spend in particular carries a high price tag, and PLNU wants a partner who helps them think through return on investment rather than someone who simply asks for more.

Church of the Nazarene

When the Church of the Nazarene was formed in 1895, it was named after the everyday people of Nazareth among whom Jesus lived, taught, and served. In short, the name Nazarene means being of the Christian faith.

The Church of the Nazarene is an international Protestant denomination, representing the largest denomination in the classical Wesleyan-Holiness tradition. Since PLNU is a Nazarene university, its relationship with the Church of the Nazarene is one characterized by a mutual commitment to the doctrine and mission. That means we strive to prepare leaders for Christian service within social, civic, business, and church communities. Past PLNU presidents have participated in the Nazarene General Assembly and the General Board governance structure (both global bodies), as well as other areas of ecclesial service.

Specifically, the church is a global community of faith, seeking to preach, teach, and model holiness of heart and life as the missional core of its vocation to make Christlike disciples in the nations. The church is a member of the National Association of Evangelicals.

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Required Qualifications

- Seven or more years leading technology teams, including a senior leadership role accountable for strategy, budget, and staff.
- Technical grounding sufficient to engage substantively with senior technical staff on infrastructure, enterprise systems, security, and data.
- Evidence of leading a significant change or transformation, including change led with and through a team.
- Experience leading a cross-functional initiative where authority was earned rather than assigned.
- Oversight of enterprise systems, including ERP and student information systems, and the fiscal and policy work that surrounds them.
- Leadership in information security governance and vendor risk management, with the judgment to communicate posture plainly to non-technical leaders.
- A personal faith in Jesus Christ, active involvement in a local church, and willingness to live in agreement with PLNU's Community Life Covenant.
- Ability to serve in person on the San Diego campus.

A note on credentials. A degree in a technical or related field is valued, and comparable professional experience is accepted in its place. PLNU has decided not to hold this seat to a graduate degree requirement, because what matters here is the ability to do the work.





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Preferred Qualifications

- Experience in higher education, particularly at a private or faith-based institution.
- Workday experience.
- Experience leading an organization of comparable size and structure, with directors and managers reporting in.
- Track record of succeeding in a distributed, multi-site technology environment.
- Work on artificial intelligence strategy, governance, or adoption at an institutional level.
- Involvement in enterprise or institutional risk management.
- Familiarity with Southern California, or personal ties to the region.

Mission and Culture

PLNU is a Christian community before it is anything else, and this role sits inside that commitment rather than alongside it. Employees affirm belief alignment and agree to live according to the Community Life Covenant. The Information Technology Services leadership team has served this institution for a long time, cares about each other, and cares about the wider campus culture. This is a place that rewards people who invest in relationships before they ask for change.

People stay at PLNU. It is common to meet colleagues with ten, twenty, or thirty years of service, and that shapes how decisions get made. Governance is shared, conversation comes before conclusion, and consensus takes longer than it would in a corporate setting. Leaders who thrive here find that pace worth the trade, because the relationships it builds make institutional change possible.



For Consideration

If this opportunity aligns with your experience, your leadership, and your sense of calling, the search team would welcome a conversation. All conversations and submissions are handled in confidence.

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Applications should include a resume and a letter of interest addressed to the search team, along with a brief statement of Christian faith and church involvement.

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