



Vice President for Advancement & Alumni Relations Converse University

Converse University invites nominations and applications for the appointment of Vice President for Advancement & Alumni Relations



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Converse University

Converse University is a private, liberal arts, residential, doctoral degree-granting institution located in Spartanburg, SC. Within the University umbrella, Converse maintains the Converse College for Women, an empowering undergraduate living-learning community that focuses on mentorship, service, and leadership that continues a sisterhood that spans more than 130 years.

The Founder's Ideal

"It is my conviction that the well-being of any country depends much upon the culture of her women, and I have done what I could to found a college that would provide for women thorough and liberal education, so that for them the highest motives may become clear purposes and fixed habits of life; and I desire that the instruction and influence of Converse College be always such that the students may be enabled to see clearly, decide wisely, and to act justly; and that they may learn to love God and humanity, and be faithful to truth and duty, so that their influence may be characterized by purity and power."

Dexter Edgar Converse, founder of Converse College

History of the University

Although the doors of Converse opened in 1890, the first step towards the founding of the college was taken in 1889 when a prominent attorney assembled a group of Spartanburg citizens to discuss the project. Among the 13 men was Dexter Edgar Converse, a native of Vermont who had settled in Spartanburg before the Civil War and had become a successful pioneer in the cotton mill industry.

Mr. Converse was especially interested in establishing a college for women because his daughter, Marie, was approaching college age and he wanted her to have every possible educational advantage. His initial and subsequent contributions to the cause were so valuable that the college was given his name.

Beginning in the 1900s, Converse matured into one of the leading colleges for women in the South. It was during this period that the College's Petrie School of Music received a national rating as a professional school of music. Converse became a charter member of the National Association of Schools of Music, which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the accrediting agency for music curricula.

Other key points in Converse's history include:

- 1964: Converse introduced graduate programs, including the Master of Art in Teaching (MAT) program, the first degree of its kind in South Carolina.
- 1983: The college introduced Converse II to fit the schedules and ambitions of adult women.



- 2003: Converse completed the most successful capital campaign in its history with \$82.5 million in private gifts.
- 2006: Converse became the first women's college to attain the prestigious All-Steinway School distinction.
- 2013: Converse made national headlines by announcing a 43% reduction in tuition – leading the national movement for transparent college pricing and making a top-quality private education accessible at a public-university price.
- 2018: Converse expanded its reach by joining the University Center in Greenville (UCG), a center that focuses on advancing access and attainment of higher education degrees, benefitting the citizens and economic community of upstate South Carolina. Converse provides an array of co-educational degree programs on the UCG campus.
- 2019: Converse marked a historic milestone with its new status as a doctoral degree-granting institution following approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). In addition, SACSCOC approved Converse's first doctoral program, a Doctor of Education in Professional Leadership.

Converse Today

On February 7, 2020, after many months of careful deliberation and research, Converse College decided to expand its undergraduate residential program from single gender to co-ed beginning in Fall 2020. The Board of Trustees also approved a name change from college to university, effective July 1, 2021, which acknowledges Converse's long-held university status and positions the institution to lead the charge for educational and economic excellence in the region.

Converse serves a diverse student body with a total enrollment of approximately 1500 students, of which approximately 850 are undergraduates. Students hail from 29 states and 9 countries. Converse offers these students a comprehensive academic program that merges the liberal arts and career-focused majors where every student can participate in experiential learning: internships, student research, leadership development, community service, and study-travel.



Converse provides students with “*The Converse Guarantee*:

Guarantee 1: We guarantee all undergraduate, full-time students will graduate from Converse in four years. We are committed to your success. If you don't graduate in four years, the rest of your classes needed to complete your degree at Converse will be free.

Guarantee 2: We guarantee all students will be employed full-time or enrolled in graduate school within six months of graduation or be eligible to return for a full year tuition-free.”

Academic programs at Converse are offered through five schools and departments: The Arts; Education & Graduate Studies; Humanities, Sciences, & Business; Converse College for Women; and Converse International School.

Converse students are offered:

- 45 undergraduate major fields of study including options for double and self-designed majors.
- Graduate programs include: MIM, MLA, MMFT, MM, MAT, MFA, MEd, EdD, and EdS degrees. These programs include South Carolina's only Master's in gifted education program, only low-residency MFA in creative writing, the first Bachelor of Fine Arts in creative and professional writing, and the Upstate's first undergraduate music therapy degree program.
- Five online graduate degrees (EdS, MEd, MIM) and one low-residency MFA graduate degree.
- Five programs, including the EdD, are also offered at the University Center of Greenville.
- An environment that values creativity, innovation, and transformation where they engage in small, individualized classes with an 11-to-1 student-faculty ratio.
- 86% of courses taught by full-time faculty of whom 98% hold the terminal degree in their fields.



Of note is the Converse College for Women, a powerful force within the University. While Converse is now co-educational across all programs, through the programming of the Converse College for Women, Converse reaffirms the founder's conviction that a small undergraduate residential liberal arts college is a uniquely powerful environment for developing women's talents.

By taking Women's College designated courses spread across their time at Converse, participating in fun, monthly community events, and engaging in annual traditions each year, students will:

- Be welcomed into a sisterhood that spans more than 130 years.
- Gain invaluable networking opportunities with passionate alumni who want to see them succeed.
- Feel empowered through close mentorship and goal-setting that helps them achieve their dreams.
- Find their place within the larger world through impactful service opportunities.
- Share their unique power through leadership within a supportive community.

Converse is located in the vibrant city of Spartanburg, in Spartanburg County, the 5th-largest county in South Carolina. The County is home to nearly 328,000 people and 13 unique municipalities. At the intersection of Interstates 85 and 26 in the heart of Upstate South Carolina, Spartanburg is within driving distance of Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport, Charlotte Douglas International Airport, and Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, and less than a half-day's drive from several major regional destinations.

Unmatched statewide in economic development for new investment and job creation, Spartanburg is a higher education hub with seven diverse institutions; home to a thriving cultural district with public art on nearly every corner; and community-minded approaches to education and public health. With a growing downtown including new shops and restaurants, international companies and countless small businesses offering career opportunities, organizations to help individuals get involved civically and professionally, award-winning wellness initiatives, breathtaking outdoor recreation opportunities, and more trails than any other county in South Carolina, there's something for everyone in Spartanburg.

For more information on Spartanburg, please visit: <https://seeyourselfinspartanburg.com/>



Athletically, Converse competes at the NCAA Division II level as a member of Conference Carolinas. Converse has 17 DII sports teams including acrobatics & tumbling (emerging), field hockey, women's golf, women's lacrosse, softball, women's swimming, and women's volleyball, as well as men's and women's programs for basketball, cross country, soccer, tennis, and track & field.

In addition, the University offers co-ed programs in eSports and IHSA equestrian. Converse athletes recently ranked 12th in the nation among Division II teams for their community service.

Mission

Converse empowers students to become transformative leaders who see clearly, decide wisely, and act justly.

Vision

Converse advances a culture of belonging and collaboration that ignites creativity, innovation, and transformation.

clearly
wisely
justly

CONVERSE

Core Values

Converse prides itself as a culture of belonging and collaboration that ignites creativity, innovation, and transformation. Supporting our mission are seven core values that guide Converse's commitment to creativity and the development of wise leaders.

These enduring beliefs serve as the compass for Converse. They transcend time, extend across the institution, and guide our actions and decisions

- **EXCELLENCE** drives us to achieve the best in all that we pursue; to develop competence, confidence, and courage to realize full potential in mind, body, and spirit.
- **INTEGRITY** calls us to cultivate and exercise honor, character and vision in daily decisions and actions; to act honestly and justly when confronted with ethical dilemmas and life's challenges.
- **EXPLORATION** compels us to think critically and creatively in the acquisition of knowledge and skills; to discover and enrich scholarship and research, disciplines, methods and vocations through hands-on learning and leadership and through discovery, discourse, and debate.
- **DIVERSITY** inspires us to embrace the different perspectives, experiences, cultures, backgrounds, talents, and contributions that comprise a global society; to enhance and expand inclusivity as we build a stronger multi-dimensional community.
- **RESPECT** leads us to value self and others, recognizing the legitimacy of individuality in belief, expression, and perspective; to exercise civility, mindfulness and responsibility in words and actions.
- **COMMUNITY** motivates us to develop a dynamic network of relationships through a balance of work and play that nurtures the abilities of each member in order to establish a better whole; to mentor, collaborate and communicate as engaged citizens who effect positive change.
- **PROGRESS** challenges us to think strategically toward the future by employing creativity, adaptability, ingenuity, and innovation; to advance and transform the world around us.

Converse University President

Boone J. Hopkins, PhD, began his tenure as Converse University's twelfth president on March 1, 2022. Previously, Dr. Hopkins served as the Interim President for the University after the sudden passing of the previous President.

Prior to serving as the Interim President, Dr. Hopkins served as the Senior Associate Provost for Student Success, Dean of the School of the Arts, and Chair of the Department of Theatre & Dance at Converse. Dr. Hopkins enjoys helping those with whom he collaborates reach new heights and achieve excellence. In addition to his administrative role at Converse, Hopkins regularly taught courses in directing, theatre history, pedagogy, and performance studies in the Department of Theatre & Dance. In his six years as Dean of the School of the Arts, Hopkins and his colleagues increased enrollments in all areas of the School, cultivated unique collaborations with community partners, and developed new programs and courses, including the faculty-led "Creativity that Works" integrated arts entrepreneurship program with an emphasis on career skills and critical competencies for emerging artists.

Hopkins' involvement in theatre at Converse included directing *The Wolves* by Sarah DeLappe, one of the first college productions of the Pulitzer Prize finalist, as well as directing Theatre Converse students and guest artists in *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Godspell*, *Hamletmachine*, *Twelfth Night*, *F2M*, *Cabaret*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, and *Legally Blonde: the Musical*. While at Converse, Hopkins played Caliban in *The Tempest* directed by Melissa Owens and Darren Nash and performed the solo piece *Thom Pain: based on nothing* by Will Eno.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from Brenau University, Hopkins received his MFA in Directing and Acting Pedagogy from Virginia Commonwealth University and his Ph.D. in Theatre and Performance Studies from the University of Kansas. At Virginia Commonwealth University, Hopkins was co-founder and executive director of the Shafer Alliance Laboratory Theatre (SALT) and won the Theatre Department Leadership Award. At University of Kansas, Hopkins was honored twice with the Ethel Hines Burch Award for Outstanding Graduate Teaching and received the theatre department's highest award, the Kilty Kane, for his production work with the University Theatre. Hopkins is a member of the Board of the Chapman Cultural Center, the Downtown Rotary Club, and Trinity United Methodist Church in Spartanburg.

Hopkins credits developing his skills of empathy during his time as an undergraduate student at Brenau, the Gainesville, Georgia private university founded as a women's college. His wife, Dr. Chandra Owenby Hopkins, serves as the inaugural Dean for the Converse College for Women, a post to which she was appointed in May 2020 by President Krista Newkirk. Together, the Hopkins are leading Converse to fully realize the transformative power that Converse's new co-educational model offers and the vital importance of Converse's historic heart as a women's college through the Converse College for Women. The Hopkins proudly live in Spartanburg with their two elementary school-age sons.



Vice President for Advancement & Alumni Relations

Overview

The Vice President for Advancement and Alumni Relations is the Chief Advancement Officer at Converse University, responsible for the overall leadership and performance of resource development and external constituents' engagement with the University. The Vice President oversees the day-to-day and strategic management of philanthropy and fundraising, institutional advisory boards, special advancement-oriented events, alumni engagement, relationship management, and donor communications, as well as all outreach activities. The Vice President will drive efforts and formulate policies and programs that grow financial and human investment in the University; will coordinate and oversee the University's relationships and partnerships with external entities; will oversee the evolution and implementation of a cohesive fundraising strategy for the University in all forms of outreach to external and internal constituencies; and will supervise and expand efforts that broaden the visibility, reputation and utilization of the University and its resources to external constituencies.

The Vice President will serve as a member of the University's executive management team and work directly with the Board of Trustees to build visibility, relationships and resources for the University. The Vice President will oversee functional areas of: Philanthropy and Relationship Management (fundraising, cultivation and stewardship); Advancement Services; Advisory Boards; Alumnae Engagement and Donor Relations; Communications and Marketing; and Special Donor and Alumni Events.

Reporting Relationships & Responsibilities

The Vice President reports directly to the President and serves as member of the President's Cabinet. Direct reports to the President include: Director of Advancement Services; Director of Alumni Relations and Advisory Boards; Director of Donor Relations; Director of Institutional Grants; Assistant Vice President for Philanthropy; and the Administrative Assistant for Institutional Advancement. Overall, the Vice President provides leadership for the University's strategic vision plan and especially in the development of comprehensive campaign planning and execution.

Specific responsibilities include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Act as chief advancement officer supporting the President and the Board of Trustees in building relationships with a broad range of external constituents including alumni, donors, athletic boosters, corporations, foundations, and other friends of the University.
- Work closely with the Board of Trustees, President, Provost, deans, and other senior administrators to develop a multi-year fund-raising strategy for sustainable long-term growth.
- Steward all activities to achieve revenue targets for the University's comprehensive campaign.
- Lead Advancement and Alumni Relations staff in restructuring efforts to build an integrated organization that significantly increases targets for unrestricted, restricted, and endowment funds at the University and institutional levels while managing fund-raising costs.
- Manage Alumni relations, research, and operations components of Advancement to a high level of efficiency to streamline and optimize giving opportunities.
- Directs the development and effective execution of a comprehensive and cohesive communications, marketing, public relations and brand-building strategy to internal and external constituencies to meet advancement goals for various targeted and general populations and utilizing different media platforms.
- Cultivate and entertain alumni and prospective donors at various events, some of which may be held during evenings or weekends as required and may involve domestic and international travel.
- Assures adherence to state and federal regulations, institution policies and relevant accreditation standards.



Requirements / Qualifications

Personal Qualifications

The Vice President will be a person of character, drive, creativity and integrity. He or she will be a leader who can work both autonomously and as a member of a collaborative, tightly-knit team under strong presidential leadership. He or she will be an effective and inspiring manager, who is a strong communicator, who has excellent organizational and writing skills, and who provides vision, accountability, leadership and support to the division as a whole and individual team members. He or she will have a deep understanding of and commitment to the value of a historic women's college as well as the benefits and opportunities of expanding and advancing the institution. He or she will appreciate being driven to achieve results and will develop a results-oriented team.

Professional Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree required; an advanced degree in a related field preferred. CFRE or Certificate in Nonprofit Management is a plus.
- Minimum ten years of experience in: institutional advancement; philanthropy/fundraising; and supervising a team of employees, preferably in those areas. Additional experience in the areas of communications, marketing, management and/or sales is also preferred.
- Demonstrated excellent verbal and written communications skills, and a mindset that prioritizes clear, congenial, effective and open communications.
- Demonstrated excellent management skills in such areas as goal-setting and accountability, staff hiring, supervision, delegation and evaluation, budget planning and management.
- Experience with cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship strategies and techniques especially as pertains to principal gifts. The Vice President will be expected to manage a prospect portfolio that include both major and principal gift prospects.
- Proven experience with marketing and communications in service to achieve the goals of a comprehensive campaign for Converse University.

Compensation

Compensation will be commensurate with experience including a competitive base salary and benefits package.



To make a nomination, provide a referral, or for additional information, please use the contact information below. While applications and nominations will be accepted until a successful candidate has been appointed, interested parties are encouraged to submit their materials as soon as possible for immediate review.

To apply, please submit a resume and/or vita, and cover letter, to:

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Converse University believes that a diverse faculty and staff are essential to achieving academic excellence; thus, we strongly encourage applications from candidates from all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Converse University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, national or ethnic origin, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or any legally protected status in any personnel action regarding the recruiting, hiring, and promotion of faculty and staff members.

