

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY



Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff:

Happy New Year! It's been just over a week since I officially started as your president-elect, and I've been enjoying meeting people and learning more about Valpo. I am so excited to join the Valpo community and am ready to get started. One of the first, most important tasks for us is to choose the best person to serve as our next provost, who will help us build on the great Lutheran legacy bestowed upon us.

Rick Gillman, D.A., has graciously served as interim provost since August, and after more than 30 years of service to Valparaiso University, he will retire on Feb. 12, 2021.

Eric W. Johnson '87, Ph.D., dean of the College of Engineering, has agreed to serve as interim provost beginning Feb. 15, 2021. Doug Tougaw, Ph.D., chair of Electrical and Computer Engineering, will serve as interim dean of the College of Engineering.

Eric joined Valpo's faculty in 1997 and has served as dean of the College of Engineering since January 2013, after serving as its acting dean for the previous six months. He has been instrumental in implementing innovative plans for the college, particularly related to international programs and targeted recruitment strategies. He was honored with the Valparaiso University Alumni Association Outstanding Teaching Award in 2003, the same year he was selected for the Paul and Cleo Brandt Professorship of Engineering.

I've had the pleasure of getting to know Eric over the past few weeks and am excited to work with him in this capacity. I appreciate his candor, his enthusiasm, and his dedication to Valpo students.

Eric and I agree on the importance for the institution to conduct a national search for the next provost of Valparaiso University and have mutually decided to form a search committee with the assistance of WittKieffer. I am working with the Faculty Senate executive committee to assemble the search committee, and we will share updates as the search progresses. Please watch for an email soon with dates and times for listening sessions that will be conducted by WittKieffer.

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: this is the greatest Lutheran university in the nation. Thank you for your commitment to this important search process and for everything you do for Valpo.

Sincerely,

José D. Padilla, J.D.
President-Elect
Valparaiso University

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