



Vice President, Information Technology & Chief Information Officer

Reporting to the President, the Vice President, Information Technology & CIO (VP IT & CIO) is Athabasca University's champion for strategic delivery, academic service excellence, and system performance in information technology.

The VP IT & CIO's responsibilities and interactions with faculty, staff, and the student population reflect the unique position of AU as a Comprehensive Academic and Research Institute (CARI) focused on online and distance delivery of education. Exercising global and sector-wide leadership in this area, the VP IT & CIO plays a critical role in the ongoing achievement of AU's educational model, research, and the institution's positioning in the academic sector.

Athabasca University represents a distributed network of students, educators, researchers, administrators, and professionals who are passionate about open, online, and distance education, both as learners and as educators, and who seek to continually advance what this educational model means. The institution and its people learn, teach, research, and collaborate across the globe. IT is fundamental to AU's success, shaping not only its operations, but also its culture. Students, staff, and faculty at AU feel a strong sense of pride, ownership, and community as it relates to being at the cutting-edge of educational innovation in on-line learning. They look forward to welcoming a VP IT & CIO who shares in this pride and embraces this sensibility.

A credible, strategic, pragmatic visionary, with a track record for successfully leading and implementing complex projects, the VP IT & CIO will collaborate within AU, with other post-secondary institutions within Campus Alberta and beyond, as well as with a variety of external stakeholders, to ensure AU's information technology function remains at the forefront in the post-secondary sector.

Given the size and scope of the portfolio, as well as the many constituents linked to technology, the VP IT & CIO must be an exemplary leader. S/he must guide, inspire, and collaborate with AU's leadership and academic staff to present direction and implement IT initiatives, all while motivating and developing an agile and creative IT team. S/he must maintain productive relationships with academics, colleagues and the greater community (including unions, AU's Board of Governors, and external constituencies), and will foster a culture of process innovation and calculated risk-taking, while remaining decisive and financially prudent. S/he will prioritize a stable, reliable technology platform and strong service orientation for all user communities. To that end, the VP IT & CIO must work closely with staff, faculty, and students to ensure both the student experience and the ecosystem for academic research remain top priorities.

For more information about this opportunity or to apply, submit your resume and related information online, in confidence, to athabcio@odgersberndtson.com. Athabasca University is committed to an inclusive workplace and invites applications from all qualified individuals to join our diverse team.



Candidate Brief



Vice President, Information Technology & Chief Information Officer

For additional information, please contact:

Jennifer Ward, Partner

jennifer.ward@odgersberndtson.com

403.313.5522

Faye Laviolette, Engagement Manager

faye.laviolette@odgersberndtson.com

403.313.5523

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A Snapshot of the Opportunity

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As a publicly-funded institution, AU will continue to be affected by the financial environment of post-secondary institutions. The recently completed Third Party Review of Athabasca University demonstrates a commitment to maintaining AU as Canada's Open University. It also highlights the Government of Alberta's dedication to working with AU to ensure sustainable operations that meet learners' needs for accessible and quality education. In this environment, the VP IT & CIO must see opportunity where others see roadblocks; s/he must develop

strategies and roadmaps that support AU's bold, innovative thinking and commitment to remaining leaders on the global stage.

Reporting Relationships

Reports Directly to:	Office of the President
Direct Reports:	Director, IT Strategy & Planning Director, IT Delivery Director, IT Service Operations Director, ICT Project Management Executive Professional Officer
Internal Interfaces:	President and Vice-Presidents Associate Vice-Presidents Deans Faculty Staff Students Unions and Associations
External Interfaces:	Government Officials (Federal, Provincial, Municipal) Community Leaders Other Post Secondary Institutions Other Public Sector Organizations Private Sector Organizations

Key Accountabilities

Communication and Collaboration

- Participate in the strategic and annual planning process and share in the development of institutional vision, goals, and initiatives.
- Build and maintain strong relationships based on trust and credibility with all stakeholders and foster an environment of collaboration.
- Provide advice and counsel to all stakeholders and faculty concerning IT issues and industry trends.
- Effectively communicate the IT vision and major project progress throughout AU and to other key stakeholders, as appropriate.
- Conduct IT planning in consultation with stakeholders to facilitate alignment and create efficiencies across the institution.

- Work as part of the executive team to examine institutional priorities with a view to developing IT plans to support the needs of the academy.
- Develop relationships and encourage collaboration with institutional and sector leaders by understanding business and research priorities.
- Act as a public representative of AUIT, maintaining a number of significant contacts with the private sector, municipalities and regional districts and federal and provincial government departments and agencies.
- Advise and keep the President informed of matters relevant to his or her area of responsibility.

IT Governance and Portfolio Management

- Provide strategic leadership of AU Information Technology (AUIT) to ensure an exceptional user experience for students, faculty and staff.
- Lead a governance structure that aligns IT initiatives with AU's priorities through IT systems and budget planning.
- Oversee multiple, concurrent IT projects and prudently manage associated budgets.
- Effectively manage the delivery of multiple revenue services.
- Ongoing monitoring and identification of institutional security and risk in information and communications technology; developing solutions to ensure security and address risks.
- Ensure that appropriate risk management and emergency preparedness protocols are developed and maintained.
- Make certain that all initiatives in the IT portfolio follow best practices in planning and outcome measures.
- Oversee ongoing assessment of IT capabilities and performance on behalf of entities across the University.
- Manage relationships with the Alberta Government regarding IT capital and infrastructure.
- Guarantee that the required corporate and legal reporting obligations of the University are met with respect to ICT.
- Provide strategic, administrative, and technical support to the Vice-President Academic and senior scholars to achieve AU's ICT innovation initiatives provincially, nationally and globally.

Service Development, Operations and Technical Support

- Provide results-oriented accountability, management, and overall direction for the Office of the VP IT and CIO.
- In consultation with AU colleagues, develop strategy and plans for technical infrastructure and application architecture and ensure the plans are executed according to project plan.
- Direct an IT team that is focused on service excellence and system performance, and that supports ongoing operations which prioritize stability, efficiency, scalability, and growth.
- Ensure that enterprise information systems operate according to internal and external accrediting and audit agency standards and legal requirements.
- Protect and secure the IT assets and information entrusted to or maintained by AUIT.
- Determine and maintain a business continuity plan.
- Oversee the negotiation of all IT contracts.
- In conjunction with Human Resources, identify and implement technology-related training and education throughout the institution.

Leadership

- Act as a key member of the Athabasca University Executive through participation in the Executive group and appropriate committees of the Board of Governors.
- Actively engage with and listen to all internal stakeholders, then lead necessary university initiatives in partnership with colleagues, scholars, as well as both public and commercial enterprises.
- Lead change; leverage the team's strength to maximize their potential while addressing the needs of the academy.
- Participate as a leader in provincial, national and international IT strategic initiatives.
- Interact with government officials and funding bodies to ensure maximum leverage of available resourcing.
- Responsible for ICT capital infrastructure and function, including enterprise planning, project management and applications to government for funding opportunities.
- Act as role model, exemplifying outstanding leadership qualities while developing and mentoring the next generation of IT leadership within the institution.

The Candidate

Although the Search Committee recognizes that no one individual possesses the sought-after qualifications in equal measure, it has developed a set of criteria to articulate the desired background, experience and personal qualities of the ideal candidate.

Education

- University degree, preferably at the graduate level, in Information Systems, Engineering, Business or related area, from an accredited institution.
- ITIL, COBIT and Project Management credentials from an accredited institution or professional body would be advantageous, or demonstrated equivalent experience.
- A commitment to lifelong learning related to technology, professional development, and leadership.

Experience and Skills

- A minimum of 15 years of professional, operational, and IT project management experience, of which a minimum of 7 years should include management experience.
- Demonstrated experience with IT systems and management, at a senior/executive level, with increasing responsibilities in large, complex, multi-stakeholder, private and/or public sector settings.
- Experience within the post-secondary sector, and/or experience with academic computing or learning technologies would be a considerable asset.
- Experience with, and understanding of, strategic and business planning methods, tools and processes, with the ability to oversee the creation of long and short-term institutional IT plans.
- Track-record for attracting, developing, and mentoring teams of technology professionals, as well as effectively marshaling resources and delegating as appropriate.
- Experience working in a customer-oriented operation or service environment which has been recognized for prioritizing the user experience.

Personal Characteristics

- A career history demonstrating personal values such as integrity, inclusiveness, transparency, consultation, trust, resilience, decisiveness, and a caring, welcoming, and respectful approach to all interpersonal relationships.
- A history of having a visible presence within one's organization and in the community, and the passion, energy, and readiness to engage with students, faculty, and staff on various institutional matters.

- A passion for playing a key role in preparing students for their future, providing them with an experience that encourages them to become exceptional members of civil society.
- A demeanour that exhibits openness, consistency, sound judgment, fairness, resourcefulness and confidence, coupled with an accessible manner, optimism and enthusiasm.
- Pragmatic, yet with an ability to innovate; to see the big-picture and bring forward ideas, and the foresight to anticipate results; a decision-making style that moves ideas and people toward strategic goals.
- A history of being a change leader and not just a change manager, where the need for change in a portfolio is both recognized and addressed.
- An astute and nimble approach to management, and an ability to present creative and alternative approaches to business and personal situations.
- A history of being a team builder who: develops rapport with others; knowledgeably assesses talents and abilities of team members; delegates authority and monitors progress; and, supports and encourages professional and personal development.
- The ability to help people see opportunity where they initially saw constraint.
- An excellent listener who synthesizes information before providing direction; strong people and presentation skills.
- A capacity for striking the right balance between contemplation and action, and group discussion and individual autonomy.
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, including the ability to communicate technical strategy and information to a non-technical audience, in a clear, concise manner.

The Appointment and Process

The University invites applications from all qualified individuals. Athabasca University is committed to employment equity and diversity in the workplace and welcomes applications from women, members of racialized groups/visible minorities, Aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, and persons of any gender identity or gender expression. Accommodations are available for applicants with disabilities throughout the recruitment process. In accordance with Canadian immigration requirements, priority will be given to Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

Nominations and/or applications should be submitted, in confidence, to Jennifer Ward or Faye Laviolette at athabcio@odgersberndtson.com.

Additional Information

www.athabascau.ca

<http://www.athabascau.ca/aboutau/strategic/>

<http://news.athabascau.ca/news/announcements/sustainable-future-for-university>



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Appendix A — About Athabasca University



Athabasca University (AU), Canada's Open University, is devoted to the removal of barriers that limit access to and success in university-level study and to increasing equality of educational opportunity for adult learners worldwide. Working as a partner within Campus Alberta, AU is committed to collaborating with other key stakeholders to ensure a seamless and responsive advanced education system that provides high-quality learning opportunities in support of lifelong learning. With a complement of 1,350 faculty and staff serving over 40,000 students in every province and territory in Canada and 90 countries worldwide, AU offers more than 850 courses and 55 undergraduate and graduate programs in a range of arts, science and professional disciplines. AU provides interactive learning environments that include a variety of on-line and other media technologies for individualized and cohort learning. The University actively pursues technological innovations that can enhance its teaching, research and administrative functions.

Since its inception in 1970, AU has been a leader in educational innovation and internationalization. For example in 2016, the RAIC Centre for Architecture at Athabasca University, launched its first-of-its-kind technological collaboration to promote energy-efficient building design through its online global partnerships. This innovative, three-part workshop series, powered by the teleconferencing and video-conferencing facilities of Athabasca University, enabled students and faculty from four international post-secondary institutions to connect, in real time, to showcase the energy-efficient performance of their designs.



In addition, AU has a long-standing practice of working collaboratively with other Canadian and international post-secondary educational institutions and learning industries. Over 350 formal collaborative agreements with other Canadian and international post-secondary institutions, with professional associations and employer groups and with Indigenous institutions and communities are now in place to enable students enrolled in other post-secondary institutions to make extensive use of AU courses and educational services to help them complete their degrees and succeed on their educational journeys.



For more information, visit <http://www.athabascau.ca/>

Appendix B — About Athabasca, Alberta, Canada

A vibrant rural community in which to live, work and relax, the Town of Athabasca is nestled in the picturesque Athabasca River Valley, a 90 minutes' drive north of Edmonton with a population of just over 2,900 people.

As the health, education, shopping, and service centre for the region, the Town of Athabasca and surrounding area offers something for just about everyone—music and cultural festival devotees, nature lovers, adventurers, cottagers, campers, fishermen, hunters, golf enthusiasts, history buffs, retirees, business entrepreneurs, and those seeking the pace of a small town and a rural lifestyle.

The Town offers peaceful vistas, safe streets, and fresh air. There are pedestrian-friendly pathways and walking trails, including a wheelchair accessible Rotary Way at the riverfront, the Muskeg Creek ski and hiking trails, the new Trans-Canada trails south along the Tawatinaw River and north of the Athabasca River towards the Sawdy district and Smith.



The local economy builds upon a strong small-business sector and a permanent employment base at Athabasca University, Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries, and public sector jobs in health, education, and social services. As an entryway to the new Alberta north, Athabasca is also a centre for employment in oil and gas exploration and services, forestry and supporting services, agricultural, food, hardware, and retail services.

Between the years 1880 and 1914, Athabasca Landing, as the town was then called, became known as the "Gateway to the North," a jumping off point for the Peace and Athabasca trading rivers flowing to the Arctic. Today, the Town is the modern gateway to the new north country, its economic prospects, natural resource industries, tourism opportunities, natural beauty, and lifestyle choices. While the Town of Athabasca is steeped in historical tradition, it is very focused on the future.

For more information on the Town of Athabasca, please visit <http://www.athabasca.ca>.

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