

# Position Brief for

Embry–Riddle Aeronautical University

For the position of Dean, College of Aviation,  
Daytona Beach Campus

May 18, 2026



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# The University

As Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University celebrates its Centennial year, it continues to set the standard in aviation and aerospace higher education. For more than a century, Embry-Riddle has taught the science, practice and business of these fields, earning a strong reputation for equipping students with the skills, preparation and support needed for successful careers and leadership positions in business, government and the military.

The university is committed to education; research; outreach and engagement; and innovation across a wide range of disciplines. It serves as a dynamic hub where emerging and established experts come together to explore, shape and advance the scientific, technological, safety, social and business impacts and opportunities of aviation and aerospace.

Embry-Riddle is committed to teaching excellence that reflects creative thought and innovation, giving its students the knowledge and experience for personal fulfillment and professional success. Like the aviation and aerospace industries it serves, Embry-Riddle is dynamic and constantly evolving to serve the educational needs of those who will be future industry, academic and policy leaders.



The University offers advanced degrees in multiple areas, including all aspects of aviation, uncrewed systems, cybersecurity engineering and management, business, human factors, project management, and occupational safety management among many others. Embry-Riddle also continues to pioneer industry-responsive degree programs and specialized courses, such as undergraduate degrees in spaceflight operations, uncrewed aircraft systems, and aerospace physiology. The university grants an MBA and Ph.D. in aviation. It is the first in the country to offer a course in hybrid and urban air mobility. Within the College of Engineering, Embry-Riddle offers three doctoral degrees: Aerospace Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, and Mechanical Engineering.

For the third consecutive year, Embry-Riddle's undergraduate Aerospace Engineering program at the Daytona Beach campus ranked among the top five in the nation. Embry-Riddle's Prescott, Arizona, campus ranked No. 1 nationally in the Best



Undergraduate Aerospace Engineering Programs category for schools without a Ph.D. option.

Embry-Riddle’s students, faculty, administration and Eagle alumni are united by a passion for aviation and aerospace. The University’s global influence and the rapid evolution of these fields have positioned Embry-Riddle for expansion and greater opportunities in sponsored research. Embry-Riddle strongly supports student research; nearly 90 percent of its students work directly with faculty and industry partners on advanced research projects, capstone experiences and internships. Many Embry-Riddle students regularly win awards, excel in competitions and publish their research. Currently, students are collaborating with industry and government partners to develop new biofuels and environmentally friendly vehicles and aircraft as well as developing innovative propulsion systems; renewable energy sources; and uncrewed and autonomous technologies, to name just a few high-profile student initiatives.

Embry-Riddle is also a research center, developing solutions to real-world problems in partnership with the aerospace industry, other universities, and government agencies, including at its state-of-the-art Research Park adjacent to the Daytona Beach Campus. Faculty members conduct research and mentor student-researchers in all colleges. Signature research focuses on aviation cybersecurity, aviation data science and business analytics, flight research, unmanned aerial systems, and autonomous systems. For more information about Embry-Riddle, please visit: <https://erau.edu/>.

## **P. BARRY BUTLER, PRESIDENT**



P. Barry Butler serves as president of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Under his leadership since 2017, Embry-Riddle has expanded academic, industry and government partnerships to advance the study of aviation and aerospace safety, data analytics, and aviation cybersecurity. These partnerships have strengthened discovery-driven education and led to the creation of two centers of excellence: the Center for Aerospace Resilient Systems and the Boeing Center for Aviation & Aerospace Safety.

The university has also significantly expanded its Research Park, an ecosystem of aviation- and space-focused start-ups and leading companies. The latest addition is the ultra-modern Cici and Hyatt Brown Center for Aerospace Technology, which is the new home of a Boeing engineering center of excellence.

As a strong advocate for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, Butler has supported a dual-enrollment program with the Gaetz Aerospace Career Academy. The academy offers university courses to students in more than 200



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Florida secondary schools. At the Arizona Campus, the STEM Education Center serves as a hub of enrichment for students, faculty, researchers and the community.

Enhancing space-related curricula is a presidential priority, which has resulted in the launch of a Master of Space Operations degree. Butler also encourages student engagement in hands-on, real-world research. Students have sent projects to space, including a camera system that became the first student-designed project to reach the moon. Another point of pride is the commissioning of ROTC graduates to serve in the U.S. Space Force.

Previously, Butler was Executive Vice President and Provost of the University of Iowa. He was responsible for more than 100 academic programs across 11 colleges. For 10 years, he served as Dean of the College of Engineering. He holds three degrees from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: a bachelor's in Aeronautical Engineering, a master's in Astronautical Engineering and a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering. He has served as a visiting research fellow and consultant to government and private R&D organizations. He is a licensed pilot and glider pilot.

### **KELLY AUSTIN, SVP FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND PROVOST**



Dr. Kelly Austin is Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

In this role, Dr. Austin's responsibilities encompass critical areas affecting academic matters and student success for the more than 30,000 students at the world's leading higher education institution focused on aviation, aerospace and research.

Throughout his tenure at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Austin has led significant academic initiatives aimed at promoting faculty and academic excellence, while also improving the overall student experience. He has led educational innovation, supported the expansion of the research enterprise, and strengthened industry partnerships, helping elevate the university's position as a leader in the aviation and aerospace community. His focus on curriculum updates, faculty development, and interdisciplinary collaboration has strengthened teaching and scholarship. Austin's commitment to student success has resulted in measurable improvements in retention and graduation rates and reinforce the institution's global reputation.

Dr. Austin has previously held the position of Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses and Executive Chancellor at The Pennsylvania State University, University Park. In that role, he oversaw the teaching, research, and service activities, and managed the budget for Penn



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State’s 20 Commonwealth Campuses, which educated approximately 27,000 students across all academic programs. He also served as Chancellor at Penn State Schuylkill. Before his tenure at Penn State, Dr. Austin was Vice President for Finance and Administration at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown.

Dr. Austin holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master of Business Administration in Aviation (Airline Management) from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Embry-Riddle developed its strategic plan (2023-2028) through a 10-month collaboration between students, faculty, staff, administration and community stakeholders. Following a series of internal assessments, analysis of best practices, and review of current opportunities, core teams proposed various strategic focuses and critical tasks aligned with five key pillars. It was endorsed by our Board of Trustees in March 2023.

Each of the five key pillars of the strategic plan is supported by a Strategic Implementation Team (SIT), tasked with the ongoing identification of best practices, key goals, success metrics and next steps. These teams remain responsible for implementing these goals within the timelines and budgets they established.

The strategic plan reflects the University’s strengths and supports new aspirations. As we make progress toward the milestones we have defined together, Embry-Riddle becomes an even more innovative and collaborative place to work, learn, and grow. To learn more, visit: <https://erau.edu/leadership/president/our-strategic-plan>.

### **ONE UNIVERSITY, THREE CAMPUSES**

There are three Embry-Riddle campuses and satellite locations across the world, but Embry-Riddle is defined by a common purpose and dedication to student success. Integrating resources and programs across campuses is a priority that allows the university to leverage competitive advantages. Embry-Riddle has a unique opportunity between Daytona Beach, Prescott, and Worldwide to optimize strengths and distinctions.



**Daytona Beach, Florida Campus** – Embry-Riddle’s 185-acre eastern campus is located along Central Florida’s I-4 corridor, a short drive from Orlando and the Space Coast.

Serving more than 8,000 undergraduate and over 800 graduate students from 50 states and nearly 100 countries, the Daytona Beach Campus is also home to the university’s administrative headquarters. Adjacent to Daytona Beach International Airport, the campus offers undergraduate and graduate degrees from four colleges: Arts and Sciences, Aviation, David B. O’Maley College of Business, and Engineering.

The Mori Hosseini Student Union, at the heart of campus, has become an iconic image representing Embry-Riddle’s spirit of ingenuity. Daytona Beach is also home to the University’s Research Park and the John Mica Engineering and Aerospace Innovation Complex (MicaPlex). This state-of-the-art building is a 50,000-square foot innovation hub with ten specialized labs and a nearby subsonic wind tunnel. The MicaPlex is the site of research companies and disruptive technology start-ups focused on space, engineering, unmanned systems, and sustainable energy. The expanding Research Park has been a significant driver of economic activity for the state,

**Prescott, Arizona Campus** – Embry-Riddle’s campus in Prescott, Arizona, is located approximately 100 miles north of Phoenix, and currently serves over 3,000 students led by a Chancellor. The campus is an integral part of the Prescott community and is becoming known as Arizona’s STEM university. The campus has a rolling, seven-year strategic plan that aligns with and supports the University’s five-year plan.

This campus covers more than 500 acres of scenic western terrain. Campus life is centered in a one-square-mile area that centralizes academic, residential, and recreational resources.

Over the past several years, Prescott has experienced significant growth and record enrollment, and several crucial construction projects on new residential housing and a state-of-the-art student union are underway. The highest enrollment is in aviation and engineering with students pursuing degrees in space physics, meteorology, forensics, gaming and simulation, air traffic management, and uncrewed aerial systems, as well as security and intelligence programs. A School of Business opened in 2018, and new programs continue to be added in strategic areas.

**Worldwide Campus** – Embry-Riddle Worldwide was established in 1970. Today it serves more than 23,000 students online and in classrooms globally. Approximately 110 locations and online courses deliver flexibility to students across the country and the world.



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Led by a Chancellor, the campus offers more than 50 undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees and certificate programs. Degree programs include aviation, business, communication, computer science, emergency services, engineering, human factors, management, safety, security, logistics, and uncrewed systems.

These diverse and dynamic programs support and connect students in a virtual learning community through web-based support groups and online forums. Embry-Riddle Worldwide also offers professional education programs to ensure the workforce builds critical skills.

**Embry-Riddle Asia** – Embry-Riddle extended its global reach into Singapore in 2011 to deliver its world-class aviation and aerospace degree programs to students across Asia. Partnerships enabled Embry-Riddle to grow during its first decade in Singapore, paving the way for the creation of ERAU Asia Institute (ERAU-AI), which began teaching in 2022. Since the university set foot in the “Lion City,” it’s remained committed to delivering a curriculum that mirrors what is offered at Embry-Riddle locations worldwide to nearly 33,000 students.

In June 2024, ERAU Asia moved to its new state-of-the-art campus and training center at Seletar Aerospace Park. The new campus allows ERAU Asia to enhance its academic degree programs, expand its uncrewed aircraft training capabilities, and deliver a broader range of Professional Education and Training courses. The campus and training center offer cutting-edge equipment for immersive virtual training, air traffic management simulation, UAS flight training and aviation maintenance.

### **ACCREDITATION**

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University – including the Daytona Beach Campus, the Prescott Campus and the Worldwide Campus – is accredited by the Southern Associations of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award degrees at the associate, baccalaureate, master's and doctoral level. Degree/certificate programs at both the Daytona Beach and the Prescott campuses in flight (private, commercial, instrument, multi-engine, flight instructor and instrument flight instructor ratings) and flight dispatch are additionally approved by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).



# The Position

Reporting to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, **the Dean of Embry-Riddle’s College of Aviation** serves as the chief administrative, academic, and operational leader of the College of Aviation, home to the largest and most prominent collegiate flight program in the world. The Dean will be responsible for stewarding a complex, high-performing enterprise while advancing its strategic trajectory.

Located at the University’s Daytona Beach Campus, the Dean will lead a globally renowned College of Aviation at a pivotal moment of strategic growth. This role combines operational stewardship of a large-scale flight training enterprise with academic leadership, external engagement and research advancement. The Dean will protect, uphold and strengthen the College’s flagship Aeronautical Science program while driving diversification across complementary programs and research centers.

## THE OPPORTUNITY



This is a uniquely scaled and strategically important leadership role within global aviation education. The Dean will lead the most visible and operationally complex College of Aviation in the world at a moment of meaningful inflection.

Daytona Beach has long set the pace for Embry-Riddle’s aviation leadership, with a flagship aeronautical science program that defines the institution’s global reputation. The next Dean will be tasked with elevating the College—bringing the energy, vision and external connectivity required to take an already market-leading enterprise to its next level.

This is a role for a leader who can respect operational excellence while accelerating momentum, visibility, and strategic growth.

For a leader with the right combination of credibility, vision, and energy, this role represents a platform to influence the global future of aviation at scale.



## CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Drive Strategic Growth and Portfolio Diversification** Expand and diversify the College's academic portfolio across aeronautical science, air traffic management, aviation safety, aviation maintenance, uncrewed aircraft systems, meteorology and space operations. Balance growth with the preservation of flagship program quality.
- **Advance Priority Research and Centers of Excellence** and actively engage with the University's Centers of Excellence, including the Boeing Center for Aviation and Aerospace Safety, the Center for Advanced Air Mobility, the Center for Aerospace Resilient Systems and the Center for Space and Atmospheric Research, as well as Embry-Riddle's Florida Test Bed, to accelerate applied research, scale funded programs and translate research into curricular and operational innovation.
- **Lead Flight Training Operations** Oversee one of the world's largest flight training operations, serving approximately 2,000 aeronautical science students in a high-volume daily environment. Ensure operational safety, regulatory compliance and uninterrupted excellence while partnering closely with the College's operational leadership team (chief pilot, maintenance, program leadership).
- **Elevate Research Profile and External Visibility** and promote and scale signature initiatives such as the Center of Excellence for Advanced Air Mobility and related research programs to raise the College's national and international profile and attract industry, government and philanthropic support.
- **Serve as External Ambassador**, representing the College across industry, government, military, and the broader aviation ecosystem. Cultivate strategic partnerships that create pathways for student internships, faculty collaboration, sponsored research and workforce development.
- **Protect and Strengthen Aeronautical Science** while maintaining and enhancing the College's flagship Aeronautical Science program as the global benchmark for collegiate flight education, ensuring curriculum currency, training quality and career outcomes.
- **Support Institutional Partnerships and Regulatory Alignment** while guiding complex institutional initiatives and partnerships (for example, evolving relationships with Daytona State College) and ensure alignment with regulatory bodies such as the FAA, maintaining proactive engagement on policy, accreditation and operational standards.
- **Foster Culture and Continuous Improvement** to build and sustain a culture of engagement, energy and continuous improvement across faculty, staff, and students.



Promote shared governance, transparent decision-making and student-centered program development.

- **Ensure Accreditation and Regulatory Compliance** and maintain compliance with accreditation standards and regulatory requirements, and implement a data- and metrics-driven approach to performance, safety and program assessment.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Along with the College's high-functioning, deeply experienced operational team, the Dean will be expected to amplify impact. Key strategic opportunities include:

- **Scale and Prominence:** Steward a best-in-class flight operation that serves as the backbone of the College and a global benchmark for aviation training.
- **Portfolio Evolution:** Thoughtfully diversify program offerings to strengthen adjacent disciplines while preserving the Aeronautical Science program's preeminence.
- **Industry Transformation:** Lead in emerging domains such as advanced air mobility, aviation safety, resilient aerospace systems, uncrewed systems and space operations.
- **External Positioning:** Elevate the College as a convener and thought leader across aviation, aerospace and space ecosystems.

## CANDIDATE PROFILE

The successful candidate will combine industry credibility, academic leadership, and large-scale operational experience. He or she will be effective at the intersection of flight operations, academic enterprise leadership and external engagement.

### Key Attributes

- **Industry and Academic Credibility:** Recognized within aviation through senior industry roles, academic achievement, or both; able to command respect in a flight-centric culture.
- **Large-Scale Operational Leadership:** Proven ability to oversee complex, high-risk, high-volume operational environments.
- **Strategic Growth Orientation:** Track record of expanding and diversifying academic portfolios while maintaining flagship program excellence.
- **Systems Thinking:** Demonstrated understanding of the interdependencies among flight operations, safety, regulation, and academic programming.



- **External Engagement:** Demonstrated success cultivating partnerships across airlines, aerospace companies, government, and military organizations.
- **Research Enablement:** Ability to elevate institutional research visibility and translate research strengths into educational and operational impact.
- **Energy and Engagement Leadership:** Ability to bring momentum and inspiration while respecting existing operational excellence.
- **Change Leadership with Restraint:** Skilled at targeted, strategic advancement without unnecessary disruption.
- **Student-Centered Mindset:** Commitment to preparing the next generation of aviation professionals across diverse career pathways.
- **Interpersonal and Communication Excellence:** Effective communicator across technical, academic and industry audiences.
- **Ethics and Integrity:** Highly principled, transparent and accountable leader.

### Essential Qualifications

- **Authorization to work in the United States** (unrestricted).
- Demonstrated senior leadership experience in aviation operations, academic administration, or a closely related field.
- Proven record of building partnerships, advancing research initiatives and managing complex operational enterprises.



# About Daytona Beach, Florida

More than 60,000 residents and 8 million annual visitors enjoy year-round moderate weather, quality educational choices, recreational activities, an active arts community, family-friendly beaches, and professional sports, including NASCAR's premiere track, Daytona International Speedway, and the LPGA headquarters.

Daytona Beach, located on Florida's east coast in Volusia County, is internationally known for its beaches and its automobile racing roots but it also boasts historical properties, an aggressive redevelopment strategy, exciting residential and economic development opportunities, and thriving business establishments.

Situated along Central Florida's I-4 corridor, Daytona Beach is just an hour's drive from Orlando and major theme parks and within three hours of Florida's west coast.

To learn more about the greater Daytona Beach area, please visit [www.daytonachamber.com](http://www.daytonachamber.com).

## REMUNERATION

A competitive, attractive compensation and benefits package will be offered to the selected candidate.

We appreciate all expressions of interest, referrals, or nominations for this role. Please feel free to forward referrals, or a comprehensive CV, along with a cover letter.

**PLEASE SUBMIT TO:** [erau.dbaviationdean@odgers.com](mailto:erau.dbaviationdean@odgers.com)

**Or, to arrange for a confidential conversation, please contact:**

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