

President Nellis names David Descutner as Interim Executive Vice President and Provost of Ohio University

(Athens, OH) – President M. Duane Nellis, today, appointed Dr. David Descutner as Interim Executive Vice President and Provost of Ohio University, effective July 1st. Acting in this role will allow Descutner an opportunity to advance the University’s academic mission while assisting Dr. Nellis with his transition as the University’s 21st President. Descutner most recently served as interim president of Ohio University following the departure of President Roderick J. McDavis in March 2017.

“David Descutner has provided invaluable service to Ohio University for nearly four decades, most recently in his role as interim president,” President Nellis said. “He has been a tremendous asset to me, personally, as I embarked upon the beginning of my tenure as OHIO’s 21st president. It only makes sense to continue working closely with David as I continue to transition into my new role. His institutional knowledge and experience in academia will serve the University well in this interim capacity.”

Before his retirement from OHIO in 2015, Dr. Descutner served as the Dean of University College and Executive Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. A Professor of Communication Studies, Dr. Descutner started his career with Ohio University as a member of the faculty in 1979. He was recognized numerous times for his teaching and mentoring, as well as for his advocacy on behalf of the regional campus faculty, and he served two terms on Faculty Senate.

As Dean of University College, Dr. Descutner worked with Student Affairs, the Registrar’s Office, Enrollment Management, University Libraries and Student Senate, among others, to help Ohio University receive military-friendly school designation and to establish the James Abraham and Arlene Greenfield Veterans and Military Student Services Center. He managed the undergraduate learning part of the 1804 Fund, and he also collaborated with the Ohio University Foundation to launch the Konneker Fund for Learning and Discovery in 2012.

David Descutner also served as chair of the Vision OHIO Steering Committee, and from 2012-14 was the Interim Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion. He partnered with University Libraries to establish the Ohio Fellows Program in 2012.

“I have been rewarded by a tremendous career at Ohio University, and I am so grateful for the trust and confidence in my abilities Dr. Nellis has shown in naming me now as interim provost,” said Descutner. “I look forward to continuing to work closely with President Nellis as he integrates into his new role and to working with faculty as we continue in our efforts to remain the nation’s best transformative learning community.”

During his time at OHIO, Dr. Descutner also served in the School of Communication Studies as Director of Studies for the Honors Tutorial College, as Director of the Undergraduate Program, as Director of the Graduate Program, and as Interim Director of the School. He was responsible for first-year experience programs and academic support programs, including Bobcat Student Orientation, the Learning Communities Program, the Academic Advancement Center, the Allen Student Help Center, Student Accessibility Services, as well as the Army and Air Force ROTC programs. He was the university’s representative to the Ohio Board of Regents on undergraduate issues from 2001-2015.

After retiring in 2015, he was named Interim Chair of the Department of Social Medicine in the Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine. He currently is the Special Assistant for Faculty Affairs and Academic Planning to the Executive Dean in The Heritage College.

Dr. Descutner and his spouse, Dr. DeLysa Burnier, a professor in Ohio University's Department of Political Science since 1983, have been very active in philanthropic endeavors with Ohio University, the University of Illinois, Slippery Rock State University, and many local nonprofit entities. He is a member of the board for United Campus Ministry. He earned his bachelor's degree from Slippery Rock State University and his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Illinois.

A national search will begin in the next couple of months to fill the regular position of Executive Vice President and Provost.