

Biography

Wallace D. Loh

He is the Executive Vice President and Provost of The University of Iowa, appointed in August 2008. He holds appointment as Professor in the College of Law.

Loh has oversight responsibilities for budgets, personnel, and planning in the 11 colleges and other academic units of the University. He works on recovery or rebuilding of academic facilities recently damaged by the worst flood in state history. With the participation of faculty and staff, he oversees the crafting and implementation of a strategic plan on focused excellence in research and graduate education (including interdisciplinary cluster hiring); expanded undergraduate enrollment and student success; internationalization and diversity; partnerships with community colleges; and strategic budgeting. He has reappointed several deans and recruited central administrators.



Born in China in 1945 and raised in Peru, he graduated from high school in 1960 and immigrated alone to Iowa in 1961, where he learned English and became a naturalized citizen. He graduated from Grinnell College (1965; honorary degree, 1993), and received an M.A. from Cornell University (1967) and a Ph.D. in psychology from The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor (1971) after working as a research assistant at the Universiteit te Leuven (Louvain, Belgium) in 1968. He received a J.D. from Yale (1974), where he was an editor of the Yale Law Journal. His native languages are Spanish and Chinese, and he's conversant in French.

Loh held appointments as Professor of Law at the University of Washington, Vanderbilt University, Emory University, University of Houston, University of Texas-Austin, Cornell University, Beijing University (China), and University of Colorado-Boulder. His teaching and scholarly publications are in the areas of criminal justice and law and social science. He worked in law firms in New York and San Francisco and in the American Bar Foundation in Chicago.

He started in academic administration as Dean, University of Washington Law School (1990-95), the first Asian-American appointed to a law deanship. The School rose to the top 10 of public law schools, attracted one of the most diverse student bodies in the nation, established new academic programs and legal clinics, and implemented required public service. He led record fundraising, including a capital campaign for a new law building. Voted by students as the Outstanding Professor of the Year (1990), he also received the Trailblazer Award from the National Asian-Pacific American Bar Association (1994) and the diversity award from the Hispanic Bar Association

(1994). He served as Vice President of the Seattle Public Library. An associate dean he recruited succeeded him as Dean.

As the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculties (since re-titled Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost) at the University of Colorado-Boulder (1995-97), Loh led faculty and staff in creating and implementing a four-year plan to strengthen the research enterprise and undergraduate education. An accompanying budget plan reduced deficits, increased revenues, and reallocated funds to support the academic plan. He recruited several new deans and central administrators, some of whom went on to become provosts at AAU schools. One succeeded him. He was elected President of the Association of American Law Schools (1996), the learned society of the academic legal profession, and served on its executive committee for four years.

In 1997, Loh answered the call of Governor Gary Locke of Washington—a friend who was elected the first Asian-American governor in the continental U.S.; now U.S. Commerce Secretary—to serve as his chief policy adviser and a member of his cabinet. Overseeing 24 policy advisers and staff, Loh worked on developing, negotiating, and executing the Governor’s policy agenda in the areas of welfare reform, rural economic development, health care for low-income children, K-12 education reform, and saving Pacific Northwest salmon runs. He formed and staffed a blue-ribbon “2020 Commission on the Future of Post-Secondary Education” that resulted in the “Washington Promise Scholarship” to increase affordable access. In 1999, he returned to Seattle to care for an elderly parent.

From 1999-2008, Loh served as Dean and Professor of Public Service in the College of Arts & Sciences at Seattle University, the largest unit in this Jesuit comprehensive university of 7000 students. He oversaw substantial growth in students, tenure-track faculty, and academic programs, including doubling of women faculty and tripling of faculty of color. He completed record fund-raising, including for a new Center for the Arts. He served on the education committee of the Seattle Opera and on the board of the Empty Space Theater.

No longer place-bound by family responsibilities as of 2007, he relocated to Iowa in 2008. His career came full circle, returning to the state where he first began his life in America. He is married to Barbara Loh, a registered nurse, and they have a daughter in college.