



Amherst College

An Invitation to Apply for the Position of President

THE SEARCH

Amherst College, a highly selective, private, residential liberal arts college, seeks its twentieth president. Amherst is widely recognized as an institution of the first rank among the nation's liberal arts colleges, celebrated for the exceptional quality and diversity of its student body and the intense engagement and pedagogical innovation of its faculty. Due to the devotion and generosity of its alumni and friends, Amherst has an endowment unmatched by all but a handful of other prosperous institutions. With an outstanding faculty, skilled and dedicated staff, a beautiful and well-equipped campus, and a strong financial position, Amherst prepares ambitious and talented students for lives of sustained intellectual inquiry, civic engagement, leadership, and service.

Amherst seeks a president who will embrace its traditions and, in close collaboration with the College community, imagine and realize a future of even greater equity and impact. The president must possess the virtues and values to lead a close-knit community that has global reach and influence. The successful candidate will be a scholar, an adroit administrator capable of bold decisions, and a leader with the curiosity and courage to chart the future of this exceptional place.

THE COLLEGE

Overview

Amherst College proudly celebrated its bicentennial in 2021. Over two centuries, the College has demonstrated the combination of unwavering values and continual adaptation that characterizes truly consequential educational institutions. Amherst is an intellectually rigorous and intense academic community with a deep commitment to equity and access. The College was one of the first in the nation to admit African American students, graduating its first Black student in 1826. It admitted women starting in 1975, and as a new century dawned, Amherst moved vigorously to increase the socioeconomic and racial diversity of its student body.

The College seeks to enroll 1,850 students, with enrollment slightly elevated to 1,920 at present as a result of the pandemic. Nearly half of the College's students identify as domestic students of color; nearly ten percent are international. Current students come from 48 states, Washington DC, Puerto Rico, and 66 countries. Eighteen percent are the first in their family to attend college, and nearly 60 percent receive need-based financial aid. The class of 2025 is the most diverse class that Amherst College has welcomed

to campus. More than half of first-year students—51 percent—self-identify as domestic students of color, and 12 percent are international. Ninety percent graduated in the top 10 percent of their high school class. As diversity has increased, so have markers of academic talent and achievement.

The College has made significant investments to ensure that Amherst is affordable for the most talented students, regardless of their ability to pay. In 1999, Amherst was the first liberal arts college to eliminate loans and replace them with grants for low-income students. Notably, Amherst also meets full need for international students, enabling the College to recruit highly-promising students around the globe. In October 2021, the College announced it was ending the practice of a legacy preference in admissions in tandem with significant increases in financial aid offerings. Students from 80 percent of American households will now qualify for substantial aid.

Amherst has great successes to celebrate, and at the same time, accepts the challenge of continuing to reflect on its history. The College has commissioned a broad historical study to assess any ties to slaveholding and also to reflect on the experience and contributions of Amherst's Black alumni. As the College looks forward to welcoming its next president, the community acknowledges and embraces the work that lies ahead to realize the full benefits of the diversity it has achieved, and to support the success and belonging of all of its students.

Academics

An Amherst publication describes studying at the College as an experience that “*often prompts a slight (and thrilling) sense of vertigo, gives you an oceanic sense of possibility, and will stay with you for the rest of your life.*” Amherst achieves this with a student to faculty ratio of 7:1, average class size of 19, and faculty who are leaders both acclaimed in their academic disciplines and utterly absorbed in teaching undergraduates.

Amherst offers a bachelor's degree in 41 majors across the arts, natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The College's open curriculum has no distribution or core requirements. Instead, with the support of engaged faculty advisors, students choose the courses that pique their curiosities. This flexibility requires and rewards student independence and initiative. With so many options, faculty advisors are core to the College's educational model, offering close guidance and mentorship to students as they work to shape their own education. With 850 courses available to students on the Amherst campus – and 6000 courses in which Amherst students can register across the Five College Consortium – classrooms and labs are filled with inquisitive and animated students wrestling with ideas, thinking critically, and discovering their intellectual passions.

Academic life for Amherst students increasingly extends beyond the classroom. Undergraduate research at Amherst produces co-authored articles in professional journals and presentations at academic conferences and symposia. The College funded more than \$1.5 million in student-involved research in 2020, a figure that will increase. With an array of international experience options, internship programs, class fieldwork, and resources like the Amherst MakerSpace, students are in an environment rich with resources and possibilities from the day they arrive on campus. With access to the extraordinary scholarly collections of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington DC, established by the will of Henry Clay

Folger, class of 1879, Amherst students are eligible for short-term fellowships to study in one of the world's great collections of books and manuscripts relating to Shakespeare and the span of the Tudor and Stuart civilizations.

Students

Amherst students consistently rate their academic experience as exceptionally rewarding. They are intellectually intense, inquisitive, and passionate, at times fierce, in their opinions and beliefs. They are also driven. They have worked hard to come to Amherst, and they work hard after they arrive. Fully 40 percent of Amherst students graduate with double majors, and some carry triple majors. On top of their academic loads, athletics, student organizations, and service engagements make material demands on students' time. Among Amherst students, there are many activists and advocates. As they are encouraged to do in the classroom, they often pose challenging questions to College leaders, and they take pride in shaping discussions about what Amherst is and can be.

Amherst College is a residential campus, and the vast majority of students live in its residence halls. With more than 100 clubs and organizations, student life is active. Affinity groups flourish; music organizations sustain Amherst's reputation as "the singing college"; and in every corner of campus, one can find students intently engaged in conversation over ideas. Athletics also has a significant presence on campus. A member of NCAA Division III and the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC), Amherst sees 32 percent of students competing on 27 varsity teams. Additionally, about 80 percent of students participate in intramural and club athletics.

The residential experience is intended both to create a strong sense of community on campus and to encourage and support individual initiative and personal growth. It provides opportunities for students to learn from and with each other, to develop capacities for collaboration and mutual respect, to learn how to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, to practice the skills of citizenship and community leadership, and to build lifelong friendships.

Faculty

The College's instructional faculty of 307 are distinguished in scholarship and research, comprising 247 full-time and 60 part-time faculty members. They choose Amherst as their academic home because they also thrive and excel in teaching undergraduates. A demanding and rewarding mix of teaching, scholarship, and service both draws and keeps exceptional academics at Amherst. The faculty today combine long service and new vitality: the College has 211 tenure-line faculty, 101 of whom have been hired since 2011. Twenty-five percent of faculty identify as domestic faculty of color. The College has recruited aggressively, and regularly has been able to appoint its top choices.

The research profile and scholarly achievements of faculty at Amherst are competitive with the records of research university faculty whose engagement with undergraduate teaching is relatively modest. Within the past three years, members of the faculty have won Guggenheim and American Council of Learned Societies fellowships, the Berlin Prize, and the Bancroft Prize.

The depth and intensity of interactions with inspiring, attentive, and creative faculty are a primary feature of the student experience at Amherst. A diverse and increasingly international student community enriches the academic experience at Amherst; the change in campus composition has also meant greater variability in student preparation. The College's faculty have adapted and innovated to meet the needs of students who have traveled various academic pathways on their way to Amherst, adding summer preparation courses, gateway offerings in a range of subjects, and intensive writing classes in recent years. The College's size and resources allow the faculty to focus on and support each individual student to pursue the full Amherst academic experience.

Shared governance is deeply ingrained and greatly valued at Amherst, and faculty play an active role in defining vision and strategy for the College. The Committee of Six, a faculty leadership body elected to two-year terms, meets weekly with the president and provost to review promotions and tenure cases, establish committee charges and composition, build agendas for faculty meetings, and raise and conduct other essential College business. More than many of its peers, Amherst presidents maintain a close working relationship with faculty and involve them in important decisions.

Staff

A staff of 700 includes senior administrators, managers, and those on the front line of providing student support and the full range of campus operations. Amherst's staff are expert, dedicated, and essential to the mission of the College. They are integral to the student experience and play a central role in creating and sustaining a strong College community.

As at many other colleges, Amherst's staff has grown over time as professional staff have replaced faculty in a variety of academic support roles, standards and expectations for student services have continually risen, and the increasing complexity of technology and infrastructure have required staff with new skills. Despite this expansion, many staff are nonetheless stretched. The College's ambitions to innovate and its relative abundance of resources contribute to a habit of adding to its portfolio of projects and initiatives while rarely down-sizing or ending others. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the College was able to avoid a reduction in force and paid stipends to its front-line staff; nonetheless, the heavy burden on staff has been felt acutely.

Alumni

Amherst College has more than 23,000 alumni, including leaders in science, education, business, law, medicine, politics, and the arts. Almost 80 percent of alumni go on to earn graduate or professional degrees. Five of them have been awarded Nobel Prizes. Many are or have been prominent on the world stage, and countless others contribute to society in vitally important ways. In annual fundraising, Amherst has among the highest alumni participation rates in the country. More than 3,500 alumni serve as volunteers for Amherst each year, and in 2021, more than 65 percent of all alumni engaged in Amherst events. Reunion, a treasured tradition among alumni, brings more than 1,400 graduates to campus each June to connect with classmates and participate in College- and class-sponsored programs. The new president will continue and advance the engagement of the alumni with the mission and resources of the College.

Finances

Amherst has been particularly well-managed financially, guided by a knowledgeable and committed board of trustees, disciplined administration, a talented investment office, and a tradition of collaborative budgeting and financial planning. The College's financial strengths include one of the highest endowments per student, a lower tuition revenue reliance than most peers, an active and generous donor base, and an exceptionally strong credit rating. Amherst's endowment at the end of FY 2021 stood at an all-time high of \$3.77 billion.

The College continues to make excellent progress against the goals of *Promise: The Campaign for Amherst's Third Century*, with a fundraising target of \$625 million by the time the campaign closes in June 2023. The campaign has already reached 90 percent of its goal, well ahead of schedule, and President Martin, the board of trustees, and the advancement team are also actively fundraising for the new student center and dining commons in design.

Campus and surroundings

On a hill directly adjacent to town, the campus of Amherst College is 1,000 acres of distinguished historic and modern architecture, with an Olmsted-inspired central quadrangle. It is nestled in a gentle landscape, with stunning views across the Holyoke Range. As the College has grown and evolved, Amherst has taken care to preserve a balance among campus, town, and open space.

Responding to an 85 percent increase in science and mathematics concentrators since the turn of the century as well as the creation of two new STEM majors, Amherst's state-of-the-art Science Center opened in 2018. With large common spaces, visible research labs, surrounding gardens, and many areas for casual interaction, the Science Center draws together the sciences and the wider College community.

The need for more common space on campus, for students first and foremost, but also to support interaction among all members of the Amherst community, is pressing. A world-class student center and dining commons are in the late planning stages. It will dramatically expand and improve social space for students, provide for a new dining facility for the campus, and offer a range of meeting and activity spaces for the College community. The center is being designed by the leading Swiss architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron, which is known for pathbreaking designs that connect indoor and outdoor spaces, combine urban elements with local context, and achieve a high standard of sustainability.

The town of Amherst, roughly 90 miles west of Boston, has a year-round population just shy of 40,000. Amherst's population includes students of the College as well as those at Hampshire College and the flagship University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Further, Smith and Mount Holyoke Colleges are just a short trip away. Many people come to Amherst to study and then stay, and more than 40 percent of local residents hold an advanced degree.

Frequently ranked among the top college towns in the country, the Amherst area has a vibrant culture and distinctive character. Amherst is renowned for its literary history and writing community. Emily Dickinson is among the distinguished literary figures who have called this place home. Her father and

brother were leaders in the early years of the College, and the College now holds the largest collection of Dickinson manuscripts, as well as owning and operating the Emily Dickinson Museum.

The town also offers four different art museums, numerous concert venues, local cinema, and abundant and varied food and beverage options, including five breweries. Animated by the colleges, students, and their families, Amherst is anything but a sleepy New England town.

Leadership

The current search for the president comes as Carolyn (Biddy) Martin, president since 2011, has announced her decision to conclude her service at the end of the current academic year. President Martin is the first woman president of Amherst, and her service has been inspirational. President Martin's legacy includes significant headway towards inclusiveness and equity. She steps away from the presidency with the student and faculty bodies at their most diverse in Amherst's history, having commissioned the College's Anti-Racism Plan, and established the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. President Martin also oversaw the design and opening of the Science Center, which has become a hub of campus life and study beyond the sciences, and the development of the Climate Action Plan, which commits the College to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Early in her tenure, she transformed the handling of sexual assault and misconduct on campus. The president has modernized the administrative functions of the College and raised more financial support for Amherst than any of her predecessors. Biddy Martin has been an accessible, vigorously engaged, and unfailing champion of both students and faculty.

President Martin's wise and decisive leadership in steering the College through the height of the COVID-19 pandemic has been emblematic both of her and of the College's character. Amherst was among the very first institutions to make the difficult decision to send students home in the early days of the initial surge. It has also been steadfast in providing as much in-person teaching as could be safely offered every semester since the onset of the pandemic. Staff and faculty have adapted, invented, and stretched to sustain the community and carry on its mission. Carefully monitored and continually adapted protocols and precautions have kept case numbers extremely low. The College's COVID dashboard, available on its website, won distinction for its clarity and transparency.

As the chief officer of the College, the president reports to the board of trustees and works closely with the chair of the board. Amherst College is governed by a 24-member board, in addition to the president. The trustees come from a broad range of professional backgrounds, locations, and constituencies. Andrew J. Nussbaum '85, partner in the law firm of Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz, currently serves as chair of the board. The board and the president engage in collegial, transparent dialogue, through quarterly meetings, board retreats, and a number of ad hoc and standing committees.

The president leads the senior administration of the College, which includes the provost and dean of the faculty; chief student affairs officer; chief of campus operations; chief financial and administrative officer; chief communications officer; chief information officer; chief equity and inclusion officer; chief advancement officer; dean of admission and financial aid; chief policy officer and general counsel; chief strategy officer; and chief of staff. This leadership group has demonstrated extraordinary teamwork and

mission-driven decision making, especially in the management of the College's COVID-19 response, and in their stewardship of the institution more broadly.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: THE WORK AHEAD FOR AMHERST'S TWENTIETH PRESIDENT

Fortify community and ensure the well-being of all of Amherst's people

The purposeful bringing together of talented people from many backgrounds, identities, and perspectives has been exceptionally successful at Amherst. The results demonstrate the College's belief in the educational value of diversity, its capacity to tackle hard work and do it well, and its underlying commitment to equity. The success also carries challenges, in creating the structures of support and sites of dialogue that can span the divides and differences within a racially and economically diverse community.

The tensions that arise from rapid change in the composition of a community are exacerbated by an extended public health emergency, and further sharpened at a time when issues of equity are at the forefront of national discourse. Students, faculty, and staff are feeling the strain. The College has more to do to encourage empathetic and critical engagement across lines of difference and to set clear expectations for respectful interactions among different segments of the Amherst community. Building on the significant foundation laid by President Martin, Amherst's next president will be intimately attuned to the quality of life among students, and all members of the community, and will attend to their well-being. With a leader who has the talent and empathy for this work, the College can realize the full benefits of the exceptional diversity of its student body – and increasingly of its faculty and staff – and can create structures and spaces that build bridges across divisions in a thriving community.

The president's work of community will extend beyond campus, sustaining strong connections between those on campus and alumni, parents, and friends of the College, as well as with communities in the region and beyond.

Lead a community-wide process to ensure an integrated living and learning experience for Amherst's students

The next president of the College has an opportunity to lead the enhancement of a premier residential student experience. This moment calls for a clear-eyed and intentional look at what is required to ensure that connections between the academic and non-academic dimensions of student life are strengthened, and that the structures, expectations, and resources are in place to foster a vibrant and healthy student social life. The completion of the new student center and dining commons will create much needed additional space for students to gather and engage with one another, but achieving a consistently inclusive and integrated student experience may entail structural changes in the organization of student life, in close collaboration with colleagues in student affairs and others on campus. The new president will lead the effort to ensure that this important work remains a priority.

Sustain academic excellence and champion the liberal arts

At the very center of Amherst's identity and purpose is the rigor and distinction of the education it provides, as well as its commitment to pedagogical and curricular innovation. The intellectual intensity

and ambition of its faculty and students produce not only a transformative experience in the classroom and the lab, but also steady creation of significant scholarly research and artistic works. The College, with the leadership of the new president, will continually engage complex questions of what constitutes a best-in-class residential liberal arts education, including the balance and mix among the humanities, social sciences, and science and mathematics.

Given Amherst's leadership position, the president has a ready platform from which to engage in critical national conversations about the purposes and societal benefits of higher education. In a time when narrow specialization and practical career preparation are trends, Amherst's president will have a persuasive voice and will carry the message of how a liberal arts education prepares its students for lives of consequence and of leadership in their chosen pursuits, as well as in the communities where they live and work.

Bring fresh leadership perspective to the organizational strategy of the College

Amherst's new president will provide leadership for a collaborative exploration across the College's constituencies, to identify the optimal size and organizational structure of the College's workforce, including faculty and academic and administrative staff, and to ensure the wisest possible use of its resources.

The College's extraordinarily strong financial position results in part from firm discipline on the expense side of the ledger. The presidential transition is a natural moment to examine the allocation of financial and human resources so that the College can continue to do its job supremely well.

This exploration and the resulting choices will make certain that staffing for key functions and initiatives is appropriate, and may extend to:

- Renewed and/or revised structures and expectations regarding faculty governance and service;
- Early appointment of outstanding candidates to fill current key vacancies who will join an empowered and engaged senior leadership team;
- An organizational and staffing plan to achieve the purposes of the College's vision for an integrated student experience, as well as to support innovative faculty research;
- A community of staff who are fully engaged and valued as partners in the educational enterprise;
- A clearly articulated vision of the role of technology for teaching and learning, as well as for campus administrative functions;
- A capital and facilities plan that ensures adequate classroom and faculty office space, as well as areas for informal interactions and social life among all segments of the College community.

Lead a College-wide continuing conversation about Amherst's mission and vision

Members of the College community are intensely committed to Amherst's mission, purpose, and successes, and they take seriously the importance of adhering to shared values. The College's core values are understood by many, but are largely unspoken, or at least unwritten. A time of leadership transition and emergence from the worst of the pandemic provides an opportunity to pause and reflect on what has been achieved and what remains to be done. Building on the strategic plan created in 2015, the new president will confer with colleagues and consider how and when to begin a next round of strategic planning. This will include an opportunity to renew the College's mission, vision, and values, to serve as guideposts for Amherst's next chapter, and to help inform the future of the residential liberal arts model of education.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE: EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The Amherst community seeks a president with a deep and scholarly commitment to the liberal arts, administrative leadership experience, and the curiosity and courage to be an exemplary leader of the College. The president must enjoy engaging with all cohorts of the community, from frequent interaction with students, staff, and faculty, to regular dialogue with alumni across many generations. While no one individual will embody them all in equal measure, the successful candidate will bring many of the following qualifications and personal virtues and values:

- An accomplished scholar and broadly engaged intellectual, with a demonstrated commitment to higher education generally and the liberal arts in particular;
- A leader for whom equity and inclusion are at the personal core. A record of advancing diversity and belonging, with cultural fluency, compassion, and emotional intelligence;
- A gift for facilitating both transformation and unity through difficult conversations – including in moments of crisis – with patience, humility, and persistence; a talent for facilitating civil discourse across lines of difference, and resisting simplistic point-counterpoint debate;
- A successful record of administrative leadership and strategic management; demonstrated ability to recruit, empower, support, and retain best-of-class professionals and to sustain a culture defined by excellence and responsiveness;
- Commitment to fundraising. A taste and talent for making the philanthropic case for Amherst;
- A keen interest in becoming immersed in the College, its history and traditions, its spirited community, and its abundant possibilities;
- A transparent disposition and habit of consultation, coupled with decisiveness when consensus is elusive;

- Courage of conviction. A capacity for making informed choices that may not satisfy all segments of the community, and the thick skin and grace to absorb the fallout. Resilience and stamina for the task at hand;
- Superb communication skills. The aptitude to listen, discern, inspire, illuminate, and explain. Enthusiasm for connecting personally and maintaining open, accessible lines of communication with students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees, and neighbors and friends of the College;
- Warmth, and a sense of perspective and balance, evidenced in a blend of gravity and wit;
- Unquestioned integrity and sound judgment.

TO APPLY, NOMINATE, OR INQUIRE

The College has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in the search. Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and resumes with letters of interest should be sent electronically to:

Lisa Savereid, Andrew Marshall, and Mindy Cimini
Isaacson, Miller
amherstpresident@imsearch.com

Amherst College does not discriminate in admission, employment, or administration of its programs and activities on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex or gender (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity), age, disability, genetic information, military service, or any other characteristic or class protected under applicable federal, state or local law. Amherst College complies with all state and federal laws that prohibit discrimination, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Equal Pay Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act.