



An Invitation to Apply
for the Position of

PRESIDENT
Hamilton College
Clinton, New York

THE SEARCH

Hamilton College is a pre-eminent coeducational, residential, liberal arts college that attracts 2,000 students to its historic hilltop campus in the picturesque village of Clinton, New York. Hamilton's strategic choices have propelled it into the first rank of liberal arts colleges, forging a distinctive and vibrant identity. The College takes seriously its motto, "Know Thyself." It offers students what few places do: the rare opportunity to become the architects of their intellectual and personal development through an open curriculum. Hamilton asks students to ally their passion with their curiosity and to make learning and creative invention a lifelong pursuit.

Hamilton has nurtured the [open curriculum](#) for decades, and it defines the offer of the College. Like its highly regarded peers, Hamilton encourages a strong liberal arts education, but one that responds quickly to individual students, to the world's changing states of knowledge, and to innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The mission infuses every facet of the College; few other liberal arts colleges have made as profound a commitment.

The College has created an appealing identity. It is one of the most selective institutions in the country, with an acceptance rate steadily shifting from 30% in 2009 to 26% in 2016, to 11.8% for the Class of 2026. Yield has similarly improved from 35% to 41%.

Access is every bit as important to Hamilton as the quality of the student body. In 2007, Hamilton made a principled decision and eliminated merit scholarships. Three years later, still in the wake of the Great

Recession but with extraordinary trustee support, Hamilton went need-blind in its admission decisions. Since that turning point, the College has attracted classes of unprecedented academic ability and talent, seen record applications, increased diversity of all kinds, and improved its retention (95.1%) and six-year graduation rates (92.3%).

The high caliber of Hamilton's student body has been recognized externally as well. In recent years, Hamilton students have earned highly prestigious awards, including Marshall, Truman, Watson, and Fulbright fellowships. For 19 consecutive years, Hamilton has been named a Fulbright U.S. Student Program top-producing institution.

Over the years, Hamilton has increasingly diversified its student body. Thirty-four percent of Hamilton students are US students of color or international students, up from 22% in 2008-09. For the Class of 2026, 37% are US students of color or international students. Fifty percent of Hamilton students receive financial aid, with the number of Pell-eligible and first-generation students increasing steadily. At the same time and for the same purpose, Hamilton has moved to diversify its faculty. Hamilton faculty members who identify as people of color represented 21% of the faculty in 2020, up from 17% a decade earlier. The percentage of women on Hamilton's faculty has grown steadily from 44% in 2010 to 51% in 2021. Since 2013, every department hiring a faculty member has appointed a trained "diversity advocate" to its search committee.

These Hamilton commitments have helped the College attract and retain excellent leaders, faculty, and staff who want to be at an institution that admits and supports the best students. With 198 dedicated faculty, Hamilton also ranks among the top institutions for student-to-faculty ratio at 9-to-1, lowered from 10-to-1 20 years ago. Twenty-eight percent of classes have nine or fewer students, and 72% have 19 or fewer, a reflection of Hamilton's efforts to respond to student initiative and intensive teaching. Students and alumni speak with deep and genuine affection for Hamilton, particularly their close, meaningful relationships and collaborations with academic advisors and faculty members.

Hamilton's exceptional faculty members are a community of accomplished and ambitious scholar-teachers who are foundational to Hamilton's success. They are committed to all aspects of student life, they share their research with students, and they are available to students in and out of the classroom. The constant improvement in Hamilton's identity and appeal are a direct result of its faculty's commitment to and engagement with students.

To ensure that Hamilton sustains its financial aid promise, the largest component of Hamilton's recently completed and most ambitious fundraising campaign, [Because Hamilton](#), was allocated to financial aid endowment. More than \$127M of the campaign's \$411M total was for endowed student scholarships. The College's overall endowment, currently \$1.3 billion, up from \$540 million at the start of FY10, is often listed among the top 125 of all 3,200 non-profit colleges and universities in the United States. Hamilton's endowment per student places it even higher.

In 2018, the College adopted a five-year strategic plan, [Connected Hamilton](#). Consistent with Hamilton's history, it aimed at the hard work the College must do to create an ever more excellent education. It contained ambitious initiatives to create momentum that will play a consequential role over the next

decade. [Digital Hamilton](#), a technologically focused update to the curriculum, including the addition of an interdisciplinary concentration in [data science](#), was a priority in the *Because Hamilton* campaign. [Advise, Learn, EXperience \(ALEX\)](#) provides an individualized and holistic advising network that connects students' academic advising with their co-curricular and extracurricular experiences, helping them take full advantage of the open curriculum.

Hamilton's trajectory has been remarkable, defined by determined, consistent, and strategic change that has constantly strengthened the institution. A new president will arrive at Hamilton at an opportune moment. The College is excellently positioned with impressive alumni support, significant financial reserves, outstanding enrollment, a committed faculty, a diverse community, and a vivid identity. The College seeks a visionary president who can embrace Hamilton's ethos, build on its rare accomplishments, and offer an even greater promise to the next generation of Hamilton faculty, staff, and students.

To conduct this search, the Hamilton College Board of Trustees has named an 18-member [search committee](#) that includes faculty, staff, students, administrators, and trustees. The committee is assisted by the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller. Inquiries, nominations, and applications, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

Leadership

The current search for the president comes as David Wippman, president since 2016, has announced his decision to retire at the end of the academic year 2024. The College set new benchmarks in every dimension during his tenure.

President Wippman's legacy includes significant efforts to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion, including hiring Hamilton's first vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion. In 2018, he dedicated a new health and wellness center that greatly expanded programs and resources for student well-being. Throughout his tenure, he initiated the renovation and refurbishment of important facilities for the humanities, athletics, and recreation. In addition, President Wippman oversaw the development of the [Sustainability Action Plan](#), [Climate Action Plan](#), and the [Land and Forest Stewardship Plan](#), which commit the College to become carbon neutral and reduce waste by 90 percent by 2030.

THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

Working in close collaboration with the faculty, students, trustees, and staff, the next president of Hamilton will be expected to provide inspiring leadership and effective management to ensure that Hamilton meets its own aspirations as a great and singular liberal arts college.

The Hamilton community has been engaged to identify the considerable challenges faced by the residential liberal arts model of education and to develop effective responses. Among other things, these challenges take the form of rapidly changing demographics; a demanding cost structure; a need for physical plant improvement; fundamental changes in the ways students study, learn, and access information; a wide variation in the kind of experiences students have had – and not had – when they

arrive on campus in a post-pandemic era; and the increasingly national and global market for higher education that rewards research universities.

Hamilton seeks a president who will rigorously engage the College community in charting a dynamic future. This individual will need the ability to lead, the courage to ask the College community to look critically at itself and openly at the world, and the judgment and experience to execute with a steady hand and a collaborative spirit.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Building upon an impressive foundation, the president will address the following challenges and strive to use them as opportunities to propel the College to even greater prominence:

Define and champion Hamilton's distinctive identity and its value proposition.

The open curriculum defines Hamilton. Under the careful guidance of a dedicated faculty, students can direct their own intellectual development. It is a distinctive and appealing academic culture that attracts creative, motivated students and inspires gifted scholars to join the Hamilton faculty. Supporting this learning environment and ensuring its ongoing rigor and relevance are fundamental to the continued strength and well-being of the College. The president must champion the intellectual invention and personal creativity that will ever more sharply define Hamilton.

In the social context of our time, the College has sponsored a wide variety of initiatives. In 2016, the College implemented a requirement that all concentrations include (and thus all students will take) at least one course focused on Social, Structural, and Institutional Hierarchies (SSIH). More recently, the College secured a large Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Inclusive Excellence Grant to make its STEM curriculum more inclusive. In addition, the [Common Ground](#) initiative brings diverse viewpoints to the campus and affirms the need for intellectual engagement across difference, a theme that fits readily into the stimulating Hamilton ethos. Each of these efforts has had presidential leadership and will require leadership well into the future.

The College expects a new president to engage with faculty, students, and staff in pursuing bold ideas and programs for maintaining the highest academic standards. The intellectual intensity and ambition of its faculty and students produce a transformative experience in the classroom, a steady creation of significant scholarly and artistic work, and graduates prepared to invent in a demanding world. The president must champion the entrepreneurial energy and intellectual creativity inherent in the College and its curriculum.

Lead the College in the next strategic plan to ensure Hamilton's future as a leading liberal arts college.

The College's most recent strategic plan, [Connected Hamilton](#), concluded at the end of the 2022-2023 academic year and exceeded its expectations.

Hamilton routinely takes on the next big challenge and, during the tenure of its presidents, achieves remarkable jumps in stature and effect. The next president will engage in a creative and generative

process to inspire the next chapter of the College. Careful study has produced a considerable list of priorities, including improvements in DEI, critical facilities, student engagement, and faculty size, teaching load, and responsibility. Early in the tenure of the next president, Hamilton will need to identify the full menu of possibilities and work within shared governance toward a widely understood and accepted strategic plan that will direct financial choice and power the next capital campaign.

Modernize and improve Hamilton's infrastructure and facilities.

Hamilton recently launched a multi-dimensional Campus Master Planning process, which will result in a major renewal of the campus to meet its current and future needs. The College needs to build and renovate residence halls and athletic facilities. These are substantial commitments. Hamilton will require carefully developed priorities, well-understood timetables, aesthetic and functional choices, and significant fundraising.

It is critical that the next president leads Hamilton in the development and execution of the next vision for its campus.

Cultivate and support a strong and diverse faculty culture during a time of generational change.

Hamilton is experiencing a generational shift in its faculty. The next president must work with the faculty as academic fields, curricular needs, and pedagogical approaches evolve to recruit and retain the next generation of diverse and outstanding scholars and teachers.

Between 2015 and 2025, 49% of the Hamilton faculty will have reached the average retirement age. With this generational shift, Hamilton must continue to attract new and innovative faculty into the community and provide them with mentorship and empowerment while maintaining the high caliber of teaching that defines the College.

With an influx of younger faculty, the president will collaborate with the dean of faculty to support recruitment and retention strategies for a scholarly professoriate who can make long-term commitments to life in the Clinton, New York, area. Engaging and retaining the right faculty, committed to the College and the region, is a consistent challenge.

The issue has even greater relevance for faculty of color. Hamilton needs to diversify its faculty ranks and retain the faculty of color it regularly attracts. The College has unequivocally committed to improving its campus climate and culture as it pertains to the recruitment, retention, and inclusion of all faculty, particularly those from underrepresented and historically marginalized backgrounds. The president will contribute to efforts to diversify the faculty through both recruitment and retention; champion efforts to continue making the promotion and tenure process more equitable and transparent; and strengthen the focus on inclusive excellence both in the classroom and beyond.

The College recruits faculty and attracts candidates from the finest graduate programs. They come to campus knowing they will emphasize teaching more than their colleagues at research universities. The current teaching load is 3-2 courses per year. Newer faculty, in particular, seek a 2-2 course load. There is

broad recognition that such a significant level of change would require difficult choices and substantial new resources.

Steward the College's resources to ensure financial strength and sustainability.

Hamilton has achieved a strong financial trajectory over the past decade. Finances have been well managed, the endowment has grown impressively, and the College has invested wisely. Hamilton has increased its staff; retained its 9-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio; continued its distinctive open curriculum; and continued to adhere to a need-blind admission policy while meeting 100% of financial need. Despite these successes, Hamilton will face fundamental challenges over the next decade. Hamilton's vision will require major investments in faculty, facilities, and student support and engagement. The College will need to carefully examine new commitments and the full range of prior obligations while developing its next strategic plan and next capital campaign. The next president must manage the College's operating finances with discipline, informed by a well-understood strategy, and must excel in transparent financial management that builds community consensus.

The president will be responsible for making important decisions on the strategic allocation of resources based on financial analysis and active consultation with appropriate constituencies and must communicate fundamental decisions with reason and clarity to gain maximum support. Ensuring long-term success will mean increasing the endowment, addressing cost and spending priorities, and securing and strengthening all current and future sources of revenue.

Effectively engage with alumni and donors.

The next president will join Hamilton shortly after the conclusion of the College's most ambitious capital campaign. The recent *Because Hamilton* campaign was carefully designed to support financial aid and scholarship efforts and yielded impressive results. The momentum generated by this campaign will provide a fine platform as the College pushes forward to make important campus renovations and improvements and will provide a significant opportunity for the next president. Thus, the College seeks a president with the instincts and appetite for fundraising, a gift for engaging alumni leaders, and the ability to articulate a compelling vision of Hamilton that builds on its past, excites its donors, and takes it into the future.

Demonstrate a commitment to cultivating an engaged student body and enhancing the student experience.

Hamilton students are intellectually curious, ambitious, driven, and actively engaged with each other, their surroundings, and the world. Students are the heart of Hamilton, and the next president must champion their well-being and success. In turn, the College is committed to providing a climate that supports every student in the full pursuit of their education while building holistic life skills that include student health and wellness. The [ALEX](#) (Advise, Learn, EXperience) program is a serious innovation still being implemented. It was designed to provide students with a collaborative network of support to guide them as they navigate multiple learning pathways, co-curricular opportunities in the open curriculum, and thoughtful consideration of career opportunities. Hamilton must work consistently to engage its students,

to encourage exploration, and to prepare them for leadership success in their chosen field after graduation. The president leads Hamilton's commitment to student success.

As a personal matter, the president should be an integral part of campus life, viewed by students as a visible and approachable embodiment of the College. The next president will engage with students, faculty, and staff to ensure a vibrant residential life, a balance of academics with physical and mental well-being and self-care, and sensitivity to developments of local, national, and international significance. The president will demonstrate cultural fluency and competence and be diplomatic in the understanding that not all Hamilton constituencies experience the College in the same way.

Continue, strengthen, and improve the College's commitment to a culture of diversity and inclusion in its intellectual and community life, and across its student, faculty, and staff populations.

Hamilton's next president must have a deep commitment to the mission of diversity, equity, and inclusion, supported by demonstrable measures of success. In the current context, Hamilton will need a president with a sophisticated understanding of how selective colleges and universities can and should act in the wake of the Supreme Court's decisions in the Harvard and UNC cases.

The Board of Trustees and current President David Wippman have provided resources to further support current DEI efforts. The president will have a nuanced understanding of the challenges that must be addressed to ensure an equitable opportunity for all students, faculty, and staff to be successful. The institution has the duty to use the diversity of its student population to strengthen the College and broaden its reach. The next president must recognize and demonstrate a commitment to continued diversity and further the institution's efforts to recruit and retain a diverse student body, faculty, and staff in a new legal context.

Hamilton practices need-blind admission, while meeting 100% of a student's financial need. Access and diversity are integral to the values of the College. Hamilton will expect its next president to share the College's passion for these priorities and extend Hamilton's efforts to remain accessible and affordable to its student population. Every member of the Hamilton community, whether student, faculty, or staff, must feel included in the campus culture and be well positioned to thrive.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE: EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Hamilton 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 interactions with students, faculty, and staff, to conversations with parents and regular dialogue with alumni across many generations. While no one individual will embody all qualifications in equal measure, the successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences, personal virtues, and values:

- An accomplished scholar and broadly engaged intellectual with a deep understanding of and commitment to the undergraduate liberal arts college, coupled with an appreciation of, and enthusiasm for, Hamilton.

- An ability and desire to help lead the College in a discussion about the future of the liberal arts and undergraduate education in an evolving national context and an increasingly global society.
- A record of successful administrative leadership, including oversight of senior leaders, and of effectively recruiting and retaining strong executives.
- Recognized skill as a gifted communicator in diverse settings.
- A capacity to connect with and relate to members of the Hamilton community on a personal level; an excellent listener who can build strong relationships and maintain open, accessible lines of communication with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents.
- A history of recruiting, developing, and retaining a world-class faculty; a strong appreciation of the academic world, scholarly values, and professional culture.
- A demonstrated ability to develop a strategic vision and the skill to execute that vision in a practical and inspiring way.
- A talent to lead productive fundraising in an academic environment; an established background of fundraising success and campaign experience is highly desired.
- A record of building and maintaining external relations and advancing an organization's profile and reputation regionally, nationally, and internationally; the desire and ability to speak to the challenges facing higher education, especially the liberal arts, on national and global platforms.
- Proven efficacy in working with a governing board, as a group and as individuals; experience building and maintaining an engaged and supportive board.
- 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 demonstrated respect for academic freedom and diverse opinions on key social and political questions of the day.
- A deep engagement with and commitment to environmental stewardship.
- Proven ability to build consensus and challenge the status quo to develop creative and innovative solutions.

TO APPLY

Hamilton has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed electronically and in confidence to:

John Isaacson, Chair
Kate Barry, Partner
Alycia Johnson, Managing Associate
Isaacson, Miller
[Hamilton College Presidential Search](#)

Hamilton College is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity employer and encourages diversity in all areas of the campus community. The community recognizes its collective responsibility to acknowledge its colonial history. Hamilton's campus is located on the ancestral and traditional lands of the Oneida Nation. The community commits itself to engaging in solidarity with the Oneida Nation and to ensuring that the perspectives and cultures of Indigenous peoples are honored and embraced.