



**UNION**  
**COLLEGE**  
FOUNDED 1795

**AN INVITATION TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION OF  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR COLLEGE RELATIONS  
SCHENECTADY, NEW YORK**

**THE SEARCH**

Union College, a nationally recognized, distinguished liberal arts college, seeks a strategic and innovative leader to become its next vice president for college relations (VPCR). The VPCR will develop and lead an ambitious development and alumni relations program through a transformative campaign and beyond. Reporting to President David Harris and serving on his senior leadership team, the VPCR will oversee and influence all fundraising and alumni relations efforts across the College, inspiring its alumni, friends, and staff, and increasing engagement and philanthropy.

Founded in 1795, and located in Schenectady, New York, Union is one of the oldest colleges in the nation and the first to redefine traditional liberal arts education with modern languages, science, and engineering early in its history. Today, Union integrates these disciplines—along with the arts, humanities, and social sciences—in new and exciting ways. A Union education is rigorous, innovative, and encourages its more than 2,000 students to work beyond the limits of disciplinary boundaries, allowing them to think globally and lead creatively in a world where problem-solving requires breadth across humanities, arts, social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering without sacrificing depth of preparation.

Since the start of President Harris’s tenure in 2018, Union has strengthened and innovated as a liberal arts college and built on its academic excellence. Union’s strategic plan, [The Power of Union](#), launched in 2020 with the vision to develop every student to lead with wisdom, empathy, and courage, in ways large and small, now and across multiple tomorrows. Simultaneously, Union publicly launched [Powering Union: The Campaign for Multiple Tomorrows](#), which has surpassed its \$300 million goal nearly a year early.

The VPCR will successfully lead the current campaign to its conclusion and map out a vision for post-campaign philanthropy. To this end, the VPCR will continue to strengthen Union’s development and alumni relations programs through the implementation of best practices, team and capacity building, and

the application of data-driven outreach and fundraising strategies that will create an increasingly effective philanthropic enterprise. Union seeks a VPCR who is imaginative, experienced, and capable of building and deploying a first-rate advancement operation. The VPCR will be President Harris's principal adviser on all advancement-related matters and serve as an integral member of his senior leadership team.

The successful candidate will be an accomplished individual with a track record of success as a senior advancement professional, preferably in a higher education institution. Key qualifications include: superb skills and demonstrated success in donor cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship at major and principal gift levels; significant experience managing staff and programs within a sophisticated development and alumni relations operation across all stages of a campaign life-cycle; experience developing and implementing effective fundraising and engagement strategies; demonstrated ability to build and lead diverse teams; excellent communication skills; proven ability to work effectively in a collaborative environment; and an ability to embrace the culture and values of Union College. The ideal candidate will also be able to articulate the mission and aspirations of the College with passion and conviction, be intellectually curious, and be committed to active engagement in the campus and local communities. A bachelor's degree is required.

Union has retained the services of Isaacson, Miller—a national executive search firm—to assist in conducting this search and to identify outstanding candidates. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## THE COLLEGE: HISTORY AND OVERVIEW



Union takes great pride in its history with a mission that includes “shaping the future while understanding the past.” On February 25, 1795, Union was the first college to receive a charter from the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York, and it has continuously operated as one of the 30 oldest institutions of higher education in the United States. The College's name comes from its early mission to be an ecumenical institution where individuals from multiple Protestant denominations could study and work together. Over time, the understanding of what it means to be diverse has expanded, and the commitment to building a community characterized by mutual respect is part of Union's institutional DNA.

Union's early history played a seminal role in the development of the modern American college curriculum. Though Union's earliest students received a classical education, in the 1820s Union became

one of several Hudson Valley colleges to adopt parallel courses of study. In this way, students continued to pursue the liberal arts while also studying natural sciences. Union was among the first colleges to allow modern languages to satisfy graduation requirements, and Union's engineering curriculum, which continues as a robust component of the campus to this day, began in 1845. What once were parallel courses of study have blossomed into an integrative approach to the liberal arts and applied sciences.

### ***Leadership***

David Harris is the 19th president of Union College. He previously served as provost and senior vice president at Tufts University. Prior to his time at Tufts, he served in multiple roles at Cornell University, including senior associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, vice provost for social sciences, deputy provost and interim provost, and the founding director of Cornell's Institute for the Social Sciences. In 2010 and 2011, he served in the Obama administration as a deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He attended Northwestern University, where he earned a B.S. in human development and social policy, and a Ph.D. in sociology.

The American Association of Colleges and Universities and education company Cengage recently honored President Harris with a 2022 AACU-Cengage Inclusion Scholarship. The scholarship recognizes college and university presidents whose outstanding leadership to advance liberal education has reduced equity gaps, improved inclusion and belonging for minoritized students, and promoted diversity in hiring practices.

Active in the local community, President Harris is secretary of the Capital Region Chamber of Commerce, co-chair of the New York Capital Region Higher Education Council, and served on the Schenectady Downtown Reinvestment Initiative Local Planning Committee.

### ***Finances***

Union has been well-managed financially and is currently in a strong financial position, guided by a knowledgeable Board of Trustees and a strong administrative team. Union's operating budget for the Fiscal Year 2022 was \$139.4 million supported by an endowment of nearly \$500 million.

Union is one of fewer than five percent of American colleges and universities that commits to meeting 100 percent of demonstrated financial need with more than \$58 million awarded in scholarships each year. More than 50 percent of Union students receive need-based financial assistance, including those receiving Making Union Possible Family Grants, one of the College's newest aid initiatives. The [Schuler Access Initiative](#) is a new partnership with the Schuler Education Initiative that will help enroll more low-income students at Union. In less than a year, the College secured \$20 million in cash and commitments, which with Schuler's match, will provide \$42 million in scholarship grant funding to recruit and enroll more underserved students. For those receiving support at Union, the average need-based scholarship is \$43,800. About 25 percent of students receive merit scholarships and the average award is \$20,000.

Additional information may be found in the addendum to this document and on the College's [website](#).

## **OFFICE OF COLLEGE RELATIONS**

Union's development efforts have been highly successful. At the start of 2020, Union launched the public phase of its \$300 million [Powering Union: The Campaign for Multiple Tomorrows](#), the largest and most ambitious capital campaign in the school's 225-year history. On Sept. 12, the College announced that the campaign has raised \$304 million with 10 months still to go. Notable gifts during the campaign include a [\\$51 million gift](#), the largest in Union's history. In Fiscal Year 2022, the Union Fund achieved \$3.16 million in unrestricted gifts.

The strong sense of community at Union nurtures and develops fiercely loyal alumni who treasure their experiences on campus. The Union Alumni Association is composed of approximately 30,000 graduates. The alumni have been generous over the years; current alumni participation in philanthropy is 20 percent. Similarly, Union has built increasingly strong relationships with parents; in Fiscal Year 2022, 50 families contributed to the Parents Circle by making annual gifts of \$5,000 or more.

### **Key Opportunities and Challenges for the next Vice President for College Relations**

The VPCR will work closely with President Harris and fellow senior leaders to identify and implement bold new philanthropic and engagement strategies. The VPCR will also work closely with the campaign chairs and other key volunteers, board members, and faculty and staff to engage, educate, mentor, and otherwise support these key stakeholders in their respective fundraising efforts, ultimately resulting in a significant expansion and diversification of the principal- and major-gift donor base and increased, sustainable unrestricted philanthropic revenue for the College.

The VPCR is responsible for providing innovative, data-driven leadership, and strategic vision over all aspects of the College's fundraising activities and constituent relationships, including shepherding the current campaign to its conclusion and establishing a strong post-campaign footing. The VPCR will assess, plan, and oversee implementation of all aspects of a comprehensive program including capital campaign management, major and planned giving, the annual fund, alumni and parent engagement, donor relations, and advancement services. They will also oversee 40 dedicated staff, making shifts in structure as necessary to ensure an effective and efficient infrastructure capable of carrying the College through the campaign, post-campaign period, and future fundraising efforts.

The VPCR will personally and successfully engage select prospects and donors; partner with gift officers to determine appropriate strategies and define mutually acceptable annual and multi-year performance goals; and ensure that the office of college relations effectively engages Union alumni, current and past parents, and other friends in the life of the College.

The VPCR's major functions and responsibilities are as follows:

### ***Leadership Engagement and Strategy***

- In collaboration with the president and college leadership, assess the on-going fundraising potential of the College, particularly as it enters a post-campaign period; serve as architect and builder of a strategic, cohesive, and systematic fundraising and engagement program that will further broaden development, outreach, and constituent engagement activities, creating a sustainable program that leverages current strengths and identifies new opportunities for growth.
- Partner with the president in his role as chief fundraiser for the College, serving as a co-strategist and adviser in cultivating and soliciting transformational gifts. Similarly guide and support the senior staff, faculty, trustees, and other community members in their capacity as formal Union representatives in all advancement-related activities. Ensure they are effectively and professionally staffed; provide focus for their efforts so that their time spent is productive, meaningful, and personally rewarding.
- Serve as an active member of President Harris's senior leadership team. Participate in and contribute to discussions that guide strategies and policies shaping Union's future beyond advancement.
- Encourage the board's personal participation in philanthropy and provide the highest level of personal support to the board and volunteer leadership for their activities on behalf of Union; ensure that their volunteer experience is meaningful, productive, and enjoyable and that the board's intellectual and emotional connection to the College and each other is strengthened.

### ***Programmatic Elevation***

- Craft a sophisticated multi-year fundraising and engagement strategy and implement a coordinated advancement program that drives increases in philanthropic revenue year-over-year and ensures sustainable long-term growth in contributions, deepening existing donors' commitment to Union while also broadening the base of support.
- Continually evaluate and enhance the major-gift pipeline and existing annual fund programming; assess existing programs and systems to identify and acquire prospective donors, increase donor retention, and upgrade and renew existing donors; develop and implement new innovations that elevate donor engagement and commitment to the College.
- Steer the College through the final stages of its campaign and into the post-campaign period. Leverage the campaign's achievements, messaging, and priorities, as well as the strategic plan to identify compelling opportunities to keep donors and volunteers engaged personally and philanthropically.
- Ensure that various units within the college relations office collaborate and communicate, internally and across the College, thereby integrating advancement efforts throughout the institution.
- Ensure that all systems and processes maximize available intelligence through reporting and follow sound budgetary, legal, and accountability practices.

### ***Fundraising and Staff Management***

- Personally manage a portfolio of major- and principal-gift prospects and donors; ensure that timely steps are taken toward cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship while balancing leadership responsibilities on campus.
- Serve as a resource for frontline fundraisers in developing effective prospect strategies, execution of moves, closing with prospects, and stewardship. The VPCR must lead by example, promote teamwork, and inspire others to action. Similarly, serve as an exemplar to all other college relations staff regarding donor engagement and cultivation, as well as cross-campus collaboration.
- Set clear direction and priorities for a staff of 40 professional and administrative support personnel, employing a transparent, data-driven approach. Continually assess staff strengths, recruiting new staff as necessary, and maintaining a high-quality and diverse team.
- Promote excellence through well-defined goals and the implementation of performance and accountability measurements. Inspire, empower, and motivate staff through active communication and delegation, placing staff members' work within the context of Union's strategic priorities.
- Mentor and cultivate individual staff members, building a strong pipeline of talent and creating future growth opportunities within Union's college relations office.

### **Qualifications and Characteristics**

This position requires a strong and proactive leader who possesses exceptional judgment, superb communication skills, a sense of urgency, a distinctive record of achievement, and the ability to work collaboratively and diplomatically with many internal and external constituencies. The VPCR will bring many of the following professional qualities and experiences:

- A deep appreciation for the history, achievements, and aspirations of Union College, and its identity as a global and inclusive liberal arts college. Ability to demonstrate a real understanding of the College's mission and purpose, and effectively and eloquently articulate that to a diverse audience.
- At least 10 years of progressively responsible experience envisioning, developing, and implementing a successful and comprehensive development and alumni relations program, ideally in higher education. Depth of knowledge of best practices in all key areas of advancement, including demonstrated ability to manage and close a comprehensive capital campaign.
- Experience building upon an existing advancement program, resulting in a transformative increase in philanthropic revenue for an organization. Success in increasing the effectiveness of an advancement program and its staff through established objectives and performance standards.
- The credibility and sound judgment required to effectively engage and leverage Union's leadership and volunteers in the cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of key prospects and donors.
- A clear track record of success in personally cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding gifts of seven-figures or more from individuals, foundations, and corporations. A high level of comfort and effectiveness

working with high-net-worth individuals and corporate business leaders.

- Proven management skills in establishing a team- and goal-oriented environment that empowers staff through active communication and delegation and that builds confidence, promotes inclusion and belonging, and celebrates achievements.
- Superior strategic skills with a strong grasp of industry best practices and a holistic understanding of all aspects of fundraising, campaign operations, and alumni engagement. Substantial experience evaluating the strengths of existing programs and identifying opportunities for improvement.
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to connect with a variety of audiences; personal excellence in written and oral presentation. The experience, ability, and inclination to be an effective, outgoing representative for Union.
- Ability to build relationships and collaborate across the institution, serving as a resource to others and obtaining their input; persuasive, persistent, and determined.
- A commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging on the college relations team, the Union community, and beyond.
- A sharp eye for operational efficiency and the best use of resources, including a demonstrated understanding of budgets and the ability to manage them.
- A desire to engage deeply in the College, Schenectady, and Capital Region communities.
- Strong personal integrity and work ethic, as well as a sense of humor and perspective.
- Bachelor's degree required.

## TO APPLY

Jack Gorman is leading this search with Elizabeth Neustaedter and Lisa Clayton. For more information, to submit a nomination, or to apply for this role, please visit:

[www.imsearch.com/8744](http://www.imsearch.com/8744)

*Union College is an equal opportunity employer and strongly committed to student and workforce diversity.*

*Union College is committed to providing access and reasonable accommodation in its application process for individuals with disabilities and encourages applicants with disabilities to request any needed accommodation(s).*

*Union College's Strategic Plan highlights the role of diversity in providing an effective education for the 21st century at the heart of our mission and vision for the College. Diversifying the student body, the faculty, the administration, the staff, and the curriculum requires a commitment to honor our mission and advance our goals. Union provides a blend of intellectual, social, and cultural opportunities to facilitate the integrated academic, social and personal development of a diverse community. We value and are committed to a host of diverse populations and cultures including, but not limited to, those based on race, religion, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and national origin.*

## UNION COLLEGE ADDENDUM

### ***Academics***

Today, Union continues to be at the forefront of undergraduate education, continuously defining and redefining what it means to provide a liberal arts education. Each year, about half of Union students declare majors in arts, humanities, and social sciences, while the other half declare majors in science and engineering. In this inclusive environment, students develop in-depth expertise in their chosen discipline and, with emphasis on the intersections between fields, students also experience the kind of interdisciplinary learning that allows them to tackle problems from multiple angles. Union students become part of a community of scholars who are non-linear thinkers, able to synthesize knowledge and approaches from a variety of disciplines to address the multi-faceted challenges of the 21st century.

Union is well positioned to be a national leader in interdisciplinary education and scholarship in the coming years. In February 2020, the College announced it had received the [largest single gift](#) made to the institution in its history. Alumni Mary and Rich Templeton ('80) donated \$51 million for the creation of the Templeton Institute for Engineering and Computer Science, which anchors the College's Engineering and Computer Science Initiative and aims to further integrate engineering and the liberal arts. In addition to the new institute, the gift will be used in the recruitment and retention of women pursuing a degree in engineering or computer science, as well as enhancements to curriculum, faculty support, and capital to develop new spaces and facilities on campus.

Union offers opportunities for meaningful academic endeavors outside the classroom. Undergraduate research is a hallmark of a Union education, having taken hold in all disciplines and across all academic divisions. Union cultivates collaboration and creates learning communities to develop in its students the specialization and breadth necessary to become innovative problem-solvers while offering multiple points of entry into high-impact undergraduate research experiences, including independent study, research practica, terms abroad, internships, and senior theses. These experiences fully engage students, excite them to construct their own investigations, give them practical experience, and prepare them for postgraduate study and careers.

Union is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). In 2020, Union had its decennial review, and its accreditation has been reaffirmed without conditions.

### ***Student Life***

Union students are actively engaged in the campus community. Students participate in more than 130 student-run organizations and engage in more than 15,000 hours of community service annually through



Union's Kenney Community Center and other campus clubs, residences, organizations, and athletic teams.

At Union, athletics is an extension of the academic enterprise. Union athletes are students first, and in the last 10 years, the average GPA of its NCAA student-athletes has mirrored the student-body average. Athletes also make up a robust portion of the student body, as nearly 200 members of each entering class are varsity athletes. Nearly all of the College's athletic teams compete in the Division III Liberty League, with men's and women's ice hockey competing in the Division I Eastern College Athletic Conference.

More than 90 percent of students live in campus housing. The student-run Theme House Consortium boasts a series of residences built around particular programs in the academic curriculum and in other interest areas. Union became home to America's first fraternities with the founding of Kappa Alpha in 1825 and remains home to fraternities and sororities today. All students belong to a Minerva House, seven lively hubs blending academic, social, residential, and leadership interests. Faculty, administrators, and staff are also members of one of these seven Minerva Houses, which sponsor a wide range of programs open to the full Union community.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging are central to Union's institutional identity and mission. The College prides itself on fostering an inclusive environment where a diverse student population can thrive. Students come from 50 countries and 40 states. Nine percent of students are international and over 25 percent of students are domestic students of color. Union has been recognized nationally for its diversity and inclusion efforts, winning the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) award six years in a row.

Union's historic and continued commitment to depth and breadth in the liberal arts has produced leaders in all fields, including arts, medicine, science, engineering, media, entertainment, law, and politics. The College is consistently recognized in national rankings for high return on investment. Union alumni include Nobel Prize, Lasker Award, and Academy Award winners, a National Book Award winner, two MacArthur Fellows, Olympic gold and bronze medalists, seven Cabinet secretaries, a secretary of state, 13 governors, 200 judges, 90 college presidents, and Chester A. Arthur, the 21st President of the United States.

### ***Faculty and Staff***

At the core of Union's academic experience are over 200 faculty members, 80 percent of whom are tenured or on the tenure track, and approximately 10 percent of whom are lecturers or senior lecturers. All classes are taught by faculty – not teaching assistants – and 97 percent of tenure-line faculty hold a terminal degree in their field. The Union faculty and all the College's educational offerings are organized into four divisions: Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Science and Mathematics, and Engineering and Computer Science. Close student-faculty interaction and small classes are a hallmark of the Union experience. The relationship between students and faculty motivates students to learn through inquiry and discourse. The College's 10:1 student-faculty ratio allows for students and professors to get to know each other, fostering a spirit of collaboration and partnership.

Their partners include the more than 620 staff members who support the student experience. Staff are integral not only to the administration, maintenance, and operation of the College, but also to its educational mission. The staff's loyalty, hard work, and commitment to the mission of the College are critical to its success.

### ***Facilities***

Union has undertaken aggressive investment in the renovation of its campus, strengthening facilities by building or renovating many major structures over the past 15 years. Nearly every academic building has received refurbishment, along with significant expansions and construction of new facilities. Recent projects include facilities for dance, humanities, social sciences, and a visual arts renovation.

In 2020, the College completed its most ambitious project to date: the [Integrated Science and Engineering Complex](#). The \$100-million, 142,000-square-foot facility houses six major departments in science and engineering and promotes visibility and multidisciplinary connections with departments across campus. Over the next few years, the College will be studying residential life and student life spaces to update plans for future renovations or enhancements to campus. Planning is currently underway for updates to the College's hockey facility, which, once complete, could offer space for conventions, trade shows, and other Union and non-Union activities alike.

### ***Schenectady, New York***

Union College occupies 130 acres in downtown Schenectady, New York. Incorporated three years after the College was chartered, the city's history is deeply connected to Union. Seated near the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers and a short distance from the Adirondack, Catskill, and Berkshire mountains, Schenectady is part of the Albany metropolitan area with the state capital located 20 minutes to the southeast of Union's campus. Schenectady is three hours from New York City and Boston, and four hours from Montreal. This location has been a historic asset for Union, allowing students and faculty easy access to the state capital and the major metropolitan areas of the Northeast.

Union itself has contributed to Schenectady's renewal. The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities estimates Union's total economic impact at more than \$313 million, including an annual average of \$133 million in operational spending, \$21.8 million in expenditures by students and visitors, and an estimated \$8 million in construction. The College is also a source of pride and comradery for the community.