



President  
Institute of American Indian Arts  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

## THE SEARCH

The Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), the University for Indigenous Creative Excellence, seeks a dynamic, engaging, and strategic leader to serve as its next President. IAIA seeks a leader with a deep understanding of complex factors facing higher education at this unique moment, and a steadfast commitment to the mission of serving indigenous people through higher education and the arts. The President will join the community in a significant moment for the institution and community. This is an exciting opportunity for an inspiring, communicative, and unifying leader who will guide IAIA into the future.

## ABOUT IAIA

Established in 1962, and chartered by Congress in 1987 as a separate, independent institution, the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development, known by a shorter name, the Institute of American Indian Arts, or “IAIA,” offers academic excellence to both Native and non-Native populations with a goal of empowering through education, economic self-sufficiency, expression and enhancement of artistic and cultural traditions. IAIA is the only institution of higher learning in the world dedicated to contemporary Native American art and culture. As a 1994 Tribal University and Land-Grant institution, IAIA is also responsible for promoting and strengthening tribal programs in food and agricultural science.

IAIA also operates an acclaimed museum, the [Museum of Contemporary Native Arts](#) (MoCNA), which is the only one in the world focusing exclusively on exhibiting, collecting, and interpreting the work of Native American artists.

The IAIA is the birthplace of contemporary Native American art and has been the educational home for esteemed, innovative artists, writers, filmmakers, performers, scholars and museum professionals and other leaders since 1962. Today, IAIA continues to grow on its 140-acre campus, offering certificate, undergraduate, and graduate degree programs. Its constituent Museum of Contemporary Native Arts

continues to expand its renowned collection of over 9,000 artworks, curating numerous progressive and innovative exhibitions, both traveling and at MoCNA's location in downtown Santa Fe.

Part of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, IAIA is a public tribal land-grant college and the world's only institution of higher learning dedicated to contemporary Native American art. IAIA offers undergraduate degrees in Cinematic Arts and Technology, Creative Writing, Indigenous Liberal Studies, Museum Studies, Performing Arts, Studio Arts, Native American Art History and Computer Science; graduate degrees in Creative Writing, Studio Arts and Cultural Administration; and certificates in Broadcast Journalism, Business and Entrepreneurship, Museum Studies, and Native American Art History.

The college serves approximately 700 full-time equivalent (FTE) Native and non-Native American students from 35 states and around the globe, representing nearly 100 federally recognized tribes. IAIA has graduated more than 4,000 students, representing more than 90% of the 562 federally recognized tribes. Supporting the student body includes over 100 faculty and staff members who share their knowledge and experiences. Often artists themselves, the expertise and technical prowess faculty and staff bring daily to campus are essential ingredients in IAIA's ability to meet its mission.

Strong values make IAIA a place where creativity and scholarship flourish. The community promotes well-being for themselves, each other, and the environment, recognizing that good health and contentment are crucial to success. Their most revered values are:

- Collaboration: Working together for student success
- Excellence: Upholding high standards for students, faculty, and staff
- Creativity: Encouraging bold expression in art and life
- Respect: Fostering the appreciation of cultures, perspectives, and identities through diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility
- Integrity: Expecting and honoring reciprocity, accountability, honesty, and responsibility to ourselves, our community, and our world
- Leadership: Cultivating leaders in Indigenous arts, cultures, and communities
- Stewardship: Taking care of IAIA's material and human resources

## THE IAIA PRESIDENT

The President will serve as a champion for the Institute, enhancing its reputation on a local, national, and international scale. By building strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders, the President will foster a culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and mutual respect. The ideal candidate will demonstrate visionary, strategic, and collaborative leadership in higher education or a similarly complex environment. They will possess strong financial acumen, exceptional communication skills, and a proven track record of fundraising success. The President should have a broad understanding of the disciplines at IAIA. The successful candidate will continue to strengthen the resources and support available to students while exhibiting a deep commitment to student, faculty, and staff well-being.

IAIA has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND FOUNDATION

IAIA is governed by a 13-member board of trustees appointed by the U.S. President. The IAIA President reports to this board, which represents the education, arts, and philanthropic communities. The President of IAIA is an ex officio board member, as is the President of the IAIA Associated Student Government.

The IAIA Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, was founded in 2010 to expand IAIA's capacity to raise critically needed funds to help empower students to succeed. The members of the IAIA Foundation Board of Directors represent a broad array of skills and talents, including artists, educators, business people, executives, and philanthropists.

## ACCREDITATION

IAIA is one of 37 tribal colleges in the United States and a member of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC). IAIA is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) to offer certificates, associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and master's degrees.

## ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

As the Institute's chief executive officer, the President is responsible for the overall management and direction of IAIA. As such, the President works with the IAIA's board to set the vision and strategic direction. The President oversees an operating budget of approximately \$18.5 million and an endowment of \$25 million. As a community-centered institution, the President is a present and visible figure on and off campus, fostering strong relationships with constituents, both internal and external. At the same time, the President is the chief fundraiser, developing resources to support the Institute's continued growth. The President's direct reports include: Provost; Vice President of Operations; Chief Advancement Officer;

Chief Communications Officer; Director of Sponsored Programs; Director of the Museum of Contemporary Native Arts; and Director of Institutional Research.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PRESIDENT

### **In partnership with the IAIA community, develop and implement a strategic vision for the future of the Institute.**

The President will be expected to work closely with the board, faculty, staff, alumni, and other colleagues to implement the strategy for IAIA's future. The Institute has been engaged in a strategic process, and the new President will build on the good work and solid foundation of this plan while refining and adapting it to achieve IAIA's goals for the future. IAIA will further hone its distinctive identity and continue to articulate the competitive advantage and purpose of an IAIA education. It will continue strategically building and shaping programs that meet this identity and moment in higher education.

### **Cultivate financial resources and ensure long-term financial stability.**

Most essentially, the President will be the lead fundraiser for IAIA. The institution has shown an ability to secure philanthropic support. However, there are significant avenues of potential support yet to be fully realized, and there is room for growth. The President must be an ambitious and tireless ambassador for IAIA. Partnering with the IAIA board and the Foundation board and a dedicated chief advancement officer, the President will seize the opportunity to build relationships and attract increased gifts and grants. The President must be a gifted relationship builder, engaging ambassador, and compelling storyteller who will present IAIA as an attractive resource and priority investment. IAIA has strong budgetary, physical, and human assets that allow it to operate from a position of strength. Yet, as an institution committed to access, expenses are significant.

### **Champion the recruitment, retention, and support of students.**

The next President will work closely with leadership to support recruitment, enrollment, and retention strategies and resources. The President will oversee the creation and implementation of innovative recruitment and retention strategies to attract a talented student body and support them toward successful graduation and employment. Following the pandemic that saw a dip in undergraduate enrollment, the Institute has seen a rise in graduate enrollment and has focused on expanding its programs, including new degrees in gaming and animation.

### **Sustain and lead an active and engaged campus community**

IAIA has a vibrant campus life where the President is an active part of the community. While the President has a significant external role, they must also recognize the importance of the on-campus community. The President will prioritize the well-being and culture of the campus, weaving inclusivity, transparency, and accessibility into policies and processes on campus with a commitment to shared governance. The President will be a visible and engaged presence on campus, interacting openly and genuinely with faculty,

staff, students, and alumni. The President will actively support and foster the faculty's work in the classroom and as scholars, as well as support the development of staff and their overall engagement.

### **Champion IAIA, enhancing its reputation on a local and national scale.**

The President will serve as a visible leader and ambassador for IAIA, actively engaging at the local, state, and national levels. The President will be the primary advocate for IAIA, enhancing its reputation and building meaningful partnerships that extend the Institute's reach and influence. Critical in this work will be engagement with local, state, and federal government. Building strong ties with the City of Santa Fe, leveraging the city's vibrant arts scene, and fostering relationships with local industries will also be critical in this role.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The ideal candidate will also possess many, if not all, of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- A deep and enthusiastic understanding of, and commitment to, IAIA's mission and values.
- Experience in crafting, leading, and implementing a vision and strategy.
- A leadership style that reflects Indigenous leadership and inspires and fosters community building and mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Ability to serve effectively as the external face of an organization, building relationships within and outside the organization with government, business, community, and educational leaders.
- Knowledge and experience working with the Higher Learning Commission and the US Congress.
- Demonstrated experience in and/or commitment to supporting faculty creative practice, research, and scholarship.
- A record of successful partnership with a board and equally effective support and management of a senior leadership team.
- Strong fiscal management skills that allow the President to set priorities, develop budgetary practices, and collaborate on/devise fundraising goals and achieve them.
- Extensive experience working with diverse Indigenous cultures and a personal connection to Indigenous communities.
- Exceptional written, oral, organizational, and interpersonal skills in a wide range of settings.

- Possess exemplary qualities of humanity, including empathy, humility, and a commitment to kindness and a community of care that exemplify Indigenous ways of knowing and traditional practices.
- Building and strengthening relations with the student body, and working directly with the IAIA's Associated Student Government at IAIA and other student organizations.
- Terminal university degree preferred.

## COMPENSATION

The salary range for this position is \$180,000-\$200,000 and is commensurate with experience. In addition to a benefits package and relocation support, IAIA will also provide the President a housing stipend.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

A search committee composed of faculty, staff, students, and board representatives has been formed to conduct the search, assisted by the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller. All inquiries, referrals, and nominations should be directed to Isaacson, Miller. Please send a CV or resume and a letter of interest in strict confidence to:

Benjamin Tobin, Becky Piper, and Alaine Small  
Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/institute-american-indian-arts/president>

*IAIA has a policy of equal opportunity in education, activities, admissions, scholarships, and employment. IAIA complies with all federal regulations relating to non-discrimination based upon sex, race, religion, or disability. Under Public Law 99-498, IAIA applies American Indian preference in hiring. IAIA does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, or national or ethnic background in its admissions or educational policies, financial aid, employment, or in accordance of rights, privileges, and activities generally made available at this educational institution.*