



SALEM

ACADEMY *and* COLLEGE

Search for the President Salem Academy and College Winston-Salem, North Carolina

THE SEARCH

Salem Academy and College seeks its next President, a collaborative and innovative leader who will lead the institution into its third century of educating girls and women to be global leaders and advancing equity and health in our society. As the oldest educational institution for girls and women in the nation and with Salem College as the nation's 13th oldest college, Salem has a strong sense of history and tradition, a tight-knit community, and a proud legacy of preparing girls and women for remarkable and purposeful lives. Salem is also an institution committed to evolving to meet the moment and, in 2018, made the bold move to enhance the Salem experience with a focus on health leadership at the College and STEAM at the Academy while maintaining a strong commitment to the liberal arts. Today, Salem Academy is the nation's only boarding and day high school with a STEAM focus on a college campus, and Salem College is the nation's only liberal arts college dedicated to advancing women in health leadership.

Salem Academy and College continue to be recognized for their excellence in education, with Niche naming Salem Academy as the #1 Boarding High School in North Carolina and the #1 STEM School in Forsyth County. Salem College was ranked #32 Liberal Arts College in the nation by Washington Monthly. The College has also received national recognition as a leader in social mobility and economic diversity, including being ranked #3 in the United States for social mobility for Pell-eligible students by U.S. News & World Report and #2 in the nation for economic diversity by The New York Times magazine. The College recently welcomed a record-breaking incoming class reflecting a 31% enrollment increase.

The next President will position Salem Academy and College for long-term success, financial sustainability, and enrollment growth at a complex moment for education. Salem Academy and College is looking for a relational and strategic President who can excite and galvanize the internal and external communities around a future that draws on Salem's historic strengths and its continued evolution. This is a tremendous opportunity for a clear-sighted, creative, and results-driven leader who is seeking to join a caring community dedicated to recognizing and supporting the leadership potential of girls and women.

Salem Academy and College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT SALEM ACADEMY AND COLLEGE

History

Salem Academy and College (Salem) began as a school for young girls in 1772 in the Moravian town of Salem, which had been established just six years earlier by Moravian missionaries. Although no longer affiliated with the Moravian Church, the history of the school has been an integral part of the town of Salem, now called Winston-Salem. Remarkably, the school's doors have always remained open, even during the Revolutionary War and the Civil War.

The school was founded following a historic journey of 21 Moravians (18 of whom were young women and girls) who traveled from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to Bethabara, North Carolina, in 1766. After completing their remarkable journey, Elisabeth Oesterlein and Salome Meurer became two of the first teachers and staff in the new girls' school created in 1772, which is known today as Salem Academy and College. In 2021, more than 400 Salem Academy and College alumnae, friends, relatives, and students replicated this [historic journey](#) as part of the celebration of Salem's 250th anniversary.

Today, Salem Academy and College is a diverse community dedicated to educating girls and women and empowering them to lead with over 15,000 College alumnae and 4,000 Academy alumnae around the globe. The Academy and College share a 64-acre campus at its original location in the heart of Old Salem, part of the city of Winston-Salem. During its long history, the institution has developed into Salem Academy, a college preparatory school for girls in grades 9 through 12; Salem College, a liberal arts school for women; as well as a graduate program, open to men and women.

Strategic Plan

Salem Academy and College has been engaged in institutional planning since 2018 to establish the direction for the institution to ensure its future viability. While planning has taken place respectively for the Academy and College during this period, Salem has developed an institutional strategic plan that incorporates cross-cutting themes and priorities. In June 2025, the Board adopted a new three-year plan that builds upon the 2022-2025 Rise Strategic Plan and seeks to increase and stabilize total enrollment for both the Academy and the College, improve student outcomes, and strengthen financial health with continued focus on Health Leadership, STEAM, Brand and Recognition, and Distinctive Campus Culture initiative areas. The Presidential Cabinet and administrative leaders are currently identifying the tactics and establishing the timelines and metrics for the plan.

Faculty and Staff

Salem Academy and College has a combined faculty and staff of approximately 146, with around 37 of those individuals serving as faculty for the College and around 18 of those positions dedicated to working specifically at the Academy. Several staff positions and offices support both the Academy and College. The faculty and staff are known for their dedication to the students, their care for one another, and their commitment to making sure that Salem Academy and College remains a leader in the education of girls and women.

Students

Salem College

Salem College currently enrolls 576 students (514 undergraduate and 62 graduate) and just had a record-breaking number of 219 new students (175 first-year and 44 transfer) enroll this fall. This incoming class represents a 27% enrollment growth in new students from fall 2024's class. Overall, the student body includes 51% BIPOC students, 60% first-generation students, and students from 31 states and 9 countries. Salem College is a member of Division III of the NCAA and of the [USA South Athletic Conference](#) (basketball, beach volleyball, cross country, indoor volleyball, soccer, softball, tennis, and track and field).

Salem College boasts a rich history and is proud to offer students numerous opportunities throughout the year to participate in its many time-honored traditions. Taking part in these activities connects current students with generations of alumnae who have come before them and connects them with history and community. Fall Fest is one beloved tradition full of Salem College spirit. Classes are canceled so students can take part in the celebration, which kicks off early in the morning as the seniors wake up the campus to start the festivities. Throughout the day, the four classes of students compete in cheers, skits, and games, continuing with evening performances and cherished exchanges between Big and Little Sibs. Overall, the day highlights the strong bonds and sense of community that make Salem College so special. For Salem College seniors, Founders Day Convocation is a milestone moment. At sunrise, they robe and gather in front of historic Main Hall, symbolizing the official start of their Commencement journey. Afterward, the class plants a tree to leave their mark on campus before heading to a festive breakfast in the Refectory—a time to laugh, share memories, and celebrate the traditions that connect generations of Salem College students.

Salem Academy

Salem Academy has a current enrollment of 66 students, consisting of 62% day students and 38% boarding students. Forty-one percent of students identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), and 18% are international students with six countries represented (Bulgaria, China, Dominica, Germany, Spain, and Uganda). Academy students have the opportunity to participate in activities ranging from sports to theater to robotics. Students also complete, on average, two internships before graduation.

Academy students also participate in a number of [traditions](#) over the course of the school year, including Saber Sorting - a picnic with friendly competitions of tug-of-war, big-ball volleyball, and other zany challenges similar to the sorting hat in Harry Potter, placing students on either the purple or gold team. A student's Saber color lasts a lifetime. Another cherished tradition is Senior Vespers, where students participate in a candlelight choral service followed by a traditional Moravian Lovefeast, where the senior class serves coffee and buns to all attendees.

Governance and Finances

Salem Academy and College is governed by a Board of Trustees composed of 18 to 22 voting members, including the Chairs of the Salem Academy and Salem College Alumnae Boards. The Board of Trustees is charged with the strategic, long-term stewardship of the institution's mission and with strengthening its financial, physical, and educational assets. The President of Salem Academy and College serves as a non-voting *ex officio* member. John McConnell, MD, former Chief Executive Officer Emeritus, Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and Professor Emeritus of Urology, Wake Forest School of Medicine, is the current Chair of the Board, and Brandy Nelson C'97, former Salem Academy faculty member, Executive Director, Instructional Design at College Board, and Education Consultant, is the current Vice-Chair.

Salem reports total assets of \$113M, an annual operating budget of \$24M for FY2025, and an endowment of approximately \$64.7MM. Salem has had consistent successes in fundraising, raising approximately \$9.9M in FY2025. The next President will lead Salem in broadening the base of support and completing its next capital campaign.

ABOUT SALEM COLLEGE

Mission Statement: Salem College, a women's college grounded in the liberal arts, values its students as individuals, develops their leadership potential, and prepares them to create healthier and more equitable communities.

Vision Statement: Salem College is the premier women's college committed to advancing equity in health and in our society.

Statement of Core Values, including framing statement: Our values are aspirational and interconnected. They are dynamic expressions of our commitments to one another as members of the Salem College community and the larger world as we strive to live them every day.

- *Intellectual Curiosity* – We are fervent about cultivating an environment where a love of learning and thirst for knowledge are the driving forces.
- *Intentional Community* – Community is created when we are purposeful in nurturing connections, collaboration, creativity, care, courage, and the regard for each person's unique contributions. We affirm that the health of the individual and the health of the community are interdependent.

- *Equity and Belonging* – We believe our community is strengthened by the diversity of its members, by our intentional efforts to welcome all who are part of the Salem community, by the sense of belonging that they feel, and by the equitable outcomes of our work.
- *Innovative Spirit* – Our ethos of courage and resilience, exemplified by Salem’s founders, fuels each generation of Salem students and graduates to be change-makers in their own time.
- *Courageous Leadership* – The Salem community provides students with both buoyant support and the challenge to be fiercely courageous. With confidence in our individual and collective strengths, we claim the responsibility to make a meaningful difference in the world around us, each in our own unique ways.
- *Honor and Integrity* – At Salem College, our Honor Code calls us to live, learn, and lead with integrity. To do so is to act with love – embracing the shared stewardship of our community and purposefully demonstrating our convictions to the greater world.

The mission, vision, and values statements were adopted by Salem College in November 2023.

[Salem College](#) is a private, residential, four-year liberal arts college offering four undergraduate degrees: BA, BS, BM, and BSBA; three graduate degrees: MAT, Master of Music, & MEd; and four certificate programs. The College has 26 undergraduate majors and 32 minors. The College's curriculum links the liberal arts with a distinctive focus on health, ensuring understanding of the power, importance, and complexity of health in our society. The College prepares students for a range of career paths and graduate programs through its commitment to women’s leadership development. The College is committed to teaching excellence across the curriculum and co-curriculum and building health communities on and off campus. There is a 7:1 student-to-faculty ratio. 89% of students report full-time employment or graduate school acceptance six months post-graduation.

In support of its health leadership focus, Salem College is in the process of developing and implementing a unique, four-year leadership development program called [RISE](#). The program is designed to develop future leaders to create a better, healthier, more equitable world. This co-curricular leadership program is focused on the specific aspects of being a confident and courageous leader in the 21st century.

The [Celebration of Academic Excellence \(CAE\)](#) began in 2008 as a day-long symposium showcasing the outstanding scholarly and creative achievements of students and faculty. As one of Salem’s most important annual events, this celebration reflects the foundational role of scholarship in the life of our academic community. CAE serves as an important capstone event for our seniors, and classes are cancelled so the entire campus can participate. For examples of work presented by faculty and seniors last year, see <https://cae.salem.edu/>.

[Engaging Ethics](#) has become one of Salem’s signature programs, with “ethical inquiry” courses woven throughout the curriculum and innovative co-curricular programs offered each year. Launched in 2022 after a two-year, grassroots planning process linked to reaffirmation of accreditation, the program fosters students' ethical inquiry and prioritizes five Salem-specific “Touchstones”: Courage, Integrity, Justice, Care, and Respect. Key concepts for thinkers across disciplines and traditions, the Touchstones were

chosen for their demonstrable significance to Salem College, past and present. A three-year grant from the Educating Character Initiative and Lilly Endowment Inc. is providing new resources for developing and deepening the program.

ABOUT SALEM ACADEMY

Mission Statement: Educating girls since 1772, Salem Academy fosters compassionate and creative leaders, prepared for college and life, who chart their paths with character, curiosity, and courage.

Vision Statement: Every student will be challenged, supported, and affirmed in becoming the best version of herself.

Statement of Core Values, including framing statement: The Salem Academy Honor Tradition fosters trust, responsibility, and respect among members of the community. The Honor Code is the backbone of Salem Academy life and serves as the foundation of our school.

- *Transformative Learning* – Providing an extraordinary and challenging educational experience to prepare students for success in college and beyond
- *Comprehensive Wellness* – Intentionally cultivating wellness in all aspects of our students' journeys to support them in leading healthy, balanced lives.
- *Inclusive Community* – Ensuring that all members of our community are welcomed, acknowledged, and encouraged to use their voices and to form lasting relationships.

The vision and values statements were adopted by Salem Academy in November 2023. The mission statement was adopted in 2019 and reaffirmed in September 2023.

Salem Academy is the nation's only all-girls boarding and day high school with a STEAM focus located on a college campus. The Academy's rigorous preparatory curriculum, combined with individualized support, leads to lifelong success. For more than 250 years, Salem has empowered girls to lead. Today, they continue to pioneer education opportunities for girls with vision and intention. Salem Academy provides girls with meaningful access to coursework in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics, including robotics and coding. Students learn persistence, self-confidence, collaboration, and adaptability — skills to succeed at college and in life.

Average class size is nine students with a 6:1 student-to-teacher ratio. 89% of teachers hold advanced degrees. AP and Honors courses are offered in addition to access to Salem College courses across all areas: language, English, math, science, business, political science, and nonprofit management. Academy students have the opportunity to earn up to 60 college credit hours.

ABOUT WINSTON-SALEM

[Winston-Salem](#) is a vibrant city where history meets reinvention. Throughout the city's 265-year history, reinvention and artistic expression have remained the heart of its inspiration. Here, sprawling tobacco

farms were transitioned into world-class wineries, treasured historic buildings were reborn as sophisticated boutique hotels, and abandoned factories were transformed into hubs of innovation for world-renowned biotech research. Over \$2 billion has been recently invested in Winston-Salem's downtown development, now home to more than 120 local restaurants, shops, galleries, cafes, breweries, and bars — as well as more than 1,200 hotel rooms. The efforts have gained national attention, earning praise from Forbes as one of America's Top 10 Best Downtowns.

Today, Winston-Salem is the fifth largest city in North Carolina and is constantly growing and evolving. With the development of a diverse business base, it is a leader in nanotechnology and stem cell research, finance and financial technology, manufacturing, cybersecurity, and aviation- again reaffirming Winston-Salem's time-honored tradition of boldly forging ahead. In fact, Winston-Salem has been consistently ranked as one of the best cities in the nation for generating new startup companies by Wallethub.com. Highlighting the downtown redevelopment efforts is the [Innovation Quarter \(IQ\)](#), a booming mixed-use district and one of America's fastest-growing research parks.

Winston-Salem is in an ideal location to enjoy a range of regional activities, including 75 minutes to the Blue Ridge Mountains with hiking, fly fishing, kayaking, and wonderful small mountain towns, and 45-to-60 minutes to southern Virginia and West Virginia. There are two ski resorts within 1.5 hours, 3.5 hours to the Carolina beaches, and 4-to-5 hours to the Outer Banks. The closest airport is Piedmont Triad, just 25 minutes away, with direct flights to DC, LGA, CLT, ORD, ATL, PHL. Winston-Salem enjoys a temperate climate in all four seasons, including beautiful fall foliage, especially in the mountains, and spring blossoms with azaleas and dogwoods in full glory.

Winston-Salem was recently named one of America's top college towns by Southern Living, underscoring its commitment to higher education. The city is currently home to more than 30,000 college students and six standout colleges and universities, including Salem College, Winston-Salem State University, Wake Forest University, University of North Carolina School of the Arts, Carolina University, and Forsyth Technical Community College. The School of Medicine (inclusive of Public Health) at Wake Forest and the School of Nursing and other allied health professions at Winston-Salem State offer unique opportunities for Salem students.

Winston-Salem is home to the nation's first arts council, and the city's ongoing cultivation of arts and culture can be seen today in the numerous galleries, performing arts groups, theaters, collectives, and collections that attract and impress artists, collectors, and admirers worldwide. In addition, Winston-Salem hosts many arts-focused festivals and events year-round, including the [RiverRun International Film Festival](#), [Piedmont Craftsmen's Fair](#), and the biennial [National Black Theatre Festival](#), to name a few. Winston-Salem is home to the [Piedmont Opera](#) and the [Winston-Salem Symphony](#). There are also many wineries to enjoy in the local area. Winston-Salem offers a perfect mix of small-town charms and big-city excitement.

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

The President of Salem Academy and College is appointed by, and reports directly to, the Board of Trustees. The President serves as the Chief Executive Officer of both the Academy and College with responsibility for ensuring the success of the institution as a whole. The President will be expected to lead transformational change at Salem, both strategically and operationally, that encompasses academic focus and integrity, enrollment management, fiscal stability and viability, fundraising efforts, personnel/talent development, and physical plant management. The President will work closely with the Board of Trustees in developing, communicating, and executing a strategy consistent with the overall vision and values of Salem. The President will also be an active champion and representative of Salem, both on and off campus.

The President will be assisted and supported in this work by a team of cabinet members, which includes the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, the Vice President for Finance and Administration/CFO, the Vice President for Institutional Advancement, and Salem Academy's Head of School.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PRESIDENT

Continue to develop, implement, and refine the health leadership and STEAM initiatives.

The next President has the opportunity to build on the momentum of the Health Leadership and STEAM initiatives that complement Salem's historic strength in liberal arts and college preparatory education. The new President will be charged with working with the faculty and staff to further develop and expand these initiatives, ensure synergy and cohesion across the curriculum, and identify opportunities for future growth, including external partnerships. The President will need to maintain regular and consistent contact with alumnae, faculty, staff, and the student body to facilitate open and transparent communication about the vision and future plans for Salem to cultivate excitement, trust, and clarity.

Ensure Salem's future financial strength and stability.

The next President, in close collaboration with the Board of Trustees and senior leadership, will be responsible for creating a data-informed plan for the short-term and long-term financial sustainability of the Academy and the College. The President will provide strategic, financial, and operational business leadership and management to meet financial and enrollment objectives and maximize/steward the effective and efficient use of facilities, acquisitions, and resources in general. Salem has been the beneficiary of generous alumnae, but in the coming years will need to continue to grow its fundraising base, particularly with its commitments to supporting scholarships and social mobility. As the chief fundraiser, the President must be able to tell the story and value proposition of Salem in a compelling way that motivates donors and partners. The President will be responsible for leading successful capital campaigns. Through the President's active and enthusiastic participation in fundraising activities,

including seeking corporate and healthcare partnerships as well as grant opportunities, Salem will achieve financial stability and grow the endowment.

Foster a healthy organizational culture supported by a collaborative, high-functioning team.

The President must provide leadership, including recruiting, retaining, managing, motivating, and evaluating a talented professional administrative/executive staff who provides leadership to all functional disciplines within the Academy and the College. One of Salem's greatest assets is a deeply committed faculty and staff who are passionate about their students, the Academy and College, and its mission. At the same time, many are stretched thin, and financial and people resources are limited. The President, alongside the senior leadership team, must do a careful analysis of roles and responsibilities across the institution and determine how best to support the ongoing professional development of faculty and staff in a time of resource constraints.

Expand external affiliations and partnerships in Winston-Salem and beyond.

While it has a long history and distinctive mission, Salem's important role in the Winston-Salem community has at times been overlooked. The next President will need to be a visible leader in Winston-Salem and develop new mutually beneficial opportunities for collaboration and partnership. As Winston-Salem continues to embrace its role as an innovation hub, there are many opportunities for the next President to position Salem Academy and College as a key partner, particularly related to health leadership and leadership development of girls and women. The President will also serve as the primary advocate with local, state, and federal government officials and representatives regarding issues affecting the Academy and College.

Increase the visibility of Salem with clear, consistent, and compelling messaging.

Given Salem's areas of distinctiveness – a long history of excellence in education, its focus on the leadership development of girls and women, and its health leadership focus – there are significant opportunities to speak about, market, and promote the Salem brand with a variety of audiences. It will be important for the President to work with the senior leadership team to make sure there is consistency and clarity in brand identity and messaging across the Academy and College. The next President should be a passionate and engaging representative of the Academy and the College to alumnae, media, the academic community, and other institutions of higher education.

Champion the recruitment and retention of students.

Like many small private high schools and colleges, Salem is facing challenges in the recruitment and retention of students. While the College has seen recent significant success in growing enrollment, it needs to be thoughtful about how to continue this momentum and increase retention. For both the College and Academy, it will be important to develop new strategies for raising visibility, particularly in an ever-increasingly competitive market. Salem does have many strengths to draw on, including a student-

centered approach to education that supports girls and women to develop into global leaders. The new focus on health leadership and STEAM adds a compelling differentiator that can continue to be amplified.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Salem Academy and College seeks an energetic, thoughtful, and visionary leader and an effective, seasoned administrator to serve as its next President.

The successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences, characteristics, and abilities:

- A passionate advocate for girls and women.
- A champion and respected voice for Salem's vision for the future: an academically excellent, student-centered education for girls' college preparatory education and women's liberal arts and professional education.
- A proven leader and action-oriented manager with the ability to think innovatively, pivot nimbly, and explore new creative ideas and strategies while considering the needs of multiple constituencies in an over-250-year-old institution; able to effectively lead a team to implement Salem's strategy.
- Financially astute with the ability to provide strategic, financial, and operational leadership and oversight in budgeting, financial management, and administration to maximize the effective and efficient acquisition and use of resources.
- Shares the values of the Academy and College, including creating a welcoming and inclusive community.
- A compelling communicator who is accessible, credible, energetic, enthusiastic, and eager to use these attributes for financial and partnership development to provide stability for the institution while fostering growth to the endowment; someone who can lift up and bring together our Salem community and tell and sell Salem's story to new audiences.
- Demonstratively successful in funding substantial projects through partnerships and grants.
- Proven track record cultivating formal partnerships with other organizations.
- Trustworthy with integrity and character that are above reproach.
- Appropriately academically credentialed with preference for a terminal degree; success in a senior leadership position in business or a professional career.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the close of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/salem-academy-and-college/president>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

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Salem Academy and College is an equal opportunity employer and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, age, religion, disability status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, pregnancy, or any other characteristic protected by law.