



Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost
Columbia College
Columbia, South Carolina

THE OPPORTUNITY

Columbia College (the College), a private liberal arts college with a legacy of transformation and impact, seeks a seasoned leader to serve as its next Executive Vice President and Provost (the Provost). This is a defining opportunity for a bold leader to join a college on the rise, reimagining liberal arts education through inquiry-based learning, deep community engagement, and a steadfast commitment to social mobility. The Provost will be an architect of possibility, helping to articulate and advance the College's mission in ways that expand opportunity and empower students to shape meaningful futures.

As the College's chief academic officer, the Provost will provide strategic leadership across the academic enterprise, guiding the development and delivery of programs that span the College's four schools, graduate and online offerings, and professional programs. This leader will shape the academic strategy, steward resources, and cultivate a culture of excellence in teaching, learning, research, and scholarship. The Provost will collaborate closely across campus to strengthen academic planning, support innovation, and ensure that the College's programs remain responsive to student and societal needs.

This is a moment of forward momentum for the College. With the launch of its new strategic plan that guides progress toward the end of the decade, the College is investing in academic areas that align with workforce needs and directly serve the needs of its surrounding communities. Most graduates remain in South Carolina, and the institution takes seriously its role in preparing students to contribute meaningfully to the region's social and economic vitality. The next Provost will be a key driver of this work, leading efforts to amplify the College's academic identity, empower distributed leadership, strengthen community partnerships, and shape programs that allow students to thrive as engaged citizens and professionals.

Columbia College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to support this critical recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT COLUMBIA COLLEGE

Columbia College is a private liberal arts institution committed to preparing students for lives of purpose, responsibility, and impact. Since its founding, the College has cultivated a learning environment where academic rigor is paired with a deep investment in personal growth, ethical leadership, and community engagement.

Leadership at the College is cultivated through action, reflection, and connection, not defined by titles or hierarchy. Students are encouraged to engage deeply with their communities, take initiative, and approach challenges with resilience. Whether in the classroom, through service, or in professional settings, they learn to lead with empathy and integrity. The College offers undergraduate, graduate, and online programs that blend a liberal arts foundation with career-focused preparation. Small class sizes and close faculty mentorship foster a culture of support.

History

Founded in 1854 and rooted in the United Methodist Church, Columbia College has a rich legacy as one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in South Carolina. Originally established as Columbia Female College, the institution opened its doors to students in 1859 with a mission to provide a rigorous liberal arts education for women. Over the decades, Columbia College has evolved in response to societal shifts, education needs, and student demographics, becoming fully coeducational in 2020 and welcoming its first coed residential class in 2021.

Throughout its history, Columbia College has demonstrated resilience and adaptability. The campus has endured and rebuilt after fires, including a major one in 1964 that destroyed Old Main, a beloved campus landmark. The surviving columns of Old Main remain a powerful symbol for the College and have since been incorporated into the logo.

Today, the College offers a personalized liberal arts education that is open and inclusive to all. The College is committed to cultivating critical thinking, effective communication, lifelong learning, and a strong sense of personal responsibility.

Leadership and Strategic Vision

In 2025, Columbia College launched [On the Rise: A Plan for Growth and Impact](#), a strategic framework designed to guide institutional transformation through the end of the decade. The plan reflects the College's vision for the future: to be a model of intentional liberal arts education, a champion of inquiry-based and experiential learning, and a catalyst for community transformation.

The College's academic approach redefines what it means to be a liberal arts institution. It moves beyond knowledge acquisition to foster critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and collaborative inquiry. Graduates will be prepared for their first job and the challenges and opportunities of a future that can't yet be fully imagined.

Columbia College envisions a campus deeply embedded in its surrounding community, working in partnership to dismantle the barriers that undermine health and opportunity. The College will have profound and reciprocal community engagement, and faculty, staff, and students will be actively engaged in addressing the social determinants of health in one of the most medically vulnerable zip codes in the country. Strategic investments will focus on three areas of academic growth: allied health sciences, education innovation, and visual and performing arts and design.

The strategic plan is organized around six institutional priorities:

- **Improving the student experience**, focusing on creating supportive, engaging, and inclusive environments that foster academic and personal growth
- **Modernizing facilities and elevating the campus environment**, upgrading and expanding physical infrastructure to support campus life
- **Advancing academic innovation** through curriculum, program development, and faculty excellence
- **Expanding student enrollment**, including expanding academic and athletic offerings to support campus growth
- **Optimizing the college for operational excellence** through enhancing human resources, leveraging technology, and streamlining administrative systems and processes
- **Improving financial strength and stability**, focusing on expanding philanthropic support, diversifying revenue streams, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the College

President John H. Dozier

John H. Dozier is Columbia College's 21st president. A native of Columbia, South Carolina, Dozier brings a broad range of experiences as an educator, industry executive, and corporate leader, entrepreneur, and administrator to bear in his role as Columbia College's president. Beginning his career as a corporate consultant and executive, he has served as a higher education senior administrator for the past 23 years. Dozier held pivotal roles at the City Colleges of Chicago, including Chief Information Officer, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and President of Kennedy-King College. At the University of South Carolina, he served on the senior leadership team, spearheading community engagement and strategic initiatives to enhance the university's profile. He comes to Columbia College after serving as Institute Community and Equity Officer at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Dozier received the Richard A. Rempel Faculty Award from the University of South Carolina in 2016 and the Distinguished Alumnus Award from South Carolina State University in 2015. He has served on numerous boards and committees, including Historic Columbia, EdVenture Children's Museum, Central Carolina Community Foundation, American Heart Association – Boston Affiliate, Boston Arts Academy Foundation Board, and the MIT Press Management Board. He is a current member of the Midlands Business Leadership Group and the Columbia Chamber of Commerce Board.

Dozier holds a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from South Carolina State University and a Master of Business Administration and Doctor of Education degrees from DePaul University.

Academic Affairs

The College offers more than 50 undergraduate majors, minors, and certificates, as well as graduate and online programs that support a wide range of academic and career goals. Small class sizes, close faculty mentorship, and a commitment to student success define the academic experience at Columbia College. Academic offerings are organized across four schools:

- **The School of Arts and Sciences** provides a strong liberal arts foundation through programs in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the arts.
- **The School of Business and Leadership** prepares students for careers in business, management, and organizational leadership in a rapidly evolving global economy.
- **The School of Education** has a legacy of excellence in teacher preparation and offers degrees in early childhood, elementary, middle-level, and special education, as well as educational studies and leadership. Students benefit from strong partnerships with local schools and a focus on student-centered teaching practices.
- **The School of Health Sciences** provides students with foundational knowledge in health and wellness while developing the skills needed for graduate study or entry into health-related professions.

All students benefit from a robust mentoring model that includes an academic advisor, a staff advisor, and a peer mentor. This integrated support system helps students navigate academic planning, personal development, and the transition to campus life. As part of the College's commitment to student success, all students take a first-year seminar course designed to help them build a strong foundation for college.

Columbia College also offers the [Dr. John Zubizarreta Honors Program](#), which provides an enriched academic experience for highly motivated students. Honors students participate in small, discussion-based seminars focused on critical thinking, creativity, and self-directed learning. The program includes experiential opportunities, global study experiences, and access to national honors organizations and fellowships.

Faculty and Staff

Columbia College's faculty and staff are central to its mission of preparing students for lives of purpose, leadership, and service. The institution has a total of 120 full-time and 120 adjunct faculty members. Over 60% of the full-time faculty hold PhDs or terminal degrees. The College is also bolstered by a committed group of 138 full-time and part-time staff.

The College is committed to fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional growth for its faculty. Support includes a year-long onboarding program for new faculty, regular development workshops, and peer mentoring opportunities.

Faculty and staff achievements are celebrated through institutional awards recognizing excellence in teaching, scholarship, service, and leadership. These awards are presented annually and highlight contributions to the College community.

Students

The College's current enrollment is 1,545 undergraduate students and 286 graduate students, for a total headcount of 1,831 students. Enrollment has grown 10% over last year and 32% over the past five years. Approximately 74% of all students are enrolled full-time, including 94% of undergraduate day students and 82% of graduate students. The average age of undergraduate students is 27, and the average age of graduate students is 36.

Students who identify as women constitute 77% of the student population. 43% of Columbia College students identify as Black/African American, and 8% identify as Hispanic. Approximately one-third of students at the College are the first in their families to attend college. The College continues to prioritize access and retention, and the overall fall-to-fall retention rate is 76%, with 60% retention among the full-time first-year cohort.

ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND PROVOST

The Provost reports to the president and is the College's chief academic officer. The Provost is a critical member of President Dozier's Executive Council, which includes the Vice President of Development, Vice President for Finance and Administration, Vice President of Enrollment Management, Vice President of Student Affairs, CEO of the Columbia College Foundation, Associate Vice President of Safety and Emergency Services, and the Chief of Staff and Associate Vice President for Strategic Initiatives. The cabinet serves as a group of trusted advisors to the president and assists him in college-wide strategy development and implementation.

The Office of the Provost provides leadership across a broad range of offices and functions at the College. As chief academic officer, the Provost oversees teaching, learning, scholarship, and research across the College. This includes academic planning, budgeting, facilities, and the leadership of the four academic schools: Arts and Sciences, Business and Leadership, Education, and Health Sciences. The Provost also

provides strategic direction for graduate, online, and professional programs; the Honors Program; institutional research and effectiveness; integrated learning services; online and digital learning; registrar and educational compliance; and enrollment management, including admissions and financial aid. College-wide curricular and co-curricular activities spanning undergraduate and graduate education, accreditation, and student success also fall under the Provost's purview.

The Provost provides overall academic leadership, administrative support, and coordination for academic affairs across the College. They lead the College's academic mission through transparent communication, adept change management, and collaborative decision-making. In partnership with the deans of the four academic schools, the Provost fosters a structure that supports distributed leadership, enabling each school to guide its programs, develop its faculty, and contribute meaningfully to the College's priorities. In addition to being an academic leader, the Provost cultivates and inspires leadership at all levels of the College.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Provost will join the College at a significant moment of transition and opportunity. To succeed, the Provost must be a visionary leader with proven experience in leading positive organizational and cultural change and will address the following key opportunities and challenges:

Lead with vision in a time of transformation.

Columbia College is at a defining moment in its institutional evolution. Following a period of rapid enrollment growth, academic restructuring, and cultural shifts, including its transition to a coeducational model, the College is poised to reimagine its future. The next Provost will be instrumental in executing key priorities of the College's strategic plan and guiding the institution through this period of significant change.

The campus community seeks a change agent who leads with compassion, clarity, courage, and conviction rather than simply managing the status quo. Rebuilding morale, strengthening shared governance, and articulating the College's strategic direction will be essential to this work. The Provost will play a central role in elevating the College's academic brand and reputation, particularly its commitment to academic excellence and social mobility, and in shaping a narrative that reflects the institution's legacy and aspirations.

Drive strategic academic program development.

The College is well-positioned to expand its academic offerings in ways that are both mission-aligned and responsive to workforce needs. The next Provost will work towards continual assessment and improvement of the academic curriculum to ensure that, upon graduating, Columbia College students are prepared to meet the demands of the ever-evolving global marketplace. They will lead efforts to develop new programs in high-demand fields such as allied health, business, and education, while also revitalizing the liberal arts foundation that has long shaped the College's identity. This work will require a deep

understanding of curriculum design, interdisciplinary collaboration, and workforce trends. With limited resources and a growing student population, the College must prioritize initiatives that support enrollment growth, student success, and long-term institutional viability.

Champion faculty and staff empowerment.

The College has exceptionally talented faculty and staff members who are dedicated to student success. In partnership with other senior leaders, the Provost will encourage and support efforts to promote a welcoming and inclusive environment where faculty and staff can thrive, innovate, and achieve their career aspirations. This includes advocating for equitable compensation, investing in professional development, and creating systems that support onboarding, mentorship, recognition, and long-term growth.

The next Provost will join a community that deeply values trust and transparent communication. There is a strong desire for a leader who listens actively, engages with humility, and builds consensus across perspectives. Given that shared governance is an important part of the College's culture, it will be essential for the next leader to develop clear expectations around shared governance, ensuring that faculty, staff, and student voices are heard and valued.

Build operational excellence and financial stewardship.

The College's next Provost will be a strong steward of financial and other assets by working with the senior leadership team to use limited resources in the most impactful ways. As the College continues to grow, the institution faces the complex challenge of aligning its academic ambitions with available resources. The Provost will continue to develop and sustain budgeting and planning processes that provide deans with the information needed to be entrepreneurial strategic leaders of their units. The College seeks a leader who can balance innovation with practicality, who understands the realities of limited funding, and can advocate effectively for strategic investments in faculty, programs, and infrastructure. Equally important, the Provost will champion improvements to financial systems and processes, streamlining the current budgeting framework to make it more transparent, user-friendly, and responsive to the needs of academic units.

Strengthen student success and engagement.

The College serves a diverse and evolving student population, including many first-generation students, commuters, and learners who benefit from additional academic support. The next Provost will be central in advancing student success by prioritizing retention, advising, and holistic support services. This includes enhancing academic readiness, expanding career development opportunities, and fostering learning environments that are responsive to a wide range of student needs.

As the College continues to grow, particularly in online and graduate programs, the Provost will be expected to support these key components of the institution's future. The successful leader will collaborate closely with enrollment and financial aid teams, strengthening recruitment and retention

strategies to ensure the College remains accessible and student-centered. By being responsive to national and regional trends, the next Provost will evaluate, explore, and lead programmatic supports that enhance student retention and graduation success at all levels.

Promote a supportive and mission-aligned campus culture.

Columbia College's mission is rooted in personal attention, academic excellence, and preparing students for meaningful lives. The next Provost will be expected to lead in a way that reflects these values, supporting faculty and staff, engaging students, and ensuring that all campus community members feel connected to the College's purpose.

In recent years, the College has undergone meaningful transitions in leadership and structure, which have created both opportunities and challenges. As the institution continues to evolve, the Provost will play a key role in strengthening internal cohesion, rebuilding trust, and cultivating a shared sense of purpose across campus. The next Provost will provide stable leadership and inspire by adeptly executing the College's vision and understanding the process and skills of collaborative decision-making.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess the following required qualifications:

- A strong academic foundation, including a record of teaching, scholarship, and service appropriate for tenure at Columbia College. Candidates with nontraditional career paths who demonstrate equivalent scholarly or creative achievement, leadership experience, and a strong understanding of faculty governance will be considered
- PhD or equivalent terminal degree from an accredited institution
- Significant administrative experience with proven ability to execute ambitious, fiscally responsible, entrepreneurial initiatives
- A record of developing and supporting excellent academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels, both within and across disciplines
- Personal and professional integrity
- Capacity to maintain poise in complex and conflictual situations, to hear opposing views clearly, and to persevere when principles or strategic considerations are at stake
- Ability to make complex, timely, and principled decisions
- Extensive knowledge of planning and budgeting processes, including the ability to make critical budget decisions within resource limitations when necessary

While no person will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following personal and professional qualifications:

- An entrepreneurial spirit to realize the ambitions of the College

- A strong commitment to fostering belonging and a record of demonstrated success in recruiting, advancing, retaining, and working collaboratively with a faculty and academic leadership team with varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives
- A record of success in developing partnerships with industry, government, and nonprofit organizations
- A participatory and collaborative management style that empowers and develops energetic academic leadership at every level of the College
- Commitment to an active faculty governance model
- Recognition of the evolution of the higher education business model, the forces and trends impacting the landscape, and the ability to prepare the plan for a successful future
- Leads efforts to increase support of faculty research and scholarly contributions
- An appreciation for the varied backgrounds and complex needs of undergraduate and graduate students today
- An understanding of and facility in change management, with the ability to empower, delegate, and build consensus
- Experience with alumni or donor relations, and/or demonstrate the potential for success in this work; strength in storytelling
- A commitment to sustaining a culture defined by trust, transparency, and open communication

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

Columbia is the capital of South Carolina with a growing metropolitan population of over 800,000. The city is a central hub for government, healthcare, and commerce, and is home to more than 40,000 college students, contributing to a vibrant academic and research community. The city's central location in the state's geographic center provides convenient access to the Atlantic coast and the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Columbia's downtown features over 70 restaurants and shops, with ongoing investment in infrastructure, housing, and public spaces. The [Main Street District](#), [Five Points](#), [the Vista](#), and [The Bull Street District](#) have become key destinations for dining, arts, and community events, including the weekly [Soda City Market](#), where vendors must make or grow their own products. The city supports a range of cultural institutions, including the [Columbia Museum of Art](#), the [South Carolina State Museum](#), and the [Nickelodeon Theatre](#), South Carolina's only nonprofit art house cinema. Columbia is also home to the [Columbia Fireflies](#), the city's minor league baseball team. Outdoor amenities are easily accessible, including the [Three Rivers Greenway](#), which connects parks and neighborhoods along the Congaree, Saluda, and Broad Rivers. Just outside the city, [Congaree National Park](#) offers hiking and kayaking opportunities in one of the country's largest old-growth bottomland hardwood forests.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Columbia College has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations,

referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent in confidence via [the search portal on the Isaacson, Miller website](#).

Keight Tucker Kennedy, Managing Partner

Annah Wells, Senior Associate

Alexis Scott, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Isaacson, Miller and Columbia College welcome applications from candidates with disabilities. If you have any accommodation or access needs, we are happy to provide reasonable accommodations.

Columbia College, an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer, is seeking candidates who will enhance its faculty, staff, and administration. Columbia College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, identity sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, national origin, results of genetic testing or service in the military.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Columbia College. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Columbia College would supersede any conflicting information in this document.