



Vice President for Human Resources
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, Maine

THE SEARCH

Bowdoin College (Bowdoin or the College) seeks a strategic, innovative, collaborative, and results-oriented leader to serve as its next vice president for human resources (VPHR). Reporting to the senior vice president for finance and administration & treasurer, the VPHR will join Bowdoin at a time of tremendous opportunity. Centering Bowdoin's community and the common good, the next VPHR will join a leadership team that is deeply committed to the College's mission and people. The ideal candidate will be a transformative people and culture leader dedicated to creating optimal working environments and nurturing interconnected systems and policies for all Bowdoin employees. They will lead from a place of integrity, be a strong relationship-builder and collaborator, and have a proven track record of positive change management and a forward-looking, proactive approach to human resources.

As one of the nation's most competitive liberal arts institutions, Bowdoin exclusively offers a bachelor of arts degree, with over 40 majors and minors, including popular fields like economics, government and legal studies, and environmental studies. Through its rigorous curriculum and a culture of intellectual curiosity, it prepares students for purposeful lives and professional success. This is a pivotal moment to join Bowdoin, as the next VPHR will be stepping into a leadership role at an institution that has a strong sense of its identity and a clear vision for its future. The College's history is one of continuous evolution. The VPHR will have the unique opportunity to build on that legacy by shaping a holistic talent strategy that supports the current workforce and proactively readies future generations. A supportive and intellectually curious community combined with the institution's commitment to its people and place provides an impactful opportunity for a strategic and inspirational HR leader.

With the ability to create a lasting impact, the VPHR will be responsible for leading a human resources function and strategy that aligns with and advances Bowdoin's mission and strategic direction. They will

develop and administer HR policies, procedures, programs, and services that effectively meet the College's needs, goals, and long-term objectives. Delivering best-in-class HR functions, the next VPHR will be a seasoned, strategic, creative, and transformational leader with extensive experience across a broad range of HR disciplines. They will bring a visible, collaborative, and future-focused approach to human resources, working closely with faculty, staff, and campus leadership to strengthen the employee experience and support the College's continued success.

Bowdoin College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next vice president for human resources. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT BOWDOIN COLLEGE

Founded in 1794, Bowdoin is a preeminent liberal arts college. Its reputation rests on the excellence of its faculty, students, and staff, its intellectual rigor, and its walkable and historically significant campus, strong sense of community, and connections to the people, history, and natural beauty of Maine.

A highly selective residential liberal arts institution with a rich history and impressive and accomplished graduates, Bowdoin is located on a beautiful 207-acre campus in Brunswick, Maine. The College is a vital part of a vibrant coastal town and is just a short trip from Portland, Maine, a thriving cultural hub. The campus itself is a blend of historic and modern architecture, featuring iconic buildings like the Walker Art Building alongside state-of-the-art facilities such as Barry Mills Hall and the Gibbons Center for Arctic Studies. This setting provides a unique and inspiring backdrop for academic and personal growth.

Bowdoin's dedication to excellence is evident in its people. With 216 full-time equivalent faculty members, Bowdoin has a student-to-faculty ratio of just 9:1. Students benefit from close collaboration with a distinguished faculty, 98 percent of whom hold a PhD or equivalent terminal degree. The staff and administrative team are equally vital, with a total workforce of over 1,000 employees who are deeply invested in the College's mission. The student population is diverse, representing all 50 states and dozens of countries from around the world. While the College has strong roots in the Northeast, its commitment to a need-blind admissions policy for international students and a holistic review process creates a dynamic, globally minded and vibrant learning community, fostering a broad range of perspectives and experiences that enrich the academic rigor and campus life. The admissions process is incredibly competitive, with an acceptance rate of approximately 7 percent, a testament to the high caliber of students who choose to attend.

To learn more about Bowdoin, please visit <https://www.bowdoin.edu/about/index.html>

BOWDOIN LEADERSHIP

President | Safa R. Zaki

Safa R. Zaki is the sixteenth president of Bowdoin College, a renowned psychologist and cognitive scientist, and the first woman to lead the College since its founding in 1794. Safa's research focuses on how people divide the world into categories, using computational approaches to model human cognition.

Prior to her appointment as Bowdoin's president, Safa served as dean of the faculty and the John B. McCoy and John T. McCoy Professor of Psychology at Williams College in Williamstown, MA. Named to the Bowdoin presidency in March 2023, Safa began her duties on July 1, 2023, and was officially installed in an inauguration ceremony on October 14, 2023.

Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer | Matt P. Orlando

Matt Orlando has served as senior vice president for finance and administration & treasurer for Bowdoin College since 2016. He started with the College in 2006 as controller. Prior to his time with Bowdoin, Matt was controller and budget director for Hamilton College in New York. He is a chartered financial analyst and a graduate of Trinity College in Connecticut. Orlando serves as a board member of MaineHealth and is board treasurer for MaineHealth Mid Coast Hospital. He also serves on the board for the United Way of Mid Coast Maine (UWMCM) and is chairing this year's campaign for the midcoast region.

ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES

Reporting to the SVP for finance and administration & treasurer, the VPHR will provide strategic leadership and operational oversight for all aspects of the College's HR function. Leading a dedicated team of seven administrative and two support staff, the VPHR directs the full range of HR activities, including talent acquisition, career development, succession planning, retention, training, leadership development, HR systems and data (Workday), student employment, compensation, and benefits. Serving as a trusted advisor and thought partner to senior leaders across the College, the next VPHR will assist in strengthening organizational capacity, fostering effective leadership, and ensuring alignment between institutional priorities and the needs of employees.

In addition, the VPHR will design, implement, and administer competitive compensation and benefits programs that attract and retain exceptional talent while maintaining fiscal responsibility. They will be responsible for policy development and administration, ensuring compliance with federal, state, and College employment regulations while maintaining alignment with evolving HR best practices. The VPHR will take an active role in employee relations across the institution, working to create a climate of fairness, integrity, and respect. The ideal candidate will work closely with academic and administrative leaders in all aspects of people management across the College. They will provide clear communication and guidance regarding HR policies and procedures, promoting consistency and transparency—playing a key role in cultivating a positive, productive, and inclusive workplace culture.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Establish a clear vision and strategic plan for the HR office that aligns with Bowdoin's overarching goals and mission.

The VPHR will be a visionary leader responsible for both the day-to-day excellence and the long-term, strategic direction of the College's HR function. In addition to overseeing and strengthening Bowdoin's internal HR operations, the VPHR will set a cohesive and forward-looking agenda that ensures all HR initiatives are fully aligned with the College's mission and strategic plan. By articulating a clear and inspiring vision that centers the human part of human resources, the VPHR will galvanize the HR team and engage the campus community, fostering an environment that sustains and advances the institution and its employees in service of future generations.

Continue to cultivate a high-performing, service-oriented, and trusted HR Team

At their best, the VPHR plays a vital role in shaping an inclusive culture, strengthening faculty and staff morale, and creating meaningful opportunities for professional development and growth. Leading a small but dedicated team of human resource professionals, the VPHR will ensure the team is supported, valued, and provided with thoughtful mentoring and learning opportunities. As a culture-keeper, the VPHR will model strong managerial leadership, foster a deep commitment to collaboration and customer service, build relationships based on mutual trust and respect, and uphold the highest standards of ethics and integrity for their team. They will promote transparency and inclusivity, leading with a supportive and energizing approach that attracts and retains dedicated staff.

Leverage existing HR technology and data to identify inefficiencies and implement HR best practices across all functions

The VPHR will have significant opportunities to leverage technology to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness across the HR function. As a Workday institution, Bowdoin will need the next VPHR to continue to optimize and expand the system to meet both current and future needs, including maximizing Workday Recruit. They will improve operational efficiency by analyzing existing HR processes and procedures and implementing streamlined, data-driven solutions that promote consistency. They will champion the use of data-driven insights and modernized processes to reduce transactional tasks, enabling the HR team to take on a more consultative and strategic role in supporting the College community.

Foster increased cross-campus collaboration by building strong relationships with academic and administrative leaders, faculty, and staff at all levels

The VPHR will be a highly visible member of the College community, engaged across campus and recognized as a trusted resource and collaborator on organizational development and strategic initiatives. They will actively build strong, collaborative relationships with faculty and staff at all levels of the College.

As an engaged presence on campus, the VPHR will communicate proactively with units and key stakeholders across the College, clearly articulating priorities and seeking meaningful feedback. They will tailor communications to diverse audiences, ensuring clarity, consistency, and accessibility, regardless of individuals' prior experience with HR, tenure at Bowdoin, or employment level. With a concise and compelling communication style, the VPHR will foster collaboration, build buy-in, and strengthen shared outcomes. By instilling trust and credibility, upholding processes and procedures, and creating unified, cross-departmental initiatives where possible, the VPHR will play a pivotal role in further enhancing the effectiveness of the College's human resources function.

Balance the needs of the current workforce while strategically accounting for the shifting landscape of workforce planning, retention, and training.

The VPHR will be adept at balancing the immediate needs of the current workforce with the long-term demands of a rapidly evolving employment landscape and a shifting nature of the workforce to include more casual and student employees. They will take a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to addressing not only the internal HR team's priorities but also the broader needs of the College as a whole. With a forward-looking mindset, the VPHR will lead workforce planning, retention, and training initiatives that anticipate future trends and challenges, ensuring the College remains well-positioned to attract, retain, and develop top talent. By driving strategic and sustainable solutions, the VPHR will move both the HR office and the broader College community forward, fostering a resilient, adaptable, and high-performing environment in an ever-changing landscape.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will be an experienced and accomplished leader, demonstrating a track record of operational success in leading various HR functions. While no single candidate will have all of the qualifications, the search committee seeks candidates with a well-rounded combination of the following abilities:

Minimum Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in human resources, business administration, or other related field.
- Seven to ten+ years of progressively responsible human resources experience, including leadership/management experience.
- Contemporary knowledge of HR policies, practices, and laws.
- Ability to interact productively and tactfully with all levels of the organization.

- Ability to handle highly confidential and/or sensitive information and exercise discretion concerning its disposition.
- Initiative, sound judgment, and demonstrated ability to set priorities.
- Demonstrated ability to manage change and lead through organizational growth.
- Ability to engage with others in constructive conflict resolution, with implied influence and persuasion.
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Presentation skills—ability to present information to large and small groups
- Demonstrated commitment to equity, inclusion, and cultural awareness.
- Ability to analyze and resolve complex problems/situations, often with multiple or conflicting information.

Preferred Qualifications

- Master's degree in human resources, business administration, or related field.
- HR certification (SHRM-CP, SHRM-SCP, PHR, SPHR).
- Previous higher education experience.
- Proven experience with or competency in Workday functionality.
- Demonstrated experience with data-informed decision-making.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This is an on-campus position. The salary range for this role is \$225,000 - \$250,000.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

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 via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Rebecca Kennedy, Managing Partner (she/her)

Angelo Alexander, Senior Associate (they/them)

Karson Freeman, Associate (she/her)

Cortnee Bollard, Senior Search Coordinator (they/them)

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/bowdoin-college/vice-president-human-resources>

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orientation, gender identity and/or expression, age, marital status, place of birth, genetic predisposition, veteran status or against qualified individuals with physical or mental disabilities on the basis of disability, or any other legally protected statuses.