



BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

Vice President for External Relations
Bryn Mawr College
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

THE SEARCH

[Bryn Mawr College](#) was founded in 1885 as a women's college. Throughout its history, it has encouraged students and alumnae/i to pursue academic excellence and research to have a profound impact on the world. [President Wendy Cadge](#) is early in her tenure, and her leadership and vision are guiding the college's next chapter. Bryn Mawr College has a rich legacy, an ascendant future, and is poised for a vibrant transformation over the next decade as it looks to its sesquicentennial in 2035. A primary focus area for the college's forthcoming strategic plan is "Enhancing visibility, reputation, and impact" with a call to broaden public awareness of Bryn Mawr's impact, scholarly achievements, and expertise. ***To that end, the college seeks an inaugural Vice President for External Relations (VPER) to lead efforts to elevate Bryn Mawr's profile and broadcast the college's rich legacy to key and emerging external audiences.***

In close partnership with President Cadge and other college leadership, the VPER will be responsible for identifying and building strategic relationships with external partners to raise the college's visibility, reputation, and relationships locally, regionally, and nationally. Reporting directly to President Cadge, the VPER will serve as a member of her senior team and partner closely with the Chief of Staff, Vice President for Communications & Marketing, and Vice President for Alumni Relations and Development, among others. Leading through influence and relationship-building, the VPER will collaborate with their peers to advance the college's mission, values, and strategic priorities with non-alum constituents.

In addition to external engagement, the VPER's responsibilities include external communications initiatives and drafting a wide variety of presidential communications that address key issues and priorities. The VPER will also manage Bryn Mawr's government relations efforts, including identifying coalitions and partnerships with peer and partner institutions; building and maintaining relationships with key elected officials; and advising President Cadge and the college on key local, state, and federal policies that may impact Bryn Mawr, small liberal arts colleges, and higher education at large.

Success for the VPER will be measured in large part by this leader's ability to forge substantive connections with a wide range of constituencies whose partnership, opinions, and reach could make them valuable broadcasters of Bryn Mawr's unique mission, ethos, and offering. Of equal importance, the successful candidate must actively partner with the president and her senior team in generating and evaluating new ideas for external relations, effectively operationalizing, prioritizing, and socializing those most promising. The VPER must also be a strong writer and gifted communicator, capable of serving as a college spokesperson and presidential representative when necessary. A deep and authentic commitment to the unique mission of Bryn Mawr College will also be critical to the VPER's success.

The ideal candidate will have at least ten years of experience in external engagement and reputational elevation of an institution, ideally in a higher education setting with a national scope. This individual will demonstrate intellectual curiosity, a collegial and highly collaborative approach, excellence in written and spoken communications, and comfort with ambiguity in an entrepreneurial environment. The ideal candidate will have substantial experience interacting with a variety of external audiences in prior roles, as well as a track record of identifying new constituents. Prior experience working with other functions such as enrollment and advancement are a plus, as is an understanding of the cultural, political, and economic landscape of the greater Philadelphia region. A bachelor's degree is required.

Bryn Mawr College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE

Since its founding in 1885, [Bryn Mawr College](#) has been the preeminent college for women interested in the pursuit of wisdom necessary to challenge the world's expectations. The college has repeatedly broken barriers to achieve greater equity through exceptional academics and a deep dedication to learning. Bryn Mawr's more than 35 [undergraduate majors](#) span the humanities, sciences, social sciences, and arts. Two co-educational graduate schools offer selective master's and Ph.D. programs across the [Arts, Sciences](#), and [Social Work](#), and the [Postbaccalaureate Premedical Program](#) is one of the most successful in the nation for placing students into medical school. Bryn Mawr is dedicated to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, which serve as the engine for excellence and innovation, helping to pave the way for gender equity and inspiring brilliant minds who find life-long community at the college.

Designated by the Carnegie Classifications as a Research College for its contributions to academic scholarship, Bryn Mawr was the first women's college to offer graduate degrees, evidence of its lasting commitment to the power of rigorous academic training. Today, the college remains devoted to multidisciplinary education and unique undergraduate research opportunities. Bryn Mawr's more than [200 faculty](#) members engage more than 1,700 total student scholars with a strong liberal arts academic approach, giving them the freedom to follow their curiosity while maintaining high standards of excellence. Faculty are prolific in their scholarly endeavors, ranked #1 in research expenditure and #3 in research out of nearly 200 liberal arts institutions by *Washington Monthly* magazine. As a top [Fulbright-](#)

[producing institution](#), Bryn Mawr is committed to supporting its students holistically and to women's education and empowerment.

The college's campus, a classic example of American Collegiate Gothic architecture in a picturesque landscape, is recognized as one of the most beautiful in the country and provides a secure space for community building through [athletics](#), over [130 student clubs](#), the arts, cultural performances, and visiting speakers and scholars. The campus culture is motivated by individual self-discovery and collective uplifting. Ninety-nine percent of seniors go on to achieve positive career outcomes within [one year of graduation](#), and over [25,000 alumnae/i](#) include Nobel laureates; university presidents; leaders in government, social justice, and industry; groundbreaking scientists; and renowned scholars across various fields, including STEM and the humanities.

Leadership

Wendy Cadge, President

[Wendy Cadge](#), a nationally renowned expert in contemporary American spirituality and religion, is the 10th president of Bryn Mawr College. She is leading two key initiatives focused on advancing the College's mission and broadening its reach: developing a forward-thinking [strategic vision](#) and creating a [comprehensive plan for the physical campus](#).

A sociologist by training, President Cadge is known for her work on religion in public institutions, religious diversity, and pluralism, and as a highly respected educator, scholar, and administrator.

Numerous foundations and trusts have supported her research and teaching, including the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Fetzer Institute, Henry Luce Foundation, John Templeton Foundation, Lovell Foundation, Radcliffe Institute, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Scholar in Health Policy Research Program, Ruderman Family Foundation, Russell Berrie Foundation, Templeton Religion Trust, and The Charles H. Revson Foundation.

Cadge is a member of the American Sociological Association (ASA), the American Academy of Religion (AAR), and the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR). She is a founder and past chair of the Innovations in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Program Unit of the AAR. She is a previous chair of the Religion Section and the Committee on Professional Ethics of the ASA.

Cadge previously held various leadership positions at Brandeis University, including dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, senior associate dean for strategic initiatives, and chair of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality program. She served on the Bowdoin College faculty from 2003 to 2006.

Cadge received her bachelor's degree with high honors and majors in Sociology and Anthropology, and Religion, from Swarthmore College, her master's and Ph.D. from Princeton University, and completed two years of postdoctoral work at Harvard University.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The Vice President for External Relations (VPER) is responsible for building strategic relationships with external partners to elevate the college's visibility, reputation, and connections with key audiences. This role manages external engagement; government relations, including relationships with local, national, and international elected officials; and identifying new and existing constituents who can further expand Bryn Mawr's reach. A member of the senior staff, this person works closely with the President and other senior-level colleagues to advance the college's mission, values, and strategic priorities with non-alum stakeholders. The VPER is also responsible for drafting a wide variety of presidential communications in her voice that address key issues and priorities, and serving as a college spokesperson as necessary.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE VP

Strategic External Relations

- Identify opportunities for engagement and collaboration with external thought leaders and influencers in higher education. Develop and maintain those relationships on behalf of the President.
- Partner with higher education peers and associations to grow coalitional support for policies important to Bryn Mawr College.
- Represent the President and the President's Office at campus and community functions and on relevant external committees.
- Represent the President in meetings with key external constituents and strategic forums.
- Create platforms for dialogue between the college and local, national, and international stakeholders.
- Oversee planning and execution of presidential events for external-facing initiatives.

Strategic Communications

- In collaboration with the Office of Communications and Marketing, develop and lead a cohesive presidential communications strategy aligned with institutional priorities.
- Conduct research and assemble materials for the president in connection with speaking engagements, events, presentations, strategic initiatives, and other activities.
- Assist in writing and editing of presidential correspondence, newsletters, speeches, proposals, and other communication in consultation with the president.
- Prepare reports, briefings, presentations, and responses on institutional and strategic issues.
- Assist the president with correspondence that requires considerable sensitivity, discretion, judgment, or negotiation.

- Collaborate with Office of Communications and Marketing on crisis communication with institutional leadership.
- Manage the flow of communications in and out of the president's office to ensure consistent and responsive message delivery to key college stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, governing boards, committees, and others as appropriate.

Institutional Collaboration

- Advise senior leadership on external perception and communication strategy; serve as an intermediary between internal Bryn Mawr content creators and external audiences, reporting market feedback across various constituencies in order to refine and strengthen messaging.
- Support the External Relations Committee of the Board of Trustees.
- Support the development of reports, board materials, and special projects for the Office of the President.
- Work closely with the Advancement, Enrollment, Communications/Marketing, and Academic Affairs functions/offices to align messaging and coordinate external outreach efforts.

Government Relations

- Track legislative and regulatory developments that may impact the institution and communicate timely updates to campus leadership.
- Remain current on relevant local, state, and federal government policies and issues, recommending strategies to address or adapt to them and identifying opportunities for engagement and collaboration.
- Serve as liaison to elected local, state, and federal officials on behalf of the president.
- Increase the visibility of faculty and administrators as spokespersons for the cutting-edge research and scholarship conducted at Bryn Mawr, and for higher education institutions in general, through engagement with governmental and legislative bodies, as well as regional, national, and international associations.
- In coordination with the president, work with key stakeholders to identify policy opportunities and develop, refine, and advance Bryn Mawr's policy priorities.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Experience and Leadership

- At least ten years of experience in strategic communications, external relations, or government affairs in higher education, nonprofit, or government settings.

- A record of success developing and implementing external relations strategies for organizations of comparable complexity through a creative and entrepreneurial approach.
- An appreciation for the vital role an institution of higher learning can play in the surrounding community, and an appetite to be an active participant in identifying and delivering mutually beneficial opportunities for the college to contribute positively to its local community, greater Philadelphia region, and nation.
- Deep knowledge of the higher education landscape or comparable experience in a similarly complex, mission-driven environment.

Skills and Competencies

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to articulate clear, concise messaging and the capacity to communicate broadly across an institution and its external audiences.
- Broad experience with federal, state, and local public policy issues, preferably those affecting higher education.
- The agility and inclination to advance complex projects and solve problems collaboratively, coupled with the willingness to act resourcefully, authoritatively, and resolutely.
- Ability to serve as the college's representative and spokesperson in a variety of venues.

Collaboration and Relationship Building

- A highly collaborative team player; strong interpersonal and diplomacy skills; superb active listening and influencing skills; the ability to cultivate and sustain trust and credibility with colleagues, and to unify them around difficult issues; a facilitator, convener, and mediator.
- A commitment to engage collaboratively with and be accessible to administrative colleagues, faculty, staff, students, community members, and to respond effectively to their needs and concerns.
- A track record of successful engagement and relationship building with elected officials, civic and community leaders, and those who represent them.

Integrity and Professionalism

- A deep personal and professional commitment to the mission of Bryn Mawr College.
- An ability to work independently and effectively.
- A magnanimous and approachable persona; a willingness to engage with individuals at all levels, including students, regardless of authority level or presumed stature.
- An effectiveness at managing change and leading by influence, inspiring those outside their direct sphere of control.

- The intellectual force needed to respond to, help prioritize, and operationalize new ideas put forth by the President.
- The ability to perform as an outstanding colleague with good listening and partnership skills, high energy and drive, and a relentlessly positive attitude.
- A willingness to challenge the status quo with well-thought-out recommendations and ideas, the desire to act as a catalyst for change, and the ability to identify innovative engagement opportunities.
- A commitment to inclusion, collaboration, and cultural sensitivity.
- A proven record of demonstrating the utmost integrity, discretion, and sound judgment when dealing with sensitive and confidential matters.
- A bachelor's degree is required.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

Bryn Mawr has a long tradition of educational excellence and offers a dynamic and challenging work environment. It is easily reached by public transportation as well as most major highways. The college offers competitive salaries and excellent benefits. Information regarding employee benefits can be found [here](#).

Located West of Philadelphia, the town of Bryn Mawr is part of the historic [Main Line](#) and continues to be served by national and regional rail lines. The town was given its current name around 1870, and the new college adopted the name when it was founded in 1885.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/bryn-mawr-college/vice-president-external-relations>

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Bryn Mawr College is an equal opportunity employer. Applications are considered without regard to race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Bryn Mawr 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 Bryn Mawr College would supersede any conflicting information in this document.