

HARVARD UNIVERSITY



Dean of Administration and Finance
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

THE SEARCH

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), the largest unit and historic heart of Harvard University, seeks a strategic and visionary change leader to serve as its Dean of Administration and Finance (Dean of A&F). The next Dean of A&F will have the opportunity to serve in a key leadership role at a deeply important and influential School with a rich history and spirit of imagination, experimentation, and purpose. The FAS finds itself at a pivotal moment as it takes on a forward-thinking administrative transformation initiative to best align resources with core mission functions, amplify impact, and ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the academic center of America's oldest university. To actualize this vision, the FAS requires a Dean of A&F who is bold, strategic, and creative and will build strong relationships and inclusive processes that enable equally bold and creative change across the FAS' highly complex operation.

The Dean of A&F is the chief administrative officer of the FAS and is a direct report to Dr. Hopi Hoekstra, the [Edgerley Family Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences](#). The FAS encompasses Harvard College (including Admissions and Financial Aid), the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and the Academic Divisions of Science, Social Science, and the Arts & Humanities, as well as Harvard Athletics, the Division of Continuing Education, and many academic centers and institutes, museums, and libraries. The FAS Dean of A&F has oversight of financial matters, including the \$1.8 billion operating budget, physical resources and capital planning, human resources, IT, research administration, and other business operations.

The Dean of A&F will serve as a key strategic partner of the Dean and is a critical member of the FAS leadership team. The Dean of A&F will facilitate the integration of academic and administrative operations and planning, ensuring long-term financial sustainability and alignment of resources with research and

teaching missions. Leveraging a data-driven approach, the Dean of A&F will provide the Dean and leadership with the information and analysis needed for strategic decision-making and planning. Operating as a problem-solver and change leader, the Dean of A&F will ensure administrative excellence by leading the implementation of reimagined administrative structures and modernized business systems that best serve students, faculty, and staff. Given the complex, decentralized organizational structure of Harvard and how critical the success of the FAS is to the University, the Dean of A&F must build constructive, productive relationships with colleagues within and beyond the FAS, particularly with the University's central financial and operational leaders. The Dean of A&F must be an excellent communicator and collaborator who is committed to transparency and accessibility. They must also be a strong and visible team leader, capable of igniting excitement in the face of change. Lastly, the Dean of A&F will have an unwavering commitment to and understanding of the value of a liberal arts and sciences education and the groundbreaking research that FAS offers in a rapidly evolving world.

Dean Hopi Hoekstra of Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences has initiated this search for the Dean of Administration and Finance and engaged the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller, to assist in the recruitment. All inquiries, applications, and nominations, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1636, Harvard University is the oldest institution of higher education in the United States and is a worldwide leader in education and research. It comprises twelve degree-granting schools (Harvard College, Harvard Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard Business School, Harvard Divinity School, Harvard Graduate School of Design, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Harvard Kennedy School, Harvard Law School, Harvard Medical School, Harvard School of Dental Medicine, and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health), a division of continuing education, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, as well as an array of museums, research centers, and the largest university library system in the world. For the 2025 fiscal year, Harvard's operating budget is estimated to be approximately \$5 billion, and its endowment is valued at approximately \$39.2 billion. In 2024, Harvard inaugurated its 31st President, Dr. Alan M. Garber.

Since its founding, Harvard University has grown from nine students and a single master teacher to an enrollment of more than 24,000 degree-seeking candidates taught by more than 20,600 faculty. The distinguished careers and achievements of Harvard's faculty and over 400,000 living alumni have earned the institution a global reputation for excellence. Eight Presidents of the United States and 32 Heads of State have graduated from Harvard. Forty-eight current or former faculty members are Nobel Laureates, and forty-eight current or former faculty members are Pulitzer Prize winners. Harvard graduates are heavily represented among Fortune 500 CEOs, leaders of academic fields, and elected members of Congress. Part of the challenge and gratification of working at Harvard University comes from this selectivity and excellence.

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

The [Faculty of Arts and Sciences](#) (FAS) is the historic heart of Harvard University. The FAS has approximately 3,000 staff, 1,200 faculty (700 ladder faculty), 12,000 students (approximately 7,000 undergraduate and 5,000 graduate), and a \$1.8 billion operating budget. It is the home of Harvard's undergraduate program (Harvard College, founded in 1636), all of Harvard's Ph.D. programs (the Harvard Kenneth C. Griffin Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, founded in 1872), and Harvard Athletics. The 40 academic departments and 30+ centers of the FAS support a community unparalleled in its academic excellence across the broadest range of liberal arts and sciences disciplines.

Together, the FAS seeks to foster an environment of ambition, curiosity, and shared commitment to knowledge and truth—one that elicits excellence from all community members and prepares the next generation of leaders through a transformative educational experience.

Schools, Divisions, and Units

Academics and research are at the core of the FAS. As the largest academic division of Harvard University and the only one responsible for both undergraduate and graduate education, the FAS is home to an abundance of academic resources and research endeavors.

The FAS comprises three Schools (Harvard College, [Harvard Kenneth C. Griffin Graduate School of Arts & Sciences](#), and [Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences](#)), three academic divisions ([Arts & Humanities Division](#), [Division of Science](#), and the [Division of Social Science](#)), the [Division of Continuing Education](#), Harvard Athletics, Harvard College Admissions and Financial Aid, seven museums, and more than 30 centers and institutes.

Leadership

[Dr. Hopi Hoekstra](#), the Edgerley Family Dean of the FAS, the C.Y. Chan Professor of Arts and Sciences, and the Xiaomeng Tong and Yu Chen Professor of Life Sciences, has been a member of the Harvard faculty since 2007 and became Dean of FAS in 2023. Hoekstra is a geneticist, who focuses on making the causal connections between variation in the genome and variation in traits (from morphology to behavior). Her work integrates laboratory techniques with experiments in the field, and bridges such areas as evolution, development, behavior, genetics and genomics, and neurobiology. She is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Philosophical Society.

For parts of the past decade, Dr. Hoekstra has been a member of the FAS Faculty Council, FAS Committee on Appointments and Promotions, the Provost's Academic Leadership Forum, the University-wide Steering Committee on Life Sciences, the faculty steering committee for the Harvard Brain Science Initiative, and the Provost's Advisory Committee. Additionally, she served as vice president and then president of Harvard's Phi Beta Kappa Society. In leadership positions of several scientific societies, she has advocated for early career mentorship and improving inclusion and belonging in the sciences. She has

presented dozens of named and public lectures nationwide and abroad, served as a member of numerous advisory councils and editorial boards, and recently chaired the National Academy of Sciences' section on evolutionary biology.

ROLE OF THE FAS DEAN OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Reporting directly to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Dean of Administration and Finance (Dean of A&F) provides critical leadership across the major administrative functions of the FAS and serves as a thought partner and strategic advisor to the Dean. Additionally, the Dean of A&F will collaborate with faculty leadership and the Dean for Faculty Affairs and Planning and serve as a member of the Dean's FAS leadership team. The Dean of A&F will be responsible for integrating academic and administrative operations and planning, ensuring that administrative and financial resources are best deployed to support and advance the academic mission and strategic priorities of the FAS.

The Dean of A&F will provide leadership across major administrative functions of the FAS, which currently include finance, human resources, IT, administrative operations, institutional research, physical resources and planning, and select other administrative operations.

In this dynamic and pivotal moment within higher education, the incoming Dean of A&F will be presented with a rare opportunity to lead the strategic transformation of FAS administrative processes and redefine administrative excellence at the FAS. By ensuring that the FAS has the people, processes, systems, and structures needed to thrive across its teaching and research missions and operational functions, the Dean of A&F will strengthen the foundation of Harvard's largest School, and more importantly, set an example and precedent within higher education that will have reverberations across the sector.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE FAS DEAN OF ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

The success of the next Dean of A&F will be determined by how well they address the following opportunities and challenges:

Provide Strategic Financial and Administrative Management

Higher education, and Harvard in particular, is in a moment of unprecedented change. The need to transform, reimagine, and strengthen models of teaching and research has perhaps never been more urgent or complex. It is within this context that the Dean of A&F will serve as a critical partner to the Dean of the FAS. By overseeing the FAS' administration, financial budgeting, and capital planning activities, the Dean of A&F will ensure long-term sustainability, transparency, and alignment of resources with academic mission. As a member of the Dean's FAS Leadership Group and in close collaboration with the Dean for Faculty Affairs and Planning, faculty leadership, and Divisional Deans, they will lead conversations that facilitate the integration of academic and administrative operations and planning, connect the dots among programs, infrastructure, and funding, and enable the exploration of innovative models of

education. By leveraging a data-informed approach, the Dean of A&F will provide the Dean and academic leadership with insights needed to gain a holistic understanding of the FAS, capture the full implications of proposed initiatives, and guide strategic decision-making. The Dean of A&F will also use data to craft effective narratives that explain and legitimize decisions to varied audiences.

Improve Administrative Efficiency

With more than 3,500 staff working across three schools, three divisions, and dozens of units, operations and administrative functions are deeply complex and, in many cases, highly varied. The FAS must modernize its administrative structures to meet the needs of faculty, students, and staff with greater speed and consistency. Currently, the Task Force on Workforce Planning, with support from McKinsey, is engaging faculty and staff across the FAS and Harvard more broadly to identify ways to reimagine the administrative model and explore opportunities to increase collaboration and efficiency while reducing bureaucracy and duplication. The Task Force is expected to make recommendations in the coming months. The Dean of A&F will implement the vision of this new administrative model and be responsible for its actualization.

Collaborate, Engage, and Communicate within and across the FAS and Harvard Communities

Culturally, both the FAS and Harvard University are deeply relationship-based. Strong communication, relationship-building, and change management skills will be critical for success. The Dean of A&F must be a visible and accessible leader during this time of immense change, taking time to listen to and understand the wide-ranging needs of varied constituents across the FAS. To ensure transformational initiatives are not only implemented but embraced by the community, the Dean of A&F must be able to explain complex financial and operational information to a wide variety of audiences, communicate decisions with clarity and care, and effectively articulate the value and opportunities presented by proposed transformations. The Dean of A&F's goal will be to excite and motivate the FAS community to embrace change, not for the sake of change, but to position the FAS in a place of strength and sustainability, where faculty, students, and staff are empowered to do their most ambitious and creative work. Additionally, the organizational structure of the institution is highly decentralized and complex. To be successful, the Dean of A&F must build strong collaborative partnerships with FAS' fiscal and operational leaders as well as with central leadership, simultaneously advocating for the unique needs of the FAS and aligning the FAS with Harvard-wide priorities, understanding that the success of Harvard depends on the success of the FAS, and vice versa.

Lead, Manage, and Support a Strong Team

The next Dean of A&F will lead a seasoned team of financial and administrative professionals who are deeply committed to the mission of the FAS but working within a context of uncertainty and change. To sustain and strengthen this team, the Dean of A&F must champion an inclusive and supportive culture that models transparency, collegiality, and professionalism. By setting clear expectations, investing in mentoring and professional development, and instituting regular feedback and evaluation processes, the

Dean of A&F will empower staff to thrive while building the leadership capacity needed to meet both immediate challenges and long-term goals.

Modernizing Business Systems

Harvard's scale, history, and decentralized culture provide both an extraordinary foundation and a unique challenge—an array of systems and processes that now require greater connection and modernization. The next Dean of A&F has a critical opportunity to modernize business systems and harness technology to better serve faculty, students, and staff. Working within Harvard's storied independent school model, the Dean of A&F must champion the adoption of integrated, user-friendly tools and processes that improve transparency, enable data-driven decision-making, and reduce administrative burdens across the FAS. By doing so, the Dean of A&F will not only streamline daily operations but also strengthen the foundation for long-term institutional success.

To achieve this, the Dean of A&F will lead efforts to advance data and reporting capabilities, ensuring leaders have timely and accurate insights to guide decisions. The Dean of A&F will collaborate across the FAS and Harvard to strike the right balance between local flexibility and shared platforms, leveraging new technologies—including emerging applications of AI—to create a more connected, agile, and responsive organization. In addition, the Dean of A&F will focus on strengthening research administration, streamlining contract management, and empowering leaders at every level to make informed choices with greater clarity and confidence. The Dean of A&F will be a critical figure in achieving business excellence at the FAS, driving tech-forward, data-rich approaches that enhance efficiency, maximize resources, and best support the academic mission.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one person will embody them all, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experience, and personal qualities:

- **Track Record of Experience:** At least 15 years of senior leadership experience in complex organizations, preferably across both the private sector and non-profit/higher education sectors.
- **Degree Requirement:** Advanced degree in business administration, public administration, higher education management, or related field preferred.
- **Adaptive and Data-Driven Strategist:** Adept at using analytics and data to inform action and understanding; excels at setting priorities and charting a course in uncertain or rapidly evolving environments.
- **Transformative Leadership:** Experience leading and implementing administrative transformation, including experience in complex and best-in-class business and accounting systems and processes across an organization.
- **Strong Analytical Acumen:** Strong grounding in finance, budgeting, and decision support analytics; a data-driven and systems thinker.

- **Financial Background:** Demonstrated success managing organizations with \$1B+ budgets and leading large, multidisciplinary teams.
- **Strategic Thinker:** Experience serving as a trusted advisor and strategic partner to a senior leader and working effectively as part of a senior leadership team characterized by trust, open communication, and shared goals.
- **Visionary Change Leader:** Track record of leading and successfully delivering operational transformation in large, complex institutions; capable of building alignment and momentum around change by translating complexity into clear, compelling narratives.
- **Mission-Driven:** A deep commitment to and a clear affinity for the teaching and research missions of Harvard University.
- **Accomplished Operator:** A demonstrated ability to lead and oversee operations across a range of functions, including facilities, human resources, research administration, and others.
- **Innovator:** Brings experience in process and operating model redesign across administrative functions such as AI and tech enablement or shared services implementation.
- **Inclusive Leader:** Builds trust and fosters collaboration across teams and stakeholder groups. A proven track record as a manager, leader, and developer of large and diverse teams made up of highly skilled professionals.
- **Problem Solver:** Brings creativity and pragmatism to complex, ambiguous challenges; skilled at breaking down barriers and finding actionable solutions.
- **Resilient & Adaptive:** Thrives in ambiguity, balances competing demands, and models calm decision-making in times of change.

SALARY RANGE

The salary grade for this position is 64—more information on Harvard’s salary grades is linked [here](#).

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 using the following link: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/harvard-university-faculty-arts-sciences/dean-administration-and-finance>.

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Harvard University is committed to [equal opportunity](#) and [non-discrimination](#). We seek talent from all parts of society and the world, and we strive to ensure everyone at Harvard thrives. Our differences help our community advance Harvard's academic purposes.

Harvard has an [equal employment opportunity policy](#) that outlines our commitment to prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran status, religion, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law or identified in the university's [non-discrimination policy](#). Harvard's [equal employment opportunity policy](#) and [non-discrimination policy](#) help all community members participate fully in work and campus life free from harassment and discrimination.

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