

Search for the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
College for Creative Studies
Detroit, Michigan

The College for Creative Studies nurtures the creativity that is vital to the enrichment of modern culture. The College educates visual artists and designers, knowledgeable in varied fields, who will be leaders in creative professions that shape society and advance economic growth. The College fosters students' resolve to pursue excellence, act ethically, embrace their responsibilities as citizens of diverse local and global communities, and learn throughout their lives. The College engages in community service by offering opportunities for artistic enrichment and opening career pathways to talented individuals of all ages.

THE SEARCH

The College for Creative Studies (CCS) seeks a collaborative and future-oriented leader in art and design to serve as its next Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs. The role offers the opportunity to elevate CCS's national and international reputation, deepen regional industry partnerships within Detroit's creative ecosystem, and position the college for sustainable growth while preserving its mission and creative identity.

Reporting to the President and serving on the President's leadership team, the Provost will guide CCS's academic vision and be instrumental in implementing the strategic plan to expand access, evolve programs, and increase enrollment. As Chief Academic Officer, the Provost provides direction and evaluation for all academic activities, curricular matters, and faculty affairs. The Provost oversees Academic Affairs, Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, and Campus Life. The Provost must ensure academic quality and compliance with accreditation and regulatory requirements, facilitate collaborative efforts to address strategic opportunities, and deploy resources effectively to support institutional priorities.

The Provost must balance big-picture thinking with operational rigor, including recruiting, retaining, and developing faculty, practicing shared governance, and aligning programmatic decisions with budget realities in partnership with the CFO. The role emphasizes fostering an inclusive, collaborative campus culture, advancing student retention and success, and engaging externally to build partnerships, secure funding, and expand career pathways for students. The ideal candidate will combine a demonstrated commitment to creative practice and academic leadership with experience in program innovation, faculty development, financial stewardship, and community engagement.

ABOUT THE COLLEGE FOR CREATIVE STUDIES

The College for Creative Studies (CCS) was founded in 1906 by a group of civic leaders committed to preserving beauty and craftsmanship in an increasingly industrialized world. Today, CCS continues to advance this mission by nurturing the creativity that is vital to modern culture. Located in midtown Detroit, at the heart of a renowned [city of design](#), CCS has a strong legacy of educating artists and designers to be leaders in creative professions that shape society and advance economic growth.

Academic Accreditation and Programs

CCS is a degree-granting institution accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). CCS is a member of the Association of Independent Colleges of Art & Design (AICAD) and, in 2025, was designated by the Carnegie Classifications as an [Opportunity College](#). This recognizes CCS for fostering opportunities that promote student success, as measured by student demographics that reflect the local community, and by the earnings of graduates compared to their peers in the area.

At CCS, [Academics](#) are grounded in skills-based curriculum and unique connections to industry and professional practice. At the undergraduate level, CCS offers twelve undergraduate programs, including several BFA programs and a three-year Bachelor of Arts degree. The college is currently developing an additional three-year Bachelor of Arts degree option, which is scheduled for accreditation review in the spring of 2026. With a student-faculty ratio of 9:1, teaching and learning at CCS is intimate and student-focused. CCS offers five Graduate programs that emphasize skill development and have a high track record of success in providing students with pathways into new careers. CCS also offers free art education for Detroit youth through its Community Arts Partnership ([CAP](#)) program. In addition, [University Prep Art & Design](#) is a public charter middle and high school, located on campus, enrolling over 800 students in a high-performance academic curriculum with a special focus on art and design.

CCS is located in Detroit's [Innovation District](#), with two campuses situated one mile apart, with shuttle access between them. The facilities provide state-of-the-art resources to students, from exceptional studios for the fine arts and crafts to cutting-edge design technologies specific to each discipline. The Ford Campus is home to the undergraduate programs in Art Education, Studio Art and Crafts, Entertainment Arts (Animation, Game, Concept Design), Film, Foundation, Interdisciplinary Art and Design, Illustration, Liberal Arts, and Photography, as well as the post-degree Art Education program. The Taubman Center is home to undergraduate programs in Communication Design and Strategy, Fashion Design, Interior Design, Product Design, and Transportation Design, as well as Graduate Programs in Color & Materials Design, Design for Sustainability, Interdisciplinary Design and Media, Transportation Design, and User Experience Design. Additionally, Design Core Detroit and Shinola are also located in the Taubman facility.

Students and Alumni

In 2024-2025, CCS enrolled 1,230 undergraduate students and 57 graduate students from 32 states and 32 countries and territories. The college aims to increase enrollment to 1,550 students by 2030, driven

by a suite of changes that reduce barriers to access. These include improving the ease of transfer student admissions, restructuring portfolio requirements, and introducing new academic programs. With approximately 75% of the student base from Michigan, CCS competes with state schools in Michigan as well as several AICAD schools. For further detail, the [CCS Viewbook](#) provides a graphically rich source of information for prospective students, highlighting important statistics regarding student success and describing the programs, facilities, student life, and application process.

At CCS, a major point of pride is that students graduate career-ready. The school is particularly effective at connecting graduates to industry, and industry leaders know they can rely on CCS graduates to possess the technical and professional skills necessary for success from day one. The overall undergraduate job placement rate for CCS is 81% within 1-1.5 years of graduation. CCS has highly engaged alumni, many of whom provide a sustainable cycle of hiring, as they understand the expectation of excellence at CCS. The Alumni Council represents a diverse group of CCS graduates from multiple generations, many of whom reside in the Detroit area.

Organization and Finance

The [faculty](#) at CCS comprises approximately 58 full-time professors and over 200 part-time faculty members. Faculty members are both educators and creative practitioners, many of whom have professional experience in their respective creative or artistic industries as well as in higher education. Motivated by a love of teaching and a devotion to mentorship, faculty impart knowledge and skills that ensure students succeed in their chosen field while cultivating a passion for the importance of art and design in society.

CCS has a governing board of approximately 32 trustees. Members include local Detroit stakeholders, alumni, and leaders in many of the industries that employ CCS graduates. The full board meets four times per year and has an active committee structure, including standing committees for education, finance, institutional engagement, investment, audit, and governance.

The 2024 overall operating budget was approximately \$60 million. Approximately 75% of operating revenue comes from tuition and fees, and 13% from auxiliary revenue (primarily housing and dining). The College has a \$102 million endowment, which is robust for its size. Approximately 98% of CCS students receive financial assistance, which reduces the actual cost of tuition by an average of 50% for undergraduate students.

Strategic Plan

Like many other colleges and universities, CCS faces rising costs, demographic declines, and questions about the value of investing in a college education. In 2024, Michigan launched its Community College Guarantee initiative, providing access to tuition-free community college, resulting in an increase in demand from transfer students.

The 2023-2026 [strategic plan](#) aims to chart a new path forward for CCS, positioning the College to reach new prospective candidates and sustainable enrollment levels, cultivate an ever-more human-centered

and collaborative culture across students, faculty, and staff, and evolve as an institution to be increasingly nimble to respond to the current and future social, economic, cultural, and technological contexts. Key pillars of the strategic plan are:

- Expand the pool of potential future students, thereby increasing the diversity of the campus community, and keep pace with demographic shifts in the market. This strategy encompasses reaching prospective students who may not identify as “creatives”, reducing barriers to entry that emphasize previous artistic or design experience, and demonstrating the viability of a CCS degree by highlighting the high post-graduation placement rates across many industries.
- Develop meaningful learning experiences that meet the needs of these new learners as individuals, which may be different from the needs of prior students at the institution, resulting in a far more human-centered institution in every aspect of its operations.
- Implement practices and processes that enable CCS to become more nimble and flexible in response to the ever-changing social, economic, cultural, and technological contexts. Examples include implementing collaborative working groups that focus on integrating AI and other emerging technologies at multiple levels, as well as addressing both the tactical uses and the ethical practices and guidance that enable students, faculty, and staff to be thoughtful consumers of technology.

Leadership

A three-time college president and Michigan native, Donald L. Tuski began his term as President of the College for Creative Studies in July 2019. An educator and advocate for students, Tuski teaches courses in the college’s Liberal Arts department and is involved with many student groups on campus. Recognizing the increasing cost of higher education, Tuski is committed to maximizing value for students so that CCS graduates have the capacity to sustainably practice their creative discipline. As a result, one of Tuski’s primary focuses at CCS is to ensure that every student who attends CCS has an opportunity to learn by doing.

Prior to CCS, Tuski served as President and professor of anthropology at PNCA. He led enrollment growth at the institution during which time PNCA welcomed the largest first-year class in its 110-year history. At Maine College of Art (MECA) in Portland, Maine, Tuski led a sustained period of development from 2010 to 2016, increasing enrollment by 22 percent and growing revenue by 39 percent. At Olivet College (his alma mater) Tuski spent 25 years in various roles, including nine years as president (2001–2010). Donald L. Tuski holds a BA in biology from Olivet College, MA, and a PhD in anthropology from Michigan State University.

ROLE OF THE PROVOST

The Provost serves as the Chief Academic Officer at CCS, providing primary administrative leadership, direction, and evaluation for all academic activities, curricular matters, and faculty affairs of the college. The Provost oversees Academic Affairs, including Educational Technology and Innovation, Academic Planning, and the Library; Undergraduate Studies and Academic Facilities; Graduate Studies and

Research; and Campus Life, which encompasses Campus Safety, Civil Rights and Title 9, The Center for Tutoring and Writing, Dining and Residence Life, Student Engagement, and the Wellness Center.

The Provost reports to the President and serves as a member of the President's leadership team, which includes the Vice President of Strategy and Communication, the Vice President of Finance, the Associate Vice President of Institutional Advancement, the Assistant Vice President of Campus Life, the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Enrollment, the Deans of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, the Chief Information Officer, and the Chief Human Resources Officer.

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated success as a transformative, results-oriented leader who can partner with the President, senior leadership, and faculty to carry forward the College's academic vision. Harnessing creativity and flexibility, this individual will strike a balance between academic priorities and the realities of a tuition-driven institution of CCS's size. The successful candidate must be detail-oriented and operational to manage the work of Academic Affairs, while also being able to see the "big picture" and effectively communicate this vision to others.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Building upon the strong foundation that already exists, the Provost will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Academic Innovation and Program Development

The Provost will foster a sense of pride in CCS's unique position, character, and offerings, work collaboratively to set priorities, and make transparent and strategic choices that drive towards the College's strategic transformation goals. The successful candidate will ensure resources best support institutional priorities and are deployed for maximum effectiveness and desired impact. This includes leading the launch and growth of the new 3-year BA programs, as well as an online graduate degree in UX/UI Design, integrating emerging technologies like AI into the curriculum and operations, and supporting interdisciplinary and experiential learning, including industry-sponsored projects and student-run businesses.

Faculty Development and Recruitment

The Provost will work closely with the deans and department chairs to recruit, retain, and develop faculty, ensuring that they have the community and support they need to experience a sense of belonging, succeed as educators and mentors, and grow their creative practices. The Provost will lead by example and follow effective principles of shared governance that are central to CCS's tight-knit community. The Provost will be attuned to opportunities that advance faculty development, such as offering resources and seminars focused on best practices in teaching and learning.

Student Experience and Learning

The Provost will work closely with academic and student affairs teams to strengthen policies and programs that support student retention, academic success, and graduation rates and outcomes. Across all areas of student experience and learning, the Provost will monitor performance and outcomes, collecting data and feedback to support improvements that meet the needs of today's students. The Provost will support institutional accreditation efforts and ensure that all academic programs comply with external regulations, including those of government agencies and accreditation bodies.

Enrollment Growth and Student Access

The Provost will be central to ongoing conversations around enrollment targets, working closely with leadership to advance strategies that achieve an ideal student body composition and size, always keeping retention top of mind. The Provost will advance the College's efforts to address declining enrollment and demographic shifts. This includes ongoing improvements to transfer pathways, increasing accessibility for non-traditional students, and expanding affordability and scholarships to attract a broader, more diverse student body.

Culture and Collaboration

Harnessing strong communication and interpersonal skills, the Provost will clearly articulate priorities and goals to all members of the CCS community, ensuring that faculty, administrators, staff, and students have the systems and support mechanisms needed to work together to achieve the academic mission. To facilitate transparency and operational effectiveness across the institution, the Provost will clarify the roles and responsibilities of the academic administration, enforce policies and procedures with consistency, and clearly communicate and uphold expectations and standards.

External Engagement and Reputation Building

The Provost will leverage CCS's legacy and partnerships to elevate its visibility and impact. This includes deepening the college's connection to Detroit's creative ecosystem, expanding industry connections both regionally and worldwide, and promoting CCS as a national and international destination for art and design education. In close collaboration with the leadership team, the Provost will play a key role in defining the ambitions of the college, developing new strategic partnerships that enable cutting-edge work, supporting faculty and students in expanding their practices through external grants and partnerships, and aligning these efforts more closely with the academic program.

Operational Effectiveness and Financial Sustainability

As CCS grows, the Provost will remain mindful of budget constraints while being sensitive to the mission, focusing on operational efficiency to expand without incurring linear cost increases. In partnership with the Chief Financial Officer, the Provost will carefully manage the academic budget, including faculty salaries and contracts, departmental funding, and other academic programs. The successful candidate will anticipate and articulate the impact of programmatic decisions on CCS's academic and financial future and play a critical role in engaging with external funders.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess many, if not all, of the following professional qualifications, skills, and experience:

- Passion for the mission of CCS and a demonstrated commitment to the value of creative practice; the capacity to represent CCS as a thought leader in art and design education; a record of achievement that inspires the faculty and resonates with the core mission of the college.
- Proven experience with faculty recruitment and development; understanding and appreciation of faculty expertise and the norms of higher education.
- Capacity to represent CCS externally with credibility in both academic and industry circles; successful track record of forming creative partnerships.
- Knowledge of the contemporary digital technologies used in educational and professional art/design environments.
- Demonstrated experience in aligning programmatic and budgetary priorities and leading successful financial strategies in a constrained environment.
- Demonstrated sensitivity to, understanding of, and proven ability to work with people from a broad range of diverse interests and backgrounds; demonstrated commitment to inclusivity.
- The ability to translate ideas and ideals into actions; successful experience with strategic planning and implementation, including experience implementing complex institutional change initiatives; a data-informed approach to strategic decision-making.
- Excellent management and team building skills; the ability to inspire people who identify as designers and makers; experience with staff collaboration and development.
- Exceptional communication skills and emotional intelligence, the ability to engage effectively with many constituencies who hold different points of view, and the highest level of integrity.
- Excellent writing, editing, reporting, and presentation skills; effective at conveying information in different formats to various audiences, including students, senior management, faculty, staff, trustees, and external constituents.
- An earned terminal degree (MFA or PhD) in a field of Art and Design or other relevant discipline that aligns with the identity and offerings of the college.
- Experience working in an art or design field outside of academia.
- Five or more years of experience in higher education (both administration and teaching).

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The anticipated compensation for this position will be competitive and commensurate with experience. The Provost is expected to have a regular presence on campus, ensuring visibility and accessibility with faculty, staff, and the local community. Periodic travel for conferences, events, and network building is expected.

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: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/college-creative-studies/provost>

Dan Rodas, Partner
Nella Young, Senior Associate
Seema Khan, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

The College for Creative Studies, a leading college of art and design, represents a community composed of individuals with many perspectives, personal experiences, values, identities and worldviews and we value what this brings to our organization. CCS is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We consider applicants for all positions without regard to age, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, height, weight, gender identity, marital or veteran status, disability or any other legally protected status.

The College for Creative Studies subscribes to the principle of equal opportunity in its employment, admissions and educational practices and strives to provide an environment and workplace free from unlawful harassment or discrimination. We encourage applications from all.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the College for Creative Studies. 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 the College for Creative Studies would supersede any conflicting information in this document.