



# DARTMOUTH

Virginia Rice Kelsey 1961s Director  
Hood Museum of Art  
Dartmouth

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dartmouth seeks a visionary and academically engaged leader to serve as Virginia Rice Kelsey 1961s Director of the Hood Museum of Art. A premier teaching museum with a global collection and a distinctive record of curricular integration, the Hood is central to Dartmouth's arts ecosystem, liberal arts mission, and the Upper Valley community. Reporting to the provost, the director will set strategic direction for collections stewardship and growth, academic programming, exhibitions and interpretation, community engagement, and fundraising in partnership with the museum's Board of Advisors and Dartmouth Advancement. The next director will deepen the museum's integration into teaching and research, strengthen cross-campus collaboration in the Arts District, and expand the Hood's local and national profile at a moment of significant institutional investment in the arts and arts facilities.

## THE SEARCH

Dartmouth seeks nominations and applications for the position of Virginia Rice Kelsey 1961s Director of the Hood Museum of Art (Hood). The next director will be a collaborative, strategic, and visionary leader with a strong commitment to broad academic and community involvement. The mission of the Hood centers art and people in teaching and learning through inclusive and robust academic, cultural, and civic engagements with art and its histories.

A critical component of Dartmouth's distinctly varied, rich arts landscape, the Hood supports research and teaching, mounts groundbreaking exhibitions, and engages off-campus audiences through distinctive programs and events. The Hood is an intellectual and cultural anchor of the campus and actively engages students, staff, faculty, alumni, and local community members. The museum has a collection of more than 72,000 works of art from six continents, and the collection's strengths include Native American, European and American, Asian, Indigenous Australian, African, and Melanesian art. The Hood advances learning, care, and connections through the reach and relevance of visual art and material culture.

The next director will join the Hood Museum at an exciting moment within the organization and across the campus. The Hood stands poised to shape what an art museum at a world-class educational institution can and should be: an inspiring partner to scholars and students, a convener and presenter of intellectually rigorous and bold exhibitions, a champion of arts scholarship, an innovative community partner, and a shaper of public discourse. Grounded in the Hood's collection, the director will advance thoughtful stewardship and strategic growth of the museum's holdings, strengthening their use for teaching, research, and public engagement. Major priorities for the next director include:

- Deepening the museum's integration into the curriculum and academic life across Dartmouth;
- Helping to set a vision for the arts at Dartmouth; and
- Furthering the museum's reputation as a leading academic art museum that engages audiences locally and nationally.

The director, who reports to the provost, will be responsible for overseeing all activities of the museum and will provide strategic vision, direction, artistic oversight, and executive and administrative leadership. The successful candidate will have a deeply rooted commitment to the full scope of programs and partnerships that are offered at the Hood and a proven ability to work collaboratively with faculty, leadership, staff, students, and community partners. The director will possess deep knowledge of the arts and a strong commitment to the values of a liberal arts institution. An advanced degree in an art-related field and significant museum leadership experience is required. The director represents the museum to various external constituencies, most notably alumni and friends of the arts, the board of advisors, and audiences throughout the region. Overall, the director provides strategic leadership for the Hood Museum of Art, ensuring that the institution's mission and objectives are fully articulated and effectively pursued.

A search committee has been formed and Isaacson, Miller, the national executive search firm, has been retained to assist in this recruitment. Confidential inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

## THE HOOD MUSEUM OF ART

The Hood, one of the world's most dynamic teaching museums, is widely celebrated for the seamless integration of its collections into the Dartmouth educational experience. 2025 marks the museum's [40th anniversary](#). The Hood opened in 1985 with the mission of helping students to "construct meaning from what we see" and encouraging them to explore cultures and the human condition through art.

The museum plays a key role in fulfilling Dartmouth's commitment to experiential learning by giving students access to its collections and providing opportunities, such as curating exhibitions and acquiring works, for undergraduates and graduate students to participate in the Hood's operations. These unique partnerships make it possible for curators, faculty, and students to join in shared inquiry and hands-on learning. The Museum completed a \$50 million expansion in 2019 that increased Hood's overall square footage by more than 50%, to 62,400 square feet; enlarged exhibition space by 42%, to 16,350 square feet; added three classrooms with the latest object-study technology; and raised the number of galleries from 10 to 16. Over the past year, the museum has welcomed more than 28,000 visitors. The Hood's Department of Academic Programming, which supports courses and research in the Bernstein Center for Object Study (BCOS), engaged with faculty and students from over 40 academic departments. Students visited BCOS a total of 6,363 times for class sessions and worked directly with a wide range of objects from the museum's collection. The Hood also welcomed more than 3,000 K-12 students through the ArtStart and Images programs and school group tours. The Hood is preparing a [series of co-curated exhibitions](#) in recognition of America's 250th Anniversary.

The current 2022-2027 [strategic plan](#) sets out five goals:

1. Deepen the Hood Museum's educational impact across Dartmouth and the region.
2. Reimagine the collection's influence and potential.
3. Enable greater access to the Hood Museum's resources.
4. Spark imaginations and activate spaces of possibility.
5. Champion sustainable museum practice.

The Hood plays a critical role in Dartmouth's Arts District, which includes the Hopkins Center for the Arts, the Black Family Visual Arts Center, Sonic Practice Warehouse, and the Literary Arts Bridge. The district is an increasingly vibrant catalyst for creativity—a laboratory for visual arts and film studies, music, theater, dance, and written expression through experiential learning. While creativity exists across the Dartmouth campus and in every discipline, the district is a hub for artistic practices, inquiry, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The Hood projects a FY26 budget of roughly \$7.5 million and employs approximately 50 FTE staff members. The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, having completed its reaccreditation in November 2025.

## LEADERSHIP

Provost Santiago Schnell, an internationally recognized mathematical biologist and physiologist whose research advances understanding of the biochemical pathways underlying human disease, was appointed as Dartmouth's provost on July 1, 2025. Schnell came to Dartmouth from the University of Notre Dame, where he served as the William K. Warren Foundation Dean of the College of Science. He provided executive leadership for a complex academic enterprise spanning multiple departments, centers, and institutes with an annual budget exceeding \$110 million and implemented governance and operational reforms to strengthen transparency and resource stewardship. During his deanship, he led major philanthropic and capital efforts that raised more than \$170 million and spearheaded a \$125 million expansion of interdisciplinary facilities. Schnell is now making use of his demonstrated capacity for building institutional partnerships and fundraising to advance Dartmouth's arts ecosystem. Previously, he served as Chair of the Department of Molecular & Integrative Physiology at the University of Michigan Medical School, where he managed substantial budgets and strengthened financial performance.

As provost, Schnell is a strong advocate for the arts as central to Dartmouth's liberal arts mission and student experience. He is committed to strengthening collaboration among Dartmouth's arts institutions and to advancing the integration of the arts across curricular and co-curricular life. He has supported Dartmouth's recent investments in arts infrastructure, including the reopening of the Hopkins Center for the Arts, and views the arts as integral to the intellectual and civic vitality of the campus and region.

## ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

The director, who serves as the chief administrative officer of the museum, is responsible for all aspects of its operations and fiscal and personnel management. The director works closely with other academic and administrative departments on campus and represents the museum to various external constituencies. The director will provide strategic leadership for collections stewardship and development, including priorities for acquisitions, care and conservation, interpretive access, and ethical and professional standards aligned with teaching and research.

The director oversees a senior team that includes the Deputy Director, Associate Director of Curatorial Affairs, Business Officer, Head of Communications, Content, and Brand, Donor Relations and Advancement Manager, Administrative Assistant, Senior Curator for Academic Programs, and Curator of Education. They will also partner with the Hood Museum Board of Advisors, who serve as key stakeholders and advocates for the museum. Working closely with the museum's staff, the director will ensure strong support for Dartmouth's academic mission and the integration of the arts across curricular and co-

curricular initiatives. The director will cultivate relationships with academic departments, faculty, and students across Dartmouth's liberal arts community.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

### **Shape the museum's strategic vision and drive impactful outcomes.**

The Hood Museum of Art is currently guided by a strategic plan that extends through 2027. This plan offers a strong foundation for advancing the museum's mission while giving the next director the opportunity to shape the museum's next strategic plan. Originally set to conclude in 2026, the plan was extended by one year to support continuity during the leadership transition.

The director will guide the museum into its next chapter with a vision that is both ambitious and executable. They will steward an institution that both benefits from and enhances the intellectual vitality of Dartmouth's faculty and students, the breadth and energy of the arts across campus, and the vibrant arts culture of the surrounding community. The director, working closely with a sophisticated and committed Board of Advisors, will set clear priorities and measurable outcomes across exhibitions, collections, academic programming, and engagement. In the near term, the museum is developing plans for expanded off-site storage to increase capacity for a growing collection. Dartmouth's ongoing investment in the arts—including the Black Family Visual Arts Center (2012), the museum's 2019 expansion, and the recently reopened Hopkins Center—provides a strong foundation for this work. The director's strategic vision will align and build upon the [institutional priorities outlined by President Beilock](#), particularly Rural Health and Society and Cultivating Creativities.

Success indicators:

- A clear roadmap for the next strategic plan, with defined goals and metrics;
- A funded and phased approach to storage and collections infrastructure;
- Increased visibility of the Hood as a partner in institutional priorities.

### **Connect and collaborate effectively with students, staff, and faculty.**

Within the campus, the director will serve as the museum's primary liaison to Dartmouth's academic enterprise and an enthusiastic partner to colleagues across divisions. As a teaching museum, the Hood's primary commitment is to Dartmouth students and faculty. The director will leverage the College's intellectual capital to advance academic collaborations that engage faculty and students, deepen interdisciplinary connections, and situate the museum at the center of academic life.

The director will work with leaders across departments, divisions, and units to strengthen existing partnerships, broaden cross-campus engagement, and identify new opportunities for object-based teaching, research support, and co-curricular learning.

Success indicators:

- Growth in the number of departments/courses using the collection;
- Increased student engagement through BCOS, internships, and co-curation.

### **Ensure long-term sustainability through exceptional management and fundraising.**

The museum has experienced growth in recent years following its physical expansion, including increased staff and operations. Continued investment will further enhance the museum's capacity, allowing it to seize new opportunities, maximize existing resources, and support programming, collection care, and storage needs. Philanthropy will be essential to advancing collections stewardship, exhibitions, operations, academic programming, and student opportunities.

The director, who serves as the museum's chief fundraiser, works closely with Dartmouth's advancement team and the Hood's Board of Advisors. A key priority is deploying compelling institutional narratives to communicate the museum's mission and impact. Through philanthropy, public art initiatives, and alumni engagement, supporters have strengthened the Hood's role as a bridge between the Dartmouth community and the global art world.

Success indicators:

- Increased annual giving and multi-year commitments;
- Growth in endowed funds for collections care, programming, and positions.

### **Lead and support museum staff.**

The museum is supported by a team of dedicated professionals, and the director will play a central role in developing and mentoring staff while sustaining a culture of shared purpose and accountability. The director will establish clear communication practices and cross-functional workflows that reduce silos and strengthen coordination among teams. Through attentive internal leadership and effective delegation, the director will support staff excellence and advance the museum's mission.

Success indicators:

- Improved staff engagement/retention;
- Clearer cross-team coordination and project delivery.

### **Promote broad community engagement.**

The director will champion the Hood's role in serving both Dartmouth and the surrounding community. As an active arts leader and partner, they will represent the museum locally and regionally, strengthening relationships with community organizations, schools, and cultural partners while expanding the museum's audience and impact. Beyond serving as the museum's public voice, the director will prioritize outreach and partnership initiatives that cultivate meaningful, reciprocal engagement. By positioning the Hood as

a hub that connects Dartmouth with surrounding communities, the director will further establish the museum as a leading institution in the region's cultural landscape.

Success indicators:

- Expanded K-12 and community participation;
- Stronger regional partnerships and repeat engagement.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The committee is seeking candidates who demonstrate the following:

- A visionary approach to community engagement and the role of the museum in contemporary society, maintaining relationships with existing partners and building connections with new ones;
- Demonstrated administrative experience and intellectual leadership in a complex museum environment;
- A deep understanding of museum best practices, including collections stewardship and development, exhibition strategy, community engagement, and educational programming;
- A strong record of success in donor relations and fundraising;
- A keen understanding of and interest in financial and budget oversight and the interplay of institutional priorities, planning, resource requirements, and revenue generation;
- The skills to create a stimulating, healthy, and productive work environment for a variety of people and situations;
- Proven ability to work with faculty, staff, and students and sophistication in promoting teaching, research, and scholarship;
- An open and collaborative approach to management that builds capacity among staff;
- An understanding of operating within an academic institutional environment;
- An advanced degree in an art-related field is required.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications should be sent electronically to:

Benjamin Tobin, Ryan Leichenauer, and Alaine Small

Isaacson, Miller

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/dartmouth-college-hood-museum-art/virginia-rice-kelsey-1961s-director>

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT DARTMOUTH

### ABOUT DARTMOUTH

Founded in 1769, Dartmouth is a Carnegie-classified R1 research university defined by a comprehensive liberal arts education combined with focused graduate programs in medicine, business, the sciences, and engineering. Dartmouth, one of the eight constituent institutions in the Ivy League, is consistently ranked among the country's best institutions of higher learning. Dartmouth's student body encompasses 4,500 undergraduates and 2,300 graduate students in the Arts and Sciences and in its four pioneering graduate and professional schools: the [Geisel School of Medicine](#), the [Guarini School of Graduate and Advanced Studies](#), the [Thayer School of Engineering](#), and the [Tuck School of Business](#). A member of the Association of American Universities (AAU), Dartmouth has forged a singular identity, combining its deep commitment to preeminent undergraduate liberal arts and graduate education with distinguished research and scholarship.

Dartmouth attracts faculty from around the world and ranks among the highest universities in the country in per capita research funding. There are over 1,000 faculty members across the institution, 65% of whom are tenured or on the tenure track. Dartmouth provides a high-intensity research environment with world-class facilities and outstanding extramural support for scholarly activities for faculty and students. For FY26, Dartmouth forecasts a \$1.6 billion baseline in operating expenses with an endowment of approximately \$9 billion.

Dartmouth's talented and devoted staff provide business continuity and expertise to the ongoing operations of the institution. Higher education professionals contribute to the overall mission through strategic leadership in their respective areas. An anchor institution in the region, Dartmouth currently employs 3,128 full-time and 251 part-time staff members.

### Location

Dartmouth is known for its profound sense of place. Frequently ranked as one of the most beautiful colleges in America, the Dartmouth campus offers mountain vistas, towering pines, and a pastoral setting in the deep green Upper Valley. The natural beauty of the campus is just one aspect of what gives Dartmouth's campus its vivid color and energy. Members of the Dartmouth community have access to unparalleled opportunities, through all four seasons, to explore the outdoors. Just steps away, the sophisticated college town of Hanover offers a wide array of restaurants, shops, and services. The public schools in Hanover are well-regarded, with Hanover High School ranked as the top high school in the state by U.S. News and World Report.

*This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Dartmouth. 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 Dartmouth would supersede any conflicting information in this document.*