



Search for the Katherine and John Simpson Dean, College of Arts and Sciences  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

## THE SEARCH

The [University of Washington](#) (UW), one of the world's leading public research universities, seeks a bold, strategic, and collaborative leader to serve as the next Katherine and John Simpson Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (the College).

Consistently ranked among the [top public universities in the world](#), the University of Washington brings together excellence across the arts and humanities, social and natural sciences, engineering, and a broad range of professional fields. A member of the prestigious Association of American Universities, UW combines the scale and depth of a major research institution with a strong commitment to public service, access, and impact. With both global reach and deep roots in the Pacific Northwest, UW plays a significant role in advancing research, education, and opportunity locally, nationally, and beyond.

As the University's largest college, the [College of Arts and Sciences](#) is central to UW's research and teaching mission and touches nearly every corner of the University. The College serves more than 17,000 students and is home to more than half of all bachelor's degrees earned on the Seattle campus, while also advancing groundbreaking research and serving as an important resource for the region and beyond. The College is a hub for multidisciplinary work, with structures that encourage collaboration rather than constrain it. Given the College's expansive portfolio, the new Dean will have a unique platform to further strengthen the College's position as a national leader in liberal arts and sciences education.

The College's [faculty are recognized nationally and globally](#) for their achievements across the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, including Nobel Prize winners, MacArthur Fellows, members of both the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences, and recipients of other major national scholarly awards. Their work spans an extraordinary breadth of disciplines and is united by a shared commitment to research-informed teaching, interdisciplinary

collaboration, and public impact. Faculty weave this approach and mindset into the classroom, helping students grow from being learners to emerging experts, all while also continuing to advance scholarship that addresses some of today's most pressing questions and challenges. There is significant internal expertise in pedagogy, research, and community-engaged scholarship, which provides rich opportunities for the next Dean to further amplify.

With support from the new [Katherine and John Simpson endowed deanship](#), the next Dean will have a distinctive opportunity to strengthen the College's essential role at UW and beyond; support its faculty, staff, and students who make learning and impact central to their work; and help shape what it means to lead a college of this breadth at a major public research institution in the years ahead. To advance the ambitious goals of the College and UW, the incoming Dean must address the following opportunities and challenges:

- Collaboratively craft and implement a clear, forward-looking, and unifying vision for the College;
- Ensure transparent and inclusive communication and decision-making;
- Strategically grow and steward resources in support of the College's aspirations;
- Build on the College's longstanding commitment to student success, teaching, and learning;
- Invest strategically to empower a world-class faculty and staff; and
- Continue to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration within the College, across the University, and throughout the state of Washington.

To learn more about the University of Washington, see APPENDIX I.

## ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

The College of Arts and Sciences is at the heart of the University of Washington and is the academic home to more than 17,000 students, more than 20% of whom are the first in their families to attend college. Faculty in the College – including 682 tenure-track faculty and 153 teaching-track faculty - are dedicated to helping students think critically, communicate clearly, and engage diverse perspectives respectfully. Through teaching, research, and creative practice, the College advances discovery while serving local, national, and global communities. The College is also deeply engaged with Seattle and the broader Pacific Northwest region, including through its vibrant and growing programs in Indigenous studies and expanding partnerships that connect scholarship with regional communities.

The College encompasses four academic divisions: [Arts](#), [Humanities](#), [Natural Sciences](#), and [Social Sciences](#) (see APPENDIX II), supported by its 909 academic and research faculty and approximately 600 staff. Across the College, there are [39 academic units and more than 30 interdisciplinary centers, institutes, and programs](#) that support discovery and collaboration. Faculty are conducting ambitious research projects across a wide range of topics and interdisciplinary areas. To learn more, visit: <https://artsci.washington.edu/research/projects-initiatives>.

Faculty and students across all four divisions pursue research that addresses many of the world's most pressing challenges. From malaria treatment to solar energy to human rights, researchers in the College advance knowledge, develop innovative solutions, and push the boundaries of artistic creation. During the most recent fiscal year, faculty generated just over \$133 million in research funding through public and private grants. College faculty also serve as presidential advisers, artists, innovators, and public-facing scholars, as well as principal investigators on major international research initiatives, offering students exceptional opportunities to engage in meaningful scholarship and creative work. Building on this scholarly ambition, the incoming dean will partner closely with University and Advancement leadership to shape philanthropic priorities for the next capital campaign, which is currently underway.

Uniquely, all the University's arts units are housed within the College, including the Henry Museum; the Burke Museum; and the Meany Center for the Performing Arts. Together with the Division of Arts, these units offer more than 300 performances, exhibitions, and public programs annually. The College also sustains a wide range of community partnerships, from K-12 education initiatives to public science and arts programming and collaborations with community organizations.

The College's academic and research enterprise is complemented by a strong international emphasis, teaching 60 languages and offering more than 100 study abroad programs in 36 countries, including UW administrated centers in Rome, Italy, and León, Spain. The Jackson School of International Studies anchors much of this work, providing interdisciplinary education, research, and public programming focused on major world regions and global issues.

With more than 4,000 undergraduate courses offered, the College plays a central role in the academic life of the University. The College awards 52% of UW's bachelor's degrees, 15% of its master's degrees, and 23% of its PhD degrees on the Seattle campus. Nearly one-third of all students who enroll in courses within the College of Arts & Sciences are pursuing degrees outside the College, reflecting its foundational role across the University. This breadth brews a culture of interdisciplinarity, where students are also encouraged to pursue multiple interests; approximately 20% of students in the College are double majors.

Shared governance is a core value of the University of Washington and reflect a long-standing commitment of collaboration in the day-to-day governance of the university. Faculty play an active role through several governance bodies, and there are four institutions of faculty governance with different sets of responsibilities: Faculty Senate, Secretary of the Faculty, university faculty councils, and faculty councils in the schools, colleges, and campuses. In the College of Arts and Sciences, this work is supported by three councils: the College Council, Staff Council, and Advisory Council for Students. The College Council serves as an advisory body to the Dean, comprises the Dean and eight members elected from the voting membership of the College faculty, and provides a key forum for faculty voice and partnership on college leadership. For more information about UW's system of shared governance, visit: <https://www.washington.edu/faculty/>. For more information on the College of Arts and Sciences College Council, visit: <https://admin.artsci.washington.edu/personnel/college-council>.

The College maintains a deep and sustained commitment to equity, justice, and inclusion. Guided by a [community-informed EJI Vision and Action Plan](#), the College seeks to foster an environment in which faculty, staff, and students can thrive, contribute fully, and advance a more equitable and just society.

## THE ROLE OF THE DEAN

The next Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences will join the University of Washington during a period of transition. Like many public research universities, the College is navigating ongoing financial pressures including a structural deficit, and is implementing a multi-phase plan to balance the College's operational budget by the end of the fiscal year. While this work has required difficult decisions, it is also occurring alongside meaningful signs of confidence in the College's future, including growing enrollment and a recent gift to endow the deanship: an important investment that, along with existing reserves, will support the next dean in advancing the mission of the College.

Faculty, staff, and students describe the College as the intellectual and academic heart of the University and have expressed a deep commitment to its importance and purpose at the University. At the same time, there is a shared desire for leadership that will further promote collaboration, clear communication, and transparency around decision-making, as well as the College's realities and priorities. The next dean will be both analytical and human-centered, building trust and providing clarity while purposefully moving the College forward.

Reporting to the Provost, the Dean will serve as the chief academic and administrative officer of the College of Arts & Sciences and will oversee all aspects of the College's academic, research, financial, and operational functions. The Dean is responsible for setting academic priorities, supporting excellence in teaching and scholarship, and ensuring effective stewardship of the College's budget (approximately \$390 million), research enterprise, and physical and administrative infrastructure. As the primary representative of the College, the Dean will work closely with faculty, staff, students, University leadership, alumni, donors, and external partners, and will serve as a key institutional leader for the UW. The Dean oversees a senior leadership team of approximately 14 direct reports, including divisional deans for the arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences, as well as associate deans and dean's office staff.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

The next Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences will guide a large, complex, and highly influential academic community at a moment of opportunity. Within this context, the primary opportunities and challenges for the next Dean include the following:

### ***Collaboratively craft and implement a clear, forward-looking, and unifying vision for the College***

The Dean will work closely with faculty, staff, students, and University leadership to articulate and implement a clear and compelling vision for the future of the College. The College's vision should align

with the University's strategic plan, which is currently being renewed through a [comprehensive strategic planning process](#) underway to guide the institution through 2030. With an expansive portfolio that spans a wide range of disciplines, the College benefits from deep disciplinary excellence. There are also opportunities for greater collaboration and alignment among and between units and divisions. The Dean will have the opportunity to bring clarity and direction by articulating shared priorities and identifying where collective focus can advance the College's academic mission.

The College's vision for the future must be forward-looking and responsive to today's rapidly changing academic landscape, while remaining grounded in the existing strengths and values that define the Arts & Sciences. Artificial intelligence is one such place where the college can play a meaningful role, particularly in shaping thoughtful and ethical approaches to the use of it and in advancing critical AI literacy as a component of the University's emerging AI strategy. At the same time, the Dean will be expected to articulate and defend the value of liberal arts disciplines that are foundational to the University's mission, including those not always tied to revenue, while also helping the College continue to thrive in this next phase of its evolution.

#### ***Ensure transparent and inclusive communication and decision-making***

The Dean will play a central role in strengthening trust and confidence across the College by prioritizing transparent, inclusive, and consistent communication. As a visible and accessible leader, the Dean will ensure that College stakeholders are informed, engaged, and able to participate meaningfully in institutional conversations. The Dean will ensure that decision-making processes are inclusive and that the rationale behind decisions is clearly communicated. Clear communication will be especially important as the College navigates change and makes decisions that affect its academic and operational priorities.

#### ***Strategically grow and steward resources in support of the College's aspirations***

The Dean will serve as a key ambassador and advocate for the College of Arts & Sciences, strengthening its long-term viability through fundraising and external engagement. The University's integrated advancement model focuses on three facets: resources, relationships, and reputation. Working closely with College and University advancement partners, and in partnership with the Dean's Board of Advisors, the Dean will articulate compelling priorities that align philanthropic support with the College's academic mission and strategic goals. They will additionally work collaboratively with College and University marketing and communications teams to help strengthen and promote the College's reputation locally and beyond.

As an effective and authentic storyteller, the Dean will engage alumni, donors, and external partners around the value and impact of the liberal arts and sciences. As the Dean begins shaping a vision for the college, they will also develop clear and compelling 'big ideas' that reflect that vision and help inspire continued support in the College's efforts to address major societal challenges. The Dean will also help identify and pursue opportunities for sustainable revenue generation in support of the College's priorities and long-term success. Through these efforts, the Dean will help expand support for faculty excellence,

student opportunities, and research initiatives, ensuring that the College is positioned for sustained impact and success in the future.

Working closely with divisional leadership and University administration, the Dean will also serve as a thoughtful steward of the College's financial, human, and operational resources. This work will require balancing immediate needs with long-term sustainability and ensuring that the College's resources are positioned to support excellence and access in teaching, research, and service. By bringing clarity and transparency to resource planning and budgeting processes, the Dean will help build shared understanding and confidence across the College.

***Build on the College's longstanding commitment to student success, teaching, and learning***

The College plays a vital role in the undergraduate and graduate experience at UW. The Dean will build on the College's strong foundation in teaching and learning by supporting instructional excellence across disciplines, fostering innovative approaches to pedagogy that reflect the evolving needs of students, and expanding access to high-demand majors. The Dean will engage directly with students, including through the Arts & Sciences Advisory Council for Students, to learn about their most pressing needs and analyze student success metrics to deliberately and thoughtfully inform decision-making. In addition, the Dean will maintain and strengthen transparent communication, ensure access to resources, deepen belonging, and promote clarity around the impacts of college-specific and institutional decisions. In doing so, the Dean will reinforce the value of a liberal arts education, underscoring its role in preparing students to engage in a complex world while also ensuring that the College continues to provide and promote a rigorous, relevant, and supportive educational experience that attract and support current and future students.

In addition to success of currently enrolled students, the next Dean will be responsible for positioning the College to recruit future students in a rapidly changing landscape. Marketing and Communications staff and University Admissions will be critical partners in these efforts.

***Invest strategically to empower a world-class faculty and staff***

The College's faculty and staff are among its greatest strengths, and the Dean will play a central role in ensuring they are supported and positioned for success. The Dean will foster excellence in research, scholarship, and creative activity across disciplines by strengthening institutional support structures and encouraging collaboration. Through collaboration with faculty and the College Council, the Dean will support faculty at all levels, including research and teaching faculty, and those in the College's promotable teaching track, and continue to foster a culture of shared governance. The Dean will recognize staff as essential partners in the College's success and in the educational mission of the University, and will work to ensure that staffing levels, professional development opportunities, and organizational structures align with the College's goals. The Dean must be able to prioritize scarce resources in ways that maximize ROI and recognize the value of staff to the entire educational enterprise. The Dean will help sustain morale

and excellence across the College by cultivating a culture that values contributions, supports professional growth, and promotes shared responsibility, all while thoughtfully allocating the College's resources.

***Continue to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration within the College, across the University, and throughout the state of Washington***

The Dean will build on the College's existing strengths in interdisciplinary teaching and research by creating clearer pathways for collaboration across divisions and with other schools and colleges, including with the UW Bothell and UW Tacoma campuses. While interdisciplinary work is already a hallmark of the College, the Dean will have the opportunity to reduce barriers and simplify processes that can inhibit collaboration. They will also serve as a key partner in ensuring that the College is closely connected to and fully aligned with the University's broader priorities. Through encouraging cross-unit engagement and supporting collaborative initiatives, the Dean will help position the College as a hub for interdisciplinary inquiry, advancing research and teaching that address complex, interconnected challenges.

## QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will hold a terminal degree and bring a distinguished record of scholarship and teaching appropriate for appointment as a tenured full professor in an academic unit within the College of Arts & Sciences. While no single candidate will possess all of the qualifications listed below, the University of Washington seeks a leader who brings many of the following experiences, skills, and attributes:

- An outstanding scholar with a deep appreciation for and commitment to the liberal arts and sciences, and the ability to advocate effectively for all disciplines;
- A record of senior academic leadership in a complex organization within an academic setting, with a track record of effective collaboration with other academic units;
- Demonstrated experience overseeing financial planning, budget development, and responsible stewardship of resources;
- A leadership style that values transparency and clear communication, with a demonstrated ability to build trust and confidence among faculty, staff, and students;
- Ability to leverage data analytics to evaluate outcomes and inform strategic decision-making;
- Exceptional communication skills, with the ability to serve as an effective internal and external ambassador for the College, and to engage alumni, donors, and partners in support of the College's mission;
- Demonstrated commitment to equity, justice, and inclusion, reflected through decision-making and contributions to institutional culture and community;
- Experience supporting excellence in research, scholarship, and creative activity across disciplines, including interdisciplinary and collaborative work;

- Ability to think strategically about the future of higher education, including emerging areas such as artificial intelligence, and to guide academic communities through change thoughtfully and ethically;
- Experience leading and managing staff teams, with the capacity to support, develop, and empower faculty and staff in pursuit of shared goals; and
- Deep commitment to shared governance.

## COMPENSATION

The base salary for this position will be approximately \$312,000 to \$336,000 annually, commensurate with experience and qualifications, exclusive of any additional allowances and resources associated with the endowed deanship.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-washington-college-arts-and-sciences/dean>. Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. For best consideration, please apply by March 9, 2026.

Cati Mitchell-Crossley, Courtney Wilk-Mandel, Leslie Lemus, and Thea Kosmack  
Isaacson, Miller

*The University of Washington is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful and welcoming community for all. As an equal opportunity employer, the University considers applicants for employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, citizenship, sex, pregnancy, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, genetic information, disability, or veteran status consistent with [UW Executive Order No. 81](#).*

*To request disability accommodation in the application process, contact [UWCASDean@imsearch.com](mailto:UWCASDean@imsearch.com)*

*Applicants considered for this position will be required to disclose if they are the subject of any substantiated findings or current investigations related to sexual misconduct at their current employment and past employment. Disclosure is required under [Washington state law](#).*

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

## APPENDIX I: About the University of Washington

As one of the world's leading public research universities, the University of Washington is driven by a determination to serve the public good. Since 1861, the ideas and ideals of UW students and faculty have come alive at home and abroad through active research, teaching, and engagement. Today, the University serves more than 62,000 students across its three campuses ([Seattle](#), [Bothell](#), and [Tacoma](#)), with undergraduates comprising approximately 72% of the student population. Combined, the University's three campuses offer their students more than 846 degree options across 473 programs. Its academic community includes approximately 2,126 tenure-track faculty, 593 teaching-track faculty, and over 33,000 staff. UW's global community includes more than 8,000 international students from over 100 countries, and more than 21,000 alumni and friends living outside of the United States.

In the 2025-2026 *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, [UW ranked eighth among Best Global Universities](#), second among public U.S. institutions. UW's faculty are among the [most accomplished and influential scholars in the world](#). The University has been home to several award recipients, including 8 Nobel Prize winners, 20 MacArthur Fellows, 207 members of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, and [103 members of the American Academic of Arts and Sciences](#). Across disciplines, UW faculty advance knowledge, shape public policy, drive scientific and technological innovation, and contribute meaningfully to cultural and artistic life.

With \$1.87B in sponsored research grants and contracts in FY23, the UW is a research powerhouse of global prominence. The University receives more federal research funding than any other U.S. public university. The University operates with an annual budget of \$11.75 billion, including a \$1.4 billion General Operating Fund supporting its academic mission.

Currently, the University of Washington is engaged in a [comprehensive, community-informed strategic planning process](#) to guide the institution through 2030. This reflects UW's commitment to aligning its academic, research, and public service missions around a shared vision for the future, and underscores a period of reflection and momentum for institutional leadership.

The University is located in a dynamic region, home to many innovative, globally prominent, established corporations as well as numerous startups. As the fifth-largest employer in Washington State, UW supports or sustains more than 100,000 jobs statewide and generates an annual economic impact of \$15.7 billion. UW's impact extends to communities from Spokane to Shanghai, delivering real-world solutions, innovative technologies, and compassionate care at home and around the planet. Through more than 215 global partnerships across 50 countries, UW sustains deep international engagement in education, research, and service. As an international epicenter for commercializing research and technology, the University is at the center of the Pacific Northwest's thriving innovation ecosystem.

The UW has been an integral part of Seattle since before Washington was a state. Today, the Emerald City is a multicultural, international hub of innovation, known for its tech startups, music scene, aerospace

engineering and, of course, plenty of coffee. UW students, faculty and staff find a breadth of local opportunities for research, public service, the arts, entrepreneurship and beyond.

## University Leadership

[Robert J. Jones](#) became the 34th president of the University of Washington in August 2025. Dr. Jones succeeds President Ana Mari Cauce, who held the role for 10 years and helped transform the university by providing a leading-edge student experience, conducting research and scholarship that has a global impact, upholding the UW's dedication to its public mission, and infusing the entire university with a commitment to innovation. Dr Jones is the former Chancellor of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and the UW presidency is his third time leading a public research university. He is a distinguished scholar, with his research focusing on crop physiology, and a leader in national academic organizations and the Big Ten Conference.

In his first year at UW, President Jones has begun framing a forward-looking agenda for the institution, including a comprehensive strategic planning effort, a new university-wide focus on AI, and three presidential priorities: debt-free education, multidisciplinary collaboration, and strengthening UW's connection to its surrounding communities. These efforts are shaping the direction of the University and underscore the essential role that the College of Arts & Sciences will play in advancing them.

[Tricia R. Serio](#) joined the University of Washington as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs in 2023. As the UW's academic and budget officer, Dr. Serio is focusing her leadership on core areas to advance the University's academic mission. Dr. Serio came to the UW from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she was provost and senior vice chancellor for academic affairs. A professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, Dr. Serio previously served at UMass Amherst as associate chancellor for strategic academic planning and dean of the College of Natural Sciences. She has also held research and professorial positions at the University of Arizona, Brown University, and Yale University.

Complementing President Jones' priorities, Dr. Serio is also leading a Research Resilience and Transformation Initiative designed to strengthen UW's research enterprise and ensure it remains adaptable to today's scientific and technological needs. This work positions the College of Arts & Sciences as a key partner in shaping the University's next chapter of academic and research excellence.

## APPENDIX II: College of Arts and Sciences Divisional Overview

Below are links to the webpages outlining the departments, centers, and additional programs associated with each division within the College of Arts and Sciences. The associated academic units are detailed below.

### Division of Arts

#### Academic Units:

- School of Art + Art History + Design
- Department of Dance
- School of Drama

- Department of Digital Arts and Experimental Media
- School of Music

#### Centers & Other Programs:

- Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture
- Center for Performance Studies
- Center for the Study of Northwest Native Art

- Henry Art Gallery
- Meany Center for the Performing Art

### Division of Humanities

#### Academic Units:

- Department of Asian Languages and Literature
- Department of Cinema and Media Studies
- Department of Classics
- Department of Comparative History of Ideas
- Department of English
- Department of French and Italian Studies

- Department of German Studies
- Department of Linguistics
- Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures
- Department of Scandinavian Studies
- Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures
- Department of Spanish and Portuguese Studies

#### Centers & Other Programs:

- Humanities Academic Services Center
- Humanities First Initiative

- Language Learning Center
- Simpson Center for the Humanities

## Division of Natural Sciences

### Academic Units:

- Department of Applied Mathematics
- Department of Astronomy
- Department of Biology
- Department of Chemistry
- Department of Mathematics
- Department of Physics
- Department of Psychology
- Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences
- Department of Statistics

### Centers & Other Programs:

- Center for Child and Family Well-Being
- Center for Experimental Nuclear Physics and Astrophysics
- Center for Human Neuroscience
- Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences
- Institute for Nuclear Theory
- Institute for the Foundations of Data Science
- Molecular Engineering and Sciences Institute
- UW Molecular Engineering Materials Center
- QuantumX

## Division of Social Sciences

### Academic Units:

- Departments: Department of American Ethnic Studies
- Department of American Indian Studies
- Department of Anthropology
- Department of Communication
- Department of Economics
- Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies
- Department of Geography
- Department of History
- Integrated Social Sciences Online Degree Program
- Jackson School of International Studies
- Department of Law, Societies and Justice
- Department of Philosophy
- Department of Political Science
- Department of Sociology

### Centers & Other Programs:

- Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies
- Center for American Politics and Public Policy
- Center for Communication, Difference, and Equity
- Center for Environmental Politics
- Center for Journalism, Media and Democracy
- Bridges Center for Labor Studies
- Center for Social Science Computation and Research (CSSCR)

- Center for Environmental Politics
- Center for Journalism, Media and Democracy
- Bridges Center for Labor Studies
- Center for Social Science Computation and Research (CSSCR)
- Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences (CSSS)
- Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies
- Center for American Politics and Public Policy
- Center for Communication, Difference, and Equity
- Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences (CSSS)
- Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology
- Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest
- Comparative Law and Society Studies Center
- Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization
- Reserve Officers' Training Corps Programs
- Statistical Consulting Services
- UW Women's Center