



Dean, College of Arts and Sciences
Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia

THE SEARCH

Emory University invites nominations and applications for the position of dean of the Emory College of Arts and Sciences. The university seeks a strategic, collaborative, and intellectually engaged leader to guide its historic undergraduate college at a pivotal moment for the liberal arts and for higher education. The next dean will harness the strengths of a world-class faculty, an academically ambitious student body, and the resources of a leading research university to chart a bold and unifying vision for the College's next chapter.

Emory College of Arts and Sciences (the College or ECAS) is at the core of Emory University, enrolling more than 5,380 undergraduates and offering one of the most expansive liberal arts curricula in the country. Its approximately 635 faculty members are nationally and internationally recognized scholars, educators, and artists whose work drives discovery, interdisciplinary collaboration, and student learning across 47 departments and programs. The College's vibrant intellectual community, fueled by a dedicated staff, deep engagement in research, and a commitment to student success, anchors Emory's identity as a global research university with a liberal arts foundation.

The next dean will guide Emory at an exciting time of transition and will help the College elevate its impact. The dean will lead a collaborative strategic planning process; strengthen communication and community across faculty, staff, and students; support excellence in teaching and research; steward and diversify financial resources; and champion the value of the liberal arts to internal and external audiences. This is an opportunity for a thoughtful and inspiring leader to clarify the College's unique positioning within Emory and across the higher education landscape and shape the future of an institution deeply committed to inquiry, interdisciplinarity, and the public good.

Emory University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to support this recruitment. A detailed description of the qualifications sought in the next dean and instructions for submitting applications and nominations can be found at the conclusion of this document.

EMORY COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Founded in 1836, [Emory College of Arts and Sciences](#) is the historic and academic heart of Emory University and its primary undergraduate division. Today, the College enrolls more than 5,380 students who pursue a rigorous liberal arts education enriched by the resources of a leading research university. As the cornerstone of Emory's intellectual life, the College fosters a culture defined by inquiry, discovery, and the pursuit of knowledge across disciplines. Students are encouraged to ask bold questions, engage deeply, and develop the capacity to reason, communicate, and lead with clarity and purpose.

The College's approximately 635 faculty members bring world-class scholarship and a commitment to exceptional teaching into the classroom every day. Faculty, staff, and students together form a vibrant academic community grounded in critical inquiry, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a shared commitment to fostering an environment where all members feel welcomed and valued. This ethos is central to the College's mission and to Emory's identity as a university that seeks to advance knowledge and serve humanity.

Academic Offerings

Emory College offers one of the most comprehensive liberal arts curricula in the nation, with 47 departments and programs, 90 majors, and 66 minors spanning the humanities, arts, social sciences, and natural sciences. Students explore widely and dive deeply, engaging in courses that emphasize analytical rigor, creativity, and the ability to understand complex issues from multiple perspectives.

As part of a major R1 research university, the College provides students with extensive opportunities to participate in groundbreaking research alongside faculty across the humanities, arts, social sciences, and natural sciences. These experiences allow students to contribute to new knowledge, develop advanced research skills, and engage in interdisciplinary inquiry.

Undergraduates may begin their studies either in the four-year Emory College of Arts and Sciences or at [Oxford College](#), a distinctive two-year liberal arts environment where students complete the first half of their bachelor's degree before transitioning to the Atlanta campus. Both pathways reflect Emory's belief that a liberal arts foundation is essential preparation for navigating the complexities of the twenty-first century. Students may continue their studies in Emory College, Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, or the Goizueta Business School.

Faculty

The College's faculty are central to its mission and reputation. Emory College is home to approximately 635 faculty members, including tenured and tenure-track scholars as well as teaching and professional-track faculty who collectively sustain the breadth and depth of the College's academic offerings. Faculty members are distinguished scholars, educators, and creative artists whose work shapes their disciplines and enriches the student experience. Many hold memberships in prestigious academies, including the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Education, and the American Academy of Arts & Sciences. College faculty have earned major national and international honors, such as the Pulitzer Prize and the Peabody Award, and contribute to Emory's global reputation for excellence.

Faculty roles span research, teaching, mentoring, and service. They advise undergraduate and graduate students, lead interdisciplinary initiatives, and contribute to the governance and intellectual life of the College and university. The College's [Office of Faculty](#) and the [Office of Faculty Affairs](#) within the Provost's Office provide resources and support to foster faculty development, excellence, and career advancement.

Staff

The College's approximately 539 staff members play essential roles in supporting its academic mission. Staff contribute across a wide range of functions, including academic administration, research support, student services, advising, operations, and community engagement. Their work ensures that faculty and students have the resources, infrastructure, and support needed to thrive.

Students

Emory College attracts one of the most competitive undergraduate applicant pools in the nation. For the Class of 2029, the College received 35,914 applications and admitted just 11 percent. Emory students consistently earn some of the most prestigious academic honors available to undergraduates in the United States. Over the past ten years, they have been awarded over 120 Fulbright Fellowships, 36 NCAA Postgraduate Scholarships, 25 Goldwater Scholarships, 11 Schwarzman Scholarships, five Udall Scholarships, four Marshall Scholarships, three Truman Scholarships, three Rhodes Scholarships, one Gates Cambridge Scholarship, and six Beinecke Scholarships. These distinctions reflect the intellectual ambition, global engagement, and academic excellence that define the Emory College student body.

The student experience within Emory College is characterized by a dynamic blend of rigorous academic engagement and rich co-curricular involvement. Students work closely with faculty on research projects, gaining hands-on experience that deepens their learning and prepares them for future scholarly and professional pursuits. Beyond the classroom, students participate in a vibrant campus community supported by [Emory Campus Life](#) resources that promote wellness, belonging, leadership development, and community engagement. With more than 480 student organizations, including performing arts groups, cultural associations, service organizations, and club sports, students find abundant opportunities to explore interests, build community, and develop as leaders.

Athletics also contributes meaningfully to the student experience. Emory competes in NCAA Division III and the University Athletic Association (UAA), a conference known for pairing academic excellence with competitive athletics. The Emory Eagles were named the winners of the 2024-25 Learfield Directors' Cup, the first time that Emory has claimed the title as Division III's most successful athletics program. Student-athletes excel both academically and athletically, reinforcing the College's commitment to holistic student development. Across all aspects of campus life, Emory College fosters a culture of curiosity, collaboration, and service, preparing students to make meaningful contributions to their communities and the wider world.

ROLE OF THE DEAN

The dean of the Emory College of Arts and Sciences is the chief academic, financial, and administrative officer of the College. At a critical moment for Emory and higher education, the next dean must articulate with clarity and conviction how a liberal arts education, grounded in inquiry, civic engagement, and lifelong adaptability, prepares students to navigate and lead in a dynamic and complex world.

The next dean of the College will join a community defined by intellectual vitality, deep commitment to the academic mission, and a strong sense of shared purpose. A person of integrity, courage, and scholarly presence, the next dean will value the collective wisdom within the College, listen with humility, communicate with clarity, and inspire confidence across a diverse and talented community. With world-class faculty, exceptional students, and the breadth of a liberal arts college embedded within a major research university, Emory College is poised for its next chapter of excellence.

The dean will oversee a staff of 539 with an operating budget of \$400 million and steward \$1 billion in current endowment market value. Additionally, the dean will be expected to partner across the university to elevate Emory's mission in collaboration with the leaders of Emory's eight other schools and colleges. Close collaboration will be especially important with the undergraduate schools—Oxford College, Goizueta Business School, and the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing—as well as with the dean of the Laney Graduate School to strengthen graduate education and advance the College's research and teaching mission.

Emory's location in Atlanta offers unparalleled opportunities for partnerships with industry, cultural institutions, nonprofits, and civic organizations. The next dean will help the College more fully leverage its position in a global city by expanding experiential learning, building research collaborations, and strengthening community engagement. The next dean will be an engaged community citizen building meaningful partnerships across the city with higher education institutions, government, and industry.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

Shape a clear and compelling identity and strategic direction for the College's next chapter

The College is ready for a unifying vision that articulates its identity and priorities. The next dean will have the opportunity to lead a collaborative, transparent strategic planning process that defines what it means to be a liberal arts college within an R1 university, clarifies the College's distinctive strengths, and charts a path for the coming decade. This is a moment to bring focus to the College's aspirations and to align people, structures, and resources around a shared sense of purpose.

As part of this identity and strategic direction, the dean will champion the liberal arts as a pathway to opportunity and success. Emory College's blend of liberal arts education and research excellence is one of its greatest assets. The next dean will have the opportunity to articulate a bold, distinctive case for the liberal arts, one that embraces interdisciplinarity, supports the humanities and the arts, strengthens the natural sciences and social sciences, and prepares students for a rapidly changing world. This includes communicating the value of the liberal arts to internal and external audiences, engaging in national conversations about higher education, and positioning Emory College as a leader in liberal arts education with an intellectually rich R1 environment.

Bolster faculty and staff excellence in research, teaching, and service

The College's faculty are exceptional scholars and teachers whose work advances Emory's reputation for intellectual rigor, discovery, and meaningful public impact. The next dean will play a critical role in elevating faculty research and scholarly eminence by strengthening the conditions that enable faculty to pursue ambitious intellectual agendas, attract external funding, and contribute to the most consequential conversations in their fields. This includes expanding support for research and creative scholarship, enhancing faculty recruitment and retention, and ensuring that scholars across all disciplines have the resources and institutional support needed to thrive. The dean will also foster interdisciplinary collaboration while sustaining the distinctive teaching mission that defines the Emory undergraduate experience.

Staff are essential to the College's success and deeply committed to the vitality of the community. The next dean will ensure that staff are well supported and positioned to contribute fully to the College's ambitions, with meaningful opportunities for professional growth and engagement. Just as importantly, the dean will cultivate a culture that recognizes and celebrates the many contributions of staff, whose expertise and dedication are central to advancing the work of faculty and enriching the experience of students.

Strengthen community and communication with constituents internally and externally

Faculty, staff, and students are deeply committed to Emory and eager for leadership that is visible, engaged, and communicative. The next dean will have the opportunity to strengthen connections across the College by listening openly, communicating decisions clearly, and fostering a culture of transparency and trust. The dean will ensure that Emory College is an environment where people feel valued, heard, and supported in their work.

The College benefits from a dedicated group of Emory alumni and parents represented by the Dean's Advisory Council. The Council works closely with the dean and the Emory College Development and Alumni Relations team. Members provide counsel to the dean and the College leadership team, advance the College's interests and its academic mission, and support Emory's external relations, alumni engagement, and fundraising efforts.

Thoughtfully steward and cultivate new revenue to support the College's vision

A skilled fundraiser and fiscal manager, the dean will be a strategic steward and generator of resources. The dean will thoughtfully allocate financial resources in a complex funding model in a manner that is transparent, principled, and mission driven. The dean also will bring clarity to budget processes, advocate effectively for the College within the university, and explore new revenue streams, including partnerships, sponsored research, and philanthropic opportunities. The dean will work closely with university advancement professionals to ensure fundraising priorities align with the academic vision and institutional needs and to make a compelling case for investment in the College.

Strengthen partnerships across the university to enhance the student experience

Emory's students are exceptional, and the College plays a central role in shaping their academic and developmental journey. The next dean will deepen collaboration among the College's Office for Undergraduate Education, Emory Campus Life, and Office of Undergraduate Admission to create a more integrated and supportive student experience. The dean also will work closely with the leaders of Emory's Oxford College, Goizueta Business School, Laney Graduate School, and Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing to ensure coordination and commitment to student success across the university.

Refine and clarify the College's leadership team structure

The College's leadership team structure has evolved in recent years, with a new divisional dean model, creating an opportunity for the next dean to assess the current structure, clarify roles and responsibilities, and ensure that the organization is aligned for effectiveness and efficiency. As the College has grown over time, now with 47 departments and programs and 635 faculty, the dean will ensure that the administrative structure of the College appropriately supports the scope and scale of the College. The dean will support the development of a senior team focused on supporting the work of faculty, staff, and students across the College with a spirit of collegiality and service.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one candidate will embody every quality outlined below, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities to address the above priorities:

- A record of distinguished scholarship, teaching, and service that warrants appointment as a full professor with tenure in Emory College of Arts and Sciences;
- The vision, energy, presence and long-term commitment to lead Emory's vibrant, intellectually engaged, and rich academic community, championing academic freedom, and the enduring value of the liberal arts;
- Significant, successful senior-level leadership experience in a large, complex academic environment, with the capacity to steward a multifaceted undergraduate college embedded within a major research university;
- Demonstrated skill in managing complex fiscal operations, allocating resources transparently, and aligning financial decisions with academic mission and priorities;
- A nuanced understanding of the landscape of liberal arts education today and the ability to articulate compellingly the strengths and distinctiveness of Emory College to internal and external audiences, including donors, partners, and the broader public;
- Keen judgment in evaluating academic excellence and an informed grasp of issues related to faculty recruitment, retention, promotion, interdisciplinary scholarship, and the evolving nature of research and teaching;
- Intellectual curiosity and broad scholarly appreciation across the humanities, arts, social sciences, and natural sciences, paired with the ability to articulate an inspiring vision and galvanize others around shared goals;
- Demonstrated success building partnerships and engaging effectively with alumni, donors, foundations, industry, or community organizations, and a readiness to serve as a compelling and strategic fundraiser;
- A leadership style characterized by empathy, accessibility, transparency, humility, and deep respect for shared governance;
- Exceptional communication skills and the ability to engage effectively across a diverse set of constituencies, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, university leaders, and external partners.

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/emory-university-college-arts-and-sciences/dean>.

Keight Tucker Kennedy, Managing Partner
Kelly McLaughlin, Managing Associate
Alexis Scott, Managing Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Emory is an equal opportunity employer, and qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, protected veteran status, or other characteristics protected by state or federal law.

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

APPENDIX

EMORY UNIVERSITY

[Emory University](#) was founded in 1836 by the Methodist Episcopal Church in Oxford, Georgia. In 1915, it relocated to its present location in the Druid Hills neighborhood of Atlanta. The original Oxford Campus serves as an additional undergraduate site.

Emory is recognized internationally for its outstanding liberal arts college, superb professional schools, and one of the Southeast's leading healthcare systems. The university's mission is "to create, preserve, teach, and apply knowledge in the service of humanity." To fulfill this mission, Emory supports the full range of scholarship, from undergraduate to advanced graduate and professional instruction and from basic research to the many applications for such research in serving the public good. The university is home to more than 16,500 students, 4,000 faculty, 14,000 staff, and offers more than 80 programs of study across [nine degree-granting colleges and schools](#), many of which hold national rankings. In the latest *U.S. News and World Report* rankings, the Rollins School of Public Health is ranked number two and the undergraduate Biomedical Engineering Program, offered as a dual degree program with Georgia Tech, is ranked number one. The School of Medicine is ranked among the nation's top 20 schools of medicine in NIH research funding.

Emory University is consistently recognized for its excellence. *U.S. News & World Report* rated Emory 24 in its 2025 report of America's best national universities. Emory is a member of the Association of American Universities and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

Emory's world-class faculty includes exceptional instructors and groundbreaking researchers. Over 95 percent of full-time faculty members hold the highest degrees in their respective fields. Individual faculty excellence encompasses scholarly achievement, teaching and advising, the potential to create new knowledge, and a clear dedication to service. Notable past and current members of Emory's faculty include the late former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, CNN Chief Medical Correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Hank Kilbanoff, former U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Jeffrey Koplan, and the late Frans de Waal, one of the most influential primatologists of our time. Emory University is home to four current members of the National Academy of Sciences and 31 Fellows of the National Academy of Medicine.

Recognized as one of the most collaborative, robust, talented, and successful research institutions in the nation, researchers at Emory University exceeded one billion total in research funding for the third consecutive year. As a major economic engine, Emory's research has generated 57 Georgia-based startups that have created more than 1,000 jobs.

Emory University maintains a consolidated operating budget of \$7.6 billion, an endowment with a market value of \$11.4 billion (as of FY 2025), and an economic impact on the state of Georgia of over \$19 billion

in 2023. The Emory campus in Atlanta is less than five miles from the Mid-Town district, the premier innovation center in the Southeast. Emory University is the largest private employer in the 20-county metro area, with over 45,000 direct employees, including Emory Healthcare, the pre-eminent academic health system in Georgia.

Emory is home to a vibrant and diverse community that is actively committed to making the world a better place. This commitment is reflected in its strong academic standing, as evidenced by a number 21 ranking in Best Value Schools by *U.S. News & World Report*. Continuing a tradition of prestigious scholarship, Emory's undergraduate students have achieved remarkable success since 2020, earning the Rhodes Scholarship, the Truman Scholarship, Fulbright Scholarships, and 17 Goldwater Scholarships, showcasing the exceptional achievements of the university community. This rich tapestry of backgrounds and experiences fosters a dynamic learning environment where varied perspectives lead to innovative solutions. Students and faculty alike thrive in this inclusive atmosphere, contributing to a legacy of impactful scholarship and global engagement.

With a multitude of student clubs, sports teams, and performing arts groups, Emory is the place for students who want to be a part of it all. Thirteen percent of students are involved in fraternities or sororities on campus, and 80 percent of all students volunteer in the community. From joining student organizations to running for student office, Emory's intercultural student community is just as passionate about making a difference on campus as it is globally. Emory prides itself on the mix of people, beliefs, values, and social circles that comprise its campus communities, as well as the University's understanding that everyone offers more than one way to contribute to campus community.

Leadership

Justice [Leah Ward Sears](#) has been named interim president of Emory University, effective September 1, 2025. A member of the board of trustees since 2010, Sears has had a distinguished career in the Georgia judiciary. In 1982, she was appointed to the City Court of Atlanta, and three years later, she became the first African American woman to serve as a superior court judge in the state of Georgia. In 1992, Sears was appointed to the Georgia Supreme Court, where she served for 17 years, including four years as chief justice. Sears has previously served as an adjunct professor at the Emory School of Law and as a visiting professor in family law at the University of Georgia School of Law.

[Badia Ahad](#), PhD, became Emory University's provost and executive vice president for academic affairs on November 1, 2025. Previously, she served as dean of Emory's Oxford College. She also holds the title of Charles Howard Candler Professor of English and African American Studies. As Emory's chief academic officer, she works with the deans of the university's schools and colleges to ensure the quality of undergraduate, graduate, and professional education while advancing Emory's progress as a leading research university. A scholar of African American literary and cultural studies, Ahad joined Emory in 2023 after 18 years on the faculty at Loyola University Chicago, where she held several leadership roles including director of the university core curriculum and vice provost for faculty affairs. She also served as

principal investigator on a \$1 million National Science Foundation ADVANCE grant supporting faculty retention. Ahad earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign and her MA and PhD in English from the University of Notre Dame.

Strategic Plan

Emory University's [One Emory: Ambition and Heart](#) centers on five priorities: faculty eminence; academic community of choice; innovation through scholarship and creative expression; thriving healthcare, inventing cures; commitment to our people; and Emory + Atlanta: rich history, shared future. This strategic framework is focused on strengthening all of Emory's nine schools, making the university an unparalleled destination for education, elevating Emory's world-class academic health system, and recommitting to Emory staff and the city of Atlanta.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Emory's Atlanta campus is centrally located in the Druid Hills neighborhood of metro Atlanta, just a short drive away from renowned research centers, museums and music venues, global corporations, and a world of opportunity. Additional details about Atlanta can be found [here](#).