



President  
William James College  
Newton, Massachusetts

*William James College strives to be a preeminent school of psychology that integrates rigorous academic instruction with extensive field education and close attention to professional development. We assume an ongoing social responsibility to create programs to educate specialists of many disciplines to meet the evolving mental health needs of society.*

## THE SEARCH

William James College is a mission-driven, relationally rich, academically distinctive institution that has grown successfully through entrepreneurial leadership, and is now entering a phase where clarity, coordination, and institutional maturity must match its growth, while preserving the culture, the values, and the entrepreneurial spirit that define it.

Nicholas A. Covino, PsyD, who transformed William James College, will step down as President after nearly 25 years of leadership. The Search Committee and the Board of William James College seek a president committed to its mission, with the personal qualities necessary to serve its mission and the managerial and entrepreneurial skills to further build William James College on the platform it has so carefully constructed.

## THE COLLEGE

Founded in 1974 as the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, William James College (WJC) has evolved into a highly respected institution, with an emphasis on experiential-based training that prepares students for careers in mental and behavioral health and organizational leadership that strengthens communities.

The College is a mission-driven institution with a profound commitment to its values and seeks to fill a critical need in an anxious society. Its faculty and staff join and rarely leave. Through its academic and certificate programs, the College prepares practice-ready graduates to work in schools, prisons, community health centers, community and government social service agencies, and with diverse and often underserved populations. The College's board and faculty possess a uniform commitment to social justice and to contribute meaningfully to fill the multi-cultural mental health workforce shortage. WJC has become a community with a broad shared commitment.

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The administration and the faculty believe that WJC's academic approach is a major differentiator in the marketplace and that their commitments to students and teaching skills have built its reputation. It offers its students intensive experiential learning and a field education, with high levels of faculty engagement and support and a training model grounded in real-world application. Today, more than 44 percent of its students identify as BIPOC. In response to evolving needs, the College now offers specialized coursework and concentrations in LGBTQ studies; Latino, African and Caribbean Mental Health; Asian Mental Health; Global Mental Health; and Military and Veterans Psychology, among other fields.

The institution has grown substantially over the past two decades, from its founding as the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (MSPP). In 2001, MSPP had approximately 130 students enrolled in a single Clinical Psychology doctoral program and a budget of \$11 million a year. By 2025, William James College employed 147 total faculty with 81 full-time, core faculty, among 228 full-time employees. It enrolls more than 1,100 students across sixteen graduate degrees, a bachelor completion degree, and certificate programs spanning clinical, educational, organizational leadership, and community-based behavioral health fields, with a budget of approximately \$47 million.

The College's reputation and its enrollment have grown steadily. It has regularly added new programs that teach mental health disciplines in highly varied domains.

The Clinical PsyD program attracted nearly 800 applications for about 100 spaces in the entering class in 2026, up from 610 applications the prior year. This program is the historic backbone of the College and its steadily improved reputation drives applications and enrollment.

The MA in Clinical Mental Health Counselling program has matured in a highly competitive field and has 80 new students in the 2025 cohort with another 20 enrolled in its relatively new online program. The online program has students across the Northeast with a few in Georgia, Tennessee, and the West Coast. It is the second most important revenue generator for the College. It works hard to distinguish its offerings from its competition, with characteristic WJC commitment to the quality of the teaching.

The Organizational Leadership department provides a PsyD degree in Leadership, and an MA in Organizational Psychology (MAOP) delivered in a hybrid and online mode, that appeals to working professionals who are interested in leadership. The PsyD degree in leadership psychology prepares graduates for coaching, academic, or consulting careers. The programs have grown steadily.

The School Psychology department offers the MA/CAGS in School Psychology as an on-campus, three-year program, and the MA or Certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) online. The School Psychology department operates in a competitive landscape and has built a strong regional reputation for producing practice-ready professionals equipped to meet the growing and complex mental health and learning needs of school-aged children.

The Center for Workforce Development has trained over 4,000 behavioral health and community health workers, who are the backbone of care in community based mental health organizations. Over 80% are from underrepresented populations. One of its premier programs is the Behavioral Health Service Corps

(BHSC) which offers recent college graduates hands-on training, mentorship, and career development opportunities and has been a feeder program to the College's degree programs. The Center's work has been largely supported by grants and has attracted over \$25 million since its founding in 2017. Grant support has become more difficult with changes in federal policy, but the program fills a widely acknowledged need and has found continued support from the State, private foundations, and employer partnerships.

With the strength of the Clinical PsyD program in Massachusetts, WJC has acquired permission from the State of Rhode Island to locate a second Clinical PsyD program, the College's first out of state. It will open for its first class of 10-15 students on the Roger Williams University Providence campus in the fall of 2027. The College expects the program to fill an important need in Rhode Island and to grow well over the next several years.

Leadership describes WJC finances as "healthy but not wealthy." From modest fundraising and careful attention to operations, the College has grown its net assets from \$4 million in 2010 to \$30.5 million in 2025 with a combination of cash and quasi endowment of \$31 million. It owns a large, modern, attractive, office park building financed with tax exempt debt at a rate of 2.44%. The College produces a net from operations every year and uses its funds to invest in new programs and add to the quasi endowment.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT PRESIDENT

### **Lead William James College's next chapter while sustaining its deep commitment to its mission and to its relational culture**

William James College enters this presidential transition in a position of strength, having grown significantly in scale, scope, and impact over the past two decades. The next president will build on this foundation by shaping the College's next chapter, sustaining its deep commitment to mission and preserving the relational, high-touch culture that defines the WJC experience, even as the institution evolves in complexity and reach. Personal connection, availability, respect for all, and social justice commitment are essential to success. The next president must walk the talk, connect personally, and in message and action, embody the values and mission of William James College.

### **Bring a strategic and disciplined approach to the College's programmatic offerings**

William James College's program portfolio reflects both its strategic growth and its commitment to mission, with the Clinical PsyD program serving as a longstanding anchor of institutional strength. The next president will be charged with thoughtfully assessing and, where appropriate, refining this portfolio, ensuring alignment with mission, market demand, and financial sustainability, while identifying opportunities to strengthen, expand, or adapt offerings. The Clinical PsyD is the engine that has driven the school historically and the Rhode Island expansion grows from its success. The future may hold other opportunities to serve. The MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) is also in high demand, especially the online format, and breaks even, but has a lot of competition with other programs locally

and is always price sensitive. It serves a deep public need, but the academic program will need constant adaptation in order to meet students where they are, while providing a consistently rigorous academic program. Organizational Psychology programs offer modest growth potential, again especially online, but offer considerable leverage to organizational success. Workforce development activities, which are primarily externally funded, offer mission alignment and community impact, and often are a feeder to degree programs at the College, but will require even further revenue diversification.

The College has adapted thoughtfully to the needs of communities, finding program models that are sustainable and effective. That work must continue with the same level of both mission and ambition.

### **Lead the expansion of the Clinical PsyD program into Rhode Island and perhaps beyond**

There is a very high and growing demand for the Clinical PsyD program. It serves a profound public need. The Newton cohort has been capped for years by APA guidelines to about 100 students per year. The early indicators in Rhode Island are promising. It has required a modest investment. The project will take patience and will grow slowly but is projected to break even in a few short years. In the course of going to Rhode Island, WJC has learned a great deal about expansion to other states. As Rhode Island matures, WJC may have opportunities to expand in equally hospitable venues.

### **Strategize how the impact of technology, including AI, across the field, could change the structure and approach of WJC**

In the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, the working world has turned creatively to virtual work. Telehealth has reached clinical psychology both in care giving and in teaching. At the same time, AI has appeared suddenly on the horizon, with unknown implications for the organization of work, for the nature of pedagogy, and for care itself. In the tenure of a successful WJC president, the organization will grapple with new technology frontiers in every part of its function, from operations to pedagogy. It seeks a president who can both encourage experimentation while providing essential ethical guidance to all the College's users.

### **Develop essential managerial infrastructure to support a growing and complex institution**

Entrepreneurial leadership has enabled WJC to expand programs, partnerships, and geographic reach, and as it has grown, it has developed a strong managerial cadre. The next president will need to ensure that systems, processes, and leadership structures continue to evolve alongside growth, enabling more coordinated decision-making and a sustainable institutional model for innovation. The organization must keep its ambition and its creative impulse while it moves steadily to ever more sophisticated management.

### **Strengthen financial resilience and revenue diversification, including philanthropy**

While financially successful and well-managed, WJC remains highly tuition-dependent and operates with a limited financial cushion. In recent years it has acquired considerable grant support, and its newer programs have diversified the revenue streams. The president must advance strategies to diversify

revenue even further. In the last few years, WJC has built a small, professional development team, and philanthropy has improved. Over the next president's tenure WJC will need expanded philanthropy, new partnerships, new sources of grant support, and new program models, while maintaining financial discipline and aligning resource allocation with institutional priorities.

### **Advance workforce development and community impact**

WJC has established itself as a leader in workforce development, connecting education directly to the urgent need for mental and behavioral health professionals, especially in community-based organizations in Massachusetts and more recently Rhode Island. These organizations are an essential part of the care-giving system in their states, and they rely on staff with relatively modest pay and limited training. They endure high staff turnover, and staff retention has been a difficult problem for many years. These are issues of consequence for all the human service providers and for their state governments. The next president has an opportunity to further integrate and elevate these efforts, strengthening partnerships with providers, acting as expert advisor and advocate with the States, and helping to develop a trained, resilient workforce who can commit to the field.

### **Respond to student affordability, debt, and outcomes**

Students at WJC are deeply committed to careers in mental health but often face significant financial burdens in pursuing their education. They are greatly aided by federal policies that forgive student debt if the graduate works in not-for-profit or public work. Recent changes in loan policy that limit total borrowing have been a real challenge and WJC has responded creatively with help from the State. The next president must navigate the intersection of affordability, access, outcomes, and policy, ensuring that students are supported academically and financially, and advocating appropriately, in a changing policy environment.

### **Strengthen the College's brand beyond the region**

WJC has been positioning itself to be a regional and national leader in training behavioral and mental health professionals and addressing the mental health workforce shortage, and its programs are in demand. The College is well known in the field and in the region with constantly improved applications. It is not, as yet, widely recognized in the national higher education landscape. Over time, increased visibility and reputational strength will enable philanthropy, out of state developments, and faculty recruitment and retention. The president has represented WJC broadly in many venues and that work must continue.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

William James College seeks a president with a deep commitment to its mission who can build on its strong foundation and lead the institution through its next phase of growth and development. While no single candidate will embody every attribute, the successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences, capabilities, and qualities:

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- Possess knowledge about the education and training of psychologists and mental health providers, the standards of practice in the community, and challenges/opportunities presenting to the field, with a PhD or PsyD in Psychology preferred;
  - A demonstrated commitment to WJC's mission, including preparing practice-ready professionals to serve the mental and behavioral health needs of diverse and underserved communities;
  - A relational and visible leadership style, with the ability to engage students, faculty, staff, and partners and to foster a culture of respect, accessibility, and belonging;
  - Experience leading a complex organization through growth and change, balancing entrepreneurial momentum with the development of stronger systems, structures, and coordination;
  - A record of effective financial leadership, including stewardship in a tuition-dependent environment and alignment of resources with institutional priorities;
  - Experience advancing diversified revenue strategies, including philanthropy, partnerships, grants, and new program models;
  - The capacity to navigate a shifting external environment, including changes in higher education, public policy, student financing, and emerging technologies;
  - An ability to innovate and remain open to new methods and ideas;
  - An appreciation for academic culture and faculty work, with the ability to lead effectively in an institution grounded in teaching and practice;
  - A track record of building and leading strong teams, including recruiting, developing, and retaining effective senior leaders;
  - Exceptional listening and communication skills, including the ability to articulate a clear vision and represent the College to diverse internal and external audiences;
  - Experience working with a governing board, and the ability to build strong, collaborative relationships with trustees;
  - The ability to elevate institutional visibility and reputation, positioning WJC as a leader in mental and behavioral health education;
  - Personal qualities of integrity, humility, sound judgment, and resilience, with the capacity to listen, learn, and build trust, appropriate to leading a mission-driven institution with a close-knit community.

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## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Confidential 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/william-james-college/president>

John Isaacson, Chair  
Kelly McLaughlin, Managing Associate  
Mindy Cimini, Senior Search Coordinator  
Isaacson, Miller

William James College is an institution and community dedicated to the principles of excellence, fairness, and respect for all individuals. We are committed to strengthening our communities, including our workplace, by fostering the development of competencies essential for change agents in an increasingly complex society.

This position is not eligible for employment visa sponsorship now or in the future. Applicants must be authorized to work in the United States at the time of hire and be able to perform the essential functions of the position, with or without reasonable accommodation.

William James College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to enable qualified individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of this position, with or without accommodation.

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

## WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Academic Programs

William James College is organized into four academic departments: Clinical Psychology, Counseling and Behavioral Health, Organizational and Leadership Psychology, and School Psychology.

The College offers two PsyD programs in Clinical Psychology and Leadership Psychology.

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The College offers multiple master's degree programs, including a mix of in-person, hybrid, and online formats. The MA programs include: Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Applied Behavior Analysis, Organizational Psychology, Psychology, and School Psychology.

WJC also offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and Human Services. This is a bachelor's degree completion program.

In addition to the degree programs, the College offers a range of certificates and non-degree programs. Certificate programs include Crisis Response and Behavioral Health, Executive Coaching, Leading Transformative Mental Health in Schools, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Mental Performance Consulting. The College offers additional workforce-aligned and micro-credential programs.

## Strategic Plan and Institutional Priorities

William James College is making strong progress against its current strategic plan, established in 2023 with goals to be achieved by 2028. The strategic pillars of the current strategic plan include:

- Support WJC's greatest strengths: faculty, staff, and field supervisors
- Own the New England market for professional psychology education
- Become the experts at educating a multicultural mental health workforce
- Expand and diversify sources of revenue
- Optimize the student experience

Areas of focus for next strategic plan will likely include student outcomes, stakeholder impact, technology, and financial sustainability.

## Leadership and Governance

The William James College Board of Trustees is a dedicated and diverse group, representing a variety of professional backgrounds including finance, psychology, healthcare, education, business, and marketing.

The president's cabinet includes the vice president for academic affairs, vice president for workforce initiatives and specialty training, vice president for business development and strategy, vice president of finance and operations, and associate vice president of enrollment management.