



Inaugural Dean of the School of Media Arts, Computing, and Design
Clark University
Worcester, MA

THE SEARCH

Clark University, a nationally ranked, private liberal arts-based research university, seeks a visionary and collaborative leader to serve as the inaugural dean of the new School of Media Arts, Computing, and Design. This role represents a rare opportunity to lead a new School at the convergence of the arts, interactive media, and technology.

The University's internationally ranked programs in game design and interactive media, alongside established strengths in computer science, the arts, and the humanities, form a robust academic ecosystem. The School of Media Arts, Computing, and Design brings these distinct but complementary areas together in a single academic home, creating new opportunities for integration across creative, computational, and humanistic disciplines, with growing attention to how people engage with and are shaped by interactive media, computing, data, and AI. Together, these strengths underpin a School that unites rigorous scholarship grounded in the values of a liberal arts education, alongside an experiential, studio-based approach to learning. As this new School continues to take shape, Clark students will be competitively prepared for success in an increasingly digital and interdisciplinary world.

The successful candidate will bring an entrepreneurial vision and approach to leading this new academic enterprise. The inaugural dean will play a pivotal role in shaping and launching the School, positioning Media Arts, Computing, and Design as a destination for creative, computational, and design-driven work with broad societal impact. This is an opportunity for a builder—an innovative and collaborative leader who can bring colleagues together, develop new structures and programs, and help define the School's future direction. The dean will also be a compelling communicator, able to clearly articulate the value and impact of Media Arts, Computing, and Design's interdisciplinary model, and leverage this platform to cultivate external relationships and drive fundraising success, recruitment, and resource development for the School.

Clark has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications should be submitted according to the instructions at the end of this document.

ABOUT CLARK UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1887, Clark was one of the first all-graduate institutions in the United States. Today, the university is a nationally ranked, private, liberal arts–based research university known for intellectual independence and academic innovation. Clark is increasingly recognized for academic programs and student experiences that tackle pressing social and human challenges on a global scale.

Clark is a highly student-centered institution that teaches approximately 2,063 undergraduate (Fall 2026) and 929 graduate students (Fall 2026) annually. Clark students learn to be imaginative, contributing citizens of the world and engage in advanced research and creative work early in their academic careers, often beginning in their first year, reflecting Clark’s commitment to inquiry driven learning. Clark’s urban location and tradition of community partnerships place faculty and students in an ideal position to live the university’s motto, “Challenge Convention. Change Our World.” The University’s 253 full-time and 181 part-time distinguished faculty and 519 full-time and part-time staff advance a broad portfolio of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral [programs](#), including an [accelerated 4+1 BA/Master’s](#) model that has received national attention for its innovation and effectiveness.

Clark has received many national and international distinctions, including recognition for its inclusion efforts, innovative practices, community engagement, and impact. The University has been named a top private institution for making an impact by the Princeton Review and is one of 45 schools in the book *Colleges that Change Lives*. With an operating budget of \$156 million and an endowment of more than half a billion dollars, Clark’s current financial position is strong, and the University’s 72-acre urban campus includes approximately 1 million square feet of academic space, residence halls, and research and athletics facilities.

Under the leadership of President [David Fithian](#), Clark has undertaken a period of purposeful transformation, strengthening the alignment between the University’s academic programming, students’ needs and interests, and the current and emerging job market. For undergraduate students, the enhancements are embodied in The [Clark Experience](#), which ensures that every student leaves Clark with the preparation, creativity, and tenacity to succeed on whatever path they choose. New mentorship and career development offerings available to incoming students include the Shaich Scholars and Penn Scholars programs that give direct access to high-profile leaders and practitioners.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF MEDIA ARTS, COMPUTING, AND DESIGN

Over the past several years, Clark has undertaken a series of bold, future-oriented initiatives to align its academic programs with converging intellectual fields, student interest in interdisciplinary and applied programs, labor-market demand for hybrid skill sets, and faculty enthusiasm for collaborative teaching,

research, and creative work. The creation of the School of Media Arts, Computing, and Design builds on this momentum and extends Clark's commitment to rethinking how knowledge is created and applied in the twenty-first century. The School brings together distinct but deeply complementary academic areas—the Becker School of Design & Technology, and long-standing departments in Computer Science, English, Mathematics, and Visual and Performing Arts.

The School's academic model is anchored by dual-pathways and a robust studio-based program. The dual pathway model is more than just completing two majors. It reflects a deliberately integrated and coordinated approach to learning and advising, with coursework and projects in one field informing and deepening work in the other. At the heart of the School is the Studio: an interdisciplinary, team-based capstone experience that will become a defining feature of every major in the School. The Studio is envisioned as a semester- or year-long collaborative endeavor in which students from different fields bring their expertise to bear on real-world questions, culminating in public-facing outputs such as exhibitions, performances, apps, data-driven installations, or media campaigns. This blending of theory and experiential education is designed to provide Clark students with a hands-on, collaborative, and publicly engaged education. Through this integrated structure, students develop the ability to move seamlessly between conceptual thinking and applied work.

Center for Media Arts, Computing, and Design

The School's programs are supported by the Center for Media Arts, Computing, and Design, a state-of-the-art, 70,000-square-foot facility that anchors teaching, research, and creative work. Opened in 2023, the Center includes a multimedia gallery, augmented and virtual reality laboratory, video game library, makerspace, incubator space, robotics lab, and data science lab, creating opportunities for students and faculty to work across traditional academic boundaries while integrating technical fluency, artistic expression, storytelling, design, and emerging technologies. Supported by advanced facilities and evolving technological platforms, students and faculty pursue sophisticated creative practice and research in areas including game design, immersive media, animation, digital cinematography, audio production, software development, interactive storytelling, and emerging work in AR/VR, motion capture, and human-centered computational environments.

THE ROLE OF THE DEAN

The inaugural dean of the School of Media Arts, Computing, and Design will play a pivotal leadership role in developing and advancing a shared vision and strategic priorities for the School and positioning it for success in the higher education marketplace. The dean will foster a culture of collaboration and innovation within and beyond Clark, serving as both the internal leader responsible for launching the School and an outward-facing ambassador responsible for elevating its reputation, communicating its impact, and serving as a lead fundraiser in partnership with University Advancement. Early success in the role will be reflected in measurable progress across several areas, including growth in student enrollment, notable external visibility and reputation to be leveraged for student outcomes such as internships and career placements as well as academic and industry research and project-based collaborations, expanded

philanthropic support, including endowed faculty positions, the development of a coherent, compelling, and forward-looking academic model that clearly connects academic innovation to student outcomes, and the creation of signature student experiences.

Reporting to the [Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs](#), the dean will serve as the chief academic leader for the School and a key member of the University's senior academic leadership team. The role requires an institutional perspective, with responsibility for advancing curricular coherence and interdisciplinary connections within Media Arts, Computing, and Design and across the University. They will work in close partnership with department chairs, faculty leaders, and affiliated units to build a cohesive School identity while respecting the autonomy and distinct cultures of the participating disciplines. As the School grows, the dean will be responsible for building appropriate administrative, staffing, and operational infrastructure. When fully developed, this may include roles such as an associate dean to coordinate academic and programmatic initiatives, leadership to support research development and external funding, faculty to grow and scale course offerings, and professional staff to support studios, facilities, and interdisciplinary programming. The pace and scale of this growth will be aligned with fundraising success, enrollment trends, and institutional priorities.

A central responsibility of the dean will be to advance the School's mission through philanthropic leadership and strategic resource development. Working closely with University Advancement, the dean will play a lead role in identifying priorities, cultivating and stewarding major donors, and securing philanthropic support for faculty excellence, student opportunities, facilities, and long-term programmatic growth. The dean will be expected to articulate a compelling case for investment in the School and to contribute meaningfully to broader institutional fundraising efforts aligned with the University's strategic priorities. In addition, the dean will cultivate a broad range of external partnerships that extend the School's reach and impact beyond the University. This includes developing relationships with industry, cultural institutions, nonprofits, community organizations, and other collaborators who can contribute to the success of the School.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN

Establish a Foundational Vision and Strategy for a New School

The inaugural dean will articulate and advance a bold vision for the School that defines its intellectual identity and strategic priorities. This is a pivotal moment for Media Arts, Computing, and Design as many of its defining elements are still taking shape, presenting a unique opportunity to shape its trajectory through thoughtful planning and intentional design. Working in close partnership with faculty, staff, and University leadership, the dean will build shared alignment around this vision and position Media Arts, Computing, and Design as a uniquely integrative space where the liberal arts, humanities, and creative disciplines intersect with new media, technology, and computing. The dean will be responsible for establishing a strategic plan with actionable priorities, measurable outcomes, and the organizational and administrative structures needed to support the School's operations.

Build a Collaborative Academic Culture Across Distinct Disciplines

The School of Media Arts, Computing, and Design brings together faculty from diverse academic and creative traditions, including tenure-track, practice-based, and industry-engaged educators. This collaborative environment enables the development of innovative academic offerings and student experiences that cut across traditional boundaries. A central opportunity for the dean will be to cultivate a highly collaborative and innovative environment that brings these communities together around shared goals. The dean will lead through partnership and shared governance, building trust, aligning incentives, and fostering a culture in which faculty actively contribute to shaping the School's future. Success will require a leader who listens actively and translates across disciplines, ensuring alignment and building trust in the early stages of the School's development.

Lead Fundraising Efforts

The inaugural dean will play a leading role in advancing philanthropic support for the School, working closely with University Advancement to define fundraising priorities, cultivate and steward major donors, and secure significant investments. The dean will be a compelling communicator who can articulate the School's purpose, impact, and differentiating strengths to internal and external audiences. They must position the School as a distinctive model in interdisciplinary education and translate its approach into a vision that resonates with philanthropic donors and other funders. Success includes securing support for faculty excellence, expanding resources for innovative academic programs and student experiences, and aligning philanthropic efforts with the School's long-term strategic priorities.

Build Strategic External Partnerships

The inaugural dean will build and sustain a portfolio of strategic external partnerships that extend the School's academic mission and deepen its external engagement. These partnerships can include collaborations with industry leaders, cultural institutions, nonprofit organizations, and community partners aligned with the School's interdisciplinary focus. These relationships will serve as a platform to support meaningful opportunities for students, including internships, project-based collaborations, and applied learning experiences. At the same time, they will support faculty engagement in externally connected research and creative practice, helping to generate new opportunities for sponsored projects and external support.

Elevate Visibility and Create a Distinctive Identity

The dean will play a central role in elevating the School's visibility and shaping a clear, compelling identity that distinguishes Media Arts, Computing, and Design in a competitive, rapidly evolving landscape. The dean will work closely with admissions, marketing, communications, and alumni engagement to define and consistently communicate a cohesive value proposition for the School. This will include developing and executing coordinated digital and in-person strategies that elevate awareness of Media Arts, Computing, and Design programs, faculty, and student work. The dean will also ensure that the School's successes are highlighted in ways that build credibility and momentum for the institution. This can include

establishing a distinctive calendar of events, exhibitions, and convenings that position the School as a visible and dynamic hub of creative and intellectual activity.

Advance Scholarship and New Forms of Knowledge Creation

The dean will champion an inclusive and expansive understanding of scholarship that encompasses both humanistic inquiry with emerging and practice-based forms of knowledge creation. The dean will support the development and growth of externally funded research and creative portfolios, encourage collaboration across methodologies, and help align varied forms of scholarly work across disciplines. This includes advancing work that bridges computational research, artistic practice, storytelling, and design innovation. Through this work, the dean will position the School as a hub where rigorous intellectual inquiry and applied, public-facing creative production coexist and reinforce one another.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Clark University seeks an accomplished, forward-looking leader to guide the launch and set the School on a path towards long-term success. While no single candidate will have all the ideal qualifications, candidates should possess many of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Leadership experience in complex academic or creative environments with a level of accomplishment commensurate with appointment at the senior faculty level. The committee welcomes applicants with an equivalent record of distinction in practice-based, industry, or interdisciplinary leadership roles aligned with the School's mission.
- Ability to set a clear and compelling vision and translate it into actionable strategic plans. Experience setting priorities, aligning stakeholders, and guiding initiatives from concept through implementation. Record of building organizational structures and managing staff, budgets, and operational systems.
- Exceptional communication ability. Capacity to articulate the value and impact of interdisciplinary education, ideally in the context of the liberal arts, to various audiences in order to advance the School's visibility and reputation.
- Proven ability to lead and inspire interdisciplinary teams, foster innovation, unify disparate units across differences, and drive positive change in complex and dynamic environments.
- Demonstrated ability to lead within complex shared governance environments. A leadership style characterized by intellectual curiosity and a willingness to learn from existing strengths while shaping future direction.
- Established track record of fundraising and resource development, including working with advancement teams, donors, industry sponsors, cultural institutions, nonprofit organizations, and

other external partners to support faculty initiatives, student experiences, facilities, and programmatic growth.

- Ability to leverage emerging technologies and advanced facilities to enhance teaching, learning, and creative practice.
- A proven capacity to manage and scale externally funded research and creative portfolios. Experience supporting humanistic inquiry and practice-based forms of scholarship.
- Experience leading in a culture where open dialogue, shared governance, and candid exchange of ideas are valued.
- Demonstrated ability to create inclusive environments that support the success of students, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives.
- Deep appreciation for the values of a liberal arts education, and the breadth of academics represented across the school's faculty, departments, and programs.
- A terminal degree is preferred in any of the School's core academic disciplines with a record of advancing interdisciplinary work across media arts, computing, game design, the performing or visual arts, the humanities, or related fields.

LOCATION

Clark University's 72-acre, tree-filled campus is located in the Main South neighborhood of Worcester, Massachusetts, about two miles from downtown Worcester and 40 miles west of Boston. Worcester is a dynamic, diverse city on the rise. The second-largest city in New England, with a population of over 205,000, Worcester is home to eight institutions of higher learning, including the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester State University, and the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. Worcester is increasingly recognized for its growing healthcare and biotechnology communities, its thriving arts and cultural communities, and as a vibrant food hub with an abundance of new restaurants and craft breweries. In addition, the city has become home to the Red Sox minor league baseball team, which plays in a new ballpark about a mile from campus.

More information on the city and region can be found at [Downtown Worcester](#) and [Discover Central Massachusetts](#).

COMPENSATION

The anticipated compensation for this position is \$250,000-\$290,000, which will be competitive and commensurate with experience.

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/clark-university-school-media-arts-computing-and-design/dean>

Ben Tobin, Raul Bernal, and Alaine Small
Isaacson, Miller

Clark University embraces equal opportunity and affirmative action as core values: the University believes that cultivating an environment that embraces and promotes diversity is fundamental to the success of our students, its employees, and its community. This commitment applies to every aspect of education, services, and employment policies and practices at Clark. Clark's commitment to diversity informs its efforts in recruitment, hiring, and retention. All positions at Clark share in the responsibility for building a community that values diversity and the uniqueness of others by exhibiting integrity and respect in interacting with all members of the Clark community to create an atmosphere of fairness and belonging. Clark strongly encourages members from historically underrepresented communities, inclusive of all women, to apply.

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