



Dean and Chief Academic Officer  
New England Conservatory  
Boston, MA

## THE SEARCH

The [New England Conservatory of Music](#) (“the Conservatory” or “NEC”), an international leader among schools of music, seeks an innovative and collaborative Dean and Chief Academic Officer (CAO). Reporting to NEC’s president and serving as a critical member of the Conservatory’s leadership team, the Dean and Chief Academic Officer partners closely with the Dean and Chief Artistic Officer (CRO), as well as other senior administrators, faculty, staff, and the Board of Trustees, to advance NEC’s educational mission, goals, and strategic priorities in a rapidly evolving arts education landscape. Specifically, the CAO oversees the Conservatory’s academic functions and is responsible for ensuring the delivery of high-quality educational programs, fostering educational excellence, and driving innovation in teaching and learning to strengthen student success, professional preparation, and outcomes.

The CAO oversees the academic agenda and compliance for the College, including curricular design, development, and implementation; academic departments; academic faculty contracts and pay; academic operations (including registrar functions, scheduling, assessment, and accreditation); the Center for Teaching and Learning; and student and academic life (including student & residence/campus life, advising, and wellness). The CAO ensures strategic and operational excellence, organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and clarity and transparency in these areas.

Additionally, the CAO partners closely with the CRO to manage the college budget, lead academic faculty recruitment and professional development, enable the cultivation of musicianship at the highest level, foster innovative and integrative teaching and learning across the faculty, and encourage collaboration, both within the college and across the institution.

NEC has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of

this document. Additional information on New England Conservatory can be found at <https://necmusic.edu/>.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DEAN AND CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

Reporting through the CAO are the Conservatory's academic faculty, including those in music theory, music history, the liberal arts, and modern languages. Additionally, five administrative roles report into the CAO including the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Academic Life, the Associate Dean for Curriculum and Academic Affairs, the Dean of Community Engagement and Professional Studies/Chair of Teaching Artistry, the Library Director, and the Special Assistant to the Office of the Deans. With this team, the CAO will be expected to execute on the following opportunities and challenges:

### ***Oversee curricular development, innovation, and assessment***

In recent years, NEC has updated its curriculum to meet the evolving needs of students and the demands of the musical profession. As the CAO further develops, implements, and refines this new curriculum, so arises the opportunity to assess its effectiveness and create a culture of continuous improvement around the curriculum. The CAO will drive its assessment and activate any necessary updates, ensuring that programs adhere to NEC's standards of professional relevance and educational and artistic excellence, as well as accreditation standards and compliance and regulatory requirements. At the same time, the CAO will continue to apply a forward-thinking lens as the business model and outcomes-driven orientation of conservatory education evolves.

### ***Foster faculty excellence and development***

NEC retains its remarkable stature in part due to its exceptional faculty, and the CAO is charged with enabling faculty success. Responsible for the recruitment, hiring, and retention of quality teachers in music theory, music history, the liberal arts, and modern languages, the CAO will also be attuned to systems needs as it relates to faculty development. Partnering with the CRO who oversees performance faculty, the CAO will jointly lead the Faculty Council, as well as guide the associate deans in the development and implementation of faculty assessment and support. Finally, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation in teaching methodologies remains a priority for the institution, and the CAO will enable the advancement of those priorities, including overseeing the Center for Teaching and Learning.

### ***Provide strategic leadership to advance the Conservatory***

The CAO will work in concert with the Executive Council and Chief Officers to advance the institution's mission, vision, values, and strategic plan. In particular, the CAO is responsible for policies and initiatives that influence educational offerings, student learning outcomes, and faculty development. The CAO will

be fluent in using data to inform decision making as it relates to these areas, and working at a tuition-dependent organization, will monitor key performance indicators related to enrollment and educational quality.

As with any institution, crisis management and risk mitigation are critical responsibilities of any senior leadership team, and the CAO will collaborate with crisis and emergency management teams to develop and implement contingency plans and protocols related to academic emergencies, disruptions, and risks. Finally, the CAO will ensure continuity of academic operations and support the well-being of students, faculty, and staff during crisis situations.

### ***Strengthen student success and support***

The CAO oversees the college's Office of Academic and Student Affairs, including registrarial functions, an integrated and holistic advising structure, student success and persistence, residential and campus life, and student wellness. The dean will ensure collaboration across the Office of Academic and Student Affairs, the enrollment management team, and the finance department to track enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates. Additionally, the CAO will lead the implementation of initiatives that support student learning, persistence, and success.

### ***Steward institutional resources and expand strategic partnerships***

Together with the CRO, the CAO will partner to manage the college's budget and allocate resources effectively, working with data to inform decision-making that ensures the Conservatory's long-term sustainability while advancing academic and artistic excellence and fostering innovation. Also in collaboration with the CRO and executive leadership, the CAO will assist with identifying, developing, and expanding strategic alliances, partnerships, and collaborative initiatives in support of NEC's academic enterprise, strengthening institutional impact, identifying potential new revenue pipelines, and deepening meaningful engagement with external communities.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The Dean and Chief Academic Officer will be a creative, forward-thinking, and adaptable leader, and a bold thought partner and pedagogical expert who will energetically lead NEC's academic enterprise. In addition to a passion for education, deep interest in the performing arts and conservatory education, and appropriate administrative and management experience, the successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences, characteristics, and abilities:

- Profound understanding of excellence in academics, including a deep commitment to the highest standards of teaching and learning, an appreciation for the arts, and a desire to support the education and training of musicians and leaders;

- Deep respect for the community and culture of NEC; an appreciation for the spirit of partnership among faculty, students, and staff, and the ability to harness this collaborative spirit to drive toward new opportunities and goals;
- Commitment to fostering a healthy, thriving, and welcoming community;
- Administrative, operational, and interpersonal intelligence and capabilities; a record of success managing people and teams, partnering effectively with faculty, and building support for and leading groups through change initiatives;
- Experience with teaching, developing and/or redesigning curricula, and a demonstrated dedication to fostering students' growth—in an arts organization or otherwise;
- A track record of innovation and strategic risk-taking, creative problem-solving, and impeccable judgment; experience building programs – moving from idea to action – and in generating buy-in for these efforts;
- Emotional intelligence, including warmth, approachability, and empathy.

## 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/new-england-conservatory/dean-and-chief-academic-officer>

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*NEC is an Equal Opportunity Employer that recruits and hires qualified candidates without regard to race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, disability, or veteran status.*

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