



Assistant Vice President for Human Resources
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

THE SEARCH

Swarthmore College, one of the world's premier liberal arts institutions, seeks a strategic, collaborative, and forward-looking Assistant Vice President for Human Resources ("AVP") to help advance a modern, mission-aligned human resources function as the College strengthens its employee experience, workforce strategies, and HR technology infrastructure. Reporting to and serving as a key strategic partner to the Vice President for Human Resources ("VP"), the AVP will help shape a cohesive human resources strategy that supports the College's mission, strategic plan, academic excellence, and the evolving needs of its workforce.

Leading, mentoring, and empowering a team of four professionals, the AVP will oversee core human resources areas including talent management, employee relations, learning and development, performance management, and employee engagement. The ideal candidate will be a seasoned HR generalist and trusted leader and relationship-builder who can navigate the complex and collaborative nature of a liberal arts institution, leverage data and technology to strengthen decision-making and service delivery while providing a personal, community-oriented approach that distinguishes Swarthmore's residential campus community.

To be successful, the AVP will thoughtfully address several key opportunities and challenges outlined below:

- Provide strategic leadership for talent management, talent alignment, and professional development;
- Strengthen employee relations practices and mitigate institutional risk;
- Advance learning, leadership development, and performance management;
- Strengthen organizational culture, employee engagement, and institutional effectiveness; and
- Lead workforce innovation and partner with HR senior staff to optimize Workday.

Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, is assisting Swarthmore College with this recruitment. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

Founded in 1864 by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Swarthmore College is among the nation's most distinguished liberal arts colleges. Located on a 425-acre arboretum campus of rolling lawns, wooded trails, gardens, and historic architecture approximately 11 miles from downtown Philadelphia, Swarthmore offers the resources and opportunities of a major metropolitan area while preserving the close-knit culture of a residential college. The institution enrolls approximately 1,700 students and is recognized internationally for academic excellence, a highly selective admissions process, and an educational philosophy rooted in critical thinking, close faculty-student engagement, and the transformative power of the liberal arts. Its mission and culture continue to be shaped by its Quaker heritage, including enduring commitments to collaboration, ethical leadership, respect for individuals, and the pursuit of knowledge in service of the common good.

These values are reflected in a vibrant campus community that combines rigorous intellectual inquiry with a deep commitment to social responsibility, inclusion, sustainability, civic engagement, and belonging. More than 800 dedicated staff members and an exceptional faculty of scholars, teachers, researchers, and mentors support the College's mission and distinctive residential learning environment. Recognizing that its people are among its greatest strengths, Swarthmore invests significantly in employee development, leadership capacity, workplace inclusion, and organizational effectiveness. Across the institution, faculty, staff, and students work collaboratively to advance knowledge, support student development, and serve the public good. Additional information on Swarthmore College may be found at [swarthmore.edu](https://www.swarthmore.edu).

ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES

The Assistant Vice President for Human Resources serves as a key strategic partner to the Vice President for Human Resources, providing leadership for the College's talent management, learning and development, and employee relations functions. Reporting to the Vice President for Human Resources, the AVP will help design and implement a cohesive, forward-looking human resources strategy that advances the College's mission, strategic plan, and commitment to academic excellence while responding to the evolving needs of the workforce.

The AVP will play a leadership role in shaping policies, practices, and workforce strategies related to emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, as well as the continued implementation and optimization of Workday. As a member of the HR senior leadership team, the AVP will work closely with colleagues across the department and campus to foster a collaborative and inclusive community.

The AVP will lead, mentor, and empower a team of four professionals responsible for talent management, employee relations, and learning and development, ensuring campus partner support while balancing operational compliance with strategic partnership.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The AVP will join Swarthmore as the College continues to invest in its people, modernize HRIS and processes, move to Workday, and adapt to a changing workforce. The successful candidate will thoughtfully address the following opportunities and challenges:

Provide strategic leadership for talent management and professional development.

The AVP will lead the College's talent management strategy, overseeing staff hiring processes and, as appropriate, participating in or leading search committees for senior-level positions while supervising the Assistant Director of Talent Management. They will develop and implement a forward-looking talent strategy that proactively builds diverse and high-caliber talent pipelines. They will monitor and, in collaboration with the VP, respond as appropriate to trends in higher education and the liberal arts sector, including the growing impact of artificial intelligence on workforce practices. They will also collaborate closely with the Compensation Director on career progression and other initiatives that align talent management and compensation strategies.

Strengthen employee recognition, employee relations practices, and mitigate institutional risk.

The AVP will design and oversee employee recognition programs that reinforce institutional values and contributions, ensure recognition practices are equitable and meaningful, and continually assess and enhance the employee experience to support the attraction, development, engagement, and retention of talented staff.

The AVP will provide leadership for the College's employee relations function, establishing standards and governance for conflict mediation, corrective action, and workplace conduct, while conducting investigations as needed and facilitating the resolution of interpersonal conflicts to support a collaborative and respectful campus environment. Supervising the Manager of Employee Relations, the AVP will provide guidance on complex employee relations and risk management matters; ensure the consistent interpretation and application of College policy and sound HR judgment; identify trends, institutional risks, and recurring concerns; and recommend strategies to strengthen consistency, decision-making, and risk mitigation. They will lead efforts to promote a safe and equitable campus environment, including serving as a Deputy Title IX Coordinator with responsibility for supporting fair processes and institutional compliance.

The AVP will also partner with the Manager of Leaves and Wellness on complex FMLA and ADA matters that require senior HR judgment and collaborate closely with the Office of General Counsel and the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to ensure compliance while delivering practical and effective solutions for employees.

Advance learning, leadership development, and performance management.

The AVP will provide leadership for the College's learning, development, and performance management strategies by supervising the Manager of Learning and Development and ensuring the design and delivery of staff programs that support leadership development and professional growth. They will also oversee onboarding initiatives that help new colleagues feel welcomed and connected to the College's history and values, direct modern performance management practices that foster professional growth, meaningful feedback, and proactive succession planning, and guide the enhancement and creation of professional development offerings that maximize the capabilities and benefits of Workday Learning once implemented.

Execute HR technology transformation, workforce innovation, and Workday optimization.

The AVP will serve as the strategic process owner for the Workday Talent, Onboarding, Learning, and Performance modules, as well as other Workday functions that support their areas of responsibility. Working closely with colleagues across the HR leadership team, the AVP will play a central role in the continued development, implementation, and optimization of Workday while leveraging data, analytics, and practical technology solutions to strengthen decision-making and operational effectiveness.

The AVP will help the College navigate the evolving impact of artificial intelligence on the workforce, identifying opportunities to improve processes, enhance service delivery, and adapt talent strategies while maintaining the relationship-centered approach essential to Swarthmore's collaborative and highly engaged campus culture.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Swarthmore seeks an accomplished and collaborative human resources leader with a demonstrated record of success as an HR generalist with strengths in talent management, employee relations, and organizational development within complex organizations.

Required:

- Bachelor's degree in human resources, business administration, or a related field; advanced degree preferred.
- Eight or more years of progressively responsible human resources leadership experience with a focus on talent management, learning and development, employee relations, or related areas.
- Demonstrated success leading talent acquisition, talent alignment, employee relations, and learning and development initiatives.
- Comprehensive knowledge of employment laws, regulations, and human resources best practices.
- Experience conducting employee relations investigations and addressing complex workplace issues with sound judgment and discretion.
- Demonstrated ability to build trust and credibility across diverse constituencies through a consultative and collaborative leadership style.

- Experience leveraging data, analytics, and technology to improve human resources programs, decision-making, and institutional effectiveness.
- Experience leading and developing high-performing teams.
- Demonstrated skill in change management and institutional transformation initiatives.
- Exceptional communication, relationship-building, and problem-solving skills.
- Unquestioned integrity, professionalism, discretion, and commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace culture.

Preferred:

- Experience with Workday or similar implementation, optimization, or administration.
- Familiarity with the opportunities and implications of artificial intelligence in workforce and human resources settings.
- An understanding of higher education and the liberal arts, or experience working within a mission-driven and collaborative organization.
- Experience with Title IX in an institution of higher education.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The market range for this position is \$180,000 to \$215,000 per year, which represents the College's good faith and reasonable estimate of the range at the time of posting. The salary offered is determined based on factors including, but not limited to, experience and education of the final selected candidate, departmental budget availability, internal salary equity considerations, and available market information.

The Assistant Vice President for Human Resources role is a full-time role based in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. This is a hybrid work position, but the AVP is expected to be a visible leader on campus and available to work on-site as needed.

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/swarthmore-college/assistant-vice-president-human-resources>.

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