

Williams College

Director of Libraries
Williams College
Williamstown, Massachusetts

THE SEARCH

Williams College (Williams), a leading private liberal arts college, seeks a dynamic, visionary, and collaborative leader as its next Director of Libraries (Director).

Williams is recognized for extraordinary teaching *and* research. Williams Libraries (the libraries) are an integral nexus of the teaching and research mission that drives the College, and the next director will be the key leader who guides their continued vitality. They will lead an organization that embodies the Williams dedication to teaching and research, supports student learning and the work of faculty in and out of the classroom, and provides an accessible and inclusive space and service for all users. They will be, at their core, a partner who relishes the chance to work and collaborate in the close-knit community of a highly engaged residential liberal arts college, and a leader who actively promotes the organizational health of the libraries.

The libraries are well-resourced to meet this critical mission. They are home to collections and special collections of unusual note, breadth, and depth. Teaching, learning, access, service, and research are supported by a dedicated, expert staff. Composed of Sawyer Library, Schow Science Library, and Special Collections, each space has undergone significant updates in recent years, including the award-winning renovation and expansion of Sawyer Library (including special collections and archives), which has seen the libraries become a physical hub on campus and a vital space in the community. The libraries have been intentional in strategic planning over the last decade, resulting in a coherent and diligent organization well-positioned to lead in the face of continuing change.

The successful candidate will bring a deep understanding of the technological innovations and challenges facing academic libraries today, a strong commitment to intellectual diversity and inclusion, and a passion for the mission and goals of an outstanding liberal arts college. The candidate will have experience in the

collaborative development and execution of a strategic vision; the expertise to balance support for the libraries' legacy services with the evolution of new approaches to teaching, learning, scholarship, and dissemination of knowledge; and a successful record of organizational leadership.

Williams College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

WILLIAMS COLLEGE

Williams College is a highly selective, private, residential liberal arts college located in Williamstown, MA. The College is broadly recognized for its academic rigor and strong tradition of excellence in personalized teaching and learning. The campus is home to approximately 2,070 undergraduate students who develop close intellectual and personal relationships, learning from and alongside some of the world's leading scholars. Williams' faculty is devoted to teaching, mentoring, and scholarly research. Williams offers two graduate programs enrolling just short of 50 students: a two-year master's degree in the history of art in partnership with the [Clark Art Institute](#), and a yearlong master's program designed for economists from low- and middle-income countries. Upon graduation, students join an extraordinary body of alumni – the oldest society of alumni in the country – many of whom remain involved and invested in Williams.

Williams admits U.S. students without regard to their ability to pay. The College meets 100 percent of every admitted student's demonstrated financial need for four years, and it is the first school in the country to offer "all-grant" financial aid, with no loans or required earnings contributions. Just over half of all Williams students receive financial aid from the College.

At Williams, there are three academic divisions (languages and arts, social studies, and science and mathematics) that encompass 26 departments, 37 majors, and over 10 concentrations. While at Williams, students major in a core area of study, but students, and indeed faculty, are often interdisciplinary in their scholarship, and roughly 45% graduate with more than one major. Instead of minors, Williams offers concentrations, which are groupings of courses around certain topics that pull from many departments and disciplines. Additional opportunities exist for students to take part in experiential education and off-campus study, as well as develop their own majors.

Williams is home to more than 300 full-time faculty members who are at once leading scholars and deeply engaged mentors and teachers. Given Williams' student-faculty ratio of 7:1, students become partners in the process of discovery, contributing to knowledge in an intimate, supportive environment, developing deep relationships with professors and mentors, and learning from and with each other through free inquiry and the open exchange of ideas.

Campus & Location

For a small college, Williams has a relatively large and complex campus, consisting of over 3 million square feet of historically important and newly constructed buildings situated on over 450 acres of a contiguous core campus, as well as 2,600 acres at Hopkins Memorial Forest, the College's nearby educational research forest.

Dubbed “one of the loveliest communities in New England” by *The New York Times*, Williamstown is the perfect combination of a bustling cultural hub and an outdoor oasis. Spring Street, at the heart of town, offers a variety of dining options and shopping, providing an array of possibilities for students, faculty, staff, and locals. Numerous world-renowned cultural attractions can be found in Williams' backyard, including the Clark Art Institute, MASS MoCA, Jacob's Pillow, Tanglewood, and Barrington Stage Company. The Berkshires also offer abundant outdoor activities, including hiking, skiing, and swimming.

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Williams' system of shared governance, attentive to the interests of all constituent groups, is central to the enduring excellence of the College and the vitality of its community. Faculty carry primary responsibility for the curriculum and related matters; staff have a voice through college committees and advisory groups; and students shape many aspects of campus life. The President and Senior Staff manage the College's strategic and day-to-day affairs, while the Board of Trustees is the ultimate corporate and fiduciary authority responsible for the College's policies, programs, and financial sustainability.

President Mandel

Maud S. Mandel joined Williams as the College's 18th president in July 2018. A distinguished scholar and educator, President Mandel continues to teach as a professor of history. Her tenure as president has been marked by a collective vision that has clarified, endorsed, and funded innovations across the College. Under her guidance, the College launched its current strategic plan in 2021, with cross-cutting themes of sustainability and diversity, equity, and inclusion values. Following on this initiative, President Mandel led the effort for Williams to fund and implement “all-grant” financial aid. An advocate for educational innovation that combines the best of new and old, she has encouraged important conversations around thoughtful engagement with educational technology and the creative arts. She has advocated effectively for a project, now underway, to support, design, and build the new Williams College Museum of Art. As president, she provided administrative support for the creation of interdisciplinary programs and discussions about tapping new potential for the College's distinctive Winter Study program.

President Mandel earned her B.A. from Oberlin College, and her master's and Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan.

Provost Siniawer

Provost Eiko Maruko Siniawer assumed the role of Provost in July 2022. She was renewed for a second, three-year term in 2025. A historian of modern Japan, she earned her B.A. in history from Williams College before earning an M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Harvard University.

As provost, Siniawer leads the academic operations of the College and is responsible for resource allocation decisions in order to support the College's educational mission and strategic priorities. The Provost supports eight critical areas of the College: Admission, Institutional Research (IR), the Libraries, Office for Information Technology (OIT), the Science Center, Student Financial Services, Williams College Museum of Art (WCMA), and the Zilkha Center for the Environment. By convention, the provost is chosen from among the Williams faculty by the president and serves up to two, three-year terms.

WILLIAMS COLLEGE LIBRARIES

Williams College Libraries provide an intellectual forum where the world of ideas is made manifest to inspire learning, teaching, and creativity. In the liberal arts tradition, dedicated staff, collections, and collaborations stimulate critical inquiry. The libraries offer a space that is inclusive and adaptable, that can serve as a nexus for community, collaboration, experience, and inquiry. The libraries support these mission-critical components of a Williams' education through expansive and noteworthy collections, special collections, and archives, across a wide range of digital resources in partnership with dedicated librarians and staff, and in award-winning spaces designed for the modern vibrancy of campus-based libraries.

The Williams College Libraries include Sawyer Library, Schow Science Library, and Special Collections. The library boasts a profound and varied collection. Nearly 700,000 physical titles are joined by nearly double that number in both e-book titles and again in e-journals and serials. The libraries are home to more than 40 dedicated librarians, teachers, scholars, archivists, and staff. The structure is organized across units in the verticals: Research Services & Library Outreach; Access Services; Collections and Systems; and Special Collections. The libraries have an active and well-respected information literacy instruction program involving librarians from both Research Services and Special Collections, and serving all divisions of the College, teaching over 300 sessions in 2025-26.

Williams has invested in the libraries' physical spaces to ensure they meet the needs of a modern library and align with Williams's educational goals and culture. Sawyer Library, with a focus on the humanities and social sciences, and home to Special Collections, is a space of architectural splendor. The product of a three-year building and renovation project completed in 2014, it is a welcoming, soaring space with expansive mountain views and natural light that was recognized with the AIA/ALA Library Building Award in 2016. It serves as a campus hub for research, collaboration, and campus life with spaces that support both individual research and group-based academic work. A collection of group study rooms and collective

seating areas reflects a space that was intentionally designed for the new era of libraries as collaboration spaces.

For students and researchers, Sawyer Library provides an integrated and efficient user experience. Students often move between group work areas, individual study zones, research consultations, and library collections within a single visit. Collections, Special Collections, and archives are steps away from collaborative spaces. The Center for Educational Technology, which collaborates with the libraries to support digital scholarship, multimedia projects, and innovative teaching, Peer Academic Support, the Writing Center, and the Rice Center for Teaching are located within Sawyer Library. The comprehensive nature of the space makes Sawyer Library a destination. The campus Committee on Diversity and Community described the libraries as, "among the College's most consistently inclusive and effective academic spaces. Students describe them as welcoming, supportive environments where they can focus, feel a meaningful sense of belonging, and access academic resources."

Schow Science Library is likewise a community anchor. Located in the Science Center complex, the library contains book and journal collections in the fields of astronomy, physics, biology, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, geosciences, and psychology. The building itself is a physical bridge, connecting three main science buildings and providing a common, communal space. Recent years have seen the addition of classroom and shared space that have added significantly to the utility of the library.

Special Collections, housed in Sawyer Library, includes a wide variety of rare books, papers, and other items, including the papers of Sterling A. Brown, Audubon's *Birds of America*, and a significant collection of American founding documents, including a draft of the U.S. Constitution and an early printed version of the Declaration of Independence. Recent strategic work has seen effort on descriptions and reparative cataloging, along with discoverability, to increase the inclusivity and use of special collections holdings. The College Archives are part of Special Collections, and document the history of the College and serve as the living memory of the institution, with holdings ranging from early student letters and meeting minutes to issues of *The Williams Record*, the student newspaper.

The libraries also include a Library Shelving Facility, a high-density storage facility on campus that is shared with the Williams College Museum of Art.

Williams is also an active and engaged participant in the library community. Williams is a member of the Boston Library Consortium (BLC) and the Oberlin Group. As early members of the BLC in particular, Williams has reaped the benefits of partnership with several much larger research universities, which further expand the libraries' ability to provide resources for faculty and students. Williams remains a guiding force in and key member of BLC today and is a model for a successful and thriving contemporary liberal arts college library.

THE ROLE

Reporting to the Provost, the Director of Libraries is responsible for the leadership and administration of the Williams College Libraries, including the management and development of staff, budget, facilities, collections, and strategic planning. The Director will oversee a relatively large and mature operation, including a staff of 42 and a budget of more than \$3.5 million (independent of personnel). The Director supervises department heads in the areas of Research Services & Library Outreach, Access Services, Collections and Systems, and Special Collections, as well as an administrative coordinator, and is a close collaborator with faculty, Academic Technology Services, and other campus constituencies.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DIRECTOR OF LIBRARIES

The Director of Libraries will be empowered and expected to:

Refine, communicate, and implement a clear vision for the future of libraries at Williams

The Williams Libraries' overarching purpose is to participate in and support the educational mission of Williams. In a dynamic educational environment, amid the evolving landscape of information and knowledge, the Director will be a thought leader in the field of academic libraries and will provide the College with insights into the potential future of libraries and services. They will provide leadership and expertise, facilitate long-range planning, and sustain partnerships that enable the library to be strategic, nimble, and intentional in an ever-changing future. The Director must be a deep thinker who can shape a vision, but is equally inclined to community collaboration, such that strategy and vision manifest with the needs and interests of the whole Williams community clearly accounted for. They will be someone who strives to understand the full spectrum of constituent needs and experiences and brings that knowledge to bear in helping to determine how the Williams Libraries meet the future. It is certain that multiple considerations will factor into any strategic vision of the future. Rather than addressing those considerations separately or in conflict, the Director will look to integrate and connect them into a unified, powerful vision and resulting resource for the Williams community.

Engage and support as an institutional thought partner

The libraries are a critical partner for faculty, staff, students, and the community, and the Director must engage, support, and nurture relationships between the libraries and their constituent groups. They will ensure that library resources and services are accessible and approachable, that research support meets the needs of faculty and students, that teaching support is proactive and expert, and that, for members of the broader Williamstown community, the libraries are known as a welcoming community resource. The Director will promote a partnership orientation throughout the libraries and ensure that library systems and structures serve as a foundation for collaborative engagement. The Director will deepen existing partnerships, including those with the Williams College Museum of Art and Office of Institutional

Technology, and nurture new ones to ensure that the library is known and utilized as a resource across the campus ecosystem.

Facilitate a first-class teaching organization

At Williams, dedication to teaching is held not just amongst the faculty but is inherent in all College units and personnel. The libraries must be an engine that drives this value. Library staff must continue to be excellent teachers across a variety of topics; must continue to partner with faculty and instructors across campus; and must continue to innovate new teaching modes and programming that integrate with coursework throughout the curriculum. The libraries are a key partner with the Rice Center for Teaching and with Academic Technology Services, where they can support the development of courses that foster the acquisition of information literacy and help determine curricular interaction with new modes of knowledge engagement, including generative AI in instruction. Success will see the libraries be a source of support for all on campus around teaching and its evolution, which is readily turned to because of a proven record of enthusiastic partnership and recognized value.

Support the development of accessible and well-utilized collections and special collections

The libraries have committed significant effort to examining the collection and Special Collections, with tangible results. Yet in an evolving world, that work is forever ongoing. The libraries must continue to develop collections in all media or formats that support the evolving academic priorities of an inclusive community with diverse needs and make more accessible and usable the legacy special collections so that they are known to students as well as faculty as an active tool of scholarship and learning.

Cultivate and nurture a strong, unified, service-oriented staff

At the core of the libraries is a dedicated, high-performing, and hardworking staff who are committed to providing a high standard of service and a welcoming, inclusive space to the Williams community. The Director will lead an organization and culture that is committed to recruiting, retaining, and developing a skilled, inclusive, and diverse staff. As a service organization, the Director will continue to ensure a high level of cultural competency among all staff.

In many libraries, there can be tension between the staff librarians and the rest of the library team. The Director will work across the libraries and with the department heads to ensure that library employees are and feel respected, nurtured through professional development and growth opportunities, and positioned for long-term success. The Williams Libraries are a learning organization, and library employees will feel empowered to embody this organizational value. The Director will endeavor to cultivate an organization devoid of silos, where communication, collaboration, and collegiality are lived values in all work and regardless of professional role.

Strategically steward resources

Williams is fortunate to be well-resourced and is ambitious in operational scope. But as in any institution, resource decisions must be carefully and thoughtfully made. There are always difficult and complex decisions for leadership to ensure resources are allocated to best support the College's mission. The institution's dedication to exceptional teaching *and* research, a rapidly changing technical environment, increasing costs in publishing and vendor relationships, and the advanced skills needed to maintain a complex information environment all stress the libraries' resources. The next Director should have significant experience and demonstrated ability to leverage, maximize impact, and think creatively about resource management and allocation.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will possess many of the following professional expertise, leadership competencies, and personal qualities:

- A deep understanding of both academic libraries and higher education, and the broad challenges and opportunities facing both. A deep appreciation for the pedagogy, research, and community represented by liberal arts colleges;
- Outstanding leadership and management abilities, including strategic vision, an understanding of best practices and effective tactics, budgetary sophistication, excellent organizational skills, and the proven ability to attract, nurture, retain, motivate, and manage staff;
- Intellectual curiosity and appreciation of the range of disciplines; demonstrated knowledge of and commitment to research practices, special collections, and the dynamic information landscape;
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, including the ability and commitment to engage the college community broadly, to partner with institutional leaders, faculty, and students;
- Deep commitment to and concrete experience in fostering and supporting programs that address equity, inclusion, and diversity;
- Demonstrated ability to lead transparently, fairly, collectively, and responsively;
- Personal and professional integrity of the highest degree;
- Qualities of mind and character that demonstrate open-mindedness, compassion, self-reflection, humor, and an orientation that favors collaboration;
- Academic credentials appropriate to the leadership of a modern college library.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The compensation range for this position is \$200,000-\$230,000, commensurate with experience. This role is based on Williams' campus in Williamstown, MA. Williams 2027 Benefits Guide can be viewed [here](#).

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 in confidence via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/williams-college/director-libraries>

Jackie Mildner, Partner
Andy Marshall, Managing Associate
Pamela Carty, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller

Employment at Williams is contingent on the verification of background information submitted by the applicant, including the completion of a criminal record check and education, when applicable. Decisions regarding appointments, promotions, and conditions of employment comply with applicable federal or state law prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, ancestry, or military service.

It is unlawful in Massachusetts to require or administer a lie detector test as a condition of employment or continued employment. An employer who violates this law shall be subject to criminal penalties and civil liability.

Beyond meeting fully its legal obligations for non-discrimination, Williams College is committed to building a diverse and inclusive community where members from all backgrounds can live, learn, and thrive. As part of this commitment, we will ensure that persons with disabilities are provided reasonable accommodations. If reasonable accommodation is needed to participate in the job application or interview process, please feel free to contact us via phone at (413) 597-2681 or email at hr@williams.

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