



Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Assessment
Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

THE SEARCH

Swarthmore College, one of the nation's leading liberal arts institutions, seeks a strategic, collaborative, and intellectually curious institutional research leader to serve as its next Assistant Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Assessment (AVP IERA). This individual in this role will balance innovation with stewardship, technical sophistication with relationship-building, and long-term vision with practical execution.

Swarthmore was founded in 1864 by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) as one of the earliest coeducational institutions in the country. Located on a 425-acre arboretum campus just outside Philadelphia, the College enrolls approximately 1,700 students and offers more than 50 academic programs across the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, engineering, and interdisciplinary fields. Supported by more than 800 staff members and 262 full-time faculty, Swarthmore combines the personalized educational experience of a residential liberal arts college with the resources, talent, and capacity to advance its mission at the highest levels. Its culture continues to be shaped by Quaker values, including collaboration, ethical leadership, respect for individuals, and a commitment to advancing knowledge in service of the common good.

The next AVP IERA will join Swarthmore at a pivotal period of transition: The College expects to announce its next president by early 2027, and it is in the process of implementing Workday for Human Resource, Finance, and Student operations, and will be evaluating the future of the platform's data, reporting, and analytics environment on an ongoing basis. Together, these transitional moments offer the incoming AVP IERA an exceptional opportunity to help shape institutional priorities and strengthen the College's capacity for strategic planning and decision-making. At the same time, Swarthmore continues to advance important goals related to student success, enrollment, financial sustainability, philanthropy, assessment, accreditation, and long-range planning. The AVP IERA will play a critical role in helping the College

strengthen its information ecosystem, leverage emerging technologies, and further embed evidence-informed decision-making across the institution.

The AVP IERA leads a team of two directors, serves as a member of the President's Cabinet, and provides strategic leadership for institutional research, assessment, accreditation, data governance, federal reporting, and decision support. Working closely with academic and administrative leaders, the AVP IERA will translate complex information into actionable insights, support institutional planning and resource allocation, and ensure the College has the analytical capacity necessary to achieve its strategic goals.

The next AVP IERA will guide the evolution of Swarthmore's analytics and reporting environment, strengthen coordination among distributed data and analytics functions, advance data governance efforts, and help shape the College's approach to AI and other emerging technologies. They will also oversee institutional effectiveness initiatives, assessment activities, accreditation planning and compliance efforts, and federal reporting requirements while helping position the College for its next comprehensive NECHE accreditation review in 2036.

The ideal candidate will bring significant experience in institutional research, institutional effectiveness, assessment, analytics, or a related field; a demonstrated ability to support complex organizational decision-making; and a collaborative leadership style that inspires trust across a wide range of constituencies. As a trusted advisor to the President, Cabinet, Board, faculty, and staff, the AVP IERA will help ensure that data, assessment, and evidence-informed planning continue to support Swarthmore's

Swarthmore College has retained Isaacson, Miller to assist with this important recruitment. Instructions for submitting applications, nominations, and inquiries can be found at the conclusion of this document.

SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

Founded in 1864 by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) as one of the earliest coeducational institutions in the country, 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 offers more than 50 academic programs and [courses of study](#) spanning the liberal arts, sciences, social sciences, humanities, and engineering. Recognized internationally for academic excellence, a highly selective admissions process, an educational philosophy rooted in critical thinking, close faculty-student engagement, and the transformative power of the liberal arts, the College operates with an annual budget of more than \$300 million and is supported by an endowment exceeding \$3 billion.

Swarthmore's 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 262 full-time faculty (184 are full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty and 78 full-time off-track faculty), who are exceptional scholars, teachers, researchers, and mentors, support the College's mission and distinctive residential learning environment with a student-faculty ratio of 8:1. 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 AVP FOR INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, RESEARCH, AND ASSESSMENT

Reporting to the President and serving as a member of the President's Staff, the AVP for Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Assessment will lead the development, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of an integrated system of planning, assessment, evaluation, and institutional effectiveness across the College. Working closely with senior leadership, faculty members, and administrative partners, the AVP IERA will serve as a strategic advisor on institutional planning and decision-making, providing leadership for research and analysis, environmental scanning, peer benchmarking, monitoring key performance indicators, evaluating strategic initiatives, and interpreting and communicating data and research findings to a wide range of institutional constituencies. In partnership with the Chief Information Technology Officer, the AVP IERA will co-chair the College's Data Governance Committee and lead the development of policies, protocols, standards, and accountability frameworks that ensure the stewardship, integrity, accessibility, and effective use of institutional data and related technologies, strengthening the College's capacity for analytics in support of institutional priorities.

The AVP IERA will collaborate closely with faculty and academic leadership on learning outcomes assessment, program review, evaluation, accreditation, and certification efforts; co-chair the Academic Assessment Committee; and provide leadership for the planning, design, implementation, documentation, and continuous improvement of assessment activities across all areas of the institution. The AVP IERA will oversee institutional research, survey design and administration, external reporting, accreditation, compliance, assessment, and evaluation functions while fostering a collaborative network of analysts who operate with common standards and definitions in support of the College's mission. Serving as Accreditation Liaison Officer to NECHE, the College's new accreditor following its transition from Middle States, the AVP IERA will lead ongoing accreditation and accountability activities, ensure compliance with regional accreditation requirements. Swarthmore's next comprehensive review with NECHE is scheduled for 2036.

The AVP IERA will recruit, develop, coach, and evaluate a high-performing team, including the Director for Institutional Research (primarily responsible for managing and reporting data), the Director for Institutional Analysis and Assessment (primarily responsible for strategic research and special studies and for supporting the AVP in administrative assessment), and, as needed, consultants, interns, and other temporary staff supporting special projects. In addition to providing leadership for the College's institutional research and effectiveness functions, the AVP IERA will serve as the institutional expert to

senior leaders, leading the institutional approach to data collection and governance, leading education around emerging issues affecting higher education, particularly those related to accreditation, accountability, effectiveness, and regulatory change, and applying this knowledge to support institutional planning, strategic decision-making, and continuous improvement across the College.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Key opportunities and challenges for the next AVP IERA include the following:

Guide a transformative moment in institutional data, analytics, and emerging technologies.

Swarthmore is entering a pivotal period of transformation as it transitions from Banner to Workday and evaluates the future of its broader data, reporting, and analytics environment. The next AVP IERA will leverage this moment to help Swarthmore modernize institutional reporting, strengthen data governance, advance data warehousing and business intelligence capabilities, and create more efficient and sustainable approaches to analytics and decision support. The AVP IERA will establish a more integrated and strategic information ecosystem while balancing innovation with accuracy, consistency, and trust in institutional data. They will also support the College's evolving approach to AI and other emerging technologies, working with campus partners to develop thoughtful governance practices, evaluate opportunities for enhanced analytical capabilities and operational efficiencies, and ensure new technologies are leveraged in ways that align with Swarthmore's culture, values, and commitment to responsible data stewardship. Working closely with colleagues across Information Technology Services, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Advancement, and other administrative areas, the AVP IERA will position the College to effectively leverage data and emerging technologies in support of its mission and future priorities.

Build a more integrated and collaborative institutional analytics function.

As demand for data and analytical support continues to expand across the College, Swarthmore has developed a distributed network of analysts and data users embedded within Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Advancement, Enrollment Management, Information Technology Services, and other administrative units. The next AVP IERA will strengthen coordination across these groups, build upon the Data Governance Handbook to further establish shared standards and data definitions, and advance a more cohesive institutional approach to analytics, reporting, and data stewardship. Success will require fostering strong partnerships across campus, balancing broader access to information with institutional standards for quality and consistency, and creating structures that support collaboration while preserving local expertise. Serving as a central convener across Swarthmore, the AVP IERA will align analytical efforts with institutional priorities while sustaining the highly collaborative and relationship-driven culture that defines Swarthmore.

Serve as a strategic advisor to leadership to shape Swarthmore's future.

As a member of the President's Staff, the AVP IERA will serve as a trusted advisor to the President, Board, senior leadership team, and campus partners during a period of institutional transition. Building upon the office's long-standing reputation as a valued strategic resource, the AVP IERA will provide insight, consultation, and thought leadership in support of enrollment strategy, student success, financial aid, philanthropy, financial sustainability, space utilization, institutional effectiveness, and long-term planning efforts. The AVP IERA will strengthen partnerships across academic and administrative units and ensure that the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Assessment remains a valued resource for analysis, assessment, benchmarking, and strategic planning. Through the ability to translate complex information into meaningful insights and recommendations, the AVP IERA will help institutional leaders identify emerging opportunities, address challenges, and advance the College's strategic priorities.

Advance institutional effectiveness, assessment, and accreditation.

Working closely with faculty, academic leaders, and administrative partners, the AVP IERA will provide leadership for institution-wide assessment efforts, program review processes, strategic plan implementation, federal reporting requirements, and accreditation planning and coordination. Having recently transitioned to NECHE, the College is well positioned for its next comprehensive accreditation review in 2036. The AVP IERA will have the opportunity to shape and strengthen assessment practices, institutional effectiveness efforts, and accreditation readiness over the coming decade. As a trusted partner to faculty and campus leaders, the AVP IERA will help translate complex reporting and accreditation requirements into actionable strategies that advance institutional priorities and support student success. Through a collaborative and relationship-driven approach, the next leader will foster a culture in which assessment is viewed not simply as a compliance exercise, but as an essential component of organizational learning, strategic planning, and institutional excellence.

Lead and mentor staff.

The AVP IERA will oversee a team of two and will ensure that the office continues to be an effective organizational unit with strong morale and a commitment to collaboration with campus partners. They will assess the current office structure and staffing capacity to ensure it operates with optimal efficiency and that it is meeting institutional needs. They will establish a strategy for staff development and resource allocation to ensure the team maximizes its talents and impact and that data analyses are timely and rigorous. They will advocate on behalf of their team, ensuring that the resources, services, and thought partnership offered by the office are widely understood, valued, and accessed as appropriate.

CORE COMPETENCIES, QUALIFICATIONS, AND CHARACTERISTICS

The next AVP IERA should possess the following knowledge, skills, and abilities:

Core Competencies

Commitment to Swarthmore Values: The responsibilities of the position are directly in support of the College mission and values through the effective integration of planning, research, and assessment.

Collaboration / Team Orientation: The position requires direct leadership of a high-functioning team of professionals as well as building effective and collaborative relationships with others across all areas of the College.

Adaptability / Flexibility: The position requires responsiveness to the needs of the community, which may change as different priorities arise. The work of the office is highly interdependent (e.g., using enterprise data stewarded by other offices, collaborating with others on survey work, etc.), and so the incumbent must model and promote flexibility in interactions.

Strategic Leadership and Decision Support: Provide strategic leadership for institutional research, effectiveness, assessment, planning, and analytics functions that support data-informed decision making across the College. Translate complex analyses and findings into clear, actionable information for diverse audiences and stakeholders.

Judgment, Project Management, and Operational Excellence: Demonstrate excellent judgment, discretion, accuracy, and attention to detail. Effectively prioritize and delegate work, manage multiple concurrent projects, and balance attention to detail with an understanding of broader institutional priorities and objectives.

Qualifications and Characteristics

Required

- Master's degree in a relevant research-based discipline.
- Minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible experience in higher education, including management of personnel and budgets, effective leadership of professional staff, and collaboration with faculty and administrators.
- Minimum of five years of professional experience with institutional effectiveness, assessment, accreditation, planning, and/or institutional research.
- Demonstrated experience with quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- Familiarity with data warehouses, data governance, data security, technical documentation, and data standards.
- Knowledge of state and federal higher education reporting requirements, regulatory compliance, and data stewardship practices.
- Experience with regulatory reporting, data submissions, and survey administration.

- Extensive experience with database management systems, data extraction, and analysis of complex datasets.
- Ability to manage detail while simultaneously maintaining a strategic institutional perspective.
- Ability to use software needed for data access and management (e.g., Argos, Access, SQL, SAS), survey research (e.g., Qualtrics), statistical analysis (e.g., SAS, SPSS), presentation (e.g., PowerPoint), visualization (e.g., Tableau), and other related tools.
- Excellent statistical and analytical skills, including the ability to communicate complex analyses and insights to varied audiences.
- Excellent written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills.

Preferred

- PhD preferred.
- Two to four years of experience supervising professional staff.
- Experience working in a highly selective or complex higher education environment.
- Demonstrated understanding of the academic enterprise and how institutional research, effectiveness, assessment, planning, and analytics support institutional strategy and decision-making.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The market range for this position is \$170,000 - \$210,000 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 Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Assessment is a full-time position based in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. The position offers a hybrid work arrangement, but the AVP is expected to be a visible leader on campus and available to work on-site as needed.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Review of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the search is completed. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications, including CVs and cover letters, should be submitted via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/swarthmore-college/assistant-vice-president-institutional-effectiveness-research>.

Dan Rodas, Partner
 Amble Ryan, Managing Associate
 Steph Simon, Senior Associate
 Katanya Cathcart, Senior Search Coordinator
 Isaacson, Miller

Swarthmore College is committed to creating a culture of respect and inclusion so that every member of our community feels a sense of belonging. We actively seek and welcome candidates with diverse perspectives and experiences, exceptional qualifications, and a demonstrable commitment to a more inclusive society and world. Swarthmore College is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate based on any identity or characteristic protected by law or College Policy.

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.