



Search for the PRESIDENT
IYRS SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY & TRADES
NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

THE SEARCH

IYRS School of Technology & Trades (IYRS) one of the premier marine trades and modern manufacturing schools in the United States, seeks its next President.

This is an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen and grow a unique technology and trade school that produces exceptional student outcomes. IYRS is valued by students for its hands-on, team-based learning model and sought out by employers for its highly skilled graduates. Named one of the Best Maker Schools in the world by *Newsweek*, IYRS possesses impressive facilities on the Newport harbor front, expert faculty, and respect from industry and the local community. IYRS alumni have started successful businesses and embarked on careers ranging from wooden boat building to wind energy to aerospace to consumer goods and have built some of the world's fastest and most beautiful yachts.

IYRS was founded in 1993 by Elizabeth Meyer as the International Yacht Restoration School to teach 15 students the fine craftsmanship necessary to restore historically significant wooden sailboats. The school has since grown into a leading non-profit experiential learning institution and currently offers four full-time, accredited certificate programs: Boatbuilding & Restoration, Marine Systems, Composites Technology, and Digital Modeling & Fabrication. Each year IYRS enrolls 90 to 100 students that represent a diverse mix of high school and college graduates, veterans, career changers, and up-skilled.

IYRS is supported by a staff and faculty of 25 and a 33-member board of trustees and sits on a three-acre waterfront campus featuring four administrative and academic buildings and a working marina. Reporting to the President is a five-member leadership team that includes the Chief Financial Officer and Director of Operations; the Directors of Educational Programs, Admissions, and Development and Marketing; and the Facilities and Marina Manager. IYRS's FY2022 operating budget is \$4.3 million.

IYRS's next President will have the opportunity to mold the right mix of academic programs, increase enrollment, diversify its financial resources, continue to develop the board, maintain philanthropic support, and create a clear and powerful communications strategy. The President will benefit from IYRS's engaged board and its location in a town and in a state that values and supports technology and trade

education. The next President should bring leadership, financial stewardship, marketing, and management experience; a passion for experiential education and an entrepreneurial spirit; expertise in partnering with diverse constituencies; and a commitment to the mission of IYRS to prepare students to enter the global maker and manufacturing workforce.

ABOUT IYRS

History

In the early 1990s, Newport resident Elizabeth Meyer, a lifelong sailor and well-known J-class yacht restorer, noted that the number of craftspeople trained in wooden boatbuilding and restoration was declining. Determined to sustain this craft and preserve the beauty of classic wooden yachts, Elizabeth and marine artist John Mecray founded IYRS to train the next generation of master boat builders. By the late 1990s, IYRS had celebrated the first class of graduates from its Boatbuilding & Restoration program and established a strong reputation among wooden boat enthusiasts for its high-quality education. In 2004, Terry Nathan joined IYRS as President and led the school to evolve its successful educational model to include new trades and technologies.

IYRS Today

IYRS has since expanded its curriculum to include courses in Marine Systems, Composites Technology, and Digital Modeling & Fabrication and changed its name to IYRS School of Technology & Trades, which better represents the true breadth of its programming. For all programs, students learn by doing. Technical and craft-oriented people build confidence at IYRS by learning teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking through the exploration of tools, technology, and a variety of materials. Graduates are in high demand across many industries and obtain rewarding jobs in their chosen fields. More than 700 companies around the country, including GEV Wind Power, TPI Composites, Flux Marine, Tesla, and Hinckley Yachts, seek to hire IYRS graduates. In FY22, the graduate placement rate for graduates seeking employment was 87 percent. All programs are accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges and the RI Board of Governors for Higher Education.

Campus

IYRS occupies three harbor-front acres in the heart of downtown [Newport, Rhode Island](#). The small but historically significant city attracts visitors from around the world to experience its Gilded Age mansions, historic downtown, beautiful beaches, world-class museums, and waterfront restaurants. It is also home to other notable educational institutions, including Salve Regina University and its Pell Center for International Relations and Public Policy and the US Naval War College. Newport is considered a world sailing capital and is located within a 45-minute drive from Providence and a 90-minute drive from Boston.

The IYRS campus includes four academic and administrative buildings and a working marina. The Boatbuilding & Restoration program is housed in Restoration Hall, which was Newport's original electric

generating plant before being converted into IYRS's impressive 18,000-square-foot maker's space in the mid-1990s. In 2009, IYRS expanded its footprint and restored the John Mecray Aquidneck Mill Building, which is one of Newport's first and only cotton mills and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Mill Building is home to staff offices, the Kristal and Joe Dockery Welcome Center, the [Edward W. Kane and James Gubelmann IYRS Maritime Library](#), and commercial office space rented to external tenants. IYRS's newest space, the 20,000-square-foot Brooks Building, was completed in 2017 and is home to the Marine Systems, Composites Technology, and Digital Modeling & Fabrication programs. The school has also recently reclaimed a 17,500-square-foot wharf, which will provide multiple opportunities for future income generation and campus growth.

IYRS's marina occupies prime real estate on the Newport waterfront and is a source of revenue for the school. It welcomes visiting yachts from around the world and is the location from which Boatbuilding & Restoration students launch their newly restored boats on graduation day each year. The marina offices are housed in a separate administrative building.

Programs

IYRS's visual and tactile curriculum emphasizes teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking. It provides highly technical and craft-oriented people with the necessary foundations to work with various materials, tools, and technologies. IYRS programs range from six to twenty months; are full-time, 8:30 am until 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday; and include a required [industry externship](#).

Boatbuilding & Restoration

During IYRS's 20-month Boatbuilding & Restoration program, students master the craft of wooden boatbuilding. Students experience every element of the boat restoration and construction process, from drafting the boat design to launching and sailing their restored wooden yachts from the school's marina. Upon graduation, students are prepared for careers in wooden boatbuilding and restoration, marine carpentry, fine woodworking, furniture making, historic building restoration, and more. Boatbuilding & Restoration currently enrolls a total of 22 students.

Marine Systems

In 2006, IYRS and the American Board and Yacht Council, one of the maritime trades' standards bodies, entered into a letter of understanding to jointly develop a premier Marine Systems program. The six-month program, offered twice per year, trains students to install, repair, and troubleshoot all aspects of a boat's systems, from the engine to electrics to hydraulics to plumbing. Marine Systems currently enrolls 24 students for the fall 2022 semester.

Composites Technology

IYRS's Composites Technology program was first launched in 2010 with federal funding from the Department of Labor. The six-month program, soon to be increased to nine months in fall 2023, teaches students to design and build with advanced composites, focusing on carbon fiber, which is highly desirable

for today's modern manufacturing industry. The various manufacturing methods to which students are introduced apply to numerous industries, including yacht building, sporting goods, prosthetic and medical devices, aerospace engineering, and beyond. Composites currently enrolls 14 students for the fall 2022 semester.

Digital Modeling & Fabrication

During the nine-month Digital Modeling & Fabrication program, students learn the basics of design and innovative manufacturing using cutting-edge tools, including 3D modeling software, 3D printers, milling machines, CNC routers, lathes, and more. Students graduate with the skills necessary for in-demand careers in a variety of design departments and modern prototyping shops. Digital Modeling & Fabrication currently enrolls 16 students for the fall 2022 semester.

Student Body

IYRS will enroll approximately 100 students this year. The school has the capacity to support up to 120 to 125 students annually, and, with some program and facility adjustments, could increase enrollment by an additional 10 to 20 percent. IYRS students are an average age of 30 and bring diverse experiences; 15 to 20 percent come to IYRS straight from [high school](#), 66 percent attended or graduated college, 15 to 20 percent are [military veterans](#) who come to IYRS with GI funding, 50 to 55 percent are [career changers](#), and five percent are hobbyists. Most students come from New England and the Eastern Seaboard, with the rest coming from elsewhere in the United States and around the world. Some have a history of craftsmanship, and others learn from scratch. While IYRS students represent a range of backgrounds and experiences, the school seeks to increase the gender, racial, and ethnic diversity of the student body.

Student Services

In addition to externship experiences, IYRS provides students with personalized [career development](#) support, business and entrepreneurship seminars, and numerous [networking and career exploration opportunities](#) with its over 700 industry partners. [Graduating students](#) enjoy high job placement rates; recent graduate placement rates have ranged from 87 percent, including hobbyists and retirees who are not seeking employment, and students can recover their education costs relatively quickly.

Tuition and Fees

IYRS's six-month-long academic programs cost \$19,000, and its nine-month, full-academic-year programs cost \$22,500 annually, though these numbers are projected to increase slightly. All programs have additional fees that include shop materials, hand tools, textbooks, and certification exams. Sixty-two percent of fall 2022 students received IYRS [scholarships](#), and there is interest from the board to increase IYRS's ability to provide scholarships and support for other expenses.

Finances

IYRS is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational institution. Forty percent of IYRS's revenue is derived from tuition and fees, an equal amount from philanthropic contributions, and 20 percent from space rentals and management fees. IYRS's annual operating budget is \$4.3 million, and it has net assets of about \$20 million, including its real estate portfolio. In 2020 IYRS embarked on a campaign to reduce its debt from the construction of the new \$9 million Brooks Building, which it has substantially achieved. The debt is currently \$1.3 million and will be further reduced by the end of 2023.

Fundraising

IYRS's donor base is loyal and generous. Of the 40 percent of IYRS's budget that comes from philanthropy, about two-thirds comes from individual gifts and foundation grants and one-third from the school's celebrated summer gala, which nets nearly \$500,000 each year. IYRS intends to continue to diversify its philanthropic base and secure its next generation of donors. The school recently launched its Power of 100 campaign, which aims to raise \$5,000 yearly from 100 donors in support of scholarships. IYRS also actively seeks support from industry; its new Industry Partner Program provides valuable benefits to employers while generating needed scholarship funding for students.

Staff and Faculty

Reporting to the President of IYRS are the Chief Financial Officer and Director of Operations, Director of Educational Programs, Director of Admissions, Director of Development and Marketing, and the Facilities and Marina Manager. IYRS currently employs a full-time staff of 25, 10 of whom are faculty members.

Board of Trustees

IYRS has a 33-member board of trustees, which meets three times a year. The five board committees include Academic Programs, Administrative, Development, Fiscal, and Governance and Nominating. In addition, there is a Board Officers Group. Trustees may serve an unlimited number of consecutive three-year terms. Board members are valued ambassadors of IYRS and are expected to donate or deliver to the school a minimum of \$10,000 each year.

Leadership Transition and Strategic Direction

In 2018, Jay Coogan, former president of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and provost of the Rhode Island School of Design, became IYRS's fourth President. At the beginning of his tenure, Jay worked closely with board and staff members to update the school's mission, vision, and core values, complete its reaccreditation, and form the school's 2020-2023 strategic plan. The plan featured enhancements to the school's educational offerings, student experience, staff professional development, brand awareness, board engagement, and financial wellness. IYRS made great strides in many of these areas despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the debt incurred from the construction of the Brooks Building. Thanks to the school leadership's deft navigation of these challenges, IYRS successfully weathered the pandemic and reduced its debt by 80 percent, placing it in a strong position, poised for its next leader to

take the helm. Additionally, the historic 133-foot schooner *Coronet*, which had been on campus since 1995, was recently moved from IYRS to Mystic Seaport, where its restoration will be completed. This has freed up valuable waterfront real estate for the school's strategic use.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PRESIDENT

Ensure the continued delivery of relevant, high-quality educational programming.

IYRS's next President will maintain the school's excellent suite of programs while thinking proactively and creatively about economic and technological evolutions and appropriate program delivery that will meet student needs. In concert with board and senior staff, the President will periodically assess the curriculum to ensure alignment with industry. They will also consider opportunities for additional program offerings and alternative methods for program delivery, which could include increasing cross-pollination among programs and making it easier for students to take multiple courses; building new part-time, short-term, or summer programs; and introducing an Associate Degree in Occupational Studies.

Define IYRS's external presence and create a thoughtful enrollment growth strategy.

IYRS seeks a straightforward brand identity and message that will help prospective students and partners more easily understand its mission and the transferability of its education. The school aims to reach total capacity for all its programs, which has been a challenge, especially since the beginning of the pandemic. The President will work with the board and staff to devise a creative enrollment strategy to promote increased interest in each program, attract more applicants, and identify areas for targeted recruitment, such as high schools. IYRS will also invest in its overall marketing strategy so that it is better able to attract industry partners across sectors.

Preserve IYRS's current and future fiscal well-being.

The President will steward IYRS's annual operating budget with a conscientious eye and lead financial planning according to established priorities and immediate and projected realities. The President will seek new revenue streams and funding opportunities and increase earned revenue from tuition to reduce the school's reliance on philanthropy, increase student financial support, and build a cash endowment. Additional sources of income could include government funding, strategic deployment of campus facilities, additional part-time or community programming, and broadening the donor pool.

Develop relationships with key stakeholders.

On behalf of IYRS, the President will continue building relationships with external constituents, including donors, industry partners, community organizations, government entities, and other educational institutions, particularly within Newport and Rhode Island. IYRS is especially interested in expanding and diversifying its base of industry partners outside of the marine trades to give students as many career opportunities as possible and effectively align programs with market demands.

Attend to the student experience and achieve strong student outcomes.

The next President will foster positive student experiences; increase the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the student body; ensure that students are well-prepared to embark on their chosen careers; and deepen alumni engagement. The President will also work towards reducing the barriers to entry that students face, the most significant of which is the high cost of housing in Newport. The next President will have the opportunity to think strategically and creatively to alleviate this issue.

Attract, retain, and develop a committed and talented faculty and staff.

The President will support IYRS's faculty and staff by fostering an inclusive and accountable culture, advancing professional development, growing the staff if necessary, encouraging active collaboration among units, and effectively engaging with and delegating to the leadership team. The President will also establish and standardize essential policies and procedures and invest in increased HR capacity.

Cultivate a dedicated and diverse board of trustees.

Though IYRS is a small school, its board of trustees rivals the boards of many major corporations with its dedicated membership of executives, entrepreneurs, and business leaders. The new President will engage trustees as thought partners, leveraging their expertise in service of short- and long-term strategy, and will support trustees in their essential roles as IYRS representatives. The President will also diversify the board by recruiting trustees of various identities, backgrounds, and experiences and who represent interests beyond maritime.

Leverage IYRS's excellent location and facilities to enhance the student experience and maximize revenue.

The President will ensure that IYRS's academic and administrative buildings and marina are well maintained, efficiently utilized, and effectively deployed for income-generating purposes. The next President will also play an essential role in determining the strategic development of the space that has recently opened with the departure of the *Coronet*.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- Experience leading in a similarly complex organization in the education, nonprofit, public, or private sector. Knowledge of teaching and learning, particularly in nontraditional educational settings.
- A passion for IYRS's heritage and its focus on restoration, technology, and trades. Commitment to hands-on, experiential learning and the role of trade and maker schools in today's educational landscape.
- Demonstrated ability to guide, support, and leverage faculty and staff expertise and capacity.
- An ability to fundraise, particularly with major and individual donors, foundations, corporations, and government entities interested in hands-on learning.

- Strategic, business, and financial management skills.
- Knowledge of academic program and enrollment strategies, including curriculum development, outreach, branding, and education pricing.
- A record of innovative accomplishments and flexibility and courage to test new ideas and take risks.
- Success as an effective listener, facilitative leader, and authentic partner. Demonstrated ability to engage with people from diverse backgrounds, from students to board members to potential donors.
- Experience with public speaking and serving as the face of an organization.
- A grounded, realistic, and positive demeanor. Excellent communication skills with high emotional intelligence. A can-do attitude and optimistic spirit. Demonstrated commitment to the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Experience with facilities oversight and capital planning is desirable.

APPLICATIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND INQUIRIES

All inquiries, nominations, and applications (including resumes/CVs and one- to three-page letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be directed in strict confidence to the search team [HERE](#). Applications will be reviewed as they are submitted. To be assured full consideration, please submit materials by Friday, March 17, 2023.

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