

**TEACHERS COLLEGE**  
**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**  
A Graduate School of Education, Health & Psychology

Search for the Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer  
Teachers College, Columbia University  
New York, New York

**THE SEARCH**

Teachers College, Columbia University, the first and largest graduate school of education in the country, seeks an innovative and strategic Associate Vice President and Chief Information Officer (CIO) to partner in reinvigorating the College's technology infrastructure. This individual will join an institution with a history of profound impact on the world through cutting-edge research and practice, and with a deep commitment to social justice. Reporting to the Vice President for Administration, the next CIO will be responsible for enterprise-wide strategic and operational oversight of Information Technology (IT) systems and infrastructure across the College.

Teachers College technology enterprise (TCIT) has approximately 55 staff that directly support all aspects of academic and administrative systems management, including: hardware, applications and technology management, cybersecurity, systems engineering, research data management, enrollment systems, networking, telecommunications, business solutions, email, mobile devices management; and web services for over 5,000 students, 1,000 staff, and 217 full-time faculty and lecturers across ten departments and offer over 65 academic programs in education, health, and psychology. The central IT operating budget is \$13 million.

Through collaboration with senior leadership, this position is responsible for leading and advancing IT strategies, policies, practices, and standards across Teachers College. This position is charged with becoming a strategic partner to establish and maintain governance processes to ensure the alignment of IT goals with the College's strategic priorities. The CIO will collaborate with faculty and executive management across the enterprise to identify, recommend, develop, implement, and support cost-effective technology solutions for all aspects of the organization. The CIO will bring current knowledge and a future vision of technology and systems to sustain Teachers College's competitive position in education, research, discovery, and innovation.

The successful candidate will be an imaginative information technology leader and an outstanding manager with an instinct for consultation and a talent for collaboration. The ideal candidate will bring complex organizational experience and knowledge of a broad spectrum of technology issues from infrastructure to research computing, teaching and learning, and enterprise systems supporting the business needs of the College. The CIO will have a proven record in the creation and development of high-performing teams and the preservation of productive working relationships with colleagues and partners across their organization. The successful candidate will understand the importance of recruiting, developing, and leading a diverse and vibrant workforce. The new CIO will bring a deep and expansive understanding of the potential for information technology to advance the purposes of a preeminent teaching and research institution.

Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, is assisting with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document. All such outreach will be treated confidentially.

## **TEACHERS COLLEGE**

Teachers College (TC) was founded in the late 19th century with the belief that education writ broadly is the path to a better future. The heart of its philosophy has always been a recognition that education is the “great equalizer” and the basis of a healthy society. The College has a proud legacy of innovation to meet the needs of the times while building on a solid foundation of evidence and practice – a legacy that includes creating the fields of special education, educational testing and psychology, nutrition education, conflict resolution, and urban education. The Institution has always viewed its leadership role in service to its mission of social justice in two complementary arenas. One is acting as a major player in policy and practice-making to ensure that schools are reformed and restructured to welcome all students regardless of their socioeconomic background. The second is preparing graduates to not only serve students directly but also to inform, design, and coordinate educational, psychological, behavioral, technological, and health initiatives to remove barriers to learning at all ages. In recent years, the College has added to its record of moving the field forward with the launch of groundbreaking programs in learning analytics, spirituality and psychology, community college research, and digital educational games.

The faculty of Teachers College consist of some of the most influential scholars in the world in the fields of education, psychology, health, and leadership. They regularly engage with

practitioners and policymakers who put their knowledge to use and enhance its impact, and often work across disciplines to tackle the most challenging problems in their fields.

Teachers College is an independently run affiliate of Columbia University (CU), allowing the College to maintain its own governance and financial planning while also benefitting from the vast academic and intellectual resources of one of the world's foremost research universities. The College is in sound financial health, having achieved an operating surplus on its ~\$200 million budget for 16 consecutive years, an endowment of \$508.7 million as of August 2021, and a physical plant valued at \$128.5 million. In 2016, the Middle States Commission for Higher Education emphatically renewed the Institution's accreditation, affirming the College's efforts to shape 21<sup>st</sup> century approaches to teaching and learning through "a research-inspired multi-disciplinary approach, blending both theory and practice" and "responsiveness to emerging societal issues surrounding education."

Though significantly evolved, the current mission of Teachers College remains closely connected to the founding principle, which was to "provide a new kind of schooling for New York City's poor, one dedicated to helping them improve the quality of their everyday lives." The College today continues to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world – with innovative technologies, opportunities, and challenges - using the wisdom of the past as building blocks in the constant pursuit of excellence, innovation, and impact.

### ***Leadership***

#### **Lisa Seales, Vice President for Administration**

Lisa Seales was appointed Vice President for Administration in September 2020. She had served as Associate Vice President for Human Resources and Chief Human Resources Officer since 2019, having joined TC after 18 years at Columbia University in Human Resources. Previously, Lisa was a senior member of the University's Information Technology operation where she developed and oversaw the execution of plans for providing the entire 40,000-member CU community of faculty, students, and staff with superior IT services. Lisa earned her BA in Social Psychology from Wheaton College and her MA in Organizational Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AT TEACHERS COLLEGE**

The CIO serves as the leader of [Teachers College Information Technology \(TCIT\)](#), a department in the College's Central Administration. TCIT was formed as a service delivery unit to support the unified technology systems, including the integration of data centers, networks, and operation tools. TCIT is responsible for the strategy, planning, and delivery of information technology across the College. It is a living organization and strives to function nimbly, growing and adapting to the needs of the College and the changing landscape of technology.

Over the years, TCIT has operated as a leading partner in TC's strategic technology initiatives. TCIT leads approaches to cybersecurity, enterprise systems, identity management, communication services, student information systems, teaching and learning technologies, and research computing. Partnership and user-focused service are defining characteristics of TCIT.

In 2022, TCIT developed a strategic plan for 2023-2026 with a framework of seven categories: generate a unified strategy and optimize IT resources through governance; enable a streamlined and holistic view of the student experience; lead the reshaping and modernizing of institutional processes; strengthen TC's information security program; build a technology support program to empower the research enterprise; establish a data governance and analytics program; and foster a diverse and inclusive community through IT practices. The next CIO will have the opportunity to actualize these strategic priorities and work in collaboration with leadership to define and refine TCIT's goals in coordination and in support of the [president's strategic priorities](#).

## **TEACHERS COLLEGE ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER**

Reporting to the Vice President for Administration, the Chief Information Officer is responsible for information technology strategy, policies, and services that support TC's teaching, learning, and research missions. The CIO is TC's information technology architect, its primary thought leader on all IT-related matters, and the leader of the organizational and financial elements of TC infrastructure technology resources.

Through collaboration with senior colleagues and College leadership, and partnerships across the College the CIO envisions, establishes, and advances college-wide IT strategies, policies, and standards. The CIO heads the TCIT staff as an adept manager and visionary leader. Teachers College is a complex organization, and there is a strong commitment to shared governance and transparency across leadership. The CIO will navigate the organization while communicating about decisions that continue to bring innovative technology to the College. This includes

advancing college-wide solutions to common IT problems to ensure robust security and effective user experiences while focusing specialization where it matters most. The CIO must be an effective and compelling communicator within TCIT and across the broader campus community, clarifying the strategic vision, opportunities, choices, and costs to senior administration and sharing with the campus community the division's capabilities, recommendations, policies, and decisions.

As the leader of TCIT, the CIO supervises five direct reports: Director of Client Services, Director of Enterprise Applications, Director of Project Management Office, Director of Infrastructure Support Services, and Executive Director of Information Security.

## **KEY OPPORTUNITIES**

Specific opportunities for the new CIO include:

### ***Chart a visionary path forward in accordance with the strategic plan and TC priorities***

The next CIO will work in consultation with the faculty, staff, and the broader TC community to imagine the next chapter of technology innovation and management. The CIO will drive positive change, deliver the vision, and execute the new technology strategic plan in a cost-effective manner.

The CIO must consult and collaborate with partners across TC to organize IT in a way that is both responsive to college-wide priorities and that anticipates the College's future needs and opportunities. This will require an understanding of how IT intersects with each unit and their individual IT-related challenges and aspirations, as well as a nuanced understanding of the changing landscape and pressures for research and the needs of a variety of constituents. The CIO must also exercise exceptional management and communication acumen to provide the right level of detail, ensure transparency, understand needs, and find ways to get to "yes" with college partners.

### ***Establish IT governance structures and enhance security***

Building effective collaborations and partnerships across the College will be key to the successful implementation of the CIO's technology strategy. The CIO will interface with a broad array of stakeholders, including faculty, staff, students, and board members; given the wide range of user capabilities and preferences on campus, the successful CIO must be a leader who can develop

protocols for adopting technology and tools for implementation. This leader needs to be able to build bridges, problem-solve effectively, communicate regularly, and establish healthy relationships across constituencies. This CIO must create a culture that prizes technology as a partner, not just a service, and engage users in the decision-making processes.

TC is keenly focused on maintaining robust, effective information security and a privacy roadmap framed around industry best practices and the needs of the College. With the constantly evolving and expanding threat landscape, the next CIO will bring a proven track record of managing organizations to promote high security standards. They will ensure that quality assurance and data security are optimized, oversee audits and risk management reviews, and provide the necessary support for prevention and mitigation actions. At the same time, the CIO must understand the nuances and needs for access to confidential information and research within the multifaceted needs of TC. The CIO will work closely with the Chief Information Security Officer to safeguard College data and resources, ensure compliance with the changing laws and applicable government policies regulating security and data protection, and inform and implement policies and processes that will support TC's commitment to data protection and privacy.

### ***Inspire, support, and develop IT staff***

The CIO is the advocate for information technology across the College and the leader of its 55 staff members. The next CIO will inherit a high-performing and talented team of IT professionals with a wide range of responsibilities, knowledge, and experience. The CIO will build on existing frameworks and community efforts to foster a greater sense of shared purpose and provide vision for a cohesive organization that is innovative, responsive, flexible, and committed to excellent customer service.

The CIO will continue to build an environment of innovation and collaboration within TC to enhance its culture as a unified and integrated division and thereby enable the division to steward institutional growth and operational improvement. It will also be imperative to work with and leverage the existing IT resources and assets throughout the various schools and divisions across the College.

### ***Support teaching and learning across the College***

Teachers College aspires to be preeminent in the integration of technology into teaching and learning to facilitate student success and to provide the best possible learning environment for a

diverse community. As such, the CIO will champion the innovative use of technology to bolster the teaching, research, and learning enterprise of the faculty and students. The CIO will circulate widely, keeping a pulse on the direction of educational technology in the various units, and anticipate the resources and infrastructure for TC to be at the forefront of innovation in a rapidly changing environment. The CIO will support the College's larger efforts to facilitate cross-unit dialogue and collaboration as it relates to the development and implementation of leading-edge educational technology.

### ***Drive the development of enterprise systems***

Essential to the role of the CIO is the preservation of efficient and effective enterprise systems. The CIO will support the business and service needs of the College by driving the development and maintenance of robust enterprise systems. The CIO will bring a sophisticated understanding of how to utilize enterprise systems to improve access to data, increase productivity and efficiency, manage workflow, and reduce costs across the College.

Currently, the College utilizes Banner. The CIO will assess the most effective and efficient way to take advantage of enterprise technology. Rather than utilizing technology for technology's sake, the CIO will be attentive and aware of the reality of the needs on campus and assess any changes moving forward with an eye toward stewarding resources and balancing various technological needs.

### ***Champion a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion***

Teachers College is deeply committed to maintaining and enhancing its culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion; to further advancing these core values; and to continuing to attract, develop, and promote top IT talent from diverse backgrounds. The CIO is the primary guardian of this inclusive working environment and nurtures these values within the team and across the College. The new CIO will be charged with the creation of a greater sense of shared purpose, connectedness, and cohesion among the TC IT staff; bringing energy and inspiration to their professional development; and building a culture that attracts and retains the best technical talent. It is imperative for the new CIO to be conscious of inclusive design to ensure that technology and digital content are accessible to everyone. The CIO will work to guarantee that technology is not a privilege, but a right of access to the entirety of the TC community.

## THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

This position requires a leader with broad technological knowledge. A service-oriented leader and listener, the CIO will have a record of building and leading high-performing teams, establishing and sustaining productive working relationships with a range of constituencies, and achieving results through collaboration and influence. The successful candidate will understand the importance of recruiting, developing, and leading a diverse and vibrant workforce.

The successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experience, and personal qualities:

- Senior leadership experience across a complex organization with multiple layers of stakeholders, encompassing strategic planning, project planning, visioning, and process transformation;
- Experience with change management and implementation of new systems across a complex environment;
- A proven track record of outstanding management that demonstrates financial acumen, organizational sophistication, superb listening skills, and high emotional intelligence;
- Demonstrated inclination and strength in communication; the ability to simplify and build unity around complex issues;
- Liveliness and range in intellect; ability to engage substantively with faculty and staff and respond effectively to their needs and concerns;
- Experience within higher education and/or other relevant organizations undergoing industry transformation; a business orientation and perspective;
- Commitment to shared governance;
- A demonstrated track record of advancing diversity and a deep understanding of the educational value of a diverse and inclusive community;
- Devotion to the highest ethical standards; personal and professional integrity above reproach;
- At least ten years of increasing and broad-based responsibility in IT or a related field;
- An advanced degree is preferred.



**TO APPLY**

Teachers College has engaged Isaacson, Miller for this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be sent in strict confidence to:

Katie Rockman, Partner  
Joanna Cook, Managing Associate  
Steph Simon, Associate

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/teachers-college-columbia-university/associate-vice-president-and-chief-information>

*Continuing its long-standing policy to support active equality for all persons, Teachers College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, citizenship status, veteran status, disability, pregnancy, gender expression or any other criterion specified by federal, state or local laws, in the administration of its admissions, employment and educational policies or scholarship, loan, athletic and other school-administered programs. Rather, Teachers College affirms that it admits students and selects employees regardless of their race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, citizenship status, veteran status, disability, pregnancy, gender expression or any other criterion specified by federal, state or local laws and thereafter accords them all the rights and privileges generally made available to students or employees at the school.*