



Dean, School of Media Arts
Columbia College Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Columbia College Chicago actively promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion as vitally important to its present and future success. These principles are essential to the educational experiences of our students, staff, and faculty.

THE SEARCH

Columbia College Chicago seeks an innovative, entrepreneurial, and collaborative leader to serve as the next dean of the School of Media Arts (SMA). Reporting directly to the senior vice president and provost, the dean will have the opportunity to lead a consistently top-rated school and a talented community of faculty, staff and students dedicated to the expansive field of media arts. To that end, the next dean will model curiosity and take a keen interest in supporting education and creative practice trends within media arts while continuing to improve the college's standing as a hub of expertise and innovation.

Located in the heart of downtown Chicago's Cultural Mile, Columbia College Chicago is a private, not-for-profit institution that creates a dynamic, challenging, and collaborative space for students, faculty, and staff to see the world through a lens of creativity. The School of Media Arts provides a cutting-edge, multidisciplinary environment for students to learn, lead, and grow into the next generation of media artists. Columbia's intent is to educate students who will communicate creatively and shape the public's perceptions of issues and events and who will author the culture of their times. Supporting a wide variety of programs housed in four academic departments, Audio Arts and Acoustics, Cinema and Television Arts, Communication, and Interactive Arts and Media, the dean of SMA will assume the leadership of a school with a strong reputation that is home to two of the largest programs in the College. This role will provide the dean with the opportunity to work alongside a faculty comprised of industry leaders and academics who marry boundary-pushing technical skills and thought-provoking critical theories to deliver an educational experience that is distinctive and rooted in praxis.

Columbia seeks an exceptional leader who will hit the ground running and actively engage the constituencies within the school, articulating and building support for a clear programmatic vision, generating productive departmental strategic direction, and embracing shared governance. Serving as a conduit between the provost's office and SMA, the dean will help Columbia College Chicago achieve institutional goals, as well as ideate, implement, and assess a strategic direction for the continued success

of the School of Media Arts in light of the contemporary challenges facing higher education – and in particular, creative arts institutions. The ideal candidate will thrive in a collaborative environment and embody the vision and values of the college and school; will be a cutting-edge thinker who can translate ideas into action; a strong communicator with a high degree of emotional intelligence, compassion, and charisma; a champion for centering the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access within all facets of the dean's and the School's work; and an excellent people manager dedicated to the recruitment, retention, and development of exceptional faculty and staff. Professionally, the dean will have deep experience in at least one of the disciplines represented within SMA; a fundamental understanding of best practices related to media arts within higher education; an expansive network within the working and professional industry of media arts; and an unwavering commitment to building and maintaining relationships with internal and external partners, industry leaders, alumni, and potential philanthropic supporters.

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

ABOUT COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO

Founded in 1890, Columbia College Chicago is a private, not-for-profit college for creatives serving more than 6,500 undergraduate and graduate students. Its curriculum blends a liberal arts core with major programs of study in a range of creative fields. Located in downtown Chicago's South Loop, the College is centered in one of the world's most lively urban cultural areas. It also leases classroom, studio, and office space in Los Angeles for the Cinema and Television Arts department's Semester in LA program. In Chicago, the College opened a new 114,000-square-foot student center in 2019, representing a major new investment in the quality of the student experience. As part of this strategic effort, along with the disposition of certain real estate holdings and the acquisition of others, it is the intention of the College to create a more compact and identifiable campus for the College. Its many competitive advantages include its strong reputation in the creative industries, outstanding faculty, passionate students, impressive technological and physical resources, and a sincere commitment to bringing diverse voices and experiences in proximity with each other to shape new forms of creative practice.

Although the College was established in 1890, its modern-day incarnation is a product of the 1960s, when it reinvented itself as an institution with a hybrid curriculum that required students to complete a liberal arts core as well as a major program of study in a creative discipline and built a faculty of active practitioners in creative fields. Taking advantage of generous federal student aid funding, it joined many other US colleges and universities in embracing an access mission, implementing a generous admissions policy that attracted many students who might not otherwise have been able to pursue higher education. In the decades that followed, enrollment grew dramatically from just over 200 students in the early 1970s, and now stands at around 7,000 students; during that time, the College has placed increasing focus on improving graduation rates and student retention and other elements of student success.

Columbia is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) through Open Pathway. It will undergo its next ten-year accreditation review in 2028-2029.

Staff, Faculty, and Students

Columbia College Chicago students are aspiring creatives in their respective industries and fields. Representing a broad spectrum of racial and ethnic identities as well as sexuality and gender-identity cultures, Columbia students truly represent what it means to have a diverse campus. Students are geographically diverse, hailing from every state in the nation and more than 60 countries. Columbia College Chicago practices a progressive admissions policy with the intention of increasing meaningful access to higher education and providing resources to support students from acceptance through graduation. 50% of the student body identifies with a federally defined minority group, with 16% of the student body identifying as first-generation college students.

At the undergraduate level, Columbia offers 58 major and 66 minor programs of study and confers the BA, BS, BFA, and BMus degrees. At the Master's level, it offers 14 programs of study and confers the MA, MFA, and Master of Arts in Management degrees.

Each May, Columbia takes over the South Loop of Chicago with *Manifest*, an all-day festival that showcases the hard work and talent of its wildly creative students. Produced and run by Columbia students, *Manifest* features gallery exhibitions, live music, film screenings, original video games, fashion shows, literary readings, and more. To show the vivacity and electric energy of *Manifest*, the School of Media Arts faculty and students create a video showcasing the highlights of the annual event that is screened at commencements beginning the following day. The culmination of this event and the work of SMA students can be viewed in the *Manifest* 2023 [video](#).

In earlier decades, Columbia students were taught almost entirely by adjunct part-time faculty who were, for the most part, professionals working in their creative fields. More recently, the College has built a strong full-time faculty with accomplished records of creative activity and/or scholarship. In Fall 2022, Columbia employed 250 full-time faculty and approximately 600 part-time faculty teaching each semester. Part-time faculty have been represented by a union since 1998.

Columbia's programs and faculty have outstanding reputations in their fields. In annual surveys, the *Hollywood Reporter* consistently ranks its film program and music composition for the screen MA program as among the top programs in the United States, and the College's comedy studies, playwriting, photography, animation, and video game design programs have received similar accolades. Current and former faculty, both full- and part-time, have been recognized with MacArthur Foundation Fellowships and Pulitzer, Grammy, and Tony nominations or awards in recent years.

Enrollment, Finances, and Operations

The College is projected to spend \$77.2 million in institutional financial aid expenditures in FY2022, a significant increase from \$8.3 million in FY2009. 97% of new freshmen received institutional grants in Fall 2022, and the total tuition discount rate across the College was 42% for FY2022, an increase from 19.9% in FY2018. The College has implemented an enrollment management plan that is intended to address the challenges posed by national enrollment trends and further adjust to post-COVID shifts in enrollment patterns. The plan is predicated on growing the applicant pool of students whose academic profiles and creative experience are predictive of success at Columbia and developing new strategies to attract, support, and retain them.

University Leadership & Strategic Direction

Dr. Kwang-Wu Kim | President

Dr. Kwang-Wu Kim has served as president and chief executive officer of Columbia College Chicago since July 2013. Since his arrival, he has been embraced by the Columbia community for his clarity of vision and open leadership style as he seeks to build an institution that is oriented around supporting student success, access, and excellence in all that it undertakes. President Kim has made it a core institutional priority to ensure Columbia's curriculum, its employees, and its business practices reflect the diverse world from which its disciplines and students hail and in which the college's graduates will live and work.

Marcella David, JD | Senior Vice President and Provost

Marcella David is senior vice president and provost, and professor in the Business and Entrepreneurship Department at Columbia College Chicago. In this role, David serves as the College's chief academic officer and provides leadership for all academic planning and review; program development at the undergraduate and graduate levels; allocation of financial resources in accordance with academic priorities; academic diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives; advancement of faculty scholarship, research, and creative work; global education; online learning; and student retention and persistence initiatives. Provost David is committed to recruiting and supporting diverse students, faculty and staff and providing educational opportunities that build the confidence and competence of the next generation of creative leaders.

Strategic Direction

Recently, Columbia College Chicago adopted a pair of comprehensive institutional plans to guide its next strategic direction. Last fall the Board of Trustees approved [*Building Our Brighter Future*](#), a five-year strategic plan that reinforces the College's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and focuses on its student enrollment, retention and success goals. Work is already underway to implement action steps

that will reinvigorate the curriculum, strengthen student growth and student support structures, engage with internal and external communities in a sustainable way, and improve operations. Columbia College also publicly launched the [Campus Master Plan](#) in February 2023, which is the culmination of a design process that drew on feedback from the entire campus community. The dean of SMA will be instrumental in continuing the implementation and execution of this ambitious agenda and imagining the next steps that define SMA's and the College's distinctive approach to education and creative practice.

THE SCHOOL OF MEDIA ARTS

The School of Media Arts fosters creativity, critical thinking, and civic-mindedness in the next generation of media artists and provides a collaborative, multidisciplinary environment engaged with new creative economies and technologies that transforms its work. Students choose BA, BS, BFA, and MA programs in Audio Arts & Acoustics, Cinema and Television Arts, Communication, and Interactive Arts and Media. Through cross-departmental partnerships, SMA defines curricular pathways that position students to blur disciplinary boundaries and collaborate on team projects that open doors to the world beyond college.

Faculty, Alumni, and Staff

Faculty in SMA are scholars, makers, and producers in their fields and dedicated teachers in the classroom. In the Fall, the School had 50 total tenured faculty, five tenure-track, 11 full-time teaching-track, and 219 part-time faculty.

Faculty at Columbia remain engaged in their areas of craft outside of the classroom through publications, creative projects, community outreach, and service to the College. Creative and scholarly output includes books, new content, marketing campaigns, and television, film, game, and other productions. Faculty are also deeply engaged in civic and community engagement activities and are active in their professional communities. Notably, David Antognoli, an assistant professor of Game Design, developed a mobile game designed to help youths develop trauma resilience by Stryv365, and Susan Kerns, associate professor of Cinema and Television Arts, is a co-founder and co-director of the Chicago Feminist Film Festival and a content acquisitions specialist at Cow Lamp Films.

Once students graduate from Columbia College Chicago, they become part of the growing alumni network of more than 136,000 alumni worldwide. Of that, 53,500 are alumni of the School of Media Arts. The alumni network at Columbia is a creative powerhouse and a dynamic community actively shaping the future of the arts and media industry. Alumni from the School can be found in various creative industries, and they bring innovative practices to education, community, and civic engagement. Among its distinguished alumni are renowned cinematographers such as Janusz Kaminski, Michael Goi, and Mauro Fiore as well industry leaders such as Paul Broucek (president of Music, Warner Brothers Pictures), Len Amato (president at HBO Films), Ben Mills (head of product at Venmo), and Iliana Regan, a James Beard Award-nominated chef. More information about the alumni of Columbia can be found [here](#).

The team of 32 professional staff in SMA are devoted to championing student success. Their skillful management in key areas, particularly student advisement and technical support, plays a crucial role in nurturing students' growth and development. While they offer support to the dean and department chairs, their main focus is on the students - fostering an enriching learning environment, and aiding them in their transformative journeys.

Academic Departments

Each department is led by a chair, who manages the departmental budget and leads the department in strategic action plan implementation, curricular design, assessment of student learning outcomes, course scheduling, and the hiring, supervision and development of faculty and staff. The chairs of the four departments report to the dean of SMA.

Audio Arts and Acoustics specializes in live and recorded sound design, engineering, and production/post-production; environmental and architectural acoustics for public, commercial, and residential spaces; and music technology. Students in Audio Arts and Acoustics learn and practice in advanced acoustics lab spaces, a digital audio production lab, three separate control rooms, two recording studios, an anechoic chamber, live and installed sound spaces, a reverberation chamber, and a post-production-audio suite.

Cinema and Television Arts provides the opportunity for students to express their creative ideas on screens, both large and small, and to develop in-demand media production skills for careers in film, television, and emerging media. Students enrolled in Cinema and Television Arts courses have access to equipment centers for cinema and television, a 260-seat cinema, a 35,500 square-foot media production space, post-production audio suites, television studios, screening rooms, and an entire post-production center to support their post-production needs.

The Communication Department allows students to turn their creative passion for communication into a high-demand career and make their mark in the disciplines of communication, journalism, public relations, and advertising. Award-winning faculty and industry professionals teach courses and give students the chance to apply theory to practice. Students enrolled in the Communication Department have access to a Club DJ Classroom and Lab, the Columbia Chronicle Newsroom, the WCRX 88.1 FM student radio station, and learning spaces designed to engage students with collaborative, agency-based models of learning that is student-centered and promotes career readiness.

Interactive Arts and Media students work with new and emerging technologies to create the immersive experiences of the future. Being at the forefront of creative technology, students cross-train with Columbia's talented faculty of user experience designers, animators, game developers, programmers, and visual effects artists who will help bring their ideas to life. Students explore their capacity in cutting-edge animation production spaces, the Game Lab, the Open Lab, and the Sound Studio. The Interactive Arts and Media Department at Columbia has received recognition for its work with Epic Games' Unreal Engine

and has been invited to join Epic's Unreal Academic Partner Program, where game design students gain access to a library of assets and training opportunities, including MetaHuman Creator and Twinmotion.

Semester in L.A. brings together students from across many of the College's creative disciplines to work, study, and live in the heart of Hollywood while gaining critical experience in the media and entertainment industry to carry into their careers after graduation. Through internships and classroom instruction that is only available in the Los Angeles area, students are immersed in the Hollywood entertainment industry while having the opportunity to explore career interests and learn at Sunset Las Palmas Studios. These combined in-person instructional hours and internships allow students to demystify the business of Hollywood and learn from top entertainment professionals who willingly offer their knowledge and resources to help students get ahead.

THE ROLE OF DEAN

Reporting to the senior vice president and provost, the dean is supported by an administrative team consisting of an associate dean, the associate dean for Semester in LA, an assistant dean for budget and operations, an assistant to the dean, and an academic scheduler. The dean will bring an innovative and visionary leadership style to SMA to advance the curriculum and co-curricular offerings. The dean will inspire, motivate, and lead the faculty of SMA in a supportive manner that will further encourage cross-collaboration among departments and schools to create interdisciplinary programs that meet the needs of students of today and tomorrow. Additionally, the dean oversees the School of Media Arts annual operating budget of just over \$19 million dollars.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

In particular, the next dean will be charged with addressing the following opportunities and challenges:

Strategically develop and execute an innovative vision for the School of Media Arts.

The School of Media Arts is a collaborative, multi-disciplinary learning environment focused on developing civic-minded, creative, and critically thinking doers. Leveraging the vast experience of SMA's talented alumni, faculty, and staff, the dean will use their knowledge of industry standards, advancing and evolving technologies, best practices in higher education, and passion for media arts to develop a visionary and inclusive strategic direction for the future of the School. While serving the students of today and thinking about the students of tomorrow, the dean will work collaboratively to examine SMA's cutting-edge curricula and program structures, promote educational experiences that allow real-world application of skills learned in the classroom, encourage faculty to pursue research and professional endeavors and promote opportunities for the SMA community to reach across schools and departments within Columbia College. A strong connection to the professional industries represented by SMA's academic offerings will be crucial to ensure the School's ability to keep up with evolving trends and prepare students for the workforce they will soon occupy.

Serve as a champion for the School of Media Arts across the campus community, the greater Chicago metropolitan area, and beyond.

The dean will serve as the chief ambassador for the School on a local, national, and international level. In their role, the dean will increase the visibility of SMA, and the creative work of its faculty, students, and staff. In the spirit of innovation and collaboration, the dean will liaise with academic leadership within Columbia College to forge new pathways for cross-disciplinary academic, curricular, and co-curricular collaboration and creative production, as well as with College leadership to advocate for resources to bring such ideas to fruition. A well-networked dean will create opportunities for students to bring their technical skills from the classroom to the field, encourage the meaningful presence of industry professionals on campus, and establish relationships that could evolve into future internship and job possibilities for students and faculty alike. The dean will extend the reach, prominence, and reputation of the School of Media Arts as one of the top institutions for graduating students who become impactful working industry professionals.

Position the School of Media Arts to strategically grow enrollment and support diversity, equity, and inclusion across the School.

The dean will join and embrace a culture that strives to embody the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. As the leader of SMA, the dean will bring a demonstrated track record of impact in this area and will advance actionable initiatives that embed diversity, equity, and inclusion in the school and for all who call it home; students, faculty, staff, leadership, and alumni. The dean will have an astute understanding of enrollment and retention challenges facing the higher education landscape today and in the future. With an eye on accessibility and affordability, the dean will work with all stakeholders to ensure students have the necessary systems, supports, and advocates in place to not only pursue an education at Columbia College Chicago but persist to graduation and find success after leaving the College.

The dean will create and support efforts to recruit, retain, and develop a diverse and talented faculty and staff that is representative of the student body within SMA and will champion and promote these values amongst the faculty and staff who are educating the future leaders of tomorrow.

Effectively lead the School through superb organizational management.

Charged with overseeing the staffing and infrastructure of SMA, the dean will lead by modeling behaviors, mentorship, collaborative efforts, and effective communication across the School. The dean will work in partnership with SMA faculty to ensure the curriculum reflects the true breadth, currency, and diversity of present-day media arts. As a leader, the dean will nurture a culture of authenticity, collaboration, transparency, and trust among the entire SMA community. While leveraging the institutional knowledge of SMA's administrative staff and faculty members, the dean will facilitate organizational effectiveness through streamlined and clear processes and ongoing assessment of the current organizational structure as it relates to the future needs of the School.

Provide financial stewardship and management of the School of Media Arts resources.

In conjunction with Columbia College leadership and the development team, the dean will pursue opportunities for philanthropy and will be empowered to secure new revenue streams in support of the School of Media Arts. Through dynamic storytelling and data-driven evidence of the school's achievements, the dean will exercise creativity and ingenuity in establishing relationships that result in opportunities to progress SMA and the College, whether fiscally or through the exploration and procurement of cutting-edge technologies. Skillful business savvy and management of finances will be key for SMA to continue supporting a broad range of innovative offerings and opportunities. The ability to prioritize, leverage and tactfully utilize funds and resources will be an ongoing requirement for the dean. It will be paramount that the dean continues to nurture established relationships with donors, corporate partners, alumni, and industry professionals, while strategically developing plans to foster new relationships with the aforementioned constituents.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While few candidates will possess all the qualifications and characteristics the search committee is seeking, the ideal candidate for the dean of the School of Media Arts will have many of the following:

- Significant experience in a creative field represented in the SMA;
- An innovative and visionary leadership style to advance the SMA toward its aspirations and goals;
- Demonstrated business acumen and experience in fiscal planning, budget allocation, and resource management;
- Leadership experience in an academic environment or experience working collaboratively with academic partners;
- Demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- A commitment to promoting access and student success;
- Demonstrated ability to recruit, retain, and motivate talented faculty and staff through collaborative engagement or comparable experiences and transferable skills;
- Effective interpersonal and communication skills with the ability to assess, develop and engage faculty and staff within SMA;
- Demonstrated support for traditional and emerging technologies and the development of leading-edge curricula;
- Ability to coordinate and work effectively with other administrative and academic units to support the creation of interdisciplinary courses and programs;
- Ability to maintain and develop relationships with SMA's internal and external constituencies, including development, alumni, industry leaders, and key decision-makers at the College;
- Demonstrated ability to enhance the SMA's reputation and reach locally, nationally, and internationally;
- Broad experience and deep understanding of the disciplines within the School;
- A terminal degree appropriate to the disciplines in the SMA is preferred; and

- A previous academic appointment at the rank of full professor or a record of clearly demonstrated superior performance and accomplishments warranting an academic appointment is preferred.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and/or resumes with cover letters may be submitted electronically to:

Jackie Mildner, Partner
Stephen Kalogeras, Associate
Lehman Robinson, Associate
Pamela Carty, Senior Search Coordinator
Isaacson, Miller
1800 K Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Applications, inquiries, and nominations may be [submitted here](#).

Columbia College Chicago is an equal opportunity employer and complies with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations concerning civil rights. The college does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, or other protected classes under the law.

Columbia College Chicago seeks individuals with a demonstrated ability to work with students from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds and whose creative, scholarly, and/or professional work aligns with our commitment to dismantling systems of privilege and oppression. All faculty members are expected to advance the College's DEI mission. For more information on the Office of Academic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, please visit: colum.edu/diversity.