



UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

DIRECTOR, SCHOOL OF ART
Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas

THE SEARCH

The University of Arkansas, a public land-grant research university, seeks a forward-thinking, strategic, accessible, and collaborative leader to serve as the Director of the School of Art (the School). Reporting to the Dean of the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, the Director will provide academic and administrative oversight of the School, which encompasses programs in Art History, Art Education, Graphic Design, and Studio, including painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, sculpture, and ceramics. This is an exciting opportunity to build on a strong history of excellence while creating a vision for the future of the School. The new Director will lead with an innovative lens and a focus on creating partnerships within the university, across Northwest Arkansas, and throughout the state. The School of Art aims to serve as a leader in making arts education accessible to everyone. The Director will have a strong desire to work with faculty, staff, students, and external partners to help shape and drive the School's next chapter.

The School of Art has gone through significant evolution in recent years with the most dramatic transformation occurring in the past five years. The biggest change was growing from a Department of Art into the School of Art in the fall of 2017, made possible by a visionary gift from the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation. This is the largest gift ever given to a U.S. university to support or establish a school of art. The gift created the first and only accredited, collegiate school of art in the state of Arkansas with the goal of propelling art education and research in the state while also providing unparalleled access and opportunity to students.

In partnership with the faculty, the next Director will take the lead in defining the future of the School, helping to advance and outline its standards of excellence, directions of growth, and multi-disciplinary connections. The Director will be responsible for the daily operation of the School and its programs, promoting excellence within the School and the University as well as overseeing strategic advancement in the areas of curriculum, technology, personnel, finances, and community relations. The Director will engage in student-focused initiatives, both undergraduate and graduate. The School seeks a leader versed in pedagogy in art education, art history, studio art, and design who will help faculty innovate in their field. An external advocate for the School, the Director will engage existing donors while cultivating new relationships. They will also be a presence on campus, collaborating with faculty, staff, and students and involved in the day-to-day functions of the School. Overall, the Director will be a transparent and clear communicator with the experience to oversee the administrative operations of the School and build on a culture of equity, access, and inclusion.

The University of Arkansas has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Founded in 1871, the University of Arkansas is a land grant institution, classified by the Carnegie Foundation among the nation's top three percent of universities with the highest level of research activity. The University of Arkansas faculty of 1,500 supports over 32,000 students across 96 undergraduate majors, 97 master's degree offerings, and 50 doctoral and specialist programs. With strong enrollment across its 10 colleges and schools and a broad array of research centers and institutes, the University of Arkansas is poised to grow its collaborative and innovative research enterprise and meet its land-grant mission well into the future.

The University is consistently ranked among the top universities and best values in the United States. Under the leadership of Chancellor Charles F. Robinson, and on the heels of celebrating its sesquicentennial, the University is currently honing its "150 Forward" strategic plan which focuses on three pillars – research excellence, student success, and being an employer of choice.

J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Fulbright College is the largest and most diverse academic unit on campus with three schools, 16 departments, and more than 30 academic programs and research centers. The College provides the core curriculum for all University of Arkansas students and is named for J. William Fulbright, former university president and longtime U.S. senator. The School of Social Work, the School of Art, and the School of Journalism and Strategic Media are all a part of Fulbright College, as well as the departments of Anthropology, Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Communication, English, Geosciences, History, Mathematical Sciences, Music, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Sociology and Criminology, Theatre, and Work Languages, Literature, and Cultures. The mission of the College is to enrich lives by promoting discovery, access, and inclusion, facilitating transformational experiences, and fostering peace through education. The College is home to 6,996 undergraduate students and 851 graduate students. For more information about the Fulbright College of Arts & Sciences, please visit: <https://fulbright.uark.edu/>

THE SCHOOL OF ART

The School of Art has a rich history beginning in 1874 when instruction in drawing and painting was first offered at the University of Arkansas for non-degree credit. The first art major program leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree was introduced in 1929. A Bachelor of Fine Arts degree was instituted in 1982 and the Master of Fine Arts graduate degree, one of the first such programs in the country, was initiated in 1952.

In recent years, the School of Art has experienced substantial growth and change. The biggest change was transforming from a Department of Art into the School of Art in the fall of 2017, made possible by the \$120 million gift from the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation. The gift also created the first and only school of art in the state of Arkansas, helping to propel art education, design, research, and creative activity in the state forward while also providing unparalleled access and opportunity to students.

The gift was allocated with three primary goals including providing unprecedented levels of financial support for students in the form of scholarships, travel grants, and internship opportunities, engaging the region in outreach and public service through partnerships with the Crystal Bridges Museum and a variety

of community arts organizations, and expanding programs and degree offerings within the School. As the next Director joins the School, long-term success and goals include increasing enrollment levels, continuing to prioritize student access and diversity, building strong relationships across the University and throughout the community, hiring and retaining excellent faculty and staff, and continuing to enhance the reputation of the School.

The School of Art enrolled 531 undergraduate students and 52 graduate students in fall 2022, offering a range of programs including [Art Education](#), [Art History](#), [Ceramics](#), [Drawing](#), [Graphic Design](#), [Painting](#), [Photography](#), [Printmaking](#), and [Sculpture](#). The School also offers [the Freshman Foundations](#) program, which is a first-year experience series exposing students to new experiences and techniques intended to set them down the path toward success in their chosen major. The School offers a Bachelor's in Art History, a Minor in Art History, a Bachelor of Arts in Studio, a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art Education, a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design, a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio, and a Master of Fine Arts. Additionally, the School launched a Master of Arts in Art Education and Master of Communication Design which welcomed their first cohort of students in fall 2022. A Master of Arts in Art History welcomed its first cohort of students in fall 2023.

The School of Art is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive climate that fosters collaboration, community, and open dialogue while embracing the backgrounds, identities, and perspectives of all students, faculty, and staff. The School of Art is committed to taking action with more intentional inclusion efforts. The School created the Justice, Equity, Access, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEADI) Committee which serves as a working group, task force, and School committee to create and sustain an inclusive environment in the School of Art. The committee is made up of faculty, staff, and student representation from all programs and areas, with the focus of discussing strategic planning, concerns, facilitating initiatives, and education and resources related to expanding access and belonging. The School of Art continues to recruit top students with a focus on increased access. Through dynamic educational programs, unique research initiatives, and interdisciplinary and collaborative teaching models, the School of Art promotes inclusive and equitable practices. These practices acknowledge and challenge barriers to quality art education access and prepare artist educators and artist scholars to study, research, and transform the educative potential of the visual arts in schools, museums, and communities—regionally, nationally, and internationally. For more information on these efforts within the School of Art: <https://fulbright.uark.edu/departments/art/about-the-department/diversity-equity-inclusion.php>

The School of Art has [state-of-the-art facilities](#) with a growing footprint. The Fine Arts Center and Gallery is undergoing a \$38 million restoration with plans to reopen in fall 2024. The Fine Arts Library is also being renovated and is scheduled to reopen in mid-2024. Within the School of Art there is the student-run sUGAR exhibition series and the student-run Anne Kittrell Gallery that is located in the Student Union. Thanks to the Windgate Charitable Support Foundation and their transformational \$40 million gift, the School of Art opened the new Windgate Art and Design District in the heart of south Fayetteville in 2023. The district features several new buildings for art and design classrooms, labs, and studios, and serves as a central hub for students and faculty.

The School of Art is heavily engaged in the arts community of Fayetteville and Northwest Arkansas. MFA, MA, and MDES students actively work and exhibit in the downtown square, research human behaviors in the region, and present their work to the community in open studios as well as in collaboration with local nonprofit organizations and galleries. Additionally, the School of Art has a partnership with Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, creating specialized opportunities for faculty and students to engage in cross-institutional education and approach art, visual culture, and related material from interdisciplinary

perspectives. The School of Art and Crystal Bridges have created a signature program through the successful launch of the Master of Arts in Art History specializing in the Arts of the Americas that uniquely positions the institutions as the place of study for American art.

For more information about the School of Art, please visit <https://fulbright.uark.edu/departments/art/>

THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

Reporting to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and working with faculty, staff, and students, the Director will be responsible for setting the vision and aligning with college and university goals. As the lead administrator for the School, the Director is responsible for budget management, fundraising and development, faculty recruitment, mentoring, promotion, tenure, curriculum development, enrollment and retention initiatives, building strong relationships with community partners and arts leaders, and managing personnel and operational functions. The Director will engage in student-focused initiatives and ensure continued emphasis on both undergraduate and graduate populations. The Director is assisted in these efforts by an administrative team that includes an Assistant Director, Director of Administration and Communications, Curator and Director of Exhibitions, Program Director of Art History, Program Director of Art Education, Program Director of Graphic Design, Program Director of Studio Art, and Program Director of Foundations. The School of Art has a budget of approximately \$15 million.

The Director of the School of Art will arrive at an important moment requiring a leader with strong administrative skills who can build upon the School's rich history while supporting its growth. The incumbent will lead strategic planning efforts to create a unifying vision and direction for the School. The Director will be a transparent and collegial communicator, interacting openly and genuinely with multiple constituencies and attending carefully to the School's sense of community. Collaboration and partnership are critical to success. The Director will work closely with the Walton Family Charitable Support Foundation to help achieve the goals of the endowment gift as well as expanding the School's philanthropic base.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Director of the School of Art will be energized and inspired by the following opportunities and challenges:

Collaborate with the School of Art community on envisioning a strategic direction for long-term success

As the School of Art transitions to its next leader, the Director will create a forward-looking vision focused on both growth and sustainability. The new Director will bring faculty, staff, and students together to form a strategic plan for the School with a creative lens as well as efficient and clear goals. The Director will help shape, advance, and define the School's standards of excellence. They will look at the School holistically and see the value of all disciplines. The new Director will be empowered to build upon the strengths of the School in order to impact students, and have influence across campus, the community, and beyond.

Ensure the School of Art's curriculum and programmatic offerings are of the highest quality, as well as advancing collaboration across campus

The School of Art successfully launched the Master of Arts in Art Education and Master of Design in Graphic Design in 2022 and the Master of Arts in Art History in 2023. The next Director will build off this progress and assess the possibility of additional programs and collaborations. The Director must ensure

that School of Art programs prepare students to be creative thinkers and leaders in their fields. The Director will lean into partnerships that support students of all disciplines as they engage opportunities during their academic careers and post-graduation.

The University and the College deeply value interdisciplinary learning and collaboration. In conjunction with the faculty, the Director will identify, improve, and promote methods of collaboration, particularly in creating curricular and programmatic connections with other schools and colleges as there is tremendous opportunity for the School to contribute to and benefit from collaborations across campus.

Strategically recruit and retain faculty; support faculty research and creative practice

The Director will be expected to support the recruitment and retention of faculty. The endowment gift has supported the hiring of faculty with 20 faculty hires taking place since 2018 and the Director will have the opportunity to support the recruitment of a number of additional tenure-track faculty over the next few years.

The Director will work with faculty to support and promote outstanding research and high standards of scholarly and artistic excellence. They will champion faculty in seeking internal and external funding to support both disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and teaching. The Director will ensure that resources are maximized to enable faculty to achieve their goals and professional development. The Director will be expected to ensure efficient and effective day-to-day operations of the School while recognizing the specific needs of each discipline and equipping them for success. The Director must also have experience evaluating tenure and promotion dossiers, supervising faculty and staff, and overseeing performance reviews. Leadership calls for a transparent and skilled communicator who can create a culture of collaboration, cohesion, and fairness that nurtures and supports this dynamic community.

Foster relationships with donors, foundations, and the art community to strengthen the School of Art's fundraising efforts

The new Director will continue to foster partnerships with donors and foundations while working closely to achieve the goals of the School's grants and endowment gift. Additionally, the Director will continue to seek sources of philanthropic funding and cultivate new relationships with the support of the advancement team. The Director will be a visible leader in the arts community of Northwest Arkansas, as well as foster partnerships across the state and with national art institutions to help the School build its network of national arts and design leaders.

Advance the mission of access and student success

The Director will work with faculty, staff, and program leadership to support student success and ensure that the programs of the School are accessible and equitable to all students. The Director will champion a learning and working environment where everyone feels welcome and respected, and where the diversity of ideas and perspectives enriches the community.

The School has seen a steady increase in student enrollment and retention since becoming a School of Art with a 50 percent growth from 2017 to 2022. The new Director will propel off this momentum and use data-driven and creative strategies to meet goals for future enrollment growth. The School of Art is strategically reaching out to organizations across the Mississippi Delta, state, and nation to create more pathways into the School and expand partnerships with organizations across the state.

QUALIFICATIONS

The University of Arkansas seeks candidates who bring the following skills and experiences:

- A distinguished record of scholarship and accomplishment of outstanding achievement and distinction in teaching, research, and service. A terminal degree in a related discipline is required with experience that meets the qualifications for tenure within the School of Art;
- Demonstrated success advancing a culture that promotes inclusion, equitable opportunities, educational excellence, and access for all;
- Demonstrated ability to delegate, prioritize, and make transparent and collaborative decisions to advance strategic goals, support governance, and academic freedom;
- Demonstrated success in university administration, including strategic planning, interpersonal management, financial oversight, project management, and performance evaluation;
- A distinguished record of scholarship and accomplishment of outstanding achievement and distinction in teaching, research, and service;
- A profound artistic and creative sensibility and sensitivity; ability to appreciate and communicate the value of diverse scholarly productivity found in the arts, creative fields, and at the School of Art, specifically;
- Eagerness and experience in engaging external stakeholders to create partnership opportunities for students and faculty;
- Demonstrated experience working with high-level donors, alumni, and various external stakeholders; and
- Excellent listening, communication, and interpersonal skills, grounded in transparency and the spirit of shared governance and collaboration.

FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

Located in the heart of the beautiful Ozark Mountains, Northwest Arkansas is consistently ranked as one of the top 10 Best Places to Live in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. The region has plentiful outdoor lifestyle perks, including 500+ miles of bike trails, and a nationally recognized professional theatre and restaurant locale. In the region, people have short commutes, a close-knit and inclusive community, a rich arts and culture scene, and the time to enjoy all the outdoors has to offer.

Fayetteville is a thriving community of 95,230 residents (2021 Census estimate). As the second largest city in Arkansas, Fayetteville provides all the resources and culture of a large city while maintaining a quality of life that remains true to its unique heritage. Fayetteville has something for everyone: boutique shopping, a diverse culinary scene, historic neighborhoods, exciting nightlife, live music and fine arts, a nationally recognized public library, sporting events, national touring and Broadway theatre productions, and thousands of acres of park land for a wide range of outdoor activities.

Fueled by an amazing entrepreneurial spirit, Northwest Arkansas emerged from modest beginnings to become one of the nation's dynamic economic regions. Industry leaders such as Walmart, Tyson Foods, Simmons Foods, and J.B. Hunt started in the region. The presence of those companies, a burgeoning startup culture, and the university drive Northwest Arkansas's economic growth.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

The University of Arkansas has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Interested candidates must submit a letter of interest and a current resume or curriculum

vitae to be considered for the position. All applicant information is subject to public disclosure under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and application materials should be directed to:

Ben Tobin, Partner
Kristen Andersen, Senior Associate
<https://www.imsearch.com/9426>

The University of Arkansas is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution. The University does not discriminate in its education programs or activities (including in admission and employment) on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, marital or parental status, protected veteran status, military service, genetic information, or sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity). Federal law prohibits the University from discriminating on these bases. Questions or concerns about the application of Title IX, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, may be sent to the University's Title IX Coordinator and to the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. Persons must have proof of legal authority to work in the United States on the first day of employment.