



# WHITMAN COLLEGE

*Search for the Provost and Dean of Faculty  
Whitman College  
Walla Walla, WA*

[Whitman College](#), one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges and a "College that Change Lives," seeks a collaborative and innovative academic leader to serve as its next Provost and Dean of Faculty (Provost). The [Provost](#) will be joining Whitman as the institution emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic in a solid financial position. In 2022, [Dr. Sarah R. Bolton](#), a well-respected scholar and seasoned administrator who took the helm as Whitman's President, leads an expert, collaborative, and inclusive [President's Cabinet](#) who are ready to build on Whitman's strong foundation. With a new strategic plan, world-class faculty, a college-wide interest in innovation, and an ambitious fundraising campaign soon underway, the Provost will be joining the Whitman community at an exciting inflection point in its history.

Founded in 1882, Whitman College is a private, independent, co-educational, non-sectarian liberal arts undergraduate college with approximately 1,500 students. The College is committed to its liberal arts mission and expanding socio-economic, racial, ethnic, and geographical diversity to meet the needs of a rapidly changing student population. At Whitman, students develop leadership skills, personal confidence, and intellectual creativity in an environment that emphasizes community, cooperation, and inclusive excellence. They are taught by expert faculty who are equally committed to their teaching and their research as they believe that each richly informs the other. The College is ranked #48 among national liberal arts colleges by *U.S. News & World Report* and has an endowment of \$701 million as of March 31, 2023, with decades of continuous balanced budgets and no deferred maintenance for its facilities. Whitman is located in the beautiful foothills of the Blue Mountains, where the city of Walla Walla is home to about 34,000 people, three institutions of higher education (Whitman College, Walla Walla University, and Walla Walla Community College), and a booming wine industry.

With [strategic priorities](#) recently approved by the Board, the Whitman community is now transitioning to act on those priorities. The next Provost will have the opportunity to work closely with the President's Cabinet, a dedicated and strong team in the Office of the Provost and Dean of Faculty, and accomplished faculty, to help implement these new goals and initiatives. The Provost will focus on academic programming and the co-curricular experience with a lens that foregrounds equity, diversity, and inclusion; and they will have the opportunity to leverage a Whitman community that is eager to put the students and their success at the heart of everything they do. By overseeing a robust [purview of units](#) that span academic affairs and academic success initiatives, the Provost will work collaboratively with teams across the campus to make Whitman a first-choice institution in an ever-changing higher education landscape.

The Provost will be expected to address the following key opportunities and challenges:

- Provide collaborative and strategic leadership to advance inclusive academic excellence and enact the strategic plan
- Work closely with the faculty to support the evolution of the academic program, to strengthen the teacher-scholar model, and to build a stronger sense of community
- Advance diversity, equity, access, and inclusion efforts, especially in the recruitment, thriving, and retention of a diverse and talented faculty
- Build upon Whitman's vibrant programs in experiential and community-engaged learning, connecting students to local and global opportunities and preparing them for life after graduation
- Champion Whitman's academic story and the liberal arts

A list of the desired qualifications for the position can be found at the conclusion of this document, which was prepared by the search committee with the assistance of Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm. All confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the parties listed at the conclusion of this document.

### **About Whitman College**

Originally founded as a seminary in 1859, Whitman College became the first degree-granting four-year, liberal arts college in the State of Washington in 1882. Throughout its history, Whitman has focused on the close faculty-student interaction critical to exceptional higher education, and has stayed small to enable it. In 1913, Whitman became the first college or university in the nation to require undergraduate students to complete comprehensive examinations in their major field, and in 1919, became the first Phi Beta Kappa chapter for any Northwest college.

Today, Whitman College is a selective liberal arts college with a vibrant campus community that prides itself on its strong academic programs, supportive residential life experience, and commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Whitman offers a rigorous curriculum that combines breadth and depth of knowledge across disciplines, and offers many opportunities for collaborative research among students and faculty. Whitman students are bright, involved, curious, and passionate; and at Whitman, they are challenged to develop the tools to think critically, problem-solve, and communicate effectively in order to become citizens of the world.

### *Faculty*

Whitman faculty are deeply committed to the teacher-scholar model. They are leading experts in their fields and bring their passion for research to the classroom to inspire and support students. Whitman faculty present their work regularly through publication, artistic performance, conference presentations, and other venues, and faculty have been awarded grants and fellowships from a variety of national and regional organizations. Recent grantors include the Battelle Research Institute, Fulbright Fellows Program, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and National Science Foundation. Of the 204 Whitman faculty members, 86% are full-time faculty, 94% possess a Ph.D. or terminal degree in their field, approximately half are women, and 15% are from traditionally underrepresented groups. Faculty teach a 3-2 course load, providing them the time to engage with students on an individual level while maintaining robust research agendas. Whitman provides faculty with resources to support their teaching and research, including regular sabbaticals, numerous grants, and, through the Center for Teaching and Learning, opportunities to create innovative curricula and develop inclusive pedagogical practices.

Faculty play a critical role in the governance of the College and their leadership is vital to the success of the College. An elected Chair of the Faculty leads and facilitates faculty discussions, and they sit on the President's Cabinet where they represent the faculty's perspective on governance matters. The Chair of the Faculty works closely with the Chairs of the major academic divisions: Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, and Natural Sciences and Mathematics. The Chair of the Faculty also works with the Provost to carry out and advance the academic mission of the College. The faculty governance structure is guided by the [Faculty Code](#), governed by the faculty, and the [Faculty Handbook](#) is administered by the Provost.

The small class sizes, with a 10:1 student-faculty ratio, and the residential proximity of most Whitman faculty to the campus foster interactive learning and deep relationships between faculty and students. Whitman faculty dedicate themselves to the learning of students and are accessible both inside and outside of the classroom. They often partner with students on research, co-authoring publications, and presenting at national conferences. Faculty are also committed to creating fully inclusive classrooms, and they are committed to mentoring and advising students both as they make their way through Whitman and as they make their first steps into their life after graduation. Promotion and tenure guidelines recognize and reward the work to advance the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion as they are central to the academic mission of the college.

### *Student Body*

Whitman students, known as "Whitties," are the heart of the College's mission. Students come from diverse backgrounds and are high achievers who focus on supporting instead of competing with each other. Whitties are committed to participating fully in their co-curricular experiences and eager to assume leadership roles, which makes for a vibrant campus community. Sixteen percent of students participate in varsity athletics, 15% of students participate in Greek life, and 18% of students participate in community service activities. Additionally, there are over 80 off-campus programs in nearly 40 countries and over 100 clubs and organizations for students to choose from.

Over the past five years, Whitman has seen an overall upward trend in the number of applicants despite some disruptions during the pandemic. In 2022, there were a record 6,238 applicants and a growing number of students from historically-marginalized backgrounds. Undergraduate students arrive to Whitman from more than 43 states, 1 territory, and 42 countries, and one-third of students come from the state of Washington. The College is also seeing a growing number of international students, comprising approximately 16% of the incoming class. Of this class, approximately 32% are students of color, 24% are first-generation college students, 56% are women, and 23% are eligible to receive a Pell Grant. Financial aid is offered to 91% of students and 62% graduate with no debt. The College is making strides toward the goal of meeting full-demonstrated financial need, which they began meeting this year for students from the State of Washington.

### *Academics*

Whitman students choose from among sixty majors, and all students participate in the following academic experiences:

- [First-Year Seminars](#): These seminars are designed to teach students to develop and pursue complex questions while helping them gain the academic skills they will need to succeed in college.

- [Distribution Requirements](#): Students gain a familiarity with many different ways of knowing while also coming to understand and explore how their studies interconnect and diverge.

Whitman's faculty lead the development of the curriculum and collaborate broadly across departments to advance it. In just the past three years, the faculty have developed and approved a new set of General Studies requirements, created new majors in Indigeneity, Race and Ethnic Studies, Ethics and Society, Brain Behavior and Cognition, and Music Technology, and approved a new minor in Finance and a program in Human-Centered Design. There are several additional curricular initiatives that are in the midst of development.

Whitman also offers strong experiential learning opportunities, including the ground-breaking Semester in the West program, which has a 25-year history, as well as growing engagement in teaching initiatives at the Washington State Penitentiary. Recently, community-engaged learning has increased significantly through faculty and staff initiatives, partnerships with Walla Walla community organizations, and the support of grants from the Mellon Foundation.

The College is situated on the traditional homelands of the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla people. Over the last decade, the College has undertaken substantial collaborative work with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, which includes educational programs in local tribal history for all incoming students, a dedicated set of scholarships for tribal members, and growing curricular opportunities in indigenous studies.

A Whitman education prepares students to be lifelong learners and to engage in the world. When students graduate from Whitman, about 64% enter the job market, 20% enroll in graduate school, and 6% receive a prestigious fellowship. More than half of graduates ultimately receive an advanced degree. The Career and Community Engagement Center, which is part of the Provost's portfolio, provides extensive opportunities for students to explore their interests through career coaching, internships, community service, and more.

Whitman is a member of the Northwest 5 Consortium, a group of premier liberal arts in Oregon and Washington including Lewis & Clark College, Reed College, University of Puget Sound, Whitman College, and Willamette University. While distinct in their ways of providing a quality liberal arts education, the campuses share common attributes and have undertaken a number of shared grants and activities, including recent work in community-engaged learning and in supporting the thriving of faculty of color.

### **Current Context**

In 2022, Dr. Sarah Bolton was unanimously selected by the Whitman College Board of Trustees to be the College's 15<sup>th</sup> President. Before taking office at Whitman, she served as President of the College of Wooster as well as Professor and Dean of the College of Williams College. Dr. Bolton is a physicist, professor, and administrator with more than 25 years of experience in higher education and a long-standing commitment to the liberal arts. She is committed to fostering an inclusive campus where every student can learn, grow, and make a positive impact.

Since President Bolton's arrival, the Whitman community has been collaborating closely on revising the College's strategic priorities, building on the tremendous progress Whitman has made in recent years and responding to the rapid changes in the world that students will enter after graduation. The ultimate goals of the strategic plan are to inspire talented and diverse students to come to Whitman; provide them with

excellent opportunities to learn, grow, and thrive in an inclusive and welcoming environment; and help prepare them for a strong launch after graduation in order to pursue a life of purpose and impact. The strategic plan was approved by the Board in June of 2023, and in the 2023-2024 academic year the President's Cabinet and Whitman community will begin work towards implementing its goals. To aid these efforts, Whitman is working with Art & Science to survey prospective students about their interests for academic and co-curricular opportunities. The Provost will play an important role in leading the strategic efforts in Academic Affairs, including initiatives in the curriculum, pedagogy, local and global engagement, and preparing students for a strong launch after college.

The College is primed for innovation after making critical decisions in 2021 as part of the Financial Sustainability Review. This review was an anticipatory process, conducted across the College, to ensure that Whitman maintains its solid financial footing well into the future. This review redirected resources to account for enrollment shifts and demographic changes of high school-age students and freed up resources to invest in innovative programs both within the curriculum and within student life. Whitman College continues to maintain its strong financial position, despite impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a larger enrollment for the 2023-2024 academic year, a [Board of Trustees](#) that is highly supportive of the new President, and a College community ready to plan for the future from a position of flexibility and strength.

New members to the President's Cabinet include Jeff Hamrick, who will assume the role of Vice President for Finance and Administration in August 2023, succeeding Peter Harvey who is retiring after serving the College for more than 30 years; Dr. John Johnson, who joined Whitman as the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion in July 2021; and Adam Miller, the Vice President for Admission and Financial Aid, and Gina Zandy Ohnstad, the Vice President for Communications, both of whom served as interim since 2021 and were made permanent in 2023. They join the longer-standing cabinet members including Kazi Joshua, Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students; Steve Setchell, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations; and Rebecca Hanrahan, Chair of the Faculty, who will complete her term in the Summer of 2024.

### **Role of the Provost and Dean of Faculty**

Reporting to the President, the Provost and Dean of the Faculty is the chief academic officer for the College and is responsible for leading the academic program and the Division of Academic Affairs. The Provost works closely with all members of the President's Cabinet as well as with the faculty and staff to accomplish College-wide goals. The [Division of Academic Affairs](#) includes the faculty, the Penrose Library, the Registrar, Off Campus Studies, Institutional Research, the Maxey Museum and Sheehan Gallery, the Career and Community Engagement Center, the Academic Resource Center and Athletics. The Provost also oversees the Chief Information Officer (in collaboration with the Vice President for Finance and Administration), represents Whitman in the absence of the President and leads discussions with the Board of Trustees on academic matters, particularly through the work of the Trustee Committee on the Whitman Experience.

The Provost supports faculty governance by working closely with the Chair of the Faculty to advance the academic mission. The Provost chairs the Committee of Division Chairs, a committee composed of the associate dean for academic affairs, the associate dean of faculty development and faculty leaders from across the three divisions of the college to address matters and problems central to well functioning of the academic mission. The Provost is an ex-officio member of the Faculty Personnel Committee, a campus wide community which reviews and recommends faculty members for promotion and tenure. The Provost

manages and updates the Faculty Handbook as needed, and consults with the faculty in maintaining their Faculty Code.

The Provost supports the College's close working relationships with local community partners, including other local colleges, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), and The Washington State Penitentiary. These partnerships connect Whitman to the larger Walla Walla community, are restorative to relationships that are complex in their histories, and provide students, faculty, and staff with unique learning opportunities.

### **Key Opportunities and Challenges for the Provost and Dean of Faculty**

#### ***Provide collaborative and strategic leadership to advance inclusive academic excellence and enact the strategic plan***

The Provost will join Whitman at a pivotal moment, playing a prominent role in the strategic plan to shape Whitman's next chapter. The Provost will work closely with the President's Cabinet, faculty, staff, and students across the institution to develop specific goals and action plans while encouraging new collaborations to facilitate and execute key priorities and objectives. The Provost will be in charge of communicating academic priorities broadly, with a high level of transparency around how resources are allocated and when priorities shift. This will involve embracing Whitman's strong culture of shared governance to ensure all voices are heard in decision-making. The Provost will seek and promote innovative ideas, bridge units, and collegially engage the entire Whitman community. Close partnerships with the Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students and the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion will be key to continuing to cultivate a culture of inclusive excellence, foster student well-being, and augment students' curricular and co-curricular experiences. The Whitman community is highly dedicated to ensuring students are at the heart of everything they do, and the implementation of the strategic plan will provide ample opportunity to inspire and facilitate new ideas around strategic, innovative, and inclusive action to continue to realize that vision.

#### ***Work closely with the faculty to support the evolution of the academic program, to strengthen the teacher-scholar model, and to build a stronger sense of community***

With many tough decisions behind them, a solid financial footing, and a widespread feeling of hope in the new President, the Provost will be able to hit the ground running to build on a strong foundation and promote innovation among faculty and staff. The Provost will support the teacher-scholar model, valuing and advancing both research itself and the role it plays in enhancing student learning. Faculty are especially eager to contribute to discussions around adapting and innovating academic programming, ensuring the teacher-scholar model supports student success, and rebuilding a sense of community across faculty, staff, students, and administration, post both the pandemic and the financial stability review. The Provost will convene the faculty in discussions about the academic program with the goal of drawing on Whitman's strengths and building programs in emerging fields, while also encouraging harder discussions around what is no longer working. To be successful, the Provost will need to be a strategic, approachable, and transparent leader who will gain the trust of the Whitman community through ongoing dialogue.

#### ***Advance diversity, equity, access, and inclusion efforts, especially in the recruitment, thriving, and retention of a diverse and talented faculty***



Whitman is deeply committed to creating an inclusive learning and working environment where all individuals are respected and where differences are embraced, and the Provost will ensure these values are infused throughout the academic enterprise. In particular, the Provost will encourage collaborative efforts around equitable hiring practices that promote diversity in all its forms, structures that support the thriving and retention of faculty, including mentoring programs, and ongoing professional development in support of campus-wide curricular and co-curricular efforts. Providing training in inclusive pedagogy will especially be important as the College welcomes an ever-more-diverse student body. While the College has made strides in diversifying the student body, the work to recruit a more diverse faculty and foster a more inclusive and welcoming community across disciplines is ongoing and a key area of focus.

***Build upon Whitman's vibrant programs in experiential and community-engaged learning, connecting students to local and global opportunities and preparing them for life after graduation***

Whitman's goal is that every student will develop and explore their intellectual passions, while also feeling confident that they will be well-prepared to meet their aspirations after college. To accomplish this goal, the College would like to build on the growing strength of their programs, especially experiential and community-engaged programs, that support students' career exploration, and leverage alumni and community connections to provide new ways for students to learn and prepare for their futures, including internships, mentoring, and research opportunities. The Provost will lead these efforts by working with the Whitman community to connect students with the world beyond the campus at the local, regional, national, and global levels. This will involve strengthening key existing partnerships and forging new partnerships to ensure the ongoing development of superb learn-by-doing opportunities for students. The Provost will also continuously evaluate and evolve these programs, in close collaboration with faculty and staff, to ensure a robust portfolio of opportunities, the success of all students in these programs, and strong, equitable outcomes for post-graduate opportunities.

***Champion Whitman's academic story and the liberal arts***

The Provost will be a champion of the liberal arts who will work closely with the faculty and President's Cabinet to define and tell Whitman's academic story more broadly. The Provost will celebrate the great academic work of the faculty, staff and students and collaborate with the leadership team to expand Whitman's visibility regionally, nationally, and internationally, attract talented and diverse students, faculty, and staff, and augment resources, including philanthropic and grant support. The Provost will be a crucial voice in clearly articulating Whitman's exceptional quality in order to position the College as an institution of choice for talented and diverse students, faculty, and staff who seek an innovative liberal arts institution committed to achieving inclusive and academic excellence.

**Qualifications and Characteristics**

In pursuit of the College's mission, the next Provost will bring strong experience in teaching, research and leadership. An academic record meriting appointment to at least the rank of Associate Professor in an academic department at Whitman College is required, and a record meriting appointment at the rank of full Professor is preferred. In addition, candidates should possess many, if not all, of the following qualifications, qualities, and characteristics:

- A commitment to undergraduate liberal arts education and a full appreciation of and enthusiasm for Whitman's [mission](#);

- A track record of academic leadership and supporting an inclusive culture of shared governance, integrity, transparency, and mutual respect;
- A demonstrated commitment to and evidence of success in enhancing inclusion, diversity, equity, and access;
- Experience building strong, collaborative, effective working relationships among faculty and staff;
- Exceptional strength in recruiting, developing, and retaining a world-class, outstanding, and diverse faculty;
- Desire to support faculty in their work as teacher-scholars;
- A track record in recruiting and supporting a strong, expert and diverse team of academic leaders and staff;
- A deep commitment to students and their success;
- Experience leading conversations around new academic opportunities;
- Proven ability to provide strategic leadership;
- An innovative spirit, willing to take calculated risks in collaboration with colleagues;
- Experience in championing and enhancing the co-curricular experience;
- Experience in managing a budget and developing financial strategies to augment academic excellence;
- Strong managerial experience and a demonstrated ability to collaborate, guide, listen, and inspire others.

### **Compensation and Location**

The annual salary for this role will be highly competitive in the range of \$230,000 to \$270,000. For information on benefits, please refer to the Isaacson, Miller website for the search, linked below.

Whitman is located in Walla Walla, Washington on the traditional Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla homelands. Just walking distance from campus is the charming and historic Main Street, which offers boutique shops, gourmet restaurants, and welcoming cafes. With close proximity to hiking and biking trails, the Columbia and Snake Rivers, and the breathtaking Palouse Falls and Bluewood ski resort, Walla Walla features the charm of a small town with a cosmopolitan feel.

### **Applications, Inquiries, and Nominations**

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/whitman-college/provost-and-dean-faculty>. Electronic submission of materials is required.

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