



Search for the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Davidson College

Davidson, NC

THE SEARCH

Davidson College (“Davidson” or “the College”) seeks a collaborative, bridge-building strategist to serve as the institution’s inaugural Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Over the past decade, the Davidson community has made important strides in addressing its history with the legacy of slavery and advancing its diversity, equity, and inclusion work. With the support and partnership of the president, the senior leadership team, and the Board of Trustees, the inaugural Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will connect and build on existing efforts across campus to lead Davidson in the national conversation on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in higher education.

Founded in 1837, Davidson College’s primary purpose is to help students develop humane instincts and disciplined, creative minds for lives of leadership and service. One of the nation’s leading liberal arts colleges, Davidson not only seeks to prepare students for the world but also to give them the skills to make the world a better one for future generations. On its beautiful North Carolina campus, the College brings together a community of approximately 1,900 creative, intellectually oriented students with a commitment to learning, leading, and serving the world. Outside the classroom, over one-quarter of students compete in Division I athletics, and 80 percent study or work internationally during their Davidson careers. These rich and distinguished offerings enable Davidson graduates to thrive in a global society and exert a disproportionate impact for good.

Reporting to the president, the Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will be a key partner to the president and senior leadership in coordinating and enhancing existing DEI efforts across the community. This individual will serve as a central resource for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts; create a strategic framework to guide existing DEI work across campus and identify opportunities for growth; design constructive community programming; and serve as a strategic advisor to other campus offices. The successful candidate will be a collaborative, optimistic, and forward-thinking subject

matter expert in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, with the demonstrated ability to lead community-wide coordination and engage empathetically across differences.

A search committee of faculty, staff, students, and a member of the Board of Trustees, supported by national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller, will lead the search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

DAVIDSON COLLEGE

Established in 1837 with roots in the Reformed Tradition, Davidson College is dedicated to helping students develop humane instincts and disciplined, creative minds for lives of leadership and service. For more than twenty years, Davidson has been consistently regarded as one of America's strongest and most selective liberal arts colleges. The most recent edition of U.S. News & World Report's Best Colleges ranking lists Davidson as 16th among National Liberal Arts Colleges, sixth in Best Undergraduate Teaching, tenth in Most Innovative Schools, and 11th in Best Value Schools—and the highest ranked college in the South. Situated on a beautiful campus just north of Charlotte, NC, the College is set apart by its historic Honor Code, the free, rigorous pursuit of knowledge, and a shared commitment to building a genuinely inclusive culture of inquiry characterized by empathy, curiosity, substantive dialogue, and a desire to learn.

Davidson receives over 7000 applications for about 500 seats, with a yield rate of nearly 50 percent. Its generous alums and strong financial stewards have ensured that students from all backgrounds can benefit from and contribute to the Davidson experience. The College boasts an endowment of \$1.3 billion, and was [the first liberal arts college](#) in the nation to meet 100 percent of calculated financial need through a combination of grants and campus employment, without requiring loans.

Davidson attracts highly motivated, well-prepared, and academically committed students. The College is home to approximately 1,900 undergraduates, 95% of whom live on campus. Thirty percent of the student body is composed of domestic students of color, and 11% percent of students are international. The College has a student-faculty ratio of 9:1, and the four-year graduation rate exceeds 89 percent.

Davidson's rigorous, holistic education translates to post-graduate success. More than 80 percent of alums earn graduate or professional degrees. The College is a top producer of Fulbright scholars and alma mater of 23 Rhodes Scholars. Committed to the mission of the College, Davidson alums give back in several ways, including as donors, mentors, and internship and employment partners.

At the core of the Davidson experience is the College's Honor Code, a declaration by the entire community that trust is foundational for open inquiry and learning. Students benefit from a distinctive set of freedoms when they sign the Honor Code, including take-home tests and unproctored, self-scheduled final exams. The Honor Code encourages a sense of personal responsibility that extends beyond the classroom and into the lives of leadership and learning that students will pursue after graduation. It remains one of Davidson's most cherished traditions.

Location

The College is located on an impressive 665-acre campus in Davidson – a beautiful college town located on Lake Norman in North Carolina. Davidson is a growing community that has remained committed to maintaining its unique small-town character and values. Davidson’s historic downtown is a short walk from campus and offers an array of locally owned shops, galleries, and restaurants. At the same time, the campus is a part of greater Charlotte, the largest city in North Carolina, with a metro area population of nearly two million residents and a wealth of artistic, cultural, and athletic experiences. Charlotte is the second largest financial center in the United States, is an international hub airport, and is the headquarters for ten Fortune 500 companies.

Leadership

In August 2022, the campus community welcomed Douglas Hicks ‘90 as the College’s nineteenth president. He returned to his alma mater eager to further its educational mission of shaping lives for service and leadership and is committed to moving the needle on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging at Davidson. He has guided the College to launch an ambitious strategic planning process, with the expectation that a new VP of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will bring expertise and energy to the continued weaving of DEI commitments into this strategic work.

Hicks previously served as William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Religion and Dean of Oxford College at Emory University, where he developed new programs to enhance the curriculum and intellectual and social communities, with an emphasis on career experience and reflection. He also co-led a university-wide working group to memorialize the labor of enslaved persons, planning for twin memorials on Emory’s Oxford and Atlanta campuses. President Hicks currently chairs the [Atlantic 10 Conference’s](#) Commission on Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

After earning his economics degree *cum laude* with honors from Davidson, Dr. Hicks earned a Master of Divinity *summa cum laude* from Duke University and his master’s and doctoral degrees in religion from Harvard University. He began his teaching career at the University of Richmond, later serving as the founding director of the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement. He then moved to Colgate University, where he served as the provost and dean of the faculty. An ordained Presbyterian minister, Dr. Hicks has held visiting faculty positions at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond and the Harvard Divinity School. Author of four books and over 50 articles, his scholarship focuses on religious diversity in American public life and on ethics, equity, and leadership.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT DAVIDSON

Davidson College’s fundamental belief in the dignity and worth of every human is guided by its foundational principles. Davidson strives to sustain a culture of belonging for staff, faculty, and students

from diverse cultures, ethnicities, races, religions, sexual orientations, gender identities, ages, national origins, socio-economic backgrounds, and abilities. This commitment manifests in the College's [nondiscrimination policies](#); in the student [Code of Responsibility](#) that centers the value of individual differences and condemns discrimination; and in employee benefits plans that reflect the College's commitment to all staff, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) staff.

Over the past decade, with support from the Board of Trustees and senior leadership, Davidson has challenged itself to think ambitiously about how it can continue to demonstrate and further its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These steps have touched all facets of campus life, and the vice president of diversity, equity, and inclusion will inherit, coordinate, and grow the pioneering work that the Davidson community has undertaken.

Community-Wide Efforts

Davidson College acknowledges that it has benefitted from the institution of slavery and the stolen labor of enslaved persons and recognizes its roles in supporting and perpetuating harms caused by the institution of slavery and its legacies, including systemic racism that continues to impact Black members of its community today. The College, in accordance with restorative justice principles, has taken many steps to repair harm through significant initiatives across the community.

In 2017, Davidson's [Commission on Race and Slavery](#) first convened to seek a full understanding of the College's history with respect to slavery and race. Chaired by the Honorable Anthony R. Foxx '93, former United States Secretary of Transportation and Davidson's first elected Black student body president, the commission was comprised of students, staff, alumni, faculty, trustees, and members of the Town of Davidson community. Together, they were charged with putting forth recommendations to guide the college toward the goal of true equity and inclusion on Davidson's campus. [Recommendations](#) from the commission have touched all parts of campus life and include an updated student orientation; the creation of the committee on [Acknowledgment and Naming](#) to guide how the college names buildings, spaces, and programs in a way that is reflective of the college's values; and a renewed focus on faculty hiring.

The College has commissioned *With These Hands*, a [memorial](#) to recognize and commemorate the contributions of enslaved persons and those whose labor was exploited at the College. Led by renowned artist Hank Willis Thomas and the architecture firm Perkins+Will, the memorial will sit in the open space between four historic buildings on the front lawn of campus, which enslaved persons helped build. This memorial is an important step toward creating awareness of Davidson's history with slavery and its legacies.

Additionally, the College has taken steps to appropriately steward the [Beaver Dam](#) plantation house and property. For decades, people were enslaved on the plantation, and little is known about who they were or where their descendants are today. The College is undertaking institutionally supported research and is expanding these efforts. A dedicated program and site manager for this space will work with [Dr. Hilary Green](#), the College's public historian, along with other campus leaders to manage the property and develop it as an educational resource for the college and community.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | Faculty

Under the recommendation of the Commission on Race and Slavery, Davidson has made a concerted effort to grow curricula and faculty in key areas. To date, the College has added four tenure-track lines in [Africana Studies](#), including a public historian, and has hired multiple other core faculty members of Africana Studies whose primary appointments span across campus in departments such as English, Music, and Psychology, making for one of the largest programs in a college of its size. The College similarly hopes to expand in existing departments such as Gender and Sexuality Studies, and leaves the door open for the creation of other interdisciplinary academic departments.

Davidson has strengthened its [Equity Advising program](#), established 12 years ago, to train faculty and staff who represent Davidson on search committees on best practices in hiring. Equity advising is a key component of faculty hiring, and currently, 15 faculty members are trained equity advisors who serve on all tenured track faculty searches. These committees are assisted by the Student Initiative for Academic Diversity (SIAD). SIAD members are trained student workers who conduct on-campus interviews with potential tenure-track faculty and candidates for senior administration, with a specific eye toward the candidates' experience and preparedness to teach, advise, support, advocate for, and serve a diverse student body. Together, the work of the Equity Advisors and SIAD has been instrumental in raising Davidson's representation of faculty of color to 28 percent.

Davidson's [Fostering Inclusivity and Respect in Science Together](#) (FIRST) program seeks to embrace DEI fluency for STEM faculty and is sponsored by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Inclusive Excellence initiative. The program aims to implement inclusive pedagogies throughout STEM and reduce institutional barriers by concretely addressing campus policies, practices, and structures that exhibit racist beliefs and/or limit inclusivity and learning. The College additionally supports faculty participation in workshops and success programs from the [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity's](#) workshops and success programs.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | Students

Students benefit from the resources provided by the [Center for Diversity and Inclusion](#), which seeks to engage all students in diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. The Center partners with offices across campus to uplift intersections of culture and identity. It is proud to offer specific programming and support designed for [students of color](#), [LGBTQIA+ students](#), [first-generation students](#), and [undocumented](#)

[students](#). This includes programming, pre-orientation experiences, dedicated spaces, advising, and emergency funding.

In recent years, the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) has brought restorative practices and solutions to student conduct cases. Additionally, students have access to a [bias reporting system](#) where they may voice concerns about age, disability, ethnicity, gender or gender identity and expression, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation. The bias reporting system is non-punitive and based on restorative principles.

[The Chaplain's Office](#) supports students of every religious and secular background and fosters opportunities for spiritual exploration, meditation, social action, prayer, study, and worship. Though Presbyterian in affiliation, Davidson's Religious and Spiritual Life contains leadership across many faiths and identities.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | Staff

Davidson believes that the College grows stronger by recruiting and retaining a diverse staff committed to building an inclusive community. The College features several affinity groups for staff, including the Staff of Color group and the LGBTQIA+ Caucus. Staff also have access to bias incident reporting forms whose responses are rooted in restorative justice practices. Both resources offer opportunities for review and improvement by the new vice president.

Currently, the Office of Human Resources supports education and training efforts for staff across the areas of discrimination and harassment, bias, accessibility, gender and sexuality, and race. Many of these educative efforts are divisionally driven, although their impact permeates the campus. Recently, the College filled a newly created position, Diversity and Equity Education Coordinator, who will assist in developing, promoting, facilitating, and assessing educational initiatives related to equity on campus.

THE ROLE

The creation of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion role signals the College's appetite for advancing its DEI work through a holistic, strategic approach that includes all members of the Davidson College community. Historically, at Davidson, the chief diversity officer role has reported to the academic affairs office, but this newly designed cabinet-level position will allow the vice president to represent students, staff, faculty, and alums, and connect and strengthen existing DEI efforts across campus to make the sum greater than the current parts. Reporting to the president, the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will serve as a central resource for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging efforts; create a strategic framework to guide existing DEI work across campus and identify opportunities for growth; design constructive community programming; and serve as a strategic advisor to senior leadership and other campus offices. The VP will be a visible presence on campus and help create a culture of hope and trust across campus.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Davidson College has worked toward excellence in its diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, and to advance these efforts purposefully, the College requires greater infrastructure and coordination of the important work happening across campus. In carrying out their responsibilities, the successful vice president will:

Serve as a visible representative and central resource for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

In this inaugural seat, the Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will serve as the College's first central resource for programming and initiatives related to DEI. The vice president will not interrupt existing work but rather bolster current initiatives, identify areas of opportunity and growth, and advise campus offices and departments of best practices in their respective areas.

As a central resource for all DEI efforts and initiatives, the vice president will strengthen record keeping and archiving of its diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging programming across the College to take account of and systematize the College's DEI offerings. By staying attuned to and involved with initiatives happening across campus, the vice president will be able to maintain a history and active record of DEI happenings and identify instances of duplication across campus.

To create a culture of trust, respect, and hope, the successful vice president will actively participate in the Davidson College community, engaging directly, visibly, and authentically with staff, students, faculty, and alumni. In maintaining active cross-campus involvement, the vice president will signal that all community members are accountable for diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts at Davidson.

Create a strategic framework to guide diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives across campus

In recent years, various departments, offices, and constituencies have led important work highlighting and addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. In 2023, diversity and inclusion are embedded in Davidson's policies, curriculum, and more. These initiatives, however, are largely siloed and divisionally driven. The Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will create an overarching strategic framework for diversity, equity, and inclusion, connecting work across campus, integrating, and enhancing these efforts, as well as identifying current limitations and areas of opportunity. The vice president will provide both vision and accountability as a participatory leader and will empower others to carry out their responsibilities through collaborative oversight and support.

Evaluate the campus climate and design constructive community programming to establish a common language and understanding across campus constituencies

The Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will provide community members with educational programming to establish a shared language and opportunities to engage across differences. The vice president will think deeply about ways to build greater philosophical and practical engagement with DEI, recognizing that members of the Davidson community are at different stages of their learning journeys. An educating voice within the campus community, the vice president will possess a deep understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging and have an excellent command of DEI scholarship to effectively engage those community members earlier in their learning journeys, as well as those most committed to DEI work.

Serve as a strategic advisor and thought partner to senior leadership and campus colleagues

The vice president will be an enthusiastic partner, colleague, and advisor to President Hicks and the senior leadership team on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion and other important College matters. As the College embarks on its next strategic plan, the vice president will play a critical role in helping the college meet its strategic short- and long-term goals.

Working in close collaboration with campus partners such as human resources, student affairs, and academic affairs, the vice president will help identify constituent needs as it relates to DEI and assist respective teams to close those gaps. In the staff realm, opportunities for collaboration include strengthening HR training and policies, as well as growing representation across all levels of staff. To further student success, the vice president will be a close partner with the student life team and help to identify gaps in student support and additional opportunities to integrate and extend DEI learning beyond the classroom. In the faculty space, the vice president will review the equity advising and hiring processes to ensure consistency across departments and tracks and support ongoing efforts to increase faculty diversity.

Strengthen relationships beyond campus borders

Closely connected to the college community, the town of Davidson is home to Davidson College. Students, staff, and faculty engage with the surrounding community in many ways, including through [community-based learning courses](#), the [Community Engaged Faculty Fellows](#) program, or the [Hurt Hub](#). The vice president will respect, uphold, and strengthen the relationship between Davidson College and the diverse surrounding community. Additionally, the vice president will be engaged with a broad range of constituencies, including Davidson alums, in the nearby city of Charlotte and beyond.

Beyond campus, the vice president will be active in conferences and associations. A lifelong learner, the vice president will develop and introduce best practices to the Davidson community.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

Davidson College seeks a collaborative, highly qualified individual with deep experience working in diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy. Accordingly, the next Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will bring many of the following professional qualifications, skills, experience, and personal qualities to the position:

- PhD, EdD, JD or other terminal degree preferred;
- A minimum of seven years of combined leadership, education, and training experiences in the diversity and equity education space;
- Proven ability to provide visionary strategic leadership and a strong record of success in developing and implementing strategic equity and inclusion initiatives;
- Demonstrated understanding of the liberal arts college tradition, passion for the mission of the College, and alignment with institutional values;
- Broad and contemporary understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion scholarship, as well as a working knowledge of related equal employment opportunity and discrimination issues;
- Experience working cross-culturally, utilizing sophisticated relational abilities and conflict resolution skills, strong emotional intelligence, and experience working across a wide range of constituencies with a high degree of diplomacy;
- Knowledge of and an appreciation for structures and approaches that undergird higher education, including the role of faculty, student engagement, and shared governance;
- Successful record of experience in administrative leadership, working collaboratively with administrators, faculty, staff, students, trustees, and other stakeholders to advance diversity and inclusion initiatives;
- A life-long learner with talent for designing opportunities for engagement across stakeholders (i.e., across generational and intersectional identities, etc.);
- Crisis management experience, particularly related to DEI, and the ability to provide intellectual and emotional leadership, bringing communities together during challenging and sometimes public or high-profile circumstances;
- A strengths-based and developmental approach to the work, with a sense of positive energy and enthusiasm and ability to meet people where they are.

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 electronically and with confidence via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/davidson-college/vice-president-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>

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At Davidson College, we believe the college grows stronger by recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty and staff committed to building an inclusive community. In order to achieve and sustain educational excellence, we seek to hire talented faculty and staff across the intersections of diverse races, ethnicities, religions and worldviews, sexual orientations, gender identities, ages, socio-economic backgrounds, political perspectives, abilities, veteran status, cultures, and national origins.