



Search for the Vice President for Communications and Marketing
Hamilton College
Clinton, NY

Hamilton College prepares students for lives of meaning, purpose, and active citizenship. Guided by the motto, "Know Thyself," the College emphasizes intellectual growth, flexibility, and collaboration.

THE SEARCH

One of the nation's oldest and most highly regarded liberal arts colleges, Hamilton College seeks a visionary and strategic leader to serve as its vice president for communications and marketing. The vice president will join a close community that cares deeply about critical observation, analytical thinking, and clear and precise writing. An excellent communicator, the vice president will report to the president of the College and will strategize alongside a highly motivated leadership team to ensure that Hamilton is known for its rigorous open curriculum, devoted faculty, and engaged student body, and is renowned as an innovative liberal arts college.

Working closely with the president, the vice president will establish a comprehensive and strategic communications and marketing program that meets the College's ambitious goals and enhances its reputation and resources. The vice president will lead a talented staff of 13 professionals and partner with college leaders across administrative offices, academic departments, athletics, student affairs, and the College's museums and centers. This leader will oversee internal and external communications, from campus announcements and alumni newsletters to athletic achievements and performing arts accolades. They will help showcase Hamilton's strengths, innovatively market its brand to diverse audiences, and serve as a trusted communications advisor. They will have the tact to manage crisis communications, the skill to increase Hamilton's brand awareness through earned media, and the interpersonal skills to develop effective public relations and media partnerships that will benefit the College.

The vice president will have demonstrated experience developing and implementing multi-faceted communications and marketing programs for an organization with many audiences. They will appreciate

traditional media, have expert knowledge of emerging media, and will be prepared to guide the College toward best practices for a sophisticated and sustainable approach to communications and marketing. They should understand the changing nature of communications, media, and technology and will know how to communicate and engage diverse audiences within this changing environment. Strong executive leadership and managerial skills are essential. The vice president must also bring a collaborative and collegial nature, with high emotional intelligence, intercultural competence, and a demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The ideal candidate will have a deep appreciation for and commitment to Hamilton's core values and mission. They will be intellectually curious and committed to building relationships within the tight-knit college community.

Hamilton College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in conducting this important search and to help identify outstanding candidates. All inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed to the search firm in confidence as directed at the end of this document.

ABOUT HAMILTON COLLEGE

Originally founded in 1793 as the Hamilton-Oneida Academy, Hamilton College received its charter from the regents of the State University of New York in 1812 and was known through the late 19th and early 20th centuries as a small, all-male college with a powerful teaching tradition emphasizing written and oral communication. Starting in the late 1960s, Hamilton took a series of bold steps that forged its modern identity, including chartering and merging in 1978 with Kirkland College, an independent women's college physically adjacent to Hamilton's existing campus. Kirkland complemented Hamilton; its curriculum was more experimental, its buildings were modern, its emphasis was on the fine and performing arts, and it stressed creativity, self-direction, and interdisciplinary learning. Today, the unified Hamilton retains its teaching commitment as well as a distinctive culture that blends the traditions of both institutions.

From its founding generations, Hamilton has been a close community, operating as a small village on a hill in Clinton, New York. Hamilton has a socially and intellectually diverse campus life that invites a student body with a broad spectrum of interests. Through its commitment to need-blind admissions, Hamilton is one of a few dozen colleges that meets both the full demonstrated financial need of its applicants and admits the most qualified students. The community retains a cheerful and engaging quality, with an increasingly rich array of academic, athletic, artistic, and co-curricular activities. In addition to activities on campus and in charming Clinton, residents can also access cultural opportunities in nearby Utica (10 minutes), Syracuse (50 minutes), and Cooperstown (55 minutes). Hamilton is approximately four hours by car from mid-town Manhattan, Boston, and Philadelphia, three hours from Niagara Falls, and less than two hours from the Finger Lakes and the southern border of the Adirondack Park.

Leadership

Hamilton's current president, David Wippman, is retiring on July 1, 2024 following eight successful years at the helm of the College. President Wippman's legacy includes the renovation of important campus

facilities, the expansion of programs for student wellbeing, significant efforts to prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion, and the development of plans for sustainability working towards carbon neutrality.

In February, Hamilton College [announced](#) Steven Tepper as the 21st president of the College, succeeding President Wippman on July 1. President-elect Tepper is a sociologist and scholar of higher education and U.S. cultural policy. He joins Hamilton from Arizona State University (ASU), where he served as dean and director of the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts. Prior to ASU, President-elect Tepper was on the faculty at Vanderbilt University where he was a key architect of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy, a national think tank for cultural policy and creativity. He also worked as deputy director and lecturer of sociology and public policy at the Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies at Princeton University. President-elect Tepper holds a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and a doctorate in sociology from Princeton University.

Faculty

Hamilton faculty are first-rate teacher-scholars; innovative teaching and scholarly work are deeply ingrained in faculty culture. Hamilton has the equivalent of 195 full-time faculty members, over 100 of whom are tenured, with a student-to-faculty ratio of 9-to-1. Classes are small and engaging, with 23 percent having nine or fewer students and 74 percent having 19 or fewer students. In addition to bearing responsibility for the curriculum, faculty spend time working closely with students and conducting research. Fifty-two percent of the faculty are women, and 24 percent are people of color.

Students and Alumni

Hamilton students are among the most talented anywhere. The rigor and competitiveness of the College's admission process, and its firm commitment to need-blind admissions, place Hamilton in the company of only a handful of other institutions. Hamilton prides itself on being a school of opportunity. Hamilton's current first-year class was selected from a record-high applicant pool of 9,899, resulting in the lowest admit rate on record (11.8%), and is the most ethnically and socioeconomically diverse class in the College's history. 29.5 percent of the first-year class identify as U.S. students of color, 7.5 percent as international citizens, 22 percent as Pell Grant recipients, and 14 percent of first-year students are the first generation in their families to attend college. Overall, students hail from 47 states and 54 countries. Hamilton's current financial aid budget of \$55.7 million supports roughly half the student body. For fiscal year 2024, there is a proposed increase to the scholarship budget to \$59.7 million, furthering Hamilton's commitment to its students.

Hamilton has 23,200 alumni, many of whom are engaged and committed to supporting current students and other alumni in their quest for meaningful pursuits after college. Many work closely with the Maurice Horowitch Career Center to assist students in determining career goals, accessing internships, and other

career-related opportunities off campus. The Hamilton connection remains strong long after graduation, with the College consistently placing in the top one percent of national alumni giving levels.

Athletics

Hamilton is a founding member of the Division III New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC), an affiliation defining not only established athletic competition but also a group of small liberal arts colleges similar in stature and mission. These colleges agree that athletics should be integrated and in sync with the academic program and that all student-athletes are representative of the overall body. As a member of NESCAC, the College encourages participation in athletics, and roughly one-third of its students are varsity scholar-athletes on one or more of Hamilton's 29 intercollegiate teams, excelling in both the classroom and their chosen sports. Even more students are involved in intramural and club sports on campus, and wellness is a priority for the entire community.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Hamilton has long been attentive to the changing needs of students and employees and will continue to ensure that [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) are incorporated into all aspects of campus life, including academics. In 2021, the President's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Council published proposals that span four areas of action: people, planning, and practices; pedagogy and research; relationships; and reporting. These proposals focused primarily on structural changes to enhance earlier DEI efforts throughout the Hamilton community.

In August 2022, Hamilton hired its first full-time vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion, a cabinet-level position established to develop and deepen meaningful partnerships with community members across the College and in the community, and to facilitate the revision and implementation of a comprehensive strategic vision for DEI campus-wide.

Campus

The Hamilton campus consists of the original buildings from both Hamilton's and Kirkland's campuses. In the last 15 years, the College has invested about \$340 million in new construction, renovations, and landscaping improvements, largely funded by alumni and parent donors. The campus has grown from 1.5 million to more than 2 million square feet across 1,350 acres. Academic space has been greatly expanded and upgraded with technology, art, and scientific equipment, including the 200,000-square-foot Taylor Science Center, dedicated in 2005, which has increased opportunities for undergraduate science education and research. In addition, the Wellin Museum of Art (2012) and the Kennedy Center for Theatre and the Studio Arts (2014) have provided a fittingly updated and expanded space for the visual and performing arts on campus. In 2018, Hamilton launched its Athletics Master Plan to focus on upgrading its current athletics facilities and developing new venues for athletics, including a full renovation of its aquatic facility.

The College's [Landscape Master Plan](#) is currently underway to inform the next decade of campus development and, in the last year, the College has engaged a design firm to support the [Campus Master Planning](#) process, which will create a thriving center of campus, transform the residential experience, and amplify access to academic resources. Plans are also underway for a new, digitally sophisticated Innovation Center to house the Computer Science Department, which is experiencing tremendous growth in student enrollments. The Center, which grew out of Hamilton's last strategic plan, emphasizes digital fluency as a foundational element of a liberal arts education.

ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

As a member of the senior leadership team, the vice president for communications and marketing will work collaboratively with constituents across the College to develop and implement a comprehensive, strategic communications and marketing plan and ensure that consistent messages and images of Hamilton College are presented to internal and external audiences.

Reporting to the newly appointed Hamilton College president, this leader will be the central communications advisor to the president, fellow members of the senior leadership team, the Board of Trustees, and other college leaders. They will also lead a talented team of 13 communications and marketing professionals with skills in print and digital communications, graphic design, videography, photography, media strategy, and marketing analytics. The vice president and their team oversee the development of a comprehensive program of publications, including [Hamilton Magazine](#) and admission recruitment materials, online and news media, signage and internal communications, media relations, videos, special events, advertising, and crisis communications.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Develop and implement a strategic, comprehensive vision for communications and marketing.

Joining Hamilton at the start of a new presidential administration, the vice president will be a co-strategist for the early priorities established by the president and leadership team. They will also be charged with building a comprehensive plan for the College's internal and external communications and marketing strategy. This leader will evaluate the current communications and marketing strategies and implement innovative ideas to ensure Hamilton sustains its strong reputation among the nation's top liberal arts colleges and its momentum as it enters a new era of leadership. Hamilton enjoys an excellent reputation, but particularly in parts of the country where the College and its elite liberal arts peers are not as well known, the vice president will bring experience and innovation elevating brand awareness through earned media and other impactful marketing strategies.

In addition, this leader will be prepared and motivated to guide the president and college leadership in responding to the social, political, and regulatory landscape that affects liberal arts colleges. A critical

piece of this role is providing proactive leadership for crisis management planning, including updating current crisis communications policies and procedures and offering real-time crisis management, counsel, and support to the president and senior leadership team.

Serve as a key member of the president's leadership team, providing sound and impactful guidance on all communications and marketing matters.

Partnering with the president in his role as chief spokesperson for the College, the vice president will support the president in establishing a strong personal and presidential voice that aligns with Hamilton's values. Likewise, the vice president will guide and support other senior leaders across the College ensuring communications align with the College's vision. It will be critical to develop strong, collaborative, and mutually supportive partnerships with academic affairs, admissions, advancement, and athletics, identifying and building consensus about areas of strategic focus and ensuring that they can communicate with their audiences across all media in engaging ways.

Lead and empower a strong communications and marketing team that is viewed as a strategic partner across the College.

An inspirational leader, the vice president will develop and support Hamilton's strong team of communications and marketing professionals, encouraging them to serve the College with excellence, efficiency, and accountability. This leader will set a clear direction and priorities for the team of 13, continually assessing staff strengths, offering appropriate opportunities for professional development, recruiting new staff as needed, and maintaining a high-quality, diverse team. The vice president will advocate for and market the strengths of this talented team, acknowledging team successes and showcasing their professional specialties across campus.

Model and amplify Hamilton's commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The successful candidate will bring a sophisticated understanding of the critically important role that communications and marketing can and should have in creating a truly equitable, diverse, and inclusive college community. An inspiring and empathic leader, the vice president will treat others with respect, and will have a demonstrated record of supporting and driving initiatives to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Bringing a consultative and data-informed approach, the vice president will value nuance and will know how to communicate effectively and transparently with a diverse set of constituencies, including the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, and external stakeholders. Working closely with the vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion, this leader will help communicate Hamilton's commitments to creating an equitable and inclusive community on campus. The vice president will also support the president and all members of the senior leadership team to ensure that Hamilton effectively represents its commitments to DEI to support the recruitment and retention of strong faculty, students, and staff.

Assess and enhance internal communications at Hamilton to increase community cohesion.

Hamilton's internal communications have evolved organically as the College has grown and changed. The vice president will have the opportunity to evaluate existing mechanisms and implement a long-range plan to ensure that internal communications are effective, efficient, and utilize appropriate channels to reach the College's diverse audiences in informative and engaging ways. To ensure success in this area, the vice president must know how to lead change collaboratively and through influence; they will be a nimble problem-solver, and respond with care to a complex array of constituent needs.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While the search committee recognizes that no individual will possess all the desired qualities and skills, Hamilton College hopes to attract a seasoned leader with exceptional skills in writing, strategic communication, and the art and science of marketing; strong emotional intelligence, skill at navigating ambiguity, and the ability to work collaboratively with a group of senior executives and academic leaders; and a deep commitment to delivering outstanding work. The ideal candidate will bring many of the following professional qualities and experiences:

- An appreciation and respect for the core liberal arts mission of Hamilton College; an interest to learn the College's distinctive culture and traditions.
- Ability to serve as an excellent ambassador for the College and to engage effectively with students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, parents, and other internal and external audiences on behalf of the institution.
- Progressively responsible experience leading comprehensive communications and marketing operations for a college, university, or related organization, delivering both short-term and long-term results.
- A strong commitment to personal and professional development and the ability to build, lead, mentor, motivate, and retain high-performing, diverse professional teams to create a robust and collaborative communications and marketing ecosystem.
- A strong understanding of higher education and related social and public policy issues and challenges, as well as the ability to facilitate the general public's understanding of these issues. Experience serving as a trusted advisor to institutional leaders on positioning, points of institutional quality, and areas for improvement, given trends and issues in post-secondary education.
- Proven ability to partner with senior institutional leadership to coordinate communications efforts, and to drive innovation to achieve high-quality results across communications and marketing.
- Demonstrated leadership in crisis management and messaging.

- Strong track record of change management, leading teams, and cross-institutional constituents through both influence and direct authority.
- Experience developing and implementing an effective institutional crisis communications plan.
- Substantial experience developing and implementing effective media and public relations strategies to enhance institutional reach and reputation among national media, philanthropic partners, employers, government officials, and the general public.
- Exceptional clarity of thought and ability to communicate clearly and compellingly, orally and in writing; strong editing and presentation skills.
- Commitment to data-informed processes to assess and monitor the effectiveness of each communication effort relative to its goals and return on investment.
- Demonstrated commitment, knowledge, and proven results in establishing best practices to advance DEI objectives; a nuanced understanding of the critical role of communications and marketing in advancing an institution's DEI goals and commitments.
- Emotional intelligence, intercultural competence, and awareness; a demonstrated ability to communicate with nuance and foresight. Demonstrated experience with and a commitment to engaging and listening to diverse constituencies and audiences.
- Significant intellectual acumen and wide-ranging intellectual curiosity; ability to learn quickly; creativity in, and passion for, conveying powerful and engaging messages about the institution.
- Ability to garner respect as an institutional and opinion leader, and to lead at all organizational levels.
- Deep commitment to collaboration and collegiality; the ability to combine best practices and business sensibilities with authenticity and respect for others.
- Forthrightness combined with tact and diplomacy; ability to handle challenging questions with empathy and grace and to mediate when needed.

COMPENSATION

Compensation for this position will be competitive and negotiated in good faith. The listed salary range is \$230,000 - \$285,000.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications (including resumes and two- to three-page letters of interest responding to the opportunities and challenges outlined above) should be sent via the

Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/hamilton-college/vice-president-communications-and-marketing>.

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Hamilton College is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity employer and encourages diversity in all areas of the campus community. The community recognizes its collective responsibility to acknowledge its colonial history. Hamilton's campus is located on the ancestral and traditional lands of the Oneida Nation. The community commits itself to engaging in solidarity with the Oneida Nation and to ensuring that the perspectives and cultures of Indigenous peoples are honored and embraced.