



LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

Search for the Dean of the Conservatory of Music

Lawrence University

Appleton, Wisconsin

THE OPPORTUNITY

[Lawrence University](#) seeks a collaborative, creative, and forward-looking leader to serve as the next Dean of the Conservatory of Music. Currently celebrating the 150th anniversary of its founding, the [Lawrence University Conservatory of Music](#) is poised for a Dean to build upon its long history of excellence and innovation, while collaboratively envisioning an even brighter future for the institution.

The conservatory distinguishes itself from other top conservatories and schools of music in myriad ways. It values all histories and traditions of music-making across culture and genre and meaningfully creates opportunities for faculty and students to engage critically and creatively with music in this context. It is one of few distinguished conservatories to be integrated with a preeminent liberal arts college, and it supports faculty and students in exploring their academic and artistic interests across traditional disciplinary boundaries. For instance, conservatory students pursue academic coursework in the college, and college students have access to lessons, ensembles, and performance opportunities in the conservatory. Many students pursue the BA-BMus dual degree, enabling them to access deep, applied study while experiencing the broad-based liberal education the college offers, and faculty from the conservatory frequently collaborate and co-teach with colleagues in the college, for instance, in Lawrence's distinctive [First-Year Studies](#) program. This transformative approach sets students up for success in their lives and careers and has led to the strong reputation the conservatory currently enjoys.

The conservatory is now primed for a Dean who will build upon this strong foundation and envision its next era of eminence. The Dean will serve as the strategic leader for the conservatory, making key decisions about resource allocation and programmatic development, all with an understanding of the importance of collaboration, shared governance, and institutional culture. The Dean will be a key institutional leader at the university, including serving as a member of the President's cabinet and on the Academic Affairs leadership team. In this work, they will engage widely across the university, finding ways

to further align the conservatory and the college, advocating for resources, and supporting strategic enrollment efforts. They will assess the administrative and operational processes in the conservatory, work closely with staff to refine systems and procedures to be more efficient and equitable, and enhance communication channels to ensure all relevant constituencies are informed of opportunities, programs, and policies. In addition, the Dean will serve as the public face of the conservatory, broadcasting the excellent work of the faculty and students, developing meaningful opportunities for community engagement, and strengthening the institution's profile and reputation both regionally and nationally. The successful candidate will be a unifying, inspiring, and supportive leader who respects the conservatory's culture, embraces the creative and transformative education the conservatory offers, has a genuine appreciation for the broad diversity of musical traditions, and inspires the faculty, staff, and students to reach new heights.

A search committee composed of faculty and staff has been formed to lead the search. The national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller has been retained to assist the search committee. All inquiries, applications, and nominations for this opportunity should be directed in confidence to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1847, [Lawrence University](#) traces its history to the early days of the uniquely American liberal arts tradition of educating students to be critical thinkers, creative problem solvers, able communicators, and engaged citizens. The university believes in the development of intellect and talent, the pursuit of knowledge and understanding, the cultivation of sound judgment, and respect for the perspectives of others. Lawrence is committed to providing challenging and enlightening educational opportunities that give students the knowledge and tools needed to find professional success and personal fulfillment.

Lawrence offers its 1,465 undergraduate students a high-quality education that stands out among its peers. The combination of a nationally ranked liberal arts college and a first-tier conservatory of music ensures that students benefit from challenging academics and an excellent arts education. The university actively fosters a transformative education that emphasizes engaged learning: students can participate in a funded summer research experience, study off campus at the [London Centre](#) or [more than 50 other programs](#), pursue an internship, or join a music tour that blends performance with public engagement. This transformative education begins with a shared [first-year studies](#) experience, during which every first-year student studies across disciplines and mediums, and ends with a distinctive [senior experience](#), in which students embark on an independent project that reflects their values, interests, and learnings, and could involve novel research, a creative work, or a performance, among other possibilities. Small classes, a four-year residential requirement, and rich educational and co-curricular opportunities create a close-knit community in which Lawrence students live, study, and thrive in a climate of shared discovery.

This experience produces alumni who lead in their respective fields. Included among the distinguished alumni are the CEOs of local and global companies, nonprofit executives, U.S. Ambassadors, state and

federal judges, international opera stars, a Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, and a large number of scientists, medical researchers, and educators.

Faculty members at Lawrence are equally ambitious. Though strongly committed to teaching and advising, the faculty remains active researchers, performers, and writers. In recent years, faculty at Lawrence have received grants, fellowships, and major research instrumentation from the NEH, NEA, NIH, and NSF, as well as the Henry Luce Foundation and the Teagle Foundation. Faculty have also published scholarly books with major presses and won national recognition for their scientific research, photography, poetry, and music. Like the students and alumni, Lawrence faculty are committed to learning in community and to sharing the fruits of their knowledge with others.

Only the second institution in America to be founded as a coeducational college, diversity, equity, and inclusion are among Lawrence's core values. Current students come from 49 states and 38 countries, and 26 percent of students are students of color. In 2016, Lawrence appointed a vice president to lead campus-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, and this year the university received a [Higher Education Excellence in Diversity \(HEED\) Award](#) from INSIGHT Into Diversity in recognition of its efforts.

THE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

Currently celebrating the 150th anniversary of its founding in 1874, the [Conservatory of Music](#) prepares musicians to create a more thoughtful, meaningful, and beautiful world within a motivated community that cultivates artistry and excellence through rigorous training. It is a diverse community that fosters intellectual growth through critical inquiry and scholarship and a creative community that connects passion for music to social engagement and innovative thinking. Students can gain a broad and deep understanding of classical music performance, and, in addition, the transformative curriculum incorporates a more extensive awareness of world cultures, new music, and non-traditional performance practices. As a renowned conservatory of music embedded in a world-class liberal arts college, the conservatory is uniquely designed to train innovative and adaptable musicians of the future.

With nationally renowned and award-winning [faculty](#) and programs, the conservatory focuses on core musicianship, while also helping students develop the musical fluency needed for 21st-century musicianship. The culture is marked by the prevalence of multi-interested, broadly curious faculty and students. The conservatory's 48 full-time and 23 part-time faculty are highly collaborative and distinguished in their fields. Among the faculty are Grammy Award winners and nominees, recipients of The American Prize in opera, and members of esteemed ensembles, including Alarm Will Sound, Wet Ink Ensemble, Decoda, and NOW Ensemble, among others.

Approximately 325 undergraduate students come to Lawrence from across the country and around the world to pursue [four music degree options](#). Approximately 250 students pursue the Bachelor of Music, approximately 20 pursue the Bachelor of Musical Arts, and approximately 55 pursue the [recently revised](#) Bachelor of Arts in Music. Conservatory students also take full advantage of coursework in the liberal arts and sciences, often pursuing the [five-year BA and BMus dual degree program](#) and benefiting from the opportunity to work directly with senior faculty members across the disciplines. Lawrence operates on a

faculty advising model. All BMus, BMA, and BA in Music students have a conservatory faculty advisor, and dual-degree students have both a conservatory advisor and an advisor from the college. Students are encouraged to bring their whole self to creating a musical path, where they can grow their artistry, build their technical facility, and expand their musicianship in a community of empowerment, collaboration, and support. The typical Lawrence student is smart, curious, and creative, capable of contributing to the ongoing dialogue about the purpose of music and its role in today's society. The faculty and students are supported in their work by a core group of seven talented staff who are dedicated members of the conservatory community.

Academics

With the vision to promote inspiring performance, engaging intellect, and energizing passion, Lawrence is recognized as a leader in innovating conservatory education in the 21st century. Synthesis is at the heart of a Lawrence student's conservatory experience; performance, theory, context, creativity, and communication are closely entwined in studio, ensemble, and classroom experiences. The conservatory recognizes that a theory or composition major still needs to be a performer, and a music education major needs to develop skills both on the stage and as a scholar. The multi-interested and multi-talented students who come to Lawrence relish the breadth of traditions and approaches they experience on campus.

Students pursue applied, individual study and participate in ensembles. In applied study, students attend private lessons and studio classes, during which students obtain a familiarity with repertoire, receive feedback from their teachers and peers, learn to make music well with others and uphold inclusive and encouraging studio environments. Ensembles are open to all Lawrence students and deliver [more than 40 performances](#) each year. They include bands, choirs, orchestras, jazz ensembles, gamelan, mariachi, Ghanaian Ewe drumming and dancing, Afro-Cuban ensembles, improvisation, percussion, new music, and dance ensembles. Some ensembles have received critical acclaim; for instance, two Jazz ensembles have won [six downbeat Awards](#) in recent years.

Students of all majors and degrees have access to a multiplicity of avenues for improvisation, composition, and music production. Improvisation figures prominently in the BMA theory curriculum, where it takes many forms, and the Improvisation Group of Lawrence University (IGLU) is a popular ensemble that is open to all students. Courses in songwriting have seen significant growth in interest and enrollment in the last several years. Students interested in music production have access to a variety of fully equipped production studios to explore their own projects as well as work on curricular offerings. Courses in arts management and music entrepreneurship provide a framework for students to develop their interests.

Grounded in the belief that music has the power to change lives, music education provides a comprehensive, collaborative, and forward-thinking pre-professional training program that prepares students to transform young students through exceptional music teaching. Students learn culturally responsive and inclusive teaching methods and have enjoyed 100 percent job placement in recent years.

Music theory and musicology are also critical aspects of the conservatory environment. In music theory, students hone their analytical skills and decode the language and systems of music by exploring a wide variety of musical styles and genres; they benefit from advanced music theory training that is rarely found at the undergraduate level. Musicology courses emphasize the multiplicities and complexities of musicological thinking. In 2018, the musicology department was one of the first in the U.S. to design a new type of introductory course to replace the longstanding chronological survey of Western classical music. The new core courses in musicology no longer centrally position the repertoire of the Western classical canon and instead explore a rotating assortment of music topics and case studies drawn from various times, places, and cultures. This approach provides students with opportunities to discover their own musical assumptions and values, grapple with questions about musical meaning, contemplate how discourses about music marginalize and empower, explore how performance and scholarship might inform one another, and embrace nuance and complexity.

While the reputation of a conservatory is sometimes described as narrow, the Lawrence Conservatory not only embraces but mandates a breadth of experience in all its degrees and majors that equips graduating students with a healthy understanding of many kinds of musicking skills.

Community Engagement

The conservatory is a cultural resource to the campus and the wider Appleton, WI community through student performances and faculty professional activities. Students and faculty present approximately 250 performances each year, and the conservatory brings artists to Appleton from around the world through its [Performing Arts Series](#). Faculty are active in performances throughout the community (Fox Valley Symphony, Central Wisconsin Symphony, Madison Symphony, and various other ensembles) and provide leadership for organizations such as the Wisconsin Music Educators Association, Music Teachers National Association, and Wisconsin Choral Directors Association, among others. In addition, the conservatory offers two summer programs—the [Lawrence Chamber Music Festival](#) and [Lawrence Summer Music Institute](#)—which engage with the community through learning opportunities and free performances.

The [Lawrence Community Music School](#) (LCMS), Lawrence University's largest community outreach program, is a division of the conservatory. Since its founding in 1874, LCMS has provided high-quality music instruction to people of all ages and skill levels throughout northeastern Wisconsin. Approximately 40 LCMS teachers (non-conservatory faculty), eight conservatory students, and several members of the conservatory faculty provide music instruction through the Community Music School. LCMS serves approximately 1,100 individuals annually through early childhood classes, music for people with disabilities, private lessons, and performing ensembles for youth and adults.

Reflecting the belief that everyone has the right to experience and participate in creating music, the [Music for All](#) initiative is the umbrella that houses the conservatory's outreach programs. Such programs include, but are not limited to, the [Presto! Tours](#); a longstanding partnership with [Riverview Gardens](#); [Music for Food](#), which raises resources and awareness in the fight against hunger; [visits to nearby prisons](#); and a broad array of [community concerts](#).

A significant area of outreach is through the [Mile of Music](#), which is administered independently but receives significant support from the conservatory's Music Education team. This annual multi-day festival of original music has existed for over 10 years in downtown Appleton near campus, and the Music Education team leads dozens of workshops on a variety of genres including gamelan, ukulele, songwriting, Ghanaian drumming and dancing, and mariachi.

Finances

The annual operating budget for the conservatory is approximately \$300,000. Notably, this does not include faculty or staff salaries, which are managed at the university level. Additionally, capital funds for computer purchases are managed under the Instructional Technology budget, and financial aid and scholarship dollars are managed by the Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing/Communications, so these funds are not included in the conservatory's operating budget.

Long-range financial planning is undertaken by the university, with input from the Dean. The conservatory's budget development process fits within that larger planning process. The university has adopted a zero-based budget model for the 2024-25 academic year.

Facilities

The majority of conservatory offices, classrooms, and rehearsal facilities are housed in the Music-Drama Center, Shattuck Hall of Music, and Memorial Chapel complex. This complex contains three large rehearsal rooms, four classrooms, a seminar room, a recording studio, the ensemble library, an electronic piano laboratory, 32 teaching studios, 45 practice rooms, two dedicated reed rooms, two electronic music/production studios, a computer lab, four administrative offices, the 250-seat Harper Hall, the 450-seat Stansbury theater, and Memorial Chapel, a dedicated performance venue that seats an audience of 1250. Waterman House, located in the block north of the main complex, contains five faculty offices and a classroom. Mursell House, across the street from the main conservatory building, houses two offices and a rehearsal space used by the gamelan.

[Two transformational capital projects](#) will help to enhance the student experience and build long-sustaining partnerships within the community. [Fox Commons](#) will give Lawrence new academic and student life avenues as a living-learning community that blends apartment-style student housing with built-in academic and collaboration spaces. [West Campus](#), slated for completion in the fall of 2025, represents a partnership between Lawrence and a local art museum and will house 18 conservatory faculty, a state-of-the-art production studio, the Trout Museum of Art, academic spaces, and apartments.

Campus and Location

Lawrence's picturesque 84-acre campus sits on a bluff overlooking the historic Fox River in [Appleton, Wisconsin](#), a city of 75,000 residents. The campus is nestled between residential neighborhoods and a bustling downtown, featuring shops, restaurants, museums, performing and public art spaces, as well as many festivals throughout the year. In addition to ample green space and distinguished architecture, the campus has easy access to community trails and parks. The Fox Cities region, with a population of more

than 200,000, enjoys the cultural liveliness of an urban location and access to excellent school districts. Appleton International Airport is five miles from campus.

Lawrence has two additional campuses. [Björklunden vid Sjön](#), Swedish for “Birch Grove at the Lake,” a 441-acre retreat on Lake Michigan in Door County, Wisconsin, is Lawrence’s northern campus and hosts a range of academic and arts opportunities for Lawrence faculty and students, as well as members of the community. The [London Centre](#), conveniently located in the heart of cultural London on Great Russell Street in Bloomsbury, offers credit-earning experiential courses for up to 25 students per term.

THE ROLE OF THE DEAN

The Dean is responsible for all academic and administrative affairs of the conservatory. As the conservatory’s senior leader, the Dean works in close partnership with conservatory faculty and university leadership to set a vision and strategy for the conservatory, advocate for resources, and administer the budget. The Dean will recruit and develop faculty in collaboration with the Provost, supervise and support staff, recruit and engage meaningfully with students, lead accreditation efforts, develop new programs in close collaboration with faculty and leadership in Academic Affairs, oversee the Lawrence Community Music School, engage in fundraising and development activities, liaise with external partners, and serve as the public face of the conservatory. As a key institutional leader, the Dean will engage widely across the university, collaborate meaningfully with the Provost and broader Academic Affairs team, and find ways to further align the conservatory and the college.

The Dean reports to the Provost and serves in the [President’s cabinet](#) and on the Academic Affairs leadership team. The Dean’s leadership is informed through a number of shared governance structures, including the Conservatory Advisory Committee, additional faculty committees, and the Dean’s Advisory Council which is an elected body of conservatory students that meets monthly with the Dean to discuss concerns and issues from the student perspective.

The Dean is supported in their leadership by the Associate Dean for the Conservatory and a team of talented staff. Support staff in the conservatory include one full-time Director of Operations, two full-time administrative coordinators, a full-time Director of Programming and Community Engagement, two full-time recording engineers, and a full-time staff collaborative pianist. Two non-employee piano technicians maintain the piano inventory on a contract basis. Two full-time staff members in the admissions office (reporting to the Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid) serve as Director of Conservatory Admissions and Conservatory Admissions Counselor. The Lawrence Community Music School is supported by a full-time director and two additional administrative coordinators.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Collaboratively develop an inclusive, forward-looking vision for the conservatory

The conservatory benefits from a strong sense of community, an appreciation for the full breadth of musical genres and traditions and being an important part of a prominent liberal arts college. The Dean will spend time getting to know the people in the conservatory and across the university and will

collaboratively develop a forward-looking and innovative vision for the conservatory that builds upon its strengths and aligns with its values of inclusivity, broad exploration, collegiality, and excellence. This vision should attend to the needs and desires of the campus community, while simultaneously pointing toward an even brighter future.

Support student recruitment and enrollment management efforts

Enrollment has remained strong and steady at approximately 350 students pursuing conservatory degrees since 2000, and approximately one-third of all university students participate in music course offerings and ensembles. As the world changes and new generations of students bring different sets of expectations to their college experience, the opportunity emerges for the Dean to work closely with the Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing/Communications and the conservatory's two dedicated admissions staff to craft a message, brand, and approach that resonates with today's and tomorrow's students. As these efforts are undertaken, it will be important to engage faculty even more deeply in recruiting students to the campus and to their studios. In doing this work, the Dean will lead with a keen eye toward strengthening both the values of artistic excellence and equity, always endeavoring to increase access to talented students who could benefit from and contribute to the Lawrence Conservatory experience.

Develop new resources for the conservatory, and allocate them strategically

As at most small liberal arts colleges and conservatories of music, resources are limited, and ambitions are high. The Dean will work closely with university leadership to set and administer the conservatory budget, allocate resources prudently, advocate for additional resources to meet pressing capital, infrastructural, personnel, and programmatic needs, and develop new resources through strategic fundraising, grant-seeking, and programmatic efforts. [Investments are currently being made in the physical plant](#), but additional deferred maintenance remains. An enterprising Dean will be a key partner in identifying and developing new resources that enable the conservatory to strengthen its facilities and offerings and realize its ambitions.

Continue the work of assessing administrative and operational processes, refining them to increase efficiency and equity, and regularizing such assessment

In this tight-knit conservatory where most people know one another, and where everyone knows the Dean, decisions and priorities are often set through established relationships. As the needs of faculty, staff, and students have grown increasingly complex in recent years, the opportunity now exists to assess the administrative and operational efficacy of the conservatory and identify systems and processes to enable the community to do its best work efficiently. A review of academic programs is already underway across the institution, with a faculty task force making recommendations with the broad input of faculty chairs. The Dean will continue this work by supporting ongoing institutional assessments in collaboration with the Provost. Importantly, this work must continue with an eye toward enhancing the values of equity and inclusion in all conservatory affairs.

Enhance internal and external communication channels

Much exciting work happens across the conservatory, across the college, and in the broader Appleton and Northeast Wisconsin communities, but often people lack access to information about different opportunities. The Dean will enhance communication channels both internally and externally, ensuring increasingly broad and diverse constituencies are apprised of opportunities, programs, policies, and partnerships as appropriate. The Dean will collaborate with the Vice President for Enrollment and Marketing/Communications to set the strategic priorities for communication efforts and will engage with the campus and broader communities to ensure messages are being received widely.

Embrace and deepen community engagement efforts in the city of Appleton and across the region

The conservatory has a long history of meaningful engagement with the campus's neighboring communities. This commitment is perhaps best seen in the [Lawrence Community Music School](#), the [Music for All initiative](#), and the conservatory's ongoing support of [Mile of Music](#). An enterprising Dean will endeavor to deepen these efforts, ensuring faculty, staff, and students have robust opportunities to engage beyond campus, and further ensuring these partnerships are mutually beneficial to both the conservatory and the broader community.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

The successful Dean will possess many, if not all, of the following professional qualifications, skills, and experience:

- Curiosity and open-mindedness; the experience and perspective needed to serve as an artistic and academic leader for the full conservatory community;
- A personal and professional commitment to music and music education across genres; an appreciation for the role of the arts in creating a distinctive and vibrant campus atmosphere;
- An understanding of the trends and developments that will affect the future of higher education at large, and more specifically the future of collegiate music education;
- The perspective needed to lead an institutional unit, and to partner meaningfully across a full institution;
- Experience engaging authentically with a community; an understanding of the importance of institutional culture; a visible presence and active participant in a range of events and activities;
- A collaborative mindset with strong emotional intelligence and approachability;
- Excellent communication skills, both oral and written; the disposition to listen and consult broadly before making strategic decisions; the ability to build unity and consensus around difficult issues;
- A genuine and palpable respect for the nature of shared governance, while at the same time acknowledging the need to be a strategic decision-maker;
- Experience working meaningfully with a faculty; experience teaching at the collegiate level;
- A passion for education and an understanding of the needs of students;

- Demonstrated success as an administrator, manager of people, and strategic leader; the ability to mentor and stimulate staff and help them to stretch and grow;
- A thoughtful commitment to excellence and to the values of belonging, diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Strategic planning and financial management skills, including experience setting financial and programmatic priorities that balance near-term and long-term objectives;
- The credentials to qualify for appointment at the level of full professor, including an earned doctorate or equivalent terminal degree, are preferred.

TO APPLY

Lawrence University has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. All applications, nominations, and inquiries should be submitted in confidence to:

Karen Avery, Partner

Keith Mason, Managing Associate

Caroline Corry, Senior Search Coordinator

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/lawrence-university-conservatory-music/dean>

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