



**An invitation to apply for the position of
Provost**

**Otis College of Art and Design
Los Angeles, CA**

We are the originals, adventurers, and creators.

[Otis College of Art and Design](#) ("Otis") seeks an accomplished, experienced, and collaborative academic professional to be its next Provost. Established in 1918 as the first independent professional school of art in the city of Los Angeles, Otis educates a diverse community of students to become highly-skilled, well-informed, and responsible professionals. The College offers a wide range of degree and certificate programs, including Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees, Master of Fine Arts degrees, and extension programs for youths and adults. Otis serves over 1,200 students from the U.S. and 34 other countries; over 75% are students of color and 30% are first-generation college students.

This is an opportunity to serve as chief academic officer at one of the nation's leading independent colleges of art and design, at a pivotal moment in the institution's history. In recent years Otis has successfully and steadily increased its student enrollment, with more growth forecast and achievable. A strategic planning process is currently in development, focusing on innovation, partnerships with creative communities and industries, and collaboration. The city of Los Angeles teems with creative energy and offers unmatched opportunities for the institution as a whole, and its faculty and students.

Working with the President, the senior leadership team, and a distinguished faculty of artists, designers, and researchers from diverse creative fields and industries, the Provost will advance a compelling vision of an innovative, holistic education with an emphasis on career development, student success and social mobility, and equity, diversity, and inclusion. The Provost's purview includes academic affairs and faculty affairs, admissions and enrollment management, and student affairs and services—allowing the Provost to develop and apply comprehensive strategies that benefit and enrich student experience at Otis.

Otis seeks a collaborative leader who is able to inspire and eager to partner, who possesses a wealth of experience in creative research and practice, and whose actions are equitable, respectful, and transparent. Intellectual agility, clarity of thought, and exceptional communication skills are essential. The ideal candidate will have a record of strong and broad administrative leadership, collaboration, data-informed decision-making, and action.

Otis College of Art and Design has retained Isaacson, Miller, to assist in this recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications can be submitted to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT OTIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

Otis College of Art and Design is a distinguished national leader in art and design education, preparing students for their future careers. It is one of the most culturally diverse private schools of art and design in the U.S.: three-quarters of all students self-identify as persons of color. The College serves students from over 34 states in the nation, with a preponderance from California; 20% of the student body hails from outside the U.S., namely China, South Korea, and India.

The College's connection to Los Angeles and the Los Angeles creative community is elemental: Harrison Gray Otis (1837-1917), the owner and co-founder of the Times-Mirror Company and publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, bequeathed his property to establish the school. Otis maintains robust partnerships with renowned companies including Blizzard Activision, Mattel, Netflix, Nike, Sony Pictures, Spinmaster, Universal, and Vince, many of which employ Otis graduates. Otis graduates are also found at Disney, Gap, and Pixar. Since 2007, the institution has commissioned the [Otis Report on the Creative Economy](#), an invaluable tool to assess the tremendous economic impact and influence of the area's creative sector on the economy.

In this richly generative setting, Otis students and graduates are driven, passionate, and successful. Ninety-five percent of recent graduates secure employment within six months of graduation, with 84% of those employed working in the fields of art and design. Otis counts among its graduates cultural luminaries who have shaped contemporary art and design, including Rick Owens, Alison Saar, David Hammons, Kerry James Marshall, and Robert Irwin.

Otis currently offers [Bachelor of Fine Arts](#) (BFA) degrees in Animation, Game and Entertainment Design, Environmental Design, Fashion Design, Fine Arts, Graphic Design, Illustration, Product Design, and Toy Design, and [Master of Fine Arts](#) (MFA) degrees in Fine Arts and Graphic Design. Otis also provides [certificate programs](#) and an array of [personal and professional development courses in its Extension program](#). Students also benefit from institutional collaborations with acclaimed artists such as Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Theaster Gates, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Denise Ferreira da Silva, and Anicka Yi.

The College's approximately 350 full-time (ranked), adjunct (ranked), and unionized part-time faculty (lecturers and senior lecturers) bring deep expertise, knowledge, and achievement to bear in their work at Otis. Many faculty members work across disciplines, integrating their accumulated professional experiences from various creative industries. They are dedicated educators, fostering a stimulating environment for the exploration of ideas and the acquisition of skills.

Spanning five acres on the Westside of Los Angeles, the Elaine and Bram Goldsmith Campus provides students with extensive access to a wide array of art and design tools, technology, residence halls, and a range of academic and student services. Anchored by Ahmanson Hall—the 1963 mid-century IBM Aerospace building celebrated for its computer punch card window design—and the neo-modernist Galef Center for Fine Arts, the Goldsmith Campus offers a dynamic environment conducive to artistic exploration and innovation.

Otis is led by [Charles Hirschhorn](#), who became President in 2020 after a three-decades-long career spanning film, television, cable, broadband, animation, and video games. Under his leadership, Otis

has elevated its visibility and reputation; expanded enrollment, student financial aid and scholarships; and increased fundraising, faculty and staff compensation, and corporate partnerships.

Otis College of Art and Design is a member of the [Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design \(AICAD\)](#). It is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

ROLE OF THE PROVOST

Reporting directly to the President, the Provost has a broad portfolio and significant responsibilities, with seven direct reports:

- Vice President of Admissions
- Vice President of Student Affairs and Campus Diversity & Inclusion
- Associate Provost of Educational Effectiveness and Enrollment Management
- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Executive Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness
- Director of Academic Administration
- Executive Assistant for the Provost

The Provost has oversight of a budget exceeding \$30 million and leads a dedicated corps of faculty and staff of about 500.

The Provost plays a central role in shaping the instructional and co-curricular environment, the climate and culture of Otis, and how the College lives its institutional values. In this work the Provost collaborates closely with senior leadership and colleagues in academic assembly, faculty senate, and the part-time faculty union. The partnership with the President is key: the two work together closely, with the Provost bringing academic and higher education expertise and the President bringing industry experience. Together they establish institutional goals, set strategy, and initiate plans. The Provost also works closely with the Vice President of Finance and Administration around the institutional budget planning process, the allocation of physical resources, and technology planning.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Provost will:

Drive the strategic planning process forward towards implementation.

Otis is currently engaged in a robust and inclusive strategic planning process, with a broad set of strategies, goals, and action plans. Collaborating closely with the President and the Associate Vice President of Special Projects, the Provost will shepherd this process and move it into the implementation phase. Doing so will require inspiring leadership, effective management, cross-institution collaboration, and an ability to mobilize and draw on the talents of the entire community.

Foster and cultivate diversity, equity, and inclusion across all levels of the institution.

Otis College is deeply committed to supporting a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff, fostering a sense of belonging for all. The institution seeks a Provost who prioritizes racial equity, values diversity, and leads equity-related initiatives at the College. The Provost will advance the College's commitment to diversity and equity by ensuring that the College responds and contributes effectively to the needs of minoritized students. In close collaboration with the Vice President of Student Affairs and Campus Diversity & Inclusion, the Provost will provide strategic and programmatic leadership at all levels of the college, including the ongoing examination of systems, policies, and procedures; recruitment, retention, and advancement; and professional development.

Provide leadership and support for academic affairs.

As Chief Academic Officer, the Provost will collaborate closely with the Dean of Academic Affairs, who oversees all degree and extension programs as well as academic services, and the Associate Provost, who leads enrollment management and assessment efforts. The Provost will be responsible for implementing and continuously assessing recently revised curricula and programs to foster future innovation. The Provost will champion teaching excellence; attend to faculty affairs and promote faculty development and success; encourage transparent and collegial shared governance; and support the part-time faculty union.

Support and lead enrollment growth and student success.

Otis College aims to continue to expand its enrollment in the coming years. Working closely with the Vice President of Admissions and the Associate Provost, the Provost will effectively lead recruitment strategies and enrollment management efforts while upholding and enhancing the quality of education offered. Additional priorities include improving retention and graduation rates, as well as strengthening career development programs for students.

Lead resource and budget planning and implementation effectively.

While the College enjoys strong enrollment and financial health, the Provost will play a key role in institutional budget planning, which currently heavily relies on tuition revenue. With a commitment to tuition rate management to lower the burden for students, the Provost will effectively plan and implement the budget, making difficult decisions and prioritizing programs and initiatives across the College to align with institutional strategic goals and ensure financial health.

Support and lead a robust internal administration.

In addition to overseeing academic affairs and services, the Provost will closely collaborate with departments such as admissions, student affairs and services, as well as HR, finance, IT, marketing, and institutional advancement. While specialized experiences in each area are not required, familiarity and transferable experiences are expected. In particular, the Provost will attend to the needs of the admissions team in addressing the college's enrollment goals while strongly supporting programmatic efforts for post-graduation outcomes.

Work with the President and other institutional leaders to foster external relationships and representation.

Collaborating closely with the President and Vice Presidents, the Provost will expand the College's network and represent the institution externally to support student success. Otis already boasts a rich history of building relationships with regional industries and creative communities. There is opportunity to consider how best to leverage the connections to increase the success of Otis's programs, graduates, and institutional advancement.

KEY QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess an understanding of and appreciation for the transformative power of art and design to effect positive change in the world, coupled with a desire to promote extraordinary learning opportunities and be a thought leader in art and design education.

In addition, this individual will possess many of the following qualifications, characteristics, and experiences:

Professional qualifications: A distinguished record of professional achievement, academic credentials, and/or leadership in art and design.

Knowledge of art and design education and higher education: Sophisticated understanding of current and emerging developments in the field. Strong proficiency in the development and implementation of programs and curricula, as well as faculty development initiatives. Appreciation for the full spectrum of visual arts, design, literary, and liberal arts, and a commitment to interdisciplinarity. A student-centered approach, prioritizing the individual needs and experiences of students and ensuring the College remains ahead of other institutions in its strategies.

Administrative experience: A history of broad institutional management. Business acumen and solid financial grounding, with a proven track record of effective budgeting and resource allocation, as well as the ability to identify opportunities to enhance operational efficiency and diversify revenue sources. Experience with admissions and enrollment management and student success programs. Familiarity and experience with best practices in assessment and accreditation in higher education; commitment to sustaining a culture of evidence.

Leadership skills: Intellectual vision and strategic thinking abilities. An action-oriented leadership style; decisiveness; evident success in dynamic and nimble organizational settings. A record of effective collaboration within and across an organization; ability to galvanize and inspire a campus community. Demonstrated success in discerning and advocating for faculty concerns and interests while prioritizing the overall needs and mission of the College. Demonstrated commitment to shared governance. Exceptional partnership and negotiation skills; cultural competency; effectiveness fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion at all institutional levels.

Management skills: Outstanding communication and interpersonal skills, enabling strong partnership with internal and external constituents and effective representation of the College. A record of

effective management of large teams, with a focus on mentoring, guiding, inspiring, and empowering faculty and staff with respect and kindness. Exceptional organizational and project management abilities.

Personal qualities: An accessible, collaborative leadership style characterized by integrity, high emotional intelligence, intellectual curiosity, and creativity. Decisiveness, clarity of thought, sense of agency and urgency. Commitment to transparency, accountability, collaboration, and fairness.

Terminal degree or the equivalent.

TO APPLY

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (CVs and letters of interest) should be submitted electronically to:

Anita Tien, Partner and Andy Marshall, Managing Associate
Isaacson, Miller
[Provost Search, Otis College of Art and Design](#)

Otis College of Art and Design is an Equal Opportunity employer, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, veteran status, genetic information, or any other characteristic which may be specified by law or college policy.