

# Position and Candidate Specification

## Williams

Williams College

### President

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Williams College seeks a vigorous, accomplished individual who will both join and lead the College community as our 18<sup>th</sup> President. Working in close collaboration with the faculty, staff, students, and trustees, the President is expected to provide inspiring leadership and sound management. As the academic, intellectual, and administrative leader of the campus, she or he will foster a climate of academic excellence, creativity, and aspiration to ensure that Williams builds on its distinctiveness and embraces new opportunities to continue to define the attributes of a great undergraduate liberal arts education.

Williams today faces exciting challenges and opportunities. In the next five years, nearly 20 percent of the tenure-line faculty will retire; their successors will represent and define the next generation of professors at Williams. Students increasingly hail from a wide range of diverse backgrounds, bringing new energies, perspectives, and needs to the institution. Pedagogy and technology continue to evolve, bringing fundamental changes in the ways students study, learn, and access information. As a critical backdrop to these changes in Williamstown, the volatile national and international environment demands that the community engage in discussion, reflection, and robust debate.

Williams seeks in our next President a person who is energized by these opportunities and the many others that will emerge. It seeks a person who will collaborate with the College community in charting a dynamic future for Williams. She or he will need the ability to lead, the courage to ask the College community to look critically at itself and openly at the world, and the judgment and experience to execute with a steady hand and a collaborative spirit. With experience, strength, and optimism, the 18<sup>th</sup> President of Williams College will lead the community through the essential choices of the next decade.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Support passionately both academic excellence and intellectual curiosity, and engage members of the community in critical discussions and deliberations about education, including curriculum, pedagogy, and emerging fields.
- Continue to drive excellence in the undergraduate program and two graduate programs (art history and development economics).
- Continue and advance the College's commitment to a culture of diversity and inclusion in its intellectual and community life, and across its student, faculty, and staff populations.
- Engage actively in the life of the campus; be visible at important moments of the College as well as at everyday events. Develop relationships with faculty, students, and staff in ways that reinforce a sense of common purpose and shared experiences.
- Ensure that practices in admissions, financial aid, and campus life and services align with the values and ambitions of the College in attracting and supporting the student body.
- Provide national leadership and a respected public voice on issues of higher education and, particularly, on the value of the liberal arts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- Lead, and continue to develop, a strong administrative team and set high expectations for all offices and functions that provide the critical support to the College.
- Reinforce the existing deep and productive ties with the alumni body, and strengthen the ways in which alumni activities and organizations meet the needs and expectations of all alumni populations.
- Maintain and enhance the bonds of mutual interest that knit Williams to the local community and to the institutions that nurture and sustain it.
- Help to complete successfully the \$650 million capital campaign, currently approaching 90 percent of goal.

## **DESIRED OUTCOMES**

- The intellectual energy and excitement of Williams deepens and the community engages broadly in continuing to shape the future of the College as a leader in the liberal arts;
- Faculty, students, and staff from a range of backgrounds and identities seek out Williams, and thrive;
- Williams continues to be a model for the highest principles of shared governance;
- Financial resources continue to grow, ensuring the College can successfully attract, nurture, and support excellent faculty and students;
- Williams is viewed as a thought leader in liberal education; a place willing to articulate what should endure and to explore innovations;
- Top administrative talent continues to find Williams an attractive opportunity, and the department and operations serving the College are exceptional; and
- Alumni from all class years and backgrounds feel a strong bond to the College and the relationships developed there, and engage with the College in a variety of ways.

## IDEAL EXPERIENCE

- A record of distinguished scholarly achievement and a demonstrated appreciation for the values and culture of academia;
- Classroom engagement revealing the soul of a teacher who enjoys and has thrived among intelligent, vibrant undergraduates;
- The opportunity to have demonstrated a clear commitment to diversity and inclusion;
- Impactful and collaborative organizational leadership at a scope and scale commensurate to the College; and
- A track record of effective communication at the highest level.

## CRITICAL LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES

### Leading Change

A major demographic transition of the Williams faculty, an increasingly diverse community, and pressures on higher education in the country provide an unprecedented opportunity for the next President of Williams. The next President will:

- Bring intellectual depth, insatiable curiosity, eagerness for debate, and a deep commitment to collaboration as she or he works with key stakeholders to explore options and adjust course.
- Anticipate trends in higher education, and think boldly with the community about how Williams will enhance current strengths and build new areas of distinctiveness.
- Retain, enhance, develop, and empower an administrative team to achieve measurable positive impact across multiple dimensions including academic vitality, diversity, financial sustainability, and resource growth.

### Inclusive Collaborative Leadership

In an institution with a strong history of genuinely shared governance, the next President of Williams will be an expansive, open-minded leader, ready to listen but also prepared to make decisions. The next President will:

- Embrace the opportunity to collaborate across the institution. Thrive on discussion and debate, listen thoughtfully, and create an environment where all voices are invited and heard.
- Work closely with the many and varied stakeholders, engaging them in the development and articulation of a long-term direction, in setting priorities, and in executing ambitious plans.
- Communicate widely, in a clear, compelling, and timely manner.

## Community Engagement & Building

In the intimate, increasingly diverse community of Williams, the next President will:

- Seek opportunities to engage with all members of the community and participate actively on the campus, in the town, and with the alumni body. Develop strong, authentic relationships and look for opportunities large and small to make and deepen connections.
- Lead efforts to create a culture that supports, embraces, and celebrates differences while seeking opportunities to recognize all that unites.
- Be an inspiring and trusted leader and convener with the ability to drive a sense of inclusiveness and respect – even in the face of controversial issues. Model civil discourse and openness to different points of view, and set high expectations for respectful discussions.

## OTHER PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- A broadly engaged intellect, reflecting genuine curiosity and a lively turn of mind;
- A leadership style that balances personal confidence with the humility to listen, and to credit others;
- Warmth and a vivid sense of humor, most especially when college life tries the patience of presidents;
- An understanding of the global context and the large issues that are alive in the modern world;
- Exceptional verbal and written communication skills; and
- Personal interest in living and working in a close-knit community among the mountains of Western Massachusetts.

## THE SEARCH PROCESS

Williams College is being assisted in this process by Spencer Stuart, and welcomes comments, questions, nominations, or expressions of interest. To submit comments, nominations, or expressions of interest, please send an e-mail with any supporting materials to the confidential address: [williamsresident@spencerstuart.com](mailto:williamsresident@spencerstuart.com)

Beyond meeting fully its legal obligations for non-discrimination, Williams College is committed to building a diverse and inclusive community where members from all backgrounds can live, learn, and thrive.

For additional information about Williams College, please visit: <https://www.williams.edu>.