

Carleton

Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid

Carleton College seeks a creative, strategic, and values-driven leader to serve as its next Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid. This highly visible role offers the extraordinary opportunity to capitalize on Carleton's strong and consistent record of meeting or exceeding enrollment targets and attracting cohorts of extraordinarily talented students from a large and growing pool of strong applicants. The next Vice President will continue this positive momentum while also further elevating the College's visibility among exceptionally talented prospective students from a wide range of backgrounds and honing the ways by which Carleton successfully competes for their attention in an intensely competitive market.

One of the world's premier liberal arts colleges, Carleton is known for its warm, vibrant, and tightly knit campus community. In a rare cultural blend, the College is academically superb and utterly committed to intellectual rigor, but at the same time it is fundamentally welcoming and unpretentious. The Vice President will play a key role in sustaining this remarkably inclusive culture while holding in balance three key elements: 1) Carleton's high academic standards and liberal arts values, 2) its commitment to further increasing enrollment of students from diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, and 3) its guarantee to meet full demonstrated financial need for all admitted students. The Vice President must approach these challenges with the deepest integrity and a nuanced understanding of how national best practices in enrollment can most fruitfully be applied at a highly selective and culturally distinctive liberal arts college.

In addition to providing strategic direction, organizational leadership, and professional mentorship to the highly dedicated staff within the Offices of Admissions and Student Financial Services, the Vice President will report to the College's President and serve as a key member of his cabinet. The Vice President will also have the unusual opportunity to engage directly with the Board of Trustees, alumni, and corporate and foundation leaders alongside the President as part of the current \$400M capital campaign, of which a \$125 M target for need-based financial aid is the centerpiece. Carleton is committed to sending its graduates into the world with an exceptional life-changing education, with abiding loyalty to their alma mater, with tight bonds to faculty and staff mentors and with fellow students—and also with a fraction of the student debt carried by many of their peers. The new Vice President will continue this tradition by finding new and innovative ways to keep Carleton accessible and affordable and to ensure that the College continues to enroll and graduate the most talented students from the most diverse backgrounds.

CARLETON COLLEGE: AN OVERVIEW

Founded as a preparatory school in 1866 and reorganized as a college four years later, Carleton is one of the nation's most prestigious and successful liberal arts colleges. Located in historic Northfield, Minnesota – just 40 miles from the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul – Carleton boasts an outstanding faculty, intelligent and engaged students, and a passionate alumni body. The College is consistently listed among the top ten liberal arts colleges in various national surveys, including a [number one ranking for undergraduate teaching](#).

Carleton offers 32 majors in the arts, humanities, natural sciences/mathematics, and social sciences. Academics are based on a trimester system, allowing students to take more classes across a broader range of subjects. The College teaches students to read perceptively, to write and to speak clearly, and to think analytically, while striving to instill in them a sense of curiosity and intellectual adventure, an awareness of method and purpose in a variety of fields, and a commitment to quality and integrity.

With 2,023 students from 50 states and 35 countries, Carleton's student body is difficult to categorize or stereotype. Affectionately known as "Carls," the students are best described as curious and earnest. They are an intellectually insatiable group that approaches learning with enthusiasm, energy, and a uniquely Carleton brand of playfulness. The class entering in Fall of 2018 will be Carleton's most diverse yet, with 29.6% identifying as U.S. domestic students of color, and another 13.2% as international students. Students enjoy broad-ranging interests and friendships that cross traditional boundaries. Carls are deeply committed to their academic endeavors; they need no encouragement to work hard.

Carleton's world-renowned faculty are deeply committed to student success. The student to faculty ratio is 9:1, with an average class size of 16. Faculty members devote their primary attention to teaching with a clear understanding that active engagement in their chosen academic fields is essential to nurturing their own intellectual vitality and their ability to inspire bright students. At Carleton, students and faculty members work together in a process of intellectual discovery, creating an environment of collaboration and individual growth.

COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

[Steven G. Poskanzer](#) became Carleton's 11th president in August 2010. A scholar of higher education law, Poskanzer's research focuses on issues of academic freedom and how colleges and universities seek to achieve educational goals in a complex legal and policy environment. At each institution where he has worked, Poskanzer has also made a point of teaching students in the classroom.

ACADEMICS

Carleton provides a liberal arts education that transforms the lives of students and prepares them for a rapidly changing world. Instead of training students for one narrow career path that may become obsolete, the Carleton curriculum teaches skills that last a lifetime: critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, effective communication, and the flexibility to adapt to dynamic situations. Excellence in education is about far more than rankings. However, the liberal arts education offered at Carleton is widely considered to be among the best in the world.

[Carleton faculty members](#) are recognized in their fields as leading scholars, scientists, artists and researchers, but teaching is their passion. Carleton classes represent the best of the liberal arts tradition and faculty teach with insight, depth of knowledge, and skill. Furthermore, they extend this teaching commitment beyond the classroom, regularly sharing meals with and opening their homes to their students.

Carleton's academic environment is undeniably rigorous and challenging—but it's also uniquely [supportive](#). Instead of competing with one another, students embrace a spirit of collaboration.

Faculty members are approachable and invested in their students' success, and academic support resources abound for faculty and students alike.

Unlike most colleges, Carleton has three 10-week terms per academic year: Fall, Winter, and Spring. This allows students to focus more completely on their classes and pursue diverse interests. Carleton's [graduation requirements](#) are designed to develop essential habits of mind that transcend traditional academic disciplines. These include writing, research, quantitative reasoning, global understanding, and more.

Carleton gets new students off to a strong start with [Argument and Inquiry](#) seminars. Open only to first-year students, these courses are designed specifically to introduce the liberal arts approach to learning. They help students develop critical reading and writing skills, learn to use research tools, and make persuasive arguments – all while studying engaging subjects.

“Comps” is Carleton shorthand for the comprehensive Senior Integrative Exercise, a capstone academic experience required by every major. Comps is an opportunity to stretch academic wings and explore a topic of the student's choosing in depth with expert guidance from faculty advisers. Many Carleton alumni who go on to earn advanced degrees say that their comps project was outstanding preparation for graduate-level work. Carleton professors [welcome student involvement](#) in their research; indeed, some research projects grow out of conversations between faculty members and students about shared interests. Carleton also offers numerous fellowships and scholarships for research and independent study, helping students pursue scholarly interests during summer and winter breaks.

Carleton is committed to taking education—and Carleton students—far beyond campus boundaries. Carleton's [Off-Campus Study programs](#) and [Center for Community and Civic Engagement](#) create dynamic opportunities for students to learn with and from others in the local community and the wider world. Seventy-six percent of the Class of 2017 participated in at least one off-campus studies program over the course of their Carleton experience. Seventy-one percent of the class of 2016 participated in at least one Academic Civic Engagement course.

Preparing students for successful careers and fulfilling lives after graduation is a key College priority. The intention and plan is to make this a distinctive strength of Carleton. This is reflected in the current capital campaign, with \$54M allocated to developing internships, externships, research, and community-based learning opportunities that students can pursue regardless of their financial status. An expanded Career Center has been tasked with the goal of providing every Carleton student with at least one externship and internship to best prepare them for the realities of today's job market. Carleton also provides stipends to some students who work with faculty members over the summer. The current goal is to double the number of awards, creating 85 endowed summer research stipends.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Because creative and talented people come from many places and have many backgrounds, Carleton College is dedicated to attracting and retaining a diverse faculty, staff, student body, and the Board of Trustees and sees this as among its highest priorities. Carleton's commitment to

diversity will sustain and enrich the learning and living environment that defines the institution and its place in the world.

Further details on the above statement and related initiatives at Carleton can be found on the College's [Community, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion website](#).

LOCATION

Since its founding, Carleton has been closely identified with its vibrant, historic hometown. Located just 40 miles south of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Northfield (pop. 20,000) is home to two excellent liberal arts residential colleges (Carleton and St. Olaf College) and boasts a strong public school system, including the highly-rated Northfield Senior High School. Situated along the banks of the Cannon River, Northfield offers myriad outdoor activities including camping, hiking, fishing and nature trails. The Carleton campus is also home to an 800-acre arboretum. With its 150 years of history, art, culture and education, Northfield offers something for everyone. *Country Living* magazine named Northfield, MN one of the “50 Most Beautiful Small Towns in America.” Carleton is committed to being a good neighbor and community partner to those living in Northfield.

Carleton's proximity to the Twin Cities is an excellent complement to life in Northfield. The Twin Cities offer convenient access to domestic and international transport, major sporting and concert events, a vibrant art scene, and Fortune 500 companies. One of the nation's most liveable metropolitan areas, the Twin Cities consistently rank highly in national surveys for their cultural and artistic offerings, strong economic base, excellent schools, and walkable/bikeable infrastructure.

ABOUT THE OFFICES OF ADMISSIONS AND STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

Each year the Office of Admissions carefully assembles a diverse class of exceptionally talented students who will individually contribute to their classmates' learning experiences, the broader Carleton community, and the world in which they go on to lead productive professional and personal lives. Towards this endeavor, the Office of Admissions works in close partnership with Carleton's senior leadership, faculty, alumni, current and prospective students and their families and plays an integral role in ensuring that Carleton's values, culture and mission are communicated in a way that continues to attract the best students from an increasingly competitive talent pool.

With a \$55M financial aid budget, Carleton College supports the student body's unwavering commitment to learning by ensuring that 100% of demonstrated financial need is met for all admitted students, for all four years. Carleton does not offer merit-based aid, except for a handful of endowed, targeted scholarships. The admissions process at Carleton is need-blind until the set budget is exhausted at which point a need-sensitive policy is applied to a small pool of applicants. Carleton encourages all students to apply, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Carleton has always had robust enrollments of students from middle-income families and purposefully seeks to retain this distinctive strength and characteristic, even as it also seeks to grow its ranks of high-achieving, low-income students. To this end, need-based financial aid is the \$125

Mcruce of the College's ongoing \$400 M capital campaign, in which the Vice President will have the opportunity to participate alongside the President.

ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT AND DEAN OF ADMISSIONS AND FINANCIAL AID

The Vice President provides the overall strategic direction for Carleton's pursuit of the most academically talented, creative, intellectual, diverse, community and globally-minded students in the nation and from around the world. Overseeing a staff of 26 and a division budget of \$1.6M, the Vice President ensures that the academic quality, diversity, and selectivity of incoming classes is sustained or improved year after year, all while working within Carleton's financial aid budget.

The new Vice President will be responsible for assessing and honing Carleton's admissions and financial aid practices, in partnership with colleagues within the offices and across campus and in keeping with the College's established priorities and values. In addition, the Vice President must also be a cogent, credible, and persuasive advocate for the work of the admissions and financial aid offices with a wide range of constituencies, both on and off campus. While recruitment at Carleton is a college-wide effort in which many offices and individuals contribute critical support, the faculty are of particular importance. As a liberal arts college, Carleton cares deeply whether its faculty feel that successive classes of incoming students are of consistently high academic quality, meaningfully diverse, and a strong cultural match. The Vice President must also connect effectively with Carleton's Board of Trustees and ensure that the division's strategic direction and operational practices are aligned with the College's overall mission and values. Other important groups with which the Vice President will interact include are the [Admission and Financial Aid Committee](#), a college-wide body dedicated to issues and policies concerning admissions and financial aid, and the Alumni Association admissions volunteers, who strive to assure the character, quality, and diversity of the student body by encouraging bright, talented students to apply to Carleton. These interactions are, of course, in addition to the Vice President's daily collaborations with students, staff, faculty and other external relationships.

Housed in the newly renovated historic [Scoville Building](#) as of 2017, the admissions and financial aid personnel includes: four supervising staff, eight admissions counseling staff, eight operations support staff, and six financial aid staff. The Vice President oversees both admissions and financial aid and is ultimately responsible for delivering the optimal class in relation to the College's values and aspirations. Current Vice President Paul Thiboutot has announced his plans to retire in Spring 2019 and leaves a legacy of three decades of remarkable success and personal credibility upon which his successor can build.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Having enjoyed many years of impressive and consistent enrollment success, Carleton seeks a Vice President who will continue its positive trajectory and who shares the College's liberal arts values. The new Vice President must have a deep understanding of how national best practices in admissions and financial aid inform enrollment strategies at highly selective institutions like Carleton. The new leader will also play a critical role in addressing the following opportunities and challenges:

Designing and implementing a transparent and comprehensive strategy for Carleton's continued enrollment success. As a forward-thinking leader, the Vice President will work collaboratively with campus leadership and other key constituencies to craft guiding strategies and internal processes for admissions and financial aid in keeping with Carleton's liberal arts values and institutional priorities. Given the College's significant, but not unlimited, financial resources and its desire to continue recruiting excellent, diverse students in a highly competitive market, the Vice President will need to draw upon national best practices to optimize Carleton's results. To that end, the Vice President will analyze the College's current marketing, recruitment, admission, enrollment and financial aid practices and policies seeking greater efficiencies and better outcomes, without losing sight of Carleton's bedrock values and goals.

- **Harnessing the power of data to drive decision-making and ensure optimal allocation of resources.** To achieve the College's desired goals of continued competitiveness, identifying and attracting exceptional students who will succeed at Carleton, yielding a strong, diverse class of future Carls, and working within a generous but finite financial aid budget, the Vice President will establish team-wide protocols for using data to set and refine strategy and process. Optimizing the technical capabilities of [Slate](#) and implementing best practices for highly selective institutions, the Vice President will work closely with Institutional Research and the budget office in harnessing data to inform key decisions regarding expanded geographical recruitment reach, targeting of prospective students, tracking of student success, communication platforms and messages, optimal financial aid packaging and other activities. The Vice President will also proactively monitor and assess results and modify approaches as needed.
- **Partnering across stakeholder groups to ensure that future classes of Carls continue to grow in diversity of experience, socioeconomic status, background, and thought.** Carleton draws upon the energy and expertise of a wide range of groups both on campus and off campus to recruit a strong, diverse body of students who will thrive in the Carleton community. As a member of the [American Talent Initiative](#), and working closely with external partners including [QuestBridge](#), [The Posse Foundation](#), and [College Horizons](#), Carleton will continue its momentum of recruiting and retaining talented underrepresented students within a sustainable financial model. Carleton also proudly participates in the [Yellow Ribbon](#) program offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and has established a partnership with the Service to Schools program. The Vice President will lead strategies toward maintaining a balanced socioeconomic profile with strong middle-income representation within each incoming class, which has long been a priority at Carleton.
- **Ensuring that Carleton effectively communicates its impact and value to undergraduate students, parents, and key influencers through clear, creative, and consistent marketing and outreach.** In collaboration with the Office of Marketing and Communications, the Vice President will skillfully lead and evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to increase Carleton's national and international visibility among prospective students. In addition to strengthening relationships with college counselors at targeted high schools, the admissions marketing strategy will focus on reaching students who may not be aware of or traditionally be acculturated to consider a college like Carleton. Developing a strong social media presence, continuing to draw upon alumni, faculty, and current

students as recruiting resources, and experimenting with new platforms and strategies for reaching today's students might all be part of the emerging strategy. And in exploring these new potential forms of outreach, the Vice President will ensure that all interactions and messages reflect Carleton's unique culture and core values with consistency and integrity.

- **Mentoring, developing, and retaining the exceptional and committed staff within the Offices of Admissions and Financial Aid.** The Vice President will lead a dedicated staff of 26, cultivating the skills of each individual staff member, building on their expertise, and encouraging their professional development through conferences and other forms of continuing education. An approachable and highly skilled people manager, the Vice President will continue to cultivate an atmosphere of collaboration and collegiality, both within the offices and across campus.

DESIRED QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will embody the particular qualities and experiences that have made Carleton a distinctive community and be personally and professionally committed to the work of further enhancing the quality and diversity and inclusivity of the campus. Additional desired characteristics include:

- An energetic commitment to the value of a liberal arts education and an ability to persuasively articulate its value and meaning for today's students and parents;
- A keen understanding of the national landscape and best practices in admissions and financial aid for highly selective liberal arts colleges, and demonstrated success in translating them into appropriate strategic objectives;
- A proven track record of skillfully and thoughtfully using data to inform decision making across a wide range of areas, from the tactical to the strategic; as well as the ability to persuasively and clearly present both quantitative and qualitative information to a wide range of audiences, including the faculty, administrative colleagues, the Board of Trustees, and others;
- Empathetic understanding of how today's talented students from backgrounds typically underrepresented at top liberal arts colleges may view the college admissions process as well as practical experience developing innovative ways to identify, engage, and enroll them—and help them flourish as students;
- A willingness to serve as a generous and open-minded member of the President's Cabinet and engage in productive discussions on a wide range of campus issues with senior-level colleagues;
- Exceptionally strong interpersonal and communication skills, both one-on-one and with larger groups;
- An open and transparent management style, and a readiness to listen closely to the concerns of staff at all levels and from all backgrounds;

- Strong budget management skills that underscore Carleton's ongoing commitment to making attendance financially accessible to all admitted students;
- The ability to foster collaboration across departments and divisions and develop new relationships both internally and externally;
- An enthusiastic willingness to travel on behalf of admissions priorities as well as with the college president, engaging alumni and strengthening external relationships to achieve campaign goals;
- A desire to develop talent in others, with a management style that fosters collaboration, entrepreneurial thinking, and strong performance around clearly communicated, metrics-driven goals;
- Knowledge of effective social media and marketing strategies to increase the awareness of Carleton and an appreciation of its value proposition among a wider range of students and families; and,
- A lively sense of humor, the ability to find the joy in hard work, and a low-ego approach to leadership — all partnered with a powerful desire to champion Carleton's status as one of the nation's very best liberal arts colleges more boldly and more broadly than ever before.

CONTACT

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Carleton College is committed to attracting and retaining a diverse group of faculty and staff and offers a comprehensive benefits package. Carleton College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, marital status, veteran status, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, status with regard to public assistance, disability, or age in providing employment or access to its educational facilities and activities.