

Emerson

COLLEGE

Vice President for Administration and Finance

Emerson College invites applications and nominations for the position of Vice President for Administration and Finance (VPAF).

Emerson College: Overview

Emerson College is nationally and internationally recognized as the premier institution of higher learning devoted to communications, the arts, and the liberal arts. Over the years, the College has evolved from a small New England school of oratory to a multifaceted institution with campuses in Boston, Los Angeles and the Netherlands and degree programs in Boston, Paris and Lugano, Switzerland. The College has also established partnerships with various international institutions, giving the school a presence in six of the world's seven continents.

While Emerson remains committed to its historic mission as a specialized academic institution, its curriculum reflects the emergence of interdisciplinary study as a mode for teaching and learning, and affirms new directions for the fields of the arts, communications and the liberal arts. Emerson is internationally recognized in its fields of specialization, which include: communication studies; marketing communication; journalism; communication sciences and disorders; visual and media arts; the performing arts; and writing, literature and publishing.

Led by President Lee Pelton, Emerson is home to 3,800 undergraduate students and over 700 graduate students representing 50 states and more than 55 countries. The students are independent minds from diverse backgrounds who develop their own personal voice and expertise in professions that profoundly shape society and culture in the 21st century. The 503 full-time and part-time faculty members teach 26 undergraduate majors and 41 minors in the communication and arts discipline and 18 graduate programs offered in flexible formats.

History

Established in 1880, Emerson College is named for its founding president, [Charles Wesley Emerson](#), an orator, preacher, and teacher. Throughout its history, Emerson has shown the capacity to respond to the changing educational demands within communication and the arts. It was the first college in New England to establish an [educational FM radio station](#) (WERS, 1949), now repeatedly identified in The Princeton Review as the number one student-run college radio station in the country. It was also among the first colleges in the nation to establish a program in [children's theater](#) (1919) and one of the first colleges to offer undergraduate programs in [broadcasting](#) (1937).

Today, the College continues to offer its students inspiring and innovative learning experiences in an environment that fosters connection and collaboration. The College's academic reputation is on the rise nationally and internationally, enabling its programs to become increasingly competitive and selective. Some highlights include:

- *US News & World Report* ranked Emerson #6 in its category, a ranking that has steadily climbed from #14 in 2012.
- Forbes ranks Emerson as the 16th most entrepreneurial college in the U.S.
- The *Hollywood Reporter* ranked Emerson in the top 10 of its list of “The Top 25 American Film Schools.”
- College Factual, a ranking and college search company, ranked Emerson #1 for Journalism, #7 for Film, Video and Photographic Arts, and #15 for Marketing.
- Emerson College Polling – which has grown from three students in 2012 to more than 400 – was named the second most accurate pollster by well-regarded political website [FiveThirtyEight](#). Media outlets and candidates increasingly relied on Emerson Polling during the recent historic midterm election.
- In the last seven years, Emerson’s applications have more than doubled from 7,500 to over 15,000 and the acceptance rate has improved from 47% to 31%.
- Undergraduate students come from almost all 50 states, with the largest fraction of students coming from California.
- 16% of undergraduate students enrolled in 2018 were international.
- In 2016, Moody’s ranked Emerson in the top quartile of revenue producing universities.

Diversity and Inclusive Excellence

Emerson College is committed to a living, learning, and working environment where all members of the community are valued and respected. The College holds a fundamental belief that inclusive and academic excellence is not possible without full engagement with diversity across all areas of the institution. In recent years, the [Emerson 360 Climate Surveys](#) have provided critical insights from students and staff that support the existence of healthy and inclusive work and educational environment.

The College’s Social Justice Center works to uplift and support individuals and communities and is a key contributor to the College’s ongoing diversity efforts and also serves as a vehicle through which students and staff can engage in dialogue and actions connected to society’s most pressing issues. The work of the Social Justice Center is centered around intersecting practice areas: Radical Care & Advocacy; Community Knowing and Sharing; and, Access & Equity. In his inaugural speech in 2012, [President Lee Pelton](#) affirmed his priority to redoubling Emerson’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. Within the first days of his presidency, he announced the launch of a new initiative for [Inclusive Excellence \(IE\) at Emerson](#). The initiative includes an [IE Action Plan](#) created by the Social Justice Center that helps Emerson College achieve measurable outcomes across a series of established goals

Housed within the Social Justice Center is the [Elma Lewis Center](#) for Civic Engagement, Learning and Research. The mission of the Center is to inspire and sustain civic engagement at the College, and to uplift communities by bringing Emerson’s strengths in communication and the arts to bear in supporting social change.

Faculty and Staff

The [faculty](#) represent the core of the Emerson educational experience and typically serve as both teachers and professional mentors to their students. The College employs 503 full-time and part-time faculty members across three campuses. The faculty to undergraduate student ratio is 1 to 13. Upper-level classes generally enroll fewer students, which allows for individualized teaching and personal interaction.

Emerson also employs more than 600 talented and dedicated staff to support the teaching mission of the College.

Students and Student Life

The distinctive nature of an Emerson education – focused on communications, the arts and liberal arts – attracts students who are creative, vibrant, and deeply engaged with their work, with their campus, and with the world around them. Emerson students are doers and storytellers who bring passion and extraordinary commitment to their academics and their craft. It's not unusual to find students shooting a film, writing and producing a play, or launching a website outside of class time, simply because they want to do so.

With the College's growing national and international reputation, applications have increased 205% since 2012. Emerson enrolls approximately 3,800 full-time undergraduate students and over 700 full and part time graduate students from all 50 states and more than 55 countries. At the undergraduate level, the College offers a BA, BFA, BS and a joint BA/MA. There are 26 undergraduate majors and 41 minors. At the graduate level, an MA, MFA, MS and a joint MA/MFA are offered in 13 graduate programs. There are also four certificate courses in the areas of: data analytics for marketing; digital content management; digital marketing; and, public relations.

The class of 2022 is more diverse than any previous class: 16% of new first time students are the first in their families to go to college; 20% of the transfer students are first-generation college students; international enrollment (representing 26 countries) is up 54% over last fall for the new first-time class (145 students compared to 94 last year); 16% of new first-time students are international, which is the highest ever; and 27% of the incoming new first-time class are domestic students of color. Together, 43% of the new first-time students bring diversity to Emerson. The Class of 2022 is also the most competitive; the incoming class had the highest ever high school GPA at 3.72.

Emerson has more than [90 student organizations](#) centered on a variety of interests and activities: LGBTQ students and allies; multiculturalism; Greek fraternities and sororities; performance clubs; political, service, and social advocacy; department majors; spiritual organizations; and student governance and council. Students are also highly active in co-curricular activities, internships, and class projects. Emerson has [14 varsity sports teams](#) and is a member of the New England Women's and Men's Athletic Conference (NEWMAC).

Emerson's [student body](#) is approximately 63% female and 37% male. The College has a strong presence of self-identified LGBTQ students and allies and is proud to have been named the number one college for LGBTQ friendliness by the Princeton Review.

Academic Structure

The College consists of seven departments that revolve around the focus on arts and communication. They include: Communication Sciences and Disorders; Journalism; Marketing Communication; Communication Studies; Visual and Media Arts; Performing Arts; and Writing, Literature, and Publishing. These departments offer a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs. Two of the College's graduate programs (Writing, Literature, and Publishing; and Communication Sciences and Disorders) are consistently rated among the best in the country by various organizations. The program in Visual and Media Arts is among the most competitive in the country. The College also includes the Institute for Liberal Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies that both complements and supports the major degree programs.

Accreditation

Emerson is a private, independent, nonprofit college fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools & Colleges as authorized by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Emerson is also accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (for its master's degree in communication disorders), and the Massachusetts Department of Education (for its education preparation programs in the Departments of Communication Sciences and Disorders and Performing Arts).

Strategic Plan

Emerson aspires to be the global hub for higher education in the arts, communication and liberal arts. The College is an intellectual and creative community in which teaching, learning, scholarship, and creative works are accomplished at the highest possible levels and in ways that manifest their values. As such, the College's immediate future involves a major investment in the core academic enterprise, renovating existing facilities to create a more modern, cohesive campus as well as significant investments in innovative and distinctive programs.

These efforts support and advance the five goals outlined in Emerson's [strategic plan](#):

- Academic Excellence
- Civic Engagement
- Internationalization and Global Engagement
- Innovation
- Financial Strength

Financial Overview

Emerson is committed to the responsible use of resources (human, financial, and physical facilities); increasing financial resources through revenue-generating activities and enhanced fundraising; attracting and retaining faculty and staff; and developing long-term plans for the renewal and replacement of its physical plant and technology infrastructure.

The College's total gross assets are more than \$1B and its net assets increased from \$405M to \$450M. The College's endowment increased by \$10.6M to \$171M due to investment returns, gifts, and appropriations from the College.

Emerson invests its funds in a diversified portfolio designed to produce growth and income while safeguarding principal. The portfolio is invested with 14 different managers in accordance with restrictions imposed by donors or by board-mandated policy.

The College provides financial aid programs to assist applicants who do not possess financial resources to cover educational expenses. Approximately 70% of the students enrolled at the College receive some form of financial assistance. Awards typically combine grants and scholarships, loans, and College work-study. During the academic year 2018-2019, students received \$44M through financial aid programs. The College's weighted discount rate for FY18 was 24%.

Emerson's ability to achieve its mission is rooted in philanthropy. Over the past decade, the College has received support from generous alumni, parents, friends, through an increasing culture of philanthropy. The College's [Division of Institutional Advancement](#) is responsible for the Annual Fund, Major Gifts, Donor Relations, Corporate/Foundation Relations, Planned Giving, and Alumni/Parent Relations. The College's total philanthropic support from outright cash, pledges, stock and bequests from individuals, private and foundation grants for the fiscal year was nearly \$10M.

Emerson Leadership

[Dr. Lee Pelton](#) is the 12th president of Emerson College in Boston. He is an internationally known speaker and writer on the value of a liberal education and the importance of leadership development, civic engagement, and diversity and inclusion in higher education. Pelton has outlined a bold vision for Emerson as the global hub for arts, communication, and the liberal arts. He is a well-respected thought and innovation leader, recognized in *Boston Business Journal*, "50 Most Powerful Leaders in Boston" (October, 2018); *Boston Magazine's* list of "100 Most Influential People in Boston" (May 2018); "The 21 Most Powerful People in Boston Business" (May 2017) and its list of "75 Bold Thinkers Who Are Shaping Our City and the World" (May 2014). Pelton began his academic career at Harvard University, where he earned a PhD in English literature. After Harvard, Pelton served as dean of the college at Colgate University and Dartmouth College and was president at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon for 13 years.

Role of the Vice President for Administration and Finance

Reporting to the President, and with four direct reports and a team of nearly 20 people, the Vice President for Administration and Finance (VPAF) serves as the chief financial officer of the College and oversees Finance and Accounting, Procurement, Facilities, Campus Services, Construction, and Real Estate and Human Resources. The Treasury function for the College is held by a member of the Board. The VPAF manages the College's budget as well as its \$171M endowment. The new VPAF will oversee the campus master plan and will work closely with the Board of Trustees' Executive, Audit, Finance, Investment, and Facilities committees.

The VPAF will play a key role in implementing strategic priorities and managing related finances. In recent years, the College has invested heavily in capital, including acquisitions of real estate contiguous to the campus and significant renovations. The incoming VPAF must have experience or knowledge of managing complex real estate transactions and financing in a vibrant urban setting.

The VPAF is responsible for providing leadership and vision for the primary financial and administrative operations of the College and has oversight of annual budget preparation, financial reports, and summaries and forecasts for business growth and the general economic outlook.

Reporting directly to the VPAF are the: Associate Vice President of Finance; Senior Associate Vice President for Real Estate (vacant); Senior Associate Vice President of Human Resources; and, Associate Vice President of Financial Business Services.

This is a time of great momentum for Emerson, as it continues to strengthen its position as one of the leading institutions of higher education in arts, communications and liberal arts. As the College continues on its clear, upward trajectory under the leadership of President Pelton, the VPAF will play an integral role in ensuring its continued financial success.

The next VPAF will bring a wide breadth of experience successfully managing finance and administrative functions for a complex organization.

Opportunities for the next Vice President for Administration and Finance include:

Implementation of the new strategic plan:

Emerson continuously seeks new strategies to offer the best possible student experience as well as the highest level of support for all faculty and staff members in their endeavors. To that end, the VPAF will play a significant role in implementing initiatives that have emerged through a recent strategic planning process, with particular focus on improving the overall financial position of the College. As Emerson continues to strengthen its reputation as a leading institution, the VPAF will develop strategic initiatives to help the College meet its goal of continuing to foster a diverse, inclusive learning environment, while ensuring a sustainable financial future

Oversight of multiple capital projects:

Emerson is currently executing a number of capital projects. The VPAF will ensure that capital projects are planned well and executed efficiently with minimal disruption to the day-to-day operations of the College. The VPAF will be a strategic leader on the financial and operational dimensions of capital projects and will understand and be able to report to College constituents on the plans, progress, and funding for new projects. Successful completion of these projects will also require continued strengthening of relationships with community leaders and government officials.

Management in a transparent environment:

The VPAF must be an excellent communicator who has the capacity to articulate fiscal and budget narratives to several diverse groups and organizations on and off campus. Working in collaboration with the senior leadership team, the VPAF will be instrumental in helping the College make informed and thoughtful financial decisions, and will educate community members on the thought process behind these decisions. In addition to traditional responsibilities, the VPAF will be expected to sustain the high degree of trust and transparency the community has come to expect through open, respectful dialogue with faculty, administrators, the Board of Trustees, students, staff, alumni, donors, and members of the local community.

Management of a diverse and growing portfolio of assets:

Emerson has continued to grow its portfolio of assets through the acquisition of real estate. While Emerson is a highly leveraged, tuition-dependent institution, the College maintains a strong revenue base and has begun to identify innovative ways to drive additional revenue streams. Through new degree programs, partnerships and alliances, global portals, and entrepreneurial ventures, the College continues to explore strategies designed to expand and diversify its

portfolio. The College would benefit from an innovative and creative finance professional to work in concert with a President who enjoys innovative planning and thinking.

Identification of opportunities for greater financial stability within the context of multiple urban campuses:

While Emerson's central location in Boston's Theatre District is a distinct advantage for the College, there are and will continue to be associated considerations. With five theaters, a leading speech and audiology clinic, a professional theater company, a radio station, and world-class sound stage, Emerson is positioned to create the cultural capital of Boston. The VPAF will explore creative strategies and partnerships with the Boston community to coalesce the boundaries between campus and the surrounding neighborhood.

Providing high-level support for all of the functions and departments that fall under Administration and Finance:

Joining the ranks of a senior team with diverse skills and experiences, the VPAF will promote a culture of customer service, innovation, and quality; provide administrative leadership; and ensure the continued development of the team that reports to this position. The VPAF will be especially focused on the Human Resources department as the College prepares to launch a new HRIS, moving from Banner to Workday. The VPAF will oversee the system migration at a high level, and will ensure that the necessary resources are in place to support the transition. As the higher education landscape continues to evolve, the College will need to ensure the attraction and retention of a strong administrative team along with the opportunity for professional development, as needed.

Qualification and Characteristics:

Emerson seeks a Vice President for Administration and Finance with a track record of successful and progressively responsible senior leadership in finance and administration. The successful candidate will have outstanding financial, human resources, and administrative management skills; experience in real estate development and financing; endowment management; a record of building and leading diverse teams; and a demonstrated commitment to the advancement of an innovative and increasingly global institution devoted to the arts, communication, and the liberal arts. Candidates must demonstrate a successful track record of communicating effectively with a range of internal and external constituencies, and clear enthusiasm to be an active participant in a thriving academic community. The next VPAF will have the opportunity to manage a diverse portfolio, as well as major capital projects that are currently underway and on the horizon.

The VPAF will possess many of the following qualities:

- A record of stellar strategic leadership in financial and business management;
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills;
- An ability to provide leadership for capital project budget development and to manage projects successfully within time and resource constraints;
- Superior understanding of finance, business, and administrative operations in institutions of higher education or other organizations of similar size and complexity;
- Proven ability to oversee the preparation and monitoring of budgets and financial projections;
- Proven planning skills with a vision towards long-term sustainability;
- The ability to work successfully in a highly collaborative organization;

- A track record of successfully developing, managing, and mentoring staff, and proven skills in building relationships with faculty, professional staff, and Board members;
- The political skill to strengthen relationships with community stakeholders in ways that build trust and promote mutual benefit;
- Outstanding listening skills;
- Appreciation for change management;
- An ability to be strategic, cool-headed and pragmatic;
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a propensity for finding creative solutions to complex challenges;
- A high level of integrity and discretion; and,
- A strong work ethic, high energy, and action orientation.

A baccalaureate degree is required and an advanced degree and/or comparable years of relevant experience in the field are preferred. Experience from other sectors, in addition to higher education, is welcomed.

Contact

Please send nominations, applications, and queries in confidence and electronically to:

Shelly Storbeck, Managing Partner
Ethan Dubow, Principal
Tammarah Townes, Managing Associate
Storbeck/Pimentel & Associates, LP
EmersonVPAF@storbecksearch.com

Diversity and inclusion are core values for Emerson College. The successful candidate must have the ability to work effectively with faculty, students, and staff from diverse backgrounds. Members of historically under-represented groups are encouraged to apply. Emerson College is an Equal Opportunity Employer that encourages diversity in its workplace.