



## Vice President for Student Life

Rhodes College seeks an experienced, strategic, and forward-looking leader for the position of Vice President for Student Life. Reporting to President Marjorie Hass, the Vice President will partner with students, faculty, staff, and administrators to design and implement a holistic vision for the student experience at Rhodes that will inform both high-level strategy and day-to-day operations. Drawing upon a nuanced understanding of national best practices and student development theory, the Vice President will lead the way in crafting policies, guidelines, and approaches that are proactive, transparent, and thoughtfully tailored to Rhodes's mission and needs.

As a residential liberal arts college in the heart of Memphis, Rhodes is defined by its talented students, dedicated teacher-scholar faculty, rigorous curriculum, and a deep commitment to civic engagement. Its next Vice President must share these values and be eager to partner with students, faculty, and others in ensuring that Rhodes delivers on its promise of cultivating within its graduates a life-long passion for learning, a compassion for others, and the ability to translate academic study and personal concern into effective leadership and action in their communities and the world.

### INTRODUCTION

Rhodes College aspires to graduate students with a life-long passion for learning, a compassion for others, and the ability to translate academic study and personal concern into effective leadership and action in their communities and the world. Rhodes has built a unique place for itself among the nation's top liberal arts colleges by combining a powerful commitment to the liberal arts with unusually rich connections to the surrounding City of Memphis, Tennessee. Rhodes has twice been named "The #1 Most Service-Oriented College in the United States" by *Newsweek*, and civic engagement is integrated into the curriculum for all students. Recently, Rhodes was included in the new Princeton Review college guide, *Colleges that Create Futures: 50 Colleges that Launch Careers by Going Beyond the Classroom*.

Recently named by the Princeton Review as America's most beautiful college campus, Rhodes also ranks #51 among the nation's top liberal arts colleges by *U.S. News and World Report*. The college is one of 40 institutions in the quintessential guidebook, *Colleges That Change Lives*, and is included on the Princeton Review's lists of "Colleges that Create Futures" and "Colleges that Pay You Back." Rhodes enrolls 2,036 students and has an endowment of \$360 million. The Rhodes student experience is driven by intellectual engagement, service to others, and honor. The Honor System, one of the oldest student-run systems in the country, is a valued and vibrant tradition at Rhodes and all incoming students sign a pledge affirming their commitment to the three components of the System — the Honor Code, the Social Regulations Code, and the Rhodes Commitment to Diversity.

## HISTORY

Rhodes College was founded in 1848 in Clarksville, Tennessee, and, for many years, it was closely affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. In 1925, President Charles Diehl led the move to the present campus in Memphis, Tennessee, where, in 1945, the college became known as Southwestern at Memphis.

Since 1984, when the College adopted the name Rhodes College to honor former College president Peyton Nalle Rhodes, the institution has grown beyond regional recognition to a nationally ranked liberal arts college that attracts students and faculty from far beyond the Mid-South region, with 70% of students from out of state.

## CITY OF MEMPHIS

Rhodes sits in the heart of Memphis, a metropolitan area of 1.2 million people, a city with boundless creativity where passion, ideals, cultures, and opportunity converge in authentic ways. The city, on the Mississippi River, is filled with unexpected combinations: global commerce and local start-ups, high culture and outdoor adventure, soul food and haute cuisine, world-class infrastructure and spectacular green-and blue-ways, rich heritage and forward thinking, and, of course, all the many forms of music born and still being recorded here, which create a wholly original Memphis sound.

Home to several Fortune 500 companies and a burgeoning film industry, Memphis is a vibrant city with numerous museums chronicling its rich history, among them, the National Civil Rights Museum, a cherished college partner and catalyst for the recent year-long MLK50 Commemoration. The city boasts a vast park system, a green line, and Shelby Farms, an urban green space of 4500 acres, unrivaled in both size and potential. With five major expressways, numerous freight railroads, and the world's second largest cargo operation in Memphis International Airport, the city serves as a major American transportation hub.

The Rhodes community is deeply committed to ensuring continued growth and development in the City of Memphis. Rhodes' unique position as one of few liberal arts colleges in an urban setting provides an array of opportunities for students and alumni to engage with and make meaningful contributions to Memphis. The city's Medical District and the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital are key partners in providing such opportunities.

## THE HONOR SYSTEM

The Rhodes Honor System, one of the longest standing honor systems in the country, consists of the Honor Code, the Social Regulations Code, and the Rhodes Commitment to Diversity. The objective of the Honor System is to foster the spiritual growth, moral fortitude, and intellectual development of the individual student. All incoming students sign a pledge at the beginning of each school year affirming their commitment to the three components of the Honor System. Students are personally responsible for their work, their actions, and their word, and all students pledge to uphold the System in their daily lives and to report cases of violation to the appropriate student governing bodies.

The Honor System is a tradition which has been valued by the Rhodes community for more than a century. It allows the fullest possible expression of individual life in harmony with community life,

and it is a principle which members of the Rhodes community believe to be fundamental in ethical life during and after college.

## LEADERSHIP

Dr. Marjorie Hass is a nationally recognized advocate for the value of a liberal arts education who began her tenure as the 20th president of Rhodes College in July of 2017. Under her leadership, Rhodes College has been recognized for its quality, value, and academic rigor.

Just six months after arriving in Memphis, the USA Today Network-Tennessee named Dr. Hass one of the 18 Tennesseans to watch in 2018. In her first year as president Dr. Hass secured a transformational gift to the Lynn & Henry Turley Memphis Center that more than doubles the College's investment in community partnerships, she supervised the launch of a new master's degree in urban education, and she began an inclusive strategic planning process that will chart the College's course for the next decade.

Dr. Hass serves as a board member of the Association of American Colleges & Universities and former chair of the board of directors of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. She is an active member of the Tennessee Independent Colleges & Universities Association. She also serves as a member of the NCAA Committee on Women's Athletics.

Leadership development is a key priority for Dr. Hass. She serves as a mentor for emerging leaders in higher education and an advocate for diversity and inclusion. Dr. Hass has participated in several faculty development seminars since coming to Rhodes.

Dr. Hass began her career as a professor of philosophy. Her teaching and research focused on philosophy of language, philosophy of logic, and feminist philosophy. She spent more than 16 years as a member of the faculty at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA. Dr. Hass was appointed provost in 2005, a position she held until she was named president of Austin College in 2009. Dr. Hass holds a bachelor's, master's and doctoral degree in philosophy from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

With the arrival of President Marjorie Hass in July 2017, Rhodes College seized the opportunity to assess its current environment and imagine a future that takes advantage of new opportunities to strengthen its position in the national landscape and Memphis.

To that end, Dr. Hass challenged the campus to consider how it will build on the College's academic and financial strengths in order to serve the diverse and talented students of the future. While the planning is still very much in process, several core themes have emerged. These include:

- Commitment to Rhodes' core mission as a residential, liberal arts college.
- Commitment to place, including Rhodes' campus, the vibrant city of Memphis, and the community's responsibilities as global citizens.
- Preparing for the talented students of tomorrow so that the College can best serve an increasingly diverse and engaged student body.

- Developing new revenue streams in order to reduce tuition pressure on families.
- Enhancing pathways from college to career to assist students in translating their academic learning into meaningful lives of leadership and service.

The planning process has identified a range of ways in which the above themes could be realized and applied through concrete actions and initiatives. The viability of these themes and applications are currently being assessed so decisions can be made about priorities and The Board of Trustees is expected to vote on the completed plan in the fall of 2019.

## ACADEMICS

The classroom experience at Rhodes is intimate and rigorous. Rhodes values the engaging dialogue that arises when students and professors work together to investigate questions and problems they care about. In this environment, students are expected to formulate and articulate big ideas and contribute in major ways to the critical discussions and debates that take place in classrooms and laboratories, and the 10:1 student to faculty ratio makes this possible. Rhodes seamlessly integrates high impact experiences such as internships, study abroad, and faculty-mentored student research with a traditional liberal arts education, and the Foundations Curriculum gives students the freedom to pursue their academic interests while developing critical-thinking skills that will serve them throughout their lives. Rhodes has hosted a Phi Beta Kappa chapter on campus since 1949.

Through 18 academic departments and 13 interdisciplinary programs, Rhodes offers more than 50 majors, interdisciplinary majors, and minors. The College provides pre-professional advising for students who plan to work in the health professions, law, engineering, ministry, and education, and has a partnership with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital to provide extraordinary research opportunities for qualified students. Rhodes offers two graduate degree programs: the Master of Science in Accounting and the Master of Arts in Urban Education.

More than 70 percent of Rhodes students supplement their study on campus with international study. The Buckman Center for International Education provides study abroad advising and financial aid and serves as the first point of contact for international students studying at Rhodes.

## STUDENTS

Rhodes is home to a diverse group of approximately 2,036 students who represent 46 states (plus D.C.) and 41 countries. The Class of 2022 includes 32% students of color from the United States and 10% international students. Approximately 70% of Rhodes students live on campus, and the student body has a 44:56 male to female ratio.

Rhodes students are intellectually curious and deeply engaged in academic and extracurricular activities. Students with a personal commitment to service are drawn to Rhodes and to the many opportunities to integrate themselves into the greater Memphis community, and more than 80% of students participate in service activities. Rhodes actively recruits students who are excited to be part of the city, seeking opportunities to serve Memphis in ways that will benefit all its residents, and the College was ranked #1 on *Newsweek's* list of "Most Service-Oriented" colleges two years in a row. In 2017, Rhodes students volunteered 394,758 hours of service to the community.

In addition to the multitude of service opportunities, there are more than 100 student clubs and organizations available on campus, including academic clubs, performing arts groups, cultural and political organizations, fraternities and sororities, student governance groups, religious organizations, publications, and club sports. There are 23 NCAA men's and women's athletic teams and student athletes comprise approximately 30% of the student body. The athletics program has had tremendous success both at the conference and national levels.

## **FACULTY**

Rhodes faculty members represent the best of the scholar-teacher model that is so essential to a liberal arts education. Virtually all of the approximately 195 full-time faculty hold the highest degrees in their respective fields and contribute regularly to the scholarship of their disciplines. Many have been recognized for their excellence with grants from the NSF, NIH, NEH, and the Mellon Foundation, Fulbright awards, and numerous other honors including a recent faculty invitation to join the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations. Rhodes honors faculty accomplishment through institutional awards for teaching, scholarship, and service and supports the ongoing development of the faculty through such programs as the Hill Grant for curricular innovation, the Faculty Development Endowment Grants for faculty scholarship, and an extensive mentorship program for incoming faculty. Since the mid-1980's, Rhodes has offered a two-year William Randolph Hearst Post-Doctoral Fellowship for aspiring faculty from underrepresented minority groups in higher education. Rhodes is committed to sustaining an environment in which faculty can thrive in their careers and make substantial contributions to the College community and their scholarly communities. In summary, Rhodes faculty exhibit an unusual combination of superior teaching skills and significant involvement and accomplishments in scholarship.

## **STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION**

Rhodes employs just over 300 exceptionally dedicated administrators and staff who join the faculty in serving the educational mission of the college and cultivating the character of its students. Staff members are an integral part of the community. Continuing to value the contributions of staff members at all levels of the College is essential to maintaining the sense of common purpose, civility, and respect within the community. Rhodes is proud to recognize particularly outstanding staff contributions at its annual Service Recognition program which includes recognition for years of service and four awards for outstanding staff.

## **CAMPUS AND FACILITIES**

Rhodes' Collegiate Gothic campus, identified by The Princeton Review as the most beautiful campus in the United States, sits on a 123-acre wooded site in the heart of historic Midtown Memphis. The walkways, quadrangles, residence halls, common areas, and classrooms are all intentionally designed to encourage intimate conversation, the exchange of ideas, and life-changing connections.

With each new expansion on its original 123-acre Memphis campus, Rhodes has maintained its Collegiate Gothic architecture. The Paul Barret Jr. Library, completed in 2005, has been ranked among the country's most beautiful libraries. In 2012, Rhodes opened two new facilities, the expanded and renovated Catherine S. Burrow Refectory and the West Village Residence Hall. In 2014, the College completely renovated the Rhodes Tower science facility and, most recently, in

2017, the College opened Robertson Hall, a \$34 million, 55,000-square-foot science facility that houses state-of-the-art research and teaching facilities.

The College recently acquired a 10-acre property across the street from the main campus, known as West Campus. With this new space, the College continues its growth trajectory and provides even more opportunities to support the campus and Memphis communities. To date, construction at West Campus has included a bookstore, Human Resources department offices, the 650-seat McNeill Performance Hall, the Education program, and renovated classrooms and faculty offices. The future of the West Campus will be determined by the strategic plan and new campus master plan.

## FINANCES AND RESOURCES

Effective June 30, 2018, the College completed its 45th consecutive year of balanced budgets. For fiscal year 2019, the total operating budget is \$77.7 million net of a generous financial aid budget of \$50.5 million. Rhodes has an endowment of \$360 million and a moderate debt level of \$69 million. Total assets are approximately \$615 million. The College maintains a debt rating of A+ with a stable outlook from Standard and Poor's and a rating of A1 with a stable outlook from Moody's Investors Service.

## ROLE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT LIFE

The Vice President for Student Life is the chief student affairs officer and is a visible and accessible leader on campus and in the local community. Reporting directly to President Marjorie Hass, the Vice President serves as a collaborative and collegial member of her core Senior Leadership Team, which includes:

- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Enrollment & Communications and Dean of Admissions
- Vice President for Development
- Vice President for Finance & Business Affairs
- Vice President for Strategic Initiatives
- Chief Communications Officer
- Executive Assistant to the President

The Vice President for Student Life's portfolio includes oversight of the following areas:

- Academic and Learning Services
- Athletics
- Accessibility Services
- Campus Safety
- Career Services
- Bonner Center for Service
- Chaplain's Office
- Counseling Center
- Health Center
- Multicultural Affairs
- New Student Programs and Leadership

- Residence Life
- Student Activities
- Rhodes Express (one-stop student services including Bursar, Financial Aid, and Registrar)
- Community Standards

The Vice President will oversee 12 staff within the Office of Student Life, and approximately 97 staff across the division, including the following direct reports:

- Associate Dean of Divisional Strategy, Inclusion, and Involvement
- Associate Dean for Student Success
- Chaplain
- Dean of Students
- Director of Athletics
- Director of Career Services

In addition, the Vice President will interact with the Board of Trustees, particularly as a liaison to the Committee on Student Life. And given the close relationship between Rhodes College and the City of Memphis, the Vice President will also be expected to interact with city leaders, community members, and others in a variety of roles.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Vice President for Student Life will have the opportunity to address the following priorities:

- **Developing a forward-looking strategic vision for student life that harmonizes with the College's overall strategic plan:** Broadly endorsed by the Board of Trustees in Spring 2019, the College's new strategic plan is currently being finalized through a broadly inclusive and collaborative process involving a wide range of constituencies. Several of the key priorities of the plan relate directly to student life, such as further development of an inclusive campus community and of the College's career services. The Vice President will be charged with collaboratively developing and leading the implementation of a divisional strategic plan that addresses the College's top strategic priorities. At the same time, the divisional plan should also outline a proactive approach to recurring challenges and complex issues within student life.
- **Align Rhodes' student life policies and practices with nationally recognized best practices:** The Vice President will bring deep familiarity with current wisdom regarding developing programs, managing risk, building and sustaining an inclusive campus community, collaborating with faculty, and many other areas to their work. They will listen to and meet with division staff and other constituencies around campus to identify current strengths as well as areas of growth within student affairs. The Vice President will be responsible for transforming the Student Life division over time into a model operation that is based on nationally recognized and proven practices but thoughtfully adapted for the specific mission and needs of Rhodes.
- **Serve as a key leader and partner in sustaining and enhancing the inclusiveness of the Rhodes campus community:** Rhodes recently hired a Vice President for Strategic Initiatives who serves as the College's Chief Diversity Officer. Additionally, she leads the implementation of the College's new strategic plan. The Vice President for Student Life will

be a critical colleague and partner with her and diversity and inclusion officers in Student Life and Academic Affairs to proactively address the questions of climate, race, and identity that are currently at the forefront on campuses across the nation. The Vice President will also model in both their personal and professional behavior support and advocacy for a community that is safe, welcoming, and supportive of its diverse community.

- **Mentoring, developing, and retaining the talented and committed staff within the Student Life Division:** The Vice President for Student Life will build on the expertise of the talented staff within the Division, further cultivating the talents of each individual staff member, encouraging their continued professional development, and uniting them as a smoothly functioning team. In addition, the Vice President will recruit, retain, mentor, and support new staff as appropriate with a particular eye toward ensuring that the division's staff is broadly diverse and that students from underrepresented backgrounds at Rhodes continue to see in the Student Life staff individuals with shared experiences.
- **Partner enthusiastically and effectively with the Division of Academic Affairs:** As is expected at most residential liberal arts colleges, the relationship between Student Life and Academic Affairs at Rhodes should be strong and mutually beneficial. The Vice President will work closely with the Provost, Academic Affairs staff, and individual faculty to help ensure that all students are supported and thriving both inside and outside the classroom. The Vice President will be asked to serve as a resource and partner to faculty in helping to refine the First Year Experience course which aims to unify students during their first semester on campus while also sparking dialogue on challenging topics.
- **Strengthen the College's ability to make data-driven decisions:** Working collaboratively with the Provost, the Chief Information Officer, and others across campus, the Vice President will examine current practices for collecting data related to student success, engagement, and satisfaction and identify areas for improvement. Going forward, the Vice President will ensure that decision-making within the division will be based on data whenever possible in order to maximize the student experience and identify the best possible use of existing resources.

## DESIRED QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS

The new Vice President should be an experienced leader with deep subject matter expertise in modern student affairs, as well as have an ease and genuine rapport with both students and faculty. The ideal candidate will hold a relevant advanced degree, with a terminal degree preferred. They will also bring many of the following complementary skills and experiences to their work:

- A sophisticated understanding of the student life challenges facing residential liberal arts colleges in the 21st century and a broad sense of the most effective solutions to them;
- The ability to confidently lead a team through a time of significant change, including both an examination of high-level mission and strategy as well as a review and assessment of daily operations;
- Subject matter expertise and a high degree of personal comfort in leading difficult conversations related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and other topics;

- A willingness to be accessible and visible to students, and open to hearing their concerns, their priorities, and their aspirations, as well as a readiness to advocate for their needs as appropriate;
- An ability to work closely, credibly, and creatively with faculty and Academic Affairs staff as partners in the holistic learning enterprise, as befits a residential liberal arts college;
- The ability to build relationships of trust and shared purpose across a wide range of stakeholders including parents, city leaders, Memphis community members, trustees, and others;
- A strong sense of how to approach complex conversations and interactions with diplomacy, insight, and emotional intelligence;
- Strong communication skills, particularly in the areas of writing and public speaking;
- An understanding of the collaborative leadership structure within higher education, the nature of the academic enterprise, and a commitment to the mission, vision, and institutional priorities of Rhodes College.

## CONTACT

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

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*Rhodes College is an equal opportunity employer committed to diversity in the workforce.*