

# Smith College Presidential Search Statement



***Smith College educates women of promise for lives of distinction and purpose. A college of and for the world, Smith links the power of the liberal arts to excellence in research and scholarship, thereby developing engaged global citizens and leaders to address society's challenges.***

Sophia Smith, the founder of Smith College, had a daring vision—that through education, women’s power for good would be “incalculably enlarged,” and that the institution would do “the most good to the greatest number.” For Sophia, knowledge was a potent force for progress, and educated women were the courageous agents of change the world needed.

Smith’s founder launched one of the first institutions that supported women’s education in the United States, and it has been evolving ever since, keeping pace with the expansion of women’s rights in the world and empowering women to have exceptional impact. Today, nearly 150 years later, Smith College nurtures leaders and visionaries. Smith students have agency and voice, curiosity, and strong intellects. Their Smith education empowers them to go out into the world as trailblazers, asking tough questions and dedicating themselves to pursuing knowledge and truth. A Smith education empowers the loud voices that inspire change as well as the quiet ones who instill it. Smithies are united in their quest to create a better—more inclusive, sustainable, and just—world.

A sense of community is at the core of Smith College and is an integral part of its identity as an institution. Smith grads and students often speak of their love for the faculty and the faculty’s love for them. These personal and intellectual connections, along with the strong bonds of friendship that form amongst the students, exert a profound influence over the lives of the students that last well beyond their college years.

## ABOUT SMITH COLLEGE

Founded in 1871, Smith College opened in 1875 with 14 students. Today, Smith is one of the largest women’s liberal arts colleges in the United States, enrolling 2,500 undergraduates from nearly every state and more than 70 other countries. Smith also enrolls 350 students in its co-educational graduate programs. The Smith faculty comprises about 300 members. The undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio is 9:1. Approximately 1,000 talented and dedicated staff uphold the mission and work of the college by providing essential, highly effective academic, residential, and administrative support.

Smith is dedicated to developing global leaders to address society’s challenges. Smith graduates—nearly 53,000 strong—are among the world’s leading thinkers, doers, policy makers, activists, artists, entrepreneurs, and educators addressing the complex, urgent problems of the day. Smith’s staff, faculty, students, and alums are united by a sense of curiosity, an appreciation of the diversity and complexity of the human experience, and a desire to build a more just and inclusive society. As a global community of scholars and humanitarians dedicated to learning, teaching, discovery, creativity, and critical thought, Smith is pushing the world forward.

Ask a Smithie what distinguishes the college, and they will likely say “the community.” The 41 self-governed houses form the bedrock of this deep sense of community. In the house system, between ten and 100 students from all four classes and a wide range of interests, backgrounds, and talents live together in community. They

host gatherings, film viewings, discussions, and Friday afternoon tea to mark the end of a busy week. The house system helps unite the Smith campus and contributes to creating the treasured bonds that last for generations.

The college has always been proud of its history, but its mindset is to innovate, evolve, and grow beyond its borders. Smith was among the first colleges to start a study abroad program in 1925, knowing that future leaders would benefit from a deep understanding of different cultures. Since 2002, the college has produced more than 300 Fulbright Fellows and is consistently ranked among the top-producing institutions. And in 2004, Smith became the first women's college to launch an undergraduate engineering program.

Smith's academic program, exceptional faculty, and its open curriculum all benefit the students by nurturing a spirit of intellectual curiosity, deep learning, and critical thinking. Students are encouraged to explore the liberal arts broadly, but they own their education and chart their intellectual path at the college.

Beyond academics, Smith students pursue their interests, hone their talents, and contribute to the community in a multitude of ways. For example, Smith athletes compete in 11 varsity sports in the NEWMAC League. Artists, musicians, and actors will find a thriving venue, and more than 140 student clubs keep current Smith students engaged, contributing, and growing.

In addition to the undergraduate college, Smith offers master's degrees in biological sciences, exercise and sports studies, dance, playwriting, and teaching, and is home to the Graduate School for Social Work, which awards master's and doctoral degrees. The Ada Comstock Scholars Program enables women of nontraditional college age to complete a bachelor of arts degree either part-time or full-time, with flexible options for course loads, special academic advising, career counseling, and housing. The college's nine [applied learning and research centers](#) offer ways for students to connect their academic passions to real-world experiences, ensuring a truly holistic educational experience for all students.

Smith College is a member of the Five College Consortium, one of the oldest and most highly regarded consortia in American higher education. Its members are four private liberal arts colleges (Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith) and the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass). Participation in the consortium expands Smith's offerings and connects students, faculty, and staff to a larger community of 30,000 students and hundreds of social and cultural events.

Smith is financially strong. As of June 30, 2021, Smith's endowment stood at \$2.6B, the result of strong financial stewardship and generous philanthropic support. Over the past decade, philanthropic gifts to Smith reached new levels through the Women for the World campaign, the Here for Every Voice financial aid initiative, and other fundraising efforts, which have secured a record-setting \$685 million since 2013. In 2020, Smith received the largest gift in its history—\$50 million—to support financial aid and career development.

To increase access and ensure that qualified students can attend Smith regardless of their financial circumstances, the college has expanded financial aid funding by 58% since 2013 and in October 2021, it made the historic decision to [eliminate loans from financial aid packages](#) and offered new funding for first-year student start-up grants so new students could begin their college experience on firmer financial footing. The college is working toward becoming need-blind in its admission practice.

Smith's campus serves as a source of inspiration, discovery, and joy for its community. Situated on 147 acres of stunning botanic gardens, tree-lined paths, and sun-soaked lawns, Smith is a quintessential New England college with more than 100 buildings. During the past decade, Smith has reshaped its campus, developing innovative new classrooms, gardens, and buildings—most notably, the stunning [Neilson Library](#), designed by Maya Lin. The reimagined library is an evolution of a building that has been the intellectual heart of Smith for generations. Informed by the needs and desires of students, faculty, staff, and alums, the library features high-tech classrooms and maker spaces, a café for socializing and informal study, and an entire wing devoted to Smith's Special Collections, considered one of the nation's most extensive archives of women's history. With its 21st-century design and sustainable systems, Neilson is part of Smith's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. In the summer of 2022, the college will break ground on its geothermal campus energy project. This six-year capital project will result in a 90 percent reduction of carbon emissions on campus, allowing the college to meet its 2030 carbon neutrality goal.

For more information about Smith, please visit [Smith's website](#).



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## SMITH'S NEXT PRESIDENT

Smith College seeks a leader with the vision, energy, and shared values to build on Smith's mission and impactful track record and to leverage its assets in innovative and inspirational ways. In this period of constant change in the world and in higher education, the next president will embrace the opportunity to lead a college with a history of academic excellence, a commitment to women's leadership, and an unwavering focus on producing students who are deeply engaged in understanding the complex world around them and advocating for the creation of a better one. Smith's next president will embrace and nurture the unique spirit and mission of the college; welcome discussion, dissent, and debate; and be prepared to make bold decisions in the face of ambiguity and divergent views.

Building on its many achievements and contributions to higher education, Smith seeks to be a model for the ways in which the liberal arts can lead change in the world.

**Likely priorities for the next president include:**

- **Import of a Liberal Arts Education**
  - Serving as an effective and tireless public advocate for the value of the liberal arts and for women's education.
  - Encouraging ongoing academic innovation in programming, pedagogy, interdisciplinary teaching, and research, and ensuring that Smith plays a critical role in defining the next iteration of the liberal arts.
  - Supporting and enhancing the college's role in developing leaders through the educational experiences as well as through the powerful network of Smith alums.
- **Equity and Inclusion**
  - Driving systematic and cultural changes to ensure that Smith is a place where everyone feels a deep sense of belonging; actively working to create an environment that acknowledges and values diverse perspectives and experiences.
  - Integrating Smith's career development offerings and academic training, with the goal of increasing career success and satisfaction for every alum, while equalizing the student experience by broadening the networks and resources accessible to first-generation and low-income students.
- **Accessibility and Affordability**
  - Continuing the progress and commitment to access and affordability by reducing barriers to college entry.
  - Leading a venerated historical women's college while taking into account gender fluidity.
- **Sense of Community**
  - Exploring and supporting the best ways to support the health of students and adults to ensure that they are physically, mentally, and emotionally prepared to grow and do their best work.
  - Upholding a commitment to shared governance and navigating the relationships between different constituencies on campus, demonstrating a keen emotional intellect. Ensuring that Smith remains an employer of choice by building a strong sense of purpose and unity among all members of its community and recognizing the inherent value of all contributions to the education of students.
- **Philanthropy and Stewardship**
  - Setting priorities to ensure that the resources align with the college's priorities and enthusiastically embracing the opportunity to raise new funds to support the compelling needs and ambitions of the institution.

- Maintaining and expanding Smith's financial health and ensuring that capital needs for facilities and technology receive appropriate investments.

## IDEAL EXPERIENCE

Smith's next president will possess high intellect and integrity, as well as expansive leadership skills. This individual will bring strong executive leadership experience to steward the college's assets, a commitment to preserving and nurturing a sense of community, the ability to communicate with passion and clarity, and the courage to take on challenging conversations and make difficult decisions. In addition, the president will bring the joy, empathy, curiosity, and energy required to lead an institution that serves dynamic, smart students; a talented and dedicated faculty and staff; and devoted alums.

As such, the Search Committee seeks an individual with a demonstrated ability to:

- Provide vision, strategic leadership, insight, and energy to understand the modern and evolving higher education ecosystem and to advance the college towards its highest aspirations and goals.
- Embrace the enduring values of a high-quality liberal arts education and articulate its strength to others.
- Engage intellectually with a talented faculty and gain their confidence through a commitment to scholarship, academic excellence, and exceptional teaching.
- Inspire, support, and drive impactful engagement on issues of social justice, equity, and inclusion.
- Attract philanthropic support for the college's ambitions; forge the relationships and have the story-telling skills needed to inspire donors and alums.
- Steward the financial and physical assets wisely, making decisions always in the best interest of the institution.
- Lead in education conversations on the national and international stage with inspired approaches during our uncertain and polarized times.
- Communicate exceptionally and listen well, with the ability to engage effectively with a wide range of constituencies.
- Develop collaborative, trusting relationships with students, faculty, staff, and alums.
- Innovate and develop new ways to forge community bonds at Smith and provide the mental, emotional, and academic support for all members of the Smith community.
- Bring energy, resilience, and stamina for the pressures of the role.

## THE SEARCH PROCESS

Smith College has selected a 15-member Search Committee—made up of trustees, faculty, staff, and a student—who will make a recommendation to the full board of trustees at the conclusion of their work.

Nominations, applications, and inquiries can be directed in confidence to [Smithpresident@spencerstuart.com](mailto:Smithpresident@spencerstuart.com). For more information, please visit the Smith College Presidential Search webpage <https://www.smith.edu/about-smith/board-of-trustees/presidential-search>.

Smith College affirms that diversity in all aspects of the educational environment is necessary for achieving the highest level of academic excellence. As a central element of this commitment to excellence, the college seeks to provide an environment that fosters the recruitment and success of a diverse student, faculty, and staff community. The college aspires to create and maintain an educational, working, and living environment that is respectful of differences and free from harassing behavior. It is the policy of Smith College to provide equal employment opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, religious creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, genetic information, military or veteran status, and pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions.