

**An invitation to apply for the position of**

**Provost  
Hollins University  
Roanoke, VA  
September 15, 2020**

## THE POSITION

Hollins University, one of the nation's most dynamic and diverse liberal arts colleges for women, seeks an equally dynamic Provost to serve as its next chief academic officer. Reporting to the President and working in collaboration with senior administrators and the Hollins faculty within a shared governance model, the Provost will lead with compassion and courage; build an equitable, inclusive, and diverse learning community; and promote the enduring value of the liberal arts and the education of women. The Provost will help Hollins to imagine and advance its academic mission, building on strong traditions while moving the university forward toward a shared vision for its future.

Located in Roanoke, Virginia in the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains, Hollins University is a vibrant community with 130 faculty, 701 undergraduates, and 113 graduate students. Known for its creative and highly engaged student body and its distinguished faculty and staff, Hollins prides itself on its nationally recognized academic programs, a deeply committed alumnae network, an extraordinarily beautiful campus, and its unique ability to ensure that each of its students has the opportunity to design a transformational college experience. As a testament to the university's standing among the leading liberal arts colleges in the nation, *The Fiske Guide to Colleges 2020* calls Hollins one of "the country's best and most interesting colleges and universities," while *U.S. News and World Report* ranks Hollins #102 overall and the #30 "Best Value School" in the category of "Best National Liberal Arts Colleges." Hollins is proud to be ranked #21 for Social Mobility in the same category.

An innovator and proactive problem-solver, the Provost will join the Hollins community in the midst of a general education curriculum review and at a time of renewed emphasis on strengthening its graduate and non-degree programs, along with efforts aimed at positioning Hollins to continue to lead as one of the nation's premier liberal arts colleges for women. With a visionary new President at the helm, a strong record of alumnae engagement and giving, and institutional eagerness to implement new and transformative programs, Hollins aims to position both its students and itself to thrive amid the opportunities and challenges emerging from the ever-changing higher education landscape. To this end, Hollins requires a Provost who will cultivate a strong and diverse faculty as well as a leader who can encourage the faculty and staff to think boldly about existing institutional practices, ranging from academic programming to hiring practices.

The next Provost of Hollins will address the following opportunities and challenges:

- Restructure the Office of Academic Affairs in order to lead an effective and forward-thinking team.
- Cultivate and sustain a diverse undergraduate and graduate faculty.
- Invigorate academic life and programs by developing and implementing a sustainable tenured and tenure-track faculty hiring strategy.

- Infuse existing academic programs and departments with new energy and vision, while also developing new programs to enhance the intellectual life of the university.
- Participate in the design and implementation of a new general education curriculum.
- Maintain the financial strength of Hollins, harnessing resources to recover and rebuild in a post-pandemic academic environment.

A summary of the characteristics and qualifications that Hollins is looking for in its next Provost can be found at the end of this document.

## **HOLLINS UNIVERSITY**

Hollins is dedicated to the liberal arts and is unwavering in its support of inclusive academic excellence. Long at the forefront of women's education, the university has continued its tradition of educational innovation. While Hollins remains committed to its standing as an undergraduate women's college, its eleven gender-inclusive graduate programs are integral to the university and increasingly key to the financial health of the institution. The new Provost will be energized by the constellation of graduate and undergraduate programs at Hollins and motivated to work collaboratively to make the "sum more than the parts." In turn, this will create a more distinctive institutional profile that will both attract and produce outstanding students who will go on to have successful careers and make a positive difference in the world.

### **The Academic Program**

#### *Undergraduate Programs*

Hollins steadfastly believes that a strong liberal arts education is the best foundation for leading a life of consequence, even as the university aims to continue to evolve its curriculum in response to present-day opportunities and challenges. In the last few years, several new programs have been launched including a new major and minor in Public Health, an undergraduate major in Creative Writing, the Institute for Entrepreneurial Learning, and the Rutherford Center for Experiential Learning. Among the most distinctive of Hollins' academic programs is the Batten Leadership Institute (BLI). The BLI program offers undergraduates academic and practical experience in leadership studies, while also providing an executive certificate in leadership that attracts participants from a wide range of industries and organizations in the Roanoke region.

The undergraduate program offers 29 majors, 14 major concentrations, and 30 minors, leading to Bachelor degrees in Arts, Fine Arts, or Science (B.A., B.F.A., B.S.). The five most popular majors at Hollins are English/Creative Writing, Biology, Business, Psychology, and Studio Art. At Hollins, true to the liberal arts tradition, disciplines genuinely enrich one another. Many students pursue a double major or add a minor or one of our undergraduate certificate programs to their major, blending seemingly dissimilar fields: Religious Studies and Mathematics, Business and Dance, Theatre and Philosophy.

The creative spark is alive and well at Hollins. The university's well-deserved reputation as a champion of the fine arts is reflected in numerous awards and accolades. The Theatre Program at Hollins, one of the top ten programs in the country according to *The Princeton Review*, is the proud recipient of five national Kennedy Center Awards; the MFA Program in Dance is internationally recognized and attracts some of the top dancers and choreographers from around the world; and the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum and the Art Department bring nationally recognized artists to campus through the Frances Niederer Artist in Residence Program.

With a science center and laboratories that have recently benefited from a multimillion-dollar renovation, Hollins offers programs of study in the following STEM fields: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Data Science, Environmental Studies, Mathematics, and Psychology. Interest in STEM has been steadily increasing, with 39% of the incoming class expressing plans to pursue majors in these fields. The university has also established a relationship with the Global Change Center at Virginia Tech—which is a short 45-minute drive from Hollins—where Hollins students can participate in the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship program. At Hollins, students have the opportunity to conduct substantive research alongside faculty members, with many students having the further opportunity to present their research at professional conferences and publish in peer-reviewed journals.

A 4-1-4 academic calendar enables students to pursue internships, independent study, study abroad, or take an inspired, intensive course during the January Term. Additionally, all first-year students participate in Hollins' first-year seminar program, which immerses them in collaborative and active learning and enables them to hone their skills in critical thinking, creative problem solving, research, and writing. Most students also have a “capstone experience” in their final year, usually centered on writing a senior thesis or participating in an internship in their major area of study.

### ***Graduate Programs***

Over the last six decades, Hollins has created excellent gender-inclusive graduate programs that continue to add to the university's reputation. The current graduate programs are the M.A. and the M.F.A. in Children's Literature, the M.F.A. in Children's Book Writing and Illustrating, the M.F.A. in Creative Writing, the M.F.A. in Dance, the M.A. in Liberal Studies, the M.F.A. in Playwriting, the M.A. and the M.F.A. in Screenwriting and Film Studies, and the M.A.T. in Teaching and Learning.

The Master's in Creative Writing (now the M.F.A. degree) was established in 1960 and is celebrated nationally. Graduates include four Pulitzer Prize winners: Annie Dillard, Henry Taylor, Mary Wells Knight, and Board Member and US Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey. *The New York Times* has written, “Sometimes one begins to think that the faculty and graduates of Hollins supply half the world's books. Certainly, they supply many of the best ones.”

## **Faculty**

Hollins has 130 members of the faculty, of whom 40% are tenured or tenure-track. The remaining faculty members are either long- or short-term full-time, part-time, or adjunct/contingent professors. The faculty is organized into the following Divisions:

- Division I      Humanities
- Division II      Social Sciences
- Division III      Natural Sciences and Mathematics
- Division IV      Fine Arts

Active and committed citizens of the University, Hollins faculty members are both dedicated teachers and engaged scholars. The community of students and faculty creates an intellectually rich environment with ample opportunities for interaction inside and outside of the classroom. Hollins supports this integrative tradition with an average class size of 12 and a student-to-faculty ratio of 9:1. Small classes and labs promote strong relationships between faculty and students, as does a personalized approach to student advising.

## **Staff**

Hollins University employs approximately 200 non-academic staff members. Direct reports to the Provost include the Registrar, University Librarian, Director of the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum, Director of the Center for Career Development and Life Design, Director of Athletics, Director of International Programs, Manager of Graduate Programs, Director of Strategic Academic Initiatives, Dean of Academic Success, Director of Undergraduate Research, Director of Faculty Development, Director of the Batten Leadership Institute, Director of the Institute for Entrepreneurial Learning, and the Academic Affairs Office Administrative Assistant. Most of the above individuals are members of the Provost's Council and collaborate with faculty and other campus partners on curricular and co-curricular initiatives.

## **Students**

The academic profile of incoming students is strong, with an average weighted GPA of 3.65, an ACT average of 25 and 1180 on the SAT. Forty-six percent of the incoming first-year class are from Virginia, but Hollins continues to attract students nationally, with 9% of the first-year class coming from California, Florida, and Texas. This fall, Hollins welcomed 206 students as members of the Class of 2024, 28% of whom self-identify as students of color and 37% of whom are first-generation college students. Last fall, Hollins welcomed the largest group of incoming international students in its history with over 30 students (15% of the incoming first-year class) hailing from countries including India, Nepal, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom. In addition to serving traditional undergraduate populations, Hollins offers the Horizon Undergraduate Program

for women who are returning to college after an interruption in their education. The employment rate for Hollins graduates is very strong: 95% of the graduating class of 2018 were employed or enrolled in graduate school within one year of graduation.

## Campus Culture

A residential liberal arts college, Hollins is a close-knit community where living and learning are conscientiously integrated. On average, ninety percent of undergraduate students live on campus, where they participate in a full array of extracurricular clubs and activities ranging from literary journals to student government. The university sponsors nine intercollegiate sports that compete in the NCAA DIII Old Dominion Athletic Conference, while the equestrian team competes in the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association. Hollins is particularly well-known for its nationally acclaimed riding program, which boasts 19 individual national championships, 2 team national championships, and 4 individual national high point rider championships.

The entire campus enjoys many long-standing traditions, from an annual hike up nearby Tinker Mountain to the Passing of the Robes, where seniors give their decorated graduation robes to juniors. Students' sense of investment in Hollins translates into lifelong loyalty to the university. The devotion of alumnae to Hollins and its students is uncommonly strong, with *The Princeton Review* ranking Hollins #5 for "Best Alumni Network" in the 2021 edition of *The 386 Best Colleges*.

Hollins has striven to create a diverse and welcoming community, yet the university still has work to do to achieve inclusive excellence. President Mary Dana Hinton has committed Hollins to becoming a model of inclusive excellence. In her words, "[ensuring a sense of belonging, offering the professional development to extend that sense of belonging to all, and providing the structures and support for redress when needed are essential cultural shifts we will undertake.](#)"

## Leadership and Governance

Mary Dana Hinton, Ph.D., became the 13th President of Hollins University in August 2020. A respected proponent of the liberal arts and educational equity, President Hinton aims to lead Hollins into the future by becoming a model of inclusivity in women's education and a higher education innovator.

Active in the national higher education arena, Dr. Hinton is a member of the Board of Directors for the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), Saint Mary's School, and the University Leadership Council. She speaks frequently in the U.S. and abroad on topics related to the liberal arts and inclusion, and she founded the Liberal Arts Illuminated Conference. President Emerita of the College of Saint Benedict, Hinton is a proven strategic leader, accomplished fundraiser, and advocate for the liberal arts.

Hollins University is governed by a Board of Trustees comprised of 26 people who are leaders in their fields and who render extensive service to the university. Along with contributing generous donations to Hollins, the trustees are actively engaged and supportive of the university's overarching mission. The bylaws of the university outline the role and responsibility of the trustees: "The Board is the policy-making and governing body of the University, ultimately responsible for ensuring that the financial resources of the institution are adequate to provide a sound educational program. The Board of Trustees selects and evaluates the chief executive officer, approves the mission statement of the University, and all candidates for degrees."

Hollins has long embraced shared governance, with administrators, faculty members, and student representatives working together to govern the university through a range of committees. Within the system of shared governance at Hollins, the faculty is the university's principal legislative body, responsible for the formulation and implementation of academic policy.

## Campus and Facilities

The Hollins campus is, in a word, [beautiful](#)—475 acres nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Front Quadrangle is listed in the National Historic Register, and the Wyndham Robertson Library has been designated a National Literary Landmark. The new Student Village, featuring apartment-style housing, is comprised of seven buildings enabling 68 students to enjoy modern housing and independent living. In the last fifteen years, over 50% of the buildings on campus have been renovated or undergone major updates, including the establishment of the state-of-the-art Eleanor D. Wilson Museum within the Wetherill Visual Arts Center and the Dana Science Building.

## Roanoke, Virginia

With approximately 100,000 residents, Roanoke is a diverse city, located just south of the Hollins campus. The city of Roanoke is a part of the larger Roanoke Valley, which is home to 300,000 residents. The area offers a variety of cultural, educational, and entertainment opportunities, including excellent schools, many restaurants and breweries, the Taubman Museum of Art, the Harrison Museum of African American Culture, the Science Museum of Western Virginia, the Kid's Square Children's Museum, and the Jefferson Center, which hosts performances put on by organizations such as the Mill Mountain Theater and the Roanoke Ballet. Roanoke's Berglund Center also hosts a range of larger musical events and concerts. Roanoke is the medical hub for this region and is home to two major hospitals, as well as the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute.

Roanoke is especially well-known for its outdoor recreational resources. Home to numerous nature and hiking trails, Roanoke has been named "Best Place to Raise an Outdoor Family." Domestic travel is also convenient from Hollins thanks to the nearby Roanoke Regional Airport, which has non-stop service to cities including Atlanta, Chicago, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, and

Washington, D.C. There is Amtrak train service as well for passengers to Washington D.C., Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

## **ROLE OF THE PROVOST**

The Provost will serve as the chief academic officer of Hollins with primary responsibility for oversight of the university's academic mission. The Provost must have the demonstrated ability, skill, and vision to lead the faculty in (1) providing an outstanding and innovative liberal arts education and (2) implementing new academic programs and initiatives that will bring new students and revenues to the university. Reporting to the President, the Provost will work closely with her on the articulation, implementation, and assessment of the university's strategic plan for the Academic Affairs division. Other duties include supervising the above-mentioned direct reports and providing regular updates to the Board of Trustees. The new Provost will share the university's commitment to the liberal arts, the education of women, and academic inclusiveness, and is expected to take office on or about July 1, 2021.

### **Opportunities and Challenges for the Next Provost**

***Restructure the Office of Academic Affairs in order to build an effective and forward-thinking team.***

Through the hiring of this position, the university's chief academic officer's title will change from the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) to Provost. While Hollins has been fortunate to have strong leadership from its VPAA, the responsibilities of the position have grown beyond the scope of what a single VPAA can manage. Currently the Office of Academic Affairs has oversight over curricular development and review; faculty hires and reviews of faculty performance; the tenure and promotion process; SACS assessment, review, and accreditation; all university-wide academic ceremonies and convocations; and more. The new Provost, in consultation with the faculty and President, will aim to revamp the organizational flow of this office and will identify and fill key positions for carrying out the goals of the university's academic mission.

***Cultivate and sustain a diverse graduate and undergraduate faculty.***

Hollins continues to strive for diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice, and the university has made great progress in some respects. The university's student body has become one of the most diverse in the nation among liberal arts colleges: 34% of all domestic undergraduate students self-identify as students of color, 25% are first-generation college students, and 10% are international students representing 22 countries. Hollins has made financial aid for students with demonstrated need a priority, with 99% of its students receiving some form of aid. Among the incoming first-year cohort, 100% received some form of financial aid, and 38% were Pell Grant eligible. As a women's college, Hollins has also made strides toward greater gender inclusivity, revising its admissions policy regarding transgender students in 2019. Furthermore, Hollins has shown a commitment to educational equity through the recent founding of its Office of Inclusivity and Diversity, as well as the formation of its Working Group on Slavery and Its Contemporary Legacies. Yet much

remains to be done to promote diversity at every level of the university and to create a truly inclusive community for students, faculty, and staff. Toward these critically important ends, the next Provost of Hollins will help to devise and implement a strategy to approach diverse hiring and employee retention, especially among the faculty. The Provost will also aim to identify and implement policies that will promote inclusive excellence across the university.

***Invigorate academic life and programs by developing and implementing a sustainable tenured and tenure-track faculty hiring strategy.***

The Hollins faculty are alumni of the nation's top graduate schools and programs. In addition to teaching six courses per year, faculty members actively contribute to their respective fields by publishing scholarly and creative works; performing original theater, music, and dance compositions; and showing art in galleries and museums. Moreover, the faculty eagerly participate in shared governance, often going above and beyond established service expectations. In short, the Hollins faculty is the backbone of the university. Over the past decade, however, Hollins has witnessed a reduction in tenure-track lines coupled with increasing reliance on contingent and adjunct faculty. The new Provost will aim to work in consultation with the Faculty Executive Committee and the President to construct a multi-year, multi-prong strategic plan for increasing tenure-track lines.

***Infuse existing academic programs and departments with new energy and vision, while also developing new programs to enhance the intellectual life of the university.***

Hollins students are engaged citizens of the classroom and the world. Visitors to campus are often amazed by the ways in which our students take an active role in their learning process. While this can be explained in part by the caliber of students that Hollins attracts, stellar students are not the whole story. With many academic departments staffed by three or fewer faculty, Hollins nonetheless offers an impressive array of majors, minors, and certificate programs intended to foster the remarkable curiosity of Hollins' student body. Faculty members are eager to collaborate with a Provost who will inspire and who will bring energy and creativity to the process of reimagining existing academic programing, including the ongoing process of general education reform. The Provost will also bring new ideas to campus, actively partnering with the faculty and university administrators to strategize and implement innovative academic programs. In particular, the Provost will look forward to helping to lead Hollins on its continued academic mission to develop an inclusive and diverse curriculum that meets the needs of its students.

***Participate in the design and implementation of a new general education curriculum.***

The Hollins faculty launched a multi-year general education reform process during the 2019-2020 academic year. Under the leadership of a committee with representation from all four divisions of the university, the faculty is currently studying models and approaches from distinguished liberal arts institutions across the country. The goal is to reimagine Hollins' general education curriculum, emphasizing an integrative approach that helps students make connections across and among

disciplines. The new Provost will arrive on campus as this process is going forward and will work with the faculty as this innovative new curriculum is completed and implemented.

***Maintain the financial strength of Hollins, harnessing resources to recover and rebuild in a post-pandemic academic environment.***

Hollins enjoys a financial profile envied by many small liberal arts colleges. The university has the fourth largest endowment among private colleges in Virginia—standing at \$174.6 million as of June 30, 2020—and has operated without external debt since 2007. Hollins’ graduates are especially generous in supporting their alma mater. In 2010, Hollins completed the largest fundraising campaign in the university’s history, raising \$162 million. In 2017, Hollins achieved its highest single year fundraising total, meeting a six-month \$10 million challenge for the university’s 175th anniversary. Even though the financial foundation of Hollins is solid, challenges persist as a tuition driven institution. In addition, as is the case for almost all colleges and universities across the country, the current global pandemic is a stressor on Hollins’ finances. Accordingly, the new Provost will work with the faculty and the President’s cabinet, especially the Chief Operating Officer, to strategize new streams of revenue for strengthening the academic programming Hollins offers and the institution’s financial foundation as a whole. The Provost will also allocate existing budget resources in a transparent and equitable manner.

## **CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PROVOST**

The Provost must be a gifted collaborator who genuinely likes to work with a variety of constituencies and who respects all members of the Hollins community. We seek a Provost who believes deeply in the power of equity and inclusion in higher education. We also desire a transparent and collaborative leader who will build on Hollins’ existing academic programs and create connections across the campus community that stretch beyond academics. The successful candidate will have a deep and abiding understanding of and commitment to the principles of shared governance and the liberal arts.

### **Qualifications**

- Earned doctorate or other terminal degree and record of distinguished scholarship and teaching requisite for an appointment as a tenured associate or full professor.
- Significant experience as an academic administrator in higher education including experience with budget management, curriculum reform, and strategic planning.
- Experience and demonstrated success in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives as they relate to academic programs including but not limited to the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty.
- Experience with and demonstrated success in collaborative leadership and a willingness to work within a system of shared faculty governance.
- Possess excellent communication, interpersonal, conflict resolution, organizational, multitasking, management, decision-making, analytical, and problem-solving skills.

- Ability to advocate effectively for the faculty and for the academic mission of the university with external and internal audiences.
- Awareness of the challenges and opportunities facing small liberal arts colleges on a national level and the ability to articulate to diverse audiences the value of a liberal arts education.
- Awareness of the unique challenges and opportunities facing women's colleges in the twenty-first century and the ability to articulate to diverse audiences the value of a women's college education.
- Experience with foundation grant-making related to academic programs and evidence of successfully securing grants to support the academic enterprise.
- Ability and willingness to travel domestically and internationally as needed via various modes including automobile, plane, and train.
- Willingness to make a commitment to Hollins and to help move the university forward toward a shared vision for its future.

## **Application Procedures**

To apply for this position, candidates should submit a substantive cover letter addressing qualifications and desired attributes, a curriculum vitae, and a list of five professional references including addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, along with a brief description of the candidate's working relationship with each. References will not be contacted without the explicit permission of the candidate. Further materials may be requested at a later date.

Application materials must be submitted electronically to: [provostsearch@hollins.edu](mailto:provostsearch@hollins.edu).

Confidential inquiries, questions, and nominations may be directed to Dr. Darla Schumm, professor and search chair, [dschumm@hollins.edu](mailto:dschumm@hollins.edu) or (540) 362-6025.

Review of applications will begin on October 16, 2020 and will continue until the position is filled. All nominations, applications, and inquiries will be held in full confidence until finalists are identified for on-campus interviews.

Hollins is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is strongly committed to promoting diversity and inclusiveness at every level of the university. Persons of all genders, persons with disabilities, and persons of all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Candidates are encouraged to comment in their cover letter on how their contributions will further the university's efforts to ensure the success and inclusion of all members of its community.