

Columbia

C O L L E G E C H I C A G O

President

Columbia College Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

THE SEARCH

Columbia College Chicago (“CCC” or the “College”) invites applications and nominations for its next President, a visionary and dynamic leader who will guide CCC in its mission to shape the future of creative arts education. Located in the heart of downtown Chicago’s Cultural Mile, CCC thrives within a vibrant cultural landscape, leveraging the city’s artistic and professional opportunities to deliver a unique student experience. The next President will embrace CCC’s unique culture, rooted in social progress and serving a diverse, creative community of approximately (in fall 2024) 5,500-5,600 students, 200+ full-time and 400+ part-time faculty, and 400+ staff members.

CCC distinguishes itself among its peers with a curriculum that blends practitioner-led, applied training in the creative arts that prepares students for employment in creative disciplines. At its core, the College is dedicated to graduating students with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in the growing and dynamic creative economy. The next President of Columbia College Chicago will play a pivotal role in shaping the institution’s future. The President will help develop a strategic vision that positions the College for financial stability, elevates CCC’s reputation, and fosters a supportive and inclusive campus environment that has a primary focus on student success. The President will have experience managing through challenging financial environments and will have a proven track record of developing new revenue-generating operations, engaging with major donors, and establishing strategic partnerships that contribute to the longevity of the institution.

The President will serve as a champion for the College, enhancing its reputation on a local, national, and global scale. By building strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders, the President will foster a culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and mutual respect. Restoring trust and morale among students, faculty, and staff is vital. The ideal candidate will demonstrate visionary, strategic, and collaborative leadership in higher education or a similarly complex environment. They will possess strong financial acumen, exceptional communication skills, and a proven track record of fundraising success. The President should have a broad understanding of the disciplines at CCC and ideally hold a terminal degree appropriate to these fields.

Columbia College Chicago has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in strict confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO

Background

Founded in 1890, Columbia College Chicago is a private, not-for-profit college whose curriculum is focused on creative disciplines, including academic programs in communication and writing, media and digital arts, music and sound, performing arts, visual arts, and business and management. Located in downtown Chicago's South Loop, the College is centered in one of the world's most lively urban cultural areas. CCC's many competitive advantages include its strong reputation in the creative industries, outstanding faculty, passionate students, impressive technological and physical resources, and a commitment to bringing diverse voices and experiences in proximity with each other to shape new forms of creative practice. Although the College's roots draw from the turn of the 19th century, its modern-day incarnation is a product of the 1960s, when it reinvented itself as an institution built around a progressive social agenda, with a hybrid curriculum that incorporated a foundation in the liberal arts alongside a major program of study in a creative discipline. Embracing an access mission, enrollment grew dramatically from just over 200 students in the early 1970s to approximately 5,500-5,600 students today. The modern-day CCC is an institution that represents the expanding role of creative practice in society, and it stands out as a beacon for those seeking to thrive in the dynamic and growing creative economy.

Distinctively Columbia

What sets Columbia College Chicago apart from other institutions is its collaborative artistic ethos and its deep specialization in various creative disciplines. Prioritizing access over competitiveness, CCC's classrooms are accessible and inclusive, fostering a soulful and vibrant community that values creativity, passion, and humanity. CCC distinguishes itself through its inclusivity, welcoming students who have potential but may lack opportunities elsewhere and providing them with a supportive and engaging environment to develop and hone their craft. This inclusivity is reflected in its admissions policy, which welcomes a diverse student body that closely mirrors Chicago's racial demographics. By fostering a community rich in varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives, CCC significantly impacts the creative industries and arts ecosystem in Chicago and beyond.

The College's specialized programs that bridge the gap between mastery of creative disciplines and broader educational preparation are what distinguishes Columbia from its peer institutions. Faculty members bring real-world experience and industry connections to the classroom that enhance students' learning experiences. Columbia's programs and faculty have outstanding reputations in their fields. In annual surveys, the *Hollywood Reporter* consistently ranks its film program and music composition for the screen MA program as among the top programs in the United States, and the College's animation, comedy

studies, photography, playwriting, photography, visual effects, and video game design programs have received similar [accolades](#).

Each May, Columbia takes over the South Loop of Chicago with [Manifest](#), an all-day festival that showcases the hard work and talent of its wildly creative students. Produced and run by Columbia students, *Manifest* features gallery exhibitions, live music, film screenings, original video games, fashion shows, literary readings, and more. To experience the vivacity and electric energy of *Manifest 2024*, view videos of the event [here](#).

An Affirming, Welcoming, and Inclusive Community

Columbia prides itself on being an urban institution whose students reflect the economic, racial, cultural, and educational diversity of contemporary America. Its commitment to diversity, difference, and freedom of individual expression creates a uniquely welcoming and accepting environment. The college embodies a joy of exploration, discovery, and innovation, attracting students who are passionate about making a difference through their art practice. Often, these students are BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, first-generation college attendees, or individuals who historically have faced additional challenges in traditional educational settings because of intersecting identities and/or lack of access to opportunities. CCC provides a structured yet flexible environment where these students can develop their unique voices, explore their creativity, and acquire the business skills needed to succeed professionally. This inclusive and supportive atmosphere allows students to author the culture of their times while pursuing their creative and professional goals. In recognition of Columbia's diverse student body, the institution is also on the verge of being formally recognized as a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) by the U.S. Department of Education.

A Creative Urban Campus

Chicago's influence on CCC extends beyond its role as a backdrop for academic pursuits; it is also a vital part of the College's ethos and mission. Located in the heart of downtown Chicago's Cultural Mile, the College is intrinsically linked to the city's rich cultural landscape and dynamic arts scene. Occupying more than 15 academic, administrative, and residence life buildings in the South Loop neighborhood, a part of the city's central business district, the campus offers unparalleled opportunities for students to explore, collaborate, and engage with the city's creative industries and diverse communities. By engaging with Chicago's communities, the College not only enriches the educational experiences of its students but also contributes to the cultural and economic vitality of the city. This symbiotic relationship between the College and the city underscores CCC's identity as a core pillar in the cultural and artistic fabric of America's third-largest city.

In 2019, CCC opened a new \$55 million, 114,000-square-foot student center, representing a major investment in the quality of the student experience. The College also leases classroom, studio, and office space in Los Angeles for the Cinema and Television Arts department's Semester in LA program.

COLUMBIA'S PATH FORWARD

Building on a rich history as a vibrant center of culture, art, and creative energy, CCC is once again embracing the opportunity to evolve and ensure that it thrives for another 135 years. On May 20, 2024, the CCC Board of Trustees approved a series of [measures](#) designed to address Columbia's fiscal challenges. These measures modify the College's structure and offerings to boost the College's appeal to current and prospective students, enhance retention and graduation rates, and double down on its commitment to propel students into fruitful, creative careers. These measures also identify actions to improve administrative efficiency, reduce operating expenses, and make further progress in addressing the institution's recent operating deficits.

Restructuring the Academic Enterprise

Columbia is in the midst of a reorganization that will revamp the existing academic structure, which comprises four schools: the School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the School of Media Arts, the School of Fine and Performing Arts (which between them encompass fifteen academic departments), and the School of Graduate Studies. Under the restructuring plan announced in May 2024, the College will eliminate the School of Graduate Studies and transfer management of graduate programs directly to the academic discipline in which the program resides. Additionally, the remaining three schools will be replaced by eight creative academic units, still known as "schools" but characterized by different elements and leadership structures than those of the existing Schools. The result of these changes is to bring some formerly separate departments under one roof to take advantage of shared strengths, create more room for collaboration, and enhance students' cross-disciplinary skills. While some legacy programs will be eliminated, there is a focus on the development of new programs with a more robust student experience in mind. Additionally, the institution is modifying its Core Curriculum to provide students more space to pursue minors, complete non-degree certificate programs, take electives to deepen their knowledge of major disciplines, and explore pathways or Core interests. The changes also allow for programs to collaborate more closely and promote faculty engagement in meaningful cross-disciplinary practices. The restructuring process will be implemented in phases to ensure a smooth transition, with a full transition expected to be completed by the Fall 2025 semester.

Improving CCC's Financial Position

Like many higher education institutions, CCC has confronted a combination of national trends, internal challenges, and the impact of COVID-19, which have complicated efforts to grow enrollment and improve the College's fiscal standing. Enrollment trends over the past decade have spurred CCC to rethink both how it is structured and how it serves and educates its students. The College was hit especially hard by the pandemic as its curriculum—given the disciplines it offers—is geared towards hands-on instruction. In light of these challenges, the College is taking action to prevent extraordinary withdrawals from the endowment and restore the College's long-term financial health. These actions include a combination of administrative efficiencies, academic department and curricular reorganization, institutional expense

savings, and headcount reductions. As a result of these efforts, the institution is projected to realize approximately \$20 million in savings between FY24 and FY25. These steps, in combination with projected tuition increases, fundraising goals, and additional revenue-generating actions, are anticipated to bring the operating budget back into balance by FY27 and erase the deficit.

Additional information on Columbia College Chicago's finances and other key topics can be found in the Appendix at the end of this document.

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION

Former President Kwang-Wu Kim stepped down on July 1, 2024, having served in the role since 2013. He played a pivotal role in improving the academic and professional standards of the College, in supporting student success, in stabilizing and growing the College's endowment, and in upgrading the College's physical infrastructure, including the construction of a new \$55 million student center and a \$12 million theatre complex. CCC's board of trustees appointed Mr. Jerry Tarrer to serve as interim President upon Dr. Kim's departure. He steps into the position from his previous role as senior vice president for business affairs and chief financial officer for the College. Interim President Tarrer is laying important groundwork for the next administration by continuing work on bolstering the College's finances and overseeing changes designed to improve operations, curriculum, and service to students. More information on Interim President Tarrer and his cabinet can be found [here](#).

The Role of CCC's Next President

CCC is at a pivotal moment in its history, and the next President will play a fundamentally critical role in ensuring the future vitality and existence of the institution. Reporting to the CCC Board of Trustees, the President will be instrumental in setting a bold vision and strategic direction for Columbia College Chicago, aligning the institution's goals with its mission to be a leading college for educating and training students in creative disciplines.

The next President will be a highly visible, transformative, and inspirational change leader, deeply committed to engaging with the entire college community. Embodying the qualities of a dynamic and strategic chief executive, the President will be expected to set clear goals and guide the institution through a pivotal period, identifying educational markets where Columbia can grow and thrive. The President should not only be outwardly ceremonial, representing the College in various high-profile events and engagements, but also be hands-on in the day-to-day operations of the institution. This includes getting involved in the business aspects of each function, ensuring that all parts of the College work seamlessly towards common objectives.

The President will lead the College through upcoming structural revisions, aligning all faculty, staff, and students toward clear goals, fostering a culture of unity and a shared commitment to the future of the institution. A strong commitment to shared governance will be critical. The next President will foster a

culture that welcomes stakeholder input and diverse perspectives, thereby strengthening the College's collective engagement and trust. As an articulate and dynamic communicator, the President will promote CCC's mission and its pivotal role in the creative economy. The President will strengthen the College's brand and reputation, positioning it for growth and inspiring confident optimism for the future of CCC. Financial stewardship and fundraising will be crucial aspects of the President's role, and the next President must fully embrace the opportunity to lead CCC toward a financially sustainable and prosperous future. The next President's leadership will spark a new chapter for CCC, elevating its reputation within the creative industries and distinguishing the institution among its peers with an educational experience that blends practitioner-led, applied training in the creative arts with durable 21st-century skills.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

In particular, the next President will be charged with addressing the following opportunities and challenges:

Shape and implement a strategic vision that positions the College towards a vibrant future

The incoming President will have the opportunity to shape Columbia College Chicago's vision and strategic direction, building on its strengths in providing challenging and dynamic educational opportunities for creatives. The President will work closely with College stakeholders to craft and execute a plan that distinguishes the institution from its peers and enhances student success. The President will need to support interdisciplinary collaboration and implement efficient operating systems and processes. The President will also work closely with the Board of Trustees to align the strategic vision with the College's mission and goals, ensuring that key initiatives receive the necessary support and resources. In leading these efforts, the next President will create a more cohesive and effective academic environment, leading to positive impacts on enrollment, retention, and academic experience for all students.

Enhance financial stewardship and expand fundraising and industry partnerships

Addressing financial stability is a critical challenge for Columbia College Chicago. The President must lead transformational fundraising efforts, diversify revenue streams, implement strategic financial planning to secure the College's short and long-term future, and achieve financial resiliency. This includes increasing the endowment and obtaining financial resources for scholarships, academic programs, and infrastructure improvements. The President will cultivate a culture of philanthropy, engaging major donors and exploring new revenue opportunities such as strategic partnerships and innovative programs. Transparency in fundraising efforts, including clear communication about goals and outcomes, will be essential in building donor confidence and support. Establishing new and nurturing existing corporate partnerships will be essential in creating additional funding sources that enhance the College's industry connections. Given the impact of recent austerity measures on staff and faculty compensation, the new President will also need to improve the College's financial health to restore competitive compensation and morale among faculty and staff.

Champion Columbia College Chicago, enhancing its reputation on a local, national, and global scale

The President will serve as a visible leader and ambassador for Columbia College Chicago, actively engaging with the campus and local communities, industry partners, and the broader public. The President will be the primary advocate for CCC, enhancing its reputation and building meaningful partnerships that extend the College's reach and influence. The President will participate in student and community events, foster connections with alumni, and promote the College's mission and achievements. By strengthening relationships with key stakeholders, the President will attract new opportunities for collaboration and support, solidifying Columbia College's standing as a leader in creative arts education. Building strong ties with the City of Chicago, leveraging the city's vibrant arts scene, and fostering relationships with local industries will also be critical in this role.

Oversee enrollment and retention strategies that drive growth and promote student persistence

CCC is renowned for its hands-on learning environment, where students master their creative discipline and hone their craft. Improving Columbia's student retention rates and promoting enrollment growth is essential for generating revenue and achieving financial stability. The President will oversee the creation and implementation of innovative recruitment and retention strategies to attract a diverse and talented student body and support them towards successful graduation and employment. The President will support efforts to ensure program-market fit, which may include sunsetting or restructuring existing academic offerings and launching new programs that align with industry demands and student interests. This will enable the College to reinvest in its facilities, faculty, staff, and student services. The President will also strengthen partnerships with industry leaders and alumni to create more opportunities for internships, collaborations, and job placements, further enhancing the appeal of prospective and enrolled students.

Lead with operational excellence and accountability

Ensuring operational excellence and efficiency is essential for Columbia College Chicago's success. The president will oversee the implementation of necessary structural changes. They will push forward College-wide progress on important initiatives and serve as a model of leadership that motivates all departments to move forward on institutional change efforts. The President's ability to manage complex operations and maintain high standards of accountability for themselves and others will be crucial in navigating the College's challenges and capitalizing on its opportunities.

Embrace a community built on diversity, difference, and freedom of individual expression

CCC's diverse community is fundamental to its mission and identity. The President will embrace and advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, ensuring that all students, faculty, and staff feel valued and supported. This includes addressing systemic barriers, supporting underrepresented groups,

and fostering an inclusive campus culture that celebrates differences and individual expression. The President must truly embrace the culture of CCC, which has historical roots in a social progressive agenda and serves a student body that includes many individuals from marginalized communities. By supporting efforts to engage with local high schools, community organizations, and other educational institutions, the President will help to build pipelines for diverse student enrollment. In embodying CCC's culture, the President will support policies and practices that reflect the College's commitment to social justice and equity.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While experience in a creative field represented by Columbia College Chicago is welcome, the search advisory committee is open to candidates who embody a passion of and support for creative disciplines. The committee also recognizes that while few candidates will possess all the qualifications and characteristics it is seeking, the ideal candidate for the president of CCC will have many of the following:

- **Proven Leader:** Demonstrated track record of visionary, strategic, and collaborative leadership in higher education or a similarly complex environment. Prior experience and success in transformational change and/or turnarounds in a college or university setting will be highly valued. A previous academic appointment at the rank of full professor, or a record of clearly demonstrated superior performance and accomplishments warranting an equivalent academic appointment, is desirable.
- **Financial Acumen:** Strong planning and financial proficiencies, with experience in setting strategic financial and programmatic priorities that balance short-term and long-term objectives. An in-depth understanding of business and financial models, preferably in a higher education context.
- **Exemplary Communication Skills:** Exceptional oral and written communication skills. The ability to foster collaboration, translate thoughts for broader consideration, and build unity around difficult issues is necessary.
- **Fundraising Success:** Proven success and appetite for fundraising, with the ability to cultivate relationships with major donors, secure financial resources, and engage alumni. A record of sustained philanthropic success, preferably in a higher education context, is vital.
- **Enrollment Strategies:** Proven experience in developing and implementing successful enrollment strategies. Demonstrated ability to build and lead an effective enrollment team to drive student recruitment and retention.
- **Commitment to Student Success:** Demonstrated ability to enhance skill-building, improve graduation rates, and ensure successful employment outcomes for students.

- **Commitment to Academic Excellence:** Strong appreciation of the academic world and its scholarly value, with the ability to earn and command the respect of faculty. A commitment to a creative and liberal arts education, critical thinking, and academic freedom is essential.
- **Champion for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** A demonstrated commitment to the values of social equity and inclusivity. The willingness to create an inclusive and equitable community, as evidenced by past accomplishments, is fundamental to the role.
- **Commitment to Creative Industries:** Knowledge and appreciation of the creative disciplines represented at Columbia College Chicago.
- **Educational Background:** A terminal degree appropriate to the disciplines at CCC is preferred.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and/or resumes with cover letters may be submitted electronically to:

Dan Rodas, Partner
Tim Lanigan, Senior Associate
Raul Bernal, Senior Associate
Seema Khan, Senior Search Coordinator
Nicole Sancilio, Senior Search Coordinator

Isaacson, Miller
263 Summer Street, 7th Floor
Boston, MA 02210

Applications, inquiries, and nominations may be [submitted here](#).

Columbia College Chicago is an equal opportunity employer and complies with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations concerning civil rights. The college does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, protected veteran status, genetic information, or other protected classes under the law.

Columbia College Chicago seeks individuals with a demonstrated ability to work with students from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds and whose creative, scholarly, and/or professional work aligns with our commitment to dismantling systems of privilege and oppression. All faculty members are expected to advance the College's DEI mission. For more information on the Office of Academic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, please visit: <https://about.colum.edu/diversity-equity-inclusion/index>.

APPENDIX: More About Columbia College Chicago

Alumni

Once students graduate from Columbia College Chicago, they become part of the growing alumni network of more than 96,000 alumni worldwide, making it one of the largest alumni networks of any arts and media college in the world. The alumni network at Columbia is a creative and dynamic community that actively shapes the future of the arts and media industries. Alumni from the College are found in various creative industries; they bring innovative practices to education, community, and civic engagement. Among its distinguished alumni are renowned cinematographers such as Janusz Kaminski, Michael Goi, and Mauro Fiore, as well industry leaders such as Paul Broucek (president of Music, Warner Brothers Pictures), Len Amato (president at HBO Films), Ben Mills (head of product at Venmo), Iliana Regan, a James Beard Award-nominated chef, David Cromer, a MacArthur Genius Award winner and one of Broadway's most distinguished directors, and Anna Shapiro, a Tony Award-winning director and former artistic director of Steppenwolf Theatre. More information about the alumni of Columbia can be found [here](#).

Finances

Pre-COVID, Columbia College Chicago operated for decades with no operating deficits. The pandemic exacerbated existing enrollment and financial challenges, leading to decreased revenue due to increased tuition discounting and enrolment declines. Despite these setbacks, CCC is determined to return to a healthy financial state under its next president. The administrative and instructional cost reductions, structural reorganization, and layoffs highlighted in this document represent the College's commitment to addressing its financial challenges and developing a long-term financial strategy that sustains the institution going forward.

Projections for the FY25 budget estimate operating revenue of \$148.5 million, an operating deficit of \$18.4 million, and a cash reserve balance that will vary between \$13.1 million (low) and \$30.9 million (high) during the fiscal year. CCC has taken steps to reduce administrative overhead expenses by \$15M for the 2025 fiscal year. This includes the elimination of 100 positions (70 filled and 30 vacant) at the end of May 2024 (impacted staff and administrators received severance packages and other transition assistance). An additional \$4M in academic cost reductions will be realized through efficiencies in educational delivery and ongoing restructuring efforts. Overall, the College will decrease budgeted operating expenses by nearly \$20M between FY24 and FY25.

As of June 30, 2024, the College's endowment was valued at \$192.2 million, with more than 92% of this value unrestricted. CCC has \$64.4 million in outstanding debt, none of which matures before 2037. The College remains current on all its debt and no debt covenants have been triggered by its lenders. Columbia has not missed any payments to any entity and is current with all accounts payable. The College's last three Composite Financial (CFI) Scores have been 3.00 (FY21), 2.20 (FY22), and 2.20 (FY23). In its most recent review, S&P Global Ratings awarded the College a rating of BBB-, a modest adjustment to reflect the College's continuing deficit. This still places Columbia as an investment-grade credit risk. The S&P

report identified additional indicators that are positive for CCC's financial future, including an "impressive first-year matriculation rate relative to rating category medians and similarly rated peers" and "Financial resource ratios, which remain near, if slightly below, rating category medians despite weakening in recent years."

CCC's latest audited financial statements are posted [here](#).

Faculty

Faculty at CCC are dedicated teachers in the classroom, as well as scholars, makers, and producers in their fields. Current and former faculty, both full- and part-time, have been recognized with MacArthur Foundation Fellowships and Pulitzer, Grammy, and Tony nominations or awards. Creative and scholarly output includes books, marketing campaigns, and television, film, game, and other productions. Faculty are also deeply engaged in civic and community engagement activities and are active in their professional communities. The College anticipates faculty size for the FY25 to stand at 200+ full-time faculty and 400+ part-time faculty.

Governance

Shared governance is essential to realizing the spirit and goals of Columbia College Chicago's mission. The ultimate legal authority for CCC is vested in its [Board of Trustees](#), who are leaders in business, education, philanthropy, law, government, media, and other fields. In addition to the Faculty Senate, which empowers faculty to provide authoritative communication and collaboration with the president of the College, there are a number of additional bodies that meet regularly to plan, share information, discuss pertinent college issues, review programs, recommend policies, and propose procedures. More information can be found [here](#).

Labor Relations

Columbia College's leadership has worked closely with the two unions that represent its part-time faculty and its staff. The Columbia Faculty Union (CFAC) represents 400+ part-time faculty members who have been unionized since 1998. College staff members won the right to form a union in 2006 and are represented by the United Staff of Columbia College (USofCC). Columbia strives to maintain productive and collaborative relationships with each of its unions.

In the fall of 2023, part-time faculty members represented by CFAC went on strike. The strike, which lasted for 49 days, highlighted CFAC's concerns about the College's financial management and the impact of cost-cutting measures on educational quality and part-time faculty workload. Despite the challenges, an agreement was reached in December 2023, addressing many of the union's concerns and paving the way for improved collaboration and transparency between the administration and part-time faculty. As of May

20, 2024, negotiators for the staff union were engaged in bargaining discussions for a new contract. The staff union's current contract expires on August 31, 2024.

Staff

CCC's 400+ staff members are essential to the institution's success. They play a pivotal role in creating a supportive and enriching educational environment, offering guidance, resources, and expertise that enhance the student experience. From academic advisors and counselors to administrative personnel and support staff, each member's dedication ensures the smooth operation of the College and the well-being of its students. As CCC navigates financial challenges and seeks to stabilize its future, the continued dedication and contribution of its staff will be instrumental in driving the College toward a prosperous and sustainable path.

Students

Columbia College Chicago's nearly 5,500-5,600 students are aspiring creatives in their respective industries and fields. Representing a broad spectrum of racial and ethnic identities, as well as sexuality and gender-identity cultures, Columbia students truly represent what it means to have a diverse campus. Students hail from every state in the nation and more than 60 countries. Columbia College Chicago practices a progressive admissions policy with the intention of increasing meaningful access to higher education and providing resources to support students from acceptance through graduation. 50% of the student body identifies with a federally defined minority group, and 16% of the student body identifies as first-generation college students.