

Dean, School of Arts & Interdisciplinary Studies

[Emerson College](#) seeks a forward-thinking, collaborative leader of distinguished academic accomplishment to serve as Dean of the new School of Arts & Interdisciplinary Studies. Reporting to Emerson's Provost, Dr. Alexandra Socarides, and working closely with its President, Dr. Jay Bernhardt, the Dean will be responsible for providing vision, leadership, and operational oversight of this important unit within Emerson's unique academic enterprise. Building on a heritage of innovation and an established reputation for excellence and creativity, the Dean will create and implement a plan to advance the School's impact and stature in the context of the College's strategic plan, [Extraordinary Emerson 2030](#).

School of Arts & Interdisciplinary Studies

The School of Arts & Interdisciplinary Studies is the largest of Emerson's three academic divisions. Formed through a summer 2025 reorganization of several academic units, the School now comprises three academic departments: Writing, Literature & Publishing; Performing Arts; and the Marlboro Institute for Liberal Arts and Interdisciplinary Studies. It is also the home of the Comedic Arts program, the Media Arts Gallery and the Huret & Spector Gallery, and the journal *Ploughshares*. For the Fall 2025 semester, the School has over 1,000 undergraduate students and approximately 350 graduate students. The launch and growth of online programs, such as Popular Fiction Writing & Publishing, has driven a significant increase in graduate enrollments over the last five years. In Fall 2025, the School has over 100 full-time, 200 part-time faculty, and 25 staff.

Emerson College

As its mission statement establishes, "Emerson College's mission is to educate and elevate extraordinary artists, communicators, scholars, and professionals for the betterment of society. We pursue this mission through world-class teaching, practice, performance, and discovery that are experiential, innovative, and inclusive." This mission guides and shapes all Emerson programs whether for undergraduate or graduate students.

Founded in 1880 and spanning three distinct global campuses, [Emerson College](#) serves over 3,500 undergraduate and 1,500 graduate students from more than 70 countries and all 50 states. Its main campus is located in the heart of Boston's Theatre District and offers the entire Emerson community experiences that are sewn into the very fabric of Boston. [Emerson's Los Angeles](#) campus provides a West Coast experience for up to 215 Emerson junior and senior students pursuing semester-long internships related to their field of study in iconic Hollywood. The [Kasteel Well](#) campus in the Netherlands has been a hub for international scholarship and research for nearly 40 years and serves as a living-learning community for up to 90 Emerson students each semester. Emerson enjoys strong partnerships with institutions across the world, including the Paris College of Art, which adds to the richness of the Emerson experience. Emerson also has its [Emerson Prison Initiative](#) (EPI), which works to democratize access to college education.

Emerson educates future leaders in the arts, communication and media; inspires generations of students to think boldly and creatively; and ensures that all students, faculty, staff, and alumni contribute powerfully to the cultural, social, political, and civic landscape. Deliberately committed to a grounding in the liberal arts and interdisciplinarity, the College-wide curriculum enables

students to pursue academic majors and programs such as Media Arts Production, Journalism, Creative Writing, Marketing Communication, Publishing, Theatre, Political Communication, Communication Science and Disorders, Comedic Arts, and many more across the institution. Emerson's community is passionate and creative; its students are critical storytellers at a critical time.

Emerson has developed a collaborative shared-governance model. In addition, faculty and many administrative staff are unionized: Emerson's full-time faculty teach, perform, research, advise and serve under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement; affiliated (less than full-time) faculty work under the terms of a different collective bargaining agreement; and administrative staff in many functional areas and position classifications are also unionized.

The Position

Serving on the Provost's leadership team, the Dean is the academic leader of the School of Arts & Interdisciplinary Studies. The ideal candidate will be accomplished in their field and able to move fluidly across the School's various areas, demonstrating the ability to understand and engage with a broad range of academic and creative disciplines. This leader will advance the distinctiveness, reputation, and impact of the School and the College with primary responsibility for:

- Developing and bringing to life a vision and strategic goals for the School aligned with [Extraordinary Emerson 2030](#)
- Ensuring pervasive and authentic implementation of Emerson's mission, vision, and values
- Leading the intellectual vitality and creative growth of programs in expanded modalities (in person and online) at Emerson's campuses and globally
- Overseeing faculty recruitment, hiring, development, tenure and promotion, and well-being
- Sustaining and strengthening the School's and the College's shared governance values and practices
- Identifying, prioritizing, and articulating the School's interests and needs to internal and external audiences
- Establishing, sustaining, and refreshing intellectual coherence and academic cooperation across departments and schools
- Managing personnel, budget, planning, and administrative processes
- Providing departments with guidance on creating, positioning, reimagining, and/or launching academic programs, expanding the enrollment pipeline, and enhancing the student experience
- Fostering successful development and continuity of academic department leadership

Opportunities:

- Cultivate a cohesive and distinctive identity for the School, realizing its full potential both independently and through interdisciplinary engagement and collaboration across the College
- Assist in and lead fundraising and development initiatives in coordination with the Provost and President

- Encourage the development of interdisciplinarity and innovation as a guiding value in new program development
- Foster the development of a vibrant and inclusive culture for the new School, characterized by collegiality, innovation, and engagement among faculty, staff, and students
- Advance the School's presence at Emerson's Los Angeles and Netherlands campuses, and identify compelling new domestic and international partnerships that can broaden the College's reach
- Collaborate with the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Associate Vice President for Executive Education to strengthen and expand graduate and non-degree and professional development programs that are anchored in the School

Qualifications

- Academic credentials, teaching experience, and research and/or creative record commensurate with appointment as a tenured full professor in one of the School's departments
- Capacity to develop and articulate a vision for arts education, creative activity, and liberal arts that draws on, innovates, and differentiates the School and the College
- Demonstrated academic leadership and administrative experience
- Demonstrated commitment to inclusive and academic excellence and shared governance
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively across diverse academic areas and disciplines, bringing depth in one's own field while also appreciating, understanding, and effectively navigating and supporting the perspectives, methods, and needs of all disciplines within the multifaceted school
- Demonstrated ability to grow programs in strategic, data-driven, and innovative directions
- The ability to develop and implement a vision for the excellence of the School that is both distinctive to the School and integrated within Emerson's strengths, trajectory, and strategic plan
- Experience working effectively with faculty, students, staff, administrators, and alumni from a variety of backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives
- Experience with institutional advancement and alumni relations

Equity and inclusion are core values at Emerson College, along with creativity, innovation, curiosity, expression, and collaboration. The successful candidate must demonstrate a commitment to Emerson's core values.

The anticipated salary range for this position is \$225,000-275,000.

To Apply

Emerson College has retained [Opus Partners](#) to support this recruitment. Craig Smith, Senior Partner, and Abigail Maynard, Managing Associate are leading the search. Inquiries, applications, and nominations should be sent to abigail.maynard@opuspartners.net. The search process will unfold with the greatest possible attention to candidate confidentiality. Required application materials include a CV and letter of interest. The letter should reflect how a candidate's

qualifications and experience match those described in this leadership profile. Application review will begin on January 15, 2026, and continue until the position is filled.

Emerson College seeks individuals who bring innovation, creativity, and impact to its campuses to increase its depth, breadth, and diversity in our educational offerings. Emerson's commitment to inclusive excellence is supported by a range of resources.

Commitment to Inclusion

Emerson College believes the pathway to achieving inclusive excellence is fostering a campus climate where everyone can thrive. As a community of scholars and storytellers, we continually strive to cultivate a community that draws upon the widest possible pool of talent, characterized by the intentional inclusion of individuals from varied backgrounds, perspectives, beliefs, and values.

Annual Clery Report

In accordance with the federal Clery and Campus SaVE Acts, Emerson College commits to providing all current and prospective students and employees with access to the annual campus security reports for each of our campuses. This report may be accessed from the Emerson College Police Department website. Emerson College has designated the Associate Vice President of Equity, Access & Equal Opportunity/ Title IX Coordinator to respond to inquiries regarding the College's Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment & Sexual Violence. The Associate Vice President of Equity, Access & Equal Opportunity/ Title IX Coordinator is located in the Ansin Building, 180 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02111, Suite 409, and may be reached by calling (617) 824-8999 or by emailing oeo@emerson.edu.