

# Kenyon



*At Kenyon, we build strong foundations for lives of purpose and consequence.*

## **PROVOST SEARCH**

### **POSITION PROSPECTUS**

This search is managed in partnership with Opus Partners.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kenyon College is a top-ranked liberal arts college distinguished for academic and scholarly excellence, close relationships among students and professors, and a strong sense of place. Each year, a new class of students makes the intentional decision to join this community that embraces challenging work, creativity, and a wide range of viewpoints. On Kenyon's exceptionally beautiful central-Ohio hilltop campus – regularly [ranked](#) among the country's most beautiful – students and faculty are partners in inquiry, devoting energy and respect to the work before them and the people around them.

As it moves into its third century, Kenyon College seeks a bold, adroit, and engaged leader to serve as its next Provost and advance its distinguished academic and scholarly mission. Leading and serving the faculty in its stewardship of the Kenyon education, the Provost reports to the President of the College and serves as a key member of her cabinet.

Kenyon's new chief academic officer will join the College at a pivotal moment. Across higher education, institutions are adjusting to external forces that are placing pressure on colleges and universities, including Kenyon. Kenyon leadership and trustees, however, recognize this moment as an opportunity and are aligning resources and strategy to capitalize on it, taking a proactive approach to enhance programs and offerings, adopt new strategies to recruit and enroll students, right-size the budget for long-term financial sustainability, explore new revenue opportunities, and continue to grow the endowment. At this inflection-point, the next Provost will contribute vision, conviction, creativity, and resourcefulness in framing and implementing decisions that will shape the College going forward.

As a trusted partner to the President and a champion of the faculty, Kenyon's new Provost will contribute broadly to the College's success. They will be a collaborative leader who is committed to working with colleagues to ensure a vibrant future for the entire Kenyon community.

In stewarding the College's academic mission, the Provost will seek a strategic balance between tradition and innovation and will keep in focus both the interests of the faculty and the interests of the College.

## THE POSITION

Two principles underpin the academic program at Kenyon. One is a commitment to the liberal arts and sciences – the belief that this approach to education, with its emphasis on breadth, on critical thinking, and on writing and communication, provides the best preparation for “a life of purpose and consequence.” The other is an emphasis on personal relationships: relationships fuel learning at Kenyon.

The faculty is the heart of the institution. At Kenyon, faculty responsibilities include teaching, scholarship, and service. Excellent teaching has always held the highest priority. But the administration and faculty recognize that scholarly activity is vital both for its intrinsic value and its value in shaping a dynamic and relevant curriculum. As a result, Kenyon has built a faculty of dedicated scholars and creative artists who participate in and shape their disciplines, winning grants and fellowships, publishing articles and books, presenting research at conferences, and exhibiting their creative work. Between 2010-2025, the College hired 109 tenure-track faculty. Of these, 45 have secured tenure and 42 await tenure review. The rate at which Kenyon tenures its faculty has remained stable over time.

Kenyon professors are avid and accomplished scholars whose research gives a vital foundation to their excellence in teaching. They work closely with students, in and out of class, challenging them, inspiring them, and frequently collaborating with them on research. They serve as academic advisors and personal mentors and often stay in touch with students for years after they graduate. Kenyon professors care about their students; they set high standards and help students meet them.



Kenyon takes considerable pride in its curriculum, which is traditional but far from static. Rooted in the liberal arts and sciences, the curriculum lives in 26 academic departments within four academic divisions – fine arts, humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences – plus nine interdisciplinary programs. All Kenyon students complete the same basic requirements for graduation, declare a major and may elect a second major or a minor. Each major includes a Senior Exercise, a culminating academic experience defined by the department or program.

While the College's academic departments continue to advance scholarship and research within the parameters of their disciplines, the curriculum also encourages interdisciplinary work through an impressive array of interdisciplinary programs: American Studies, Biochemistry, International Studies, Molecular Biology, Neuroscience, Environmental Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, and the Integrated Program in Humane Studies. There are in addition four special academic initiatives advanced through college-wide centers: the Center for the Study of American Democracy, Digital Humanities, Jewish Studies, and Science and Nature Writing. With its Computing and Artificial Intelligence program, Kenyon brings faculty and students together to study artificial intelligence from multiple disciplinary standpoints.

Kenyon's distinctiveness centers on its deep commitment to liberal-arts education and an intensely personal model of faculty-student engagement: the student/faculty ratio remains 9:1. The faculty is distinguished by any measure and includes recipients of funding from the major federal agencies as well as private sources such as the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the Henry Luce Foundation. The current faculty include four winners of NSF Early Career Awards. Total federal funding for research at Kenyon has surpassed \$1 million in each of the last five years.

The engagement between faculty of this caliber and the wonderful students who come to Kenyon leads to extraordinary recognition for the students: in the decade to 2023, students won three Goldwater Scholarship, 13 Gilman Scholarships, 30 NSF Graduate Research Fellowships, and no fewer than 80 Fulbright Awards. In 2026, Kenyon was recognized as a top producer for the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Student Program for the 19th time in the past 21 years, ranking the College among the top 18 Baccalaureate institutions nationally, confirming its place as a leader among liberal arts institutions in developing these international scholars. The College ranks ahead of the Ivy League institutions in the percentage of STEM graduates who earn a PhD in a STEM field. It is also the only liberal-arts college to receive a [Schmidt Sciences award](#) (among 23 national recipients). Other data that illustrate Kenyon's character and community are available [here](#).

The [Office of the Provost](#) oversees all aspects of Kenyon's academic mission, including faculty, curriculum, research, and academic advising. The Provost, the Associate Provosts, and the office's administrative staff constitute the office and support the work of committees that function within Kenyon's shared governance structure.

The Provost's portfolio will include responsibility for the following areas:

- Academic Advising
- Brown Family Environmental Center and Kenyon Farm
- Career Development Office
- Center for Global Engagement
- Center for the Study of American Democracy
- Office of Sponsored Research & Strategic Initiatives
- Institutional Research
- Library and Special Collections
- Registrar

The Provost appoints and guides the work of three associate provosts – members of the faculty who serve full-time in these roles, typically for terms of three years – and the administrative staff who support the office and its operations. Similarly, consulting with the faculty, the Provost appoints department chairs and program directors and guides the development of department- and program-based curricula. The Academic Administrative Assistants who work in departments and programs also report to the Provost's office.



The Provost chairs, serves on or is *ex officio* on, and/or receives reports from important committees established in the College's bylaws and faculty handbook:

- Faculty Executive Committee
- Resource and Assessment Subcommittee of the Executive Committee
- Tenure and Promotions Committee
- Committee on Academic Standards
- Curricular Policy Committee
- Faculty Affairs Committee
- Academic Infractions Board

The Provost also co-chairs with the Vice President for Finance the College's Benefits Advisory Committee and serves as a member of the Retirement Oversight Committee.

Kenyon has two senior leadership teams that include members from the College's academic and administrative divisions. A 21-member senior staff meets with the president monthly to offer input on College priorities, policies, and operations. President Kornfeld also meets with a cabinet composed of the provost, the chair of the faculty, and the vice presidents to make strategic institutional decisions, taking into account input from senior staff and other governing bodies. The Provost serves on both of the President's leadership teams.

The Provost's primary engagement with Kenyon's Board of Trustees comes through serving as the official liaison to its Student Experience Committee, the committee responsible for academic affairs Kenyon's Board continues to affirm its support for College leadership in bold, strategic action.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND PRIORITIES

Consulting with the President, the faculty, and College constituents, the Provost will lead or contribute to the success of initiatives that will advance Kenyon as a leading national liberal arts college.

The primary expectation of Kenyon's next Provost is to lead the academic enterprise through a combination of intellectual credibility, empathy, trust, consultation, and conviction. They will engage constituents in bold, necessary, and appropriate change that will advance Kenyon's academic excellence and distinction and successfully position it for today's rapidly changing environment. Working with empathy and transparency, the Provost will enable the faculty and the College writ large to do the difficult work necessary to both sustain and innovate, protect and evolve. As one member of the Kenyon community put it, "we want to ensure that what is timeless about a Kenyon education is relevant and impactful to today's students, and to ensure that what is new in a Kenyon education is faithful to the College's values."

The College is strategically enhancing its programs and offerings to be responsive to prospective students while remaining true to its core mission. "Kenyon Keys," set to launch this fall, is the College's theme-based signature program that strengthens interdisciplinarity across the curriculum, puts learning into practice, and helps students link their experiences in and out of the classroom with their aspirations for the future.

Several components work in synergy to support students and the Keys programming: an enhanced first-year experience, a robust sophomore experience, thematic programming, expanded experiential learning opportunities, and a truly integrated advising program. Kenyon Keys will help students connect their experiences in and out of the classroom with their aspirations for the future.

President Kornfeld has prioritized the expansion of an employee housing program designed to encourage and allow faculty to live close to campus to contribute to the residential nature of Kenyon. Collaborating with the College's Chief Operating Officer and Vice President for Finance, the Provost will contribute to the development and management of new programs that assist faculty who wish to embrace this aspect of the Kenyon community.

As the next Provost establishes themselves at Kenyon, they will have the opportunity to examine the structure of the Office of the Provost to ensure that it can continue to execute its many executive and administrative responsibilities effectively and be responsive to the changing needs of students and the external higher education environment.

Kenyon constituents have articulated many aspirations in describing their ideal Provost:

- Intellectual credibility: Kenyon faculty want an academic with genuine disciplinary depth, a strong scholarly track record, and conviction about the purpose of a liberal-arts education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Faculty-centered leadership and an empathetic, transparent leadership style
- Backbone and transparency: the next Provost needs to be able to make difficult decisions in ways that involve faculty, reflecting and honoring Kenyon's commitment to faculty shared governance
- Change leadership, not change imposition: faculty want a leader who will initiate inspiring, future-oriented conversations with the faculty in a spirit of genuine respect and inclusion
- Commitment to Kenyon as a destination, not a stepping stone: this community wants someone who will embrace the sustained work that is necessary to effect strategic change
- Operational clarity and execution: the value proposition of the Provost's Office must be known to all, its standards must be clear, and its reputation must be for impact and execution
- Enthusiasm for engaging with AI: Similarly, the Kenyon community wants a provost who can advance the conversation about what a liberal-arts education means right now, in the age of AI, difficult economics, and challenges to value proposition of a college education

In engaging these expectations, the next Provost has the opportunity to become a trusted member of the Kenyon community, contributing energy, intellect, empathy, and commitment to the good of the College and shaping its exciting future.

## COMPETENCIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

Kenyon College seeks as its next Provost an innovative and collaborative leader who will effectively manage an extensive administrative enterprise; promote and embody scholarly and teaching excellence; inspire, lead, and champion the faculty; collaborate effectively with other senior leaders; and represent Kenyon, its academic programs, and its educational mission to internal and external constituencies. The Provost will be someone who can hold a genuine tension: trusted by faculty so as to move alongside them, and strong enough to lead them through the decisions that face the College.

Success in the Provost role requires several core attributes:

- The ability to engage the College community in advancing Kenyon's academic mission
- The capacity to identify the right opportunities for Kenyon's academic programs to remain distinctive and compelling
- Passion and judgment in articulating the College's values and in ensuring that the curriculum achieves these values in a dynamic and compelling way
- Strategic skills to shape and execute a compelling vision for Kenyon
- Change-leadership skills to identify, refine, launch, and implement the right initiatives
- Tactical skills and emotional intelligence to manage day-to-day operations
- An institutional perspective that promotes the long-term goals of the College

The Provost will bring the breadth of perspective needed to frame Kenyon's opportunities and challenges in both Kenyon-specific and national contexts to enhance understanding of the forces that are driving change.



The President and College stakeholders appreciate that each candidate will possess strengths in different measure. Nonetheless, the successful candidate will bring a majority of the following qualities to the role:

- Intelligence and integrity of the first order
- A strong track record of innovation as an educator, scholar, and administrator
- Deep commitment to teaching and research excellence
- An appreciation for and commitment to the value of a liberal arts education
- Demonstrated experience advancing an inclusive and equitable academic community
- The ability to provide engaged leadership for all elements of the Kenyon community
- Demonstrated management, planning, and financial skills
- Creative, global, and interdisciplinary thinking
- Outstanding listening and communication skills

The Provost serves at the pleasure of the President. Independent of their appointment as Provost, they will have an underlying appointment as a tenured member of the College's faculty. Candidates must therefore possess the academic credentials required for appointment as a tenured full professor, including a terminal degree in their field and a record of teaching, scholarship, and service commensurate with such an appointment.

## **KENYON COLLEGE**

Founded in 1824, Kenyon is Ohio's oldest private College. Kenyon remains committed to the values of a liberal-arts education applied to the world its students will enter when they graduate. These include critical thinking skills, analytical abilities, and communication skills. Kenyon, the birthplace of the [Kenyon Review](#), is proudly known as the "writers' college"; while its curriculum spans all disciplines, clear and truthful communication remains at the heart of its education. In their time at Kenyon, students acquire the ability to integrate knowledge across multiple disciplines within a strong grounding in ethics. By the time they graduate, Kenyon students are prepared for success, whether in professions or in graduate education.

Kenyon is located in Gambier, Ohio, less than an hour from Columbus, which is one of the country's fastest-growing cities. The beautiful 610-acre hilltop campus inspires the work of some 200 faculty and some 1700 undergraduates, who live on campus for all four years. Kenyon has invested in its campus, with several striking new academic buildings, including the Chalmers Library, which forms the heart of the campus and the student experience. The College is committed to sustainability.

The physical setting is itself a differentiator. The 700-acre [Brown Family Environmental Center](#), a 10-acre working farm, the Philander Chase Conservancy, the Kokosing River, and a genuinely vibrant town-gown relationship with Mount Vernon and Gambier all make Kenyon a very intentional place with a rich social fabric.

At the close of its 2024-2025 fiscal year, Kenyon's endowment was valued at \$680 million. Its FY2025 operating revenues were \$138 million and its operating expenses were \$147 million. The College has a long record of balanced budgets and is well positioned to address its operating deficit through cost controls, right-sizing personnel, and modestly increased endowment expenditures. In all of these decisions, Kenyon's educational mission and community values have remained guiding principles for leadership.

In 2020, the College established a new account of the values that inform its [mission](#):

- Intellectual empowerment and creativity
- Embracing differences
- Kindness, respect, and integrity
- Enduring connections to people and place

## President Julie Kornfeld

President Kornfeld [began her tenure](#) as Kenyon president in October 2023, in time for the College's bicentennial in 2024 and the successful conclusion of its largest-ever campaign, which raised \$532M. She is now advancing the [Third Century Founders](#) initiative, which aims to add \$100M to the College's endowment by April, 2027. Before coming to Kenyon, she was the Vice Provost for Academic Programs at Columbia University and the Vice Dean for Education at its Mailman School of Public Health.

As she began her tenure, President Kornfeld consulted with the Kenyon community and distilled from the 2021 strategic plan a set of strategic initiatives that are guiding the College's planning and fundraising. These initiatives include developing experiential education as a robust part of all academic programs; increasing engagement with Columbus across its corporate, government, civic, arts, and innovation areas; and a more expansive approach to preparing students for life beyond Kenyon in [careers](#), advanced education, and service.

## Gambier, Mount Vernon, and Columbus

Kenyon sustains the Village of Gambier, a community in central Ohio's Knox County with some 2,000 permanent residents. Mount Vernon, the county seat, is 15 minutes away and is a steadily growing city with a population of approximately 17,000 and amenities that enhance Kenyon's immediate locale. Knox County is the home of several significant companies, including Ariel Corporation, JELD-WEN, and Kokosing Construction Corporation, that diversify its primarily agricultural economy. The area's natural beauty encompasses the pristine Kokosing River, rolling hills, state parks, and nature preserves. Ohio's state capital, Columbus, is less than an hour from campus. It is a rapidly growing city with a population of one million (over two million in the metropolitan area) with an increasingly diversified economy across technology, finance, and advanced manufacturing, and is the home of Battelle Memorial Institute and The Ohio State University. Global corporations such as Intel, JPMorgan Chase, and Amazon have substantial presence. While many members of the Kenyon community enjoy living close to campus, Columbus' size, amenities, diversity, and excellent airport add to the appeal of the College's location.

## TO APPLY

Kenyon College has retained [Opus Partners](#) to support this recruitment. [Craig Smith](#), Senior Partner, and [Abigail Maynard](#), Managing Associate, are leading the search. Confidential inquiries and nominations should be sent to Abigail Maynard at [Abigail.maynard@opuspartners.net](mailto:Abigail.maynard@opuspartners.net).

*Kenyon College is an equal opportunity employer, and we welcome applications from all qualified individuals. It is the College's policy to evaluate qualified applicants without regard to race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, physical and/or mental disability, age, religion, medical condition, veteran status, marital status, or any other characteristic protected by institutional policy or state, local, or federal law. Kenyon College has a strong commitment to an inclusive environment that welcomes all voices and perspectives.*



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**Kenyon**