An Invitation to Apply for the Position of:
Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Muhlenberg College
Allentown, Pennsylvania

THE SEARCH

Muhlenberg College, located in Allentown, Pennsylvania, invites applications and nominations for the position of Chief Academic Officer and Provost. Founded in 1848, Muhlenberg is a selective residential, undergraduate, coeducational, private liberal arts college enrolling approximately 2,200 full-time students. The College is admired for its academic rigor, dedicated faculty, and close sense of community; it is distinctive for the breadth of its student-centered program, which includes the Wescoe School of Continuing Education with its 200 adult learners.

This is an opportune moment for Muhlenberg. Over the past decade, the College has been on a dramatic upward trajectory—strengthening the academic quality of its student body, increasing the number of applicants, wrapping up its most successful capital campaign to date, implementing the College’s first Diversity Strategic Plan, and completing many construction projects. An institution that is already well-known in the region and surrounding states, Muhlenberg is extending its reach and reputation among students and families nationally. A new President, John I. Williams, Jr., joined the College in 2015 and has energized the campus with a broad vision of an undergraduate educational experience that fully integrates curricular, co-curricular, research-based, and experiential learning, and that draws on efforts and talents of the entire College community.

The Provost will be instrumental in amplifying and realizing this vision, and will work with senior colleagues, the faculty, and the College community to further the impact and reach of the institution. The Provost’s team includes the Dean of the College for Academic Life; the Dean of Global Education; the Vice President and Dean of Institutional Effectiveness and Planning; the Dean of the Wescoe School; the Director of the Trexler Library; the College Registrar; the Associate Dean of Digital Learning; the Associate Dean of Diversity Initiatives; the heads of 19 academic departments (encompassing 177 full-time faculty); and the directors of three centers and institutes, and three honors programs.

The successful candidate will be an intellectual exemplar and imaginative thinker with a record of effective academic and administrative leadership. He or she will also possess a collaborative, communicative leadership style; superb administrative and budgetary management skills; a demonstrated commitment to diversity; an understanding of effective program assessment; and a track record of supporting faculty. An earned doctorate or other terminal degree is required, as is a record of scholarship and teaching commensurate with appointment as a full professor.
A search committee has been formed to conduct a search for Muhlenberg’s next Provost and will work with the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller in this endeavor. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

History

Muhlenberg College was initially established in 1848 as the Allentown Seminary by the Reverend Samuel K. Brobst, a Reformed Lutheran minister. Over the next twenty years it evolved into a college and in 1867 it was renamed after Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, the patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America (the “M” in the College’s logo is derived from his signature). The Muhlenberg family was prominent in the early life of the United States: General John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg wintered at Valley Forge with George Washington; Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg was the first speaker of the United States House of Representatives; and Henry Ernst Muhlenberg was an eminent early American scientist and the first President of Franklin College, now Franklin & Marshall College.

These historical origins helped to set the framework for the leading qualities of the College, including its commitment to active and informed citizenship and its emphasis on an open and compassionate campus. In response to community interest and as a reflection of its commitment to inclusive education, the Wescoe School was established in 1910 to offer evening courses to adult students, and Muhlenberg was the first college in the Lehigh Valley to go co-ed in 1957. Thus the hallmarks of a Muhlenberg education have long been in place: free exploration of ideas as expressed and enabled by the liberal arts, an intimate and responsive learning environment, celebration of lifelong learning, respect for diversity, development of character, and cultivation of service to and engagement with the world.

Mission Statement

*Muhlenberg College* aims to develop independent critical thinkers who are intellectually agile, characterized by a zest for reasoned and civil debate, committed to understanding the diversity of the human experience, able to express ideas with clarity and grace, committed to life-long learning, equipped with ethical and civic values, and prepared for lives of leadership and service. The College is committed to providing an intellectually rigorous undergraduate education within the context of an inclusive and diverse campus; we strongly believe that diversity is essential to learning and to our success as a pluralistic community. Our curriculum integrates the traditional liberal arts with selected pre-professional studies. Our faculty are passionate about teaching, value close relationships with students, and are committed to the pedagogical and intellectual importance of research. All members of our community are committed to educating the whole person through experiences within and beyond the classroom. Honoring its historical heritage from the Lutheran Church and its continuing connection with
the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Muhlenberg encourages, welcomes, and celebrates a variety of faith traditions and spiritual perspectives.

Location and Campus

The Lehigh Valley, nestled in the foothills of the Pocono Mountains near Pennsylvania’s eastern border, offers many cultural, artistic, recreational, and business opportunities as well as proximity to major cities. Allentown is 55 miles north of Philadelphia and 90 miles west of New York City. The metropolitan area (comprising Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton) has a population of over 500,000 that supports a range of cultural institutions, restaurants, and entertainment venues. The city’s population reflects considerable cultural diversity, including significant African-American, Arab-American, and Latino communities.

Muhlenberg’s campus is set on 81 verdant acres in West Allentown, an attractive residential neighborhood. An architectural blend of Collegiate Gothic and contemporary buildings is positioned around ample green quadrangles (www.muhlenberg.edu/tour). This is a congenial community: many faculty and staff purchase homes in the immediate neighborhood and send their children to nearby public schools. To the south, the campus is bordered by Cedar Creek and Cedar Beach Park, with its beloved public gardens, picnic areas, and outdoor sculpture. To the east, members of the Muhlenberg community enjoy the revitalized 19th Street area with its classic cinema, restaurants, and boutiques, all within a ten-minute walk from the campus. Off-campus, the College also owns and maintains the 38-acre Raker Wildlife Preserve and the 64-acre Graver Arboretum.

Leadership and Governance

John Williams became the twelfth president of Muhlenberg College on July 1, 2015. He came to this position with wide-ranging experience in corporate leadership, competitive strategy, and liberal arts college direction and oversight. Early in his early career, he worked as a consultant with Bain & Company and helped co-launch Softbridge Microsystems. He then served in a number of senior executive positions at American Express, leading strategic planning, the U.S. Platinum Card business, and the U.S. Consumer Travel network. After American Express, Williams became CEO of Biztravel.com; he went on to head the consulting unit of Eduventures (one of the most influential educational organizations serving higher education), and was a partner in the higher education practice at The Bridgespan Group, working with a number of colleges and universities. He was elected to the Amherst College board of trustees in 1984 and was elected as a life trustee in 1996. John Williams received his Bachelor’s degree from Amherst College, and earned a JD and MBA concurrently from Harvard University.

The College is governed by a 32-member Board of Trustees. It is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The College completed its most recent decennial review in 2006 and is currently engaged in its 2016 review.
MUHLENBERG TODAY

Academics

A Muhlenberg education is firmly based in the liberal arts tradition and is notable for its breadth and depth. The College offers programs in the humanities, the natural and social sciences, and in related professional areas such as business, education, pre-law, pre-medicine, and the performing arts. Cross-disciplinary study is intentionally supported, and individual student interests are met through independent study, research, and self-designed majors. By the time of graduation, about half of the senior class will have studied abroad. During summers, students and faculty collaborate on a variety of student- or faculty-driven research projects: approximately 40 student scholars stay on campus to perform research in the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Finally, the Wescoe School of Continuing Education, a distinctive element of the College, offers traditional evening college and continuing education programs, an accelerated degree program, and a variety of co-curricular opportunities.

The College benefits from links to institutions of higher learning in the Lehigh Valley and beyond. Along with five other private colleges and universities located within 30 miles of the campus (Cedar Crest College, DeSales University, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, and Moravian College), Muhlenberg is a member of the Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges (LVAIC), through which students may cross-register. Muhlenberg is also a member of the Pennsylvania Consortium of Liberal Arts Colleges (PCLA), which provides opportunities that support the College’s academic mission. The College has formal relationships with Columbia University, Duke University, Thomas Jefferson University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the State University of New York; these connections permit several undergraduate and advanced degree pathways in the health and natural sciences.

Faculty

Muhlenberg College’s culture is deeply student-centered, with an intimate scale that allows for close student-faculty interaction and has led to a freshman retention rate of 92 percent. There are 177 full-time faculty and 125 part-time faculty; they are superb teachers, advisors, and mentors. They are also active scholars: at the College, research and scholarship are highly valued—and undertaken with special regard to their salutary influence on teaching. Eighty-five percent of faculty members hold terminal degrees in their fields.

The student-faculty ratio is 11:1, and 77 percent of classes have fewer than 20 students. The teaching load is 3-3. The College has a robust advising structure, and is piloting a new mentoring program in which freshman students will learn about the value of developmental networks and will recruit mentors from among trained alumni and parent volunteers who share their interests.

Muhlenberg’s Faculty Center for Teaching seeks to cultivate reflection about teaching that encourages and supports meaningful experimentation. The Center offers a two-year orientation program for new faculty members; a peer partner program matching new faculty members with
current ones; learning communities based on interest areas; workshops and programs; resources for pedagogy and academic leadership; and summer grants for faculty to attend conferences.

Student Life

Muhlenberg has a wealth of co-curricular and extracurricular opportunities that foster a sense of connection and purpose. About 90 percent of the student body lives on campus, and over 110 student clubs and organizations on campus offer diverse cultural, educational, social, and recreational programs. Students are connected to the Allentown community through the Office of Community Engagement; nearly 75 percent of students will engage in some form of community service by the time they graduate.

Approximately 25 percent of students participate in a vibrant Division III intercollegiate athletic program, and even more take advantage of well-developed intramural and recreational offerings. Muhlenberg’s 22 varsity teams (11 men’s and 11 women’s) compete in the Centennial Conference, which includes Bryn Mawr, Dickinson, Franklin & Marshall, Gettysburg, Johns Hopkins, Haverford, and Swarthmore.

As is the case at most colleges, much attention is paid to campus climate. Muhlenberg’s Diversity Strategic Plan, enacted in 2015, has underscored and informed the College’s efforts to enhance diversity and inclusion. Several student organizations and the Office of Multicultural Life support diversity in many forms including ethnic, religious, and gender identity, and sexual orientation. The Muhlenberg Chaplain’s Office and the interfaith Religious Life Team support and celebrate a diverse range of faith traditions and spiritual perspectives. Approximately 29 percent of the College’s students are Jewish, 29 percent Catholic, and 17 percent Protestant.

In August 2016 Muhlenberg welcomed a new Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Allison Gulati, who had previously been at Lehigh University. She will be a key partner for the next Provost; together they will promote a holistic learning environment and a student experience that integrates classroom learning and student life.

Enrollment and Finances

Muhlenberg College has steadily increased its reputation and desirability over the past decade. Performing arts are a particular area of external recognition: the theatre program was named the nation’s best undergraduate program by The Princeton Review in 2016. Selectivity has risen in recent years. Applications have grown from 3,037 in 1998 to nearly 5,000 in 2016 for the 590 places in the first-year class, and in 2016 over 60 percent of enrolled students were in the top 20 percent of their high school graduating class. Academic quality as seen in standardized test scores has also risen.

The College is focused on increasing diversity and student access. Current students come from 29 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and 18 foreign countries, with the majority from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. In the 2015-16 academic year, 23 percent of the first-year class self-identified as students of color or international students. At Muhlenberg, 47
percent of full-time undergraduates receive some kind of need-based financial aid. In 2013, as part of an effort to increase financial aid and educational enrichment opportunities, the College designated $11 million toward a campaign called Muhlenberg Match. Over $7.5 million has been committed, utilizing $6.1 million in matching funds.

For decades, careful planning and monitoring have ensured Muhlenberg’s fundamental financial health and a balanced budget. As of August 31, 2016, the College’s endowment was $245.1 million, with an annual operating budget of $137.9 million for 2017. Over the past decade, the College has kept its discount rate eight to ten percentage points below the national average for private liberal arts colleges (39.8 percent for entering first-year students in the fall of 2015), while offering a combination of need-based and merit-based financial aid to approximately 86 percent of the student body.

**Muhlenberg’s Future**

Over the past twelve years, the Board of Trustees has approved two sequential strategic plans. Both were based in an institutional commitment to the College’s traditional mission and values as a private, residential, coeducational liberal arts college affiliated with the Lutheran Church. They were each the product of a broadly inclusive planning process and emphasized the strengthening of Muhlenberg’s value proposition and financial base.

The first plan included a focus on adding facilities, faculty, programs, and co-curricular experiences. This plan resulted in a number of new academic buildings and renovations; eight new faculty positions; new programs in Africana Studies, Film Studies, and Public Health; expanded study-abroad opportunities; and expanded opportunities for student research, internships, and service learning. To support the growing diversity of its campus, the College constructed a new Multicultural Center and expanded the campus Hillel facility. The second plan sought to strengthen and leverage existing activities, with an eye to maximizing impact, efficiency, and reputation. It also addressed sustainability initiatives and technological enhancements, put greater emphasis on faculty development and diversity, and took a developmental approach to students’ curricular, extra-curricular, and co-curricular experiences.

The College is currently embarking on its next strategic planning process, and the incoming Provost will contribute to and enact the new plan. Thus the new Provost will join the institution at a particularly exciting moment.

**The Role**

The Provost is the primary advocate for and architect of the College’s educational mission. This person will provide leadership, vision, and guidance for the academic enterprise and work to preserve, enhance, and extend the excellence and impact of the College’s programs. These aims should be accomplished through innovative and creative approaches to curriculum, a transparent
and rational academic planning process, advocacy for faculty and students, and respect for Muhlenberg’s student-centered, inclusive, and collegial culture.

The Provost has responsibility for academic financial management and will lead the College’s academic budgeting process. The office budget is about $20 million, including staff salaries.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Muhlenberg is a remarkable institution—a place where teaching and learning take place at all hours, year-round, on a beautiful campus populated by welcoming and collegial administrators, faculty, staff, and students. The new Provost will have the opportunity to apply these formidable assets toward the advancement of Muhlenberg’s position, programs, and reputation. During a time of acute challenges to higher education and liberal arts education, the Provost must set forth a compelling and competitive academic vision for the College.

The next Provost will:

*Strengthen the academic enterprise in the face of a changing curricular landscape.*

The Provost must ensure the continued vitality of Muhlenberg’s programs, and refine and communicate a clear academic direction for the coming years. While staying true to Muhlenberg’s liberal arts tradition, the Provost will be tasked with identifying curricular opportunities that will strengthen the educational experience. A recent review of the general education curriculum has led to greater interdisciplinarity in teaching and learning, but its implementation has strained departments and faculty. The Provost must take a broad and comprehensive view of the curriculum, consider how faculty are currently deployed, develop clear priorities, and advise on investments in new and revised academic programs.

*Nurture a culture of scholarship and intellectual curiosity.*

The Provost will champion faculty scholarship as integral to teaching excellence and will champion student research as integral to meaningful learning. To enable research, the Provost will maximize opportunities and resources; this will require consideration of faculty time, academic budgets, and support structures, as well as creative thinking and planning. In addition, the Provost will work with departments and faculty to identify and exploit areas of intellectual complementarity, encouraging inter- and cross-disciplinary collaboration and the exploration and adoption of new pedagogies and programs. The Provost will ensure that learning extends beyond the walls of the classroom, and will look for ways to integrate academic and social opportunities at the College to create a community of perpetual learning.

*Invest in the recruitment, retention, and development of faculty.*

The Provost must support faculty in their professional growth, generating and allocating resources for this purpose. The Provost will shape and lead discussions about workloads,
curricular goals, assessment of faculty productivity, faculty recognition, and other matters of importance to faculty morale; in so doing, the Provost will ensure the vitality and creativity of Muhlenberg’s offerings. Finally, the Provost will attend to faculty mentorship and professional development, to nurture and cultivate current and future departmental and College leadership.

*Enhance communication, shared governance, and transparency to foster a deeper sense of community.*

Its relatively small size notwithstanding, Muhlenberg—like other small liberal arts colleges—has a variety of decision- and policy-making structures, including departments, functional areas, and standing and ad hoc College-wide committees. The Provost will work diligently to ensure that communication lines remain open and that, as much as possible, decisions balance the need for action with an appreciation for process.

*Support a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion to embrace the College’s increasing diversity.*

The Provost will be a visible figure on campus, will seek to listen to and engage with all members of the campus, and will work to nurture an environment of trust, shared purpose, and mutual respect. As a campus leader, the Provost will work diligently to promote a more diverse and inclusive community. The Provost will provide perspective and counsel, at all times maintaining an inclusive and student-centered focus that celebrates diversity of viewpoint, background, and experience.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

Muhlenberg seeks in its next Provost a leader with intellectual vision, an open and collegial leadership style, and the energy and integrity to inspire the campus community to new levels of excellence.

The successful candidate will bring many of the following experiences, abilities, and qualities:

- An earned doctorate (or terminal degree); academic credentials and experience appropriate for appointment to the rank of professor in a field of instruction offered by Muhlenberg College;
- A distinguished record of teaching, service, and professional activity/scholarship, demonstrating broad intellectual curiosity and engagement;
- Substantial and successful experience in the development, leadership, and management of academic programs, projects, committees, or departments;
- A demonstrated commitment to high-quality undergraduate liberal arts education, and an understanding of the requirements of managing and leading a selective college or university academic program;
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- Knowledge of best practices and trends in higher education, and an ability to adopt and implement them in a way that is appropriate for the specific demands of Muhlenberg College;
- Awareness of the primacy of superb teaching to the mission of the College, and a sophisticated sense of how best to nurture, recognize, and reward it;
- An understanding of higher education finances, insight about the interrelationship of academic priorities, and experience planning and managing budget—and in raising new monies;
- Superb communication skills, both oral and written, and the ability to represent the College clearly, concisely, and eloquently;
- Excellent listening skills and extraordinary interpersonal skills combined with a commitment to broad consultation, openness to multiple views and perspectives, and the ability to recognize the good ideas of others to encourage a collective sense of accomplishment;
- A strong, fundamental, and consistent commitment to collaboration, openness, and fairness;
- Courage to confront problems quickly, decisively, and fairly;
- Personal qualities of humility, calm, good humor, resilience, persistence, optimism, and team spirit;
- A demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusiveness, and sensitivity and broad experience with diverse students, faculty, and communities, including a track record of achieving a more representative community.

TO APPLY

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and résumés with cover letters can be sent electronically and in confidence to:

Anita Tien, Vice President
Randi Alberry, Associate
Isaacson, Miller

www.imsearch.com/5916

An Equal Opportunity Employer, Muhlenberg College is committed to recruiting and retaining outstanding faculty and staff from racial and ethnic groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

For additional information about Muhlenberg's commitment to diversity and inclusion, applicants can find the latest updates to the College’s Diversity Strategic Plan at: http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/aboutus/president/initiatives/diversityatmuhlenberg/