

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH



BEACON COLLEGE

Success for Students Who Learn Differently



“The ‘Beacon difference’ is in the energy of the place, emanating from devotion to a common purpose, an unwavering commitment to robust (nation-leading) student outcomes, and the clear-eyed conviction of those in the community that our work is important and pioneering.”
— DR. GEORGE HAGERTY





CONTENTS

- 04** THE OPPORTUNITY
- 05** THE COLLEGE
 - 05** OUR NEXT CHAPTER
 - 05** MISSION AND VISION
 - 06** OVERVIEW AND HISTORY
 - 06** FAST FACTS
 - 07** HIGHLIGHTS
 - 08** ACADEMICS
 - 09** FACULTY
 - 10** STUDENT SUCCESS
 - 11** PRESIDENT HAGERTY
 - 12** BEACON BY THE NUMBERS
 - 14** ATHLETICS
 - 16** COMMUNITY
- 18** THE PRESIDENCY AT BEACON COLLEGE
 - 20** STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES
 - 22** QUALIFICATIONS
 - 23** APPLICATION AND NOMINATION PROCESS



THE OPPORTUNITY

Every college has a mission. **Beacon College has a calling** – and increasingly, the world has taken notice.

Beacon is no longer simply a national leader in educating students with neurodivergent profiles. It is an **internationally recognized innovator**, honored on the world stage at the United Nations, a founding member of the Global Higher Ed Disability Compact, and a global voice shaping the future of accessibility and neurodiversity in higher education.

The Board of Trustees now seeks a president who understands the power of that calling – **a leader who sees neurodivergent students not as an exception to the rule, but as the reason for the work.** The next president will step into a community that knows who it is, why it exists, and what it can become.

This is a rare opportunity to lead a college with a clear purpose, a strong foundation, and a global reputation that continues to rise. The next president will be a visible, engaged presence – someone who listens deeply, leads with conviction, and amplifies the stories that make Beacon unlike any other institution in American higher education.

Beacon is poised for thoughtful, mission-aligned growth – expanding its reach in sustainable ways while exploring new partnerships at home and abroad with organizations that share its values. The next president will play a central role in guiding that momentum, ensuring the college continues to move forward with purpose and clarity.

THE COLLEGE

Our Next Chapter

Beacon's story began with a handful of families who believed their children deserved more than accommodation — **they deserved a college built for them.** That belief became a movement, and that movement became an institution that has changed thousands of lives.

Today, Beacon stands at a pivotal moment. The national conversation around neurodiversity is expanding. International organizations are seeking partners. Families are searching for colleges that deliver real outcomes. Employers are recognizing the strengths of neurodivergent talent.

And Beacon — now with a national and international profile — is uniquely positioned to lead.

The next president will help write the next chapter of this story: one that expands Beacon's reach, strengthens its voice and deepens its impact on the students and families who depend on it.

Mission

Beacon College is an accredited institution of higher education with an entrepreneurial ethos and holistic focus, uniquely serving the educational needs of students with neurodivergent profiles.

Vision

Beacon College is a competitive institution of higher learning in the arts, sciences, business, technology, and education specifically devoted to the undergraduate preparation and success of students with neurodivergent profiles. In the arena of our mission and focus, Beacon is recognized as one of the foremost American institutions in this undergraduate specialty.

Overview and History

Beacon's history is rooted in courage — the courage of parents who refused to accept “no,” the courage of educators who believed in a different way of teaching, and the courage of students who dared to imagine a future that once felt out of reach.

Founded in 1989, Beacon became **the first accredited baccalaureate liberal arts institution in the nation dedicated exclusively to students with learning disabilities**, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder and related profiles. It was not an adaptation of a traditional model; it was a reinvention of what college could be.

Beacon's academic and residential experience is intentionally designed around how its students learn best. Small classes. Multimodal instruction. Embedded learning support. A campus culture that balances structure with independence. A community that sees each student as an individual with strengths, aspirations and a story worth honoring.

Over the years, Beacon has expanded its academic offerings, strengthened its student support model, and built a lifecycle approach that connects pre-college preparation, undergraduate study and career readiness. Today, Beacon enrolls students from across the country and around the world, united by a shared belief in what is possible.

Fast Facts

Beacon enrolls more than **500 undergraduates** and **450 College Readiness Program students** from 42 states and seven countries.

Students choose from **ten majors, 17 minors** and a growing array of co-curricular opportunities, including intercollegiate athletics, intramurals and more than two dozen clubs and organizations.

The college maintains six residence halls and a fully residential model that supports continuity, structure and community.

Beacon's excellence is recognized widely:

- **Forbes “Accessibility 100”** named Beacon one of the nation's most accessible and supportive institutions.
- **U.S. News & World Report** has ranked Beacon in the Top 30 Regional Colleges South for six consecutive years.
- **Peterson's** ranks Beacon No. 1 in the nation for students with learning disabilities.





Highlights



What distinguishes Beacon is not only its mission but its **execution**.

Beacon's Triadic Developmental Model — a three-member support system that spans preparation, academic engagement and campus life — creates a coherent, student-centered structure that strengthens persistence, retention and overall success. It is the backbone of Beacon's nationally recognized outcomes.

Academic instruction, structured learning support and career preparation operate in alignment. Students are known individually. Expectations are clear. Support is consistent. Growth is intentional.

And outcomes — including a first-year retention rate near 90 percent — reflect the strength of the model.





Academics

A Beacon education is **rigorous, personal and purposeful**. Students pursue majors and minors while developing the skills needed for professional environments. Advising, skill development and career planning are delivered through dedicated centers and professional staff, ensuring continuity throughout the student journey.

Learning support is embedded throughout the academic experience, reinforcing independence and persistence. The Center for Student Success and the Jones Center for Career Preparation connect academic study directly to postgraduate outcomes.

Small class sizes and close faculty engagement define the learning environment and ensure students are consistently supported and appropriately challenged.



Faculty

Beacon's faculty are educators in the truest sense of the word — scholars, practitioners and mentors who bring both disciplinary expertise and a deep commitment to teaching neurodivergent students. The college employs **42 full-time faculty members, with 62% holding terminal degrees** when accounting for MFA credentials in studio arts and recognizing the limited availability of doctoral programs in anthrozoology.

Beacon's faculty bring a breadth of academic preparation and professional accomplishment. Their scholarly and creative work has earned national recognition, and their research and publications span disciplines ranging from creative writing and film studies to neurodiversity pedagogy.

Studio Arts faculty contribute a vibrant creative presence to the college, with solo exhibitions across the United States and internationally in France, Italy, New Zealand, and Dubai. Their work has also been featured in the Stanislav Libenský Award Show in Prague, one of the world's most respected exhibitions for emerging glass artists.

Beyond the classroom, Beacon faculty are frequently sought as experts by regional,

national, and international media. Their insights have appeared in outlets including The New York Times, The Associated Press, The Atlantic, Psychology Today, U.S. News & World Report, National Geographic Kids, The Los Angeles Times, and Reuters Health.

Faculty collaborate closely with Beacon's **17 learning specialists**, ensuring instructional strategies, academic expectations and developmental goals are aligned across the student experience. This partnership — rooted in shared purpose and daily coordination — helps create a unified academic environment that responds to student needs and reinforces Beacon's holistic approach to teaching and learning.



Student Success

Student success is not an aspiration at Beacon – **it is an expectation.**

At Beacon, student success extends beyond academic achievement. The college embraces a holistic developmental philosophy that prepares students to thrive both during and after college. Through an integrated network of academic, residential, wellness, and student development professionals, students are supported in becoming confident, capable, and self-directed individuals prepared to navigate the complexities of adult life, meaningful careers, and engaged citizenship. This deeply integrated support ecosystem includes:

- Academic advising
- Learning specialists
- Career preparation professionals
- Mental health and wellness staff
- Residential life educators
- Social and executive functioning specialists
- Accessibility and academic support teams
- Coordinated care across academic and student life

This structure ensures that academic, social and developmental supports are aligned and embedded into daily student life. The result is a model that fosters independence, persistence and readiness **for life beyond college.**





President George J. Hagerty

President George J. Hagerty, Ed.D., has led Beacon College since 2013, guiding the institution through a period of transformational growth, rising national and international visibility and strengthened academic distinction. Under his leadership, Beacon has expanded enrollment, broadened academic programs, invested in student success initiatives and emerged as a global voice in neurodiversity education.

Dr. Hagerty's four-decade career includes service as president of Franklin Pierce

University, provost of Hellenic American University in Athens and senior academic and administrative roles at Stonehill College and Harvard University. A respected national leader, he has chaired the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and the NCAA Division II Presidents' Council and served on the American Council on Education Board.

He will retire on June 30, 2027, leaving a legacy of mission-driven innovation and institutional momentum.

BEACON BY THE NUMBERS

A mission-driven, **nationally recognized institution** delivering exceptional outcomes for students who learn differently.



#1

Peterson's Great Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities



Enrollment & Student Profile

- **≈500** enrolled students
- **94** average summer enrollment
- Students represent **42 states** and **7 countries**
- **80%** out-of-state enrollment
- **≈450+** students annually in pre-enrollment college readiness programs
- **95%** receive financial aid (culminating in an average **35%** annual discount rate)

Academic Programs

- **10** bachelor's degree programs and **17** minors
- **2** semester abroad programs plus travel abroad programs each year
- **100%** of students receive academic support services
- **13:1** student-to-faculty ratio

Faculty Excellence

- **42** full-time faculty including librarians
- **40.5%** hold traditional terminal degrees (PhD, EdD, etc.)
- **62%** hold terminal degrees when including MFA and fields without doctoral pathways



- **2** active faculty searches, both requiring terminal degrees
- Faculty featured in: *The New York Times*, *Associated Press*, *Voice of America*, *The Atlantic*, *Psychology Today*, *NPR affiliates*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *VICE*, and *The Hill*

Completion & Student Success

Students outperform national benchmarks for learners across all institutions:

- **90%** first-to-second year retention (multi-year benchmark)
- **76%** overall retention rate
- **71%** six-year graduation rate

Career Outcomes

- **2025 Career Placement Rate:**
 - **71%** within 6 months of graduation
 - **66%** within 12 months of graduation
- **5** full-time career center staff, expanding to 7 in July/August 2026
- **7** external career programs offered across fall, spring, and summer terms
- **100%** of students complete experiential learning prior to graduation

Student Life & Campus Experience

- **6** residence halls
- **2** dining venues
- **25-30** student-led organizations each semester
- **30+** weekly activities and events
- **11** competitive and intramural sports, including USCAA men's and women's basketball, cross-country, and track and field





Athletics

Beacon's athletics program reflects the college's commitment to **educating the whole student**. The college competes in the United States Collegiate Athletic Association and the New South Athletic Conference, offering intercollegiate opportunities that foster teamwork, discipline and leadership.

A broad intramural and recreation program complements varsity athletics, providing 10 sports and a wide range of activities that encourage participation across the campus community.

Significant investments underscore Beacon's commitment to student life, including a new 28,000-square-foot Intramural and Fitness Center and the renovation of the Railway Depot Fitness Center, which will feature a modern esports arena supporting competitive gaming.

Together, these initiatives enrich the residential experience and broaden opportunities for **engagement, wellness and community connection** — hallmarks of the Beacon journey.



The new facility, opening in August 2026, features two university-regulation basketball courts, a one-tenth-mile running track, a fully equipped fitness center, locker rooms, equipment storage, staff offices, and spectator seating.



Community

Beacon College is rooted in the iconic Southern city of Leesburg, a lakeside community of 27,000 that blends small-town charm with the convenience of Central Florida living. Located 45 miles northwest of Orlando and within an hour's drive of both coasts, Leesburg offers a setting that is accessible, welcoming and rich in character.

The college's downtown location places students and employees in the heart of a walkable district lined with historic buildings, an expansive public library, cafés, gift shops, antique stores and locally owned restaurants. Beyond downtown, the campus footprint extends into quieter residential areas with new student housing, tree-lined pathways, natural waterfronts and facilities devoted to fitness, recreation and athletics. The surrounding lake region offers year-round opportunities for outdoor activity, reflection and balance.

Leesburg's location provides easy access to Florida's most popular attractions and theme parks, yet the pace of daily life remains grounded and unhurried. Just 20 minutes north, The Villages – the nation's fastest-growing metropolitan area under 250,000 residents – adds a



wide array of dining, shopping and entertainment options that broaden the region's cultural and recreational landscape.

The relationship between Beacon and Leesburg is mutually reinforcing. The city has embraced the college as a catalyst for downtown vitality, and Beacon's investment in campus beautification and neighborhood renewal earned the Leesburg Partnership Beautification Award. The college's presence has helped energize the local economy, strengthen civic life and contribute to a shared sense of pride in the community's evolution.

For students, faculty and staff, Leesburg offers a rare combination: a close-knit community with room to grow; a peaceful environment with access to opportunity; and a sense of place that feels both grounded and full of possibility. It is a setting that supports the work of a mission-driven college and invites its next president to become part of a community that values connection, authenticity and purpose.

THE **PRESIDENCY** AT BEACON COLLEGE

The next president of Beacon College will build on the strong foundation established over the College's almost 40-year history and the transformative tenure of President George Hagerty. Beacon's next leader will guide the institution into its next era of academic strength, financial resilience, and national visibility. The president will be a skilled manager and hands-on operator, an effective public advocate, and a relationship-centered leader who understands and honors Beacon's mission of serving students with neurodivergent profiles.

Leadership and Governance

The president is the chief executive officer of Beacon College and serves at the pleasure of the Board of Trustees. Beacon is governed by a highly engaged Board that works in a collegial and collaborative partnership with the president. Trustees and employees share responsibility for safeguarding the College's singular undergraduate mission while anticipating evolving student expectations.

The president oversees the supervision and management of the institution, fulfills the duties mandated by the charter, and implements the policies of the College and the Board.

Direct reports to the President include:

- Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Technology and Security Officer
- Executive Assistant to the President
- Executive Director of Human Resources
- Vice President of Academic Affairs
- Vice President for Advancement and Strategy
- Vice President of Student Affairs



Financial Sustainability

Beacon College has enjoyed several consecutive years of operating surpluses, a tuition discount rate well below the national average, retention and graduation rates well above national norms, and an endowment that – while still modest – recently has grown significantly under President Hagerty’s leadership.

Beacon is well positioned for continued growth and seeks to build on its financial strength, advance enrollment success, and deepen philanthropic engagement in support of the College’s ambitious future.

Strategic Opportunities and Leadership Priorities

Continuing to elevate Beacon's profile as a national leader in higher education for students with neurodivergent profiles

- Tell Beacon's story clearly and consistently to prospective students and families, donors, employers, policymakers, and peer institutions.
- Highlight Beacon's distinctive pedagogy, learning-support model, and student outcomes.
- Increase visibility through media, conferences, advocacy networks, and thought leadership.
- Position Beacon as a national resource for institutions and educators looking to better serve neurodivergent learners.

Protecting and strengthening Beacon's mission while preparing the College for its next stage of success

- Champion and enhance Beacon's distinctive holistic approach to student development, ensuring the college remains a national leader in preparing neurodivergent students for success in college, career, and life.
- Preserve the high-touch, student-centered model that defines Beacon.
- Ensure growth decisions remain mission-aligned and responsive to student needs.
- Support and empower faculty and staff while fostering a collaborative, mission-driven culture grounded in innovation, accountability, and student success.
- Deepen understanding of what neurodivergent students need to thrive.
- Maintain and broaden open communication with parents, families, and key stakeholders.
- Build on Beacon's strong foundation while articulating a clear vision for the future.

Ensuring a sustainable financial model through fundraising, endowment growth, and revenue diversification

- Expand philanthropic support by connecting donors to Beacon's measurable student outcomes.



- Grow the endowment and strengthen long-term financial resilience.
- Develop new revenue streams beyond tuition, including partnerships, professional development, and specialized programs.
- Align budgeting and resource allocation with strategic priorities.

Managing enrollment thoughtfully while ensuring the College has the infrastructure to serve its students

- Manage enrollment and potential growth in a disciplined way that preserves Beacon’s individualized student experience.
- Invest in housing, classrooms, technology, and campus spaces that support enrollment trends and goals.
- Strengthen admissions, marketing, and outreach to reach more students and families who need Beacon.
- Ensure staffing levels, student services, and academic supports keep pace with enrollment.

Strengthening partnerships and extending Beacon’s impact

- Build partnerships with employers committed to neurodivergent talent.
- Deepen relationships with foundations, donors, and advocacy organizations.
- Explore collaborations with schools, colleges, and transition programs.
- Position Beacon as a resource for educators, families, and organizations beyond campus.
- Advance thoughtful use of AI and assistive technologies to strengthen accessibility, learning, and career readiness while preserving Beacon’s high-touch model.

Strengthening career pathways through internships, employer partnerships, and meaningful employment opportunities

- Expand internships, job-shadowing, and experiential learning opportunities.
- Strengthen Career Center services and post-graduate planning.
- Help students connect academic work to career goals.

Key Qualifications

Key qualifications for the next President of Beacon College include:

- Strong strategic vision paired with the discipline to translate ideas into clear priorities, measurable goals, and sustained operational follow-through.
- Demonstrated success in senior leadership at a higher education institution or similarly complex mission-driven organization, preferably a small private college or specialized institution.
- A visible, student-centered leadership style with a genuine willingness to be present on campus, listen to students, and make decisions grounded in student success.
- Significant financial acumen, including budgeting, long-range planning, revenue diversification, endowment growth, and stewardship of a labor-intensive educational model.
- Demonstrated fundraising and partnership-building success with donors, foundations, corporations, advocacy organizations, employers, and public-sector leaders.
- Entrepreneurial, growth-oriented leadership with the ability to expand Beacon’s visibility, partnerships, and national reach while preserving its core mission and advocating effectively amid shifting financial, regulatory, cultural, and political pressures.
- Commitment to academic excellence, innovation, and outcomes, including career readiness, employer partnerships, responsible use of technology and AI, and continued evolution of Beacon’s learning model.
- Exceptional communication skills, including transparency, consistency, timely updates, and the ability to explain the reasoning behind major decisions.
- Proven ability to build trust across students, families, faculty, staff, senior leadership, trustees, alumni, and external partners.
- A collaborative, empowering management style that discourages silos, supports cross-campus coordination, delegates effectively, and develops internal talent.
- An advanced degree is required; a terminal degree (or equivalent) is preferred.



Process for Applications and Nominations

The successful candidate is expected to assume the presidency on **July 1, 2027**. AGB Search is partnering with the Beacon College Board of Trustees and campus community in the search for the next president.

To ensure full consideration, applications should be **received by Thursday, October 15, 2026**, and must include:

- A **letter of interest** addressing the strategic opportunities and qualifications in this profile
- A **curriculum vitae**
- A list of **five professional references** with email addresses and telephone numbers, including their relationship to the candidate (references will not be contacted without prior authorization)

Application materials should be submitted in PDF format through the AGB Search portal using this link: BeaconCollege.edu/PresidentialSearch.

Please direct nominations, expressions of interest, or questions to BeaconPresident@agbsearch.com or:

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