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COLLEGE CHICAGO

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SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST 2025



COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

Columbia College Chicago invites applications and nominations for the position of Senior Vice President and Provost (SVP & Provost).

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Senior Vice President and Provost reports directly to President Dr. Shantay N. Bolton, who joined the college as its 11th President on July 1, 2025. The SVP & Provost serves as a key member of Dr. Bolton's cabinet, joining a talented team of senior level colleagues, faculty and staff who are committed to the College's focus on excellence in academic and creative practice and the fundamental goal of nurturing student success.

The College seeks an experienced and forward-thinking leader to partner with President Bolton and the College community as it embarks upon a new era. As the chief academic officer, the SVP & Provost will play a vital role in this transformation. The SVP & Provost collaborates with senior leadership, faculty, and staff to advance Columbia College Chicago's mission as a leading institution in the visual and performing arts, media, communication, and design. This role supports cross-disciplinary innovation and fosters strategic partnerships in education and the broader community.

The SVP & Provost oversees a large portfolio of academic programs and administrative units, including the Schools of Audio and Music, Business and Entrepreneurship, Communication and Culture, Design, Fashion, Film and Television, Theatre and Dance, and Visual Arts as well as faculty affairs, academic policies and resources, accreditation and assessment, core curriculum and global education, Institutional Review Board, and Office of the Registrar.

ABOUT COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO

Founded in 1890, Columbia College Chicago is a private, not-for-profit college whose curriculum is focused on creative disciplines.

Columbia'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 varied 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 with a hybrid curriculum that incorporated a foundation in the liberal arts alongside a major program of study in a creative discipline. The modern-day College 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.

Chicago's influence on Columbia College Chicago 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 downtown Chicago's South Loop, Columbia is centered in one of the world's most lively urban areas and 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, and a part of the City's central business district, the campus offers unparalleled opportunities for students to engage with Chicago's communities and creative industries.

In 2019, Columbia 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 Semester in LA program.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

The Senior Vice President and Provost will be a seasoned academic leader who is inspired by the mission of Columbia College Chicago, the vision for its future, and its talented faculty, students and staff. The SVP & Provost will be an entrepreneurial, strategic, innovative and collaborative academic leader.

Reporting directly to the President and joining her Cabinet, the SVP & Provost will serve as the chief academic officer and provide visionary leadership for all academic programs and initiatives—advancing a culture of academic excellence and innovation.

Key strategic opportunities include:

Serve as a Strategic Partner for President Bolton and her Leadership Team

The Senior Vice President and Provost will be a visionary academic leader eager to partner with a dynamic and engaging president to foster academic excellence throughout the Columbia community. They will provide experienced support and strategic counsel to President Bolton, who is committed to building exceptional academic programming that will facilitate Columbia's agenda for the future. The next SVP & Provost will be an integral and contributing member of the Columbia leadership team and will build and maintain transparent, collaborative and supportive partnerships with the other leadership team members.

Stabilize Enrollment and Retention through Teamwork

As a tuition-driven institution, ensuring stable enrollment and establishing clear, measurable indicators of enrollment success are essential to the College's sustainable future. Columbia College Chicago is situated in one of the most competitive higher education marketplaces in the nation, especially when considering demographic shifts; however, the College has the opportunity to stabilize enrollment through program enhancement along with the adoption of new recruitment and retention practices—focusing on undergraduate, graduate and non-traditional students. To accomplish the twin goals of strengthening enrollment and retention, Academic Affairs will work in partnership with the Enrollment Management team to advance the College's integrated efforts to recruit, enroll, support and educate students through cross-functional collaboration.

Elevate the Brand

As an urban campus immersed in the cultural energy of Chicago, Columbia College Chicago ignites creative minds through the transformative power of art. The College was recently designated with Carnegie Classification of Special Focus: Arts, Music and Design—further highlighting the unique nature of the college. Chicago deeply values the College for its impact on the City's creative community and its engagement with urban culture. There is a significant opportunity to broaden the reach of the College's brand beyond Chicago by positioning it on national and international stages through innovative academic and co-curricular programs that foster critical learning and meaningful engagement beyond the classroom. Differentiating Columbia College Chicago's programming from other colleges and universities in the region will be vital in promoting its distinctive programs and opportunities, such as Semester in Los Angeles. Additionally, prominently showcasing alumni success stories will also play a critical role in promoting the College.

Improve Operational Efficiency

The challenges currently facing higher education in the United States, including shifting demographics, rising operational costs, increasing scrutiny of the value of a college degree, and evolving political dynamics, are reshaping the landscape of institutions like Columbia College Chicago. Yet within these challenges lies a powerful opportunity to reimagine the academic enterprise and build a leadership team committed to student-centered innovation. While there is enthusiasm for expanding and enhancing programmatic offerings, including at the graduate level, success will depend on aligning academic ambition with operational discipline. This will require a strong focus on efficiency, data-informed decision making, and resource stewardship to ensure that pedagogical innovation and administrative practices advance in step with the College's long-term sustainability and mission.

Advance a Student-Focused College

The faculty and staff at Columbia College Chicago are deeply committed to their students and always put their needs first. Our staff values the extraordinary excitement, collaborative spirit and hope our students bring to their educational journey. To address new students, the college is making a conscious effort to transition from seeking students who are college-ready to being a student-ready college, proudly sharing that they are working with the Gardner Institute to “lean into student success.” Maintaining that momentum will be key.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Vice President and Provost oversees curriculum development, faculty engagement, and student academic success, while playing a central role in enhancing institutional sustainability and academic alignment with industry and creative practice. The role supports the institution's continued efforts to strengthen academic offerings across undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs, improve administrative effectiveness, and maintain financial sustainability over the long term.

As the institution's chief academic officer, key responsibilities include:

Strategic Leadership and Vision:

- Serve as the President's principal advisor on all matters related to academic and faculty affairs.
- Reimagine, develop and execute a bold, integrated strategy that aligns with Columbia's mission, values and institutional priorities.
- Establish long-term goals and metrics in support of academic excellence and innovation.

Academic Planning and Assessment:

- Lead the development and implementation of academic priorities that align with the College's strategic plan which is underway, including the advancement of interdisciplinary programs, core curriculum renewal, and innovation in creative education.
- Complete and assess the ongoing curricular reform, ensuring programs are industry-aligned, forward thinking, and embedded with experiential learning opportunities such as internships, capstones and collaborative projects.

Faculty Recruitment, Retention and Inclusion:

- Recruit, support and retain a varied and accomplished adjunct faculty, tenured faculty, tenure-track faculty and nontenure-track (teaching track) faculty committed to both creative practice and scholarly distinction.
- Champion inclusive excellence through faculty hiring, curricular engagement and support structures that ensure all students thrive.

Shared Governance and Collaboration:

- Strengthen shared governance in partnerships with the Faculty Senate, the Columbia College Faculty Union (CFAC), and the United Staff of Columbia College (USofCC) Union.
- Build and sustain effective administrative structures that support decision-making, foster cross-campus collaboration, and break down silos across programs and schools.
- Refine leadership structures among school directors and program heads.

Academic Budgeting and Operational Metrics:

- In collaboration with the President and CEO and Chief Financial Officer, strengthen academic budgeting processes and build a data-informed culture of fiscal accountability among academic leaders.
- Utilize program performance metrics and cost management indicators to inform budget allocations and drive continuous improvement.

Holistic Student Pathways:

- Collaborate closely with Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, Advancement and other key divisions to create holistic student pathways from admission to career.
- Make critical hires and establish strong performance expectations aligned with student success and academic rigor.

Partnerships and Donor Cultivation:

- Build strategic partnerships with creative industries, community organizations and global academic institutions to enhance Columbia's visibility and impact.
- Partner with the Office of Advancement to align academic priorities with fundraising initiatives, support philanthropic engagement, and cultivate donor relationships that strengthen the College's academic mission and student success.

QUALIFICATIONS AND ATTRIBUTES

- A terminal degree and a record of scholarly, artistic or creative distinction.
- A history of progressively responsible academic leadership in a higher education institution.
- A deep understanding of creative disciplines, emerging technologies, and the evolving demands of the 21st century workforce.
- Proven experience leading complex organizational change with transparency and trust.
- Accessible and open, practices active listening and accepting input with accountability and grace.
- A demonstrated commitment to faculty governance, academic freedom and inclusive leadership.
- Demonstrated experience identifying and cultivating sources of philanthropic support to strengthen the academic mission, enhance faculty teaching & research and expand experiential learning opportunities for students.
- Financial and strategic acumen, including budgeting, resource allocation and enrollment-linked decision making.
- A strategic mindset and successful track record in building, expanding or reimagining graduate programs to align with market demands and institutional strengths.
- Strong interpersonal communication skills with the ability to resolve conflict, build consensus and model collaborative leadership.
- A passion for advancing creativity as a transformative force in society and education.
- Deep-seated personal integrity and strong work ethic.

THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

The **Office of the Provost** is committed to supporting the academic and creative endeavors of the students and faculty. The Senior Vice President & Provost serves as the College's chief academic officer providing leadership for the college's eight schools as well as academic planning and review; program development at the undergraduate and graduate levels; allocation of financial resources in accordance with academic priorities; academic access and excellence; advancement of faculty scholarship, research and creative work; global education; online learning; and student retention and persistence initiatives.

As a college with a student population preparing to launch careers in the creative industries and professions, Columbia College Chicago is committed to providing an inclusive and comprehensive education that demonstrates excellence across the disciplines of the creative arts. The efforts of the Office of Academic Access and Excellence are intended to support the College's mission to actively promote non-discrimination by providing students with a rich breadth of perspectives and creative/artistic paradigms.

The Office of the Provost supports the College's strategic planning process, focusing on strategic initiatives for student success and curriculum development, including strategic planning for academic support. This office also works with school directors and units to ensure academic programs meet the needs of students and align with the College's goals.

THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST (CONTINUED)

The Office also supports the faculty in their creative practice and scholarly work encouraging innovation in teaching and learning that recognizes one's perspectives and backgrounds. The SVP & Provost partners with the school directors and faculty to develop and offer a curriculum that is forward-looking, fosters aesthetic judgment and technical skills, encourages new ideas and technologies, while considering its social and cultural impacts on the community.

ACADEMICS

Columbia College Chicago offers a curriculum focused on hands-on, practice-based creative education in media, technology, business and liberal arts, grounded in its 30-credit **Columbia Core Curriculum**. Opportunities for experiential learning include internships in the third largest media market in the US along with many collaborative projects working with peers across the various disciplines in the College. The faculty members also practice in the areas they teach and leverage industry relationships to connect students globally.

The College recently restructured into schools to streamline its academic framework and strengthen its ability to serve students by consolidating academic schools into eight “creative entities” to make the pathways to a degree more efficient. These new schools include:

- **School of Audio and Music** students develop the skills and experiences necessary to pursue careers in sound engineering, live and recorded music production, music composition, sound design and audio system installation and study with faculty who are professional musicians along with renowned visiting artists-in-residence.
- **School of Business and Entrepreneurship** offers undergraduate and graduate programs in arts and entertainment management, entrepreneurship and innovation, and marketing and business. These programs incorporate experiential learning, internships, and study away opportunities that offer practical, hands-on experience within the creative industries.
- **School of Communication and Culture** provides students with the knowledge, skills and experiences essential to a wide range of careers along with hands-on experience to hone their craft and find their voice. Working in teams, students also produce original journalism and literary publications, podcasts and broadcasts.
- **School of Design** curriculum evolves with best/promising practices and trends in games, animation, modern design, space planning and environmental sciences. Students explore these diverse pathways through interdisciplinary coursework as well as collaborative and entrepreneurial projects, employing the latest technological, design and scientific thinking.
- **School of Fashion** includes programs in fashion design, merchandising, product development, and marketing, where students explore both the creative and business aspects of fashion. They gain practical experience through corporate competitions, internships in studios serving real clients, and collaboration with peers who promote body positivity and sustainable practices.
- **School of Film and Television** provides hands-on learning in all aspects of film and television production on location and on both physical and virtual production sets. Students collaborate with Columbia's community of actors, writers, and game designers to produce their work, and can take advantage of Semester in LA to gain industry experience while making connections through internships and networking events.
- **School of Theatre and Dance** ensures that students develop professional skills for a career on and off stage. With approximately 40 productions a year, students have ample opportunities to perform, design, produce, direct and stage manage. Theatre students work on a range of plays, musicals and one-acts, while dancers create bold new works and expand their technique.
- **School of Visual Arts** supports artists, illustrators and photographers as they develop their unique visions while working closely with art historians to explore modern and contemporary art. From mastering traditional techniques to integrating AI in art creation, Columbia College Chicago's curriculum encourages exploration. Access to state-of-the-art studios and a diverse range of curated spaces and galleries, provide opportunities to showcase student work and engage with a vibrant creative community.

THE OFFICE OF THE PROVOST (CONTINUED)

Other valuable educational programs and opportunities both complement and enhance the impact of the teaching learning experiences at Columbia College Chicago, including the Columbia Core and Global Education programs described below.

- The **Columbia Core** provides an educational foundation in the undergraduate curriculum that is essential to any creative career, including coursework in aesthetics and creative expression, quantitative reasoning, communication, historical and cultural understanding and scientific discovery along with a range of core-designated classes.
- **Global Education** organizes education abroad activities for students along with international faculty collaborations available to faculty and staff. Education abroad assists Columbia College Chicago students interested in studying abroad in exchange programs, faculty-led programs, provider programs, or in-service learning and internships abroad. International faculty collaborations assist faculty and staff in establishing research, scholarship and creative endeavors with international partners.

FACULTY

The Office of the Provost supports individual faculty members, academic programs/units and the college more broadly to motivate creative and scholarly achievement, to create engaging classroom experiences and a 21st century education, and to facilitate conversation between faculty and administration.

The Office also supports faculty in their professional endeavors and role as educators in collaboration with campus partners, including academic technology, academic services, assessment and accreditation, human resources, information technology, the library and student affairs.

The Office specifically provides support and guidance in these functional areas to promote both faculty and student success:

- **The Faculty Research and Development** office fosters faculty growth across all key evaluation areas, including teaching, creative and scholarly work, and service.
- **The Faculty Development Portfolio** serves as a central website for resources and services available to faculty. A team of faculty and staff design and maintain this portfolio to provide comprehensive information in all areas of faculty development and support faculty in the areas in which they are evaluated—teaching, creative and scholarly endeavor and service.
- **The Office of Transfer Initiatives and Academic Partnerships** collaborates with community colleges nationwide to provide a more transparent transfer path. These collaborations focus on the creation of academic partnerships by connecting Columbia faculty with faculty at partner institutions and provide faculty with the opportunity to share pedagogical best/promising practices and work together to support transfer students throughout their transition.
- The Office of the Provost leads the College's Higher Learning Commission (HLC) **accreditation** process and directs the College's **assessment** of student learning by working closely with the academic units and faculty to ensure quality and compliance at the graduate and undergraduate levels.
- **The Academic Personnel Office** at the College administers the policies, procedures and systems related to all academic staff as well as both full-time and part-time faculty.

ABOUT COLUMBIA



MISSION STATEMENT

Columbia's purpose is:

- to educate students for creative occupations in diverse fields of the arts and media and to encourage awareness of their aesthetic relationship and the opportunity of professional choice among them;
- to extend educational opportunity by admitting unreservedly (at the undergraduate level) a student population with creative ability in, or inclination to, the subjects of Columbia's interest; to provide a college climate that offers students an opportunity to try themselves out, to explore, and to discover what they can and want to do;
- to give educational emphasis to the work of a subject by providing a practical setting, professional facilities, and the example and guidance of an inventive faculty who work professionally at the subjects they teach;
- to teach students to do expertly the work they like, to master the crafts of their intended occupations, and to discover alternative opportunities to employ their talents in settings other than customary marketplaces;
- to help students to find out who they are and to discover their own voices, respect their own individuality, and improve their self-esteem and self-confidence;
- to offer specialized graduate programs which combine a strong conceptual emphasis with practical professional education, preparing students with mature interests to be both competent artists and successful professionals.

ACADEMIC OFFERINGS

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 to enhance students' learning experiences. Columbia's programs and faculty have outstanding reputations in their fields. In annual surveys, *The Hollywood Reporter* consistently ranks Columbia's 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, visual effects, and video game design programs have received similar accolades.

SEMESTER IN LA

Columbia College Chicago's Semester in Los Angeles (SiLA) program is an immersive, professional development experience that places juniors and seniors in the heart of the entertainment industry. Students spend a semester living in Los Angeles, completing internships with leading studios, production companies, music labels, and talent agencies while taking courses taught by industry professionals and Columbia faculty. Designed as a capstone to their academic studies, the program provides direct exposure to the business and creative practices of film, television, and music, while also connecting students with Columbia's extensive alumni network in Los Angeles. Through SiLA, students gain the skills, experience, and professional relationships needed to launch successful careers in creative industries.

LEADERSHIP AND VALUES



LEADERSHIP



Dr. Shantay N. Bolton became the 11th President on July 1, 2025. She is the first woman in nearly 90 years and the first woman of color to lead the institution. President Bolton is recognized as a transformational leader and effective strategist.

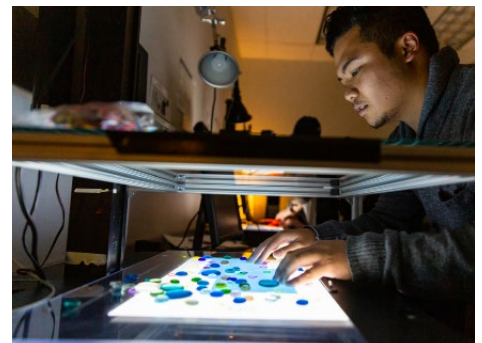
Most recently, Dr. Bolton served as the Executive Vice President of Administration and Finance, and Chief Business Officer at the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech). She successfully fulfilled similar administrative duties in her prior positions at Washington University in St. Louis and Tulane University in New Orleans.

At Georgia Tech, President Bolton managed a \$3.1 billion enterprise as well as built and nurtured relationships with a host of internal constituencies and with the government and private sectors. She served as a board member of the Georgia Tech Research Corporation, Georgia Advanced Technology Ventures, Midtown Alliance, and the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO).

Dr. Bolton possesses a distinguished academic background, holding a B.S. and M.S. in psychology from Alabama A&M University, an MBA from Florida International University, and a Ph.D. in organizational psychology from Walden University. An adjunct professor of practice in Georgia Tech's Scheller College of Business, she has taught in multiple settings.

STATEMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

The college embodies a joy of exploration, discovery, and innovation, attracting students who are passionate about making a difference through their art practice. Columbia 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 supportive atmosphere allows students to author the culture of their times while pursuing their creative and professional goals.



APPLICATIONS, NOMINATIONS, AND EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

AGB Search is pleased to assist Columbia College Chicago with this leadership search.

To apply for the Senior Vice President and Provost position, candidates are requested to submit the following:

1. A current CV or resume;
2. A letter of interest that addresses how the candidate's experiences and qualifications connect with the required/preferred characteristics and priorities as expressed in this position profile; and
3. Contact information for five references (to be contacted with candidate's permission at a later date).

For best consideration, application materials should be submitted to the Senior Vice President and Provost Portal (<https://bit.ly/4mSCSRK>) by **Monday, January 12, 2026**. The search will remain open until an appointment is made.

Please direct all nominations and expressions of interest to **ColumbiaCollegeProvost@agbsearch.com** or:

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**AGB
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Advancing Higher Education Leadership

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.