

Kenyon College

**An invitation to apply for
the position of:**

**Dean of Students
Kenyon College
Gambier, Ohio**

THE SEARCH

Kenyon College, one of the top liberal arts colleges in the country, seeks a Dean of Students to serve as a trusted resource for students on campus. Reporting to the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA), the Dean of Students takes an active leadership role in developing students into healthy, mature adults while managing the oversight of individual student issues, problemsolving, and conflict-resolution with students and families in collaboration with other members of the Kenyon staff. The successful candidate will serve as a key partner for the VPSA in all student life issues; oversee the Office of Student Rights/Responsibilities, Health Services, and Counseling Services; and coordinate services for individual students on campus.

This is a distinctive opportunity for an accomplished professional with a strategic approach to student affairs to elevate the breadth and depth of resources available to students. Kenyon has a demonstrated commitment to providing students an unparalleled experience on campus and recently created a new Vice President for Student Affairs position to enhance the Student Affairs Division's capacity. In creating this new position, Kenyon has given the Dean of Students the ability to focus on individual student development and concerns. The next Dean of Students will coordinate the many stakeholders across campus involved in student life, and be a visible and engaged member of the campus community and a known problem-solver for students and others. In addition to this important work, the Dean of Students will be a thought partner for the VPSA and serve a central role on the VPSA leadership team.

Since its founding nearly 200 years ago, Kenyon has developed a distinctive identity and has sought a special purpose among institutions of higher learning. As a private and independent residential liberal arts college, Kenyon seeks to enable its graduates to deal effectively with problems outside of academia. To achieve this goal, Kenyon students learn to develop a broad set of capacities, skills, and talents: to be able to speak and write clearly so as to advance thoughts and arguments cogently, to be able to discriminate between the essential and the trivial, to arrive at well-informed value judgments, to be able to work independently and with others, and to be able to comprehend cultures familiar and unfamiliar. As the go-to person for nearly all student concerns, the Dean of Students has a profound effect on students' experience on campus, both inside and outside of the classroom, and can enhance their ability to achieve these goals.

An 11-member search committee composed of faculty, students, and administrators has been assembled to identify a new Dean of Students. Kenyon will be assisted by the executive search firm Isaacson, Miller. Inquiries, nominations, and applications, which will remain confidential, should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

KENYON COLLEGE

The oldest private college in Ohio, Kenyon was originally founded in 1824 in Worthington, Ohio and moved to Gambier the following year. The small, all-male college originally educated clergymen for frontier America. Soon it became a highly regarded seat of classical education, educating graduates like U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes. The College's literary prominence dates back to 1939, with the founding of the world-famous Kenyon Review. Since then, the College has grown—welcoming women in 1969—and has expanded intellectually, earning national recognition in many fields.

The College is located on 1,050 acres in the Village of Gambier, Ohio, just 45 miles northeast of Columbus. The main campus comprises 135 buildings located on approximately 232 acres, including athletic fields. Much of the southern portion of the main campus is listed on the National Historic Register.

The College's 1,650 students hail from across the U.S. as well as 44 other nations. The nearly 200 full-time teaching faculty make the student to faculty ratio an impressive 10:1. This allows for intimate and intense relationships between students and faculty.

As the College looks to its future, Kenyon's commitment to liberal arts education and to educating students who go out into the world and change it for the better animate the entire community. These commitments, and their pursuit at the highest level of excellence, distinguish Kenyon from other liberal arts colleges. At a time when higher education has become enormously expensive, research highly specialized, the relevance of the liberal arts challenged, and teaching devalued, Kenyon exemplifies the distinguished liberal arts college tradition where teaching, communication, and responsibility to one's community—locally and globally—remain the highest priorities.

Kenyon believes that a student population representing diverse geographic, economic, cultural, and racial backgrounds benefits a liberal arts education. Accordingly, the College actively recruits both minority and international students, as well as students from all regions of the United States. The College's student diversity has increased dramatically; nearly 22 percent of the class of 2019 are domestic students of color, up from 11 percent just ten years ago. The College's financial picture is strong. The operating budget in FY15 was \$134.5 million. As of fiscal year close in 2015, Kenyon's endowment had an aggregate market value of \$213.9 million. The budget includes a tuition-and-fees increase of 3.75 percent to \$61,100 for the next academic year. The increase in student fees includes a 5.96 percent boost in the health and counseling fee that covers, in part, an increase in the cost of mandatory, accident-only health insurance. The commitment to student financial aid was increased to \$30,792,000, up by 7.85 percent from the 2014-15 fiscal year. The trustees increased the discount rate for qualified students from 33 to 35 percent, fixing the new rate in place for future classes; added \$200,000 to the financial-aid budget for the fourth consecutive year to be used to attract middle-income students; added \$15,000 to an annual \$75,000 commitment to fund unpaid internships for students in need; and approved a \$300,000 commitment to enhance compliance with federal Title IX mandates governing gender equity and protection, including money for more robust staffing, campus-wide education, and faculty and staff training.

Kenyon Today and Looking Forward

Sean M. Decatur became the 19th president of Kenyon College on July 1, 2013. He arrived at Kenyon after serving as the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Oberlin College since July 2008. He was also a professor of chemistry and biochemistry at Oberlin. He earned a bachelor's degree at Swarthmore College and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1990. President Decatur earned a doctorate in biophysical chemistry at Stanford University in 1995.

Soon after arriving on campus, President Decatur guided Kenyon through a strategic planning process. The resulting five-year plan, Kenyon 2020, articulated three key priorities for the community: focus on an integrated, comprehensive experience that prepares students for postgraduate success; strategically use Kenyon's resources to attract, retain, and graduate an academically excellent and diverse student body; and intentionally build community on campus, in the local region, and in the worldwide Kenyon family that enhances the learning environment and strengthens lifelong ties with the College. The campus community has embraced these priorities and is working together to meet the ambitious goals outlined in the plan.

KENYON STUDENTS AND STUDENT LIFE

Kenyon students are innovative, self-motivated, tolerant, and talented. The Kenyon student body includes 1,650 students from across the United States and around the world. Fifty-four percent of Kenyon students are women, and students of color constitute 19.7 percent of Kenyon's student body. International students account for about four percent. Nine percent of Kenyon's students are the first generation in their families to attend college, and about 52 percent attended public high schools.

Admission to Kenyon is highly competitive. The College received more than 7,000 applications for the class of 2019 and accepted about 1,700 students—an acceptance rate of 24 percent. Nearly 500 admitted students enrolled, giving a yield rate of 29 percent. Kenyon counts among its peers Oberlin, Brown, Middlebury, Wesleyan, Grinnell, Bowdoin, Carleton, Vassar, Williams, and the University of Chicago.

The campus is aesthetically attractive and has been cited by many college guides as one of the most beautiful campuses in the country. Rising grandly in the center of campus, Peirce Hall is home to the Great Hall, where students take their meals amid wood paneling, lofty carved rafters, and stained-glass windows depicting scenes from literary classics. A complete renovation recently enlarged the kitchen serving area and allowed for a variety of food stations and more extensive use of local farm products.

Athletics are an important part of student life at Kenyon. Opened in 2006, the Kenyon Athletic Center (the KAC) has a large weight and fitness room, a light-filled indoor track, tennis courts, squash courts, racquetball courts, and a swimming pool. Varsity teams, intramurals, and individuals all use the KAC. One-third of Kenyon students participate in varsity athletics, and intramural participation is popular as well. Teams are successful, and coaches are both recruiters to the College and facilitators of an active student life.

A fully residential college, Kenyon houses all students on campus in a variety of housing options ranging from traditional residence halls to College-owned apartments and houses. All first-year students live in residence halls grouped together at the northern end of campus, making it easy

to get to know one another and form friendships. After the first year, a greater variety of housing options become available. Students can live in a residence hall or in a modern apartment with its own kitchen. Students also have the option of living in a program house or getting a group together for theme housing. A campus master plan includes several opportunities for new residential facilities for first-year and upper-class student housing.

Kenyon students are actively engaged in the local community, both co-curricularly and extracurricularly. The Community Programs Office, in collaboration with the Center for Community Engagement, is committed to empowering students to become contributing citizens in whatever community they find themselves. Eight times per year, the Community Programs Office takes students to various organizations in the community to do service and learn more about their work. Started in March of 2014, the Alternative Break experience provides Kenyon students with the opportunity to break from the norm and spend their college break serving with other students.

Career planning begins early at Kenyon. First-year students visit the Career Development Office and meet with a career advisor. Kenyon's Extern Program allows students to spend a week during winter or spring break job-shadowing a volunteer at their workplace.

THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS AND DEAN OF STUDENTS POSITION

In 2014, under President Decatur's leadership, the College made a strategic decision to create a new Vice President for Student Affairs position. This role has administrative oversight of the Student Affairs Division and is a member of the College's senior staff. The VPSA is responsible for the development and implementation of strategic planning, budgets, and overall vision for the Student Affairs Division. In addition to the Dean of Students, a number of important offices report directly to the VPSA, including the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Student Activities and Greek Life; Housing and Residential Life; Athletics and Physical Education; Office of Spiritual and Religious Life; and Campus Safety.

Meredith Harper Bonham, '92, was appointed as the first VPSA and began her tenure in July 2015. Previously, Bonham served in a number of key positions at Hamilton College, most recently as the Senior Associate Dean of Students for Strategic Initiatives and Title IX Coordinator. Bonham arrived at Hamilton in 1993 as the Assistant Dean of Admission. She moved to the Office of Communications and Development as the Associate Director for Annual Giving, and then joined the Office of the President where she served for 12 years, first as the Executive Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees before her title was changed to Chief of Staff.

As the number two position in the Division of Student Affairs, the Dean of Students directly reports to and closely collaborates with the VPSA. The Dean of Students is charged with the management and oversight of individual student issues, including problem-solving and conflict resolution with students and families, in collaboration with other members of the Kenyon staff. The following units report to the Dean of Students: Office of Student Rights/Responsibilities, Health Services, and Counseling Services. The Dean of Students has three direct reports and a staff of 19 including contracted staff.

The Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities facilitates the College's response to alleged student violations of College policy. The process is designed to ensure the protection of student rights and, through due process, to sort through the information surrounding the alleged incident. The Student Conduct Review Board (SCRB), a component of the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, includes a faculty chair appointed by the President, faculty members elected by

the faculty, and student members elected by the Student Council. The SCRB is trained to understand and interpret College policy, hearing procedures, and decision making. The SCRB hears all assigned cases that allege violations of the nonacademic rules of the College.

The Health and Counseling Center has regular hours and encourages individual appointments. Staff include a physician as well as nurses and nurse practitioners who can address a full spectrum of medical issues. Counseling services includes professionals with a range of specialty areas, and both individual meetings and group sessions are available. The staff offers skill-building workshops on such topics as relaxation, assertiveness, self-esteem, anxiety, depression, alcohol abuse, eating and body-image concerns, and career choices.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE NEXT DEAN OF STUDENTS

The next Dean of Students will join a strong and supportive student affairs leadership team at Kenyon. Partnering with the VPSA, the Dean of Students will position student life as central to all aspects of student health and well-being, and will have a strong capacity for valuing, creating, and sustaining diverse and inclusive communities. The Dean of Students will maintain a high level of direct and visible involvement with students, earning their trust and respect and providing a model of engagement with students for other administrators and faculty. In this capacity, the Dean of Students will serve as a lead for the Committee for Academic Standards, including participating in the end-of-semester review of student academic achievement, and will oversee the student conduct review system and serve as an appellate authority.

Specific opportunities and challenges for the next Dean of Students include:

- Serve as a partner to the VPSA and as a key member of her leadership team as the Division modernizes and improves its ability to serve a student population with increasing support needs.
- Build strong relationships with students, faculty, and staff across campus and leverage these relationships to ensure students have a seamless experience and have access to the resources and services they need to be successful.
- Coordinate support and assistance to students having academic, behavioral, medical, or family difficulty, including communication with faculty and parents, where appropriate.
- Work closely with the VPSA to ensure Kenyon is well prepared to adjust to the changing demographics of students entering college, and ensure campus has the resources needed to support and engage a student population that is diverse in many ways.
- Serve as a visible and engaged member of the campus community and a known problem-solver for students and others, and be the coordinator for the Division's on-call structure.
- Engage students and their families compassionately on sensitive issues, communicate articulately, and manage difficult conversations effectively. Help students develop the tools to make difficult decisions and empower them to independently solve problems.

- Manage limited resources effectively to ensure students have access to the health and counseling resources needed to thrive, and support staff in the delivery of those services.
- Provide strategic oversight of the Division's assessment initiatives, including the development and implementation of new assessment priorities and tools.
- Lead the Division in strengthening trust between the students and administration, and bolster appropriate student engagement in College decision making.
- Assess and lead efforts to enhance structures that support a coordinated approach to student development and care.
- Oversee the orderly and timely change in students' enrollment status as needed due to withdrawals, re-admissions, etc., and communicate changes to the appropriate College staff and faculty.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

This is an opportunity for an accomplished and creative student life leader to join the student affairs team at Kenyon College, to serve its students as an inspiring and respected ally, and to lead Kenyon's efforts to provide the very best student experience. The successful candidate will have a proven record of creating new opportunities for student success and developing strong and deep relationships with students, faculty, and staff. The next Dean of Students will be excited by the prospect of devoting the majority of their time to developing students and helping them navigate the resources available to them on and off campus.

The successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- An understanding of and appreciation for a residential liberal arts education; a passion for providing support and opportunities for Kenyon's students; an authentic appreciation for Kenyon's history and traditions, as well as a vision of its potential.
- Compassion and thoughtfulness, and experience using these traits to develop trusted relationships with students, staff, faculty, and external constituents.
- Sophisticated interpersonal skills; a firm but fair approach to the resolution of conflict; a commitment to consult extensively balanced by a willingness to act decisively when consensus is elusive; energy, agility, sense of humor, and flexibility to work side-by-side with a dynamic VPSA and talented leadership team.
- A deep understanding of the educational value of a diverse community; a demonstrated track record of advancing diversity and enhancing inclusiveness; an ability to bring groups and individuals to common ground across lines of difference, including race, class, and socio-economic status.

- Wisdom and superb judgment; the capacity to make and stand by difficult decisions, always mindful of the need for fairness, consistency, and the potential impact of each decision on individuals and the broader community.
- Demonstrated capacity to communicate sensitive issues broadly across the College, both in writing and verbally; cultivate and sustain collegial relationships; build unity around difficult issues; be an active listener, facilitator, convener and mediator.
- Proven experience working in a matrixed environment and collaborating very closely with people who are not direct reports.
- Proven ability to manage through crises with equanimity, discretion, and a sense of responsibility and respect for students, families, and the institution.
- Devotion to the highest ethical standards; personal and professional integrity above reproach.
- A Master's degree in higher education or a related field.

TO APPLY

Kenyon College has engaged Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence to the firm as directed below.

Natalie Leonhard, Senior Associate
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Phone: (202) 682-1504

Kenyon College is an equal opportunity employer. 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.