



WILLIAMS COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Williamstown, Massachusetts

THE WILLIAMS COMMUNITY

At its origin, Williams was – literally – a college at the frontier. It is still what Williams aims to be today.

More than two hundred years ago, in the northwestern corner of America's first revolutionary state, trustees of the will of Colonel Ephraim Williams created an academy in the wilderness. It was to be a distinctly American educational institution, respectful of church and government, but fully independent from them. Williams imagined itself, from the very start, as part of the great democratic experiment America represented, where students would be admitted not on the basis of wealth and family connections, but on the basis of what they might become, how they might contribute to the country. And like any institution with democratic impulses, and with a sense of its contingency living at the edge of a frontier, Williams must have understood from the beginning that its survival would depend on its adaptability, its willingness to change.

There were times, over the long course of its history, when the College only imperfectly realized these original ideals. But they found dramatic expression in the 1960s and 1970s, when, during the presidency of John Sawyer, Williams began making a series of thoughtful, seamless decisions that created its modern character. Sensing a need to become more welcoming and inclusive, the College abolished fraternities (at the time, an unusual move for a place like Williams), and replaced them with an entirely new residential system. Soon thereafter, Williams admitted women; increased the size of its faculty and student body by nearly half; and began a process of diversifying the racial, ethnic, religious, and socio-economic identity of its membership.

When institutions change substantially, they run the risk of fracture. Williams is a striking exception. The changes initiated fifty years ago deepened the College's sense of shared identity and common purpose – not least because they proceeded with the overwhelming

support of alumni of all ages, who proved the value of their liberal educations by demonstrating a heartening openness to the wisdom of change and institutional renovation.

The past is prologue to the bold ambition that Williams asserts today: To provide the finest possible liberal arts education. If the goal is immodest, it is also bracing: Elevating the sights and standards of every member of the community, encouraging them to keep faith with the challenge inscribed on the College's gates – to “climb high, climb far.”

Williams can reach high because it has an extraordinary endowment: its people.

Williams students are among the most talented anywhere. The rigor and competitiveness of the College's admission process, and its firm commitment to need-blind admissions, place Williams in the company of only a handful of other institutions. Over the past twenty-five years especially, Williams has radically diversified its student body. Now, 20 percent of Williams students are first-generation college students; fully one-third are American under-represented minorities; seven percent are international students; and 50 percent receive financial aid.

The strength of the student body today is the product of the College's resolve to search as widely as possible for students of high academic ability and great personal promise. Diversity is not an end in itself, but a principle flowing from the conviction that encountering differences is at the heart of the educational enterprise – differences of opinions and ideas, but also differences of perspectives rooted in the varied histories students bring with them.

Though self-effacing about their abilities, Williams students have a zeal to excel – in the classroom and in the library, on the playing fields and in the performance halls, in their service to the campus and to communities beyond. They are grateful for their educational opportunities, and make the most of them. Their eagerness for serious conversation extends into the informal settings of dining halls and residential houses, where students vigorously debate ideas and explore each other's interests.

Students help to give Williams its warm, unassuming personality. They take their work seriously, but not always themselves: How could they, in a college whose mascot (for still mysterious reasons) is a purple cow; where the marching band at football games is made up mostly of kazoos; and where the student-led initiative to conserve energy is called “Do it in the Dark.” And they take good care of each other, serving as peer tutors, as Junior Advisors to first-year students, as mentors to newcomers joining co-curricular organizations. They create a strikingly close and compassionate community, and demonstrate a talent for friendship that forges lifelong bonds.

The faculty is not only distinguished, but distinctive. Recruiting from the top graduate programs in the country, Williams asks its faculty to accept an unusual (and unusually demanding) combination of challenges: to be exemplary teachers, productive scholars or artists, and engaged partners in governing the institution. Well supported by the College through research funding and a generous sabbatical program, Williams faculty are leaders in their fields – recognized nationally, and often internationally, for the high quality and

significance of their publications and creative work. They also embrace the chance to shape their college, serving in a civic spirit on a broad array of committees, and as officers of an institution that prizes collaborative decision-making.

But it is the teaching gene that especially defines Williams professors. The Williams faculty is remarkable in its devotion to teaching and its ability to instill in students a passionate pleasure in the life of the mind. Faculty members invite students to become partners in the process of intellectual discovery. That partnership becomes visible in every classroom, where students are expected to contribute rather than consume; in the challenging setting of Williams tutorials, where students take the lead in explaining what is interesting and consequential about that week's assignment; in the College's programs to engage students directly in faculty research projects (an area, especially in the sciences, where Williams leads nationally); and in a host of other ways.

The curriculum – well rooted in traditional fields, but markedly more interdisciplinary in the past decade – is as rich, varied, and up-to-date as the contemporary world requires. The outside evaluators who conducted the College's recent reaccreditation visit offered this judgment: "Exceptional in its breadth and excellence, the academic program of Williams College meets even the most stringent expectations, and sets a standard of leadership for liberal arts colleges in the United States."

But the classroom and curriculum are only the entry points. Professors at Williams want to know not only *what* their students think, but *how* they think and who they are. They want to know students in all their dimensions – to learn their histories and hopes, to see them as complex individuals who deserve attention and respect.

Faculty and students together, learning with and from each other in a community whose intimacy of scale fosters close personal and intellectual relationships; where concern for the needs and ideas of other people is not only an educational, but an ethical, imperative; where the values of engagement and decency fundamentally shape the educational process: These are the ideals to which Williams faculty and students aspire.

They have strong partners. Williams is blessed with an enormously talented administrative and support staff; they keenly understand the College's mission, and devote their energies to advancing it. Williams alumni are fiercely and intelligently loyal, contributing generously of their time, experience, and resources. Far from insisting that the College remain as it was in their time, alumni encourage Williams to reinvent itself for each new generation. Williams trustees – all of whom currently are alumni – provide discerning strategic direction and careful stewardship of the College's assets. Many trustees have close personal relationships with students, faculty, and staff; but while the board is fully engaged, it keeps its focus on large policy issues and long-term decisions.

Location plays its part in Williams' success. Surrounded by communities that enthusiastically support and participate in its educational project, Williams is at home in one of the most culturally rich towns in America, with three remarkable museums (the renowned Clark Art Institute, the Williams College Museum of Art, and, in North Adams, Mass MoCA – one of

the largest contemporary art museums in the world), the College's Chapin Library (whose rare book collection is unsurpassed by any college and few universities), the Williamstown Theater Festival (generally regarded as the country's best summer theater), and other resources.

The landscape, too, helps define the institution. It is celebrated for its natural beauty, its evocative plays of light, its restorative power to beckon outdoors. (Each October, in fact, the President declares a surprise holiday – “Mountain Day” – when the College community collectively skips class to enjoy together the countryside in autumn.) In what may be a fortuitous accident of geography, the Berkshires seem to announce metaphorically the kind of education Williams attempts: at once gentle and dramatic, by turns tranquil and stormy, enclosed – but always opening out into wider, longer views. After a visit in 1844, Henry David Thoreau put it succinctly: “It would be no small advantage if every college were thus located at the base of a mountain.” The physical setting, he concluded, is “as good at least as one well-endowed professorship.”

The President's House sits within that landscape, at the geographical heart of the campus. Its placement is emblematic of the central role the president plays in the life of the institution. With a long history of distinguished presidents – including the incumbent, Morty Schapiro – Williams is a place where not only presidents, but the presidency itself, are deeply respected. The College community looks to its presidents for leadership; encourages them by embracing their best initiatives, and supports them with loyal criticism; and sees the president not as a distant administrator, but as a collegial partner in a shared effort to create the best possible college.

The president's centrality is firmly embedded in the College's governance structure. The president presides at monthly meetings of the faculty where, in the style of a New England town meeting, all major decisions about academic (and many other) policies are debated and voted; the president leads the faculty, but is, at the same time, *of* the faculty. The Committee on Appointments and Promotions – which oversees faculty allocations, appointments, tenure, and promotion – is technically advisory to the president, but the president sits as a member, and works with its other members (the Provost, Dean of the Faculty, and three elected full professors) to craft a consensus through a process of collegial decision-making.

Leading, but part of: The model finds other forms of expression at Williams. Three senior officers reporting to the president are members of the faculty: the Provost (chief financial officer); the Dean of the Faculty (chief academic officer); and the Dean of the College (who oversees all aspects of student life, academic and residential). All three are drawn from the Williams faculty, and after serving terms that generally range from four to six years, they return to the faculty with a textured sense of the complexities that shape an institution like Williams. This highly unusual arrangement helps ensure that educational values, and a tangible sense of what it takes to teach and learn, are at the core of every decision the College makes. It also helps diminish – almost to a vanishing point – the gulf that in many other places divides presidents from professors, faculty from administrators. At Williams, “they” are “us.”

Williams believes in its mission and is proud of achievements to this point in its history, but the College is not complacent or self-satisfied. There is, if anything, an intelligent kind of restlessness in the Williams community, an abiding desire to do more, do better, and – when there’s reason to – do differently. In its seventeenth president, Williams seeks a vigorous, creative individual who will both join and lead the College community – someone who will celebrate what has already been accomplished, but more importantly, will challenge the College to imagine new possibilities for its future, and advance Williams to its next frontiers.

WILLIAMS: ESSENTIAL FACTS

Students

Williams enrolls roughly 2,000 undergraduates and 50 graduate students. For the undergraduate Class of 2012, the College admitted 1,281 of 7,552 applicants, or 17 percent. Forty-two percent of the class was admitted through the early decision program. Of those admitted overall, 42 percent matriculated. Almost one-third of the class identify themselves as U.S. students of color. Seven percent are international.

Williams admits all students, including international ones, without regard to their ability to pay and promises to meet 100 percent of their demonstrated financial need for four years. Half of the first-year class qualifies for Williams-based aid. The College has worked hard in recent years to make itself increasingly affordable. Beginning in 2008-09, no student is expected to borrow; aid packages consist primarily of grants, supplemented with a term-time job and some modest summer earnings. Over the past ten years, the median price paid by aided students has dropped by about a third, when adjusted for inflation, and the number of students who qualify for grant aid that covers at least three-quarters of the cost of attendance has grown from 1 in 20 to 1 in 5.

Williams offers two masters programs, each enrolling about 25 students: a two-year program in Art History in conjunction with Williamstown's Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute; and a one-year program at the Center for Development Economics for emerging leaders from developing economies. Virtually all CDE graduates return to their home countries, where they assume important roles in treasuries, central banks, and governments.

Once on campus, undergraduate students choose from a rich array of curricular and co-curricular options. Williams offers 33 majors and 17 concentrations and special programs. Nearly one-third of students pursue two or more majors. A student/faculty ratio of 7/1, achieved with the addition of 37 new positions over the last eight years, enables the College to offer a wide variety of small classes, including its signature tutorial program, which now includes more than 70 courses across the curriculum.

Roughly half of each class spends at least one semester abroad. The College offers two study-away programs of its own. The Williams-Exeter Program at Oxford University enables up to 26 Williams students to immerse themselves in that University’s life for a year. Each semester about 20 students from a variety of colleges enroll in the Williams-Mystic Maritime

Studies Program, with its highly experiential and interdisciplinary curriculum, which is managed in partnership with Connecticut's Mystic Seaport Museum.

Life outside the classroom is similarly vigorous. Lectures, cultural events, and athletic opportunities abound. More than 160 student organizations are active, and over one-quarter of students take part in music, theatre, and dance. Others exhibit their art and give tours of the Williams College Museum of Art. Nearly half of each graduating class has performed some kind of off-campus community service, and the percentage rises significantly if service to the college community is included.

Some 40 percent of students participate in at least one of the College's 32 varsity sports. With junior varsity, club, and intramural teams, the participation rate rises to over half. Williams was a founding member of the New England Small College Athletic Conference, which restricts varsity activity, including recruitment, even more than does the NCAA Division III, in which Williams competes in most sports. For 13 years the National Association of College Athletic Directors has awarded its Directors Cup to the Division III program with the greatest success in national competition; Williams has won 12 times.

Not surprisingly, given the College's location, the largest group on campus is the Outing Club. By graduation, some 85 percent of the class has taken advantage of the group's equipment and programming to enjoy the area's natural beauty.

Faculty

Williams has been known for the vibrancy of its faculty since at least the time of Mark Hopkins, a faculty member who served as President from 1836 to 1872, who changed forever the dynamic of the classroom by asking students the question, radical at the time, "What do you think?"

Today 312 Williams faculty ask that question, among many others, and work closely with students on course work, in research and artistic expression, and as formal and informal mentors.

The College recruits faculty from the finest graduate programs and attracts the best candidates from them. They come to campus knowing they will emphasize teaching more than their colleagues at research universities do. The teaching load is two courses per semester, which allows faculty to focus closely on student learning while also advising and mentoring outside the classroom. Assessment for promotion takes many forms that vary from department to department, but in all cases includes a College-wide written questionnaire administered to every student after every semester course. Excellence in both teaching and scholarly work are required for promotion and tenure.

Since the best teachers are themselves always learning, Williams faculty are frequent and distinguished contributors to the production of new knowledge in their fields of research and artistic expression. Faculty also earn a disproportionate number of awards and grants, including more than \$3 million in outside research support last year alone.

All tenured and tenure-eligible faculty also have College funds available for travel and research, and they benefit from a generous leave policy.

One important innovation in recent years has been the creation of the Williams Tutorial Program, a set of courses whose structure is adapted from the Oxford/Cambridge model. Tutorials typically enroll ten or fewer students, divided into pairs. Faculty members meet with each pair every week; one student writes a paper, and the other provides a critique of it (they then switch roles the following week). Discussion follows, guided by the faculty member. Faculty and students find tutorials especially demanding and satisfying educational experiences.

The recent expansion of the faculty, combined with the College's practice of conducting almost all searches at the assistant professor level, has resulted in 28 percent of faculty being 40 years of age or younger. Another 39 percent are within ten years of traditional retirement age. The College has worked hard to diversify the faculty. It remains at this point less diverse than the student body, but 19 percent of voting faculty are people of color and 41 percent are women.

Staff

Williams benefits from the dedication and expertise of approximately 800 staff members across 60 offices. Many of them participate in College life outside their jobs by serving on campus-wide committees, helping lead and participate in major initiatives, and attending campus educational, cultural, and athletic events.

The College is the largest employer in the northern Berkshires, and turnover is low – less than five percent annually.

In line with Williams' collegial spirit, a 14-member Staff Council serves as a consultative body for the Human Resources Office. They discuss and provide input on institutional policies and practices as well as on broader work and life issues.

Alumni

When Williams President Zephaniah Swift Moore left to form a rival college in Amherst, a group of Williams graduates in response formed in 1821 what has become the oldest continuing alumni society in North America and possibly the world. The continuing commitment ever since of Williams alumni to their College has been legendary throughout higher education.

Williams' 26,500 living alumni respond to the quality of their undergraduate experience and to the depth of the friendships they formed here. They give their time and expertise to Williams as members of the Board of Trustees; as leaders of the Society of Alumni; as leaders of classes, regional associations, and alumni networks; as career mentors to students and fellow alumni; and as College ambassadors to prospective students and their families and

secondary schools, as well as to other colleges, universities, and alumni organizations. Seventy-seven regional associations, spanning the globe, mount 250 to 300 events each year.

The Society's Executive Committee serves as its governing board and as an advisory body to the alumni relations office. Its 20 members are leaders of classes, regions, and networks. One primary duty is communicating the opinions and interests of alumni to the College and sharing the College's priorities and directions with alumni. The President of the Society serves as Chair of the Executive Committee and attends meetings of the Board of Trustees.

Development

The College has one of the highest, most consistent, and longest standing rates of alumni giving in the nation. Alumni Fund participation has been above 50 percent since the late 1950s; last year 62 percent contributed \$11.2 million. The Parents Fund received 1,300 gifts last year, totaling more than \$1.6 million. Williams also benefits from a strong reunion giving tradition, including the 50th and 25th Programs that have consistently brought in \$15 to \$20 million in recent years. The College manages nearly \$100 million in life-income-gift assets. Total contributions in 2007-08 were \$54,786,706.

In 2003, Williams launched the public phase of a \$400 million comprehensive campaign to support curricular initiatives, expand the faculty, enhance student life, boost financial aid, and complete three major building projects. That effort reached its goal at the end of June 2007, a year-and-a-half ahead of schedule. By the campaign's end on Dec. 31, 2008, some 75 percent of alumni had made gifts that, with those of parents and others, totaled \$500.2 million.

Finances

Budget

Williams spent \$197.4 million on its operations in 2007-08 and expects to spend \$213.3 million in 2008-09. Current plans call for reducing spending to \$206 million on operations in 2009-10 and for further reductions in 2010-11.

Endowment

On June 30, 2008, the Williams endowment stood at \$1.8 billion. During FY2007-08, the College drew down \$78.7 million, or 4.1 percent, of the value of the endowment. In FY2009-10, the payout rate will exceed the historical average. The College is making every effort to reduce expenditures in order to maintain a sustainable level.

Though turmoil in the capital markets makes it difficult to predict short-term movement, the College's planning model anticipates a return on investment of minus 30 percent by the end of the current fiscal year (June 30).

Facilities

Williams owns and manages a 450-acre main campus and other properties in the Williamstown area, including an experimental forest of 2,500 acres. Buildings number more than 170 and encompass about 2.5 million square feet. Recent notable additions include a center for theatre and dance, a student center, and two academic buildings. A project to build a new library, including media/technology center, at \$80 million, and another to renovate football and track facilities, at \$17 million, have been put on hold, waiting out the turmoil in capital and credit markets.

The College has typically budgeted \$12 million annually for capital renewal. Because of global economic pressures, the figure is currently lowered to \$6.4 million. The physical plant is in excellent condition; this reduction can take place for some time without incurring much deferred maintenance.

Environmental Sustainability

Williams has been dedicated to environmental issues for decades and is now moving toward the Board-approved goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2020 to 10 percent below their 1990 levels. Substantial progress has been made in the first two years of this initiative but meeting this goal, while growing the physical plant and facing new economic pressures, will require the continued creativity and cooperation of the broad College community. In addition to the Center for Environmental Studies, one of the first in the country, the College launched in 2007 the Zilkha Center for Environmental Initiatives to lead its efforts toward long-term environmental sustainability.

Relationship to the Community

The character of Williams is shaped in significant part by its setting in Williamstown and the Berkshires. In recent years the College has expanded its involvement with the local community. Faculty, staff, and students are engaged with a growing range of local initiatives. College and local officials meet regularly to advance projects of joint interest, and many local residents participate in campus events. A recent study showed that over the previous ten years Williams had made annual financial contributions in the community that averaged more than \$500,000 and additional one-time contributions of \$5 million. The top priority in College involvement is education, primarily working with local schools, but spreads well beyond, to include healthcare along with economic and community development.

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

The next President of Williams, working in close collaboration with the faculty, students, trustees, and staff, will be expected to provide inspiring leadership and sound management to guide the College through challenging economic times while fostering a climate of academic excellence, creativity, and aspiration to ensure that Williams retains its position as one of the nation's leading liberal arts colleges.

The Williams community has been engaged over the past several years in a planning process designed to identify the considerable challenges faced by the residential, liberal arts model of education and to develop effective responses. These challenges take the form, among other things, of rapidly evolving demographics; a daunting cost structure, particularly in financially stressed times; fundamental changes in the ways students study, learn, and access information; a wide variation in the kind of experiences students have had – and not had – when they arrive on campus; and the increasingly national and global market for higher education that tends to favor well-known “brands” over the more subtle virtues of the liberal arts experience.

Williams seeks in its next president a person who is energized by these challenges and the many others that will emerge. It seeks a person who will vigorously and rigorously engage the College community in charting a dynamic future for Williams. He or she will need the ability to lead, the courage to ask the College community to look critically at itself and openly at the world, and the judgment and experience to execute with a steady hand and a collaborative spirit. More specifically, the next president of Williams will be asked to:

- Work with the College, in the short term, to take the steps necessary to align its operating budget with available resources, to make financial judgments that will protect the long-term purchasing power of the endowment, and to ensure that the College’s overall financial model serves its mission and strategic objectives. Over the long term, continue to build the strength of College finances through ambitious and sustainable fundraising.
- As the leader of the College community, actively engage with students in a way that reinforces among them a sense of common purpose and shared experience.
- Continue, strengthen, and improve the College’s commitment to a culture of diversity and inclusion in its intellectual and community life, and across its student, faculty, and staff populations.
- Provide leadership and an intelligent public voice on higher education issues of national interest, particularly those relating to liberal arts education.
- Work with the faculty, as academic fields, curricular needs, and pedagogical approaches evolve, to recruit and retain the next generation of diverse and outstanding scholars and teachers.
- Lead the development of a strategy for deeper and broader engagement with the world outside of Williamstown, specifically those areas falling under the rubric of ‘globalization.’ Devise new ways of integrating this into the educational experience, bringing the world to Williams – and Williams to the world.
- Understanding that the quality of the undergraduate experience at a residential College depends on the health and vitality of student life, continue to assess the residential

housing system and important dimensions of student governance, student services, and student culture.

- Strengthen and improve the bonds of mutual interest that knit Williams to the local community and to the institutions that nurture and sustain it.
- Critically examine the College's approach to admissions, financial aid, and recruiting to ensure that Williams continues to attract an excellent and diverse student body.
- Reinforce existing strong and productive ties with the alumni body. Specifically, lead the process by which alumni activities and organizations better meet the needs and expectations of new alumni populations.
- Continue to build on Williams' commitment to emission reductions and sustainability through strategic investments in capital projects, the adoption or reinforcement of appropriate policies and practices in College operations, and leadership in influencing community behavior.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Williams seeks a President with a passionate belief in the value of a residential liberal arts college, with the ability to articulate the mission of Williams College in a world of rapidly changing expectations among students, their parents, the academic community, and the opinion leaders of the nation.

The Search Committee understands that no single candidate will have all of the qualifications listed below, but it seeks candidates with some combination of the following experience and abilities:

- A broadly gauged intellectual, curious and widely read, with a lively turn of mind;
- A leader with the soul of a teacher who takes pleasure in the company of students;
- An accomplished person who knows and appreciates the academic world, its scholarly values and professional culture;
- An individual with an understanding of the global context and the large issues that are alive in the modern world, and an eagerness to draw Williams students and faculty into the debate;
- An expansive, open-minded leader, ready to listen and respectful of the views of others, who can readily join the personal and collaborative Williams culture;
- A seasoned manager, a collaborator and a team builder, with proven judgment as a mentor to an administrative team, and with the diligence and experience to execute the essential business of the College;

- An individual with the personal confidence to lead, the humility to listen, the capacity to credit others for their contributions;
- A leader who possesses the substance, strength, and optimism to bring the Williams community through the essential choices of the next decade;
- An individual with a demonstrated commitment to diversity and a personal understanding of the issues, with the courage to explore the full range of intellectual and emotional agendas that are essential to a robust community;
- An inspiring individual with the capacity to steward the Williams culture of philanthropy, to reach students, parents, friends, and alumni, and nurture their ties to the Williams mission;
- A warm person with a vivid sense of humor, most especially when College life tries the patience of presidents.

TO APPLY

Williams College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent in confidence to:

John Isaacson, President and Managing Director
Maggie Gilmore, Senior Associate
334 Boylston Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02116
3797@imsearch.com

Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Beyond meeting fully its legal obligations for non-discrimination, Williams College is committed to building a diverse and inclusive community where members from all backgrounds can live, learn and thrive.