



Position Specification

University of Minnesota Twin Cities
Dean, College of Liberal Arts

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College of Liberal Arts

At the heart of every great university is a college encompassing the fundamental disciplines of knowledge. At the University of Minnesota, this is the [College of Liberal Arts](#) (CLA). CLA was formally established in 1868, 17 years after the founding of the University. CLA undergraduates study with faculty scholars and artists who are defining the future in their fields of study. The University's largest college, CLA is central to its academic mission. Minnesota's excellence as a public land-grant research university depends crucially on the excellence of CLA.

Our research and creative work have led to breakthroughs in understanding human behavior, economic theory, addiction, equality, and big data. Faculty and alumni have shaped policies to create fairer housing practices and better economic conditions around the world. Alumni and faculty have transformed the Twin Cities into a vibrant cultural hub, where theater, dance, music, and art drive the economy and stir our hearts and minds.

A college of firsts, we are pioneers in establishing the academic fields of American Indian Studies, African American & African Studies, Chicano & Latino Studies, and Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies.

The CLA consists of 31 [academic units](#):

- African American & African Studies
- American Indian Studies
- American Studies
- Anthropology
- Art
- Art History
- Asian & Middle Eastern Studies
- Chicano & Latino Studies
- Classical & Near Eastern Religions & Cultures
- Communication Studies
- Cultural Studies & Comparative Literature
- Economics
- English
- French & Italian
- Gender, Women & Sexuality Studies
- Geography, Environment & Society
- German, Nordic, Slavic & Dutch
- Global Studies
- History
- Hubbard School of Journalism & Mass Communication
- Linguistics
- Music
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology
- Spanish & Portuguese Studies
- Speech Language Hearing Sciences
- Statistics
- Theatre Arts & Dance
- Writing Studies

CLA also hosts two dozen [collegiate and interdisciplinary centers](#).

The [college leadership team](#) includes five associate deans, two assistant deans, and four administrative officers.

Undergraduate Education

CLA educates over 12,000 undergraduates each year. In CLA's incoming freshman class of 2027, over 23,000 students applied for 2,654 undergraduate seats. Eighty-eight percent of fall 2022 freshmen returned to CLA for their sophomore year in fall 2023. Ninety-nine percent of students in the class of 2027 took a full course load in fall 2023 and are on track to graduate in four years. In 2022-2023 CLA awarded 2,948 undergraduate degrees. CLA students receive nationally recognized awards, including Rhodes, Truman, Goldwater, Beinecke, and Fulbright scholarships.

Of the students who were admitted:

- 58% graduated in the top 25% of their high school class.
- 41% are students of color.
- 60% are women.
- 27% are first-generation college students.
- 28 is the average ACT score; 68% scored 28 or higher.
- 69% are Minnesota residents.
- 12% are Wisconsin residents.
- 9% are international students.

In CLA's fall 2023 transfer class, 3,361 students applied for 953 undergraduate seats. Of the students who enrolled:

- 35% are students of color.
- 36% are first generation.
- 11% are international students.
- 51% are women.
- 75% are Minnesota residents.
- 3.36 is the average transfer GPA

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In CLA, study and research opportunities are available to undergraduates in the arts, humanities, and social and behavioral sciences. Through the [Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program \(UROP\)](#), service-learning, publicly engaged teaching and research activities, and other experiences, undergraduates are mentored by instructors and advanced students who can model the process of discovery and innovation inside and outside the classroom.

One in four CLA students participate in the study-abroad program annually. To cultivate a global perspective for its students, CLA requires all of its students pursuing a BA degree to fulfill a second-language requirement. Its international character is enhanced by the presence of some 1,700 international students.

In addition, CLA partners with more than 225 nonprofit organizations for service-learning experiences for its students and places a strong emphasis on connecting its students with the community. Students intern at places like Target, WCCO-TV, the Star Tribune, the Pioneer Press, the Center for Homicide Research, and the Minnesota State House of Representatives. Student Services staff help direct students to the many learning opportunities available within CLA and throughout the University—including internships and service learning.

Degree requirements established by the college give students an education solidly and broadly based in the liberal arts. Courses that meet the Twin Cities campus-wide liberal education requirements introduce students to modes of inquiry and subject matter of major branches of knowledge, as well as to four broad themes: international perspectives, cultural diversity, environmental issues, and citizenship and public ethics.

CLA is a pioneer in interdisciplinarity and is known for its distinguished environment for, and tradition of, interdisciplinary research and knowledge. In addition to strong discipline-based programs, CLA offers interdisciplinary majors that draw on the strengths of each of the disciplines and integrate them in new and exciting ways.

Graduate Education

The College of Liberal Arts offers a variety of graduate program areas and employs nearly 700 graduate assistants each semester. Program opportunities are available in 30 doctoral programs, 35 master's programs, 43 graduate minors, and 2 graduate certificates. The college offers competitive funding resources for graduate students and extensive student services in program completion, research support, and career development.

In 2023-2024, CLA enrolled 1,335 graduate students and awarded graduate degrees, including:

- 31 Doctorates
- 46 Graduate minors
- 39 Master's Degrees
- 2 Post-baccalaureate credit certificate/licensure/endorsement

Of the CLA graduate students enrolled in Fall 2023:

Fall 2023 Graduate Student Program Enrollment:

- 77.6% are enrolled in a Doctoral Research/Scholarship program
- 2.9% are enrolled in a Doctoral Professional Practice program
- 11% are enrolled in a Masters Research/Scholarship program
- 7.6% are enrolled in a Masters Professional Practice
- 1% are enrolled in certificate or other graduate programs

Fall 2023 Graduate Student Demographic Data:

- 18.4% are students of color
- 34.7% are international
- 48.8% are women; 32.8% are men; 5.7% are nonbinary; 12.7% no response/prefer to self-describe/other

Graduate students develop their capacity to produce distinguished research and creative work, and are instilled with a commitment to serve, lead, teach, and inspire future generations of students and professionals. CLA is proud to be home to some of the most outstanding graduate programs at the University of Minnesota – and in the world. CLA's talented faculty reshape their respective fields and have an unmatched impact on graduate students, research, and creative output. Several CLA graduate programs are ranked in the top 20 in their disciplines by *U.S. News and World Report*. These include programs in macroeconomics, clinical psychology, industrial-organizational psychology, audiology, sociology of population, psychology, international economics, statistics, industrial organization, economics, social stratification, and speech-language pathology.

CLA has a strong commitment to and investment in graduate education and student support. Two notable examples include the ICGC Scholar Fellows for incoming students which offer 50% teaching and research assistantships in the second and third years of study and tuition and health insurance for 4 years; and the Diversity of Views and Experiences

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(DOVE) Fellowship Program which supports academically excellent students who promote diversity of views, experiences, and ideas.

CLA students have been well represented with National Student Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowships. Of the University's 119 active NSF Research Fellowships, CLA has 17.

CLA's Office of Research and Graduate Programs (ORGP) advances the CLA mission through support of its research initiatives, programs, and students. Competitive funding resources, along with proposal development and consultative services for collecting, managing, and analyzing data are available for graduate students in CLA. Combined with University resources, including the Center for Writing, Sponsored Projects Administration, Statistical Consulting Services, and the award-winning University Libraries, CLA graduate students are well-supported in open and diverse research and scholarship. Graduate students and alumni also receive comprehensive career services and support. ORGP offers graduate student services support regarding academic policies, program requirements, and by providing relevant data to assist with program planning and funding. CLA's Graduate Student Services serves as a central node to learn about CLA graduate program requirements, student funding opportunities, and academic life for CLA graduate students, staff, and faculty.

Faculty and Staff

CLA's faculty are dedicated teachers and path-breaking researchers, scholars, and creative artists who bring to their interactions with students the most current knowledge and ideas in their fields. Through their commitment to research and creative excellence, CLA's faculty pursue discoveries that advance knowledge and understanding within and across disciplines, and afford the development of innovative strategies to address the prevailing challenges of our time. Working with a diverse array of methods, CLA faculty engage with their students on ideas that cross levels of analysis, traverse the globe, and provide connections amongst the past, present, and future. Over the past ten years, CLA has created 22 new funds to support faculty research and community engagement, and it continues to raise funds to invest in ongoing discovery with the goal of elevating Minnesota and society as a whole.

CLA draws the world's brightest minds to Minnesota. A dozen CLA faculty and alumni have won Nobel Prizes in economics, literature, chemistry, and physics. Six CLA faculty members have been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in the past decade. Since 2000, CLA students have won 4 Rhodes, 10 Truman, and 5 Beinecke Scholarships, plus 99 Fulbright awards.

CLA Faculty Characteristics

- CLA has 474 tenured and tenure-track faculty.
44% full professors, 33% associate professors, 23% assistant professors
- 30% of CLA's tenured and tenure-track faculty are faculty of color.
- 48% of CLA's tenured and tenure-track faculty are women.
- CLA faculty receive nationally recognized awards – including Nobel Prizes, membership in the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, Guggenheim Fellowships, etc.
- CLA has 397 Associate Faculty who teach in non-tenure stream faculty positions as lecturers, teaching specialists, or term/contingent faculty

See our most recent [Accolades](#) including news about faculty publications, creative activities, and recognition.

The college employs over 800 staff across administrative and academic units and centers; over 20% are Indigenous or staff of color. CLA's [Indigenous Staff & Staff of Color Community](#) promotes personal and professional growth through shared experiences, resources, and strategies for staff of color. It launched in 2017 to help advance the college's goal of cultivating a welcoming and respectful climate in its diverse intellectual community. It is an active organization that includes members from throughout the college.

Alumni Engagement

With some 96,000 alumni living in Minnesota and more than 166,000 alumni living across the globe, CLA has tremendous opportunities to expand outreach and engagement.

Alumni have transformed industries and communities. They have founded the Chicago Climate Exchange, Lominger Limited (now Korn Ferry), Mona Meyer McGrath & Gavin (now Weber Shandwick), Hubbard Broadcasting, Children's Radio Network (now Radio Disney), and Caldrea. Alumni have also transformed communities, serving in high government offices (Vice President Walter Mondale) and launching organizations like the Center for Victims of Torture (Bob Sands), and Penumbra Theater (Lou Bellamy).

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CLA is proud of their many alumni who are leaders, to include:

- Michele Norris, Emmy and Peabody Award winning journalist
- Maria Schneider, Grammy-Award winning composer
- Esta Stecher, Former Chairperson of the Board, Goldman Sachs
- Cheryl Strayed, award-winning author of *Wild*
- Walter Mondale, 42nd Vice President of the United States
- Santino Fontana, Tony Award winning actor
- Lou Bellamy, founder of Penumbra Theater, largest of three U.S. African-American theaters
- Earl Lewis, president emeritus of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and founding director of the University of Michigan Center for Social Solutions

Alumni stay connected and give back to the college. Over 500 alumni volunteered for CLA and the University in 2023. Eighteen CLA alumni have served as board chairs of the University's Alumni Association since 1976. Twenty-one CLA alumni have served as Regents. CLA has presented 1,730 alumni with the Alumni of Notable Achievement recognition since 1994.

Fundraising

In CLA, we are driven by a purpose to do the most good for others. Gifts of all sizes empower us to strengthen the academic activities of our faculty, expand opportunities for today's students, and extend our work into the community. Last year, we raised \$27.2 million that included 84 gifts from corporations, foundations, and entities; 2,650 gifts from alumni; and 489 donors who gave more than \$1,000 (Dean's Circle).

Back in 2021, we closed the most successful fundraising campaign in CLA's history, raising \$182 million — which was \$32 million beyond our original goal. These gifts and investments in CLA are all about opportunity, providing more opportunity for students to attend CLA and participate in internships, research, and study abroad; providing more opportunity for faculty to work on the enduring and the emergent questions that drive research and creative work in the liberal arts; providing more opportunity, through our education, research, and engagement and outreach beyond campus, to do the most good we can do for others. As the University of Minnesota prepares to launch the public phase of a new capital campaign, the role of the Dean will be pivotal in collaborating with faculty, students, and staff to shape priorities for the College, and must be able to communicate clearly to a variety of constituencies the significance of CLA contributions to the University, the State of Minnesota, and the world.

Community Engagement

The work of the College of Liberal Arts does not end at the borders of our campus. As the heart of Minnesota's flagship university, our work is deeply connected to multiple communities, including: those who work and study with us, those who support us, and those who occupy spaces, both physical and theoretical with us. That's what the Liberal Arts Engagement Hub is all about – deepening our culture of engagement with the community in order to be a responsible and accountable partner, and to effect meaningful change.

Engagement is a belief system. Two-way partnerships with our communities help prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; and address critical societal issues. We've embedded community engagement in our curriculum and launched faculty awards to promote and reward cooperative research projects. Together, CLA students and faculty are working with Minnesota communities to build a more just and vibrant future for us all.

The Role of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts

Reporting to the Executive Vice President and Provost, the Dean is the chief academic and administrative officer of the College and will be instrumental in guiding its future. The Dean will set and implement the strategic direction for CLA, with responsibility for advancing its mission and operations with an articulated vision for the future of liberal arts for the 21st century public, research institution through thoughtful personnel and management decisions, retention and enhancement of faculty talent, aligning budget decisions with strategic priorities, academic program oversight, and fundraising and donor development. The Dean will guide a robust scholarship and research operation, seek to expand sponsored research, and promote excellence in undergraduate and graduate education, including the development of collaborative and innovative academic programs designed to meet existing and emerging student needs and demand.

The successful candidate will possess demonstrated scholarly excellence in a field relevant to CLA and must be able to communicate authentically and broadly, within and beyond the university, the value of art, humanities, and social science education and research in realizing the full potential of a research-intensive, land-grant university with global

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reach. The next dean will sustain existing collaborations within the CLA and across the other UMN colleges and campuses, as well as envision and grow new partnerships and pathways with other institutions (PK-12, Tribal colleges, affiliation agreements, etc.) within the interdisciplinary climate of the University. They will have demonstrated impact in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion and possess strengths in recruiting, nurturing, and retaining outstanding and diverse faculty, staff and students from all backgrounds. They will have a record of effective academic and operational administration, including revenue generation, increasing philanthropic support, and a keen awareness of the current climate regarding the liberal arts and higher education.

Key priorities for the next Dean of CLA:

- Establish a bold vision that defines liberal arts in the 21st century, sets achievable goals, unifies the College, and provides the necessary infrastructure to leverage the strengths of the CLA's rich disciplinary portfolio and of the University and UMN system at large.
- Articulate CLA's value and elevate its visibility, accomplishments, and profile to internal and external constituents.
- Engage deeply in a landscape understanding of current curricular offerings and promote a culture of assessment and continued improvement.
- Foster a culture of trust, collaboration, consistent communication, and transparency, and promote faculty and staff participation in shared governance.
- Promote an equitable and inclusive climate for all, with deliberate attention to underrepresented groups and the findings from the [TRUTH Project](#).
- Establish a clear, transparent budget and financial model that recognizes varied needs across units.
- Review current collegiate infrastructure and develop an operational plan that allows for increased efficiency that contributes to revenue generation and invests in growth areas, while also supporting mission-aligned activity.
- Increase research capacity and grow extramural funding and research investments.
- Recruit, nurture, and retain talented and diverse faculty and staff.
- Enhance CLA's financial resources by building donor and alumni relationships through development activities.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we highlight the following:

Leadership:

- An innovative strategist with a demonstrated record of effective, strong, and collaborative leadership.
- A proven capacity to formulate and articulate a shared vision for the liberal arts, persuade a wide range of audiences of its value, and engage others in its implementation.
- A history of developing and promoting shared governance between faculty and administration.
- Experience with engaging, recruiting, and retaining faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds and disciplines.
- Demonstrated administrative and financial management experience, ability to make difficult choices in resource-constrained environments, and communication skills to articulate complex budgetary decisions.
- A proven record of establishing and growing research programs and securing appropriate funding.
- Thoughtful in one's approach to prioritization and strategic decision-making; the ability to act in a transparent, consistent, and timely manner while always considering what is best for the CLA and the University.

Academic Background:

- A well-established, productive scholar and/or artist working in any of the disciplines housed in CLA, with a passion for academic excellence and an outstanding record of research and/or creative work.
- Credentials for appointment at full professor level, including Ph.D. or recognized equivalent.

Financial Management Experience and Development:

- Record of operational leadership and fiscal management demonstrating excellence, growth, and financial effectiveness.
- Strong financial acumen and entrepreneurial strategies.
- Genuine appetite and aptitude to engage in development, ideally with experience in strengthening philanthropic support from individuals, foundations, or corporations.
- Commitment to diversifying revenue streams through curricular innovation and delivery, expanding sponsored research, and other means.

Focus on Students:

- Genuine investment in CLA's teaching mission and the importance of providing undergraduate and graduate students with the highest-quality educational experience.
- Must understand and value the importance of a diverse student body and mechanisms for retention and support of all students, with an emphasis on transfer students and students from underrepresented groups.

Focus on Research:

- Willingness and aptitude to support and facilitate research initiatives and interdisciplinary collaborations.

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- Experience enhancing research productivity and creating research opportunities with internal and external partners.

Personal Qualities:

- Impeccable personal and professional integrity.
- Dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion and possesses an ability to foster an inclusive community between students, faculty, and staff from varied backgrounds.
- A leadership style that is equity-minded, self-reflective, collaborative, and able to navigate varied points of view.
- A dynamic, inspiring champion for liberal arts education who has entrepreneurial and creative drive.
- Excellent skills in listening and oral and written communication.
- An innovative, creative problem-solver and advocate, who uses sound judgment.

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

The University of Minnesota (UMN), founded in 1851, is an AAU and R1 public research university ranked among the world's most respected institutions of higher learning. The University is a community of nationally and internationally recognized scholars who advance discovery and innovation to improve the lives of people in Minnesota and beyond.

The University has an annual operating budget of \$4.2 billion per year and generates an economic impact of \$9 billion for Minnesota. The University, the state's sixth-largest employer, has over 27,000 faculty and staff; it enrolls over 68,000 students from 130 countries—54,000 on the flagship Twin Cities campus—and has over half a million alumni living around the world. The University of Minnesota has 15 schools and colleges in the fields of biological sciences; dentistry; design; education and human development; food, agriculture, and natural resource sciences; law; liberal arts; management; medicine; nursing; pharmacy, public affairs; public health; science and engineering; and veterinary medicine, in addition to world-class performing arts facilities, museums, and galleries.

The University surpasses \$1 billion in research expenditures annually, ranking 13th nationally among public universities, and its faculty and experts are considered some of the best in their respective fields. UMN boasts 25 Nobel Prize winning faculty, recipients of prestigious awards such as Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellowships, and many who are members of the National Academies and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The University is driven by the conviction that diversity and equity are inextricably linked to inclusive excellence and are essential to maintaining the University's position as a preeminent voice for innovation. The University strongly embraces equity, diversity, and inclusion and makes them central to its strategic systemwide planning. The Twin Cities campus includes over 29 percent students of color, over 9 percent international students, and close to 25 percent of all undergraduates are first-generation students. The fall 2023 Twin Cities freshman class is the most racially and ethnically diverse class in campus history, with 36.6% identifying as students of color, and that percentage has increased every year for the past 11 years.

The Twin Cities campus is in an economically vibrant region at the heart of an increasingly diverse Midwest, with 11 federally recognized Tribal nations; the largest urban Native American population in the country; a dynamic African American community; and growing African, Latinx, and Asian American populations. Located on traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous people, the University acknowledges its complex and layered history. The University is committed to ongoing efforts to recognize, support, and advocate for Native American Nations and peoples. The Twin Cities has the largest number of people of Somali descent outside Somalia and the nation's largest urban Hmong population. The University is dedicated to multiculturalism and equity in education and employment.

Current Leadership

[Jeff Ettinger](#) currently serves as the interim University president. Prior to joining UMN in June 2023, he served as chair of The Hormel Foundation board of directors, one of Minnesota's largest community foundations and grant makers and prior to that as the CEO of Hormel Foods Corporation in Austin, MN.

[Rachel Croson](#), Executive Vice President and Provost, is the chief academic officer of the University of Minnesota multi-campus system and provost for the Twin Cities campus, with overarching responsibility for fostering the academic excellence of the educational and research missions of the University and providing leadership for undergraduate, graduate, and professional education.

The UMN executive leadership chart be found at: <https://president.umn.edu/senior-leadership-chart>.

Additional information about the University's academic deans can be found at: <https://provost.umn.edu/about-evpp/office-directory>

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The Twin Cities | Minneapolis/St. Paul

The University of Minnesota occupies a distinctive niche as the most comprehensive land-grant research university located in a major metropolitan area. The Twin Cities offer tremendous arts organizations and world-class corporate, scientific, and financial entities that bring the world to the University's doorstep. In this superb setting, the University of Minnesota offers unique opportunities for engagement in a progressive, cultured, and thriving urban community. Although separated by the Mississippi River, Minneapolis and Saint Paul are virtually one city. Together they form the core of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, the 16th-largest metropolitan area in the country (and roughly the 65th-largest in the world), with more than 3 million residents.

By nearly every measure, the Twin Cities area ranks among the country's most desirable places to live, offering exceptional cultural, social, and recreational opportunities. In fact, the Trust for Public Land recently ranked the city as having the best urban park system in the United States. The Twin Cities community has long been noted for its tremendous spirit of civic cooperation. Private corporations and foundations often join with government and community organizations to improve and expand the resources available to the community. The substantial private investment that results enriches the whole Twin Cities area and helps maintain it as a dynamic metropolitan center. The University has strong partnerships with these vital community leaders and organizations.

The Twin Cities metropolitan area is the economic center of the upper Midwest. Minnesota's economy is one of the most diversified in the nation with more than 90% of all major U.S. industries represented in the state, including over 30 Fortune 1000 companies and over 15 S&P 500 firms, such as Target, General Mills, Medtronic, Cargill, 3M, and Honeywell. Other leading companies located here include United Health Group, Best Buy, Carlson Companies, Aveda Corporation, St. Paul Travelers Companies, U.S. Bancorp, and Xcel Energy. Quality education and job growth were undoubtedly factors in *Forbes* magazine ranking Minneapolis-St. Paul #32 "Best Places for Business and Careers" in 2019. The Twin Cities were also ranked as the sixth-best city in the country to live in Livability's 2022 study.

Nomination and Application Procedure

The University of Minnesota invites inquiries, nominations, and applications for the position of Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. Interested candidates should confidentially submit a curriculum vitae and an optional letter of interest (Adobe PDF files preferred) to UMN.CLA@russellreynolds.com.

For priority consideration, materials should be received as soon as possible and preferably by February 19.

The University of Minnesota shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, familial status, disability, public assistance status, membership or activity in a local commission created for the purpose of dealing with discrimination, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

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