Executive Director, Library & Learning

Emerson College

Boston, MA

Position Profile

Emerson College invites nominations and applications for the position of Executive Director, Library & Learning. This is an exceptional opportunity for a talented leader to continue to advance the library as an integral part of the campus community and to collaborate on a vision for the evolving role of the libraries in learning, teaching, and research at Emerson.

Emerson College is internationally recognized as the nation’s premier institution of higher learning devoted to communication, the arts, and the liberal arts. Energized by engagement with the creative life of campuses in Boston, Los Angeles, and the Netherlands, Emerson’s 4,466 diverse students seek to develop their personal voices, visions, and expertise in professions that will profoundly shape society and culture in the 21st century. Alumni from our undergraduate and graduate programs in Comedic Arts, Media Arts, Creative Writing, Literature, Publishing, Performing Arts, Communication Studies, Journalism; Marketing Communication; and Communication Sciences and Disorders, are prominent across the entire spectrum of communication industries: film, television, publishing, public relations, advertising, social media, marketing, gaming, and music in addition to having a major presence in government, education, business, healthcare, and sports.

Emerson College is committed to an active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in the College’s intellectual, social, cultural, and geographical communities. Emerson endorses a framework of inclusive excellence, which recognizes that institutional excellence comes from fully engaging with diversity in all aspects of institutional activities. Emerson is committed to strengthening communities, including our workplace, by fostering the development of the intercultural competencies necessary for meaningful citizenship in an increasingly complex, pluralistic society.

This position represents an outstanding opportunity for an experienced library leader with a history of decisive and effective leadership, including managing human, financial, and physical resources. Successful candidates will have an understanding and appreciation of the innovative and creative Emerson environment and will have the capacity to thrive and lead within it. Also critical are an ability to work effectively in a collaborative and diverse workplace and a commitment to increasing diversity
and inclusion efforts within the Library. A Master’s degree in Library Science or Library and Information Science from an American Library Association-accredited institution is required, along with ten years of progressive administrative and managerial academic library experience.

Emerson College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this recruitment. All applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document. All applications and inquiries will remain confidential.

IWASAKI LIBRARY

The mission of the Iwasaki Library is to support teaching, learning, research and creative work at Emerson College by facilitating access to resources, providing a flexible, welcoming learning environment, and creating opportunities for discovery and connection. Located in the Walker Building, the library collection contains 132,000 volumes and circulates 34,065 items per year. The Library’s current strategic plan can be found at https://www.emerson.edu/library/about-library

Librarians have a strong reputation on campus for the teaching and innovation that they deliver. Their instruction program has grown and developed in very positive ways, allowing staff to try new things. Librarians work collaboratively with the academic faculty in developing courses, including a stipend-based faculty professional development initiative for enhancing information literacy skills within the College’s curriculum. The Course Design Spa is a one-day event held in the library one week before classes begin in the fall and spring semesters. Consultants from offices around campus (library, teaching center, IT, disability services, counseling center, writing center, diversity office, etc.) offer a variety of “treatments” to faculty. The Information Literacy Collaborative is a stipend-based professional development opportunity for faculty and librarians to work together to enhance student learning in and about discipline-specific research to focus on integrating information literacy into a course of their choosing.

The Library also oversees records management and archives at Emerson. Archives have several faculty partnerships, including the recently developed comedy committee. The acquisition of the Comedy Archives led to a new major in the Comedic Arts at Emerson.

This year, the Emerson College staff, including library staff, voted to become members of SEIU, the Service Employees International Union. Roughly fifteen library staff are now SEIU members.

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LIBRARY & LEARNING

The Executive Director provides leadership and overall management for library and archival services through strategic planning, budget preparation, resource allocation, assessment and staff development, supervision and evaluation. Reporting directly to the Senior Advisor, Academic Administration and Finance in the Provost’s Office, the Executive Director will oversee 14 professional and 7 support staff. Current direct reports to the Director include the Associate Director for Research and Collections, Assistant Director of Systems and Technology, Head of Archives and Special Collections and the Director of Academic Assessment.
The Executive Director, Library & Learning also oversees the assessment function at Emerson. Reporting here because of the robust faculty support the Library offers, assessment of student learning is a systematic, flexible, and continuous process. Each academic program has an assessment timetable to efficiently, effectively, and comprehensively assess student learning on an academic-year cycle.

Key opportunities and challenges ahead for the next Executive Director include:

**Providing visionary, strategic leadership for the Iwasaki Library**

As the longstanding Executive Director of the Library retires, the timing is right to develop a new strategic plan for Iwasaki Library. The Executive Director will collaborate with all the stakeholders of the Library to articulate goals and strategies that meet evolving student learning and faculty research needs while supporting Emerson’s mission. It will be important to implement strategies that will enhance the value of the Library while meeting the needs of users as they change and evolve. An ability to monitor and anticipate trends will be an asset in terms of planning and developing services. Most important is the eagerness to lead, experiment, guide, and champion the Library in pursuit of the vision.

**Advocating for and promoting the Library effectively**

As the leading advocate for the Library, the Director will advance the Library’s reputation by being a visible and articulate spokesperson within the College, as well as regionally and nationally. The Director will promote the Library, seeking to enhance its prominence and clearly articulating its vital role in supporting students and faculty as they navigate the information resources available to them on campus. Now more than ever the Library plays a central role in supporting teaching, learning, and scholarship at Emerson. Building on this strong position that the Library currently enjoys, the Executive Director will have the ability to eloquently express library needs and directions to a diverse constituency and explain how the Library contributes to the academy, to student achievement, and supports campus initiatives.

An essential part of this role is to communicate information about library and archival collections and services to the Emerson community by chairing the Faculty Library Committee, publishing the Library newsletter and blog, contributing to College publications, speaking to groups of faculty, parents, alumni and donors, and submitting Library news releases.

**Leading and further developing a strong, service-oriented staff**

The successes of the Iwasaki Library are a reflection of a talented, high-achieving, and loyal staff that are committed to providing exemplary service. These characteristics are one of its core strengths. The Executive Director will extend an already well-established culture of service, leading an enthusiastic library staff in the direction of a shared and well-articulated vision of the future and will promote a library environment that values transparency and stakeholder collaboration and continues to welcome change and innovation.

The Executive Director will supervise staff in developing the collection and in providing user services by holding monthly department heads and departmental staff meetings, fostering a productive organizational climate, identifying and supporting staff development activities, conducting annual performance reviews, and hiring and assigning employees.

**Continuing the maintenance and cultivation of partnerships with the Emerson faculty**
The library staff has worked with the academic faculty to develop unique programming for both Emerson faculty and students. This has made the Library an essential part of the Emerson community. The Executive Director will work to continue and increase these partnerships and insure their success.

**Valuing and cultivating a community of diversity and inclusion**

Equity and inclusion are core values of Emerson and its Library. As such, the Executive Director will foster a climate within the Library that promotes and celebrates diversity among faculty, staff, students, and collections, and will improve the accessibility and inclusivity of library spaces and resources.

**Leveraging and managing the Library’s resources wisely**

The Executive Director will manage the Library’s fiscal resources in a way that meets Emerson’s mission and student and faculty needs. The creative leveraging of resources will be an ongoing leadership challenge for the Executive Director, whether in hiring new staff, maintaining and improving collections and other services, or launching special projects that add to the Library’s capabilities. The Executive Director will continually make strategic decisions to most effectively deploy and direct existing resources.

The Executive Director will also work with Emerson’s development office as appropriate in presenting the Library and its vision to prospective and existing donors and will contribute to the overall success of the College by submitting grant proposals for library related projects.

**Overseeing the assessment function of the College**

The Executive Director will contribute to the overall success of the College by leading its assessment activities. Specific duties include co-charging the Student Learning Committee, directing and supervising the Director of Academic Assessment, and overseeing preparation of the assessment portion of the NEASC reaccreditation self-study for interim and comprehensive reports.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

This position represents an outstanding opportunity for an experienced library leader with a history of decisive and effective leadership, including managing human, financial, and physical resources. Successful candidates will possess the following characteristics and credentials:

- Ten years of progressive administrative and managerial academic library experience;
- An understanding of the major challenges facing academic libraries today and the ability to articulate a vision and provide strategic direction in this rapidly changing information environment;
- Proven capacity to effectively lead library staff and initiate innovative projects in an academic library;
- An understanding and appreciation of the unique creative and innovative environment that Emerson is and a desire to work in such a college environment;
• A recognition of the importance of students and student workers in the Library and the ability to develop and provide effective services for them;

• Demonstrated ability to work successfully and collegially in a collaborative and diverse environment with college leadership, faculty, staff, and students;

• A commitment to both providing services that meet the needs of a diverse population of students and scholars and to increasing diversity and inclusion efforts within the Library;

• Demonstrated ability to build consensus, promote innovation, and manage change;

• A history of building, enhancing, and sustaining partnerships across the College;

• Commitment to professional development and to encouraging the growth of talented library staff;

• An understanding of new technologies and how they can enhance the delivery of library collections and services;

• Excellent oral, written and interpersonal communication skills;

• Familiarity with library instruction and information literacy theory and best practices;

• Master’s degree in Library Science or Library and Information Science from an American Library Association-accredited institution.

TO APPLY

Emerson College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of their next Executive Director of Libraries & Learning. Review of nominations and applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled. All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications, including a curriculum vitae and letter of interest that is responsive to the challenges above, should be sent electronically and in confidence to:

Beverly Brady, Managing Associate
Caitlin Barrett, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller
263 Summer Street
Boston, MA 02110
www.imsearch.com/6891

Emerson is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability or protected veteran status. We are committed to providing a workplace free of any discrimination or harassment.
APPENDIX: EMERSON COLLEGE

Charles Wesley Emerson founded the Boston Conservatory of Elocution, Oratory, and Dramatic Art in 1880, with ten students enrolled in the conservatory's first class. (The college’s first library was established in 1892.) As the Conservatory grew, the study of acting and stagecraft was integrated into the curriculum in 1908 and its first course in journalism added in 1924. In 1890, its name changed to Emerson College of Oratory and was later shortened to Emerson College in 1939. Today Emerson has evolved into a diverse, coeducational, and multifaceted degree-granting institution that educates students to assume positions of leadership in communication and the arts.

In the mid-1990s, Emerson’s Boston campus transitioned from the Back Bay neighborhood of the city to the Boston Theater District with the College acquiring and restoring a series of significant buildings in the new location, including the Cutler Majestic, Colonial, and Paramount Theatres. The College also owns a fourteenth-century castle in The Netherlands (the base for its European programs), and in 2013 constructed a major academic center on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood to house its long-standing Los Angeles programs.

Emerson is forward thinking, grounded in academic excellence, and committed to advancing the scholarship and creative work that brings innovation, depth, and diversity to those disciplines. Emerson’s campus is located across from historic Boston Common in the heart of the city’s thriving Theatre District, and offers multiple theaters, television and film studios, and many cutting-edge technical facilities for students. Emerson’s connection with Boston’s media, theater, and arts industries, as well as government, hospitals, and businesses, provides many opportunities for student internships and professional growth. Emerson’s accomplished faculty and active global network of more than 32,000 alumni open doors for students both during their time at Emerson and throughout their professional lives. Emerson graduates can be found in leadership roles in industries ranging from theatre, entertainment management, film, performing arts, television, and publishing, to fields such as government, marketing, advertising, journalism, law, public relations, speech pathology, and audiology. Notable alumni include comedians Jay Leno ’73, Iliza Shlesinger ’05, and Dennis Leary ’79; entrepreneur and makeup artist, Bobbi Brown ’79; Ange Gianetti ’86, executive producer at Sony Pictures; co-creator of Emmy Award-winning sitcom Will & Grace; Max Mutchnick ’87; Emmy award-winning writer for Atlanta Stefani Robinson ’14; Alma Powell ’59, audiologist and chair of America's Promise Alliance; Drew Deywalt ’92, author of The Day the Crayons Quit; Boston newscasters Pam Cross ’75, Latoyia Edwards ’98, Ed Harding ’75, Gene Lavanchy ’86, Maria Stephanos ’88 & MA ’93, David Wade ’95, and Susan Wornick ’71, Randy Barbato ’82, Emmy winning executive producer of RuPaul's Drag Race: Untucked; David Klotz ’94, Emmy winning music editor, Game of Thrones; Adele Lim ’96, screenwriter, Crazy Rich Asians; Broadway actors Joseph Leo Bwarie ’99 (Jersey Boys) and Betsy Morgan ’03 (A Little Night Music); and Seth Grahame-Smith ’98, author of Pride and Prejudice and Zombies; Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter.

Emerson College is internationally known for its experiential learning programs in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, London, and China. In 2014 the College opened
its Los Angeles Center, a state-of-the-art building on Sunset Boulevard that houses the residential, academic, and professional spaces for Emerson’s Los Angeles internship program.

Emerson College offers undergraduate, graduate, and professional studies programs in communication; communication sciences and disorders; journalism; visual and media arts; performing arts; and writing, literature and publishing. The School of the Arts houses the Performing Arts, Visual and Media Arts, and Writing, Literature, and Publishing departments and a multi-disciplinary program in Comedic Arts. The School of Communication houses the departments of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Communication Studies, Journalism, and Marketing Communication, and Business of Creative Enterprises. The Institute for Liberal Arts & Interdisciplinary Studies offers a strong liberal arts foundation that enables students to examine the world across diverse disciplines and perspectives that add depth and intellectual perspective to their studies. Professional Studies provides continuing education opportunities, including professional certificates, summer courses for undergraduate and graduate credit, and pre-college academic programs for high school students. The new Center for Comedic Arts offers unique curricula, resources, and outreach that foster an academic comedy community that welcomes students, alumni, and working professionals alike.

2019 U.S. News and World Report Rankings list Emerson as sixth among regional universities in the North and tenth as the most innovative school. College Reviews rank Emerson’s Journalism program among the top ten programs in the country.

In 2011, Emerson adopted a strategic plan outlining five strategic areas for excellence. They can be found at: https://www.emerson.edu/about-emerson/strategic-plan

LEADERSHIP

Dr. Lee Pelton is the 12th president of Emerson College. He is a nationally and internationally known speaker and writer on the value of a liberal education and the importance of leadership development, civic engagement, and diversity in higher education. He came to Emerson on July 1, 2011, after serving for 13 years as the president of Willamette University in Salem, Oregon.

Since arriving at Emerson, Pelton has outlined a bold vision for Emerson as the global hub for arts, communication and liberal arts. The College has begun to expand its academic footprint beyond its campuses in Boston, Los Angeles and the Netherlands by establishing Global Portals on several continents. Emerson’s Global Portals will partner with institutions abroad so that students without U.S. passports might matriculate to and graduate from Emerson through a variety of academic programs and disciplines.

Recently, he has established an ambitious plan to redevelop downtown Boston and strengthen Emerson’s sense of place and identity by animating the streetscape in the downtown core in order to inspire, embrace, and celebrate our Boston’s emerging diversity. He has also overseen the creation of several new initiatives, including Emerson Launch, a program that provides opportunities for students to launch new businesses before graduation; the creation of a Business of Creative Enterprises major; the first of its kind comedic arts major in higher education; the Office of Research and Creative Scholarship, which has set successive annual records for the number of grants and grant funds awarded to the College for innovative scholarly pursuits; the Office of Internationalization and Global Engagement, which
supports faculty and research exchanges and strategic partnerships with universities abroad; HowlRound, an international center of online communication and collaboration tools for researching processes, opportunities, and best practices for developing new theatrical work; the Elma Lewis Center for Civic Engagement, Learning, and Research, further establishing the College’s commitment to neighboring communities and addressing a variety of issues of societal importance; the opening of Emerson College Los Angeles (2014), an architecturally stunning 107,000-square-foot living-learning facility in the heart of Hollywood on Sunset Boulevard, which dramatically advances Emerson’s rapid growth as the world’s hub for the arts, communication, and liberal arts disciplines in higher education; and an unprecedented partnership between the College and the world’s leading producer of live theatre, Ambassador Theatre Group (ATG), to operate the Emerson Colonial Theatre, while providing fellowships and internship opportunities for Emerson students, underwriting theatre arts programs for local youth, and supporting Boston’s arts community.

Pelton began his academic career at Harvard University, where he earned a PhD in English literature with an academic focus on 19th-century British prose and poetry. He taught English and American literature at Harvard and served as senior tutor at Winthrop House. He later served on the Harvard Board of Overseers and as a vice-chair of its executive committee. After Harvard, Pelton served as dean of the college at Colgate University and Dartmouth College.

For more about Dr. Pelton, please read a recent interview with him in Boston Magazine: https://www.bostonmagazine.com/education/2018/11/14/the-interview-lee-pelton/

Dr. Michaele Whelan has served as Emerson’s Provost since 2013. She holds a B.A., summa cum laude, from Cornell University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in English and American Literature from Harvard University. A humanist with over twenty years of experience in higher education, first in academic and then administrative roles, she has worked with school deans, faculty, students, staff and trustees to shape an academic vision and academic priorities for Brandeis University and Tufts University. She has taught in English departments and programs in American Studies and Women’s Studies at The Pennsylvania State University, Harvard University, Tufts and Brandeis. Her area of expertise is modern and postmodern American literature with a focus on gendered narratology. She is the recipient of teaching awards, has published in her field, and is a member of the academic honor societies Phi Beta Kappa and Phi Kappa Phi.