Introduction

Marist College, an independent, comprehensive institution with a strong liberal arts tradition, is seeking a dynamic president to lead the next phase of its growth. Located in the scenic and historic Hudson River Valley in Poughkeepsie, New York, the College has transformed since its founding in 1929. What was once a small training ground for Marist Brothers has evolved into a complex educational institution with a global reach.

With state-of-the-art facilities; a spectacular campus only a short train ride from New York City; and a branch campus in Florence, Italy, Marist’s 6,000+ students have nearly limitless opportunities. 232 faculty members work across seven academic schools to provide education that is grounded in the liberal arts and focused on preparing students for successful and fulfilling lives and careers. Although the College is an independent institution governed by a lay board of trustees, it continues to embrace the ethical underpinnings and culture of the Marist Brothers (as articulated in its mission and values statements, below) as an important part of its history and identity.

MARIST’S MISSION
Marist College is dedicated to helping students develop the intellect, character, and skills required for enlightened, ethical, and productive lives in the global community of the 21st century.

MARIST’S VALUES
Excellence in education
A sense of community
A commitment to service
Delivering on the Mission

Marist is a rare institution in higher education. A mid-sized comprehensive college rooted in the liberal arts, it provides forward-thinking, tech-savvy, and innovative academic programs for the 21st century. The College educates approximately 5,000 traditional-age undergraduate students and 1,400 adult and graduate students from 49 different states and 64 different countries, making it a vibrant and diverse community of students and scholars.

Marist offers 47 undergraduate majors and numerous graduate programs, including fully online MBA, MPA, MS, and MA degrees, and Doctor of Physical Therapy and Physician Assistant Programs. This unique blend of traditional and pre-professional programs is offered through seven schools: the School of Communication and the Arts, the School of Computer Science and Mathematics, the School of Liberal Arts, the School of Management, the School of Science, the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and the School of Professional Programs.
The Hudson River Valley: A Scenic and Strategic Location

Located halfway between New York City and Albany, Marist’s main campus is situated in the heart of the beautiful and historic Hudson River Valley. The region is well known for its cultural, culinary, and recreational opportunities, and is home to 20 state parks and historic sites. Popular local attractions include the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, Vanderbilt Mansion, Storm King Arts Center, the Culinary Institute of America, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park, and many others. For its combination of natural beauty, culture, and culinary attractions, Forbes ranked the Hudson River Valley among the “Best 25 Places to Visit” in the U.S.

The College utilizes its location to strategic advantage. The Marist in Manhattan Program gives students the opportunity to live and intern in one of the world’s great cities. Proximity to New York City has also afforded fashion students the opportunity to be part of New York Fashion Week, through the College’s ongoing relationships with top designers. Students studying art, business, finance, communications, and information technology gain practical experiences in those industries via career treks and internships. The Albany Summer Internship Program (ASIP) enables students to gain an insider’s perspective on political communications, politics, and public policy in New York State’s capital city.
Distinctive Learning Experiences

Marist’s 232 full-time faculty members are devoted to teaching and to the personal and intellectual growth of their students. The College’s curriculum and small class sizes allow for exploration; rigorous skill-building; and ample opportunities for high-impact learning practices such as research, community-based learning, and common intellectual experiences. A Marist education not only prepares students to succeed in the classroom, but to lead productive and meaningful lives post-graduation.

Marist offers many signature learning opportunities. The College has a nationally recognized study abroad program that includes two unique first-year programs, the Freshman Florence Experience and the Freshman Dublin Experience. The IBM Joint Study Program, in place for more than 30 years, has brought the College the kind of world-class technology platform typically found at leading research institutions. The nationally recognized Marist Poll is the only college-based poll operation to be fully integrated into the academic enterprise of the institution. The Poll has partnered with NBC News, NPR, The Wall Street Journal, HBO’s Real Sports, and many other media outlets. Each semester, 250-300 students from all majors work for the Poll, gaining invaluable hands-on experience. Several other Centers of Excellence further enhance Marist students’ curricular and co-curricular opportunities: the Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership; the Hudson River Valley Institute; the Center for Sports Communication; and the IDCP: Data Education Center. The College also hosts the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library’s digital archives, making it one of only six colleges and universities in the nation that are affiliated with a presidential library.
Student Outcomes

Marist students are eager to explore new paths; they have rich experiences at the College and excellent outcomes. More than half study abroad during their time at the College and 83% complete at least one internship.

In addition, Marist students have been awarded some of the most prestigious national scholarships and fellowships available, including the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, Benjamin Gilman International Scholarship, Freeman Asia Scholarship, Math for America Fellowship, National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, and the Boren Scholarship. Numerous graduating seniors in recent years have been awarded the Fulbright U.S. Student Program grant and, in 2020, a student received the James Madison Memorial Fellowship.

The College’s six-year graduation rate is 84.7%, placing it well above the national average for both private and public institutions. The College’s many academic support services and longstanding access programs (including Upward Bound, the Liberty Partnerships Program, Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program) contribute to this high graduation rate. Marist preparation serves its graduates well, as evidenced by their admission to top graduate schools like Harvard, Yale, and Duke, and positions at top companies such as IBM, Goldman Sachs, and Johnson & Johnson. Each year, close to 100% of graduates are employed or in graduate school within six months of completing their degrees.
The Marist Community

Marist is a friendly, tight-knit community. Students, faculty, and staff frequently describe the bonds they form at the College in familial terms, given the depth and lasting nature of those connections. Students spend their formative years at the institution, but remain a part of the extended Marist family for life.

With more than 80 student clubs and organizations, Marist is a place where students stay involved and active in campus life. Marist is home to 23 Division I athletic teams; the College’s 700 student-athletes compete in the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference (MAAC) and Pioneer Football League in the Football Championship Subdivision. Multiple club sports opportunities are also available, including equestrian, ski, golf, fencing, dance team, and more. The College’s esports team was named Esports Program of the Year by the MAAC in 2020.

Marist encourages its students to explore the world but remains deeply engaged with its surrounding communities. Students volunteer for a wide array of projects and causes through the Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership (CCEL) and Campus Ministry. The College’s Tarver Internship Program funds student work at regional nonprofits each summer, providing meaningful professional experiences for students and assistance to deserving organizations.

Today, more than 46,000 engaged alumni/ae call Marist alma mater. Red Foxes are fiercely loyal and committed to the College. In addition to financial support, alumni are a bridge to opportunity for students, providing mentorship, internships, and more.

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The Marist Campus

Marist’s main campus – which consists of 225 acres and 75 buildings along the Hudson River – is a physical manifestation of the institution’s character. Elegant buildings, constructed with the distinctive grey stone and red brick of the Hudson River Gothic palette, are equipped with modern facilities and situated on an immaculately landscaped campus.

The original buildings constructed on land purchased by the Marist Brothers are still in use, including the Greystone building, which was built in 1865 as a three-story carriage house and today serves as the Office of the President. But the College’s beautiful campus is more a sign of its future than a monument to its past. The artistically conceived and well-executed campus master plan (recently updated by Robert A. M. Stern Architects) has, over several decades, reoriented the campus towards the river, suggesting an opening to the world that still embraces its Hudson River Valley geography.

Marist’s campus extends across the Hudson River to a 60-acre riverfront estate in Esopus, NY. The estate includes the historic Col. Oliver Hazard Payne Mansion, home to the Raymond A. Rich Institute for Leadership Development. The campus also extends across the Atlantic Ocean, to its branch campus in Florence, Italy, which the College operates in partnership with Istituto Lorenzo de’ Medici.
Strength and Stability: 
A Bright Outlook

The world of higher education has seen tremendous change this year, and that trend is likely to continue. Marist is well-positioned to succeed, even in this dynamic and challenging environment. Its history of prudent and conservative financial management has resulted in a strong fiscal position. The College has produced balanced budgets for 40 consecutive years. As of 2019 audited numbers, Marist’s total operating revenue is $225 million, with about $150 million coming from net tuition and fees. The overall discount rate has been steady at around 32.2%. The $300 million investment portfolio has been well managed and provides less than 1% of operating support each year. The College received the highest score on the Department of Education’s Financial Responsibility Test, has a Fitch rating of A+, and received a Moody’s bond rating of A2 with a stable outlook.

Technology is at the core of Marist’s institutional identity. It is woven into the College’s history; promoted at every level of the curriculum; and reflected in the College’s infrastructure, strategy, and investment priorities. An early adopter of online education, Marist was poised to make a swift and successful pivot to fully online learning in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. World-class technology platforms have enabled the College to establish fall-semester offerings in a variety of modalities – all ready to be delivered fully online if needed.
The Role

Marist College is seeking an extraordinary leader to become President at a pivotal moment in its history. While the College faces many of the same external pressures as other Northeast institutions of higher education, the organization has seen extraordinary growth in recent decades and is financially well positioned to deal with these issues. The new President will therefore have a unique opportunity to continue Marist’s leadership and innovation in response to the challenges and opportunities posed by a rapidly changing higher education landscape. Leveraging Marist’s distinctive strengths and expanding its impact, the next President will build on the College’s strong foundation to take it to an even higher level of achievement and national recognition.

As the chief executive officer reporting to the Board of Trustees, the President will lead a highly engaged college community; promote academic excellence; provide overall operational and financial oversight of the College; serve as chief fundraiser; and provide a dynamic vision for Marist’s continued success well into the future.

The President will be supported in these efforts by five senior vice presidents as direct reports: an executive vice president; a vice president for academic affairs; a vice president for business affairs/CFO; a vice president for enrollment, marketing, and communication; and a vice president for advancement. The President’s Cabinet includes these senior administrators, and the deans of the schools; special assistants; legal counsel; and leaders in information technology, student affairs, human resources, and institutional research.
Priorities

Because Marist’s current five-year Strategic Plan is set to expire within the next few years, it will be imperative for the next President to oversee an institution-wide strategic planning process that engages students, faculty, staff, trustees, alumni, and community members in a spirited conversation about the College’s future. The president will inspire and lead the development of an innovative, forward-thinking vision for the College that advances Marist’s reputation as a comprehensive, independent institution that balances a liberal arts tradition with professional preparation. Some specific priorities that have been established for the next President include:

Provide Inspirational and Strategic Vision

• Unify constituents around common goals aligned with Marist’s mission;

• Support faculty efforts to enhance academic excellence across all seven schools, including the development of new graduate programs;

• Reinforce an appreciation for the core values, heritage, and culture rooted in the College’s founding by the Marist Brothers;

• Drive innovation and creativity, anticipating and capitalizing on opportunities such as advancements in technology that may become relevant for the College;

• Enhance the affordability and accessibility of a Marist education to continue to attract the strongest students from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds; and

• Prepare for and host a successful reaccreditation site visit by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education in 2022–23.

Enhance Resilience and Sustainability

• Develop innovative programs that anticipate and address shifting market pressures;

• Deploy Marist’s leading-edge technology infrastructure to gather and analyze information, engage with stakeholders, and mitigate risk;

• Attract, develop, and retain talented and diverse faculty and staff with the right skills to meet current and future challenges;

• Strengthen financial sustainability by maintaining strong enrollments, diversifying revenue streams, investing prudently, and controlling costs; and

• Improve operational efficiency and effectiveness through partnerships, shared services, and technological innovation.
Promote a Welcoming and Inclusive Community

• Foster a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion in which all faculty, staff, and students can thrive;

• Strengthen relationships with alumni through effective communication and meaningful engagement in the life of the College; and

• Build on connections between the College and the local community, including the City of Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County, and the Hudson River Valley region.

Raise Visibility and Resources

• Build on Marist’s strengths to raise its profile and promote it to a wider audience, nationally and internationally;

• In an increasingly competitive market for talented students, articulate what makes Marist distinctive and promote widespread recognition through both media attention and college rankings; and

• Lead ambitious fundraising efforts, including cultivating donations in support of the operating budget and toward growth of the endowment.
Key Success Factors

Marist College seeks a President who embraces the ambitious and entrepreneurial aspects of the College’s mission and vision while respecting and promoting the core values that are at the heart of the Marist community.

Candidates are expected to hold strong academic credentials, preferably including a terminal degree. Competitive candidates will also demonstrate a proven track record of superior performance with regard to the following:

- Visionary and inspirational leadership, including success with organizational change and transformation;
- Strong interpersonal skills, including humility and a genuine interest in connecting authentically with members of the Marist community;
- Solid understanding of the challenges facing private colleges and universities as a result of the pandemic and a changing marketplace;
- Experience with strategic planning efforts involving multiple constituents and a track record of successfully executing such plans;
- Ability to set and achieve ambitious, multi-year goals;
- Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion, including cultural competence;
- Deep knowledge of the operating culture and methods within higher education, likely gained through professional or board experience with a college or university, ideally including undergraduate education;
- Fundraising track record or the personality traits and stamina to suggest strong potential in this regard;
- Reputation for making decisions in a collaborative, consultative, and data-driven manner;
- Financial acumen, including experience with budgeting and planning in complex organizations;
- Stellar communications skills, including writing, public speaking, and active listening;
- Ability to anticipate the trends in technology that are relevant to higher education and to leverage them accordingly; and
- Highest integrity, strong moral compass, and a commitment to transparency.
Contact

Nominations, inquiries, and expressions of interest may be directed to:

maristpresident@russellreynolds.com

Marist College is committed to creating a diverse workforce on our campus by ensuring that barriers to equal employment opportunity and upward mobility do not exist here. To this end, the College will strive to achieve the full and fair participation of minorities, women, people with disabilities, and any other protected groups found to be under-represented.

Equal opportunity means employment, development, and promotion of individuals without consideration of race, color, disability, religion, age, sex, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, or veteran status unless there is a bona fide occupational requirement which excludes persons in one of these protected groups. The College will review its employment policies and procedures to ensure that barriers which may unnecessarily exclude protected groups are identified and eliminated. The College will also explore alternative approaches if any policy or practice is found to have a negative impact on protected groups.

Marist’s policy of non-discrimination includes not only employment practices but also extends to all services and programs provided by the College. It shall be considered a violation of College policy for any member of the community to discriminate against any individual or group with respect to employment or attendance at Marist College on the basis of race, color, disability, religion, age, sex, marital status, national origin, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other condition established by law.