



MARIST

PRESIDENT
MARIST COLLEGE
Poughkeepsie, New York

THE SEARCH

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. At a time when many universities and colleges are challenged, the next president of Marist College will inherit an incredibly strong foundation on which to build, with a healthy financial position, and a community dedicated to supporting students in a distinctive educational experience that positions graduates for both success and service.

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 95-minute train ride from New York City, and a branch campus in Florence, Italy, Marist's approximately 6,600 students have nearly limitless opportunities. The 240 full-time and 323 part-time 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 an important part of its history and identity.

The world of higher education is changing rapidly, and Marist expects to be a driving force in addressing these changes. To lead them in these efforts, Marist seeks a president who is ambitious, entrepreneurial, and visionary while also devoted to the core values of excellence, community, and service. The president must be an inspiring leader, capable of galvanizing the broader community in support of continued growth and innovation. The president will articulate a vision that propels the College to broader prominence; cultivate excellence across the academic enterprise; champion the values of diversity and inclusion; strategically steward and grow the College's resources; and sustain an active and engaged presence on campus and in the region.

Marist seeks a president with excellent communication skills; a naturally respectful, collaborative, and accessible leadership style; a deep commitment to the mission and values of the College; and an understanding of current trends and challenges in higher education. Demonstrated leadership experience and sound organizational management experience are essential qualifications for the position.

Marist College has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of its next president. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller, as indicated at the end of this document.

MARIST COLLEGE



“Marist 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 College Mission Statement

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 4,968 traditional undergraduate students, 918 graduate students, 248 adult continuing education students, and 466 high school students who take Marist courses for credit. These students come from 44 different states and 58 different countries, making Marist a vibrant and diverse community of students and scholars.

With a stunning 242-acre riverside campus located a 95-minute train ride from New York City, Marist is serene and pastoral, yet plugged in to one of the chief economic and cultural centers of the world. While its campus creates an environment conducive to academic excellence, Marist also encourages its students to broaden their horizons by exploring the world through its nationally-recognized study abroad programs. At the same time, rooted in its commitment to service, the College remains deeply engaged with its surrounding communities, offering targeted programs to local adult and non-traditional students. Grounded in the ethical values of the Marist Brothers, the College is energized by its traditions while also leading the way in the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning and improve organizational efficiency.

Marist is regularly recognized by industry publications for its excellent programs and student outcomes. *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Marist 11th in its 2021 ranking of Best Regional Universities in the North. Marist has also recently been included in the *Princeton Review's* lists of “Best 386 Colleges” and “Colleges that Change Futures.” *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* regularly ranks Marist among the “100 Best Buys in Private Colleges,” and *Barron's* also named Marist one of the “Best Buys in College Education.”

History

The Order of the Marist Brothers was founded in France in 1817 as an effort to provide an educational and spiritual respite from the violent revolutions and counter-revolutions afflicting France at the time. The order is particularly oriented towards public service and the formation of young people, so it found a natural traction in higher education. In 1905, the Brothers purchased a home and property along the Hudson River in Poughkeepsie, NY, and named it St. Ann's Hermitage. College-level courses were first offered in 1929, and in 1946, the State of New York granted the institution an official, four-year charter under the leadership of founding president Brother Paul Ambrose Fontaine, FMS. The Brothers set about constructing several buildings on the grounds of what was then called Marian College.

In 1960, the College changed its name to Marist College and expanded its mission. The College continued to fulfill its values of service, community, and educational excellence, admitting laypeople to pursue undergraduate studies, and also adding an evening division to serve adults in the surrounding community. By 1969, women were admitted into all programs, and control, governance, and fiscal responsibility were transferred to a diverse lay board. While proud of its heritage, Marist College is now an independent, comprehensive institution of higher education and welcomes students of all faiths.

Dr. Dennis Murray joined the Marist community in 1979, serving as president until 2016, then returning as interim president in 2019. One of the longest-serving presidents in the history of American higher education, President Murray's tenure at Marist has been marked by the continued expansion and beautification of the campus, prominence in the use and study of technology, increased enrollment and selectivity in the student body, diversification of programs, and substantial growth in endowment and other assets. Under President Murray's leadership, the College fully transformed itself from a small local college with limited resources to a nationally ranked comprehensive institution with a strong liberal arts core.

Faculty and Academics

Marist's 240 full-time faculty members are devoted to teaching and to the personal and intellectual growth of their students. Small class sizes encourage a culture of close interaction between faculty and students. Approximately 65% of the full-time faculty are tenured or tenure-track. They are complemented by 323 part-time instructional staff teaching in all units of the College. Marist faculty are recent recipients of major NSF, NIH, and U.S. Department of Education grants; have received Fulbright Research Awards; have published books with major university presses, such as Oxford, MIT, and the University of North Carolina; and serve in key leadership positions in professional organizations and on editorial boards of major scholarly journals. The faculty is non-unionized and uses a collegial governance model.

The College offers 53 undergraduate majors, 13 graduate programs, 1 doctoral program, and multiple certificate programs through its 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 College also offers a number of unique programs at its [branch campus in Florence, Italy](#), including the only four-year U.S. bachelor's degree program in Florence and a Master of Arts in Museum Studies.

The College has expanded its graduate offerings in recent years to include a number of allied health programs. Marist's [Physician Assistant \(PA\) Program](#) was established in 2016 and received full accreditation in 2020; the program's first cohort achieved a 100 percent first-time pass rate on their

national licensing exam. [The Doctor of Physical Therapy \(DPT\) Program](#), Marist's first doctoral degree, enrolled its first class in 2018 and was granted full accreditation status in 2020.

Reflecting its historic embrace of technology, Marist offers several academic programs fully online. The [Master of Business Administration](#) (New York State's first AACSB-accredited, 100%-online MBA program), [Master of Public Administration](#), and [Bachelor of Professional Studies](#) programs are recognized in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2020 list of "[Best Online Education Programs](#)." As an early adopter of online education, Marist was uniquely positioned to quickly and successfully pivot to online learning in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Unique Learning Opportunities

Supplementing the academic programs, Marist also offers many unique learning opportunities. The College has nationally recognized [study abroad opportunities](#) that include two unique first-year programs, the [Freshman Florence Experience](#) and the [Freshman Dublin Experience](#). More than half of Marist's students study abroad. The [IBM Joint Study Program](#), in place for more than 30 years, has provided the College with the capacity to acquire and use cutting-edge technology in instruction and research, helping to place Marist among the most technologically advanced liberal arts colleges in the country.

Perhaps the best known of the College's unique initiatives is [The Marist Poll](#), which is housed in the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion. Founded in 1978, the Institute was the first college-based research center to include undergraduates in conducting survey research. Today, The Marist Poll regularly works with media partners to conduct scientific public opinion polls on issues and elections. Partners have included NPR, NBC News, *The Wall Street Journal*, Telemundo, McClatchy, the PBS NewsHour, and Yahoo News. The Marist Poll also collaborates with local and regional news organizations to measure elections and key issues facing residents. The academic mission of The Marist Poll remains central to its endeavors, with nearly 300 students from all majors working for the Poll each semester.

Several additional Centers of Excellence further enhance the academic experience, including the [Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership \(CCEL\)](#), the [Hudson River Valley Institute](#), the [Center for Sports Communication](#), and the [Institute for Data Center Professionals](#). 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.

Students and Campus Life

Marist draws students from across the country and, increasingly, from around the world. The 6,600 students—including 4,968 traditional undergraduate students, 918 graduate students, 248 adult continuing education students, and 466 high school students who take Marist courses for credit—come to the College from 44 states and 58 countries. In recent years, great strides have been made to diversify the student body, and now 11.5% of undergraduate students identify as Hispanic or Latino, 4.2% identify as Black or African American, 2.7% identify as Asian, and 2.6% identify as multiracial. Students of many religious backgrounds and faiths now make Marist their home.

The College has become steadily more selective in recent years as it has improved its facilities and programs, with the acceptance rate currently hovering around 49%. Marist is deeply committed to the principles of access and affordability, and distributes approximately \$85 million annually through need-based grants, merit awards, and other scholarships. Many longstanding programs on campus—including [Upward Bound](#), the [Liberty Partnerships Program](#), the [Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program](#), and the [Special Services Program](#)—help to ensure the success of the increasingly diverse student

body. Well above the national average, the College's 88.3% first-year-retention rate and 84.7% six-year graduation rate reflect its strong commitment to student success.

The on-campus student experience is characterized by a deep sense of community. With more than [80 student clubs and organizations](#), Marist is a place where students stay involved and active in campus life and the surrounding community. In addition to volunteer activities through CCEL, the College's Tarver Internship Program funds student work at regional nonprofits, providing meaningful professional experiences for students and assistance to deserving organizations. 700 student-athletes participate in Marist's [23 NCAA Division I athletic teams](#). Many club sports opportunities are also available on campus, including equestrian, ski, golf, fencing, dance team, and many others. The College's esports team was named [Esports Program of the Year](#) by the MAAC in 2020.

The Marist experience serves its students and graduates well. 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. Eighty-three percent of students participate in at least one credit-bearing internship and 97% of graduates in the past five years have been employed or in graduate school within six months of completing their degrees.

Staff

The College employs approximately 634 staff (581 full-time and 53 part-time employees) who play critical roles in all areas of the institution, including advancement, operations, technology, and student services. Staff members are very active in professional organizations. Many have been appointed to major leadership roles, presented papers at conferences, hosted large conferences on campus, and won significant awards. Staff also serve on local boards in the community as well as on College committees. They play an active role in the lives of students through participation in student-led activities, such as Habitat for Humanity and various walks to support social causes. Employees who work in Facilities are members of SEIU and the institution's secretarial and clerical staff members are represented by CWA.

Development and Alumni Engagement

The College successfully completed its first comprehensive campaign in 2012, raising nearly \$160 million on an ambitious goal of \$150 million. A total of 14,388 donors contributed to the *Campaign for Marist*, including 21 gifts of \$1 million or more. Significant support was secured for major capital initiatives, the faculty, and the establishment of more than 40 new endowed scholarships. More recently, new gifts, pledges, and grants totaled more than \$12 million in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, including more than \$2 million in unrestricted gifts.

The College's alumni, now more than 46,000 strong, are highly engaged. Alumni are increasingly successful in their careers and support Marist in growing numbers. In addition to financial support, alumni are a bridge to opportunity for students, providing mentorship, internships, and more. Additionally, Marist has an impressive record of development success with prominent philanthropists in the surrounding region. The institution also benefits greatly from an expanding cadre of highly-capable, supportive parents.

Financial 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 more than 40 consecutive years. Marist's annual operating budget for fiscal year 2021 is \$200 million, with about \$142 million coming from net tuition and fees. Before COVID, the annual operating budget was typically approximately \$225 million. As the College has intentionally recruited first-generation and low-income students, the overall discount rate has grown slowly in recent years to approximately 37.5%. The \$371 million investment portfolio has been well managed with a draw of less than 1% each year taken to support the College's budget. 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.

Facilities

The Marist College main campus—which consists of 75 buildings across 242 acres along the eastern and western shores of the Hudson River—is a physical manifestation of the College'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 immaculate campus alongside the Hudson River. While the buildings originally constructed by the original Marist Brothers are still in use, this beautiful campus is more a sign of Marist's future than a monument to its past. Alumni will point out green, rolling fields that were once parking lots and expansive river vistas that once looked out onto industrial plants. The artistically conceived and flawlessly executed campus master plan (originally designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and recently updated by Robert A. M. Stern Architects) has, over several decades, reoriented the campus towards the river, suggesting an opening to the world while embracing its 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](#).

Location in The Hudson River Valley

Halfway between New York City and Albany, Marist's main campus is located in the heart of the beautiful and historic Hudson River Valley. The region is home to a highly-skilled and diverse workforce with more than 75,000 employers, including several Fortune 500 firms and two Fortune 50 firms (IBM and PepsiCo). Popular local attractions include the [Culinary Institute of America](#), [Franklin Delano Roosevelt Presidential Library](#), [Storm King Art Center](#), the [Dia Beacon museum](#), the [Vanderbilt Mansion](#), and the [Walkway Over the Hudson](#), among many others.

The College utilizes its location to strategic advantage. The [Marist in Manhattan](#) program gives art, communications, media, and fashion students the opportunity to spend a semester completing full-time, credit-bearing internships with leading companies in Manhattan. Proximity to New York City has also afforded fashion students the opportunity to participate in New York Fashion Week, through the College's ongoing relationships with top designers. The [Albany Summer Internship Program](#) enables students to gain an insider's perspective on political communications, politics, and public policy in New York State's capital city.

THE ROLE

Marist College is seeking an extraordinary leader to become president at a pivotal moment in its history. Unlike many of its peers in the Northeast, Marist has seen extraordinary growth in recent decades and is well positioned to deal with the challenges facing higher education. The president will inherit a college in strong financial position that is a recognized leader in the use of technology to drive innovation. The physical plant is in excellent shape and the campus culture is characterized by a genuine sense of caring and collaboration. The next president will join an institution that has successfully proven that a liberal arts education and career preparation can exist together to great effect.

As the chief executive officer, the president holds responsibility for the overall active management and direction of the College, sets a vision to lead the institution forward, develops and maintains relationships with diverse constituents, represents the institution externally, and serves as the chief fundraiser, all in support of the mission of the College. As the institution's leader, the president will embody Marist's values of excellence, community, service in all words and actions.

The president reports to the 30-member [Board of Trustees](#) and is supported in these efforts by five senior leaders 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 as well as the deans of the schools; special assistants; legal counsel; and leaders in information technology, student affairs, human resources, and institutional research. The College is also committed to hiring a Cabinet-level Chief Diversity Officer this year.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

By leveraging Marist's unique academic profile; beautiful campus; solid financial position; dedicated Board of Trustees; and highly engaged community of students, faculty, staff, and alumni, the next president will continue to lead the College on its upward trajectory. In order to do this, Marist's president must understand the external market realities confronting private colleges and be able to build consensus around institutional strategies to respond. The president will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Articulate a vision that propels the College to broader prominence

With its distinctive pre-professional programs and liberal arts core, Marist is primed for a president to articulate a compelling vision to help the College achieve a greater level of visibility and recognition. The Marist experience is transformative for its students and alumni, and while the College is highly regarded in the Northeast, its reputation is less established in other parts of the country. Most people know of The Marist Poll, but too few associate the Poll with the other excellent programs and initiatives at the College. As such, the next president will lead the institutional effort to more effectively broadcast Marist's value proposition in the competitive world of the academy.

As the College nears the end of its current 5-year [Strategic Plan](#) the president will engage faculty, students, staff, trustees, alumni, and friends of the College to identify and capitalize on the College's assets, mobilizing the campus community in support of plans for an innovative future and shared vision. Informed by the College's heritage but pointing to its future, this vision should account for the qualities that keep Marist distinct in an increasingly competitive higher education landscape.

Cultivate and strengthen excellent academic programs

Marist has thrived over the past four decades in large part because of its willingness to innovate and embrace new opportunities without compromising its commitment to the on-campus experience. The next president will navigate this fine line, working collaboratively to support efforts to enhance academic excellence across all seven schools while driving innovation and creativity. The president will understand and articulate the role technology can play in providing new modalities and opportunities for learning, while also embracing the on-campus programs that so many students and alumni cherish. Further, the president will have the vision to see how the marketplace is shifting and the prescience to lead the academic enterprise in developing new programs that anticipate these shifts. In all efforts and innovations, the president will advance the value of academic excellence that has been core to Marist since its founding.

Champion the values of diversity and inclusion

Marist is deeply committed to supporting its increasingly diverse community and has long-standing programs and initiatives in place to support students from low-income backgrounds as well as those with diverse special educational needs. The College has also launched several [more recent initiatives](#) aimed at molding Marist into a more diverse and inclusive institution where faculty, staff, and students from all backgrounds and experiences can thrive. The percentage of students of color has doubled in the last decade with applications from students of color steadily rising in addition to an increase in diversity and inclusion course offerings, and an increase in the number of full-time faculty of color. The community at large craves a president who will continue to champion and centralize this work. To this end, the president will serve as a leader in both word and action by advancing the values of diversity and inclusion in all institutional areas and holding senior leaders accountable for making measurable progress on related goals. The president will work to attract, recruit, and retain talented faculty, staff, and students who contribute to the overall diversity of the institution, continuing the positive trends the College has experienced in recent years. The president will lead by example, serving as an active advocate for these values on campus, in the greater community, and beyond.

Strategically steward and grow the College's resources to ensure continued stability

Marist is financially sound due in large part to its history of prudent financial management, strategic investment in key priorities, and steady overall enrollments. However, with current challenges emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing headwinds facing higher education at large, the demographic cliff primarily affecting regional universities in the Northeast, and a steadily increasing discount rate, institutional development must be a key priority for the next president. Working with the other senior leaders, the president will ensure the College's continued financial health by prioritizing strategic enrollment growth, leading Advancement in developing key donors and soliciting grants in alignment with strategic priorities, identifying new opportunities to diversify the College's revenue streams beyond tuition, and balancing conservative financial planning against the imperative to innovate.

Sustain an active and engaged presence on campus and in the region

Marist has a vibrant campus life where the president is an integral part of the community and is seen as a living symbol of the College. 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, and alumni remain a part of the extended Marist family for life. While the president has a significant external role, they must also recognize and embrace the importance of Marist's intimate community and connections to the

Hudson River Valley region. To that end, the president will be a visible and engaged presence on campus and in the region, interacting openly and genuinely with multiple constituencies including the City of Poughkeepsie and surrounding communities.

It is critical that the president attend carefully to the students' sense of community, creating the conditions necessary for them to develop academically and personally; champion the faculty, actively supporting and fostering their work in the classroom and as scholars; support the development of the staff, who are integral to the success of the College; and engage the alumni, who are fiercely loyal and deeply supportive of the College. To achieve these goals, the president must be an active participant in the life of the College in both presence and communication style.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

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. While the search committee understands that no single candidate will possess all the ideal qualifications, it seeks candidates who have demonstrated the following skills and characteristics:

- Visionary and inspirational leadership, including success leading organizational change and transformation
- Strong interpersonal skills including humility, the highest integrity, a strong moral compass, and a commitment to transparency
- A genuine interest in connecting authentically with members of the Marist community
- A collaborative, consultative, and data-driven approach to decision making
- 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
- Deep knowledge of the academic culture and operating methods within higher education, likely gained through professional or board experience with a college or university, ideally including undergraduate liberal arts education
- Solid understanding of the challenges facing private colleges and universities as a result of the pandemic and changing marketplace
- Ability to anticipate the trends in technology that are relevant to higher education and to leverage them accordingly
- Proven track record of advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives
- The capacity to represent Marist compellingly to donors and other external constituents, and the appetite and skill to fundraise successfully
- Financial acumen, including experience with budgeting and planning in complex organizations
- Stellar communication skills, including writing, public speaking, and active listening
- A creative and entrepreneurial spirit

TO APPLY

Marist College has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications should be sent in confidence to:

Kate Barry, Partner
Elizabeth Dorr, Senior Associate and Keith Mason, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller
617-262-6500
www.imsearch.com/7961

EEO Statement: *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.