



University of Lynchburg

President
University of Lynchburg
Lynchburg, Virginia

THE SEARCH

The University of Lynchburg (“UL”, “the University”, or “Lynchburg”) invites a bold, innovative, and collaborative leader to serve as the University’s 12th President. The incoming President will join the University at a pivotal moment in its history, working with the entirety of the UL community to articulate a forward-looking vision and shared sense of identity, building on institutional strengths and history while embracing future innovation.

Nestled in the foothills of Virginia’s breathtaking Blue Ridge Mountains, the University of Lynchburg offers a deeply personalized and transformational educational experience. UL’s vision is to cultivate a world that is innovative, authentic, and inclusive, and it does so daily by carrying out its mission: to inspire independent thinkers who become trustworthy, effective leaders who shape caring communities. Recognized as one of only 45 “Colleges that Change Lives,” Lynchburg prides itself on being a place where students are known, mentored, and developed, both academically and personally. This is achieved through close relationships between faculty and students, a focus on the holistic college experience, and programs that empower students to reach their fullest potential. With a variety of undergraduate majors, minors, and certificate programs; 15 master’s programs; and four doctoral degrees, the University blends the best of a residential liberal arts education with excellent career outcomes, market-relevant professional programs, and a commitment to experiential learning and community engagement. Lynchburg is home to approximately 2,400 undergraduate and graduate students and 23 NCAA Division III athletic teams, including 450 scholar-athletes who embody excellence both on the field and in the classroom.

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the President will embrace the exciting opportunity to shape the future of the University, boldly charting the course for a future that prioritizes unity and a sense of shared purpose, while bringing even greater stability to campus. The University has already undergone significant work to right-size, realign strategic priorities, and turn around a financial deficit, and the new President must build off that foundation as the University looks ahead. An entrepreneurial leader, the President will further differentiate the University of Lynchburg’s identity and value proposition to meet the challenges

facing higher education today. They must bring a nuanced understanding of enrollment, strategic communications, prudent fiscal management, fundraising, and innovative program development at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to craft a strategic plan that sets the University of Lynchburg up for long-term sustainability and achievement, including successful accreditation reaffirmation. They will center student success and development; advocate for inclusion and belonging; nurture a culture of transparency, trust, and collaboration; expand philanthropic engagement and strengthen the University's financial position; and serve as a dynamic ambassador and advocate within the Lynchburg community and surrounding region. The President is expected to be a visible and highly engaged leader on campus and beyond, fostering the strong sense of community that has fueled the University's evolution and culture.

The University of Lynchburg has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important recruitment. Confidential applications, inquiries, and nominations should be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

THE UNIVERSITY OF LYNCHBURG

History

Founded as Virginia Christian College in 1903 by Dr. Josephus Hopwood, a pioneer in Christian co-education, the institution became only the second co-educational institution in the state. When the College opened its doors, 11 faculty members were on staff to teach 55 students, and the first graduating class in 1904 consisted of five men and three women. However, co-education proved to be popular, and enrollment increased rapidly. This foundational commitment to embracing the academic and cultural contributions of students from varied backgrounds is interwoven into UL's identity, with belonging remaining as a core institutional value.

Through the years, the University of Lynchburg has maintained its commitment to the liberal arts, while also encouraging professional preparation, in the belief that the two areas of study support and complement one another. In reflecting the University's wealth of graduate academic offerings, Lynchburg College was renamed the University of Lynchburg in 2018. Today, the University of Lynchburg has over 150 full-time faculty members and approximately 2,400 undergraduate and graduate students from across the United States and around the world. Now, more than a century after its founding, the University of Lynchburg continues to lead the way in offering innovative educational opportunities, standing as a tribute to Dr. Hopwood's pioneering spirit.

Academics

In 2024, the University of Lynchburg's academic enterprise was reorganized into three schools: the [School of Liberal Arts & Sciences](#), the [School of Medicine & Health Sciences](#), and the [School of Professional & Applied Sciences](#). These schools offer a variety of cutting-edge undergraduate majors, minors, and certificate programs, and 19 master's and doctoral degrees. UL has expanded allied health science programming and embraced AI to enhance the academic experience. As a Google for Education partner,

the University has leveraged Google Workspace's suite of tools to enhance active learning that maximizes communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Dedicated to preparing students for impactful careers in high-demand fields, UL produces graduates who are well-positioned to tackle complex, interdisciplinary problems.

Fifty-five percent of Lynchburg students engage in research with faculty, and the University Research Center (The RC) serves as a hub where faculty, students, and community partners connect to inspire innovation, advance scholarly inquiry, and foster cross-disciplinary collaboration. The University maintains a robust partnership with Centra Health, Greater Lynchburg's major healthcare system, which serves around 500,000 people, collaborating on a variety of initiatives and programs.

Students, Faculty, and Staff

In Fall 2025, the University of Lynchburg has 2,365 total enrolled students, including 1,425 undergraduate and 940 graduate students. Seventy-four percent of undergraduate students live on campus and hail from 32 states and 32 countries. The student body identifies as 63% female and 29% students of color. The first-year retention rate has declined slightly in recent years, especially among international populations, presenting a visionary and strategic President with a compelling opportunity to enhance collaborative efforts that advance student success and improve retention outcomes. The University offers 50 total majors, and the top five undergraduate majors include nursing, business administration, exercise physiology, biology, and psychological science. There are over 60 student clubs and organizations, 26 club and intramural sports teams, and eight affinity groups. The University boasts 343 All-American student athletes who participate in one or more of Lynchburg's 23 NCAA Division III Hornet athletics teams which have won over a dozen national championships in recent history.

Graduate students at the University of Lynchburg combine academic excellence with service, global engagement, and hands-on experience. Many of Lynchburg's online programs are intentionally flexible and highly personalized, allowing professionals to tailor coursework to their careers and interests while maintaining close connections with faculty and peers. Distinctive programs and concentrations such as instructional design, sport management, emergency management, global health, and athletic and coaching education prepare students to lead in diverse and evolving fields. The University partners with the Lynchburg Fire Department and EMS, the Free Clinic of Central Virginia, and Students Without Borders to provide graduate students with immersive field learning opportunities. Popular among University staff and alumni, particularly in business, counseling, leadership, and education, Lynchburg's graduate programs cultivate a community of service-minded professionals dedicated to leadership, lifelong learning, and meaningful impact.

The University of Lynchburg is home to over 150 full-time and 60 part-time faculty as well as 400 full- and part-time staff. Committed to maintaining a welcoming environment that inspires independent thinkers and future leaders, the University of Lynchburg's faculty champions teaching and learning, mentorship, and community engagement. The University attracts collaborative and dedicated professional staff who are committed to supporting a culture of academic excellence, belonging, connection, curiosity, excellence, and service.

Campus

Spread across 250 acres in the heart of Lynchburg, the University's campus is home to more than 40 buildings designed in an elliptical pattern that exemplifies founder Dr. Hopwood's guiding principles of faith and reason. The Snidow Chapel has served as the spiritual heart of the campus since 1966, while Hobbs-Sigler Hall serves as a primary teaching and research facility and houses the departments of Biology, Biomedical Science, Chemistry, Computer Science, Environmental Sciences, Studies and Sustainability, Mathematics, and Physics. Elliot & Rosel Schewel Hall is home to the [Donovan Media Development Center](#), the [Gillian S. Stoettner Student-Managed Investment Fund](#), and the Mosaic Lounge, an inclusive and welcoming space for students to build community and belonging. The Dillard Fine Arts Center is home to the Robert C. Hailey Theatre, named for a beloved Lynchburg theatre professor. The building also houses the Daura Museum of Art, a variety of art studio spaces, and a state-of-the-art Digital Imaging Lab. Health-related fields are some of the most popular and fastest growing programs at the University of Lynchburg, and the health sciences facilities include the recently renovated Bowen-McMillan Nursing Building, two cadaver labs, the Walker Human Performance Laboratory, and the [University of Lynchburg Community Health Center](#).

At the heart of Lynchburg's athletics facilities is the majestic Shellenberger Field, which features a new artificial turf field and the state-of-the-art eight-lane Dr. Jack M. Toms Track, with a spectator capacity of 3,000. The University's athletics facilities also include the Turner Gymnasium, the Aubrey R. Moon Jr. Field, the James C. Fox Field, the Lynchburg Tennis Courts, the Wake Field House, the Hornet Indoor Golf Center, and the Lynchburg Equestrian Center.

In 1998, the University was gifted the [Claytor Nature Center](#), a 491-acre outdoor classroom for environmental study. Freshwater streams, woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, rare plants, and wildlife abound at the center, which includes Cloverlea, the original farmhouse; the A. Boyd Claytor III Education and Research Facility with laboratories and conference facilities; the Belk Astronomical Observatory; the Chandler Eco-Lodge, a 16-bed facility built with environmentally friendly materials and energy-saving technologies; a hiking trail system; a small group campground; and an amphitheater.

Governance

The University of Lynchburg is governed by a 22-member [Board of Trustees](#). This collegial and collaborative group of Trustees has ably led the institution through several transformational years and endeavors to keep the University on the leading-edge of academic innovation. The board boasts 17 alumni and is comprised of a variety of highly skilled professionals across higher education, healthcare, and the private and civic sectors. Julie P. Doyle, a Lynchburg resident and retired small business owner, currently serves as the chair of the board.

Finances

The market value of the University’s endowment holdings at the close of fiscal year 2025 was north of \$144 million, inclusive of a \$26 million trust managed by Bank of America. The University maintains a “BBB+” rating with a stable outlook from Standard & Poor’s. In FY 2024, UL successfully narrowed a \$7.1 million deficit to under \$2.7 million through targeted programmatic adjustments, disciplined asset management, and thoughtful strategic planning. These decisions, made in close coordination with the Board, enabled UL leadership to deliver a balanced budget for the first time in recent years.

The strength of the University’s balance sheet is further supported by the [One Lynchburg](#) comprehensive campaign, which has exceeded its \$40 million goal and is anchored by three core pillars: One Hive, One Heart, and One Home. These initiatives aim to expand endowed scholarships and cultivate a deep sense of belonging among students; advance academics, research, and service-learning; and invest in dynamic learning and gathering spaces. The Hornet community—alumni, faculty, and staff alike—has embraced the campaign with enthusiasm, positioning it to close perhaps an additional million dollars above goal by December 31, 2025.

ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT

The President will lead the University of Lynchburg at a critical juncture. As higher educational institutions across the nation navigate a variety of pressures, the President must position the institution as a bellwether of adaptive innovation and regional exemplar. Reporting to the Board of Trustees, the President will set the institution’s strategic trajectory, identifying areas of strength and opportunity, while positioning the institution for continued growth and differentiation in a competitive marketplace. Following years of strategic transformation and difficult, but necessary changes, the President must rebuild a culture of trust, transparency, and shared governance, shaping a shared institutional identity and vision that galvanizes and reengages students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the Lynchburg community writ large.

Leveraging an experienced administrative team, the President will provide leadership across Lynchburg’s three schools, embracing curricular innovation, investing in areas of strategic importance, and creating a unifying, comprehensive vision that promotes student success and interdisciplinarity in research, teaching, and learning. This leader will provide the narrative framework to communicate the scope of Lynchburg’s academic distinction, impact on students and community, and commitment to innovation in teaching and learning to potential funders and donors. An entrepreneurial and community-oriented leader, the President will partner locally, nationally, and globally to raise the profile of the University and promote partnerships that are of mutual benefit while positioning the institution to become not only the City of Lynchburg’s university, but the institution of choice in the region and beyond.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

To ensure the University of Lynchburg's continued commitment to student success and curricular innovation, the next President will be expected to address the following opportunities and challenges:

Design and implement a strategic plan that articulates a compelling institutional identity

Capitalizing upon the momentum of the recent reconfiguration of UL's academic and administrative ranks, the incoming President will develop a comprehensive institutional strategic plan that builds upon the learnings of the current strategic plan and honors the University's historic identity while positioning the institution to not only survive but thrive in the future. A key proponent of shared governance, the President will leverage the strategic planning process to seek input from faculty, students, staff, and alumni, crafting a unifying institutional vision that amplifies interdisciplinary teaching and collaboration, incentivizes innovation and entrepreneurship, and further differentiates the University in a competitive higher education ecosystem. A successful strategic vision will reflect this alignment, articulating a shared sense of institutional identity that empowers every member of the UL community to take ownership of the institution's future trajectory.

Ensure long-term financial sustainability and secure reaffirmation of accreditation

The next President will lead efforts to strengthen the University's financial foundation while guiding the institution through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) reaffirmation process. Considering the institution's current warning status, due largely in part to previous fiscal challenges, the President must prioritize fiscal stewardship and transparency and partner closely with advancement leaders to reengage alumni, expand philanthropic support, and cultivate new revenue streams through industry and foundation partnerships. With a clear understanding of accreditation standards and a commitment to shared governance, the President will foster a culture of accountability and collaboration, ensuring the University not only meets but exceeds expectations for long-term institutional viability.

Drive enrollment through program development and maximization

The University has experienced exponential growth in the health sciences over the past decade and has made strategic investments into infrastructure and recruitment practices to capture growing interest in the sector. The President will keep their finger on the pulse of trends across higher education, positioning the institution to remain responsive to potential shifts while honoring a commitment to shared governance. Keenly aware of opportunities to bolster enrollment and retention, an entrepreneurial President will partner with the Chief Academic Officer to implement innovative programs and transfer initiatives, professional development and leadership programming, and adult learning opportunities, as well as the Vice President of Enrollment, Marketing, and Communications to enhance recruitment practices. The President will also partner with leadership in University Experience and Student Success to

further invest in programming that enhances the student experience and creates the necessary infrastructure to ensure that students have the appropriate resources, advising, and mentoring to succeed at Lynchburg.

UL is situated in a rich higher education region and enjoys partnerships with complementary institutions. A creative thinker and collaborative partner, the President will ensure current relationships are mutually beneficial and pursue innovative ways to serve the students in the region. Under this President, innovative expansion and partnership will be a priority, as will honoring Lynchburg's roots as a liberal arts institution that positions its graduates to be independent thinkers and future leaders.

Promote institutional stability and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration

After years of strategic transformation, the incoming President must usher in an era of newfound stability, prioritizing shared governance and transparency while rebuilding morale. A skillful listener and builder of institutional culture, the President will seek to facilitate collaboration across disciplines, build continuity across undergraduate and graduate programs, and incentivize and secure resourcing to support innovation, entrepreneurship, and excellence in teaching. With a clear and comprehensive strategic vision as a north star, the President will cultivate an institutional culture that positions the University as the regional institution of choice.

Raise the institutional profile through community engagement

As the external face of the University, the President must be a stalwart institutional champion, raising the institution's local, national, and global profile to attract the interest of future students and seed philanthropic investment. A visible and mayoral presence, the President will remain accessible and actively engaged, developing meaningful relationships across the enterprise and throughout the greater Lynchburg community. The President will solicit input about the University's impact and identity while strategically enhancing the institution's academic profile, cultivating opportunities for novel community partnerships, community-based research, and service and experiential learning.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The University of Lynchburg seeks an energetic, thoughtful, and effective leader and a seasoned administrator to serve as its next President. The successful President will bring many of the following personal qualities and professional experiences:

- A deep commitment to the University of Lynchburg's mission and the power of a transformational educational experience for students and the ability to articulate and champion the mission;
- Demonstrated ability to provide visionary and forward-thinking leadership;
- A commitment to academic quality, rigor, and shared governance;

- Knowledge of current and emerging issues, trends, and strategies in higher education; a keen understanding of enrollment and retention with experience developing strategies to address demographic shifts and competition;
- Demonstrated success in thoughtfully stewarding and generating financial resources, including public and private funding, the capacity to develop and execute upon a long-range financial sustainability plan;
- The skills and personality to fundraise through successful and enduring connections with potential donors and friends of the University;
- A demonstrated commitment to cultivating a welcoming environment where all students, faculty, and staff can thrive;
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to bring campus constituents to actionable consensus, energizing and inspiring the University of Lynchburg community around a collective vision;
- A record of successful recruitment and retention of top-notch faculty and staff, and experience in building and developing strong management teams;
- A leadership style that is personable, transparent, collegial, inclusive, and consensus-building;
- Creative problem-solving skills, with high emotional intelligence, and a robust intellectual curiosity; and
- Distinguished intellectual credentials, including a track record of teaching and scholarly achievement.

LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA

With five colleges and universities, a flourishing entertainment scene, and a plethora of outdoor activities, Lynchburg offers a perfect blend of educational excellence and recreational opportunities, making it a premier destination for students and visitors alike. Nestled in the foothills of the breathtaking Blue Ridge Mountains, the City of Lynchburg is home to 76,000 residents. University of Lynchburg students engage with the community through [seven community centers](#) and have access to an assortment of live music, theater, shopping, and dining options and easy access to the great outdoors, including scenic river vistas interwoven with bountiful biking and hiking trails. Lynchburg is a short drive to Washington, DC; Richmond, VA; and the North Carolina Research Triangle and is accessible via Amtrak and a neighboring regional airport.

The City has undergone a nearly 20-year downtown revitalization project where historic buildings were renovated to create attractive apartment and loft housing and lively restaurants, hotels, and entertainment venues. A crown jewel of the riverfront, the Academy Center of the Arts, showcases a variety of performances and visual arts events and provides arts education to students of all ages. In Spring 2026, the City will complete the 5,000-seat Riverfront Park Amphitheater, further cementing the community's identity as a staunch supporter of the arts and establishing the downtown as a regional cultural destination.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent electronically and in confidence via the Isaacson, Miller website for the search: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/university-lynchburg/president>.

Natalie Leonhard, Partner
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The University of Lynchburg is committed to creating a diverse community and does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities.